



Liberation Alliance
Africa

THE MAKINGS
of
REVOLUTIONARY HOPE

An Anthology

Acknowledgement

This anthology is an embodiment of our collective dreams as we explore the makings of revolutionary hope in the pursuit of a feminist, pan-African liberation.

We are thankful for the many paths and the people who have journeyed with us and inspired us to put this offering together.

We are grateful to the decolonial feminist scholars, activists, thinkers and organisers who shared their knowledge and words with us; particularly Rosebell Kagumire, Dr Oluwatoyin Adejonwo, Najjuko Joanita, Fatima Kelleher, Leah Eryenyu, Crystal Simeoni, Gloria Mugabekazi, Nadia Ahidjo, Ese Emerhi, Dr Hadiza Kere Abdulrahman, and Baraka Muazu. Your insights and expertise have been instrumental in shaping these thematic explorations of colonial legacies in Africa.

We thank our contributors for enriching the anthology with creative and diverse perspectives, reflections and inspirations for a just, liberated world.

Thank you to Omolara Oriye and Oluwatobiloba Ayodele for their creative direction throughout the project. We give thanks to Nana Sule for her dedicated spirit and creativity along this journey. We thank Boluwatife Olowoyo for sharing her insights and feedback on the anthology. Our appreciation goes to Zainab Haruna for writing the stories and compiling the anthology. Zainab, thank you for your interpretation of our imaginations for a liberated and feminist world.

Thank you to Rosebell Kagumire for writing the foreword for the anthology. We thank the African Philanthropy Network (APN) for their financial support for this project.

Finally, we express our sincere gratitude to our co-conspirators — feminist organisers, activists, and scholars within the decolonial feminist liberation spaces who believe in our mission and walk this path with us.

In Solidarity,
Liberation Alliance Africa.

For African women and everyone on the margins: we will not be erased; we will not be deterred; and liberation will come.





THE MAKINGS
of
REVOLUTIONARY HOPE
An Anthology

Table of Contents

Acknowledgement

Introduction

Foreward by Rosebell Kagumire

Leadership

The Council of Equanimity

This Feels Like Home by Goitse Kwada

Climate Justice

Reclaiming a Lost Heritage

Communities of Defiance by Rutendo Chichaya

The Revolution Ain't What we Thought by Aidah Namukose

Economic Justice

The Tablet of Existence

A Table Spread of Hope by Siphwe Ntesang

Philanthropy

The Tablet of Existence

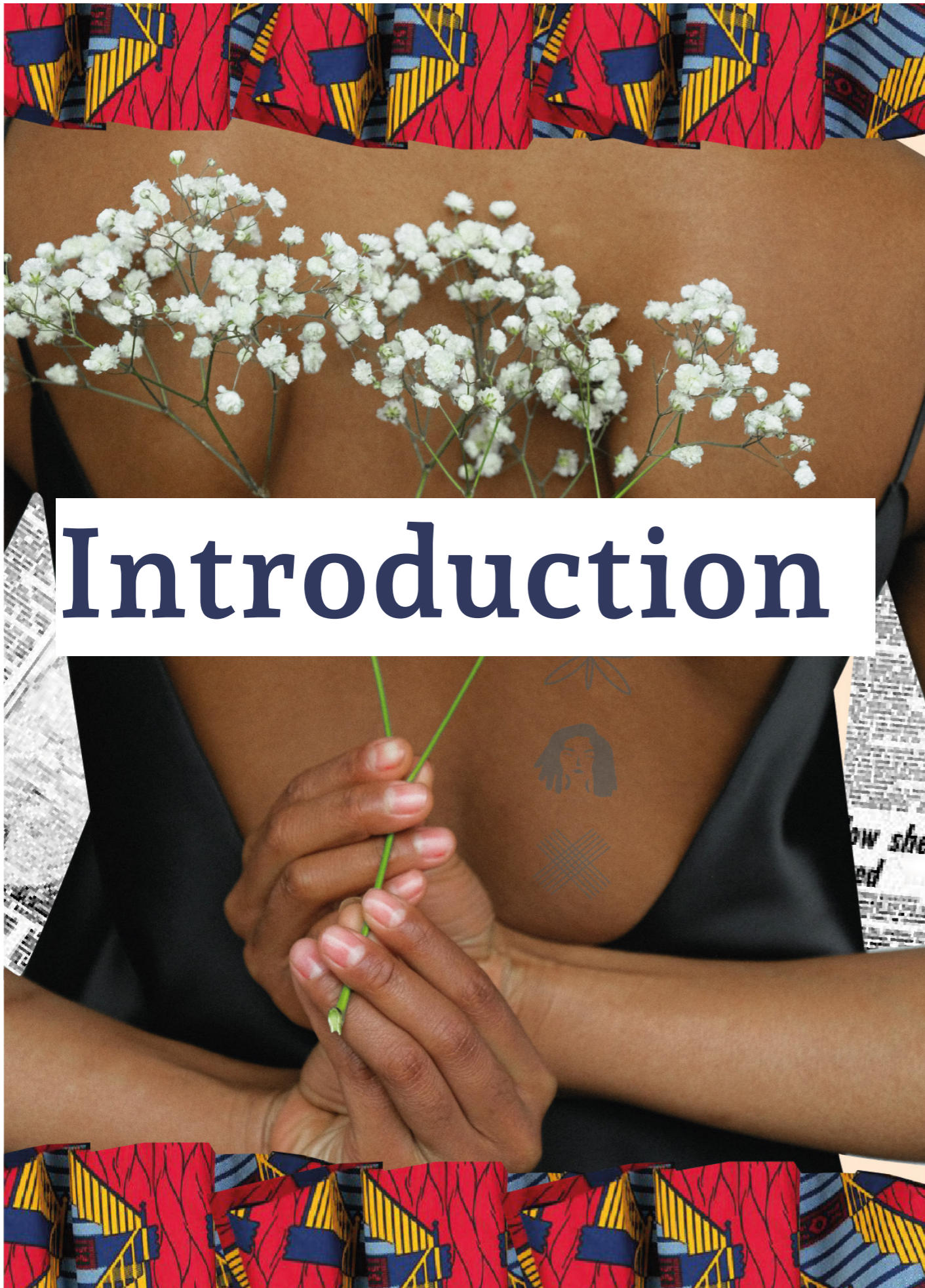
A Stranger in My Mother's House by Nana Sule

Education

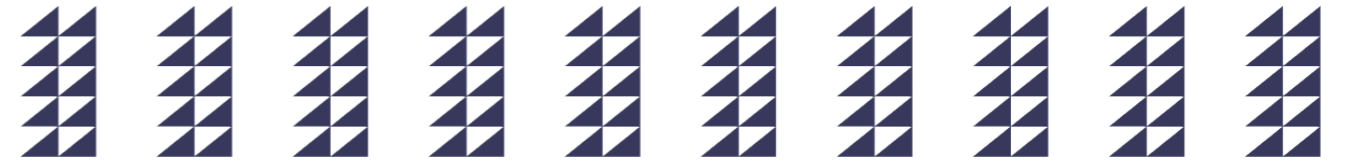
The Preservers of Leluyi

Are You Dead Yet? by Omolara Oriye





Introduction



List of Contributors

Aidah Namukose

Goitse Kwada

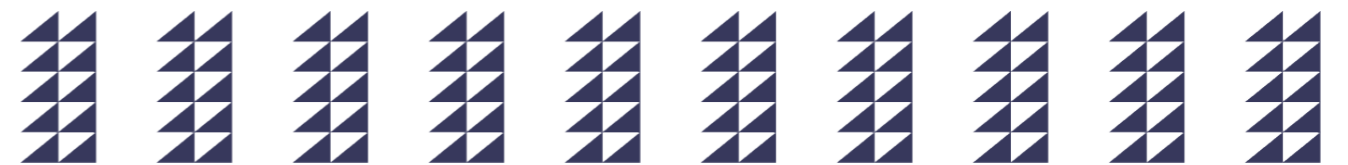
Nana-Hauwa Sule

Nikita Abuya

Omolara Oriye

Rutendo Chichaya

Siphiwe Ntesang



About Liberation Alliance Africa

Liberation Alliance Africa is a feminist, pan-African collective raising critical consciousness through radical knowledge production, policy advocacy, decolonial feminist organising, and documenting the cultural evolution of a liberated Africa. We seek to inspire a new level of thought and consciousness, to interrogate power structures, the dynamics of privilege and access to knowledge through a decolonial lens. We are keen to contribute to the disruption of colonial and patriarchal legacies that perpetuate oppression, exploitation and exclusion in Africa.

We believe that to challenge oppression and build the blocks of collective emancipation, there is a need to have the language and frame of reference to examine the world around us. We believe in the need to theorise, based on our lived experiences and our interaction with the systems of power, asking critical questions of frameworks otherwise taken for granted. We believe that at the core of our liberation is revolution, celebration and rest—we seek to inspire a generation of Africans who believe that our collective consciousness is important, rest is political and celebration is cardinal.

About the Anthology

Anti-colonial feminist organising and world-building bring to the fore the interrogation of the continued impact of colonialism, slavery and capitalism on Africa and Africans in present times despite living in what has come to be accepted as the post-colonial era. These legacies shape knowledge, African institutions, realities, and bodies of practice with wide-ranging and adverse effects as evident in our language, knowledge-gathering and dissemination efforts, trading systems, and the globalisation of international cooperation. To build an equal and inclusive future for Africans, it has become imperative to deliberately shine a light on these legacies as a first step towards sustainable collective disruption.

In 2023, Liberation Alliance Africa (LAA) hosted the [Disrupting Colonial Legacies in Africa \(DCL\)](#) series as a five-part webinar aimed at identifying and analysing colonial values and ideologies around identified themes and constructs. The DCL series was hosted as reflection-based discussions with different feminist organisers, activists, and scholars within the queer and feminist liberation spaces around Africa.

Adopting a storytelling approach, the learnings, reflections and disruptive solutions gathered from the series have been represented in this anthology. To build out the collection, the anthology further curates submissions from feminists on the continent who share their stories, dreams, and interpretations of a truly decolonised Africa.

At its centre, “The Makings of Revolutionary Hope” is a call to look at self as a primary site of liberation, engage in heartfelt and political nostalgia that interrogates, understand and analyse the history of this continent that we call home while charting our way forward through decolonial feminist world-building.

The thematic focus of the anthology is the exploration of reflections, feelings and memories arising from Liberation Alliance Africa’s five-part DCL series. The anthology delves into the thematic explorations of leadership, economic justice, climate justice, education and philanthropy as anchored by the series. The foundation of “The Makings of Revolutionary Hope” is in the coming together of decolonial feminist scholars, activists, thinkers and organisers in reflection and community to raise critical awareness on the continued legacies of colonial and white supremacist world order and engender, feminist pan-African dreams of liberation in Africa. Through the centring of diverse feminist voices, we amplify the lived experiences, scholarship and creativity of women and everyone on the margins to shape liberatory discourse and document Africa’s cultural evolution. This collection invites you to reflect on journeys of the self as intertwined with the collective in the disruption of oppressive systems.

In light of the subjugation and interiorization of African knowledge, ways of being and spirituality; the realities of the imperialist international economic landscape, neo-liberalism, and destructive extraction of human capital and resources from Africa for the enrichment of imperialist nations — What does an Africa, free from the shackles of colonial legacies, and committed to building a just and equitable society look like? We do not have the answer, but it is an exploration that we firmly believe will fundamentally shape the course of knowledge collection, consumption and dissemination in the coming years.

This anthology builds around the fictional African city of Leluji, a city that embodies feminist principles of interconnectedness, collaborative wisdom, and empathy in leadership and how that manifests in the education landscape, the leadership structure, the wealth distribution system, and knowledge transfer. We engage this imaginative exploration through the lives of three friends whose ancestry goes back to ancient times in Africa and whose individual identity is birthed and held in their sense of sisterhood, friendship and community.

Decolonisation begins in the mind. The revolution starts with our ability to name our surroundings, make sense of things and imagine a different reality and through this anthology, we ask everyone to join us on a bold journey of reflection as we envision a decolonial Africa.



Foreward

by
Rosebell Kagumire

I am honoured to introduce “The Makings of Revolutionary Hope,” a new anthology from the Liberation Alliance Africa. Emerging from the “Disrupting Colonial Legacies in Africa” series, where I was privileged to participate, the work arrives at a critical time. In a time of multiple crises, contradictions, and discontent rooted in persistent and evolving oppressive systems, we must ask the right questions to put our communities, families, and societies on a different trajectory.

So then, how does one hope when the landlord’s rent is owed? How does one hope when genocide, ethnic cleansing, divide and decimate is the order of the day? How does one hope when the system constantly tests one’s humanity? What do we do with the unwelcomed, unrecognized, vilified, criminalised and rendered non-human? How does one hope under the heat wave? When they advise ‘drink more water’, the wells are poisoned, and the springs are dry. What is water, anyway, for those who don’t have the land? They say to find shade, but where is the last tree? They say ‘stay indoors’, but the concrete we have barricaded ourselves in, just to have a slight sense of safety, to sleep a few hours before we go back to ‘the grind’ threatens to burn us alive. Who said we were safer in the house among our family? How does one hope when the powerful spend a whole country’s GDP on ‘corporate social responsibility’? How does one hope when Europeans still craft a country’s currency with a touch of traditional African craft objects, and they call it yours? How is one to hope when they have silenced the pen when they demand ‘stop being who you are or die.’ How is one to hope when screams for help from women and children evoke a response, “It has always been like that.”

