

saraba



ISSUE 4b

THE BLACK AND WHITE ANNIVERSARY SUB-ISSUE
WITH LOLA SHONEYIN: EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW & POEMS



Please print in black ink and stack together.

Arranged without order

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THE SUCCESS OF A FAILURE

DAMILOLA AJAYI

Now I can't precisely remember when I conceded to Agatha's impression of the Colloquium of New Writing. Perhaps it was after she made the statement, or earlier, when I walked into the programme venue to find the organizers to be fellow students, or later when a facilitator began his monologue on the death of Nigerian literature, on how our gathering that fateful day in September, 2008 was, in fact, a requiem of some sort, or much later when the grand finale event was a grim shadow lacking both the enthusiasm and impact of the opening day.

But I can precisely remember when the programme failed in the eyes of its organizers, three individuals I would come to admire. I knew, even from their facial expressions, that what had unfurled during the program was not exactly what they had conceptualised. Their expectation was a noble one: to organize a program for budding writers, help them find a voice and platform on which they could showcase their talents, hence the caption of the programme that lured me into being its first applicant—Write, Connect, Publish.

On the very first day of the event, the first facilitator held up the works of the participants in the air, the weight of which should have made him wince, and said that it was all trash, hog-wash. Works of the organizers included.

Although, at that point in the event, a thought ran across my mind as to the failure of the event, I attended every of the three days religiously, unlike my fellow writer and friend, Agatha, not because of the toxic words that most facilitators save one shared, but for the commune between writers, the intercourse of ideas, the love for which Saraba was born of, the success of a failure.

MR AND MR SARABA

The first "toward" encounter with Mr. Iduma was our second meeting. Our paths crossed in the foyer of the English Department, Obafemi Awolowo University. A conversation ensued

largely on literature—Rushdie, Tolstoy, Habila. This was just one of the conversations that we would have; conversations that would occupy many Sunday afternoons subsequently.

It was on one of those Sundays in November that Emma relayed an idea to me. Previously, we had been plagued and haunted by rejection mails, documents I would later find to be the reviews of the early works of a great writer.

It occurred to us that the dream of starting an electronic magazine and floating a website through which it could be accessed wasn't too farfetched. But even as Emma ran through the ideas with controlled excitement, the ideas replicated itself in my mind in form of algorithmic logistics, beeping and stretching into infinity like a grim DOS Prompt program on an obsolete IBM monitor.

I knew it would not be an easy task. But I found the idea to be very fresh, original, timely. And I welcomed it, with open mind.

The idea hatched, all it needed was nurture. So we assembled a team to join our duo: a poet, another writer, a web-designer. We met, examined logistics, rubbed minds and at the end of the meeting, we left with a higher level of skepticism. Nevertheless, the idea had married us together and even when the team unceremoniously dissolved, Emma and I were stayed married to this figment. We were joined in literary matrimony as Mr. and Mr. Saraba.

MAKING A FAMILY, A CITY, AN ECONOMY

We began to prepare for our first issue. We picked a theme, Family. We contacted Jumoke Verissimo to be our first guest editor. She accepted. This was a boost for our morale, especially when a small portion of the Sunday Guardian Arts Page featured our call for submissions. Entries came in from all directions, from even notable writers, and it was with

excitement that we released the first issue of Saraba on the eve of valentine, 2009.

Mails of appreciation trickled in. We were added as links on several reputable literary magazines. Critics also brought ideas to the table; some thought what we had done was at best gibberish; others thought it was a humble start. Our maiden edition earned several a name amongst which was 'picture book'. It had the flavor and aesthetics of a campus lifestyle magazine, someone said, pictures competed with words, and most importantly, the literary feel was attenuated. This, we found noteworthy, and we rented ourselves room for improvement. The next issue was going to be better, we thought we should enlarge our scope and so we chose *Citylife* as our next theme, and opened our mails again for submissions.

Submissions were very few and very far between, a guest editor was not forthcoming. We were surprised and almost lost faith. But never the less, again, we published. The city life issue cover was adorned with the picture of a black female waving down a taxi on a commercial street, and introspectively, this was how we felt. We were alone in a street with a budding idea needing transport to spread its fruits. The Citylife issue was welcomed like a regular visitor; there was no enthusiasm, especially the kind that is gleaned by peculiar distance. But all the same, the dream was alive and in the words of Emmanuel, one was tempted to end it there.

Between April and August, we had four months to prepare for our next issue. And ambition enlarged. Our theme was grander than our following; we wanted to give Saraba a voice of relevance, so we picked

Economy as our theme. Economy became our august obsession. *The Economy of Sound*, our first chapbook, was also in the making, a gathering of local poets. I wrote a piece on Death and Grief which I called *The Economy of Loss*. And as if providence foresaw our plans, there came ASUU strike. In that period, usually characterized by extreme ennui for fellow students, we applied ourselves. Our Sunday afternoon visits extended into other weekdays. The dream was Saraba, the drive was Saraba, the future was Saraba.

OUTLOOK AND LOOKING OUT

It's important to note that Saraba today can't rub shoulders with greater global literary magazines. But the figment and the economy from which this idea originated cannot be disregarded. Saraba is a pioneer in online publication in Nigeria and up till date is a major labor of love. No financial support or any similar arrangements has been forthcoming but this we wouldn't allow to deter our focus. Saraba, we once wrote, can regarded as human; human in the sense of growth. We are certain that a time would come when Saraba would stand by itself, a time not too far from now, when Saraba can diversify and become a major literary hub catering to worldly literary yearnings. This is achievable, I mean, we started from scrappy ideas and here we are one year, still strong.

Our story is an accessible fable. The moral lesson is of the beauty of the mind, the possibility of ideas. Once, I was obsessed with idea of a child sitting in a small corner in his room and affecting his world. Now it's possible. And we have the internet and Saraba to thank!

THERE'S NO ONE TELLING
US WHERE TO STAND
OR WHERE TO BE



A LOVE NOTE TO SARABA

TEMITAYO OLOFINLUA

Saraba you came to me, first in the month of love, February, 2009. You came as a Facebook message. A message across miles from a friend I'd never met—Emmanuel Iduma. And don't ask me how come I have a friend I have never met. It was plain curiosity that made me click the link on a visit to that website where you live. That was when I submitted myself to you. I became addicted to you. And I don't want a cure. Four issues and two poetry chapbooks down and I'm literally stuck, like an addict on hemp. Or like my six-month-old nephew who cries until he feels nipples in his lips. He searches, gropes as if in the dark till he finds it. Since that FB message, I've looked forward to hearing anything from you Saraba—emails, magazine and newsletters.

