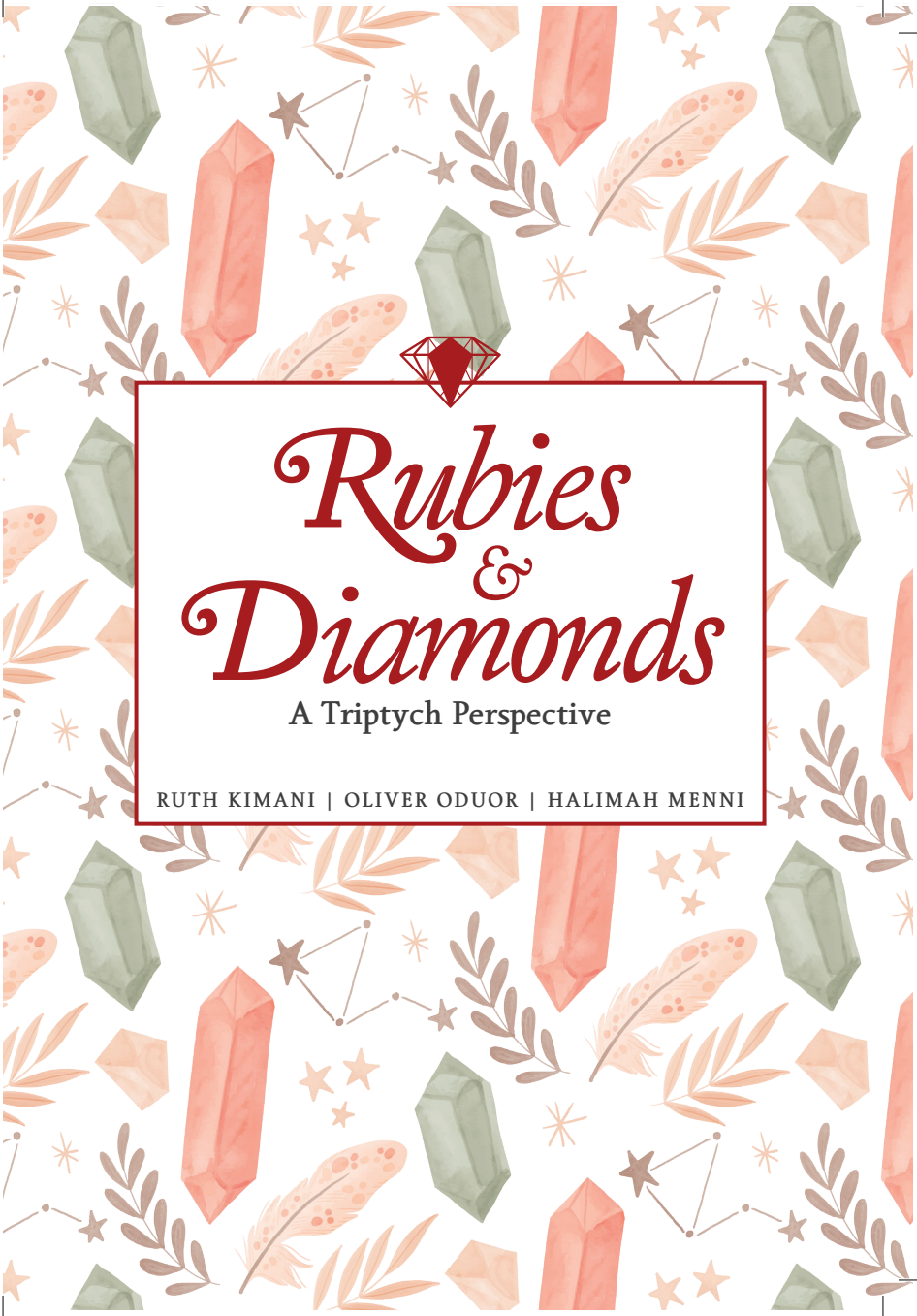

Rubies & Diamonds

A Triptych Perspective

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Foreword

It is with deep admiration and joy that I introduce this anthology, a treasure trove of spiritual musings and reflections that delve into the raw essence of Christian life. These poems, penned by three young Christian friends, are more than just words on a page—they are the heartbeat of the soul, laid bare. The collection explores the inner battles, self-questioning, and silent struggles that every believer faces, painting vivid pictures of life's trials, while also offering hope, faith, and grace as the ultimate guide.

Each poem invites the reader to pause and reflect, to take a journey inward where the real war between the flesh and spirit wages. With flowing and reflective style, the authors bring to life the joy, love, and resilience that every Christian strives for in the face of life's challenges. Interwoven with deep emotions about family, love, and self, this collection resonates with anyone who has ever walked through the storms of life, yet held fast to the promise of victory through Christ.

The unshakable grace of God is a theme that courses through every poem, pointing readers toward the serenity and bliss of the eternal life that awaits all believers. These poems not only inspire deep reflection but also offer moments of laughter, balm for the weary soul, and warnings for life's missteps. There is something in this anthology for everyone—a rich menu of thought, emotion, and faith. I am confident that as you turn each page, you will find a piece of yourself mirrored in these verses and feel a fresh stirring of hope and faith.

Micah Mahinda,
HR Consultant and an Organisational Effectiveness Coach

PART I

Joint Pieces

Halimah Menni, Oliver Oduor, Ruth Kimani

God's Good Earth

Have you ever wondered why
God made the earth and the sky?
In them He placed His creation,
Different species, all special.

Here's the marvel for us:
That for each of the species
He did all the design work
From software to hardware
One being the behaviour;
The fabric of character that runs it
The other the physical makeup
That makes it unique
Distinguishable from the rest

Have you ever wondered why
God made you and I?
In us He blew the breath of life,
Different traits, all special.

Here's the marvel for us:
That for each one of us,
He carefully moulded us into beings
Unique as He is
Yet diverse as He is
The fabric that shapes our existence
The threading of each of our memories
The weaving of each of our thoughts
The distinct hair strands on our heads
Making us unique
Discernable from the rest

Have you ever wondered why
God made the beasts of the fields?
And created the earth and sky,
All in tandem, to Him easily yields.

Here's the marvel for us:
Some creatures are so beautiful,
You just smile at His amazing mind,
Others so horrific,
You wonder why He created them.
And others look so strange
You don't know how they even function
Yet He made them, said they were good
And without man's interference
They make a beautiful ecosystem
Each species detectable from the rest.

Oliver Oduor, Halimah Menni, Ruth Kimani

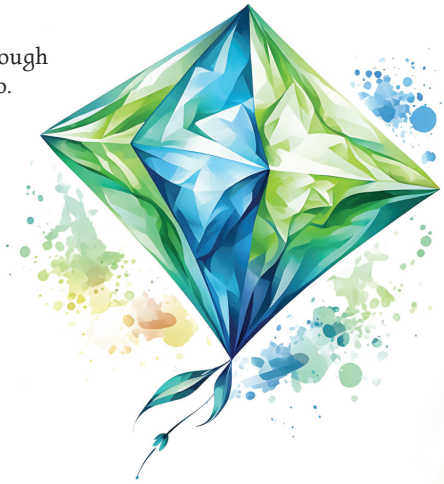
Rubies and Diamonds

It matters not
What we must face
Here on earth
In life's short race
If lemons or melons
Is what life gives us
There awaits a palace
Bejewelled for us

As pressure moulds gems
Our characters must be
Refined in fire
And like a ruby
Cleared of the mire
As precious diamonds
Left sparkling -
Twinkling like a star.

Rubies and diamonds
Known to be durable
And like a mirror
They reflect us
Though at times oblivious
Of the pressure we face
But with grace
The skin glows
And eyes shimmer
As the gemstones glimmer

Rubies and Diamonds
Precious as they are
Must be tried and tested
Found to be true
For nothing of value
Is of a small price
It must be handled
With caution
For though they be tough
They are delicate, too.



Ruth Kimani, Oliver Oduor, Halimah Menni

Who is Your God?

A question we always grapple with
A thought that keeps pushing its way forward
That we are always tempted to voice
A curious thought that threatens to pour out
A simple yet thought-provoking question
Who is our God?

We ask because we have a pretty good idea of who our God is
We ask because sometimes we wonder if it's all in the head
We ask because we get battered so much and question this
We ask because sometimes frailty hits one so hard
We ask because He reminds us in inexplicable ways that we're His
Who is our God?

Who is our God when we are high and raised on a pedestal?
Who is our God when we are low in the valley of adversity?
Who is our God when in the season of plenty?
Who is our God when our hour of need beckons?
Who is our God when all is said and done?
Who is our God?

We ask if you know who your provider is.
We ask if you know who's been your help this far?
We ask if you're aware of the peace in your storms.
We ask if you're acquainted with the anchor in your turbulence.
We ask again
Who is your God?