To hope is hinged on imagination and vice versa. But who controls our imagination? An unsuspected, unscrutinized system often dictates our

creative boundaries. Material conditions rob us of time to imagine new ways; whoever imagines outside it is labelled, discredited and discarded. Systems put a price on imagination beyond them - repercussion for imagined transgression. That is how they are sustained. Yet every day, against all odds, some dare, defy and engage new imaginaries. Liberation has always been the work of imagination - collective imagination that leads to action.

“The Makings of Revolutionary Hope” urges us to use all available tools to craft a new reality, blending fiction and nonfiction. It affirms marginalized thoughts, offering alternatives to the dominant narratives shaped by colonial legacies. We, too, can fetch the margins, find those lone, dismissed, or discarded, and bring them to the fore with us.

‘The Makings of Revolutionary Hope’ shows that journey of going back in time to go forward. It covers reflections on leadership like one imagined city in the fictional African city of Leluji. When Goitse returns to the village where she observes and learns from traditional leadership and power sharing in rural Botswana. She reminds us of the values in our lands outside forced colonial governance approaches. Goitse watches traditional justice systems of reconciliation and conflict resolution in action, the centring of humanity and unity that make it possible for communities not to feed the prison industrial complex as introduced and maintained by colonial ideals. Yet, it also acknowledges ongoing gender and youth discrimination in these societies.

The anthology celebrates community-based approaches to agriculture and environmental challenges. Aida Namukose’s ecofeminist perspective sheds light on women’s quiet, everyday revolutionary efforts in farming. Often, we visualize revolution through images of young people challenging military barricades, storming state security’s illegal detention facilities to liberate comrades, and women bravely linking arms together and marching against violence. And indeed, all these are revolutions. However, here, Namukose reminds us of the revolutionary act of tending to the land. The women working on farms, innovatively adapting amidst harsh climates, and placing social protection are revolutionaries. Their collective courage sustains families and nations while confronting increasing land grabbing, climate-induced conflict and empty promises of international climate frameworks. Their stories are reminiscent of the earth’s warmth under the feet. That receiver can also be the source.

Rutendo Chichaya’s poetry speaks to facing erasure and shame, to carry our stories in pursuit of light, especially at our darkest. It emphasizes that our bodies are a collective and must be rescued and defended as that. Omolara Oriye’s ‘Are you dead yet?’ is a haunting invitation to intimate liminal spaces



between life and death and touches the essence of helplessness. It could be in a courtroom, scenes of street brutality, from families let down by failing healthcare systems to the agony of betrayed love. Far from an exasperated demand, it's a poignant plea for the last sign in the face of despair.

Leluji City comes back several times. **The Tablet of Existence** introduces us to economic liberation that's faltering and strings us along the journey to find true freedom. **The Secret of Almeda** brings forth the organizing work of women as storytellers, active resisters to colonisation, and leaders. You find the centrality of books and oral history in shaping alternative futures and indigenous knowledge systems.

Siphiwe Ntesang asks, 'Who sits at the table?' while questioning capitalism's empty promises to change material conditions. It was promised 'as long as you work hard,' but what measuring rod determines this hard work or worse still, who is holding the rod? The pillaging of labour and resources of colonized lands continues, and conveniently, the hoarders of those resources encourage us to work a little harder. They rig it. Ntesang is urging us to reassess our trust and belief in these systems. You can't disrupt what you believe is beneficial or desirable.

In **A Stranger in My Mother's Home**, Nana Sule offers this beautiful, quiet agitation against the erasure of what we hold dear, the debasing and replacing to cater to the comfort of the occupiers—those who consider money more than memories.

At every turn, there's a system exposed, questioned, and navigated- from dictatorial trade systems, conscripted environment, the debt crisis and violent dynamics of lending and ownership. The anthology consistently reinterprets the theme of belonging. The theme of belonging extends beyond people to objects representing a culture and reminds us to confront colonial insistence on dealing with institutions devoid of historical memory.

An imagination remains an imagination, if not shared, built into realities. 'The Makings of Revolutionary Hope' urges us to be unafraid of existing and future questioning. It tells us to go back to the source, at a time when the powerful are using the 'African values' frame as a license to violate and alienate revolutionary hope.

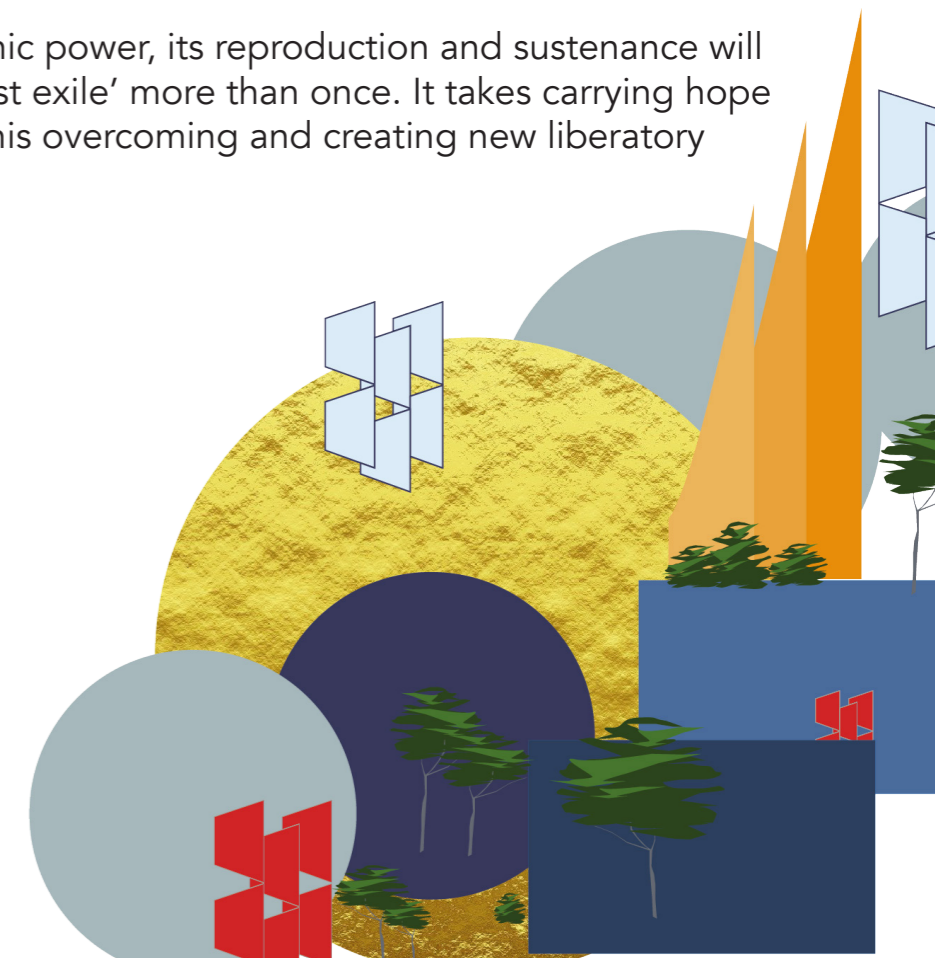
Language is central to the decolonial imaginations because of the way our languages are forced to be at the periphery and robbing us of naming - ourselves, our homes, streets and ways of being. Naming the violence and looking to history for the language that held us together is essential in

the making of hope as we continue battling colonial-capitalist-patriarchal-heteronormative impositions. Hope is carried by people. Just like joy and dance, every revolution must master the language of hope. The poet emoting a verse, the orator, the seer, the Adungu player performing at the village bar, the orator, the comedian, the seer, and the traditional healer gushingly pointing to herb, like the keen-eyed young in a laboratory all examine the present, find the language and the mode of how to get to the future, a more hopeful future.

Professor Sylvia Tamale, in her book *Decolonisation and Afro-feminism*, defines decolonization as a "multi-pronged process of liberation from political, economic and cultural colonization." and speaks of "removing the anchors of colonialism from the physical, ecological and mental processes of a nation and its people." She argues that for the colonized, decolonization of the mind is really about returning to the annals of history to find ourselves, to become fluent in our cultural knowledge systems, to cultivate critical consciousness and to reclaim our humanity."

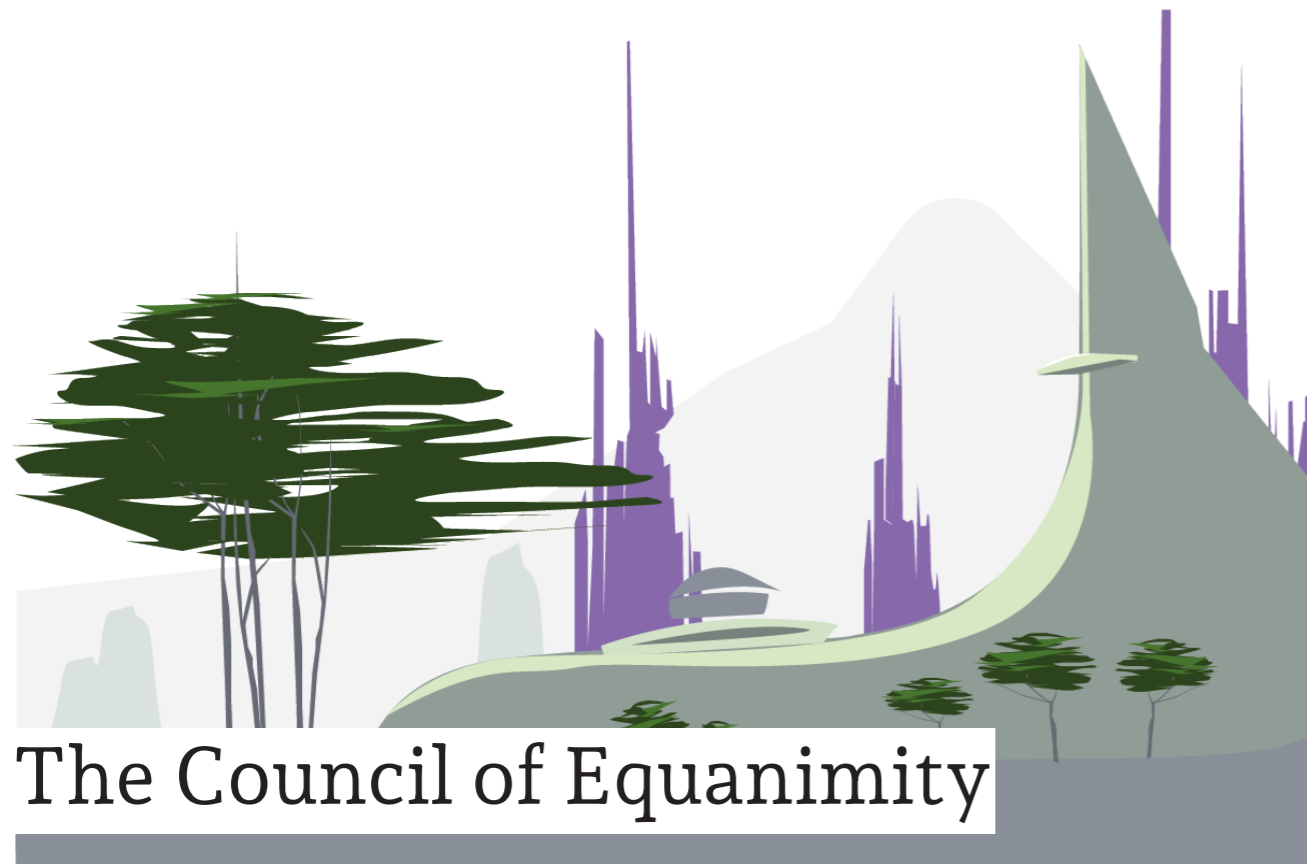
It's the same call Dr Tshepo Madlingozi makes while writing on what Es'kia Mphahlele, legendary writer and cultural activist, termed as the challenge to overcome as 'first exile'-exile from home, culture and ways of understanding the world – from which victims of colonisation suffered. Dr Madlingozi [reminds us](#) that the ultimate aim of colonisation is to separate colonised people from their sources of economic autonomy, ways of understanding the world, and, ultimately, from themselves."

Overcoming colonial hegemonic power, its reproduction and sustenance will require us to overcome the 'first exile' more than once. It takes carrying hope through telling the stories of this overcoming and creating new liberatory knowledge and realities.





Leadership



The Council of Equanimity

It is quiet in the archives of the High Storyteller's Office because I have come in earlier than everyone, something that rarely happens. The HSL offices occupy five floors of the Leluji National Library and I recently broached the topic of a floor addition with the Council of Equanimity. Since my coronation two years ago, I have spent a significant amount of time here, archiving stories, preparing for story readings, meeting city officials and in that time, I have gotten to know the layout quite well. Some days, I still get lost but that happens with everyone, my father assures me.

There it is. A voluminous volume bound in red leather with lightly eared pages, tucked neatly between a slim volume profiling the current members of the Council of Equanimity and a slightly heftier hardback volume with no title on the spine but which I know to be the seventh amendment of The Constitution of Leluji.

I edge the red leather book out of its snug perch, with one finger until it falls out into my waiting palm. I turn it over, running my hands over the soft leather, tracing out the title, "Afrique Ascendancy: Documenting Emerging Leadership in Africa 1200:2100" in cursive on the front. I open the first page, flipping through the few paragraphs that summarise the contents of the book. It documents the progress and change in Leluji leadership structure through time showing how the city has adapted the structure of leadership to meet its most pressing needs. The last entry, making up the last chapter of the book, etched there by our Historian at the time, captures the "Grand Discourse" and the current structure of the Council of Equanimity.