Sa-ra-ba. Sah-rah-bah. Sir-Ra-Ber. I'm not sure if I pronounce your name well. Or if I know exactly what it means. I don't know if you'd be male or female, if you were a human being. I have encountered you and that's enough! What best words describe you—insightful, mind-opening, a slice of contemporary African literature? I'd say you are a sumptuous meal, well prepared, each ingredient in the right measure; every word well coined, each sentence sitting well in the story. You are the dancing pot of stew filled with many voices speaking clearly yet without a noise. And like all good meals, you make me yearn for more of you. You are a puzzle, revealing a different meaning issue after issue. My fingers locked in yours; you lure me into the endless possibilities hidden in literature.

Saraba, you straddle the divide between hard core and mainstream literature (whatever those mean!). Maybe that's where your beauty lies, I am not exactly sure. However, I am sure of one thing; nay two—that no one can slumber on any issue YOU raise and that you'll keep readers coming back for more.

Issue after issue, Saraba you open up new worlds or make me see my world in a different way. Your first 'Family' Issue came as a warm hug. Family is supposed to be home; it's also that constant link between the past and future. After reading, home took a meaning of its own—it could exist anywhere, always shifting, always changing. You've been home to me—one of my homes. In your Second 'Cities' Issue, I enjoyed reading Writers' Cities. It's astonishing how a city can transform fiction; sometimes acting as a mere backdrop. And at other times, its presence cannot be ignored. One smells it. One sees it. One touches it. It forms the characters. It is even a character. Life in the city always seems plural but it has never been more singular, you said. The city is as real as you are, my love. With your third 'Economy' Issue, you raised questions—how does the economic meltdown affect us, as individuals, as a nation? With this issue also came a transformation of our 'go-betweens.' Your publishers' names became reduced to initials—E.I & D.A. Well, that's economy of words at its best, if you ask me. Your Fourth 'Story' Issue took me on a literary flight into worlds beyond the ordinary where only stories lead. What will Saraba Issues+X (X meaning infinity here) bring? I do not know but I wait with a certain itch stronger than what made me keep clicking 'next page' in previous issues.

Saraba, you are not afraid of experiments. As a child plays with Lego, you fondle ideas (and that's paraphrased from your Niran Okewole interview). As a child, you have taken a different step with each issue, not afraid of a fall. You do not stick with the 'literature-as-usual' stereotype! Not with your selection of pieces, writers, interviews or your graphic design. Saraba, you have taken a life of your own. You've grown beyond a bulb of idea in the minds of two young men to a lamp

shining on the African society through literature.

I hate reading PDFs but I've read you, not only online but there's your 'namesake' folder on my laptop—a safe haven for all past issues. It's also on my flash drive, and that's so you are doubly safe! I hate to sound gushy but I love, I love, I love your layout. Free. Undefined. Creative. Beautiful. The layout not only makes the pieces attractive; it gives them an existence which lived first, in the mind of the graphic designer. Sometimes, you decide to tell me the genre of what I read. At other times, there's silence and I figure whatever it is as I read. Some articles come in two colours on both sides of a sheet. And it's not strange to find a sheet divided into three parts, newspaper style. You decide to have interesting 'callouts' from the piece or from another writer. You even use arrows to entice me to the next page. Your layout extends the boundaries that connect words to readers. Your graphics show that what's being said is as important as the way it is said. Saraba, your graphics dare.

If readers call my love, Saraba, a writer's magazine, they won't be wrong but that's one of the things you are. And 'writer's magazine' here is not some lofty term that means you feature pieces from the 'literary greats' but that you are a learning field for

budding writers. One only needs to go through your wells of quotations and the Principles from Writers. Or read your interesting interviews with writers. Saraba, you have kept me in the embrace of the vast world of African writers and introduced me to new ones. There's no better way to learn to write than looking through the eyes of other writers. Oh yes, every writer should have a unique voice but what's a voice if it's not heard? What's a voice if it does not learn how to speak from those who have spoken? As I gaze into your eyes, I hear voices from the past beckoning me to speak. Cheering me on not to fear; that I'd be heard, that I'd be read.

It was love at first sight (and read) with you, Saraba. It's February again, a year since our chance encounter. This is my note to you, my love. It's to a blissful romance—a lasting relationship between a magazine and a reader. Just as love hurts when it speaks the truth; you may speak tough sometimes. Speak nicely at other times, that I want to bend and plant a warm kiss on your lips but may this love grow stronger. And lead to the birth of more page-turning issues.



A SHORT HISTORY OF MODERN FOOLS

EMMANUEL IDUMA

Let me begin with an explanation and a contradiction. We are *not* fools, and let no one call us fools. It could be that, for want of a proper title – being a lover of grand ones – I chose this. It should not be interpreted literally. In some sense, though, we *are* fools, and we should be called so. What I'll try to do is capture our foolishness and non-foolishness, in equal measure, I hope. By 'we' I mean Damilola Ajayi and myself, and then a couple of friends worth mention. In this short memoir, I want to afford myself the luxury of attainment, and of non-attainment; of the hunger and satisfaction that comes with seeing dreams, perhaps, on colour planes.

To create unending voices *is* a foolish statement. How can? A significant amount of lush voices, resplendent once, are already sounding patched up, and hungry. Some boys, who meet and start an e-magazine in a hidden place, think they can create unending voices. How can? We all come to the moment when we are foolhardy, and believe in the existence of dreams, the actuality of those. Yet, meanwhile, it is an illusion, a terrible night and *morningmare*. Like Enya sang, "Night has brought to those who sleep only dreams they cannot keep." It was foolhardy to think we could keep this dream of creating unending voices.

Think about it some more.

To create unending voices is to, let's say, make an attraction to apparition. There is nothing like a voice that can speak forever, or at least, while humans last. Is there? Consider it literally. There is none.

Oh God, how young and exuberant we were.

It was in a small room. Complete with my Dad's books and our family computer. He came to me, as had been his custom in the

last few weeks, on a Sunday evening. We had met some weeks back, at a *Colloquium of New Writing*, one I had organized with some friends. He was most vocal. I'll never forget his poem. So it was easy to sign an informal treaty, some pact to exchange writing souls, and become one. We did become one. In foolery, at least.