PART II

Individual Pieces

Oliver Oduor

Afraid of Love

The rare untold story
Of a naïve village boy
Innocent to the core
Green of life evermore

The background a father
Abusive like hell
A resilient loving mother
Contrasting quite well

"Thou shall not,"
Comes a voice to remembrance
Whether church or court
He couldn't tell the difference

Blink of an eye
A handsome young man
In need of affection
Afraid to go for it

Goodies in sight
One step forward
Self-doubt and fright
Two steps backwards

Till when praying mantis
Shall beauties pass you by
For you to take the step,
Ushering you into your bliss?

Halimah Menni

A Moment of Decision

I've been here awhile now,
Stuck, no strength to go on,
Confused, have run out of thought,
Wounded, bruised, trodden upon,
Junction of time: I must move on.

From where I come I cannot return,
Where to go, I cannot discern,
My heart says this, my head says that,
Torn in between, I am so undecided,
I can no longer stay here. I must go on.

One path glitters, the other glimmers,
One I see it's ending, the other I cannot,
For the path that glimmers, it seems so dim,
Allured, I am pulled to the sparkles,
My heart says, trust the faint faith.

Faith seems futile and useless,
It gives me an intangible hope,
I am but human; I need to see to believe,
The glitters convincingly call to me,
The heart with silent strength prods me.

It's my choosing I'm to walk in,
I must decide carefully and prayerfully,
Or bear the unpleasant consequences,
For making the wrong choice between these,
I must decide; it's time.

Ruth Kimani

A List of Gentle Reminders

Delete that number
Delete those photos
I know, it may still hurt
But forgive, even though they didn't ask for your forgiveness

Give away those sweaters
Pass on those clothes that no longer fit
I know, you may still love them
But holding onto them is like not letting go of things that no longer serve you

You are still alive
My oh my, It looks good on you
I know, life is hard
But compared to what?

Live life
Experience every moment as if it's the last
I know, you've been clenching your fist
A closed fist can only act as a crutch to the pain but you need an open hand to experience life

Halimah Menni

Beyond the Clouds

Somewhere beyond the clouds
The sun shines on
Cloud cover gives some shade
To the wayfarers
Sometimes it's just the view
Other times it brings rain
And then gives way to rays
For too much shade may not be best
Clouds now and then
Sunshine next
Sustaining the walk
Beyond the clouds

So walk on strangers
This world's not our home
Press on pilgrims
It's a journey we're on
Valleys here, mountains there
Trudge on don't waver
Come shine or rain
There's an ultimate reign
Silver linings a sure promise

That someday very soon
We'll be safely Home
Beyond the clouds

Farther than the cloudy sky
To where they will be clear
And the sun shines forever
All that's good is endless
There'll be no deepening shadows
No pain or sorrow there
No tear-stained eyes 'soever
But joy and gladness e'ermore
There are no rumours of war
Only peace prevails there
A land of unending gladness
Beyond the clouds

Halimah Menni

Beyond the End

Hanging somewhere
Between the edge
And eternity:

I've come too far,
To try looking back,
Yet where I stand,
It's all so bleak.

I prayed for a sign,
He gave me His Word,
I asked for assurance,
He faithfully came through.

Many are the times,
I've doubted the Promise,
Circs threatened,
To steal my joy.

Always there,
He has stood by me,
Leading me,
Through paths I couldn't see.

I've walked this far,
To try looking back,
In the void I stand,
Where do I go?

Only to God,
The Eternal One:
Beyond the end.

Oliver Oduor

Birth of a Toolbox

It started with the spanner
The handy pocket friend
Next the Allen Key
Manoeuvring through the bend
Before long there came
The all-powerful wrench
Its counterpart the mattock
Digging through the trench.

Arriving in a moment
The bolt and nut wallet
Ushering in the brushes
Ready for the colour pallet
Soon the nails were in shambles
The strike of a claw-hammer
Forget not the trees
Hearing the saw murmur.

Some manner of work
Brought in the pliers
Others called for the ladder
To reach out to the piers

Crowning it all
The workman at his best
Body all covered,
Including his chest.

Ruth Kimani

Bits and Pieces

I have fed bits and pieces of myself to the hungry crowd
I have given bits and pieces of myself to those who showed little care
I have shared bits and pieces of myself to unassuming adults
I have picked up bits and pieces of myself from the ground
I have pieced together bits and pieces of myself with love
I have sewn bits and pieces of myself when they poked holes into the fabric of my existence
I have seen bits and pieces of myself in the people who loved themselves
I have been bits and pieces of myself from time to time
I keep being, seeing, sewing, piecing, picking, sharing, giving and feeding bits and pieces of myself and wondering who would ever embrace bits and pieces of myself when I could be myself and let you enjoy the bits and pieces you choose to see!

Halimah Menni

Born to Battle

My faith is frail; thin as a thread,
Fixed on the Grail, the lonesome road I tread,
Things come and go, and people, too,
I'm struck down, again and again,
Yet I rise and press on.

Something's tugging at my heart,
It keeps me walking, trudging along,
I've wanted to give up, so many times,
But as the clock ticks and the bell chimes,
I find myself on the battlefield again.

I fight like my life depends on it,
Oft I wonder, how I do it,
If I were to choose this myself,
I'd give up, I'd let go for good,
But still, I press on.

Something inside won't let me give up,
Victory is mine; and it is assured,
How I'm to get there, is a little blurred,
The crown I await, seems so far,
I guess I was just born to battle.

Oliver Oduor

Brink of Choice

At the brink of choice
Where the chooser stands
Trying hard in search
Of the elusive balance
On the razor edge
Stretched to the elastic limit
Either next to the surrender
Or the breaking point.

At the brink of choice
Where drama goes into action
All the possible options
Awakened from their sleep
Come guns blazing
Demanding their share of chance
Each presenting itself
As *la crème de la crème.*

At the brink of choice
Where all interested parties
Whether invited or not
Invite themselves

With only one mission
To defend their logic
As the only most reasonable
Decision one can make.

Oh the brink of choice!
Where the chooser remains
Beaten and worn-out
Buffeted by stakes so high
Tempted by the easier route
That of giving up
Instead of do or die
Instead of make or break.

Oliver Oduor

Click of the Clock

Sometimes I find
In deep reflection
Or perhaps in the grind
Of moment of concentration
I hear in the background
A 'tick' and a 'tock'
Turning back around
It's the click of the clock

I stop and smile
At peace so rare
A break for a while
From moments of despair
Meanwhile, the sound goes
Knock...knock...knock!
Keeping me on toes
The click of the clock

All of a sudden
From a grin to a frown
Remembering my burden
In my sorrows I drown

So transient time seems
Life hard like a rock
The pursuit of my dreams
Against the click of the clock

The conclusion of the matter
On the future and the past
Between the former and latter
What's the answer at last?
They say one is history
Unable the present to unlock
The other is a mystery
Dependent on the click of the clock.

Halimah Menni

Clueless

Life can get really hard:

In times when everything that was once bleak
Fades away and you have no glimpse of light
And the mustard faith you seek
Is so minute it escapes your humanly sight

Those times when the thin thread of hope
Is so frail and no longer holding
When the strong winds blowing against your life's rope
Threaten in its ocean to get you sinking

The times when the birds have lost their song
And the journey you plod seems too long
With thorns and briers, stones and boulders
You are all bruised and have stooped shoulders

Those moments when the rose by the roadside
Has choked and wilted, its beauty denied
When the grass that was once green and hopeful
Has fallen to the ground - brown and mournful

All that stood bright is now fallen in plight:

The brightness of day is turning gray
The warmth as well is fading away
In that instant when the flicker at the end of the tunnel
Approaches your way all rolled into a barrel

A blast!
Aghast!

This is not what you expected
Certainly not what had been promised
You wonder what is going on
Tempted to give up but something makes you press on

The bleating of the lambs in the slaughterhouse
Fill the air around your lonely house
Where is life in these times?
Where is hope when needed most?
What does the future hold?
What does it have in store after this?

It's true dawn comes after dusk,
But that seems like a far-fetched dream.

Ruth Kimani

Curious Bud

Is this a chicken-egg relationship?
The unending debate on who came first?
The misguided notions of who is right?
The heated conversations about what is right?
Is this that kind of conversation?
Is this that sort of talk?

What kind of society do we live in?
I ask questions
I ask different kinds of questions
I ask questions because I love questions
I ask a lot of questions because one of the questions will light a bulb
I ask knowing that the right question will attract the right answer.

I am who I am because of questions
I know what I know because of my curiosity
They say curiosity killed the cat
If this is accurate,

What killed the mouse?
Was it the curiosity of the cat?
Was it fate?
Are we doomed to some kind of fate?

