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FRIENDSHIP



TOP 20 POEMS OF THE BPPC FEBRUARY/MARCH 2020

BRIGITTE POIRSON | KUKOGHO I. SAMSON (eds)

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FRIENDSHIP

TOP 20 POEMS OF THE
BRIGITTE POIRSON POETRY CONTEST (BPPC)
FEBRUARY/MARCH 2020

Edited by
BRIGITTE POIRSON
KUKOGHO IRUESIRI SAMSON



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INTRODUCTION

Although fifteen poems were directly disqualified for not meeting the requirements, the February /March contest brought a wide swath of moving and well-crafted poems that shed various lights on the multifaceted aspects of friendship.

Do read these 20 winning poems. They will take you to the discovery of self-worth, the celebration of the joy of having a true, faithful friend, more ambiguous forms of friendship, the inevitable griefs caused by betrayal, displayed in many shades or definitions of what friendship means. The only risk, if you take a plunge into the poets' lines, is that you may discover what you should not miss in life: good poetry and friends.

Brigitte Poirson
March 2020

FEBRUARY/MARCH WINNERS

IBE OBASIOTA BEN is a Nigerian. She is a graduate in English and Literary Studies of the University of Calabar. She has won the African Writers' Award 2018 (Flash fiction category). She is also a gender critic and sometimes an editor.



OLADIMEDI ADAM ADEDAYO is a Nigerian writer from Okuku, Osun State. He was shortlisted for Ken Egbas Poetry Prize in 2018 and Albert Jungers Poetry Prize (AJPP) in 2019.



OGEDENGBE TOLULOPE IMPACT is a Nigerian poet and chemical engineer. Tolulope's works have been published in *Duane Poetree*, *Pangolin Review*, *Words Rhymes & Rhythms*, *Parousia Magazine*, *Subsaharan Magazine* and elsewhere. His poem was shortlisted for the 7th Korea-Nigeria Poetry Feast, 2017. He is currently a postgraduate student of petroleum engineering.



FOR WHAT ARE SELF- BORNE SCARS?

IBE OBASIOTA BEN, 1ST PRIZE WINNER

In the eye of a twilight,
A girl is erased from a suicide note.
This is how another girl
Catches her breath between her palms
And makes it into an elixir.

There is a scar on her body that stretches into mine.
There are parts of her that live inside me,
And there are memories of us
That rankshift into resilience,
On days when home is a wave
Pushing us in and out of our bodies,
When grief is yet another paradox,
When there are apertures in our souls.

We meet often on days like these
Because parts of us need exorcism,
Because we too need soothing voices
To help us exfoliate.

Many times I have uncoupled my body
To keep census of the parts that are not mine.
I have drowned myself,
Yet reappeared in the amniotic waters of another's mouth.
Whole.

Bodies are things that can be transfused for a healing.

WHEN SAGES PREACH

OLADIMEJI ADAM ADEDAYO, 2ND PRIZE WINNER

Heed! When, through stenchy vents, sages preach, from empathy
For early kinsmen who have purely fallen victims of betrayal,
That "the price of friendship is largely paid by the defrayal
Through the fortune of one to the other hanger-on of a 2nd party."

Heed! When, through stenchy vents, sages preach from wisdom
That "When, like a glutton's belly, thy pocket brims with luck,
All around thy backyard, in treacherous ambushade, foes lurk,
While sly frenemies leech thee within like a starving tapeworm."

Heed! When, through stenchy vents, sages preach from experience
That "When, like pilgrims do the Kaaba, friends spiral thy orbit;
Do not be gulled by their guileful gregariousness of a gambit,
For they have zeroed in on thee because of thy open opulence."

Heed! When, through stenchy vents, sages preach from insight
That "That comrade of thine remains unworthy of thy trust,
Until his fraternization validates the rectitude of its thrust"
At the meekest suggestion of trouble, not to mention its sight.

Heed! When, through stenchy vents, sages preach from momentums
Of early instances of hearty ligatures of cordiality
That "Friendship rarely comes at a price of keen loyalty,
Friendship seldom fails to melt at the face of conundrums."

So when sages gnash you a kolanut, let thy fists clench!
But when, through stenchy vents, sages preach
That "Like a housefly, perch not heavily on friendship's bough",
Take to their words like an Ijebu man takes to his dear dough.