At a time in Leluji's history, there had been several tussles for power between different factions - men, women, and Mavitrons alike. These power exchanges took a toll on Leluji until finally, it was agreed that a meeting be held with all parties to find a compromise. At this meeting, usually referred to as "The Grand Discourse" in history books, The Council of Equanimity was created with the purpose of equalising power among the three factions. The Council, made up of nine members - three women, three men and three Mavitrons were elected to their seats by their people but only confirmed if other factions consented to their inclusion in the Council. So, not only were they elected by their people, they were accepted by all.

Today, I am not interested in studying the last chapter of the book.

Close by, a door pushes open, and I snap the book closed, looking towards my right where the sound of gentle whirring now echoes quietly through the foyer. In a moment, a bald head pops into view followed by a body clad in wide-legged black pants and a plain white shirt which proclaims boldly "I'm so cool, I tell stories".

"Hey, you're already here. Where is the fire?" Isla is our lead archivist at HSL and has worked here through the tenures of at least five HSLs before me. Being a Mavitron with super memory retention is a skill that comes in handy for her job.

I smile. "I am joining the Council meeting later today. Last week there was talk about reviewing the Council's current structure to make it more representative. A discussion like that will likely bring up other leadership structures from the past. If that happens, I want to be ready to answer questions."

"Oh, it's that time again. The Council reviews the structure and fit for purpose every three years. I hear Taria and your mother are pushing for the leadership nominations to be revised. You're right, it is good to prepare."

She glances at the book nestled in my hand.

"Is that Afrique Ascendancy?"

"Yep." I confirm, tossing the book lightly in the air, catching it with a slight flourish.

"Why don't you just download the book into your portable holder so you don't have to carry that heavy volume around?" She asks with a tilt of her head.

She is right. I can easily visit the data bank and download the book onto my portable memory holder in the cloud. It would be easier.

"I'm old fashioned. I prefer the touch and feel of a real book." I say as I move to check out.

"I don't know why you bother checking anything out, you're the only one that still checks out physical copies." I giggle as the screen displays the last twenty entries with my name repeatedly appearing in the staff column, confirming Isla's point.

"There's something about holding a book that connects me to my ancestors. Knowing that I am holding something that someone else has touched at another time, and that will outlive me, is grounding. It makes me connect to the stories better, you know?"

"Can't relate. Must be a human thing." Isla smirks at me, and it makes me laugh as I head out.



From my position, I observe the members of the Council as they file in and take their seats around the room, forming an O shape around the hollowed table in the middle. On my right and three seats away from me, my mother is chatting quietly with Litali, the director of Leluji's transport system. The soft-spoken Mavitron designed and executed the Ventex high-speed underground train in five years, which now shuttles across the world at a record speed of 1500 kilometres per hour, the fastest in the world. Next to her, sits Taria, the National Librarian, dressed in a bright red robe, thumbing through a digital book on the screen in front of her. I get to work with Taria a lot because our work intersects in so many ways.

Idem, the head of the worker's union sits on Mamie's right, talking urgently into his phone, he is forever quelling some type of agitation among workers in the city. Next to him, Kaloye, the head of the Arts and Creative Guild, is casting furtive glances at the time, intermittently smoothing invisible creases from his custom-made shirt. He likely has a celebrity meeting lined up after this and can't wait to leave. Kaloye has made numerous requests for holograms to be used in council meetings but they have been denied. Council members like the connection that sitting together in a room brings and want to retain it.

Next to me, Eva, the head of the Institute of Ethical Hacking Practices (IEHP) is humming a soft tune under her breath, pausing now and then to shout greetings across the room at new arrivals in between sips from her thermos. I know Eva much better than the other members of the Council because I worked part-time at IEHP before my coronation. I still visit their offices frequently to meet with my friend Daime.

Visstem, Leluji's defence commander, Shuve the director of Education, and Esime the head of Leluji Food Production Program are the last to arrive, hurrying to their seats even though they're not late.

The nine members have a five-year tenure that is separate from their daily jobs. To start every tenure, town hall meetings are held in every major district of Leluji so citizens can nominate worthy members to the council. These nominations are held as open events in the common square of the district and everyone who lives there, except children, is allowed to participate. The two requirements for nomination: are high integrity, and nominees must already hold a leadership role that is focal to the progress of the entire city, not just a region or a group.

Leadership in private and public institutions are given equal weight in consideration. Although, this requirement may be updated by the end of today's meeting. In recent meetings, my mother who heads the Genome Data

Bank, and Taria have raised a motion to review the leadership component of Council members' nomination. Their argument - Council membership should include the common Lelujian to ground the decision-making process - has merit.

The final decision by the council takes into account individuals with the highest nominations across all districts, and then presents them to their factions for confirmation and endorsement. In the case of a tie or non-confirmation, this process is repeated until the decision is unanimous.

I compare this system with how leadership has occurred in the past, and how representative it is of the people or at least tries to be. In many ways, there are similarities with our 12th-century leadership when the Leluji of today was still a tiny part of a massive empire, reaching deep into the African continent on one side and to the Atlantic Ocean on the other. The mere vastness of the empire meant that leadership structures had to take strong account of the diversity of the people and their various cultures. Back then, most of the population lived in scattered villages that were far from the centre of government and uprisings were difficult to control.

The King had ruled the empire as a sovereign but he set up a system of government made up of provinces. Each province had a leader, picked through elections or customs but the King reserved the right to appoint or demote province leaders where he deemed fit, which I think was crazy giving so much power to one person. The empire continued to expand with the King conquering neighbouring territories. By the 14th century, attacks from neighbouring states had intensified and by the 16th century, the fighting combined with internal conflict and declining trade led to the fall of the empire.

Our nine-member council structure ensures that power is held by the people. At any time, a council membership can be revoked if their conduct is called into question. Every member is aware that they are there to serve and their interests do not supersede the interest of the people.

"Calling this meeting to order. Thank you everyone for coming today. I have shared an agenda to our general platform, and will wait for everyone to find it before I continue." A minute's pause as Litali who is leading today's meeting waits for everyone to find the agenda.

"Thank you. From the notes of our last meeting, you can see that we were still reviewing the idea presented by Liyah and Taria. I think we have all had time to ponder that discussion and we can discuss with more context now. Does

anyone else agree with them that Council Membership should be opened to include people who do not necessarily have leadership roles in Leluji?"

I count as seven hands go up in the room. Visstem and Idem are the only ones whose hands are not raised

"Okay. For those with objections, I will yield the floor to you to present your arguments so Liyah and Taria can address them.

Visstem is speaking first. His argument primarily focused on security leak concerns. How will the Council prevent leaks of sensitive information discussed during meetings, he wants to know. Idem follows with a question on how the relevance of leadership will be retained if some council members do not possess experience in leadership.

"Thank you Visstem and Idem for your questions. These are both relevant concerns and I believe as a Council, we should address them seriously before we continue. I will yield the floor to Taria and Liyah to address these concerns."

"Thank you Litali. At this time, I would like to mention that there are two requirements for Council Member nominations, leadership experience and integrity. What we have proposed only pertains to the leadership experience aspect without affecting the integrity component. Integrity will continue to be valued highly hence we believe that we will be able to get Council Members who hold themselves to the highest standards of conduct"

Taria continues when my mother stops. "In addition, we also believe that this Council will benefit immensely from having representatives of groups at the receiving end of our policies participate fully in policy creation. In that way, we are creating and shaping stronger policies that will bring the most benefit to our people."

Visstem and Idem look like they have more questions. It will be a long meeting. I think about the celebrity waiting for Kaloye in his office and how he/she/they will have to wait a bit longer.

Ninety minutes later, the meeting closes with a round of pleasantries and shouts "See you next week" as people rush out the door.

"Congratulations on your submission passing the first reading, Mamie" All submissions have to pass two readings, first at the council level where there must be a unanimous assent. Then next, at district level town halls where no less than five out of seven districts must assent to form a majority.

"Thank you, Amie! You did very well with your leadership analysis through the decades too. I liked what you said about being more deliberate in decentralising power from the centre."

"I think this will easily pass at the district level. It truly speaks to the people."

"I think so too. The coming months are going to be busy."

"It will be. You can plan some story sessions in your travel so that my office can support you with context as I did today."

"That will be really good! Thank you, Amie." She beams.

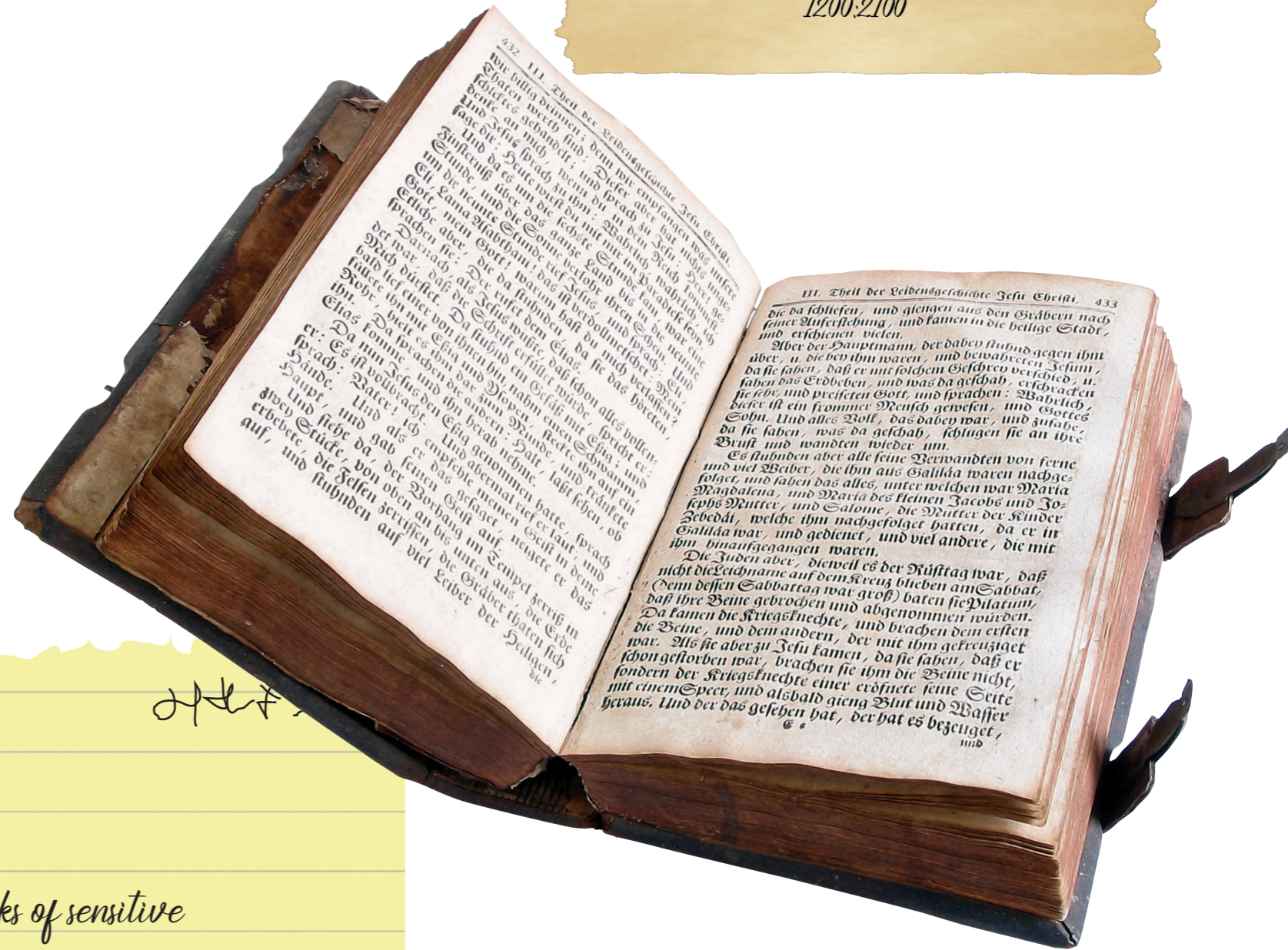
"Are you coming for dinner tonight?"

"Yes, I am. I think Cousin Jani and Emiyae will be there early. Emiyae is helping Papie with his cucumber transplanting."

"Alright, darling. See you later."

A peck, a hug. And we head out in opposite directions to continue the business of the day.


*Afrique Ascendancy: Documenting
Emerging Leadership in Africa
1200:2100*



*Council Meeting
Notes*

- How will the Council prevent leaks of sensitive information discussed during meetings.*
- How the relevance of leadership will be retained if some council members do not possess experience in leadership.*

HHH



HHH



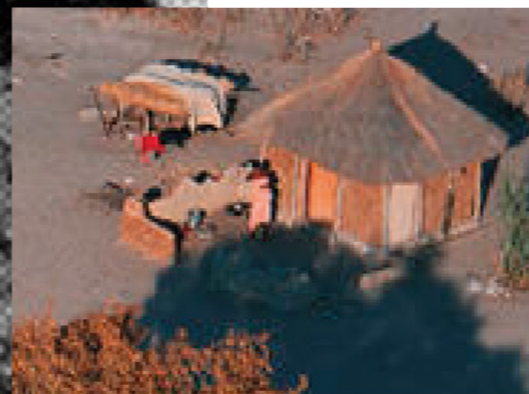
This Feels Like Home

by
Goitse Kwada

My name is Goitse and I moved to my home village in the rural northeast of Botswana last month, after years of yearning. Only a few of my loved ones get it and I am tired of explaining why this has always been an end game for me, well at least for the next few years. Hopefully, they get it now, that this feels like coming home finally.