Who decides who dies and who survives?
Who decides what is acceptable?
How can we look on as others are trapped?
How can we be onlookers as others are grasped unlawfully?
What society do we live in?

I ask because I question our values.
I ask because it breaks my heart.
I ask knowing I will surely find an answer.
I question, I ask, I am curious.

Ruth Kimani

Darkness

You grew up afraid of the dark
The darkness that only paves the way for the light
A light that comes in the morn
Some mornings may be dark
Some may be cold
Some may be warm
Some, a great thing to look forward to.

You grew to love the darkness
Because it only meant it's time for bed
Some darkness you walked right through
Some you worked all through
Some you chose to brave
But some you feared not knowing what they brought.

Today, you are bold
Brave because of the dark and light
They have both caused you pain
They have both engulfed your sorrow

They have both been a source of joy
They have both brought abundance
They have both taken away
But you still stand.

Today, you stand brave because you have seen light and dark
Today, you say a prayer of peace because you have stood in a storm
Today, you brave the light because you have met the dark
Today, I pray you brave the dark because there is a great light that awaits you
Today, you believe because you've got an anchor
You have grown some roots and you remain unshaken
Regardless of whether you stand in the light or the dark
Today, I dare you to see the light amidst the darkness
I dare you to feel the love of those around you
And you will have chosen to be the light!

Oliver Oduor

Demons of the Past

The demons of the past
That vexed my young soul
Come to remembrance in a blast
With their torment as a whole
They battered and scarred
My poor little heart
My joy and smile shattered
Only leaving me with hurt

Those demons, I tell you
Were clothed in a mask
Hard to believe, right?
But how? You may ask
Guised in a loved one
Or so they are called
An angel and a good one
By society, we are told

Now the demons linger
In my mind as memory
Powerful no longer
Perhaps just as a story
Overtaken by events
Time, another reason
Finally, a lesson presents
That everything has a season.

Oliver Oduor

Devil's Kitchen

Devil's Kitchen
The constant busy place
Where the trials of men
Cook in different measures
Silently left to simmer
Seasoned with hot pepper.

Raging tempests of temptation
Fashioned for a stumbling block
Burn like hot fire on a stove
Fuelled by misfortune of circumstance
Sometimes burning the fingers
Of the waiters and chefs.

Talking of the chefs and waiters
In the name of demons and agents
Peek and peep calculatingly
Waiting for the next customer
Before pouncing to deliver
The order: Hot and steamy.

Yet sometimes it comes
As a surprise package
Surprise! Surprise!
Happy birthday to you!
Or perhaps to say your birth
Brought all these to you.

Halimah Menni

Droplets of Eternity

Rain sprinkles earth,
A revival.
Seeds germinate,
They bud
and replicate.
They grow.
Sunshine strikes,
Rays of hope.
Flowers bloom,
Fruits ripen,
Maturity.
The cycle continues,
Infinity.
God is life,
and all that lives,
is godly.

Oliver Oduor

Elephant in the Room

I smile immediately
At the thought of this name
Of this mystic creature
Perhaps larger than life
Yet the greater irony
Is how invisible it seems
To many a people
An animal so ignored.

But how come
It fills up the room
Taking every space
And capturing every mind?
How did it enter the room
In the first place?
Through the door whose size
We know very well?

Yet the bigger question
Surely must be this:
How shall we overcome
Its deafening trumpeting?
Shall we not simply
Take the bull by the horns
Face our fears head-on
And restore all the room?

Halimah Menni

Forever or Not

It's simply amazing
How love's course runs
This I say with confidence
As emotion in me churns
It can't be happenstance
With all its twists and turns
Some kiss many frogs
Afore prince charming's arrival
And many a prince have resigned
There no longer exist princesses

But truly, my darling
This has been our love story
Still too short to be written
We could jinx it, possibly
Maybe it's taboo to count chicks
Before the eggs fully hatch
But it couldn't be wrong
To count blessings bestowed
For it's good to give a rosebud

Than wait to plant a wreath
When no words can be breathed
And desires can no longer be expressed

It's been lovely knowing you,
And if there's a forever for us or not
You've re-written a great deal
Turned my sorrows into joy
Wiped my tears and made me smile
My nights of anguish
Have turned into glorious mornings
And I don't want it to ever end
Let rain or sunshine come
Clouds and shadows, too
I want to love you more
Respect and cherish you
Be with you and do you good
This I've learnt is my heart's balm

Storms may come, I know
I pray for grace to ride them with you
And when emotions can churn no more
And all the passion seems to cease
I pray for a settled peace
So may you always rest assured
That I love you and always will
And whether there be forever or not
I do now and forever will.

Oliver Oduor

Forgive Yourself

I cannot try to deny
The memories of your past
Dark as they seem
And recurrent in your mind
Let me just remind you
The fact that you're human
Perhaps not to encourage
Any sin with indifference.

Why are you so hard
on yourself?
Why expect so highly
of yourself?
Don't you know that
life ain't that perfect?
Or who told you it's
a bed of roses?

Give yourself another chance
There's music for you to dance
Give your mind space to heal
No need your joy to steal
Life is like a place
You've never been
Mistakes like a phase
You've never seen.

Oliver Oduor

Gambler Generation

I thought I wouldn't notice
Everything unfolding from the side
Perhaps pay little attention
To this new song in town
It didn't take long
To realise I was wrong
And that its loud chorus
Has taken us by storm.

One side cheered
As their opponents jeered
The atmosphere electric
And the 'fans' ecstatic
Their classic debate
As Messi or Ronaldo
Until you come to terms
With the interest of these fans.

Now let us forget
The 'fans' for a moment
Did you take the chance

To turn on the news today?
YouTube, TV or radio I bet
It probably doesn't matter
It's all about new tunes
Of this same gambler song.

Allow me dear die-hards
I have to stop the music
My fingers are badly itching
To turn down the volume
My pen already leaking
For me to ink it all down
That unfortunately in a flash
We've become a gambler generation.

Ruth Kimani

I Come as One

Here I am,
I come as one but representing the thousands
Thousands of my ancestors and kindred
The multitude that has made it possible for me to shine
A light so bright that it'd blind
Dark souls that'd do everything to make this moment impossible
I'm possible because of the many
The many who fought blood and sweat for freedom
A freedom so dire during this age
An age of gloom

I come as one
One with the Light
A light that frees from bondage
A bondage that is now in the mind
A mindset so backward that it fears the light
But a light so bright they'd rather clutch onto the darkness.

I come as one
One preaching amidst the chaos
The chaotic hustle and bustle of life
A life so demanding that they'd rather hang back than stand out

Standing out from the thousands
The many, who dwell in complacency
Complacent of the weariness that tears them down
In tatters of hope that they fail to love, to trust, to hope
In a hopeful future that screams of harmony and unity
I come as one with the Light, to preach of the light!

Ruth Kimani

I Hope You Heal

Dear child,
I hope you heal
I hope you heal the insanity of this world
I hope the darkness never sets its claws on you
I hope it never gets to sink its murky nails in you
I hope it never attaches its imprint like a tattoo on you
I hope it dissipates at the sight of the light that emanates from you
I hope you never stand face to face with the ugliness of this long unending and confusing episode called life
But I can only hope

Dear child
I hope you heal
I hope you heal when faced with the task to rid yourself of the mud
I hope you can pick up the glue when all is shattered
I hope you can carefully piece it back together
I hope you will see the cracks as a way to let the light in
I hope the rays of the sun will seep through the cracks when you can no longer see the light
I hope that this way, you will embrace adversity and see it as a blessing
But I can only hope

Dear child
I hope you heal
I hope you will treat the wounds with love
I hope you will blow some love on them
I hope you will pamper them with cotton buds
I hope you start around the edges, work your way in
I hope you choose the prettiest bandages for the wounds
I hope that with time, you will uncover the beauty and own it
I hope we get to see the scab as you start your journey of healing
But most importantly, I hope you heal

Ruth Kimani

I Want to Write a Poem

I want to write a poem
I want to write about what you want to hear
I want to say what you have wished to be said
I want it to express your thoughts, ideas
I want it to expose your secrets
I want to write a poem that will make you uncomfortable

I would like it to be a sit at the edge kind of poem
I would like it to be a provoke-your-feelings kind of poem
I want it to be a piece that makes you smile kind of poem
I want it to be an expression that makes you cry kind of poem
I would like it to make you almost throw stones at me kind of poem
But I would also like it to be a piece that makes you want to hug me.

I would love it if it would express my thoughts kind of poem
One that would make you kinda understand me kind of poem
I would like it to express my raw thoughts kind of poem
I would love it if it tries to show my worries kind of poem
I don't mind if it leaves me vulnerable
But by the end of this poem, I want you to wonder who I am

I want to write a poem
A poem that leaves you shaking your head
A poem that makes you shift in your seat
A poem about how they didn't see me coming
A poem that leaves you grieving when I'm gone!