THE TRUE MEANING OF AMITY

OGEDENGBE TOLUPE IMPACT, 3RD PRIZE WINNER

Friends are fine figures of humane humans,
Of beautiful beings and pretty partisans.
At will, they offer helping hands
To save souls on shores of sinking sands.

Friends are butterflies-the eyes of compassion
Spilling sparkles of sympathy with genuine intention.
With zeal, they sow seeds of commitments
And give gifts of time and meaningful moments.

True friends do not act in pretence
Or wear tongues of pretentious prudence.
They speak worthy words with graceful smile,
And provide supporting shoulders with no guile.

Shouldn't we form firm alliance beyond borders,
Crossing paths of peaceful pact in endless wonders
And become proud partners and friendly family
Who hold hearty hands even in terrific tragedy?

As humans, let us find the treasure of pure partnership
In the depths of friendship and mutual relationship,
That the world may know the true meaning of amity
And heed the clarion call to selfless humanity.

IF

IZUCHUKWU SAVIOUR OTUBELU

If I had eyes at the back of my head,
I'd walk through forests without turning back
If I could cuddle myself alone in bed,
I'd sleep all through a lifetime like an amnesiac!

If I could grow a garden with a single rose,
You'll find rose gardens wherever you look
If I could spend all day watching water flows,
I wouldn't go searching for answers in an empty book!

If I could just walk in without turning the doorknob,
I'd be in five different places all at a time
If I could whisper consolations to myself each time I sob,
I wouldn't be sitting here writing this endless rhyme!

If my eyes could see through the darkness of daytime,
I wouldn't be lying here on these blocks of stone
If there were no hilltops left for me to climb,
I wouldn't be needing a friend to call my own!

If just one person can make up the world,
The world would be a beautiful place with just you
If we can dream dreams and watch our dreams unfurl,
Then maybe the sky would be any colour but blue!

If we both swim from the boat towards the shores,
We will get to the finish line before noon
If you climb my shoulders and I climb yours,
We can reach out our hands- and touch the moon!

FRIENDSHIP, LIKE THIS

JAMES TAIWO ABEL ADESITIMI

Friendship like this is hard to find:
Unrelated hearts now are like a snail and its shell.
They walk together happily hand in hand:
Friendship like this is hard to find!

Ajala's sweat often accelerates the speed
Of Okonkwo's vehicle of successes so well
His fishes of fortune thrived in Okonkwo's pond,
When a fox's river denied them a haven where to dwell.

Friendship like this is hard to find:
Unrelated hearts now are like a snail and its shell!
Both are balms to each other's life's unavoidable wound:
Friendship like this is hard to find!

They are to one another as raincoats in the rain.
Never do they for once opt for a betrayal's warmth
But only strive in concord to stab 'collective' pain,
As they journey on the world's progressive path.

Friendship like this is hard to find:
Unrelated hearts are now walking together as one
And the glory of their unison shines bright like the sun:
Friendship like this is hard to find!

TWO DISTANT FRIENDS

DEBASISH MISHRA

The moon is stale—
Sure signs of sleeplessness—
And the stars smoulder,
Casting their dull spears
Like refracted lines of memory.

I carry pigments of the raw earth
Behind my soiled fingernails,
Which I have probably amassed
During the dogged digging
Of the coffin for my love.

The moon and I,
We both are the same:
Two monosyllabic witnesses,
Two distant friends.

The moon flaunts
My sordid fingernails
And I become stale
As the night progresses.

We are two fused into one,
A coin perhaps, a page.
I melt with the moon
And dissolve in the lurid darkness
At the crack of dawn.

Sometimes, light is darkness
And darkness is light!
I will probably return
When the moon comes back
As the creamy relic of my lost love.

CLOVEN HEARTS WITH A DEEP RED

OSADOLOR WILLIAMS OSAYANDE

Thrust your relics of trust into my soul's open throat.
Two of us, we've been waiting on uncertain certainty's might
Like light searching for warmth and warmth searching for light.

And didn't the dear spirits knead our needs on our hearts,
When our naked eyes locked, our unsheathed hearts collided,
When we knew for sure that friendship is arrogance chided?

