

SHUZIA WRITERS

THE WITNESS



AN ANTHOLOGY

The Witness

**SHUZIA LIMITED
LAGOS NIGERIA**

**First published in the Federal Republic of
Nigeria 2021**

Various Authors

First Edition August 2021

**Designed & Prepared by Shuzia Publishers
writers@shuzia.com**

judges' note

We received an unprecedented number of entries and we are elated that young Christian creatives are participating in the contests.

It is heartwarming.

The poems that made it to the shortlist were incredible.

The use of words floored us.

We are glad that we could read them and that you sent them our way.

For those who did not make it to the shortlist, don't despair.

Keep going at it. Some day, you will get here.

Once again, congratulations to everyone who made it to the shortlist and the eventual winners.

Cheers.

timothy ojo

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Okoro Emmanuel Chkwuebuka

Parable Of The Witness

 _theceo

While men slept,
The endless waves of darkness struck.
As the weevils sought to destroy,
The flowers who were born beautiful.
In this field of depression,
A man strives to save the petals—
Whose body lies on the crossroad to eternal doom.

Like a farmer,
He waters them with the word of truth—
Which gives life to dead fragrances,
As he grooms souls to taste the Spice of salvation.
With the fullness of the holy spirit,
The dented roses adorn their bodies,
With new garments of royalty.

As they ignited the fire of the gospel,
Into the exiles where sin looms;
Even in the scorching sun,
They wave their nectars in worship—
Without fear;
As they propagate the good news
Of our only true love.

WINNER

Fredrick Rachel

The mandate

 fredrickrachel

It was November the 3rd; the day of the harvest.
The courtroom smelled of an unsettled silence;
Souls waiting, confused, doubting, accused.
I stood in the dock totally overwhelmed with fervor.
Truth in my tongue, its sword firmly equipped to execute orders!

What eyes dare not behold heavenly ostentation of bliss;
Of an angelic blue that will not endure tragedy,
Of a testimony clothed in untainted blood,
Of the rumbling of glory in orchestrated voices,
Proclaiming righteousness from the hallelujah side.

What lips dare not speak of a songbird set to fly;
Of scars bearing marks of the cross,
Of signs and wonders following a mandate,
Of a lost noun, an impotent verb,
Swung out from the orbit of fear.

What legs dare not walk into fields to work the harvest;
Into courtrooms to bestow these tidings,
To redeem the convict from sin and his plaintiff,
To change his sentence into a word; saved!
And proffer a Sheperd to these lost sheep.

Then said the Defendant: Can the witness show the court-
Those signs, those wonders spoke he of?
Certainly, I motioned.
Exhibit A: Is there a sick man among the jury?
Objection my Lord! Objection denied.





WINNER

Overcome Ibiteye

Martyred

 bimolaovercomer

This is how I slip out of my skin:
I walk through coals of Easter,
And watch my body morph into a parchment of scars—
Blood smells like cinnamon;
Like the redemption of a nailed thief;
Like the last words of a dying saviour.

Say, Golgotha is a movie—
And my life is a puzzling sequel.
Say, witnesses are people who bear,
The testament of death on their bodies.
I saw a man puncture his flesh with shards of love—
Until he bled like the titanic; and now, I do the same.

I offer my skin to sticks and clubs, till tis an artwork of wounds.
I saw the grave gulp up after three days of silence—
And now, I expect the same.
I douse the unease in my heart with a shush;
Then, I gather up the fragments of my soul,
And wait for the day of its rebranding.

Ejiro Elizabeth Edward

The guilt reaper



Ejiro Elizabeth Edward.



Ejiroedward552

Evasion is often godly intervention without God or?
Maybe God had a photograph of my baby,
Slithering in the walls of my womb—
Down the hallways of my thighs;
Flowing till it formed the Red Sea in my living room.

I am memorizing the body of my child,
Into my heart in case— guilt,
Absolves me of her face.
I am always thinking I am undeserving—
Maybe I wasn't made in His image;

I hold guilt the size of a city in my belly;
A plausible cause for my body not being able to contain life.
At noon, when I transition between the living & dead,
Tears pour out of the heavens, and—
In the morning I think of God's spit as rainwater.