I went to the kgotla for the first time yesterday morning. The night before that there was a car with a speaker that drove around announcing that the village was called to the kgotla by our chief for an important meeting which had me curious. The meeting started an hour past the scheduled time, but it was packed! It smelled clean, a kind of clean that reminded me of Sunday mornings in church, and pensioners in their Sunday best. It also smelled like cow dung because mornings here were for releasing livestock to spend the day grazing, and some people had come straight from the kraals.

I found out the meeting was a conclusion of a series of community meetings that had begun last year to place an assistant chief. As a young feminist who is weary of traditional structures, I was pleasantly surprised that the event MC was an older woman and that the royal family matriarchs were seated next to the royal men, and given as much respect in their roles during this process. It gave me joy to see firsthand what leadership outside of the family and after



retirement looked like for older women. I am excited that I will be learning more about them and their roles over the coming months.

After placing the assistant chief, which was the main agenda for the meeting, we talked about general community affairs. One of the old men I knew raised his hand and asked why there were no longer regular customary court sessions in the village. Typically, during these court sessions the chief acts as the judge dealing with petty crime in the village, and allocating punishment in accordance to the powers he holds as a customary leader. The answer to that concern was that 'maybe there are no court sessions because people are no longer committing petty crimes!'

The chief explained that while these sessions still happened, the goal was to reach the point where they were no longer needed in our community. He mentioned that the aim of local leadership was always to unite the community. When disagreements are dealt with by wardmen at smaller levels, it is easier to repair



relationships and reconcile our differences as neighbours which is a more just system. Was this not the decolonial mindset we had talked about in my university classes? That when localised social systems work well, it reduces the need for criminal cases? Dare I say, the chief's response had me visualising what abolishment of prisons - which always feels like a radically foreign concept - could look like in my local context.

The chief also talked about the constant concerns that young people do not attend kgotla meetings or participate in other community gatherings. While a valid concern, I think of all the times in the past that I had decided not to go to the kgotla because I do not enjoy wearing skirts and dresses. The requirement that women have to wear skirts and dresses to access what is our right as part of the community is discriminatory and not progressive.

Traditional structures are stubborn on rules that disadvantage women and it makes me wonder how serious and genuine they are about wanting us to be more active in our community. I enjoyed the kgotla meeting, I learnt a lot that I am still reflecting on. I moved to the village so I could have the time and opportunity to attend such gatherings and ask questions about them. Decolonial for me in this season is less about reading books and discoursing online, and more about leaving the house and being observant about what happens in my community. It looks like asking my grandparents and their peers countless questions, listening to them reminisce about their lives and realising that our issues are cross-generational.

In a conversation about women's rights with my grandmother, she randomly mentioned how women used to marry each other right in this small village of ours! A practice recent enough that one of the wives from such an arrangement is still alive today. I look forward to learning more about such practices. Decolonial hope is realising that nothing is new under the sun and as there

were similar issues in generations past, there are also solutions that we can explore today.

The favourite part of my days is watching the donkeys that graze near my house walk back home in the evenings after a full day of grazing. It is birthing season for them and watching the baby donkey grow and get stronger with each passing day is beautiful.

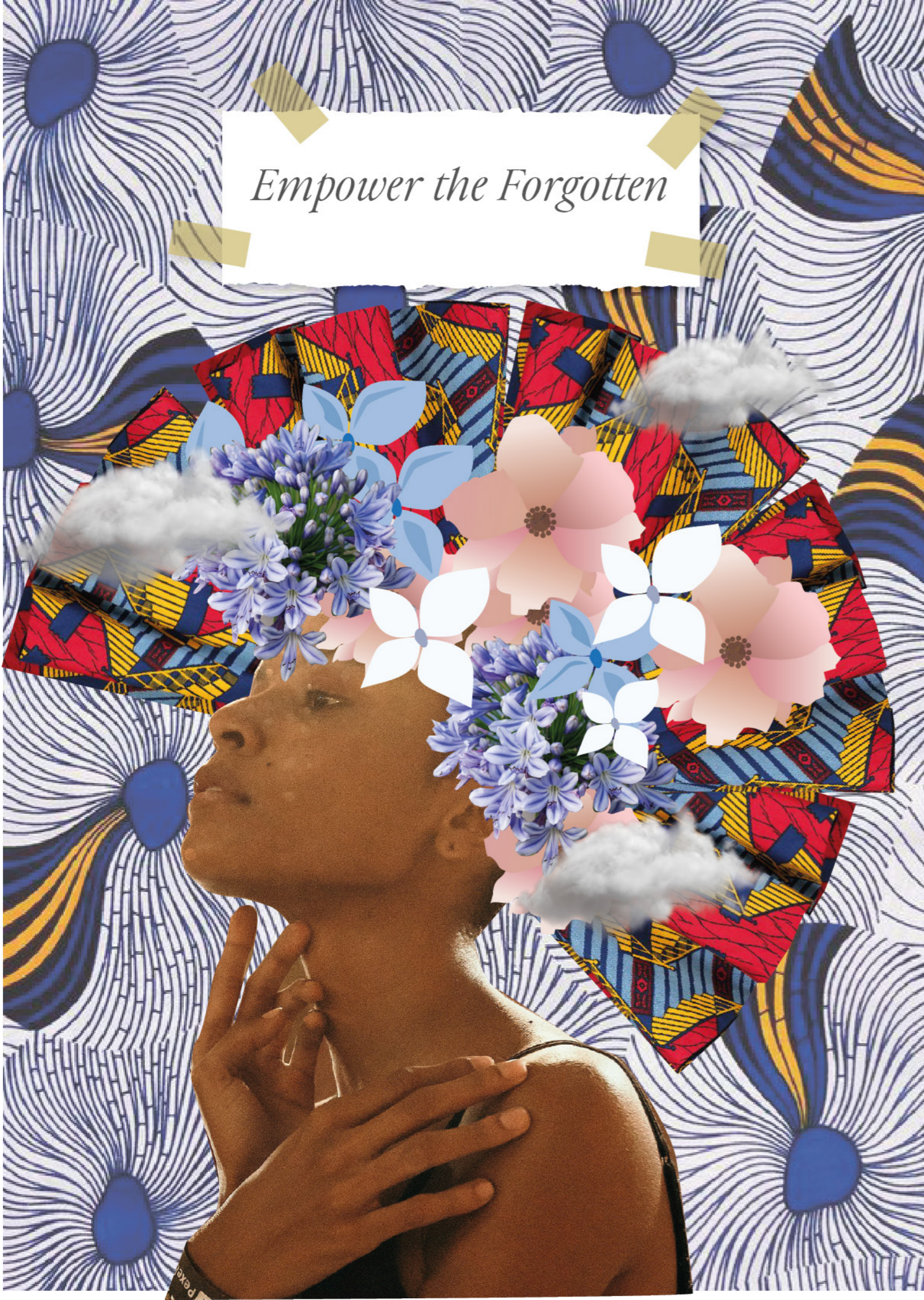
Did I mention that our village 'garbage truck' is a donkey cart? Yes, we use donkeys to collect trash from households, a climate-friendly option that also generates cost savings on fuel. So cool!

It is 8 am right now, the birds are chirping and the shade of this tree is sweeeet! I am having breakfast and have already greeted four neighbours and watched the neighbourhood guinea fowls make their morning rounds.

I think I love this little life.



Empower the Forgotten



Climate Justice





Reclaiming a Lost Heritage

The Village of Emere, 2006

There was a soothing evening breeze as the sun made a final descent towards its bed for the night, bathing the land in orange and yellowish-red rays that told children it was time to disperse from the playground and return home. On the horizon, flat hills stretched like slumbering giants under the warm embrace of the evening sun. The once-verdant fields, now kissed by the relentless hand of drought, stood silent, their cracked soil echoing a tale of unyielding struggle. The tall grass, once a sea of emerald waves, now rustled with a brittle whisper in the evening wind. Each blade, once resilient, now bore the weight of withering defeat, a poignant testament to the unravelling harmony of this once-thriving landscape.

Dusk came gently to Emere that evening, as it had always done. Oniha sat on a wooden bench with her brother, Atien in the courtyard of her family home, facing away from the kitchen which had a thin stream of dark firewood smoke emerging through the rafters. Behind her, she could hear the sounds of dinner being made and the laughter as parents exchanged funny stories of how they had haggled with buyers at the market.

She looked down at the basket of maize, next to her slippered feet, a quick mental calculation on how long it would take her to complete deshelling her basket, and whether she had enough time to wash up before dinner. She

was good at maths, as her teacher in school, located a mile away in the next village, liked to tell her.

"How many more do you have to go?" Atien spoke, breaking into her thoughts.

"Eleven more, what about you?" She spread her fingers, letting the seeds in her hand fall into the basin on her legs and threw the deshelled cob on the neat pile they had made behind them.

"I have six more. I will be done before you." Atien grinned triumphantly at her.

"You have to help me finish mine, so I can help you with your homework after dinner." She retorted and he nodded quickly.

Atien was shy and did not like asking questions in class. He reserved his questions for his sister, who patiently explained everything to him, after school.

Their mother emerged from the kitchen, and walked towards them, wiping her hands on the wrapper she had tied over her skirt for cooking. Not a tall woman but what Sobara lacked in height, she more than made up for in presence. People said two things about Sobara, that she was not afraid to speak her mind, and that she was usually right.

Her confidence was one of the qualities that endeared her to her late husband, Fila when they met about a decade ago. They were happy, working together on their farm, raising their two children, first Oniha, then Atien who arrived twenty months later. They were not rich but they made enough from their farms to get by and that was all that mattered. In Gagi tradition, families lived together in a big household, a communal style of living that emphasised the togetherness of the family unit. Family members leaned on each other in good times and bad, taking care of their children, working on their farms and protecting one another.

"Hurry up and come inside. Dinner will be ready soon." She told them.

"Okay, Mama." They chorused in response.

Sobara sighed worriedly, running her hands absentmindedly over her loose cornrows, as she glanced at the results of their labour. The harvest had been poorer than last year. When Fila passed away from a

brief illness two years ago, Sobara was inconsolable. But her family rallied around her. Still stricken by her loss, she tried her best to function so she could provide for her children. This year, despite family members chipping in, she was only able to cultivate three of her six-hectare farmland. Then late rains ruined the harvest yielding only half of the grain value.

The increasing degradation of the land depleted the soil significantly resulting in poorer yields every year for small-scale farmers like Sobara making it more difficult to sustain their livelihoods in their agrarian community. As a direct consequence, the combined effects of desertification, lessened rainfall and extended drought in Emere and surrounding villages also led to increased insecurity. There were heightened instances of renegade groups displacing people from their homes as part of a land-grabbing effort. At least five villages were displaced every month rendering people homeless and destitute.

Lately, the attacks increased in frequency, drawing ever closer to Emere. It had been the subject of many town hall meetings in the village square. Last month, there was an attack in Ajogahi, a border community and residents there fled to Emere carrying their meagre belongings on their head and recounting tales of horror when they arrived. That was the closest one so far.

Sobara prayed longer every night that the attacks would not come to her village, and yet in her heart, she knew it was inevitable.

Leluji 2023

She stood in front of a panel of screens, head swivelling from one screen to the other in no particular order, pausing here and there as if to confirm that everything was proceeding well.

One lone screen, supported by mounts, was slightly set back from the others and towered over everything in the room with bold numbers 59:12:34 flashing a countdown. Behind her, the room buzzed with activity. At the far end of the room, a long line had formed in front of a stack of clapboards. In the middle, a refreshment bar was set up, and two people sat with phones to their ears as they munched on snacks. At the other end, another line formed in front of a row of boxes stacked high almost to the ceiling where a young woman with a clipboard called names and handed out shirts. For a space with so much

going on, there wasn't a lot of noise, almost as if someone had selected low on an invisible sound setting.

Oniha tilted her neck backwards, resting her gaze on the ceiling of the tent, a feeling of gratitude washing over her that the Leluji National Library had granted them this space to set up their makeshift control centre. Her brother, Atien had secured the tools and personnel that they needed and the rest was done with donations and volunteers.

At twenty-five years old, she was doing something that had never been done before, leading a globally coordinated protest happening at the same time all over the world. She felt her mother's presence by her side, a warm feeling reminding her that she was doing the right thing.

Her head dropped and her eyes caught on one screen in particular which showed a steady stream of people arriving at an event. The title at the bottom of the screen "CCS 20: Delegates and Leaders arriving at the ICC in New Haven" flowed steadily, disappearing in and out of the screen frame. CCS 20 was the 20th session of the Climate Conference of Signatories (CCS 20) to the Global Framework Convention on Climate Change (GFCCC), a summit to allegedly re-capture the commitment of world leaders towards the climate agenda.

This conference was a follow up to the 2015 Agreement that had happened when she was a teenager. Oniha believed then in the integrity of the so-called developed countries, using every break from school as an opportunity to volunteer for the Global Nations Climate Resilience Program (GNCRP) regional office in Isha. Her lips curled as she remembered joining missions to Isha villages worst hit by the effects of climate change. She recalled the eyes of the children as they followed her, arms outstretched for the meagre meal packs that she had brought for their families. She was changing something, she was helping them, she had thought. She had been sure of it.

When the content of the 2015 agreement was made public, she had gone out that night to celebrate with friends from Uni. That hundreds of nations had pledged to mobilise \$100 billion a year in climate financing to support worst-hit communities in addressing the challenges of climate change meant that her work had not gone in vain. Mamie would be proud of her.