We humbled our inner chains and held our hands tightly
With such intensity that two people became the sun's world
Wearing the bight of joy, serrated with jaunty pain, unfurled.

There's testosterone in the mountains murmuring our names.
Genuine oestrogen in the clouds our budding red to unmake.
Sanballat would legitimize their lust our intimacy to shake.

Thunders with pheromones dense as the essence of foetuses
Have found their way to the loins of heavily, hirsute lightning.
Tobiah would wed them too with an ocean of palm-wine and gin.

But if we bravely brand our names in the hold of our hands,
Become friends traipsed into brothers traipsed into oneness,
No born or unborn evil would steal the red of our sweetness.

BEST-TEA FOREVER

AKINRINADE FUNMINIYI ISAAC

Oh, black bird! Bring back momentous moments
Of glee and spree laid in the nest of past!
Oh, black bird! Bring back momentous moments
Of the walks, talks, and blast before the blast!

Every night, I listen to the voice of the black bird.
It reminds me of your melodious voice.
Every night, I carry your thoughts to bed.
Your early demise leaves me with no choice.

I search for you in every wind I see.
I wish the whirlwind could gather your remains
And reshape you from your dispersed debris.
I yearn to (be)hold your beauteous body again.

I miss the day we built bridges with wet sand.
I miss the day we bathed in the rain.
I miss the day we walked miles holding hands.
I miss the day we parted not to see again.

You are the best thing God briefly gave me.
You are the best tea I sipped to calm my cold spine.
I raise a glass to the air in sad glee
In memory of you intertwined with mine.

Oh, black bird! Bring back momentous moments
Of glee and spree laid in the nest of past!
Oh, black bird! Bring back momentous moments
Of the walks, talks, and blast before the blast!

YOU AND ME

TOWOJU, VICTOR OLUSHOLA

In lowering lights and dying luminance,
when darkness enters and fills your eyes,
I'll hold your hands and pull you close,
walk with you till the sun comes by your side.

When you've walked a thousand miles
and your feet can't hold your body any more,
when your soul is tired and weary,
I'll be your strength, I'll carry you home.

When I'm lost and far from home
and sadness and tears fill your place in my heart,
when happiness is a sky away from my ground,
I know I'll be your prayers. I'll be your wish.

As long as it's you and I, it's enough.
For oceans are nought but a spray of nothingness
and mountains are nought but stones,
but you and I are everything that should be everything.

WHO CAN FIND A TRUE FRIEND

AKOR AGADA NATHANIEL

Broken beings are bound to blend
When they find God in a friend
On whom their weak world will completely depend.

Please, pal, ask the pious reverend
Whose running thoughts I cannot apprehend,
Like the tiger tearing through that last bend:

Who can find a true friend,
A hand that is quick to lend
When the wise finds it foolish to spend?

Who can find the true friend,
An advanced book too easy to comprehend
Whose pressured pages lack the propensity to pretend?

Who can find a true friend,
A ladder for lowly lives to ascend
And a staircase for stranded souls to descend?

Who can find that true friend
Whose love lingers like an evolving trend,
Holding forth for you till the very end?

Who can find a true friend,
A soul moistened to make amends,
And a head with no heart to offend?

Who can find a true friend,
A priceless treasure for you to defend
Even if countless cows you have to tend?

Who can find this true friend,
A beacon with which no darkness can contend,
Whose enduring light eclipses that of a legend?

BEAUTY IN AGREEMENT

OBIAHU CHINWENDU FAVOUR

Why sing the songs of war when friendship is peaceful?
Why can't we live together because it will be too colourful?
Nothing is more beautiful than a gathering of agreement.
Nothing is more colourful than a dance of arrangement.

As functional as the parts of the body working together,
The human race should be united under the same weather.
With friendship, we can defeat enemies everywhere.
With friendship, we conquer even the greatest anywhere.

War dance is only the dance for the brave,
But its dance steps is a step closer to the grave.
If the stars and moon dance together in the sky,
Then the diverse range of humans should unify.

Can't I just bury the hurts by my brother inside my mind
Or allow it to be washed to a far-away land by the wind?
I wish to wake up someday to a warless world,
A world filled with humans in a happy mood.

I want to hear the song of love at the end.
I want more hymns of friendship to be heard.
Then the chants of war shall cease to exist.
Then all shall be nothing but humanist.