I brought out a pen, and a book. It was my *Book of Sorts*, an exercise book I fill with my thoughts and *dreams*. And we wrote. Name? None yet. What? An electronic magazine, like *Writer's Beat*. Okay. Modalities? Guest Editor, Monthly, Website, Submission guidelines, all that. Yes, yes, we nodded.

All foolhardy.

Foolhardy to think we could be undergraduates and yet publishers. He's a medical student and I'm a student of Law. And we wanted to publish, to gather voices from around the world, especially Africa.

To think we could start publishing without expertise and training. With only a certain inclination to writing, and zapping the internet. It was a dead-road, an incomplete jigsaw puzzle, and we thought we could create unending voices. Surely, there might be the existence of something like an unending voice, or *someone*, but how foolish to think we could create without tools, or know-how?

I digress.

We have had four issues, one sub-issue, two chapbooks, and God-knows, we try to have online content monthly. It is this attempt that has been successful. *Anattempt*. Success is nothing—what is it? But an attempt to succeed is enough success. If there have been moments, tied in time, that seemed to favour us, let those be the moments we tried, failed, and tried again.

You say we have not failed?

Our first issue was compared to campus Christian magazines. Pictures like a modeling book. That was *failure*. We had spent night bent over our computers, and computers of cybercafés, and we're called publishers of a campus magazine. The good gist is that he came to my house, shouting that it was too good, that he had begun to distribute all over the internet.

He had the plan to *proliferate* the internet with the first issue. And he tried. We did not think, at that point, that we had failed. This failure (let me not be misunderstood) is not a failure to *publish*, or that we received no commendations. It was, permit me, a failure in quality, and in a proper comprehension of what publishing *literary magazines* entailed.

The second issue, and the third, and the fourth, and this.

We have tried to succeed, spent hours sending mails and receiving, and designing and uploading. We have been shunned by writers, accepted by some, and forgotten by some. We have made applications for workshops, got accepted and rejected, and then we have loathed some writers, together.

A shared writing soul.

He is my better half. Loathes the writings I loathe, love those I love. I've sent mails he knows nothing about and he does not object; and vice-versa. This shared writing soul is the core of our *trial* to succeed. How can one attempt to succeed without a partner?

There are other partners. Dolapo Amusan, who spent the first nights with me, uploading and designing. Though he was amateur in web designing, it stopped nothing. He'd remember that there were dreams deferred we had shared, dreams from secondary school and earlier on in the university. And to see this dream touch tangibility was to be grateful, and committed. He said.

Tosin Afolabi, the newer web designer, who gave us the present template of the site. Takes his time. Always attempts to attempt perfection. Once, in a car wash, he says to me, "I do many things." And I agree.

Ayobami Omobolanle (Famurewa – I prefer this), would become our online editor, showing hesitation at first, and then enthusiastic support. And Biyi Olusolape, with his depth and wisdom, our new Poetry Editor, has been on this from the start.

You say we have not tried to succeed?

We are modern fools. Modern fools use modernity for their foolery. They are ardent, passionate, irrational, duty-bound, beings. They forget the internet is a large space, not a room, not a house; they treat it like their palms. And they say to themselves, "We are making sense." It's a lie. They *made* sense when they became fools.

A fool thinks only about his present. But these fools, these modern fools, think that their present becomes, and *is*, their future; that it does not *lead* necessarily to their future. A real fool, like these Saraban Fools, would never think the future is tomorrow. It's today. Always today.

You say I am playing on words?

I have tried to write a short history. Yet, it appears this is an exposition on foolery. I prefer to expose our foolery. Perhaps (only perhaps) those who think we have a short mile ahead would understand that there are kilometers that call to us. To admit our foolery from the start would be fine, and convenient.

In the event that we fail. In the event that we hang our boots.

We'd only be thought of as modern fools who thought the Internet was their palms.

i.

DREAM MACHINE

EMMANUEL IDUMA

I am a dream machine
Dreaming big
And dreaming small
Or sometimes
None

The dream
Is sometimes wedged
Between frictions
Hot friction
And cold friction

The small machine
Of dreams
Was last tuned
In 1989, has grown
Clumsy with misuse

The big machine
Of dreams
Had been lifted
Across the hazy maze
But too large to move

I am a machine
Of dreams
Let me be
Let me dream

i i .

SEEING DREAMS

EMMANUEL IDUMA

I've seen dreams
on colour planes –

red for that
feeling of blood
that means
failure,

blue for ghosts
on moons saying
no at dark
nights,

white for swans
sailing on
dirty diehard
waters,

green for lands
I cannot see
but claim –

I've seen dreams
on bright planes,
saying
yes.

VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS

For Saraba

IFEH AGBONMIRE

The voice in the wilderness.
Calling for change.
For clothing of words
On dried bones.

The oracle prophesied
Bountiful harvest
Of good writing
Plenty of green leaves.

Trees would be felled,
Ink would bleed,
On the paper-fields
For awing beauty.

Many issues are born
Fathered by varying
Wordsmiths
Am the womb.

I am an online magazine.
The literary Renaissance
Burning aglow
In the minds.

The upcoming and the made
Meet on my docks
With a song
They have answered my call.

ON LOVE

TOBI ASO, MORGAN OLUFEMI

*For the love of Saraba and special persons.
And for St. Valentine's Day.*

SHORTS AND SKIRTS

TOBI ASO

When we met
I wore shorts
And you pinafore
But did it matter?

We walked and talked
We prayed and played
Yet we were teens
And it did not matter.

We shared your cakes
And chewed my flakes
We shared all cheerfully
And it never did matter.

We cared less about wears
But when you switched to skirts
And I was still in shorts
I guess wears began to mat...

SONG TO A LITERARY WOMAN

FEMI MORGAN

I love you, I love you
There's nothing that says it more than me
The flowers on my behalf in whispering be
The winds wild shout, silent as it is.

I love you, I love you
Not the braids that makes your hair long
Or the geography flashing Go che long
For all the rhythm of my veins calls your name
While my heart become happily inflamed

I love you, I love you
THOUGH , love is fast becoming cliché
I am plagued by the migraines of Nietzsche
Without your play of hearts, I am nothing but a pack of mystery cards
In this rumbled paper called life, only you can give me glads.

Let not your silence kill me
Smack me not with your library of books
Not the bookish, Give me the happy looks
Strive to be sexy,
Lie with me, don't be pesky.

Else alone will I prefer,
To chat with loneliness with my face on facebook
Tweeting silently on tweeter
Or yawning on yahoo.



