HOW A POET LOVES A POEM

AN ANTHOLOGY OF THE FEBRUARY/MARCH 2022 BRIGITTE POIRSON POETRY CONTEST (BPPC)



Edited by: Brigitte Poirson & Kukogho Iruesiri Samson

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HOW A POET LOVES A POEM

TOP 20 POEMS OF THE
BRIGITTE POIRSON POETRY CONTEST (BPPC)
FEBRUARY / MARCH 2022

Edited by

BRIGITTE POIRSON KUKOGHO IRUESIRI SAMSON



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	v
INTRODUCTION	vii
HONOUR ROLL: AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2021	viii
FEBRUARY/MARCH 2022 TOP 10	ix
HOW A POET LOVES A POEM	10
PHILIP CHIJIOKE ABONYI, 1ST PRIZE WINNER	10
LOVE IS NOT A SEISMIC EVENT (FOR ELIANA)	11
EMUOBOME JEMIKALAJAH, 2ND PRIZE WINNER	11
KINDRED SPIRIT	12
AKAN RUTH, 3RD PRIZE WINNER	12
GEOMETRY OF LOVE	13
CHINEDU GOSPEL	13
ÀBÍKÉ	14
ADÉNÍRAN ABDBASIT ADÉYEMÍ	14
METAPHORS OF LOVE	15
OLOWO QUDUS OPEYEMI	15
ENCHANTRESS	16
BLESSING OMEIZA OJO	16
INCINERATING THE COLD	17
ENOBONG ERNEST ENOBONG	17
THE COLOUR OF VAGUE LOVE	18
WISDOM C. NWOGA	18
CARPE DIEM	19
OLALEKAN DANIEL KEHINDE	19
THIS THING CALLED LOVE	20

Brigitte Poirson Poetry Contest FEBRUARY/MARCH 2022 Anthology

EJIGA FAITH HAPPINESS	20
LOVE BEYOND FANTASY	21
BALOGUN BASHIT	21
NIGHT OF OUR FIRST KISS	22
OLAJUWON JOSEPH OLUMIDE	22
WATER AND LEAF	23
OSHO OLÁÌÍTÁN JEREMIAH	23
LIEBE	24
OJO ILEMOBAYO	24
A TEXT MESSAGE TO MY LOVER	25
HUSSANI ABDULRAHIM	25
LET'S DROWN INTO THE BLUES	26
ABDULKAREEM ABDULKAREEM	26
BLISSFUL REMINISCENCE	27
ADELEYE ADEGBOYEGA OLUWAREMILEKUN	27
THE LOVE WE SHARE	28
UMARU JENNIFER UGBEDE-OJO	28
GUERNICA AS A NAME FOR A LOVER THAT IS NOT	29
ANUOLUWA OLUSEGUN SONEYE	29

INTRODUCTION

I am pleased to introduce this delightful assemblage of poems from the artistic ruminations of the February March 2022 participants. The poets delivered original poetry of sentiments, emotions, subjectivity and imagination and the poems touch on the natural and the artificial, the ideal and the realistic, the physical and emotional passion.

How A Poet Loves a Poem is, undoubtedly, "a florilegium of brilliant pieces" that are enjoyable all ways and always.

Kukogho Iruesiri Samson

March 2022

HONOUR ROLL: FEBRUARY/MARCH 2022



PHILIP CHIJIOKE ABONYI is a writer and photographer. He was shortlisted for the *Eriata Oribhabor Poetry Prize* (EOPP) 2018. His works have appeared & forthcoming in *African Writer Magazine*, *Agape Review, Eve Magazine*, *Kalahari Review, The Rainbow Magazine*, and elsewhere.

EMUOBOME JEMIKALAJAH is a medical practitioner and poet with published works in the WriteHouse Collective 2015 anthology, *Phases: Poetry of People*, the BPPC 2015 anthology, *Wind of Change*, and other print and digital publications. He describes himself as a "professional on weekdays, runner on free weekends, fine artist when on leave, poet all the time."





AKAN RUTH is a poet, painter, illustrator, art educator and freelance artist. Born in Lagos, Nigeria, Akan became fascinated by poetry and art as an introverted child and proceeded to study Fine and Applied Arts at the University of Benin, graduating in 2021. She currently resides in Benin, Edo State.