WHAT DO YOU CALL FRIENDSHIP?

OYEDOKUN IBUKUN PENAWD

Is it the joyful mood you assume
Just by the jolly jokes you consume?
Is it the gist you can't wait to execute
When gossip is actually the pursuit?

Is it the eternity you spend in a room
While leaving the truth in a gloom?
Is it the resolute secret you do input
Only for you to unveil by slight dispute?

Is it the benefit you always subsume
And likewise rebuke when not absolute?
Is it the rose you no longer want to bloom
Because the bed of roses is not acute?

WHAT DO YOU CALL FRIENDSHIP?

Is it the advice on the road to success,
Only for the glory to wear you a distress?
Or the way you derive joy and fulfillment
In your intimate friend's achievement?

Is it how you beat your chest for oneness,
Only for you to be a Bolt during torment?
Or the way you challenge his existence
Without leaving living words of augment?

Is it the pampered deceit of destructiveness
Or the truthful correction done in redress?
Is it the friendSHIP sinking during detriment
Or the one sailing on eternal engagement?

LETTERS FROM CHILDHOOD

UKPANYANG KINGSLEY AYI

Every now and then,
Thoughts arrive like letters from childhood;
Sheets of nostalgia unfold,
Taking me back to hear again
Whispers of footprints seeded in sand
Where we played at the beach as kids.
Waves of laughter rose recklessly
When the envious tide, idle with motion,
Flushed our castles and blended it
To grains of nothing and sand.

I hear creaks of bicycle wheels
As we dashed down the streets,
Racing for the courtyard;
Our eyes engilded with thrill, till
You bruised your elbow in a fall.

We have since hung our boots of childhood
Retiring to adulthood;
But life never quits her jabs,
Spewing up tides and bruising our fun.
Childhood still sends me letters
Of the adventures we shared though.

I marvel yet that in losing toys and castles,
You remain my friend and I am yours, sincerely.

THE SHIP

SALOME OSASENAGA ENOFE

A ship that sails in all clime,
Ever existing since the beginning of time,
Never asking from you a single dime,
But making you its ultimate prime.

A ship that journeys you through chapters,
Even through the path of fighters,
But along the way there is laughter
And things eventually become brighter.

A ship that unveils the good and bad,
The moments that are glad
And the ones that are sad,
Even those that are mad.

A ship that ushers in memories
That you won't forget in a hurry
And makes you forget your worries,
Even all your enemies.

A ship that grows as part of us,
Which sometimes causes a fuss
Even in public places like a bus.
But alongside there is a plus.

A ship that is part of life.
It can even find you a wife.
With pain it never is rife.
The genuine ones never attain it by strife.

A ship for one, a ship for all.
A ship that gives everyone a call.
The greatest ship of all: FRIENDSHIP

I CALL THEM FRIENDS

UDEOBA EBUBECHUKWU IFENNA

The only sound heard in my street
is clashing steel, and I am the battle,
a war among 'friends'
who soak friendship like dirty clothes
in bitterness,
friends who are all but friends.

To Tim, my love,
Thanks for teaching me
to not truly love a boy
if I'm not stronger than him.

Thanks Jim, for showing me
how to release fear from my body
with pieces of broken glass.

And thanks Fred, for lessons
on how to defy gravity
with a rope.

Life punched me again,
using them as boxing gloves.
With a face like honey to bees
and a body boys salute,
I have been 'loved' at first sight.
I called them friends only because
it made them postpone my death.

MOUNT ARARAT

WISDOM NEMI OTIKOR

We will gather together again
as waves coming to rest at shore.
We will meet at the dusk of our years
when life's tides bid us such pleasure.

Maybe we'll count each victory
as kids picking seashells from a shoreline,
confess our fallings
and swear we no longer feel the pain;

Maybe we'll offer ourselves
to some purgation-
they say tears are God's reminder
that we are more water-

or swell with laughter
till our brittle bodies become
like bubbles learning to hold air
long enough to exist, long enough to be.

We will gather together again-
bodies frail, souls searching.
Maybe over a bottle of wine
and things our children do not know.

We will pour regret as God poured rain
and find rest as Noah found Mount Ararat,
Like this alliance fighting storms
and returning, always, an olive branch.