Once again, I am eager for the harvest,
Once again, I am longing for salvation—
And by salvation, I mean from myself—
My belly rotting up with grief, grumbles when the pastor says;
God is willing to save you; delay is not denial!

Sometimes, evasion is God's timely intervention,
But guilt the size of an atlas, Makes me not comprehend God's love.
In place of my child lays a time bomb—
I am always looking for who will save me—
Someone to bear me witness, like the thief, witnessed to God by Jesus

And the pastor says, God is able and just to forgive us of our sins—
He can make you white as snow; Dripping snow— I mean flakes snow;
Whiter than red— than crimson; I mean bloody red!
Redder than the red flowing out of you for days after aborting your first child;
Whiter than, whiter than...Your guilt.

James “King James” Eneojile

The Eagle's Song

  James Eneojile.

An eagle's song echoes along the forgotten paths—
Where the trees bask in revered silence,
To part the lips of his song,
So they can all hear how,
He does not find enough rhythm but still sings;
Songs to fill up the wounds of the darkness,
That came before the morning came—
With the eagle's screech.

Guilt glides gently like a well-written asterisk,
Clothed in sad marks of blue and red;
Red, for every fear human minds have not felt—
Eating deep until it reaches the edge,
Where the soul is weak—
Where every scar is a bed;
Bed of forgotten nightmares;
She will not hear the eagle's song.

The morning light collapses into new darkness—
Eclipse of forgotten prayers, unanswered in this darkness.
She will try to rise and fall again—
And feel like oil spills from Babylonian jars.
His sound will break into her home; her heart.
She will calm the rivulets forming on her chin—
She will listen, and hear the eagle's song.

Monday Mary Lenebari

The witness

 mary_lenebari

There was one who moved with much urgency,
Her steps were swift and lips always filled with messages.
She spoke of a King and His Kingdom with great fervency,
Making mention of a Place with no pain,
Where gold adorned the passages.
To her, Jesus had said: "Do Business till I come."

Not a day passed by without her making a disciple,
In every chat and in all exchange, the Lord's name she mentioned.
This she did with all men, whether busy or idle;
Her gaze was set on Heaven;
But for the many lost souls, she didn't want to be questioned;
Because to her, Jesus had said: "Do Business till I come."

So even when the King required her soul,
And the time came for her exit from this realm;
To the many who stood by her deathbed,
She unrolled an ancient scroll, the letters upon faded—
Yet to her they were still a priceless gem.
Written thereon was this: To me, Jesus said: "Do Business till I come."

It hurt so much to watch her go,
For everyone could see she was a witness through and through;
But on the other side, joyful sounds rose up in a roar;
The witness was home, and we who read are next on the queue.
The mandate is the same, for—
To us, Jesus still says: "Do Business till I come."

Michael Imossan

Clad eyes unclothed to bear testimony

Hitherto this poem, I waltzed into every story covered;
In a cathedral of doubts, I have always been known.
To Thomas myself out of God's presence;
Inside a Church, a boy soaks a country of questions in a bottle.

Of olive oil and signs a cross on his four head;
But isn't stubbornness the birth of a miracle?
Like fetching the sky with a perforated palm,
Or whirling water into wine.

Someone said to divine: God cuts off his ears every morning,
Before the world's supplicatory noises
Are loud enough to terrify His sleep.
I wonder who that could be.

What can be done to tame a heart-throbbing,
In the rhythm of pharaoh's heart.
Today, I am seated at the rear end of the chapel;
I am Nebuchadnezzar.

Listening as my ears guffaw to the gospel gutting its drum;
I Attempt to close my eyes in mockery of prayer.
A glistening light whistles through the darkness;
My body crumbles into a sea- solemn in a susurrus of silence.

The preacher's voice falls like pebbles into vast waters in my body—
And I become a wind whirling; until a palm hollowed in the middle;
Dripping with blood— Stretches over the turbulent turf of my body:
Peace be still— a clad eyes unclothed to bear testimony.

Chinweoku Nwagu

I wish

 @chinwe.writes

I wish...I wish I had seen it all.
Not just heard it, but been a first-hand witness;
With a one on one experience with the Father—
Sat with him when the five thousand were fed;
Stood beside Mary when He was crucified.