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2022 TOP 10

- 1. PHILIP CHIJIOKE ABONYI
- 2. EMUOBOME JEMIKALAJAH
- 3. AKAN RUTH
- 4. CHINEDU GOSPEL
- 5. ADÉNÍRAN ABDBASIT ADÉYEMÍ.
- 6. OLOWO QUDUS OPEYEMI
- 7. BLESSING OMEIZA OJO
- 8. ENOBONG ERNEST ENOBONG
- 9. WISDOM C. NWOGA
- 10. OLALEKAN DANIEL KEHINDE

HOW A POET LOVES A POEM

PHILIP CHIJIOKE ABONYI, 1ST PRIZE WINNER

It appears as an inspiration, so arousing. The poet lies it on a paper the way an egg is placed in a cradle. He starts by cuddling the oxymoron in its body, hunting for hyperboles where everything hard pretends to be soft. He grasps the simile and says it is like a long dream of full moon divided into two. He lips the earlobes of personification, and the poem pretends the footsteps of water creep through its vein. It moans out metaphors that turn the poem into a singer whose voice the poet paces to its rhythm. In the navel of the stanza, he strolls down for puns in the follicles of consonance and assonance. With the hunger of his palms, he palpates the tongue of the metonymy in a parenthesis and feels the enjambment of its vibration, which gaps a hole of light where he hisses in like a snake in repetition, till he rhymes with the poem.

LOVE IS NOT A SEISMIC EVENT (FOR ELIANA)

EMUOBOME JEMIKALAJAH, 2ND PRIZE WINNER

There are no quakes, no fireworks;

No eruption of lava from igneous core

Of ancient mountains:

No confetti of ash and dust.

Mountains do not move; earth does not shift along

Treacherous fault lines.

The ocean does not quieten in its mirthless rage

Across the face of old earth

For two hearts finding each other.

For love is not a seismic event.

It is the slender tendril that reaches for the sun,

Curling with the twig, growing together

Into the morning, distilling dew from coffers

Of the past night, turning memories into roses,

Until time and age scatter pollen into the wind.

KINDRED SPIRIT

AKAN RUTH, 3RD PRIZE WINNER

Veneer, obsidian oil well glitter.
Luminous coal twinkles spasmodic laughter.
Lustrous locks lavish,
Lovingly altruistic.
Gifted creator, cherubic fragility fuses god.
twisted doubt taints poet's heart.

My love, beauteous, puriteous soul, copious fellows' fairer fade, futilely... I, sepulchral cocoon soul, besieges sheol, pistole, spite edifice forges lone ache.

Potent arm plunders anxiety. Love words in sincerity, his heart hugs - home.

Consummate symphonies akin, hands - melodies on skin, heart's strings his lips pull.

GEOMETRY OF LOVE

CHINEDU GOSPEL

because the sun cuts you open in my tender hand, a sunflower renaming dawn into beauty.

i love you because love has gravity. & it pulls us into the centre of ourselves — a stronghold.

which is to say, you are my nucleus & i yours. in your eyes, i am a reflection of fluorescence —

a firefly lamping darkness with incandescence. even on that night i stared into your face & glowed.

because you're my sunshine. & moonlight. & star. because the first time i walked into a tunnel,

there was light. & i could trace my way around your body. eat your lights & still not know the

colour of night. i want to watch you become my melanin. my air sacs filled with your fragrance

split you into many flowers — a beautiful floral garden, where i can seek beauty, when my eyes

are deficient of laughter. baby, this poem is an isosceles triangle — two equal parallels staring at each other, so in I

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e

ÀBÍKÉ.

ADÉNÍRAN ABDBASIT ADÉYEMÍ

In whole, I'll wash you like the frenzied gold-sifter.

I'll lead you through the dense crowd over the hallic mound, to the crystal spring where I found the purest living thing.

I'll sail you through the dark valley where our love is far beyond high - arched roots of demon trees.

I'll make your sorrow somersault to the bright green side till the dark clouds have its brightness.

I'll be your tempest and you'll be a defined creature in the circle of my prologue.

I'll crave for more of you like an infant breast milk and sing you kòronto as a lullaby till you rest on laps, for this lovely song of ours will die on my lips.

As the sun slips into the earth, we will keep basking with love, and its light will keep us aglow till death do us part.

METAPHORS OF LOVE

OLOWO QUDUS OPEYEMI

"i love all of you, from eyes to feet, to toenails, inside, all the brightness, which you kept". - Pablo Neruda (The Question)

i'm no stranger to the dazzling dialects of affection & other shimmery sheaths of love. every night is a fiesta of kisses between my black woman & i. we mold ethereal [flowers] into each other's lips & milking mouth; at the crest of a reminder— that love is a [sequel] of whimpering words.