THE BLOKE IN THE MIRROR.

AYOBAMI KAYODE TIJANI AHMAD

Moons ago, I enjoyed companies.
I stayed in fields with them.
We fed pigeons, threw cookies and left the crumbs
For unknown silhouettes.

The last moon of those moons,
I heard them say my cookies were poorly made.
Just like my face
that housed a convocation of burnt acnes.

I left the companies that gave me egg
And went on to hatch it prematurely.
I used to see them as an iroko tree
Worthy of having my spineless figure.

I had been blind for so long...
This moon, heaven made me discover a company
Right in my room.

I got a companion who shows me my cookies.
He shows me the amount of acne my face has been housing.
He shows me more than enough.

Some people may call you a pain in the throat,
A latrine for Flies.
But the bloke in the mirror says I'm just unique
If I look him straight in the eye.

CURSED GEM

OLALEYE GIFT EMMANUEL

I found for me a friend,
And hoped I found me joy,
But what he did intend,
Was hidden in his ploy.

I felt his love and care,
And those pretended trust,
I thought this gem was rare,
I never knew it cursed.

A tool who came to spy,
To bring unto me woe,
A setup and a wile,
Who stung more than a foe.

He stripped me to my pants,
And clipped my only wings,
He left my soul with chants
Of sorrow on sad strings.

This friend is a hot coal,
I wished he was unborn,
He was the very mole,
That made my Love forlorn.

He stole my pretty wife
And set her for his friend,
He stole my lovely life,
And brought it to an end.

BUZZCUT SEASON

ODOZIAKU BLESSING OKEOGHENE

Five friends used to be eight
Until three went away.
The crowded sidewalk
And the boisterous sidetalk
Became empty chatter.

Three friends used to be five
Until the tree of life sprung forth.
Its branches henceforth spread them apart.
The crowded sidewalk became too wide,
Empty chatter now hushed whispers.

And three became two,
When one was claimed by the pale rider.
Grief hung like a cloud.
Hushed whispers were silence.
And they had never quite heard a silence so loud,
The hollow space in the sidewalk a haunting reminder,
And their mellow steps a torture.

Two became one.
I was one and the shadows of seven were a distant memory.

One day, they would dare to ask of us:
"Where are the friends who dared to dream?"
I would answer, a flicker of a smile on my lips,
Hard and bitter: "I used to know them.
They wanted to change the world."
And all around, the world would burn.

FRIENDSHIP

FARIOGUN FOLAKEMI DEBORAH

Who sold us the antediluvian gimmick
never affording us a view of the offering even by a peek
and thus making us chase lacuna at its peak?

They told us that we are bonded by a strong cord.
Oh, we've been wading through a ford!
I don't grasp the meaning of this word,
Maybe because it is not on my board.

Why can't we go through the same pain
And drive through the same terrain?
Why can't we heed the same call of gain
And simultaneously the same apex attain,
If truly there is a bond shipped into us as friends?

I fetched my answer: as one we may be tied,
yet our paths are different to run. Undenied.
Though unified,
our dreams do not coincide,
And though together we reside,
in no way in the same way can we be satisfied.

So rather than let offence bring it to an end,
I will remain meek enough to bend.
Rather than let us contend,
a hand of companionship I will extend with no dividend.
And on days when we hit a dead end,
the hurts looking like nothing we can mend,
into the deep crevices of your heart I will descend
and remember I have taught you to be a friend.

Dear Reader,

Thank you for reading this chapbook.

The monthly [Brigitte Poirson Poetry Contest \(BPPC\)](#) is a writing contest aimed at rewarding the under-appreciated talent of young Nigerian poets. It was instituted in February 2015 in honour of [Brigitte Poirson](#), a French poet, editor, and lecturer, who has over the years worked assiduously to promote and support of African poetry. You too can be a part of the BPPC initiative by [entering your poems for any of the monthly editions](#).

Also note that any writer can have their works published on our platforms by simply [REGISTERING HERE](#) and submitting entries. We receive fiction (short stories) for [GRIOTS](#), poetry for [WRR POETRY](#) and non-fiction (essays on writing, book reviews, interviews with other witters, etc.) for [AUTHORPEDIA](#).

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