ON VARIOUS

AYODELE MOROCCO-CLARKE, ÜZEYİR LOKMAN ÇAYCI, JONEVE McCORMICK
IFEH AGBONMIRE & ITUNU AKANDE

MOLUE CONDUCTORS' ARGOT

AYODELE MOROCCO-CLARKE

Part I - Boarding the Molue Bus

Maroko! CMS!! Enter with your change O
Abeg make una move inside, the bus never full
Madam, space still dey for inside dia
Aunty, make you move your yansb, dress inside proper
This seat na for four people, I say make you shift for dia

Na which kain wahala be this? Shebi you hear wetin the man talk?
Him say na only half of im yansb fit siddon for the chair wey remain
Madam, I say make you dress inside or you go pay double o
Why you dey take bad eye look me like that?
No be me say make you fat full everywhere?

Driver, I beg never begin to start ya moto yet
Plenty people still dey try to enter the bus
Make una move inside o, this bus fit contain 120 people
Fifty seating, seventy standing, I say dress inside
Mama Ibeji comot your load from dia

Haba, five people still go fit for inside this bus
Sisi, see how you sit come open your legs like Ashewo
I dey sure say if you close your legs,
That man wey thin like stockfish fit manage siddon for ya side
Oga, she don dress small, oya siddon make another person stand for that place

CMS! Maroko!! CMS!!! The bus don almost full
I no get change o, enter with your correct money
Na wah for you madam, you know say you get belle
Na im you carry these two pikins plus this heavy load
The load no fit enter for dia, you go pay Fifty Naira for that load o

Na wetin you talk for my back? Na your Papa you dey curse, no be me, you hear?
Una see me see wahala? Abi na me give you belle?
If you no wan enter, carry your bad luck comot, no come spoil my market today
Oga Driver, bus don full, abeg fire your motor, make we comot from here
[Banging on the side of the bus] *Go on sQun, Maroko! CMS!! CMS!!! Straightttttttttt.*

Part II - Travelling in the Molue Bus

*Make una bring out your money, Forty Forty Naira, No change o
"Bus dey too hot, Everywhere dey too tight" - Why you dey complain?
If you sabi say you get car, why you come dey enter Molue, foolish woman
Aunty, you go pay for that pikin wey you carry put for leg o, no free travel for here
Mister man, I said no change, I have to marry you with that woman
Madam, I don give this Oga Twenty Naira, He go give you your Ten Naira change*

*Oga Pastor, comot make I pass, Na so you go take preaching kill us today
Holy Ghost fire this, Jesus is coming that, You for pray make this our country beta
Na so you people just carry church full everywhere, abi na Naija people kill Jesus?
Mister Teacher shift go back small, this fine Sisi don start to complain
She say you dey chook im backyard with your magic pole, Shame no dey catch you?
Small time you go tell people say you dey show good example to ya student*

*Oga Dokita, how much be that medicine? You sure say e fit cure my jedijedi?
Na so you talk the last time about that medicine wey suppose cure my malaria
No take your papa head swear say na beta medicine, if this medicine no work,
I go collect my money from your hand next time I see you or else you go hear weeen
You this boy wey dey hang for back door, where your money, you think I no see you?
Your money remain Ten Naira, Pay me my money before I show you pepper!*

*Oga Driver CMS o wa o, abeg driver slow ya moto make people comot from here
Driver! I say make you slow down, the woman get belle plus load and pikin o
Mama make you hurry up, abi you want make Yellow Fever catch us for here?
Sisi, abeg jump comot for road jo, you no see say plenty people wan comot for here? Person wey see as you close
leg waka no go gree say na you open leg siddon before
Oga come carry your load if you no wan make driver drive comot with am*

*Maroko! Maroko straight, enter with your Twenty Naira, I no get change o
Oya driver move ya moto, no let that molue overtake you o
Go on sOun! Make una see this foolish woman o
You no go carry your K-leg comot for road before motor jam u?
Abeg driver make im pass, e be like say this one don sign say na today e go die
Carry go! Make we reach Maroko so I fit go chop eba and bokoto for Iya Sikira Buka.*

CEUX QUI DANSENT AU RYTHME DE LEUR PROPRE MUSIQUE

ÜZEYİR LOKMAN ÇAYCI

Ceux qui se nourrissent de viandes...de produits laitiers...de desserts
Ne peuvent t'estimer à ta juste valeur.

Même si la pierre se fendait, tu ne peux pas leur faire ouvrir
Les fenêtres de leur ferme...
Des gens comme toi ne font pas partie de leur centre d'intérêt
Tu n'existes pas...
Dorénavant tu dois savoir
Qu'ils n'ont pas de temps à te consacrer!

Ils ont les yeux fixés toujours vers le haut
Pendant qu'ils s'inclinent
Avec un sourire au dessus de leur double menton
Devant le souverain... le sultan
Crois-tu un seul instant qu'ils te reconnaissent?

Si tu me demandes mon avis à ce sujet
C'est que les bouts de leur ficelle
Sont aux mains d'autrui
Ne te formalise point du fait
Qu'ils se prennent pour des rois!

Avec des espoirs vains
Et des attentes mal placées
N'attends pas d'eux
Qu'ils te considèrent comme un homme...

Même si tu écris des centaines de lettres
Aux hommes des portes fermées
Dans le but de les voir ou de leur parler
Tu ne recevras même pas une seule réponse...
Méfie-toi, sois attentif
Par-dessus tout
Tu leur permettras d'avoir des airs hautains
En se croyant importants
Ils te regarderont avec dédain!

Ils aiment bien se caresser
Le dos les uns des autres...
Il ne reste plus
Qu'à écouter leurs conversations "avec admiration"
A vanter leurs écrits "exagérément"
A récompenser leurs faits "par applaudissement"...

Ne perds pas de temps
Et ne t'occupe pas
En pensant à autres choses.

Translated:

THOSE WHO DANCE TO THE RHYTHM OF THEIR OWN MUSIC

JONEVE McCORMICK

Those who nourish themselves on meats, dairy products and desserts
Cannot estimate you at your fair value.

Even if stone cracked, you cannot make them open
The windows of their farm ...
People like you are not included in their center of interest
You do not exist ...
Hereafter you must know
That they do not have time to bless you!

Their eyes are always fixed from above you
While they bow
With smiles above their double chins
Before the sovereign...the sultan.
Do you think for an instant that they acknowledge you?

If you ask my opinion on this subject
It is because the ends of their twine
Are in the hands of other people.
Don't take exception to the fact
That they are taken for kings!

Do not wait for them
In the wrong places
Vainly hoping
They will consider you a man ...