my skin sprouts seemingly; every time you— my [darling] lay your glacial palms on the unruffled stratum of my body, you remind me of the whistling [purrs] of sally riptides as you waddled & swung your toothsome waist into a waltz & i went wild as you [goggled] closely to my lubricious iris/

like the spurting trills of racking lakes, i drool heavily whenever our body seeks one another & every time you scream my name a hundred [goosebumps] crawl across my skin. i remember those harmattan nights, without remorse, you denied me of [touches] & my heart broke into despair. my darling, i'm addicted to you.

your face is a portrait of resplendent emotions & every man is an artist hankering to [sculpt] your image into the blank canvas of their soul. without your presence/ here is a plain meadow— with no luxuriant bliss. & i don't know how to breathe without clinging to your hands or laying my swarthy lips on yours. i'm a pawn, a docile prey— caught by your reflections & [aesthetics]

& tonight i bond myself [in] your circus of reigning beauty/ & in my dreams i see you everywhere beyond the cape of my heart.

ENCHANTRESS

BLESSING OMEIZA OJO

You, the last spark of fire, come to me in dark days, impatient for my feeble feet to walk to the tunnel end.

On my promiscuous neck, spiralling my heart to walk in the path of petaled maidens, I want to wear you, an amulet of ownership.

Enchantress, I am a creature devoted to you. In every season, even in drought, make your body a sea for mine, seeking to drown in love sauce.

Under the mango tree where I wait for cuddles, tiny love-birds bear witness to us, how we learn to listen to the beat of our hearts.

Tonight, I am tempted to gather all creation to, with me, serenade you.
Within the stretches of your smile,

let me lie. Let me die in the horizon of your curves. Let me become another nomadic bird lost to tempest.

Enchantress, of all the towers I've seen in my dreams, only your arms feel safe for my body. Wrap me into a newborn longing for breast milk.

INCINERATING THE COLD

ENOBONG ERNEST ENOBONG

in the dark-blue eyes of a frigid night, an ebony woman lays bare and wide on a cosy duvet. for it is tonight that two black coals will make a bonfire; and man and woman will work like a blazing needle and thread to knit warmth out of the night's cold Kitenge. it is tonight, that chemical ignitions will breeze through brains and seal sanity for a moment.

& nobody will go weary.
or is it not this woman who—in the sizzle of the sun—
handles an axe like a razor and sunders wood like tissue?
and this man? who—in forests of opaque canopies—
wrestles down jaguars with naked fists?

today, the night watches, again, the rhythmic silhouette of fervid gamers in a semi-lit room. today, from the intrusive croaks of frogs and chirps of crickets, the night sieves the carnal conversation of woman and man.

THE COLOUR OF VAGUE LOVE

WISDOM C. NWOGA

Love is the colourless water.

Sometimes red and another time black
When in a breakable chinaware.
Red, the budding souls bleeding to death,
Some cut by sharp knife edges.
Black, the garb of unseen mourners,
Mourning dying hopes of tomorrow
—blank.

You've learnt the craft,
Thrusting foot in slippery bowls,
Then betraying the seeds of your waters.
You sold your holy trust to Mephistopheles
For a plate of meal on her watery land.
Now, you cast blames on intoxicating liquor,
And the devil's voice.
Saviour's cross, a waste
——shame.

Whence do you go from here? Yesterday is not a stone's throw. Tomorrow is blurry. The Lass on the fence-This love is colourless —vague.

CARPE DIEM

OLALEKAN DANIEL KEHINDE

like a soldier whose fate is in the palm of a battlefield, my love, tomorrow is laced with illusions. let the night wear boots for fleshy wars. I stretched my arm, opened my palm slowly like a scroll & you took it to an island bordered by flesh, what is this dialect that burns your tongue, my love, that the feet of my heart heed to its command? my heart races within, yesterday, a bird chirped loneliness at the broken window of my heart: a ruined city. tonight, the nudity of fire resting on your tongue sets the bird's throat to off-key. what is this dialect that burns your tongue, that builds a city with an orchard of roses in my heart? see, my love, the land that now thirsts for rain, a river once flowed with its long tongue & tasted its soil clean like a wedding garment sweeping the face of the earth. God made illusions on the seventh day before He rested, my love, if tomorrow illusions shine bright on our faces, what dialect will your tongue burn? or what orchard will rose my heart?

THIS THING CALLED LOVE

EJIGA FAITH HAPPINESS

This thing called love, As beautiful and alluring as it is, Engulfing the heart and piercing through the soul, Like the sweet fragrance of a flower...

Shall I compare love with music? Melodiously it expresses life in different tunes, From sweetness to sadness in its notes, Blissful when discovered in its right rhythms.

Should I compare love with passion?
Unconditional like the air we breathe,
Filling our soul with more life,
Powerful and mesmerizing like hypnotizing blue eyes.

