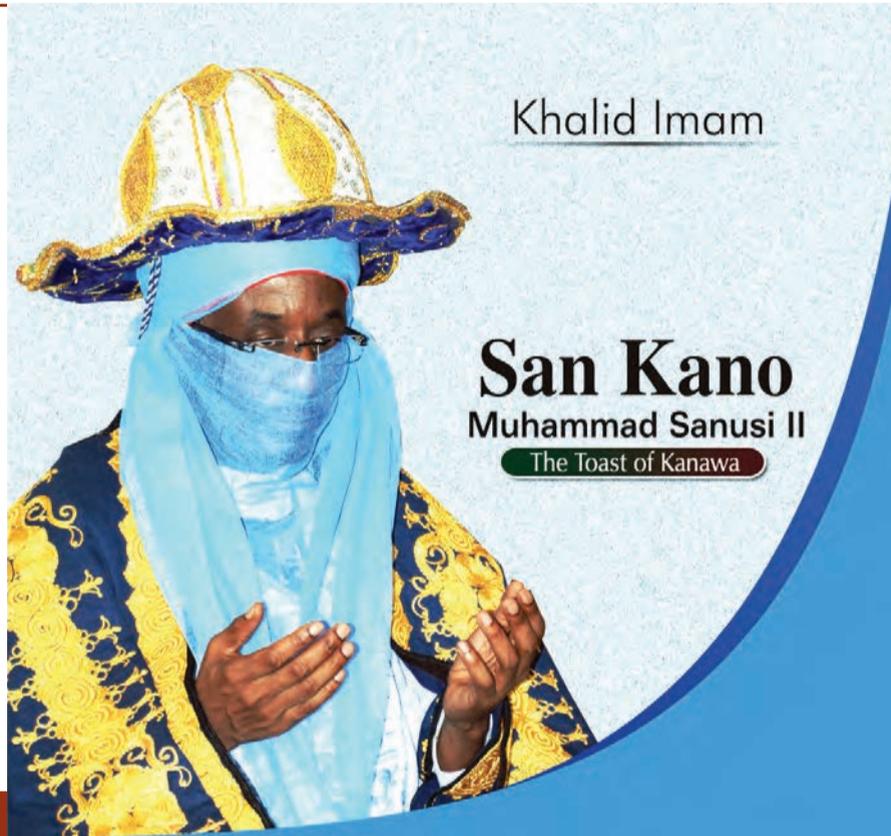


Review: The toast of Kanawa' is royal, literary feast

The poet serves as a modern palace courtier or praise singer who writes his poetry or song in English yet, enriches it as a revivalist poet



Abdalla UbaAdamu

MOST readers of poetry - the informed and the un-informed - rightly or wrongly, tend to assume poetry is crafted simply to please the ears by telling a thrilling story or entertain its audience and/or readers with its aesthetic beauty. The formalist may argue that a poem should just be excused to exist; and the being of a poem is paramount whether it teaches any morals or not, whether it pleases the ears or minds of its readers or not. To the formalist poets,

a poem should exist and be beautiful hence the 'art for art's sake' gospel is given prominence.

But, as pointed out by a renowned literary critic and erudite scholar of African literature, Professor Charles E. Nnolim, NNOM, of Department of English, University of Port Harcourt, in his seminal paper, 'The Writer's Responsibility and the Literature in National Development,' "A discerning reader knows that art is propaganda where the writer (poet) is the persuasive purveyor of the truth even if, in higher art, the end-result is an aesthetic experience."

It is needless to say poets like Khalid Imam are such poets who, by their creative endeavours, continue to demonstrate that a poet should be the conservator of our traditional values, the promoter of our history and the interpreter of our rich culture, among many others.

It is in the light of the foregoing that Emir 'Muhammad Sanusi II: The Toast of Kanawa' could pass as a classic example of an epic poem, which, by all standards, could also be classified as a panegyric - a poem written to deservedly give honour to whom honour is due (forgive the cliché). This kind of poem usually eulogises

powerful kings or influential queens; and in some cases, highly praises great men and women of princely lineage or great hunters and warriors who stand out in the society as brave men with impeccable character and unquestionable integrity.