Even if you write hundreds of letters
To these men of the closed doors
Intending to see or speak to them
You will not receive a single response ...
Be wary and attentive;
Above everything
Allow them their haughty airs.
By thinking themselves important
They will look at you scornfully!

They well like fondling
Each others' backs ...
It is no longer to the point
To listen to their dialogues "with admiration"
To extol their writings "enthusiastically"
To reward their facts "by clapping" ...

Do not waste your time
Or put your attention here ...
Think of other things.

Paris, le 20.06.2007
Paris, 20.06.2007

*Traduit par by Yakup YURT en français
French free verse translated into English free verse
by Joneve McCormick*



BLOODY SABBATH

ITUNU AKANDE

(Even warriors sometimes loose the battle of the inner dialogue)

We were sworn to an holy oath with no known limit
Unwritten, though, we loved it so much
For it left us with bars to break in the game of strength
Where men are weaned with the milk of war

Lari kori saraba
Strange voices from the earth
That bore the mass of our stamping feet

Ours was a fierce race with the goodwill of Sango
The god of lightning and thunder

Nay!
It wasn't that our heart never knew what it meant to love
It was for love that we fought for you- Oh Oya
For your love we bore so much hurt

Oya!
Frenzied in your soprano tone
I can tell the lost story of our history
But they mocked your flaming beauty
And spoke of you in some strange tongues
Men from that side of the sea that paints your ass as black
And a wig as white

Heal us with your kiss dear mother
Tons of blood oozes from our sides
With chants of war brewing for your cause
Our arms shall know no rest till Sabbath is drenched with blood

Without fail each day
Sparing touch to life and chance
We shall stand for the love of our land
For the sake of our race
Keeping faith with the count of time

...and these things shall pass
but one thing shall be
ruins and songs of war.



LOLA SHONEYIN

FIVE POEMS

Reproduced with permission of the Author

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INTERVIEW :

A Flying Method Poet

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BOOK:

For the Love of Flight

Published by Cassava Republic Press

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CANNIBAL

He tells me he wants to eat me,
tear at my tendons, gnaw at my flesh
part muscle, lap up blood,
nibble at the hardened tips,
dribble over the softened bits,
swallow me whole
by hole and pick his teeth
with my small, succulent bones.

Look, I tell him,
I'm not a seasoned chicken breast
or mutton minced to munch on
And anyway, you know
I'm having someone else for luncheon.

He doesn't care.
He parts his lips and licks them
again and again and again.

COLONIES

Not too long ago,
the British kneaded
Africa like dough
then cut it
into misshapen
gingerbread men.

The French rolled it,
long like a baguette,
then sank it
into steaming broth.

The Portuguese forked it,
the Belgians knifed it.

And now the Chinese are here,
chopsticks in tow
chins in their bowls
to swallow it whole
like a sweet, sour ball.

NEXT TIME ROUND

The next time round,
I won't be cut down,
knocked up, circled with silver
or sat on.

Instead, I will spread my branches
in a slow dawn yawn
and lick the dew
from every morning.

OPEN

She is a vagrant poem,
a cautionary tale,
an old story,
an open book.

Her belly opens
and pages fly from it.
Words fall to feet,
letters flood floor,
questions mark steps.

Like Sylvia, she straddles,
and stumbles.
Who will put her back
together again?
Who will bind her
and bring her to a close?

THE CHURCH IN EYA

There is a church in Eya
where there's no Jesus
to burn a hole
through your heart,
or your pocket.

No Jesus to stare you up the aisle,
tut-tutting, shaking his head
when no one is looking.
No one, that is,
but you.

No portrait of pain on the wall,
meekly pleading
eyes rolled up
to the birds thrashing about
the ceiling.

No Jesus to remind you
what a piece of shit you are
for unbuttoning your blouse
or unfastening your zip
or cursing those who weaken you.

In the church in Eya,
the pillars are clean
and the walls are white.
And on the immaculate walls,
there are mirrors.

Nothing fancy,
just mirrors.

And after singing and dancing
with your reflection, you pray.
You kneel quietly at a pew,
and look at yourself
and you search yourself.

A FLYING METHOD POET

DAMILOLA AJAYI catches up with LOLA SHONEYIN, an established Nigerian poet whose new collection *For the Love of Flight* was recently published by Cassava Republic Press.

Being a mother of four and a wife with a full-time job, how do you find time to write at all?

My children are a wonderful distraction, but they have come to understand that when Mum has to write, she has to write. They are very forgiving and I hope they know how much I appreciate their patience. Luckily for them, my husband, Olaokun, is a fantastic father. They prefer to hang out with him anyways, because he's so creative, so random. He buys them clay, he paints with them, and cooks with them. This works well for me because it gives me time to write. Like most writers, I prefer to write at night-time. I give myself deadlines and work towards them. That's all the self-discipline I can handle.

What books are you reading presently?

I am reading *African Psycho* by Alain Mabanckou. He's a Francophone writer, and I keep telling everyone about him. His novel, *Broken Glass*, was one of the funniest I've ever read in my life. I've lent the novel to a few people and we all have private jokes now, jokes relating to incidents in the novel. That's the mark of excellent writing—something has got to stay with you. I now go out of my way to look for Francophone writing in translation because it's so much more exciting. We are much too inhibited in Anglophone Africa.

In a recent interview, you talked about how you started writing poetry by composing naughty limericks in boarding school. Those funny beginnings have morphed into your poetry today.

Can you comment on this transition?

People would feel sorry for me if I was still writing those limericks (actually I still do), but I think it's all down to growth—emotional growth and an increased awareness of the world one lives in. Writing is also therapeutic for me and I learn a lot about myself through my own writing.

Sometimes, I will spend a few days writing a poem. I write a little, leave it, return to it, only to find that I'd been subconsciously expressing my thoughts about something I didn't even know was bothering me. There has been a significant movement as far as the themes I am preoccupied with go.

How has living outside Nigeria affected your writing? How would you compare the world of publishing and your reading audience?

The most important thing living outside Nigeria has done for me is to teach me the value of pursuing high standards. In Nigeria, most publishers seem to print without any editorial contributions, which is a shame because authors are missing out on valuable input at the different stages of writing. As a result, the end product is unsatisfactory, and, in a sense, unsatisfying for the author too.

In the UK, there is a lot of heartache that comes with the publishing world; the desire to be known as an author is not without pain-- from getting an agent, to improving your manuscript, to finding a publisher. In the end, one cannot but feel a great sense of achievement, and of course relief, having been through the rigour of writing and rewriting. I am however pleased that all my writing has been published in Nigeria first. Nigerians are my primary audience.