Her excitement waned after the first year, as she monitored the support received, where it went and what it was used for. In the wake of that Agreement, many countries in the north failed to deliver on their pledge. The truth was that very little had changed and communities like Emere, where she

had been born remained forgotten.

She was sad, she despaired, and then she got angry. Fueled by that anger, she had built Sobara, the most efficiently run climate activist organisation in the world. Their motto was simple, "Empower the Forgotten: Driving Climate Justice, One Community at a Time." When Sobara received its first grant, she and Atien commissioned a documentary to capture the stories of forgotten communities, the impact of climate change on their livelihoods, and the threat to their existence. They received an award for the documentary but there was still work to do. To gain and keep the attention of these global leaders, Sobara would need to do something truly disruptive.



On the Road to Emere, 2035

Oniha awoke abruptly from her slumber, when her head hit the side of the truck as the vehicle bounded over her dream. It was always the same dream. That night replayed on a loop.

They left Emere under cover of darkness, trekking from the village, with her neighbours, family and friends. Everything she had once known, shattered in an instant, the crackle of burning homes, the hoarse yells of parents frantically calling for their children, the heavy patter of running feet as people fled, and the silence of the bodies on the ground, eyes fixed blindly at the sky, visages stuck in fear or dismay as if they did not expect their death to come in such a manner.

They walked for six days and on the seventh, they ran out of food. On the eighth day, a good samaritan picked them up on his motorbike and took them to the nearest bus stop where they commenced their journey to meet Tembe in Leluji. Mamie never recovered from that journey and a few days after they got to Leluji, she passed away quietly in her sleep. It was almost as if she waited to be sure her children were safe before finally letting go.

Now, the truck rolled to a stop, jerking Oniha away from her reveries of the past. She raised her head, looking around at the faintly familiar landscape of her birthplace. The grasses were still tall and when she jumped from the truck, the caked soil retained the shape of her boots. She breathed in the air, ignoring the sounds of the occupants emerging from the other vehicles, settling herself into the reality that she had done it.

Twelve years ago, she had gotten the world to pay attention to the plight of forgotten communities with her historic march. It kickstarted what would be a long and arduous journey, parleying with leaders on the process of reclaiming justice for forgotten communities, influencing policies and shaping accountability mechanisms to hold them responsible for the outcomes of those policies, making sure that they never forgot again. Last year, Sobara secured One billion Eneres¹ in funding to set up the Climate Prevention and Resilience Centre (CPRC), an African-led research facility that would pioneer prevention and response strategies for climate issues based on indigenous knowledge of the local people. The centre would be set up in Emere, where it all began.

"Ready?" Atien asked softly as he came to a stop beside her. He took her hand, linking their fingers in a manner reminiscent of the last time they had been here.

"Ready." Oniha smiled at him, ignoring the quiet tears that rolled down her cheeks. And tugging her brother's hand, they walked towards the others, eager to commence the restoration of the heritage of not only Emere, but all other forgotten communities.

On the horizon, the petite woman stood watching, her wrapper flowing back and forth in the breeze, watching them as they walked away, her face split in a smile.

¹ The currency and legal tender of Leluji

Communities of Defiance

by
Rutendo Chichaya

*where women are atoned,
for the violence suffered.
and,
we can quieten those voices,
that declare these bodies as,
~~inadequate, sites of terror,~~
~~loot in wars, and ugly.~~*

*disruption is a language that,
teaches us to gather our grief.
and,
hold each other's hands,
to proclaim that shame has,
no place in our resistance,
and erasure cannot
change the truth.*





THE REVOLUTION AIN'T WHAT WE THOUGHT

by
Aidah Namukose

I've been to the beginnings of a revolution, and it ain't what we thought. No signs of iron buildings or dark clouds fogging up the sky. No gunshots or politicians' voices or referendums and votes that vanish.

This revolution is brown, green, sunny, and sweaty. Taking place across farming lines, as it did on the first day. Brown mounds of soil caved open to grow life. Brown hands gently covering the dirt, and awaiting a divine outcome.



The women and the seeds keep sprouting and growing. We forget her sacrality, and where we come from. We scorn her in denim trousers and high rises, and yet she continues to give, and allow us to be. And eventually, we learn that this hope ain't revolutionary, it is natural. Always has been and always will be, when we choose to honour her and see her.



These outcomes don't lay in court, with a jury or a pen. They lay in the temperaments of Mother Nature, whom we forgot how to please. Forgot, or maybe disincenitised.

No longer do we pray to her, leave her sacrifices and tickle her fancy. And yet, somewhere in the outlands, this revolution never stopped.



Before it's too late, but can it ever be too late? Mother nature is ever-giving, and the revolution is ever-growing. We look down, look deeper, sink into the brown. The revolution has always been here, and it ain't what we thought.



Economic Justice



The Tablet of Existence

The fundamental question of human existence has always been simple - how do we provide for ourselves and sustain our way of life? This question has been answered in different ways in different generations going back to the early hunters and gatherers. Today, we are still answering that question.

The challenge for many states is finding a balance between building wealth and managing created wealth in a way that provides optimal benefits to everyone in society, from the masses to the elite. When answered properly, the wealth divide becomes a space that can be navigated and crossed, not a gaping chasm that plunges people to their deaths as they attempt to get to the other side.

The shrill sound of the kettle lets me know that the water has come to a boil.

I lay down my book on the low table and head into the kitchen to make some tea while I wait for my friends, Amire and Daime to show up. The three of us have been close since high school, through University and now as adults working in different parts of the city. A few years ago, Amire was installed as the High Storyteller of Leluji, a prestigious honour and continuing the tradition of her father before her. The same year, Daime had gotten a job at the Institute of Ethical Practice (IEHP) where she and Amire had volunteered in the past.

I was the last to decide on a career path, my interest in numbers and economic development leading me to do a short stint at the Food Production

Program. Last month, Daime shared the advert for my current role at the National Genomic Data Bank and it was such a perfect fit, that I applied immediately and got hired three weeks later. My friends have a day of celebration planned ahead of my resumption tomorrow.

Steaming water flows into my tea mug, and I breathe in deep as the scent from the infused bag wafts, relaxing my muscles. Hibiscus tea has always been therapeutic for me.

Dawn is the most beautiful time of day in Leluji, where the air carries the soft rustle of leaves, and the city below stirs gently like a giant awakening from a slumber. The sun paints the horizon with hues of amber and blush, bringing the promise of a new day, a blank canvas with possibilities.

I have at most an hour left before Daime and Amire show up and bring my quiet morning to an end. I place the tea gently on the arm of my chair and pick up my book to immerse myself in the origins of my new place of work.

"Hey, what do you have there?" Amire's voice is what jolts me from my reading and I raise my head in time to see her plopping into the cushion beside me, as Daime climbs the stairs to the deck. Of the three of us, Amire has always been the one with abundant energy, zipping through life with exuberance, her eyes constantly sparkling with inner joy. Daime is more sedate, happy to follow Amire and I around, but confident enough to say no to the more hare-brained pranks that Amire had come up with when we were children. She was quiet, but she was no pushover. Depending on who you asked, I was either the fun one or the studious one. Both were correct.

"Hey guys." I beam at them in turn. "I didn't hear you walk up. How come you're here so early?"

"It's already 9 am." Daime giggles, showing me the time on the face of her watch. "Did you lose track of time?"

"Yeah, I started reading this book on the NGDB and it's really interesting. I guess I did lose track of time."

Amire leans over to take my mug from the armchair where it still rests.

"You're lucky this didn't spill on you." she cautions as she moves the cup to the table.

"Why are you still reading physical copies of books when the soft ones are so

easy to access? Daime asked.

“Because physical copies are better.” Amire and I chime at the same time.

Daime stretches out her hand, a finger curling back and forth at the book in my hand. I hand it over, then lean back, lifting my right foot to curl it under my left thigh. My friends are here and my quiet time is over.

“What is it about?” Amire has always been fascinated with stories and history. Even when we were children, she read the books in school before anyone else and came to class to pester the teacher with questions when we hadn’t even gotten to the chapter. She was perfect as The High Storyteller, no one else enjoyed telling stories or talking for that matter as much as my best friend.

“It’s about the origins of the data bank and how the Council of Equanimity used it to liberalise wealth in Leluji.”

Some centuries ago, the Council of Equanimity decided to liberalise wealth creation by creating a genome bank. The basic idea was simple:

- All humans have genetic data
- All genetic data have valuable information for science and technology
- Genetic data is valuable

In this way, millions of people were able to make money off their genetic data by exchanging bits of their DNA at designated genome exchange centres in the city. In turn, the Council used the data obtained to create cutting-edge scientific research and advancements in telemedicine that were sold for billions of Leluji Eneres to other cities while Leluji retained the unique patent for the inventions.

In time, the city amassed an impressive national reserve which was directed towards developing the city, providing jobs, and social safety nets for the residents. By the next century, people no longer thronged exchange centres to monetise their DNA, because they had what they needed and lived comfortably.

“You know, the other day, I was watching a documentary on the economic evolution of African cities.” Daime continues. “And I realised again how different Leluji’s trajectory has been from the 1800s till now.



But, when we compare our performance through the centuries, can all the differences we see be solely attributed to the fact that we were not colonised?

Surely a linear event cannot be responsible for shaping multiple outcomes through the years in different cities as we have seen."

Unlike Leluji, many African states and cities had not been allowed to answer the simple question on human existence for themselves. The answers had been thrust on them.

In the 1960s, many countries inherited what were essentially gate states, systems for extracting resources from the state, relying on proceeds from commodities to develop infrastructure and improve the quality of life for the people.

By the 1970s, after a commodities market crash countries started borrowing heavily from the International Financial Institutions and by the 1980s, the IFIs were knocking to collect, forcing countries to implement the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), policies to privatise state-owned assets and implement an open economy. The program completely failed to account for the key role of the state in building institutions and with rising corruption and failing institutions, many countries continued to decline in economic growth and development.

"I don't think colonialism can ever be considered a linear event, that would be overly simplifying what was a canon event for most countries," I argue.

"Exactly. First slavery then colonialism disrupted the whole way of life for entire countries, entrenching foreign government systems that did not take into account existing structures, empowering the elite and de-developing states."



"Yep. When you also consider the other wide-ranging effect - the inequality for men and women. How colonial masters only empowered men, relegating women to the background when we know that before they came, women were leaders in many spheres of African society. Not just that, they deliberately silenced women when they stopped telling their stories and uplifted men alone in their books." Daime nods slowly, pondering our words.

"Agreed. And those consequences are what informs a lot of the struggles on women's rights in those places that we still see today. Women had limited access to means of labour, land ownership rights were given to men and prohibited for women. If you don't have access to means of wealth creation, how do you generate wealth? "

"Yes! In addition, don't forget that it also stunted the production process which many of them still grapple with. The limits on local technology mean that most things are imported instead of developed locally" I finish...

She looks down at the book. "It's fantastic how we were able to avoid all of these challenges by leveraging genetic data. And building our own technology based on it that we could then export to different parts of the world."

About five decades ago, the Leluji Education Director had designed a scheme to support neighbouring countries with designing their local technology. For a decade, Leluji supported countries in building local expertise around technology, engineering and medicine. At the end of the scheme, they had significantly built their own capacity and were even able to export some of the technology to Leluji and other parts of the world, speeding up their development process.

We sit in silence for a few minutes, thinking about development pathways and economic liberation. Then Amire lets out a loud yawn, and laughing, we all head into the kitchen to make breakfast together.



A Table Spread of Hope

by
Siphiwe Ntesang

In the wake of conflict in pre-colonial African communities, our elders would convene around a fire or a hearty meal. In my mother's tongue, this gathering is called "intlanganiso". In the wake of colonialism and its transformations, these institutions of conflict resolution have since taken the form of boardrooms and wide oak tables.

In light of this, I found it fitting to frame the reconciling of African liberation through the lens of economic justice by way of a table. In the investigation of this table, my story will journey through the table's inner workings and who ultimately intends to benefit from it because if not you and I, then who?

By the end of this tale, one should be able to assess if forging a path to the future requires destruction or submission.

Who actually sits at the table?

A few years ago, in my previous naivety of the mechanisms of the world, I would have wholeheartedly nodded my head at the definition and mission of the economic system we all know as Capitalism. I would have been happy to defend the ideology and give it a place on a pedestal. I'd been reared in all of my economics classes to know that this policy was designed to serve me because I'm a consumer. I was brought up in a home where hard and honest work was praised above all things so naturally, I was sold on the idea that if I just worked hard enough in school and my career, I would be earnestly rewarded. The biggest issue with both of those lines of thought is that they numb whoever hears them to the true iniquities that run rampant within the ideology itself.

Through different manners of growth, I was aided in my ability to finally see capitalism and other systems of oppression for what they are. I have to say that not only do I feel failed by the powers that be, but I also feel betrayed by the education system currently in place as well as the market-oriented arrangement that has kept my parents and their parents stagnant in the vicious and detrimental envy and unattainability of wealth. After seeing both my parents at various stages of my childhood bend over backwards for the firms they worked for, spend full weeks on end at their various oak desks, sacrificing time with me to make sure I had food on the table, you'd think we'd be swimming in pools of wealth right now.

However, as heart-wrenching as reality, and capitalism often are, they're still battling and struggling with the same lifestyle and economic strife they had decades ago if not exacerbated by the infamous Washington Consensus and more recently, the world recession. This betrayal forcibly compels me to question who capitalism actually benefits if not my "hardworking" parents because they followed every rule in the book.

So why aren't we drowning in economic wealth?