Halimah Menni

If Perchance

If perchance you find me lost,
Wandering paths without a torch,
Lost in the wonder of the world,
Captivated by the shiniest,
Floating away from life's coast,
Called to the dark seas so moist,
And with mud all over my clothes,
Throw me a lifeline before I drown,
And if at first I don't hear your shout,
Stand by the shores and call me again,
Sit still till I answer and return,
And turn away from the angry waves,
Back to the shore, where I'll live again,
My heart aglow with vict'ry gained,
You'll have spared a feeble soul,
From the claws of life's mean toil,
If perchance you find me lost,
Don't run from me or gossip about -
My youthful wanders and human bouts,
Sit still till I turn and be saved.

Oliver Oduor

In-Between the Lines

In-between the lines
Where I find myself
Searching for meaning
To life's hidden mysteries
Lurking in the darkness
Beyond the written pages

In-between the lines
Where I lose myself
To the wildest imaginations
Of what lies within
The words of the text
From the author's pen

In-between the lines
Where I give myself
Giving in to take the chance
The sheer possibility
Of what could be
And what could not at all

In-between the lines
Where I take myself
Away from confusion
Of deceitful plain text
To know the unwritten truth
Without a shadow of doubt.

Oliver Oduor

In the Grapevine

In the grapevine
The unofficial informant
Where the truth untold
Comes out so bold
Yet clearly mistold
An ugly side so cold

In the grapevine
The innocent leakage
Where a fact denied
Comes out justified
Yet clearly falsified
True lies so glorified

In the grapevine
The perfect cycle
Where what goes round
Comes right back around
The source surely bound
To receive back the sound

In the grapevine
The blessing in disguise
Where intent for onslaught
Comes quickly to naught
An avenue cleverly wrought
For society's wars to be fought.

Ruth Kimani

Incognito

She is locked in her incognito
She is an emblem of her values
She is a gallant soldier
She is beautiful inside and out
She is a fighter yet a lover
She fights for and loves her country.

In her incognito, she laughs
In her incognito, she destroys
In her fury, she saves
In her saving, she protects
In her protection, she is confident
In her confidence, she is honourable.

We don't know if she exists
We don't even know who she is
We live free because she's hidden
We walk and talk freely because she is dedicated
We live oblivious to her existence
We sleep peacefully because she protects us.

When she is locked in her incognito
She works better
When we demand to honour her work
She lives in worry for her children
When we decide to recognise her children,
She is worried
When we live as if she doesn't exist
She performs her duties with ease.

Guns ricocheting are her music
Grenade pins hitting the ground are her protection
Grace is her name for with grace she protects
Guns are her solace for with the guns she saves
Grenades help her sleep, for with them, she is assured of safety.

Ruth Kimani

Inventory

I think it's about time I took an inventory
An inventory of my life
Inventory of what I have
What I have achieved
What I have lost
What I ought to do and what ought to have been accomplished
It is sad that I just realised I'm running out of time.

What is the time?
Why are we governed by time?
Why should we be conscious of time?
I've heard that time is of the essence
That we should be conscious of it
I like to think I live in a liberal world
I just realised I live on the principles of time.

Time has flown and old age is stealing on
I'm devastated
I'm worried
I'm sickly
What do I do?
Every second counts

I'm all alone
But just then, in my loneliness and void,
I hear "tick-tock-tick-tock"
All I'm left with is time.

I get lost in the soothing sound of the second hand
It assures me I'm not alone
I'm assured of a friend
A friend who warns
A friend who says I'm running out of her
What does that even mean?

I'll stretch out
I'll pick myself up
I'll take that inventory
It is long overdue.

Ruth Kimani

Is This It?

I love *nyama choma*
So every time I take a shot,
I imagine the shrinkage to my lungs
As it happens to the meat on the grill
The way it darkens
As it burns
The tantalising sizzle
As the master marinates
The temporary scent
That sends my taste buds on a rant
But just before I take a shot
With every shot
I stimulate my brain
But I cannot recall when this became an addiction
They tell me too much of something is poisonous
So does it mean *nyama choma* is my enemy,
Or is the chaser my combatant?
Just one more to calm my nerves
And this might just be the one that fries the liver

Halimah Menni

Love's Journey

With every glance and every smile,
Their hearts draw close each time a mile,
His kind deep gaze stops her's awhile,
Ever so charming he's never vile.

He speaks with words ever so kind,
Expressing his unwavering mind,
A clear vision to her he unwinds,
Of the path they'll take, leaving all behind.

Storms will come and winds will wail,
His love will stand amidst the sail,
On their wedding day lifting her veil,
And in marriage, carving a new trail.

Ruth Kimani

Love, through their Eyes

Love,
A word used to drive away shortcomings
A word used to mellow even the darkest and coldest of hearts
A word used to express emotions
A splendid experience

Love,
At the cross we learn
By His stripes we heal
Through the scars we see the light
As scarlet streams flow we are redeemed
In His wings we find freedom

Love,
Some may be scorched
Burnt by the disguise
A disguise that squishes and steps
Stepping on those who crave
Craving love from the wrong people

Love,
Today we witness
As we bask under the rays of sun
As we celebrate the joy
As we wish them a happy ever-after
We smile because of love
A love so strong that walks, dances and sashays down the aisle

Love
You and I
Have so much love,
That it
Burns like a fire,
In which we bake a lump of clay
Moulded into a figure of you
And a figure of me.

My love,
It's you and I against the world they say,
Thou art fair my love,
There is no spot in the fabric of our love
It feels right to notice all the shiny things about you
About you there is nothing I wouldn't want to know
With you nothing is simple yet nothing is simpler
About you many good things come into relation

Halimah Menni

Man's Façades

Hi! How are you?
Is often met with, "I'm fine, thank you!"
And now it's diluted further to,
A nod, a wave, a side smile, a wink,
And truly knowing how someone's doing,
Has become a thing of yesterdays,
And everyone's busy going his way,
As there's so much to be done,
With increasingly such little time,
No one wants to be another's burden,
Keeping things to themselves,
Sometimes for lack of trust,
With a lot to do and wishing for elves,
As life is on the fast lane for all.

With reluctant smiles and shy gazes,
We acknowledge each other's existence,
But we don't take time to peel the guises,
Of our friends and those of loved ones,
We take the little semblances,
Given as we brush shoulders,
Walk on, walk away, minds on goals,

Never wanting to waver,
We pray for the mattering souls,
We hope they're alive and well,
Then we get surprised when,
We read in the dailies and socials,
That someone that was once close,
Has passed on or is unwell.

Bring back the olden ways when
Life was slower and beautiful,
Perhaps, not in physical realms,
But relationships were real,
And people were more intentional.
There was a true sense of community,
But now, you never know the stories,
Behind the lingering eyes,
And with stooped shoulders,
We see heavy steps taken,
And sometimes it's hard to awaken,
To face the days ahead of us,
If only we'd take some moments,
To peel off façades and be real.

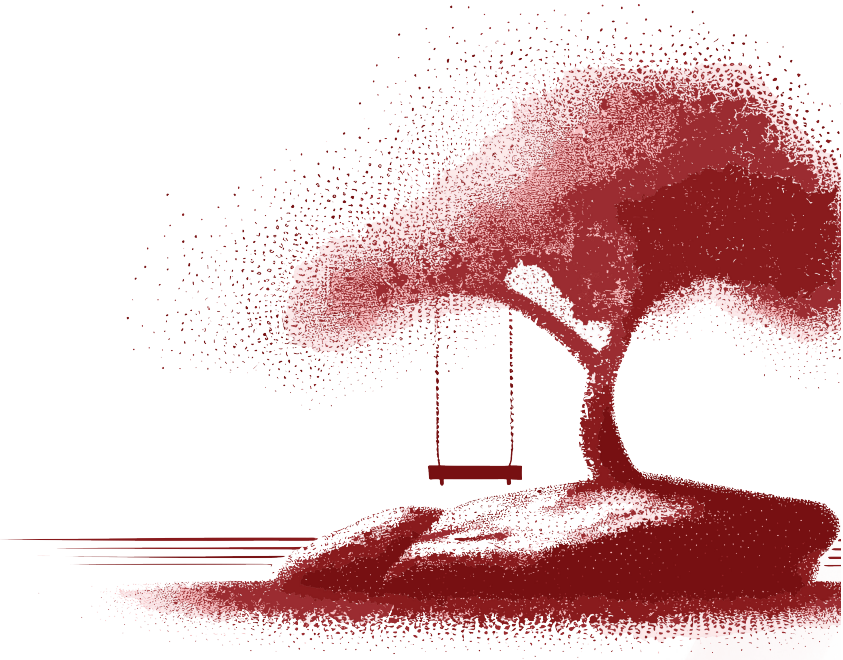
Oliver Oduor

Memories in Pictures

And so in the pictures
The memories remain
Of this fire gone cold
In the stillness of frames
It's amazing this rare story
Mind-boggling the end
The silence quite deafening
The blankness so blinding

The tongue lost for words
The pen runs out of ink
The mind unable to think
The poet's eyes rapidly blink
Lest haply without warning
A tear should escape
The tight grip of the socket
Drenching the writer's page

Who would have known
The fuel would run out,
Leaving the journey in limbo?
The destination almost a dream
So near yet so far
And yet who knows
What memories in pictures
Can do in the end?