*Your first collection is titled *So All This Time I Was Sitting on an Egg*, the second, *Song of a Riverbird*, and now the third is called *For the Love of Flight*.*

What is your obsession with birds?

Yes, I do have a thing for birds. If I had to return to this horrible world, at least let me come back as a bird, preferably an owl. I love owls. When I look up at the sky and see birds, I always feel a tinge of jealousy. The idea of freedom is very important to me, if not in speech, then at least in thought. Birds enjoy freedom in the way humans can't. I wish I were a bird; I try to live my life as free as one.

From your publications, one can almost conclude that poetry is the art form with which you are most at ease. Do you see yourself primarily as a poet?

Well, you'll have to read my novel first to see if you still feel this way. Without a doubt, I enjoy the extra challenge of having to be economical with words that poetry poses. When I'm writing a poem, my mind works differently, it's an involved, deeply personal process. I should add that don't find writing poetry as easy as it was when my first collection came out twelve years ago. My focus now is on *how* I express a thought rather than just the thought itself. Having said this, I love writing fiction. It's like working with a massive canvas.

So all this time I was sitting on an egg, your first collection, was largely autobiographical. In For the Love of Flight, the clarity and evocation of poems such as "For Kiitan" leave no doubt in a reader's mind that you were writing about your life. My question is: how much of your personal life would you be willing to reveal as the price for literary ingenuity?

I'm glad you used the word 'largely' because I like to step into other people's shoes and become them, be a method poet, if you like. For this reason, I love the writing in the first person narrative voice. It works well for me but don't be fooled into thinking the poet persona is always me, Lola. This is not the case.

Conversely, because of the introspective process that I go through when I am writing poetry, it is difficult not to reveal things which are personal to me. My feeling is that writing about *my* process of healing, awakening, or redemption will help people in similar situations. Sometimes, when you are going through something painful or inconvenient, there is comfort in knowing that someone else has seen what your eyes are seeing. Yes, some of my poems are personal and this irks my husband who is a very private person. He was telling me a few days ago that he'd decided to live with my work because the alternative was to stifle my creativity, something he wouldn't dream of doing. I am a very lucky woman.

You have a novel, The Secret Lives of Baba Segi Wives, coming out soon. Can you educate us on the challenges of juggling between art forms, because I am well aware that there is a difference between doing fiction and poetry?

The only difference for me is that fiction captures the other extreme in my character – the chatty, gregarious, humorous side. It is very difficult for me to flit between the two forms. I find I can write prose on demand, force myself into the required frame of mind. With poetry, I have to be inspired.

You are a Fellow of The Iowa International Writing Program, what we refer to in Saraba as the "Mecca of writers", how did the creative writing programme influence your writing?

I had good fun. I put on about a stone because there was so much amazing food there. I met some great writers and I am still in touch with some of them. I was the only African there that year so it was quite special. It's not an experience you can ever forget.

What are your impressions about the Nigerian literary scene, the rise of some publishing houses to fill the vacuum created in the military era, noteworthy among which are Cassava Republic, Farafina and Dada books etc.

Cassava Republic Press is publishing my novel and I feel very lucky. They approached me and asked to see my manuscript. They read it, we met and the rest is history. Bibi Bakare-Yusuf, my editor, is an amazing editor. Apart from the energy that she exudes, she is also intuitive and very smart. We work very well together. She is not only interested in profit, she is interested in books themselves, and more importantly, the writers of the books. Farafina publishes Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Sefi Atta. I hear they are also going to publish Maik Nwosu. This is wonderful news as it shows that they are focusing on giving the new generation of writers the exposure they deserve.

I want to believe that every body of work is borne out of questions and the need to answer these questions or be it as it may, ask new ones? What were the questions that inspired your upcoming collection, For the Love of Flight?

What is the significance of love and how is it manifested in our lives? What is the place of religion in our every day existence? Why are Nigerian rulers bent on eroding the integrity of the entire population?

Has your style of poetry been influenced by an earlier poet(s) and if yes, who and how?

When I first started writing, I loved reading Maya Angelou, Mabel Segun, Alice Walker and Ntosage Shange. Maya Angelou, I believe, writes popular, accessible poetry. I liked this quality in her work. I love the way she uses words provocatively, the girl power. I much enjoyed *Once*, a little known collection of poems by Alice Walker. I think she wrote it when she was about 23, after visiting Africa for the first time. It remains one of my favourite book of poems ever. I liked the 'noise' in Shange's work, her complete disregard for rules. These days, I read Phillip Levine, Anne Sexton, Sylvia Plath. I also have Nigerian poets that I love like Odia Ofeimun, Remi Raji, Tade Ipadeola, Niran Okewole, Chiedu Ezeanah, and there's a wonderful young poet called Richard Ali.

Is there any place for literary magazines in the writing and publication process?

I certainly hope so. Even in developed countries, these publications can only exist because they are supported by universities and government endowments. In a place like Nigeria where, year on year, the government has systematically destroyed the educational system, you can't help but ask who would

read such publications when most people can't read at all, or would rather read tabloids. This is what our rulers have done to us; it will be decades before we can regain all the lost ground.

There is a section in your new collection that examines known government officials. What do you really think of the current leadership in Nigeria?

A sham! A disgrace! A farce! A bunch of ignoramuses who have lost all sense of what it means to serve their country! They are there to serve themselves and their families, at all costs. There must be consequences for this kind of behaviour.

Do you see yourself becoming a full-time writer, and how soon?

I really don't know. When the time is right, I'll know. I don't think it's something you plan. For someone like me, there are all sorts of financial implications. I'm not quite at that stage yet.

What do you set to achieve with your writings?

I hope that I give people pleasure. I hope I can make people laugh. I hope I can make it hard for certain people to live with themselves. I hope I can bring peace to the hearts of those who deserve it. I hope I can speak for those who have lost their voices.

Do you have any advice for budding writers?

Live hard, read hard, write hard.

And finally, a question that has evoked very diverse answers, why do you write?

I derive immense pleasure from it and like I have said before, it beats ironing and all other domestic endeavours.

A STREETCAR NAMED SUCCESS

EXCERPTS FROM INTRODUCTION TO "A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE"
BY TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

No, my experience was not exceptional, but neither was it quite ordinary, and if you are willing to accept the somewhat eclectic proposition that I had not been writing with such an experience in mind – and many people are not willing to believe that a playwright is interested in anything but popular success – there may be some point in comparing the two estates.