It also elevates the status of spiritual leaders to high heavens by using highly charged language to celebrate their assumed sainthood as men of God or guardians of the shrine. To a great extent, praise song reverentially hagiographises the persona, for instance, the subject here: Sanusi Lamido Sanusi, Muhammad Sanusi II of Kano, whose outstanding life-long achievements, without exaggeration, have deservedly qualified him for the reverence or veneration showered on him. Panegyric poetry, as many scholars, have claimed, is rooted in ancient Arabia where Bedouin poets often showered encomiums on their Caliphs or rulers to showcase their outstanding virtues, exemplary lordship, glaring strengths and unique achievements.

Imam's work is a stimulating praise-song that adds to the compendium of such works written in a highly charged and elevated language to paint the vivid picture of the personality, Muhammad Sanusi II of Kano.

This genre of poetry from time immemorial was popularised by Arab poets such as Amar Imran from North Africa, Toufat Noor from Andalus among many others. With the publication of the Song of San Kano, (the author's first book in this genre), Khalid Imam, like most of his great African oral poets, especially Hausa singers, has successfully marked himself as a modern panegyric poet whose energetic contributions to the field of panegyric poetry have earned a place among the guru poets mentioned above.

No qualms, poems which is a praise-song written in simple language, rich symbolism and cultural idioms, has, in more ways than one, confirmed Prof Saleh Abdu's earlier description of Khalid Imam's debut panegyric poem "as a work coming from the pen of hagiographer par excellence."

In Emir Muhammad Sanusi II: The Toast of Kanawa the subject is raised to the deserving status of a great prince befitting Muhammad Sanusi II. The newly coroneted Muhammad Sanusi II of Kano, Malam Sanusi Lamido Aminu Sanusi is, without doubt, a distinguished personality whose outstanding contributions as an astute economist and banker, erudite intellectual, experienced administrator, robust critic and a Kano prince put him ahead of his peers.

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Abubakar Adam Ibrahim

7 love stories to read beyond Val's Day

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bind. But this bind of love doesn't last long in **Abubakar Adam Ibrahim's 'Painted Love.'** Again, neither of the two is unfaithful nor falls out of love, one with the other. It was a simple case of a woman so dedicated to the cause of helping the helpless in faraway African countries that breaks the cord. But this cord wasn't broken by the flight she took to Darfur. Like the typical separation spearheaded by zero proximity, it begins with longer intervals of emails and then total silence. But this woman had left a lasting impression on him. The colours she painted on the walls in his house are a reminder of a love painted within the four corners of his heart. A chance meeting after a couple of years and the feeling is still fresh:

"During his stopover at Charles De Gaulle, on his way to Ontario for a conference, she appeared out of the crowd in a departure lounge. "Dr. Yaro. Two years and fifty-eight days," she said, "the years have been fair to

you."

"And fifty-eight days?" He held her at arms-length so he could look at her face. "Have you been counting the days since you left me?" She fiddled with the coral-bead bangle she was wearing."

After this chance meeting, they still part ways, again. But hope remains. She promised to get in touch. This made him check his mails and keep his phone close. Inara is an example of a woman that comes into a man's life, turns his heart inside out, and then saunters off. What is perplexing is that she appears to be suffering too, yet she clings to it painfully. A year later, he catches a glimpse of her on CNN and it appears he is still enamoured. It is even more so when he refuses to let his new girlfriend alter the painting on his walls. Many months later she appears outside his door and asks if he has met another woman. That was when she asked:

"Why didn't you come for me all these

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THE LAST GOOD BOOK I READ...