Should I compare love with plants? Like water and sunshine groom plants, Love and care as precious a gift to humankind, To be nurtured until it blossoms.

Should I compare love with drugs? The feeling of complete happiness, Intoxicating and encompasses the mortal And uneasy to let go when addicted.

This thing called love, Sown to heal the mind, Spreading humanity amongst all, Love is bliss.

LOVE BEYOND FANTASY

BALOGUN BASHIT

Love in its wholeness can build & create, Sweet memories that are beyond fantasy. Its requited form is a cool balm that can permeate, Carrying two prepare minds far across the sea.

It cannot be forced; gradually is how it can exist. Are you after her beauty, brain or body? If she keeps saying "NO", for how long will you persist? Patience is required to avert pure shoddy,

If after saying YES, for how long will you celebrate? Will you still stick to all the promises you made? As you triumph, do unto her what can elevate. Be her warmth even when negativity came to raid.

Develop & raise your progeny through the right ways. In doing so is where the utter gain lays.

NIGHT OF OUR FIRST KISS

OLAJUWON JOSEPH OLUMIDE

[3rd of August augurs well...]

Our nakedness begins with confessions Via heart to heart infrared, an eros' device

I dig a well into your soul to touch An ocean of thoughts drowning my heart

I see through the nocturnal ambience In your eyes are red flaring coals

Consuming me to conscientious ashes
The magic of this hour, you're a razed city too

As mad my divining eyes, so bold as a lion I love that you're up to task, African cougar!

Roaring in silence to devour Your telling taciturnity all on me, your Pathera Leo

My hands like serpent, travelling over mounds Yours too, punningly touching my beady mane

In your cleavage, I lose those limbs of lust While mouths are finally locked! Oh,

Hear the puns of the sultry notes played By the drowning tongues in a salivary ocean!

Ah, this nectar kills! It's dark & still, in fidelity The language of love-lust our tongues speak

Arrests our naive hearts, marveling: Louder to wake innocent snoring souls?

WATER AND LEAF

OSHO OLÁÌÍTÁN JEREMIAH

I fly into the body of this poem as the cracked voice of a bird, like the prayers in the lips of a beggar running out of fashion, like the broken piece of the temple's dress, like my mother's breast, like many other things made of bullets, like the head of this poem as the reflection of light running straight into evanescence. Evanescence here is the rustles of the wind's mouth slicing my father's throat like a tree pronounces withers to its leaves. That every bird in it flies home with a music in the brokenness of its voice & I become a testimony of a leaf without water and the openness of a wall housing lizards within my well (your throat becomes a well when it lacks the ingredients of joy)

Sometimes, burning yourself to manliness is a curse to your own tabernacle, listening to the orifice of your mother's combustion that now, if life will run away, let her run with it

What makes all these souls a candle is this: if one does not break it, it melts itself. But then, prayers will go as vapours dancing somewhere within the air.

Lara labelled the castles of water that mould themselves high above the bridges of my eyes as an appeasement to the bees, that God has ears that are smaller to wrap me & hands that are shorter than salvation.

So, now, if you want to know what a real sorrow feels like, grab a knife and cut yourself, try to chisel out those areas where your body never quite fits into a home.

LIEBE

OJO ILEMOBAYO

I am writing to you from the chambers of my body where you dwell. Sealed not to be loosened.

I knit you into fine lines of symmetry. You sync with the ever blasting rhythms from my heart's stream.

I place you in the tips of my tongue, I draw you in and find in dripping Honey, honeycomb into the curtains of my oesophagus.

I spread you out into my gloomy clouds, You spew out sweet sunshine and sunshade into the atmosphere, then you weigh your fresh breath in me.

By the time you read me, I'll be the at deepest center of your navel, you shall be adorning a sheepishly little smile.

A TEXT MESSAGE TO MY LOVER

HUSSANI ABDULRAHIM

for Aisha

ur luv giv me wings But u do not know dis I'm butterflies & moths Rising, rising above d dross

ur luv my larynx whets But u do not know dis u – piano-song inside my head, canary waltzin with d leaves Dawn's shadows calypsoin on windowpanes

ur love kips me burnin But u do not know dis u re mitochondria, blood platelets Oxygen inside my lungs, suddenin

ur luv brings me peace But u do not know dis I'm desert dust ditherin into dunes I'm night's shimmerin sun saunterin on a midnight stream

ur luv brings me flowers
But u do not know dis
Roses of ur thoughts sprout on my pores
In my medulla, ur smile is limbs of waving sunflowers
u re evrytin there is
But u do not know dis
I envy ur luv
I envy luv