The answer, while hard to swallow, is pretty simple. The table they took a seat at wasn't designed for them. Where the menu had been set by the wealthy for the food that satiates the affluent and is infused with the nutrients that revitalises them so that they can go out and attain even more wealth- my parents, people that colour outside the predominantly white, cis-het and male circle, were always destined to be waiters/waitresses/servers for those that already occupy seats, but never to eat at the table.

When learning about the market economy, the concept of the Price Mechanism is taught in conjunction with what I like to call the Darwinism of the market. The essence of this system is that through consumer sovereignty, resources and factors of production are allotted to what the consumers seem to want and need. This mechanism is sustained by forces of demand and supply that are governed by said consumers.

Earlier, I expressed that the idea of capitalism can be stomached and enjoyed if you're the said "consumer" because you're quite literally being served by your own economy. While that's the prevailing narrative, let's imagine a scenario where we as a people are the price mechanism. Instead of consumers, we are now the resources that are allocated towards those inside the circle of privilege.

Imagine - everyday you wake up and start your 9-5 which only pays you minimum wage. You have convinced yourself that doing this job secures your ticket for financial freedom in the long run. But this is all a ruse so that you can keep funding and preserving those who sign off on your paychecks with your sweat and tears. The bad news is that you don't have to imagine anymore because that is what happens when human beings, more so marginalised folks are stripped of their earthborn worth and instead replaced with price tags and barcodes tattooed on their backs.

The Darwinism and most detrimental aspect of this idea is that the rest of the people that colour outside of the white and chauvinistic picture are now called and employed to be at the service of those at the top of the economic food chain. Their survival and preservation are valued above all, which means abundance merely circles and accumulates within the "VIP section" of the economy.

The Opportunity Cost and De facto Cost of Economic Freedom

Opportunity cost with regards to the economy is understood as the best alternative forgone when an economic choice is made. When we apply this concept to the subject matter, the question of the price of freedom needs to be tabled. The pursuit of a sunnier future begs us at an intimate level to ponder on what freedom means to all of us.

To *me*, freedom means unbridled possibilities.

With that definition, it's clear to me that the cost of economic freedom is, ironically, freedom itself. What happens when the price of freedom becomes too much to bear? If the de facto result of the apparent economic emancipation and submission to capitalism is, economic slavery and never-ending hegemony, must we then still subject ourselves to thinking that there are only two methods of

escape? Those being that, we either have to stomach and submit or dismantle and destroy. Both of which have been implanted generationally by the powers that aim to keep us in a box trapped in the pedantic rhetoric "That's just the way it is"?

At the risk of sounding idealistic and messianic, when the situation unravels and presents itself this way, the answer to the question of whether to smash the capitalist table or pull up a seat, is to do neither but instead, to form our own.

The Third Option

When tabling this particular topic, I recall a quote by Nina Simone:

*"You've got to learn to leave the table
When love's no longer being served."*

It struck a chord within me and inspired the idea that, in lieu of misallocating energy and resources towards emancipation or trying to conjure up ways to dismantle the foundation that was built off the backs of all of those who died fighting for our freedom, we can channel all of that into, at the very least, entertaining the thought that we too can form our own table. Admittedly, this is easier said than done. It is no secret that for this idea to be achieved, extensive efforts from both an individual and collective level are a prerequisite for

a sustainable and sturdy space.

On the former level which is often neglected, the table would necessitate that we begin to unlearn the harmful ideas that keep all of us mentally enslaved to the ways of neoliberalism. Through this, we are able to challenge intellectual and economic theft while steadily and effectively unchaining ourselves from current economic inequality.

On a personal level, it is also important to nurture the idea that things don't have to be this way. The rhetoric that "it's just the way things are" trumps and keeps transformative ideas from coming to fruition. So much momentum for change is lost within the web that is woven in fear of what the future could hold.

Without invalidating the fears or issues that could likely be encountered in the journey towards change, it is important to understand that above all things, every one of us deserves a seat at a table. A table that ensures our health and wealth. One that serves us in the ways we deserve and require. One that is built on core and caring values that exude love, even in the midst of adversity and it is up to us to summon the courage to construct it. In this, we find our hope. In this, we find our future.



*Treasure and Preserve
what you hold dear*

Philanthropy



The Secret of Almeda

My father once told me that there is no greater honour than telling the stories of your people. In Leluji, the High Storyteller is responsible for curating, and documenting our stories, sort of like a National Archivist and Curator but like, way cooler. We record all events, from births to crimes. Nothing is too small or big to be documented by the High Storyteller or Historian as some people call us. My father Joladi has been The Historian for forty years and in a few months, I will be taking over from him.

My family home in Edun Heights is a modest semi-detached with four bedrooms. The front is generously dotted with plants and shrubs and the back boasts a full garden with flowers on one end and vegetables on the other, all maintained by my father. I asked him once why he didn't just hire a gardener, he said he enjoyed it, and no gardener could take care of his plants as he could.

The blue house next door belongs to my mother's sister and her family. Opposite us, my father's niece, Jani moved in two weeks ago with her seven-year-old son Emiyae. My two friends, Daime and Etowhen, live opposite each other at the end of the long street. It is like this in most streets in Leluji, people live close to their friends and loved ones, raising their children in the culture of the commune, and cousins growing up as not just family, but also as friends.

It was evening and we had finished eating dinner together earlier in the garden. My cousins had gone home after they helped me load the dishes in the dishwasher and I could hear my parents talking outside.

With my coronation as a High Storyteller coming up in a few months, I had a lot of reading to do to prepare myself. Historians were not expected to know all of our stories, there were too many of them, but they needed to know enough. Dishes done, I returned to my room to continue my reading. My current book touched on the Battle at the Port of Almeda where my ancestors had battled the foreigners that had attempted to colonise us.

Every adult in Leluji was told this story from childhood. How the foreigners had come to take control of our land as they had done in many other places. We were taught how the Queen Mother, Mother of King Izaga, ruling monarch of what is now present-day Leluji had rallied the women and men to resist. The rebellion culminated in a Battle at the Port of Almeda, where it is said that our ancestors fought alongside us, unseen, but heard in the roars that rose up from the people, shaking the ground and striking fear in the hearts of the enemy.

I often wondered why the foreigners had travelled thousands of miles from their own homes to come here, where they knew no one and did not understand the culture or climate, for their foolhardy venture. It didn't make sense. What were they after? Could it really be the land, our resources as the stories said or could there be something else?

On page five hundred and forty-five, I found my answer:

As the scientists continued their presentation, one thing was clear to King Izaga, this was worth a lot of money and the pale ones would pay for it. That night he dispatched a messenger to Port Noco, their base. Come quickly, he said. I have found that which you have been searching for across the black land. He would be rich, he would liberate his people with all the money they would pay.

The Queen Mother did not share his views, instead calling for "Caution Izaga", and shaking her head back and forth. "This technology belongs to our people, we can do much with it, to help our people. We do not know these people or what they want with it. We do not know if they mean us well. There is danger here to our way of life. Let us tread with caution. Summon back the messenger." At once dismayed that his mother did not share his vision, and angered that she questioned his wisdom, the King ordered her barricaded in her quarters.

I glanced up briefly when my parents bid me good night as they passed my door, returned their greeting, and turned back to my book.

But King Izaga had forgotten one thing. That the Queen Mother wielded more influence than he did in the palace. She commanded respect and obeisance from court staff. No one would act on such an order. By the time the last of the sun's rays winked out the next day, the Queen Mother had assembled two renowned women warriors and handed them their mission. To take the technology of her people, and sneak out of Leluji before dawn.

The instructions were simple, do not return until I send for you. No one but the three knew, and the bond that formed between them - Queen Mother, Atilega and Ejure - on that night would come to be known as the bond of sisterhood by their descendants.

By the fifth day, when the pale ones arrived at the edges of her land, the secret was gone, wrapped in cloth and skin, kissed by wet earth and burnished by the sun, travelling farther and farther on the continent of the ancestors.

They did not get angry immediately, the pale ones. Their dull eyes piercing, assessing, as they looked first at King Izaga and then the Queen Mother. When they eventually spoke, their voices were nasal, seeming to come up from their throats with difficulty and rasping along the nerves of the skin. They rasped questions, they cajoled and then they bribed. We will pay you, they said. We will teach you how to read. We will show you how to build your land and make money. And when it was certain they would not get their way, they threatened. In indignation, they marched away with a promise. We will return in five days and we will take what belongs to us, by force.

They returned on the 3rd day of April, a week after they left with ten thousand men, all wearing the same thick clothes and pointy hats. Under the tropical sun, the uniforms itched and their throats parched. By the third day of battle, they were defeated as much by the land itself as the people of the Sun, who fought valiantly for the soul of their kingdom."

I sat stunned, present in the realisation that everything I had been told since I was a child was not exactly a lie, but inaccurate. I looked up when a throat cleared to see my father standing by the door, watching me. With one look, I knew that he too knew.

"Is it true?" That was the only thing I could think to ask.

"Yes." He turned and shut the door behind him,

"When did you find out?"

"Forty years ago, when I was seventeen. Same age you are now and much the same circumstance." he smiled wanly at me, his expression softening as he gazed at me.

"Does Mamie know?"

"Yes, she does. Only the High Storyteller and Members of the Council know this story and it must remain so." His smile disappeared and he looked stern for a minute.

"When did they return to Leluji?" I asked.

"You haven't read that part? The Preservers - that is what we call the three - did not return to Leluji until many years later, long after the pale ones had gone. This is also why Leluji no longer has kings, we have the Council and power rests equally between them and the people. " He shifted in his seat trying to find a more comfortable spot.

"When Atilega and Ejure returned, the council held a grand meeting and there it was decided that the technology should be made available to everyone. The gains would be shared equally among all and a percentage set aside for building the city. The women were at the forefront of that quest. That is how Leluji managed to develop so quickly unlike other African countries. The Queen Mother was the ancestor of your friend, Daime. Atilega was yours and Ejure is Etowhen's ancestor. Our three families pledged to keep the technology safe that night and to continue to preserve the soul of Leluji forever. This is why we are the preservers of the stories today."

I feel my face scrunching as I try to digest all of this information.

"But everyone believes that the imperialists came here to steal our natural resources! This story is wild!"

"Yes, our natural resources. What other resource is more natural than human data? It is our bodies, our minds, spirits, dreams and aspirations. If they had gotten their hands on it, they would have used it selfishly for their own gains, extracting it without relenting, impoverishing every citizen of Leluji. And we know they did it in other places, this extractive system and those people

are still struggling to reclaim what is theirs after they left. The preservers prevented that.

"But, why can we not tell the truth now?"

"Because it serves no purpose. What exactly will it achieve?." I struggled to find an answer and could not.

He stood up from his chair and stretched.

"Try to sleep, I am going to bed. Ponder on what you have learned tonight and let me know if you still consent to becoming the high storyteller. Remember that no matter your decision, your Mamie and I will still love you." He bent over to kiss my forehead gently and made his way to the door.

I slept surprisingly peacefully that night and when I woke the next day, I did so with a smile.



Queen Mother



by
Nana Sule

*There is a stranger who offered to sell my mother's home. i revolt
i tell him i like the sturdiness of it. i tell him how the walls hold me
close on the days i fear i am lost*

*He invites himself in. no longer in the business of buying, he swears
he calls me friend. he sits on the low stool my mother made, covered
in fabrics from my lineage. a lion cub woven in red itinochi.*

/ozi udu - daughter of a lion/

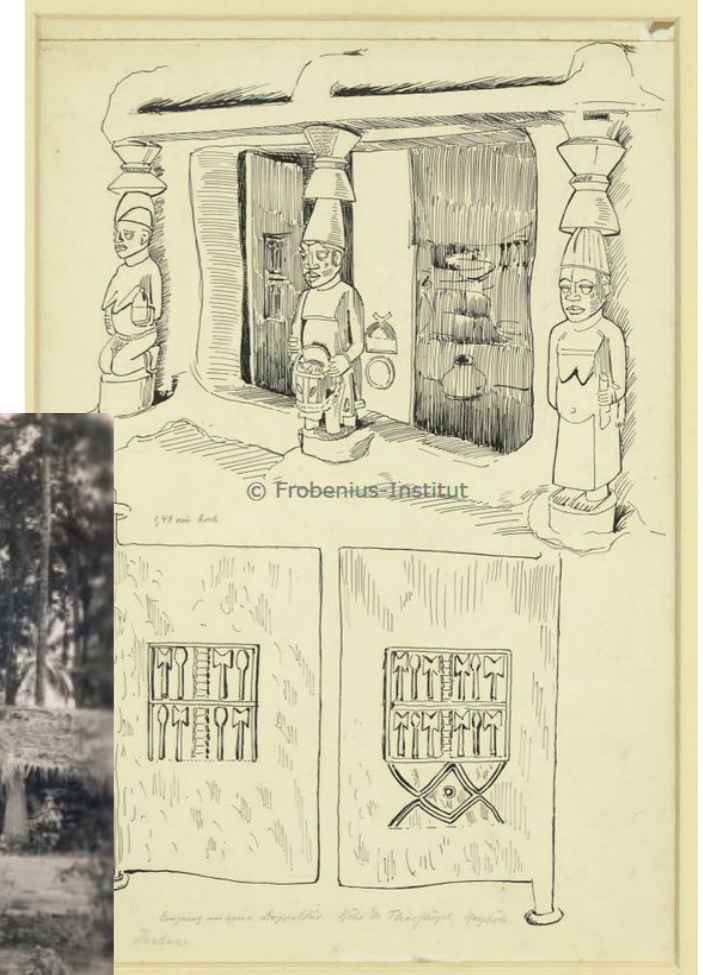
*We pour water into a pot, we throw in goruba. we have tea that my
friend says is primitive.
hours go by, my friend says my stool is sin. he fetches a couch from
his fatherland. he also carries with him a box. in it, all the things he
says are best suited for this home my mother built. i am hospitable.
he stays*