Oliver Oduor

Mister Nice

Mister Nice! Mister Nice!
How many times
Did I call your name?
To bring your attention
To things that matter
In life's short race

Listen Mister Nice
To the wisdom of my words
Life is a jungle
Full of predators
Lying patiently in wait
For the chance to strike

Life is a mirage
With many lying vanities
Fashioned for a snare
To entangle your tender heart
Denying you the chance
To enjoy your freedom

Life is an open book
Full of empty pages
You are the author
The pen right in your hand
For you to command
The plot of your story

But watch Mister Nice
Against the imminent trap
Of being good for everyone
And perhaps good for nothing
Yet, at least, do something
Instead of doing nothing

Halimah Menni

My Writing

There's a blank page
And a cursor that blinks at me
As if to warn me of looming danger:
A danger of not writing something
A word, a title, a verse, anything
My mind can't think of a thing
Yet there are a lot of thoughts
Coming at me in a jumbled mess!
What should I write?
What should I not write?
I digress.

Writing has always been
A thing of mystery to me
Sometimes inspiration strikes
And I have the favour of the muses
So I write on whatever I find
From paper to laptop to phone
When the literary gods smile on me
Or ram and wham an idea in my head
I can't rest until I put it down in ink
Lest I forget exactly what
The punchline is for the piece.

It remains a consuming fire
A journey inward, a torch to light
The world within and around me
And it's always been a draining one -
A great reliving of emotions,
Of moments and experiences,
The good, the bad, the happy, the sad,
The painful and the joyous ones, too,
It feels like I'm bleeding on the pages
While at other times it is beautiful -
Like a painting - but with words.

Ruth Kimani

Mother

She has been kind
She has been fruitful
She has been warm
Sometimes cold but always reassures me of some warmth later on
She has showered me with endless gifts
She has sometimes taken something from me.
She is very generous
She gives me hope
She gifts me a new day.

She deserves so much better
She deserves better than leftovers
She deserves better than paper
She deserves better than campaigns
She doesn't need me to play the attorney
She doesn't need you to play jury
She doesn't ask for much
Yet she deserves everything
She only asks for my respect.

She is beautiful
She gives and gives
How do we pay her back?
Is it by smoking her up?
Is it by killing her produce?
Is it by taking more than we can use?
Has she been unfair to you?
How has she deserved the pain?

As I sit on this boulder,
I can behold her goodness
I see her greatness
She shows me the promises she holds
The potential
I am ashamed of my dreams
I am ashamed that I thought I needed more warmth by cutting down her trees
I am ashamed that I have asked too much of her and given back so little.

Ruth Kimani

No Limit

She thinks I'm insane
She thinks I'm delusional when she sees me dancing
When she sees me free and lively,
She thinks I'm out of my mind.

I choose to focus on the light at the end of the tunnel
She thinks I'm too dark to recognise the light
She thinks my darkness is too blinding
I dance and dance and dance in the dark
She watches with amusement sometimes
Other times, she watches with pity etched on her face.

I choose to believe in the possibility that I will be free one day
She keeps on reminding me that the sky's the limit
I disagree with her,
The sky is no longer the limit
The sky is only a limit we choose to limit ourselves.
In my mind, I dance to the possibility of being liberal
In my mind, I have seen the light
The light has dissipated all the darkness in my life.

Sometimes I steal other people's rays of light
Sometimes I bask in the darkness
Other times, I plunge into thoughts of having a bright life.
These are the days I dance and dance.
Unfortunately, she thinks I'm insane
It's unfortunate that she cannot hear the music.

Ruth Kimani

Pass the Mic

Dark were the ages when my father was born
Dreadful were the times he was conceived
Dreamy was the ink used to write his life
Dim was the light, which illuminated his path
Dark were the days he spent doodling his dreams.

As a little boy, he lay on his mother's lap
As a little boy, he gave hope to his father
As a little boy, he went through heartache
As a little boy, he lost his mother
As a little boy, he dreamt of being a pilot.

Bleak were his days
Boldness flowed in his veins
Becoming, he dreamt
Beauty, he gave a new meaning
Boldly, he studied
Boldly, he grew.

Now he lives his dream
Not the dream he had as a little boy
Not the dream he envisioned
Not being a pilot but now being "The Pilot"

Black is the colour of his skin
But black isn't the blood flowing through his veins
Black may be his identity
But black isn't how he identifies
Black, he gives a new meaning.

For long, he longed to speak
For long, he held the dream
Feeling and hoping
Feeling and dreaming
For now, he lives
For now, he lives the dream.

He's the pilot I want
He's the pilot I need
He's the pilot I desire to be
He loves, drives, provides
He pilots, pilots our family.

Now, he speaks
Now, he talks
Now he stands for unity and humanity
Now he passes the mic.

He passes the mic he so longed for
He passes the mic he dreamt of
He allows me to speak
He allows me to use my voice
He passes the mic he couldn't own

He passes the mic to everyone needing it
He doesn't mind being the mic runner
He passes the mic willingly
He encourages me to use my voice
He understands the need
The need to pass the mic.

Ruth Kimani

Puppet

What's another word for unwise?
No, no, let's not use fools
For lack of a better word, let's roll with "puppet"
I'm left to wonder who is the puppet
Is it the beggar who asks for help?
Is it the beggar who agrees to take photos with the 'well-wisher' to get help?
Who is the puppet?

Who is the puppet?
Is it the one who is always glued to the phone?
Is it the one who always seeks the limelight?
Someone said we all have a spot for seeking attention
The need to feel significant and feel important
But I have a feeling we all are puppets, to some extent.
A puppet because we claim we live in a digital world
A world where we are always glued to our phones
A world where social media is controlling us like a puppet on strings.

Sadly, we consented
Sadly, we gave in to the pressure
The pressure to feel important
The need to show you're doing something to help others
The unquenched thirst to feel significant.
Like a puppet on strings, we post, upload, update
The "sadder" part is that we sit there monitoring the likes.
We sit anxiously, checking the comments.

What happened to anonymous help?
What happened to humanity?
Who is the puppet?
Or rather, who is the bigger puppet?
Is it the one who broadcasts achievements?
Or is it the one who gives consent to be used as a puppet to fulfil others' selfish needs?

Halimah Menni

Reawakened

Born to greats, she was great,
Everything going well for her,
What prestige, what honour,
She wanted for a thing never,
And favour was all her bet.

Then life happened, the regret,
From the greats she got severed,
What misfortune, what belabour,
She got wounds to be covered,
What calamity she had met!

But then time came she had to let -
Let go of the chains that bound her,
What shackles, what demeanour!
She had to stand tall and linger,
Till the giant within no longer slept.

Halimah Menni

Resolved

A moment comes in life,
When we must pick a side,
There's no middle ground,
As things abound.

When younger we are fearful,
We step and move; so careful,
Cautious, with little experience,
And we leave a lot to chance.

By sheer miracle we grow up,
With loads of lessons we pick up,
On our pathways and roadsides,
Sometimes caught on the blind side.

Then a time comes for a full resolve,
To clearly choose who we want to be,
A time comes when we must evolve,
Decide the kind of life we want to lead.

We must be what we were meant to be,
No matter the curve balls thrown our way,
And once we grasp what we want to see,
None can ever our resolve sway.

Ruth Kimani

Rest is a Mirage

I work, work and work
I know I will rest, eventually
This may be the only thing that gets me through the back-breaking
The promise of rest
I smile at the sight of the mirage
I work with zeal
I have learnt to be patient
I've had to learn to create my own mirage by the side of the road
I have embraced the chase

Oliver Oduor

Rock-bottom

Rock-bottom
Where a man stands
Helpless to the core
Lifting feeble hands
In surrender furthermore
To God only who can

Rock-bottom
Where a man sits
Jaws on the palm
In hopeless dreary fits
Without a single psalm
It's God only who can

Rock-bottom
Where a man kneels
Praying desperately
All is lost he feels
Rescue comes ultimately
Through God only who can

Rock-bottom
Where a man lies
In sorrow despondent
Defeated in his ways
His future left dependent
On God only who can

Rock-bottom
Where a man rises
On a solid foundation
His faith comprises
Help to his situation
From God only who can

Ruth Kimani

Self-sabotage

I run, I sweat, I rush
I dream, I hope, I work
I dream I visualise, I strategise
I write I visualise, I smile
I plan, I strategise, I dream
I don't execute,
I self-sabotage.