LET'S DROWN INTO THE BLUES

ABDULKAREEM ABDULKAREEM

The sun licks my body, I, a fallow deer seeking your stream of water. The tiny damp animal in my chest croons your name, a rhythm I'd want to take the form of an epithalamium. Loving you, a bayonet strapped to the muzzle of my riffle. We drown into the blues & I press my lips against yours—an imagination, hoping to build a nation. I'm not making a metaphor, but I'll hand you the world on a golden platter. Me & you, the antler on the head of a deer, Me and you, a pair of maracas shaken in the hands of a Puerto Rican. My Boomplay shuffles & Johnny Drille's Romeo and Juliet comes on. What is more beautiful than loving? A land ravaged by weed morphs into a garden of Peruvian Lily, a metamorphosis of affection. I stuff the atmosphere with a hum Johnny Drille's Romeo and Juliet, & the room becomes an unorthodox dance floor—meeting you was never a coincidence, the hand of God na im bring you to me. Tell me, how do I tongue the taste of your love? See, I'll keep waiting by the seashore, that someday you'll send your boat & row me to this island deflecting every of my anchor thrown towards you.

BLISSFUL REMINISCENCE

ADELEYE ADEGBOYEGA OLUWAREMILEKUN

My beautiful love, Astonished I was by your pulchritude Searched the whole universe and its similitude Still did not find a creature more alluring As well as radiating.

Oh! I remember
That blissful evening, we met during summer
I got enamoured with your dazzling beauty
Would let it go? Never!
I professed my love to you with much alacrity
"Darling, would you be mine forever?"
I affirmed, "A portrait of you should be everyone's poster"
Like the portrait of antiquity, "Mona Lisa"

Stunned by such a fantastic eulogy, You got engrossed in my testimony. But you had fears of what to anticipate And needed something to which you could relate.

I promised to comfort you whenever in dismay, Always direct in disarray, And never lead you astray. Immediately, your doubts turned to clarity, So you nodded in the affirmative. Accepting to stand by me with every tenacity, Never wondering any better alternative. Turning my weakness into invincibility, You made my fiction a reality.

THE LOVE WE SHARE

UMARU JENNIFER UGBEDE-OJO

To the princess of my heart:
'Would you be my muse for today and forever?
I promise to etch your exquisite beauty in my heart forever.
From my heart, I would create the most beautiful art ever.
The painting of your beautiful face, on my Canvas.
With every stroke of my brush, our love would go deeper.
Your graceful beauty forever etched in my heart would be my sunshine With the love we share, we would go against anything together'

To the King of my heart:

'You have called me beautiful, you think I'm beautiful; I am only this beautiful when I'm under your starry gaze. When I feel our love intoxicating me, it's so powerful. I look at our hands, intertwined in a lovers lace. Our souls become one at that very moment One against the world'

-Our love makes us invincible.

You are the north pole to my south, I can't resist your magnetic pull. When we kiss we unite like a magnet. With our eyes closed, we see the same thing -'The blooming garden of our united souls.'

GUERNICA AS A NAME FOR A LOVER THAT IS NOT

ANUOLUWA OLUSEGUN SONEYE

I'd wonder how heavy a name must be to pound my heart to a halt – guh-nuh-kuh - when I call, my mouth weightens, like dead bodies; even a name becomes hard to move for a name becomes

a need;

a person becomes

a place - a moment, a memory,

a girl becomes

a gap,

a hug becomes

a hole,

a tulip becomes

a trap

I am watching grief make offspring off a Manuel.

an Elian

a Pedro and Anita.

a Ramiro.

a Maya and Esperanza

and all my dreams of us and more become rubbles.

A lover has a thing for "staring": a mother collides with a bullet & a little girl

stands still, stares - and her eyes are filled to the brim in a moment, she pushes a name – "momia... momia."

There are no men in love, as war – only babies and muscles. a hundred cries are buried in the thick haze and the blast "voy a morir voy a morir" – a man runs for his dear life even when death owns him.

Glossary

Momia: mummy/mother Voy a morir: I'm going to die

Brigitte Poirson Poetry Contest FEBRUARY/MARCH 2022 Anthology

Dear Reader,

Thank you for reading this chapbook.

The monthly <u>Brigitte Poirson Poetry Contest (BPPC)</u> is a writing contest aimed at rewarding the under-appreciated talent of young Nigerian poets. It was instituted in February 2015 in honour of <u>Brigitte Poirson</u>, 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 <u>entering</u> your poems for any of the monthly editions.

Also note that any writer can have their works published on our platforms by simply submitting your entries on our website https://www.wrr.ng/submit/. We receive fiction (short stories), poetry and non-fiction (essays on writing, book reviews, and interviews with other witters, etc.).

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