One does not escape...easily from the seductions of an effete way of life. You cannot arbitrarily say to yourself, I will now continue my life as it was before this thing. Success happened to me. But once you fully apprehend the vacuity of a life without struggle you are equipped with the basic means of salvation. Once you know this is true, that the heart of man, his body and his brain, are forged in a white-hot furnace for the purpose of conflict...and that with the conflict removed, the man is a sword cutting daisies, that not privation but luxury is the wolf at the door and that the fangs of this

wolf are all the little vanities and conceits and laxities that Success is heir to – why, then with this knowledge you are at least in a position of knowing where danger lies.

You know, then, that the public Somebody you are when you "have a name" is a fiction created with mirrors and that the only somebody worth being is the solitary and unseen you that existed from your first breath and which is the sum of your actions and is constantly becoming under your own volition—and knowing these things, you can survive the catastrophe of Success!

Wilbur Saroyan wrote a great play on this theme, that purity of heart is the one success worth having. "In the time of your life—live!" That time is short and it doesn't return again. It is slipping away while I write this and while you read it, and the monosyllable of the clock is Loss, Loss, Loss, unless you decide your heart to its opposition.

Copyright, 1947, The New York Times
The full essay appeared in *The New York Times* Drama Section
November 30, 1947—four days before the
New York opening of
A Streetcar Named Desire
&
As an Introduction to *A Streetcar Named Desire*
Published by Signet, 1947 & 1974

3 BOOKS YOU' LL LOVE & WHY

I DO NOT COME TO YOU BY CHANCE (By Adaobi Nwaubani)

TOLU OGUNLESI

A witty exploration of that world-famous ‘industry’ that produces all those letters that bombard our boxes day in day out, promising millions of dollars in exchange for modest “facilitation” fees. Set in eastern Nigeria, featuring as protagonists Kingsley (“Kings”), a brilliant University

graduate frustrated by failed attempts at getting a job, and Boniface (“Cash Daddy”), his equally brilliant (in street-wisdom terms) but relatively unlearned Uncle who’s become a 419 kingpin, and earned himself a fortune. The lives of both men overlap with increasing intensity, until tragedy strikes (I won't spoil the surprise by saying more!).

This is a novel about dashed hopes, deceit, tough decisions and the arrogant power of ill-gotten wealth. *I Do Not Come to You By Chance* is one of the funniest novels of 2009, and Boniface the undisputed Fictional Man of the Year!

THE BETTER MAN (BY Anita Nair)

UCHE PETER UMEZ

Is as enigmatic as the Indian rustic life it attempts to depict through its tapestry of colours, cuisine, conflicts, and characters, all imbued with a rich folkloric charm that both haunts and entrances. The major protagonist, Mukundan, a retired public servant, more trapped in resolving his past than confronting his present, leads a throng of characters as rattling as our fears. Nair knows how to meld pathos with comedy, fact

and fantasy, to offer the reader a fluid, almost musical, narrative in which they can draw sips of insight and delight.

TESTIMONY (By Anita Shreve)

AYODELE MOROCCO-CLARKE

Testimony is a compelling book by Anita Shreve which explores the consequences of a sex orgy carried out and videoed within the confines of an upper-class boarding school. The unearthing of the video

unleashes a catastrophic chain of events which destroys the lives of several people – many of whom were not participants in the orgy. Through the characters, the story reinforces strongly that actions do have consequences (some of which could be tragic). I was enthralled by the multi-faceted angles and narrative style Shreve employed in telling this story. Alternating between first, second and third person narratives works beautifully.

ALL THE CONTRIBUTORS

Here is an alphabetical list of all contributors Saraba's had since February 2009; a homage of sorts, and then a call to duty.

ABUBAKAR ADAM IBRAHIM	ITUNU AKANDE
ADEBIYI OLUSOLAPE	JONEVE McCORMICK
ADEMOLA SAMSON	JUDE DIBIA
AKEEM AKINNIYI	KOLA TUBOSUN
ARTHUR ANYADUBA	KOLE ADE ODUTOLA
AWI OLUWAFISAYO	MORGAN OLUFEMI
AYO ADEMILUYI	NIRAN OKEWOLE
AYOADE ADEOYE	NUMERO UNOMA
AYOBAMI ADEBAYO	OKECHUKWU NWAFOR
AYODELE MOROCCO-CLARKE	OKOME OBUKOHURO RICHARD
BENJAMIN UBIRI	OLAOLUWA AKINLOLUWA
BOLA AKINLOYE	OLUFUNSO ORIMILOYE
CHIAKA OBASI	ORIMOLADE TOSIN
CONSTANT-NGOZI OZURUMBA	OSASONA MOFEHINTOLU
DAMILOLA AJAYI	PATRICK EBI AMANAMA
DZEKASHU MACVIBAN	PAUL ONANUGA
EDOZIE UKA	PELU AWOFESO
EGHOSA IMASUEN	QUDUS ONIKEKU
ELNATHAN JOHN	SYLVA NZE IFEDIGBO
EMMANUEL IDUMA	TEMITAYO OLOFINLUA
EMMANUEL SIGAUKE	TOBI ASO
HILARY FRANK-ITO	TOLU OGUNLESI
IBUKUN BABARINDE	UCHE PETER UMEZ
IFEH AGBONMIRE	ÜZEYIR LOKMAN ÇAYCI
ISOJE IYI-EWEKA CHOU	WALE DUBOBO
	WIRNDZEREM G. BARFEE
	YAZEED KAMALDIEN

ALL THE ISSUES

ALL AVAILABLE ON WWW.SARABAMAG.COM

February 2009: Family Issue. Guest-edited by Jumoke Verrisimo
A Re-Issue published in September 2009.

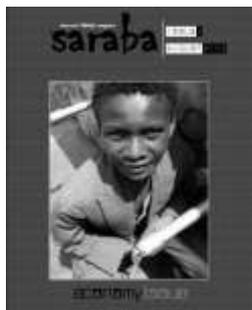
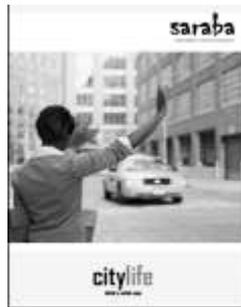
April 2009: City Life.