I've been in the race for long
So long to know what to do
What I must do seems logical
What is logical is actually what I want to stay away from
I need to stay away from the societal norms and laid-out blueprint
I want to follow my blueprint
My authenticity, my pride
I think, I make my way,
I self-doubt, I self-sabotage.

There's ingrained system I want to defy
I've been told before I'm rebellious
I actually kind of like it because no one steps on my toes
I like being alone sometimes

Being the unique one
But most times I listen to other people's opinions on how I should live
I listen and take note
I go with the flow
I drown,
I self-sabotage.

Yesterday I was learning, studying
I was following the laid-out plans
I was so meticulous in executing my plan
I was so articulate in writing down what I needed
I was ready to follow the path where others had trodden
I chose to be safe and comfortable
Then I realised I had a different path
Instead of running like everyone else,
I had to fly
Just when I was ready to jump and fly,
I realised I was a rocket
The sky was no longer my limit
I had to pierce through the shells and the sky
This time I knew what I wanted
I knew what I needed to do
I didn't self-sabotage.

Halimah Menni

She's a Warrior

She's a warrior, she's a fighter,
She fights with devils -
Fiends in high places,
She's not afraid to battle,
No matter how scarred she gets,
Some wounds are lethal,
But she never relents,
She claims the Blood of Jesus,
As her daily balm,
For she's got souls to claim,
No time to flirt with the world,
Her eye on the heavenly goal,
Standing face-to-face with Satan,
She wouldn't want any of hers,
to end up on his side,
For he's sly, cunning and evil,
Seeking souls to devour,
And so she fights wars, fights on,
Bringing along all she can,
To the beautiful Heaven,
Built on Grace by God,
For she's a warrior.

Oliver Oduor

She won't Always

She won't always be there
Oh dear heart of mine
Waiting in patient prayer
For your love to shine
After failing to take
All the chances she's given
Sleeping wide awake
On her clear signals even.

She won't always be free
For you to just take
Coz all others also see
Preying a move to make
Far away she'll be
Finally taken from you
As you watch so helplessly
Regretting your wastage, too.

She won't always also
Bear with your indecision
To show her affection more so
And her new destination

Probably depleting her chances
She'll leave you all alone
To battle your circumstances
And, sadly, be long gone.

Ruth Kimani

Small Cat, Big Cat

You see a cat
A measly little kitten
Just a feeble playmate
A cute gift to make you smile

I smile in return
I may sometimes match your energy
I sometimes exceed it
I am what you see
I like what you see

I see the fire in my eyes
I feel the strength in my bones
I even feel the roar rumble deep down
I see the fierce threatening to break out
I wish you could feel the heat in my bones
I wish you could have a glimpse of the tiger
I wish you could feel the fur between your fingers

But would you still want to play?
Would you still smile when you see me?
Would you sit still and pet me?
Would you still be my playmate?

Oliver Oduor

Some Woman

If one were to enter
Life's solemn main
To stand up and be counted
In the human race
To be born of a mother
Through whom to be nurtured
And come out right
It would have to be some woman

If on one side
One were to have company
Growing up undeformed
Full of love, life and laughter
Childhood of a special kind
With sister, one of a kind
With whom to enjoy it all
It would have to be some woman

If on the other side
A man were to have a companion
To travel across the divide
And enjoy the rest of his life

Through thick and thin
And life's race to win
With a wife as his cheering squad
It would have to be some woman

If time would grant one
To bear a daughter
To light up their home
With tenderness and joy
And at God's appointed time
Hand her over to another
Through her to be an in-law
It would have to be some woman

Yet in all if Christ
Were to have a church
To take for a bride
Through which souls to save
If God were to bear children
Through such a beloved,
Spiritually speaking,
It would have to be some woman

Halimah Menni

Sorrow Here, Joy There

Grass is greener where it's watered,
It's proven fact of time,
It withers when ignored,
On it I can bet my last coin,
And that is true about the soul of man,
While on earth, it's got a plan.

And as per what he feeds on,
His soul will thrive or surely die,
But we're encouraged by God's son,
None of His will be lost - no lie,
So once we know we are His own,
We are to get watered by His Word.

And when this happens we are safe,
No matter what comes or what goes,
We are His, alive or dead,
So when the enemy claims what's his,
And we are returned to earth's dust,
It's sorrow here but joy in Heaven.

Halimah Menni

Soul Synergy

Teamwork makes the dream work,
It's a truth of the ages,
A cord of three is hard to break,
It's been tested by the sages,
And when you want some good luck,
Be in people's good pages.

How you treat others, a make-or-break,
Of the bonds you'll here create,
Shatterproof and beyond shake,
The foes you'll meet and each mate,
Will treat you just alike,
And that's how you control fate.

No man is an island,
That is a sure given,
If you stand as a locked land,
You'll definitely rot,
But with two or a greater band,
It gives you a better hand.

Halimah Menni

Speak to me, Lord

Speak to me, when I'm weak and tired,
Speak to me, when I'm all excited,
Speak to me, when I'm down in the dumps,
Speak to me, when on the mountain tops,
Speak to me, Lord.

When I lie down to sleep, speak to me,
When I dream, speak to me,
When I wake up at dawn, speak to me,
When I go through the day, speak to me,
Lord, speak to me.

Speak to me, when I fall into temptation,
Speak to me, when evil traps me,
Speak to me, and free me,
Speak to me, and lead me,
Speak to me, Lord.

When I'm strong, speak to me,
When I've got it made, speak to me,
When I belong, speak to me,
When all is great, speak to me,
Lord, speak to me.

Oliver Oduor

Taste of Time

So I guess it's true
We made it, honey
I see the standing ovation
Everyone in applause
I hear them say
We've stood the test of time
Nevertheless to me, it seems
Rather the taste of it.

Remember the sweet experiences
After we first met
How we tried to hide
The feelings bubbling within
Before the smiles betrayed us
Our eyes beaming with love
Leaving us no option
But to say, 'I do'.

What of the bitter pills
We swallowed together?
As life threw at us
Trials tailored just for us

Stretching the fabric of our love
To its elastic limit
But through thick and thin
God kept us faithful.

At the end of life's tunnel
We stand enjoying the light
We may not play in the mud
Or ride on each other's back anymore
Though many are the years
Lying silently behind us
One thing stands sure
We've got each other's back.

Oliver Oduor

Tears from Devils

I've heard it told
That devils also cry
Apparently weeping bitterly
Shedding crocodile tears
They launch their arsenal
In shameless total onslaught
Terrorising your peace of mind
As if you don't deserve it.

Incorrigible to the core
They advance their selfish agenda
Wearing their status symbol
An attitude of ingratitude
Forget about apology
Or remorse for their deeds
Just saying they're entitled
Is simply an understatement.

How on earth
Did we find ourselves here?
When exactly
Did it all begin?

What objective
Are they trying to achieve?
Why would hearts
Be this stonier than a rock?

Where shall we start
To pick up the pieces?
Who shall help us
To rise from this disaster?
Shall we be truly able
To curb this injustice?
Reaching its ultimate end
By bringing these tears to naught.

Oliver Oduor

The Angry Fanbase

I couldn't but help
To notice the mood
Displayed by bouts of anger
From all that stood
Each in their way
Venting their frustration
On the turn of events
Imminent from the situation.

Each of them thought
It should go their way
Prematurely counting goals
Trying the game to sway
Only to end up agitated
By what they now see
The ball-game anticipated
Highly unlikely to be.

They seemed to know it all
Watching from their position
The sure winning formula
Against the opposition

Only to be disappointed
By the players' decision
To ignore their unsolicited advice
That causes more confusion.

Now with the outcome
In limbo ever the more
They've run out of patience
And are bored to the core
Some are in denial
To imagine the probabilities
Some have unfortunately given up
On any favourable possibilities.

Halimah Menni

The Bleeding Garden

Streaming waters of pain and agony,
The deep-cut well ever bubbling over,
Torrential rivers flowing in meanders,
Stripping off the cover exposing the boulders,
Where is the gardener to tend the ripples,
To steer them in one channel, smooth and consistent,
For soon enough there won't be a garden,
But instead bare rocks and stony land.

The flesh is drooping, breaking and sweeping away,
There must come the right physician,
He must come soon enough,
To control the speed of the bleeding,
To stop the spurts and the gushing,
He must bandage the gullies, and level the ridges,
Tend to the garden till it blooms like the roses,
Only he has the antidote for these deep-cut bruises.