*my friend still stays. even on days i have begged, cried, and
threatened that he leaves. He says he will leave when I can live alone.
I remind him I am never alone in my mother's home. i am never
alone, my mother's mother has breathed this air that i now breathe.
i am never alone. so he mumbles. he grumbles. he leaves though his
eyes tell me he wishes to remain.*

*my friend is gone. my relief does not return. i walk here, i find his
things. i walk there, the air smells of him. the stool is gone. in its place
is the couch. in my pot is tea my friend preferred.*

*my knees weaken, my legs fold. i am now the stranger in my
mother's home.*

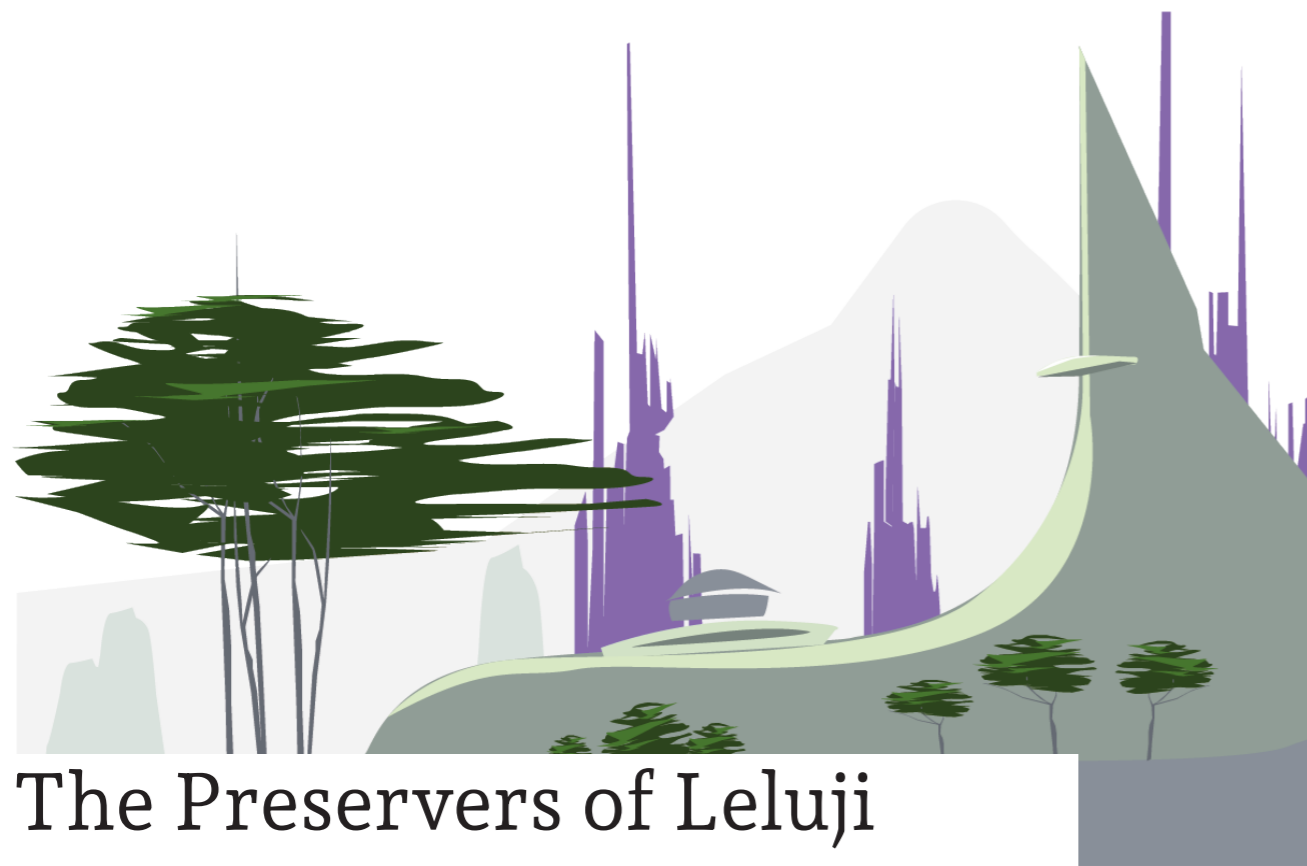
A Stranger in My Mother's House





History and knowledge

Education



The Preservers of Leluji

Leluji City, 2387

One of the things that sets Leluji apart is the vibrancy of the colours splattered randomly across the facade of this gleaming port, a testament to human intelligence and creativity. The bouncy yellows in the murals, the dazzling green of the plants in the parks, the burnished brown of human skin, and the translucent pink of Mavitrons - bodies of artificial intelligence, lush blues of rooted buildings, and the bright reds of genomic exchange centres sprinkled liberally across the city.

But colours alone do not set this place apart, it is a city that has retained its soul, holding on to the foundations of communal living practised by their descendants in the beginning of time. Leluji is a high-tech city where neighbours still care deeply about each other, and individuals on the street will pitch in to help when a stranger calls for assistance. This legacy was one that the Council of Equanimity, Leluji's high governing leadership body, was committed to upholding. The principles of Ubuntu - I am because we are - are taught to children from the cradle and practised throughout their lives. The gravest criminal act a Lelujian can commit is not murder, but selfishness. Leluji had not always been this connected. At different times in the city's history, there had been several tussles for power between different factions - men, women, and Mavitrons alike. The Council of Equanimity was created with the purpose of equalising power among the three factions. The Council, made up of nine members - three women, three men and three Mavitrons

were elected to their seats by their people but only confirmed if other factions consented to their inclusion in the Council.

On a slightly less busy street in the central district, a figure comes into the frame. She is a girl wearing baggy shorts and a long-sleeved T-shirt which has the name of her favourite football player emblazoned in red across the back. Her long and kinky hair is plaited into two corn-rows secured with a ribbon at the top of her head to prevent it from flying in her face. She manoeuvres her hoverboard with expertise and anyone watching can tell that she spends a lot of time on the nifty little machine. Her name is Amire and she seems popular, judging by the frequently shouted greetings to others on the street, and how they smile at her as she whizzes past.

For Amire, musing on the origins of this land she calls home, is a well-indulged pastime. In Leluji, children were regaled with the stories of courageous ancestors who stood and fought with valour against the pale ones. The retelling of the Great Battle of Ameda is replete in stories told to children, captured in books and movies, ensconced in murals on city walls and streets, and retold by the city storyteller on the 3rd day of April every year. The people did not forget, so the city never forgot, and by not forgetting, it thrived.

Amire's father, Joladi, had been the high storyteller of Leluji for forty years starting on his eighteenth birthday. Leluji storytellers come from only three families in the city and all of their origins can be traced directly back to the battlefield of Ameda where their foremothers and forefathers had fought to keep their lands safe. And in that sacred battle, a pledge was made to keep the story alive so that generations afterwards would never forget how close they had come to losing their agency as a people and sovereignty as a nation. Amire feels a buzz on her wrist. A new message. She turns her hand to read it. "Don't forget to pick up the books from the library, Amie." It is a message from her mother and a timely reminder because she had indeed forgotten to get the books.

Another buzz on her wrist.

"And you better not be reading this while riding that machine of yours!" Amire smiles. Her mother worries about her hoverboard, even though hoverboards are the safest way to move around a city as busy as Leluji. In Lelujian custom, a storyteller can either tell the stories for forty years or until their oldest child turns eighteen, whichever comes first. In the case where a storyteller had no child, or had completed forty years before their oldest child turned eighteen, or the oldest child wanted nothing to do with

the role - consent is a golden rule in Leluji - then the role would pass on to another family. In this way, the telling of stories had revolved between Amire's family, and the families of her friends, Daime and Etowen. It was considered the highest honour to be bestowed the high storyteller of Leluji and before the title came back to Amire's family, it had been in Daime's family for two generations and in Etowen's for three before that.

Amire's coronation as the new high storyteller would happen in a few months, on her eighteenth birthday and she looked forward to it with joy and a small amount of gentle trepidation. Joy, because she had enjoyed the stories immensely as a child and would now be able to tell it to others. Trepidation because she did not know how the new role would affect her life. She was still a girl who wanted to go window shopping with her friends, play football, and party hard into the night on days when she was supposed to be reading her books.

In the past year, she had spent many enjoyable hours poring over digilog transcripts of ancient texts, immersing herself fully in the stories of her ancestors, her people, and her family. Learning about the time when cities had been much larger, and called countries.

The only other thing Amire enjoyed more than reading and telling stories was ethical hacking. In the previous year, she received a distinction in her Intelligence and Ethical Hacking program at the University of Leluji where she graduated top of her class. Now, she works part-time at the Institute of Ethical Hacking Practices (IEHP), a Leluji agency committed to advancing ethical hacking practices in an overly connected society. Among other duties, IEHP supervised the data management and privacy practices of Leluji's Genome Bank - the DNA bank - of citizens across the entire city.

In earlier times, the University had started as a clinic owned by a medicine woman - Sayna Farro, to treat illnesses and injuries using her indigenous knowledge. Time went by, and her knowledge was preserved, transferred and documented through the apprenticeship system she developed for those who came from near and far to learn from her. By the 12th century, the clinic had grown to become a renowned centre of all kinds of knowledge, not just medicine. Today, students travelled from thousands of miles to attend the University of Leluji, revelling in both the plethora of advanced knowledge available and the traditional methods of teaching that are employed to this day.

She roused from her musings when her hoverboard slowed down in front of the National Library. She jumped off her board, parked it at the left of the

entrance in the section designated for hovers, and made her way into the building, making a brief stop at the library deli where a woman was seated. "Good afternoon, Ati" she greeted the woman seated behind the counter, wrapping up a brown cake. Ati is a word of endearment used to greet older women in Leluji.

"Ah, Ami! How are you?" the woman asked, her face wreathed in smiles.

"I am fine, Ati. How is business today?"

"Fine, fine. Every day is better than the one before. We thank our ancestors. How is your mother doing? Did she send you to pick up a piece of cake or some bread?"

"No Ati. Mamie didn't ask me to come. I'm here to get some books for my coronation. I just wanted to stop by and say hello to you. And also see if Daime is here"

"Oh she is not here. She is writing her final exams at the University today. She will be back in about an hour or so. Will you wait for her?"

"No Ati. I have to get going. I will call her tomorrow."

"Okay, dear. Greet your mother for me. Ask her to send you over for a sleepover after Daime's exams. I know she will like that."

"That will be fun! I will ask her. Bye Ati."

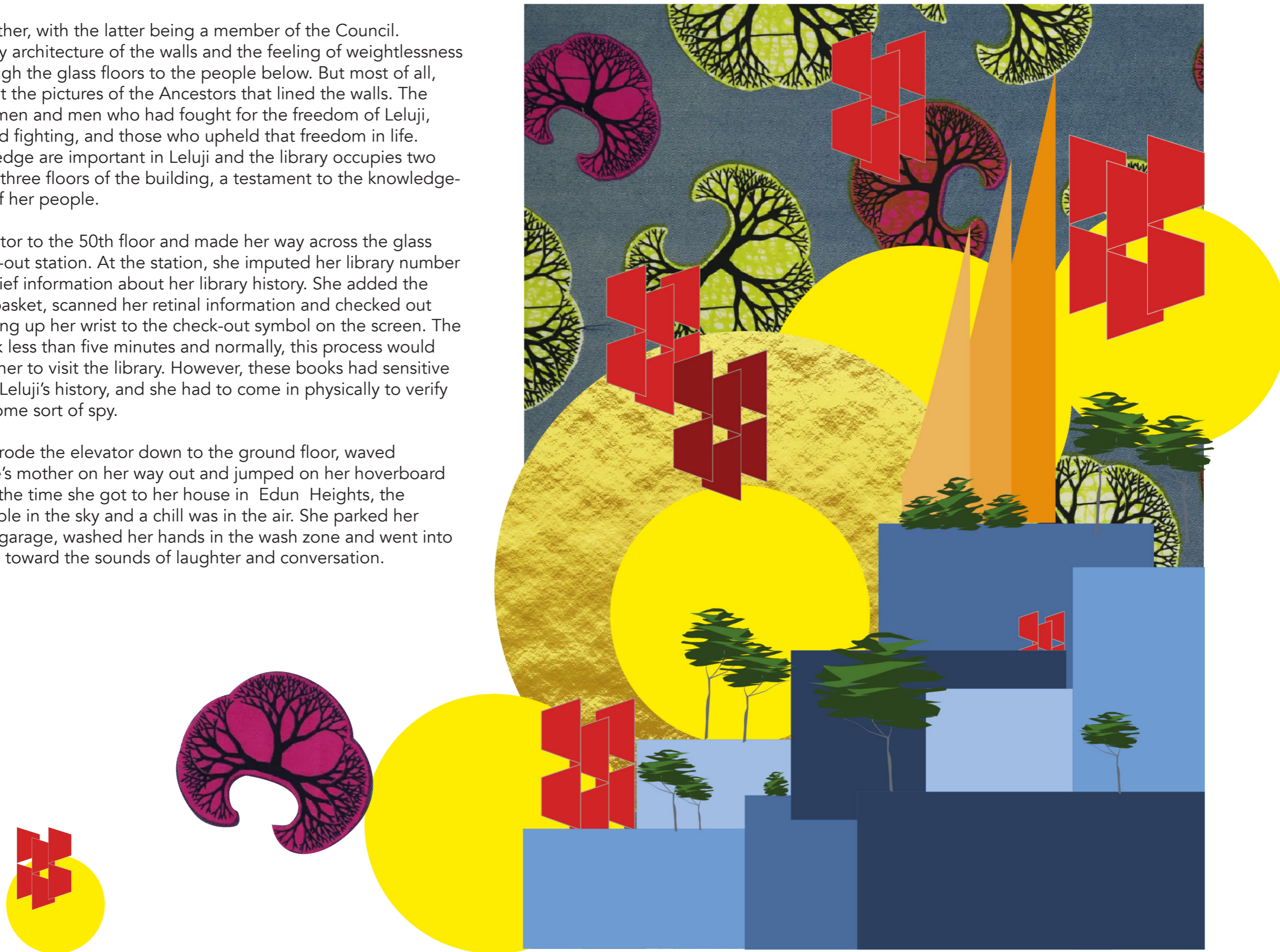
Even though Amire was confident that Daime would do well, she made a mental note to call her later and find out how her exams had gone. Lelujians generally did well with tests because they were trained early on to engage critically with knowledge and knowledge systems. Children were encouraged to query what they did not understand and express dissent with what they did not agree with. The knowledge system thrived on the challenge of proving itself, iterating easily when new information evolved that made old knowledge obsolete.