I wish...I wish I was there.
To have kissed his feet and clean His face with my scarf;
I wish I was there to have comforted Mary—
I wish I was one of the witnesses whose name made it to the Holy book;
I wish I was the teller and not the one being told.

I wish...I wish so much that I have forgotten I am still a witness.
Forgotten that the Spirit bears witness in me;
Forgotten that I may just have read it but I have shared in Christ suffering—
Forgotten that I didn't need to have been present to be part of Abba's crew;
He is still speaking; doing miracles; my name can make it to the book of life.

Now...Now I no longer wish.
I know;
I know I am a witness—
But not just a witness;
A lover as well, and a Believer,

I know...I know the Holy Spirit bears witness in me.
From the very first day I said Yes;
I beckon when He calls—
I believe when He speaks;
And I see the beauty He creates everyday.



WINNER

Emmanuel “Literati” Mgbabor requiem

 @literati22

And Jacob cracked his head on a stone—
A banquet of angels burst out of his cerebrum.
How do you sing the Lord's song with graves in your teeth?
How do you hold God by the hem of his agbada—
To squeeze out a miracle?

I know this road— walked it once;
And you were there;
There in the palm of this poem,
Are broken pieces of me
Lord, how do I love you in my brokenness?

I know the teeth of this knife—
Held it once and you were there;
When the blades graced the chest of a boy,
And begged the flesh to peel itself into a door—
To say the sky is the safest place to hide a scream.

My tongue drips lies like a leaking roof—
To say a lie is only a moniker for truth worn inside out.
And you were there— Lord!
Enthroned on purple clouds—
Sin has brought me thus far.

Lord, i have woven metaphors of my iniquities.
And here is your body latched onto a wooden cross like a signpost—
Flowers pouring out of your punctured ribs— You slung my sins;
My grief on your shoulders, you bore witness to my innocence;
Elohim, teach me to boat my body back to your bosom.

WINNER

Divine Inyang Titus

Headless into fire, reckless into miracle



 Divine Inyang Titus  wolfgang_frost

I tale no ordinary resistance—
Once, sacraments did fall on my tongue;
But I spewed God before I could taste the truth.

For salt was terrifying, and the minions made banality too easy.
In those days, I touched faith like peter, one wary foot at a time;
Like erosion, peeling God away before I can cascade into the light.

The rush of fear was like a flood barreling into unwilling spaces;
I drowned in denial of that which flowed,
And wielded mankind like a potter's wheel.

I tale no ordinary acceptance—
Once I stood, a monument of lukewarm Laodicea;
A pariah pontificating.

Now, I, like art, am always reimagining;
Deafening my body to listen for a divine rumbling beyond my name;
Daring to crucify my eyes that I may save my spirit.

Hence, in unison with water and blood; We enact a singularity
And testify the God blatant of possibility; In these days I long to—
Touch faith like Shadrach headlong into fire; reckless into a miracle.

For though I am only a seed, I am sacrificed in the knowledge—
Of the eternal light snuggling in my deep, threatening—
To bloom; and the spirit, roaming over and over and over...

Adesina Ajala

The witness as a torchbearer



adesina.ajala

It takes more than the eyes to see;
To appreciate the glory of the day—
A colony of bats gropes in the daylight;
This poem means to say:
The Ethiopian eunuch, clumsy as a blind cane,
Sashays the lines of the Scripture, until Philip flips a trail of light.
Void of Christ's light, we run into ephemeral things,
Fleeting as clouds— we become trapped into chaos;
Thronging into things, finite as zero.
Who can escape the hordes of darkness,
Without the gallantry of the light?
And the Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not grasp it.
This poem means to say:
At Pentecost, Peter lights his tongue into a turf of torch;
And witnesses the resurrected Christ before the crowd.
A torchbearer pitches his voice into the air
Till every darkness comes breaking into the sizzling light of salvation.
The church of witnesses is born—
Like the passing of a baton,
The line of witnesses has never broken rank— shining this saving light.
This is the heirloom:
For we have received the ministry of reconciliation;
This passion to hold Jesus high and burning
Like a torchbearer— by our changed lives,
And graceful deeds for the world to see;
And know how it is to rise from the ashes of sin—
How it is to become beautiful.

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