Oliver Oduor

The Giant Within

Talking of dreams
They say are valid
To others it seems
An abstract not solid
But before me stands
Vivid in a puddle
None other understands
This giant of a puzzle

I shake my head
Standing on the verge
The picture right ahead
Feeling like a mirage
It comes back to me
As I seek clarity
The hero I want to be
Will one day be reality

Water of this pool
In vapour may vanish
Leaving me looking a fool
The dream also tarnish

Even the sceptics
May laugh themselves silly
Terming but antics
And ask me: really?

This I know
It's a matter of time
The world I'll show
My fullness sublime
Perhaps in horror
The doubters will see
The giant in this mirror
Finally becoming me.

Oliver Oduor

The Kingmaker?

He's bold and stout
Full of himself
Fearful of none
Commanding in presence
He paces the floor
Unsettled his demeanour
Making himself known
As the kingmaker

Careless are the words
Directed to his object
Totally uncalled for
By the audience or the subject
The intent so confusing
Whether cheer or jeer
Coming out to some
As the king shaker

A little invitation
Just all he needs
To cause much agitation
As uncertain his face reads
Talking big of past conquests
Aided by none else but him
Tempting me to see him
As the king's crown taker

All hail kingmaker!
Or what shall I tell you?
Just keep yourself humble
With the rare chance you got
To groom the young king
It just fell your lot
Lest you suddenly seem
To be the kingship breaker.

Halimah Menni

The Lone Mourner

With stooped shoulders, head hanging down,
He trudges on, legs dragging and worn,
Passing through the fields, down to the stream,
With teary eyes, he sits under a tree.

Thankful for what he had, regretting what is lost,
Will he ever heal, can another fill this gaping void?
What can he employ to nurse his scathing wounds,
What balm will he apply to soothe the insoluble pain?

The much she meant to him words can't quantify,
If a book were to be written, it would not satisfy,
The mark she's made in his life, a constant reminder,
That he must find a way to live - go on without her.

He looks up to the sky for a sign beyond this earth,
Squinting his eyes, searching for answers,
To a question of loss, such a scorching hearth,
How to rise up and keep going, he wonders!

Oliver Oduor

The Monologue

So what exactly have I done?
How on earth did I arrive here?
Surely, how come I couldn't avoid ending up like this?
Who told me to listen to all those voices?
Or rather what could I have done to avoid them at all costs?

How could I have ended up differently?
How could I have changed the direction of destiny?
Oh my! What am I going to do now?
Who will help me back onto my feet?
Are you sure all the bridges are still intact?
That I may cross over from this dead end.

What can I do to turn back time?
Or at least the consequences
What hope have I left after all is said and done?
Where exactly does the rubber meet the road?
What happens now that they have met?
And what a pandemonium this must be!

Ruth Kimani

The Muse

Fear has been my muse
Fright has left me amused
Flight may seem like my preferred choice of a mousse
Freely expressing my demand for attention like a sizzling barbeque plate
Fight or flee seems to be my choice of date
Firmly rooted on the messy trails of melted chocolate on a plate

Painted fire has been my choice of warmth
People-pleasing disguised as people-oriented strength
Perfectly nestled in the accommodation breath
Posing a nod instead of a sneer
Preferring a smile to a jeer
Poignance a new way to cheer

I have chosen my muse perfectly
I think I should accept this award gracefully
I hate to leave this space hastily
I would wish to come back shortly
I should revisit my muse continuously
I believe it would feed my hunger bountifully

It welcomes me joyously
It promises me not to bleed profusely
It says that I will rest peacefully
It depicts a wholesome path
It wishes for a long lasting inspiration girth
It sermons all my inner breath
It keeps my thumbs on a fresh depth

Ruth Kimani

The Onlooker

I was just an onlooker
Seated basking amid the scent of coffee
With a weird gaze into oblivion
In a daze of musky human scents

I was just an onlooker
Seated in a very broody mood
Sliding up and down the space
Shifting my gaze

I was just an onlooker
Seated in the corner of the coffee shop
Hiding behind my glasses
When my eyes landed on you

I was just an onlooker
Seated and leaning on the wall
When I saw you engrossed
Huffing at the end of each line

I was just an onlooker
Sitting up and leaning in
To try and figure you out
To figure out the poetic look on your face

I was just an onlooker
Seated with chaos
But you halted my thought process
With imaginative thoughts of what you were

Halimah Menni

The Ragdoll Kingdom

They lived in a land with a vile king,
He took advantage of their very being,
They toiled like slaves,
Served and waited on him like elves,
Nothing they did satisfied him truly,
And he treated them ever so unfairly.

Then came a little boy with a big dream,
He could not stand the king's extremes,
He longed for the day he'd be big enough,
To face the king no matter how tough,
Demand the freedom of his people,
From the strongest down to the feeble.

He grew through it all head held down,
He didn't want to ever let the king frown,
For a thing he didn't do right or well,
It didn't matter how much he would swell,
From the pain he got from working hard,
And as he grew it continually became bad.

A day came; he had learnt the ropes,
Made connections and had hopes,
The time had come to free his people,
From the torment and the vile king's control,
And nothing was going to stop him,
His resolve was full to the brim.

Oliver Oduor

The Roaring Lion

I heard his roar
And turned to look
The terror too much
The ground beneath shook
From his den of gossipers
He started his advances
Towards my weary heart
Looking out for chances.

I quickly took off
Through the hidden channel
Bumped into a duo
Lying in the dark tunnel
Reaching the other end
I heard a scream of horror
The lustful duo unawares
Had just met the devourer.

To the gamblers in front
I warned of the doom
The hoarders beside them
Filling up with gloom

But while the money lovers
Hesitated over my call
To give up dirty deals
He came upon them all.

The last on my way
To the secret hiding place
Were malicious haters
With contempt on each face
Entering the Rock of Ages
For eventual safety
I heard them moaning
Their ravage was so mighty.

Ruth Kimani

The Shivering Truth

Before today, I was dead
Before today, I was sick
Before today, I was worse than dead
Before today, I was...I was...
What's worse than death?

Before today, I was just a robot
I was living life on autopilot
I took commands from external forces
Before today, I had bad breath
I was emaciated, I was frustrated
Before today, I had seriously bruised ego
Before today, I was dead.
I ask again, what's worse than death?

Then she stepped into my life,
She reflected her light towards me
She unmasked my sadness, layer after layer
Before today, I was guarded
Before today, I felt intruded whenever she'd pass by my darkroom

It was like intubation
Before today, it was uncomfortable having her around me.

Then today happened
I realised I needed her but I didn't want her
Today, I realised she meant well
Today, I underwent extubation
It was relieving.
Today, I got to know what was worse than death
She reassured me that it was OK
Today, she showed me what was worse.
I realised I was dead before today.

Today, I know that living a life without purpose is worse than death.
Today, she helped me to uncover the truth
The shivering truth.

Halimah Menni

The Unknown Certainty

Every morning that dawns,
Amidst the crowing of the rooster,
Betwixt her sleepy yawns,
She recalls last night's prayer,
How she spoke to her Creator,
How she felt a peace so sweet,
How His sovereign presence,
Was so calming to her nerves.

It's yet another day,
Rays penetrating their way,
Through the curtains,
And the panes,
She must ask Him once again,
To guide her step, she won't stray,
Lead her in paths of Truth,
Hold her hand, lest she fails.

As she walks into the unknown future,
She is certain of who leads her there,
She knows Him like the back of her palm,
And He knows her, there's no qualm,
Now she faces a set of battles,
Her heart not at peace at all,
Her mind is in total a shambles,
At crossroads, she stands baffled.

Halimah Menni

There's a Friend I Loved

There's a friend I loved,
He was good to me,
He listened keenly,
And never judged me,
I did the same for him,
And he never held back.

We grew apart a bit,
As how life is sometimes,
Full circle we have come,
And I have learnt quite a lot,
If you truly care for someone,
Don't let life drift you apart.

Try as much as you can,
To keep the bond aflame,
Perhaps not the same,
For change will surely come,
But love, that's a constant,
So don't be hesitant.

For the things people face,
Oh, they do need a friend,
It gets lonelier with growth,
That's a lesson for the books,
There's a friend I loved,
And I still do.

Ruth Kimani

Through my Eyes

Dear child,
This is a message of hope
I hope that through my eyes you see beauty
The beauty that adorns humanity
This may seem hopeless
But in hopelessness we perish
Like perishable goods we wither
Withering in dismay.

Dear child,
This is a prayer
I pray that through my eyes you find love
A love so fond and boundless that you rule the world
The world may not revolve around you
But I urge you to lead revolutions
For boring is a life without disruptions
A disruption that only leaves your fellow human in awe.