The National Library is the tallest building in Leluji, residing on fourteen million square feet and standing at an impressive four hundred and eight floors, it takes up one-fiftieth of the city's land area. In addition to being the tallest building, the library is also the busiest, and most important building as it houses office buildings, entertainment centres, two museums, and the National Genomic Bank. Amire had visited it frequently in the company of her

father, and her mother, with the latter being a member of the Council. She loved the curvy architecture of the walls and the feeling of weightlessness as she stared through the glass floors to the people below. But most of all, she loved staring at the pictures of the Ancestors that lined the walls. The pictures of the women and men who had fought for the freedom of Leluji, those who had died fighting, and those who upheld that freedom in life. History and knowledge are important in Leluji and the library occupies two hundred and forty-three floors of the building, a testament to the knowledge-gathering efforts of her people.

She rode the elevator to the 50th floor and made her way across the glass floors to the check-out station. At the station, she inputted her library number and it pulled up brief information about her library history. She added the two books to her basket, scanned her retinal information and checked out the books by holding up her wrist to the check-out symbol on the screen. The entire process took less than five minutes and normally, this process would not have required her to visit the library. However, these books had sensitive information about Leluji's history, and she had to come in physically to verify that she was not some sort of spy.

Afterwards, Amire rode the elevator down to the ground floor, waved goodbye to Daimé's mother on her way out and jumped on her hoverboard to head home. By the time she got to her house in Edun Heights, the sun was barely visible in the sky and a chill was in the air. She parked her hoverboard in the garage, washed her hands in the wash zone and went into the house, headed toward the sounds of laughter and conversation.



Are You Dead Yet?

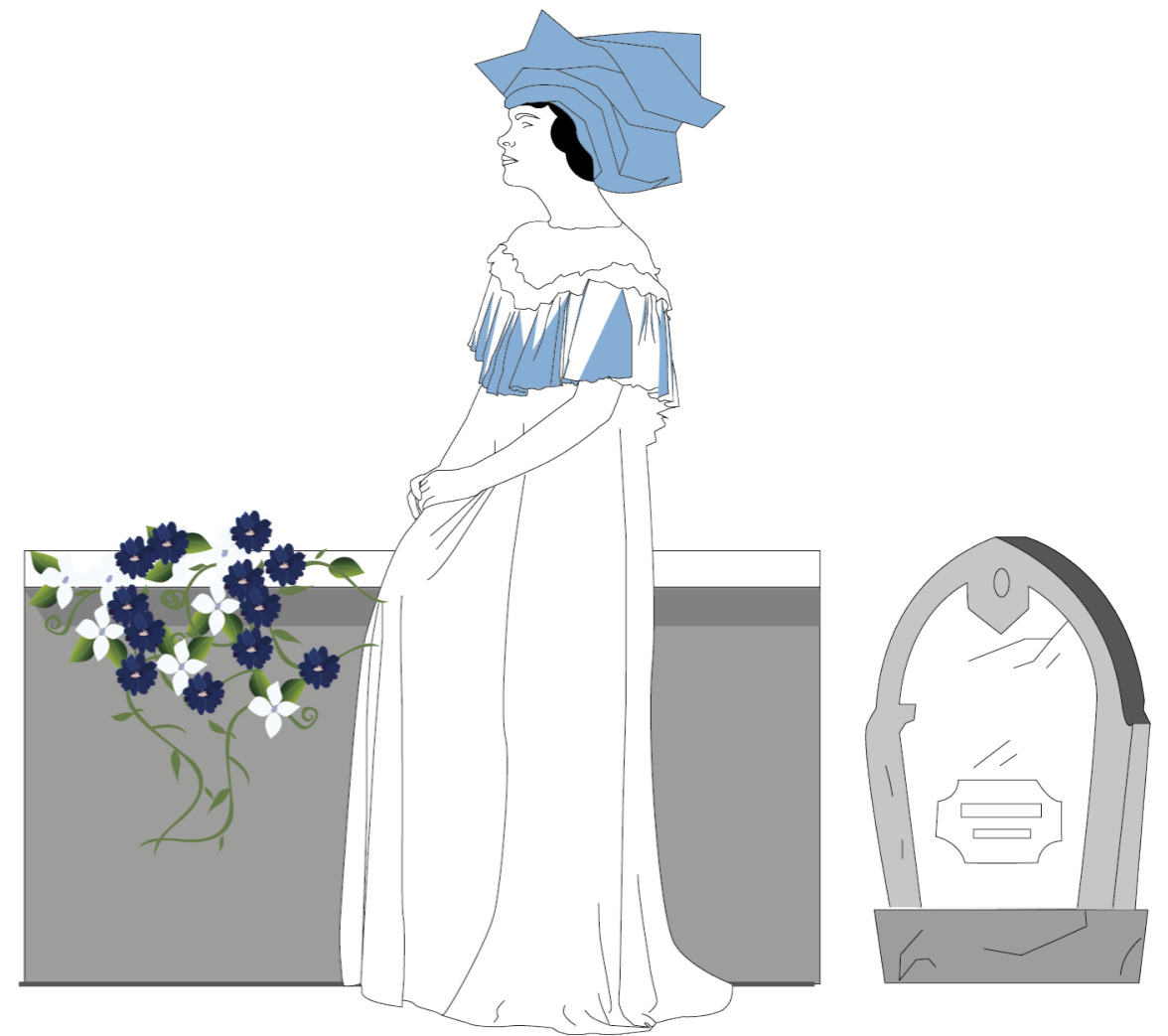
by
**Omolara
Oriye**

*Are you dead yet?
Are your hands by your side, your neck angled down?
Are you lowered into that six-inch box?
Have you submitted to the loss of consciousness?
Is your spirit wafting up in disappearing dance like smoke?*

*In this jungle, there's no life support,
Just a mother standing over your body waiting to feel the cord
snap
Because motherhood knows when you're gone.
Are you dead yet?
Your mother wants to know*

*Are you holding on, she wonders, her hands clutching her belly.
There are words unsaid, and emotions she wishes were shared.
Are you dead yet?
Or are you drifting in and out?
Are you dead yet?
Or are you satisfied with the shallow breaths that barely fill your
lungs, in and out?*

*Are you dead yet?
Do you lay still in anticipation that your punisher will stop?
Waiting for revolution to bring forth a pause?
Do you lay there, still, feeling the life leave?
Your blood flooding the streets*



*Are you dead yet?
You are lying on the floor, unconscious?
Is your perpetrator standing over you with no remorse?
Will you hang your head in resignation?
Are you dead yet?
Or can you take some more?*

*Can you look on and watch the starvation?
Do you know it is not an accident?
Your mother's consistent struggle to feed you from her dry
breasts?
Do you know she did not spill the milk?
Are you filled with wild emotions or are you dead yet?
I know your pulse is faint and that your heart aches
But you must answer me
Are you dead yet or will you stand up?
And in trepidation and uncertainty still fight?*

Reflections on the Anthology

In exploring the intersection of feminist and decolonial praxis within the African context, this anthology attempts to acknowledge the historical and ongoing injustices perpetrated by colonialism and patriarchal structures. The feminist lens offers a critical perspective that unveils the interconnectedness of various systems of oppression, revealing how gender, race, class, and other axes of identity intersect to shape power dynamics. Through this lens, we can discern how colonial legacies continue to influence education, leadership, climate action, economic justice, and philanthropy in Africa. By centring the stories of marginalised groups, particularly women, we begin to challenge the hegemonic narratives that perpetuate inequalities and work towards more inclusive and equitable solutions.

Decolonial approaches to education in Africa call us to a reevaluation of curricula, pedagogies, and institutional structures to reflect diverse perspectives and histories. By integrating indigenous knowledge systems and challenging Eurocentric norms, education can become a tool for empowerment and liberation rather than a mechanism for cultural erasure and assimilation.

Similarly, leadership guided by feminist principles prioritises collaboration, empathy, and collective decision-making, moving away from hierarchical models that reinforce erasure, dominance and exploitation. By embracing diversity and amplifying marginalised voices, leaders can foster environments that are conducive to innovation, sustainability, and social justice.

In addressing climate action, economic justice, and philanthropy through a feminist and decolonial lens, it is crucial to recognize the disproportionate impact of environmental degradation and economic exploitation on

marginalised communities, particularly women and indigenous peoples. By centring their knowledge, stories, and solutions, we can develop more holistic and effective strategies for sustainability and economic empowerment. Furthermore, philanthropy rooted in feminist and decolonial principles shifts the focus from charity to solidarity, emphasising systemic change and community-driven initiatives. By redistributing resources and dismantling neocolonial structures, philanthropy can become a catalyst for transformative social change, advancing justice and equity in Africa and beyond.

The Makings of Revolutionary Hope calls us to reflect critically on the systems of knowledge that currently exist and question whether they truly reflect the possibilities of our continent and the realities of border populations. It calls you to question, to engage, to dream **boldly**. And after that, it calls you to act.



Author Bios

Aidah Namukose is an eco-feminist and climate storyteller based in coastal Kenya. She is passionate about human rights for all, a decolonial Africa, and nature-based sustainable living.

Goitse Kwada is a storyteller and podcaster from Botswana passionate about documenting the lives of African women in ways that humanise us and highlight our joys as accurately as our pains. She is also a lover and traveller of Africa.

Nana-Hauwa Sule is a Writer, Journalist, and Communication Associate with Liberation Alliance Africa. She is an Ebedi Fellow and Author of the Children's book, *A New Name*. She was also a contributor to the feminist anthology, *In Her Words*. She enjoys writing fiction, and creative non-fiction and spends some of her time planning and moderating literary and corporate events.

Nikita Abuya is a 24-year-old Nairobi-based African visual artist who works across a variety of mediums, from graphic design, to painting, digital illustration, and photography. Incorporating nature and patterns in bold and vibrant shades, Nikita tells stories inspired by her culture, generation and experiences in which people can recognise themselves, feel represented, and empowered.

Omolara Oriye is a decolonial feminist researcher, organiser and human rights lawyer with over a decade of experience working on access to justice for marginalised groups, policy advocacy and feminist activism and philanthropy. She has a master's degree in human rights and democratisation in Africa from the University of Pretoria and an LLB from the University of Buckingham. She is a documentary photographer, writer, teacher and thinker with dreams of raising critical consciousness and resourcing knowledge as a liberatory practice. She is invested in slow living, healing her inner child and love as liberatory praxis. She is the co-dreamer at Liberation Alliance Africa.

Rutendo Chichaya is a Zimbabwean writer, poet, and book review blogger. Her short stories have been shortlisted for the Hamwe Short Story Contest in 2021, the Intwasa Short Story Prize in 2020, and her blog for the Afrobloggers Award in 2021. Her work has appeared in *Intwasa Short Stories Volume One*, *The One Poem Anthology: Survivor's Edition*, *Mosi Oa Tunya Literary Review*, *Ipikai Poetry Journal*, *Words Remember: Poems and Stories from Zimbabwe and the USA*, *Tesserae: A Mosaic of Poems by Zimbabwean Women*, and *The African Feminist Anthology: Women's Tales*. Rutendo hosts *Ihwi*, a podcast that documents storytellers' experiences.

Siphiwe Ntesang writes what ails her heart in order to find healing in the realisation of her own musings. She aspires deeply to journey deeper into economic justice through the lens of feminism and intersectional thought. Her hopes are that by way of this, she can one day sit at a table where folks who look like her can fare and flourish with no fear.



Appendix

[Disrupting Colonial Legacies of Leadership in Africa](#)

[Disrupting Colonial Legacies of Climate Justice in Africa](#)

[Disrupting Colonial Legacies of Economic Justice in Africa](#)

[Disrupting Colonial Legacies of Philanthropy in Africa](#)

[Disrupting Colonial Legacies of Education in Africa](#)





Liberation Alliance
Africa



THE MAKINGS
of
REVOLUTIONARY HOPE

An Anthology

Published by
Liberation Alliance Africa
March 2024

hello@liberationallianceafrica.com

Twitter: @liberationaa

Instagram: @liberationalliance

Website: www.liberationallianceafrica.com

Designed by Damola Bolaji
bolaji.oyindamola@gmail.com