July 2009: The Economy of Sound: Saraba's First Poetry Chapbook. Introduction by Tade Ipadeola

August 2009: Economy Issue

November 2009: Of Rhythm and Reason: Poetry Chapbook. Introduction by Niran Okewole

December 2009: The Story Issue



THREE GOODWILLS

TOBI ADEBOWALE

Ile-Ife, Nigeria

If there is a sentence that Saraba Magazine constantly reminds me of, it's that of former British Prime Minister that "every good thing that has been done, has been done by the youths." Saraba Magazine has come to fill the gorge that has hitherto been swallowing optimism and opportunities, and in its place, erected a lasting institution that will awaken the literary giants in this generation. A thousand kudos to such youthful, dynamic and cerebral publishers! From the first edition, it was evident that a lasting dream had been borne and from them on Saraba Magazine has not only grown in scope and influence but also in content. Saraba has nurtured many more literary dreams, planting the seeds of zeal and irrigating dry paths with its blossoming fountain...Such dreams that birth many more dreams never die but are perpetually sustained. It's a conviction!

NWILO BURA-BARI V

Port Harcourt, Nigeria

I was really glad to be introduced to the online literary magazine *Saraba*. I knew a time had come for a revolution in the literary community of Nigeria. They have not fallen below my expectations and I am sure they shall exceed the big project of getting Nigerians reading.

AKIN AJAYI

www.guardian.co.uk

The success of websites such as...*Saraba* underscore the depth of talent on offer. By bypassing economic and geographic restrictions, they help to promote an enthusiasm for storytelling and for narratives firmly rooted in the present.



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- *Facebook* group with over **500** members

You can advertise on the website (with links and summary of services), in the electronic magazine or in the chapbooks. See rates on the current issue of the magazine (Issue 4) or Contact Publishers.

ISSUE 4 ERRATA

In our last issue, we made the underlisted mistakes. Our sincere apology to affected contributors.

The use of the pronoun 'he' for AYODELE MOROCCO-CLARKE in the Contributors' page was erroneous. It should read 'she.'

NZE IFEDIGBO SYLVA should read SYLVA NZE IFEDIGBO. His short story should be titled *Death on Gimbiya Street* not *Death on Gimbaya Street* as was published.

Please download a newer version of the Issue with Bookmarks.



PLANS FOR THE YEAR

March 2010

THE (NIGER) DELTA ISSUE: Submissions for this issue have closed. This Issue would publish the best of short stories, poetry, creative non-fiction and creative journalism on the Niger Delta. Plans include publishing already published works that explore the theme in a refreshing and incisive manner. Release date: **March 20, 2010**

April 2010

POETRY CHAPBOOK: Eighteen Poems by Three Poets (Adebiyi Olusolape, Damilola Ajayi and Emmanuel Iduma). This is in line with the decision of the Publishers to begin the publishing of a wide range of works by individual writers.

June 2010

THE GOD (RELIGION) ISSUE: What we seek to highlight is beyond the exotic opportunity to write about religious fanaticism. We seek works that would *question*. For example, why would a mother kill her child in the name of God? How easily vulnerable are people to religion and its pretences? These questions are questions. We do not seek to answer them. We might not give reasons for people blowing themselves up. It is inappropriately ambitious to think so. But in the end, we hope the success of this issue would be in our ability to present these questions in truth. It is important to add that a balance is sought in the exploration of this theme; how there exists the possibility of equity shining through in the face of apathy and destruction. Deadline: **April 30, 2010**. Release Date: **June 20, 2010**

August 2010

POETRY CHAPBOOK: Eighteen Poems by Three Poets. The poets would have similarity of style or age. The poets are yet to be decided. If interested, contact us first before sending in your work.

September 2010

THE TECH (TECHNOLOGY) ISSUE: How the computer, for example, has defined our lives. A sort of modern destiny. As Iduma asks, "Could we say it's a multifaceted being, the kind of being that receives rousing ovation in both heaven and hell, loved by God and Satan alike?" Whatever we choose to publish, it would explore the genius called technology, in all its ramifications, implications and complications. You might wish to add perplexities. Deadline: **July 31, 2010**. Release Date: **September 20, 2010**

November 2010

POETRY CHAPBOOK: This would be our only general chapbook for the year. Particularly we would collect poems that are 'nationalistic' in perspective. A small toast to Nigeria's Golden Jubilee celebration. Basically, this Chapbook would be a montage of sorts, and would include a wide range of poems by emerging and 'emerged' writers on the Nigerian theme. Please notify us of your interest. Do not send your works without obtaining prior consent to do so.

December 2010

THE STORY ISSUE: We are making it a tradition to publish short fiction and memoirs as the major content of an issue once every year. For 2010, there'd be no exception. The open secret is that, as last year, we submit published short stories for the Caine Prize for African Writing. Deadline: **October 31, 2010**. Release Date: **December 20, 2010**

Credits

All Contributors have been previously published on *Saraba*, except **ÜZEYİR LOKMAN ÇAYCI** and **JONEVE McCORMICK**. See Back Issues and Chapbooks for complete bios.

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ÜZEYİR LOKMAN ÇAYCI, born in 1949 in Bor, Turkey, is a poet, artist, and writer with a degree in architecture and industrial design from The Fine Arts Academy in Istanbul. He has been drawing, painting and writing since childhood and has received many awards for his work, most recently from Radio NPS of Holland and Les Amis de Thalie in France. Both his Poetry and Art are featured on many elegant websites. Uzeyir lives and works in Paris.

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Interested contributors can visit the website for submission guidelines for the online magazine and chapbooks.

The views expressed by contributors are those of the authors and not necessarily those of *Saraba Electronic Magazine*.

This sub-issue is published on A4.

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CSR

Becky Barnicoat
There's No One
Thank You
Pig Date
Megan's Card

Vladstudio.com:
Special Valentine Gift

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

It's a shame and a sham to lose experiments. You could say that this is an experiment, black and white and lines, and a slight shade of blue. But on the larger, more intricate, scale, it is an experiment to see how much success we can make from failure, and how much introspection we can make from goodwill. This job—without pay—has taught us to believe in creation, and to look upon our creation with wonder, awe and intensity. That is, if this is still our creation. You discover that it has become the *creation* of a larger audience, even French poets, and that it has become a Juliet being loved by seasoned 'diasporan' poets, amongst others. How we pray that it would never become unloved!

And so, now that you have read and glimpsed, do not lose experiments. Affirm, alongside us, that the best is yet to come, and that our journey has *not* begun.

Happy first anniversary, Saraba; whoever you are.

E. I. & D. A.

February 2010