Dear child,
With intention, I urge you to find light
A light so bright that no one misses it
A light that lights up the darkness in others
Blind love is naïve
Naivety is not what I want you to see
But through my eyes, I urge you to disperse the darkness
The darkness that lurks in the corners
Only to find company in miserable shades
Shine my child, through my eyes, you can see the light.

Halimah Menni

Timeless Truths

There's a blank canvas,
In my Father's house,
A lot's to be written,
And a picture be drawn,
There's a history of this canvas,
A tree it was made from,
And there's a lot in the soil,
Where the tree was grown.

There are things to be recorded,
In order to be passed on,
To be engraved and interwoven,
Into the fabric of the canvas,
Some are wonderful,
And others not so much,
But there's a way around the bad,
When you find a certain path.

It's the path of goodness,
And eternal freedom,
Where when you find it,
You can never walk the same,
Your view changes,
And your story is rewritten,
The canvas is blank no more,
And it's filled with timeless truths.

Oliver Oduor

True Truce

How can I say
I've forgiven you
With a weapon of anger
In a sheath of bitterness
Still tucked underneath
The depths of my heart
Each time I encounter
Your presence around me?

How can I say
I'm at peace with you
When the thought of success
Coming your way
Does not sit well
In the depths of my heart
Leaving me jealous
Claiming you don't deserve it?

How can I say
I truly love you
When am so selfish

That my ego grows big
When love comes along
Knocking at your heart
From another quarter
That isn't mine?

How surely can I say
There is true truce
Between you and I
When top of my agenda
Still secretly lies
At the bottom of my heart
A plot for your downfall
Safely tucked therein?

Ruth Kimani

'Un-ripe'

I'm ripe, ripe for marriage
Ripe to have that baby
Ripe to make a wonderful mother
I'm ripe to be what you need me to be
Ripe to be.

I'll tell you what I'm not ripe for
I'm unripe for what society expects me to be
They branded me a rebel a few days ago
I could see judgement in their eyes
I could almost hear them talk to me with their eyes
They'd say, "She'll never amount to anything"
"There is a system"
"There are rules"
"Life will teach her"
"Fools learn from their own experiences"

I'm afraid they might be right
But what they think is right is no longer working for me
I am a little bit worried, I'm scared
But if I follow the society's blueprint, I may learn to walk
But I may never fly
I want to fly, to soar, to rocket.

This is raw, this is unripe
I've been trained and brought up through a system
I've been taught to walk
To eat ripe mangoes
I want to eat raw mangoes
To eat raw mangoes with chilli
Because this way, I can soar
This way, I'll learn to take it to the chin
This is the only way I know,
Know how to be ripe
This is the only way I can be ripe
Be ripe being 'un-ripe'

Oliver Oduor

Unwilling to Live

If I had but once
An opportunity to tell
I would take the chance
On this thought to dwell
As to whether on earth
I'd choose or not
To decide my birth
I'd hesitate a lot.

Familiar is this case
Of the rich, young and ruling
Running life's race
Every law fulfilling
Every other friend
Thinking he's a winner
God at the end
Only seeing a sinner.

Think of Job's attempt
To keep doing right
Satan tried him to tempt
With all of his might

Just to find him at fault
For the light that he stood
Painful consequence and result
For also being good.

Yet not by choice
Do I find myself here
So let me voice
Making this quite clear
Greater purpose I serve
Eternal and forever
Of my father above
And that I will endeavour.

Oliver Oduor

Victims of Change

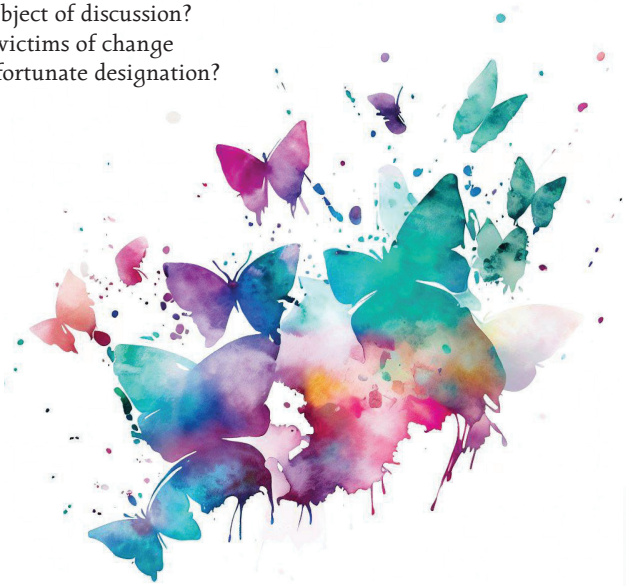
Change is inevitable
Life is transient
Time is filled
With swift transition
Bringing along with it
A clear demarcation
Between the old and the new
The past and the future.

Some enjoy the game
Of chasing the elusive future
Trying to keep up
With life's transient dream
Others fall into the trap
Of thinking they've arrived
Resisting change by all means
Only to end up its victims.

So change comes like a flood
Ruthlessly sweeping them along
Changing them without consent
Compelling them to tag along

When worse comes to worst
They are soon captured
Unwillingly turning into slaves
Of those who were willing.

What a pity! Oh victims!
Why be rigid to change?
Why stand in the way
Yet a storm is approaching?
Must you unnecessarily be
The poor subject of discussion?
Why must victims of change
Be your unfortunate designation?



Halimah Menni

Well-pieced Collage

There isn't a single person,
That's exactly as the other,
Even identical twins,
Have different views.

There's no need, therefore,
To act and pretend,
Give yourself undue pressure,
To be like another.

It's okay to mimic traits,
That speak to your character,
Of the person you'd like to be,
And the things you'd like to do.

But when you change your entire being,
To please another as your intent,
Then what becomes of your bit,
That you should play on this earth?

There's variety for a purpose,
Different types of creation,
All working together,
Like a well-pieced collage.

Halimah Menni

What do you See?

When you read the Bible,
Is it a mirror or just -
Another literary piece to you?
Do you see yourself in its pages?
Do you identify with the faithful sages,
Like Peter, Martha and Jacob?
Or do you see an alarming pattern,
A parallel of your traits with Iscariot?
Or perhaps Pontius Pilate,
Or even the rigid Pharaoh?
Do you see yourself
Becoming more like God?

When you read the Bible,
What characters resonate with you?
What personality speaks to yours?
Do you see deceptive Delilah?
Or do you see Jesus Christ
Destroying the enemy like Samson?
Do you see Satan

Working through his agents?
Do you ever wonder,
Which part you are playing
In the drama that is life,
And what your end might be?

When you read your Bible,
What do you see?

Halimah Menni

Where are the Bars?

First and foremost, I don't write to judge,
For in the same pool, with you we converge.

Growing up, we heard so much,
Of high standards and set boundaries,
Then we were taught to not bring down bars,
But we lowered them so much,
The sheep got out, the goats got in.

I fear that we no longer care for bars,
I tremble that the lines are a blur -
How far should we go?
And what more should we do?
Before we overstep,
Mercy's line?

Our fathers toed the line,
Our mothers were steadfast,
It didn't matter how odd they looked,

They'd rather be found overly cautious,
Than dare walk the lukewarm path.

Will the same be told of us,
By our children's children?
Or will they grope and grapple,
With the Truth of the ages?
Not sure which way to go,
With unclear paths set for them?

Where are the bars?

Ruth Kimani

Who is the Night?

Dressed in the cloak of dark
He stands tall
He is bold
He casts shadows on the light
Yet he doesn't mind reflecting the sun's beams upon you
He remains humble enough to let the sun's rays pierce through him
But do not mistake his timing for humility
He takes back what belongs to him when it's time
In a gentle yet demanding way
He ushers in rest
Yet he remains quiet when they come to rob you of your sleep
He watches as you go through pain
He may even chuckle when insomnia visits you unannounced
He is not weak that he couldn't protect you
But he stands as a reminder that you have to appreciate the good because of the bad
He is not all bad because he makes us long for the light
That we may be better next time!

Ruth Kimani

Why I don't Write

It's peaceful
It's calm
It's all rainbows and unicorns
It's all good
It's fine
Or that's what I want you to see

I don't write
I don't want to share my thoughts
I don't want you to have a glimpse of the rage
I do not want to let out the horror
I do not want to open my mouth
I do not want to bleed on paper
I don't know how I am feeling
Or at least that's what I want you to think

I won't write
I won't burden you with my thoughts
I won't pour out my soul to you

I won't write because this is the only way to be calm
I won't be the cause of your sleepless nights
I won't show you my real face
I won't be the reason why you worry
Or at least that's why I think I shouldn't write

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Oliver Oduor

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Notes

Notes

Notes