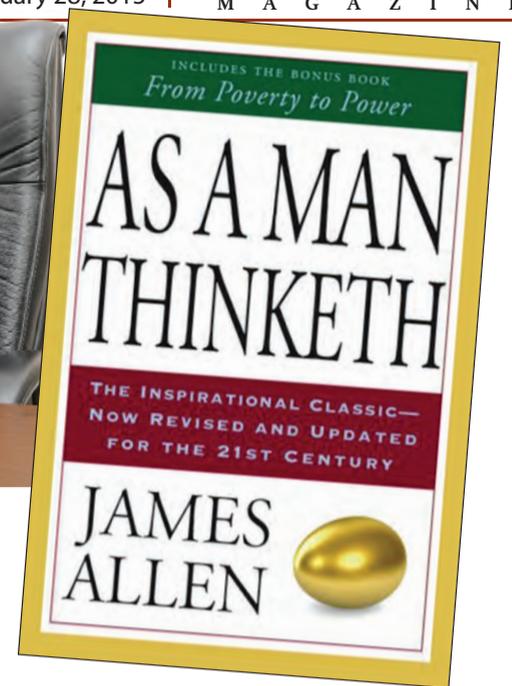
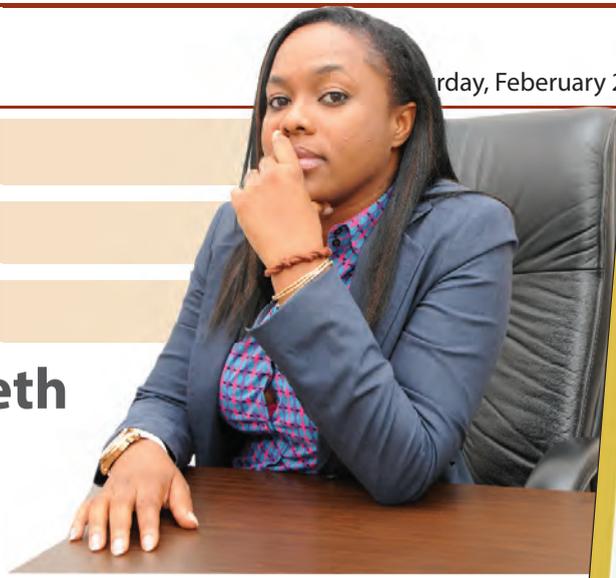
Aisha Maina: *As a Man Thinketh* By James Allen

Victoria Onehi

“It is one of the greatest books ever written,” Aisha Maina, the chief executive officer of one of the leading business development and human resources firms in Abuja, Aquarian Consult, says about the book ‘As a Man Thinketh.’

She describes the book by James Allen as one of the greatest ever written: “If you are a Christian, if you have your Bible, you should have that book as well. If you are a Muslim, if you have your Qur’an, you should have it. If you are Hindu, if you have your book, you should have that ‘As a man Thinketh,’

also. What is stated there is a universal law and it works. Nothing can come from a coin, but a coin. If you do bad, you’ll reap bad. If you do good, you’ll reap good. You cannot sow corn and reap rice, it does not happen.”



Poet of the Week: Stephen Onimisi Ajinomoh

With Nathaniel Bivan

This poet is a graduate of English Literature from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Poetry for him began sometime in 2005 as an attempt to explore the power of literature over language. It

soon became a medium of exploring self and by extension, society, through a careful study of human existence. His intention is to create an open mirror for everyone to look into.

*Evil's play thing
He is what is left
Of a once idle mind.
For him,
Mortality is senseless,
And humanity pointless.
He is a living time bomb,
Timed by evil.
To tilt nature's balance.
He is a religious puppet,
Another evil sacrificial
lamb,
Rapt towards a public altar
of unbelievers,
In what he has been
inveigled.
At the end he is just a
dummy,
Evil's play-thing
Whose rash self-
opinionated righteousness
Becomes a good example of
how not to die.
He is lost.
Strange Culture
I can hear my ancestors
demanding:
What is this song of
destruction
Echoing from up north?
What is this strange culture
of suicide
Threatening the peace of*



*our kindred spirit?
What is this new name of
ill-luck
In the era of Goodluck?
What height of inversion
is this
That sees "Boko" as
"Haram"?
These faceless enemies of
our time,
Life-less in conscience and
healthy in crime,
Are indeed a "Haram" to our
generation.
Woe betides them,
Who crave the destruction
of our nation.*

*For soon, they shall only
exist
In the black books of our
history.
Vanity
What are we chasing?
These incessant movements,
From rising to falling,
We crawl, we walk,
We ride and sometimes fly,
All going, never reaching.
What are we chasing?
The crawling, the walking
and flying,
From birth to death;
A walking after shadows,
Fueled by desire,
All to keep flesh flesh!
Demanding all but giving
less.
All the hustle leads to but
one,
The satisfaction of what is
never satisfied.
We rarely realize in
strength,
Only in weakness,
When the flesh is weak
And the spirit redeemed
From the senseless wrestle,
We all shall like Solomon
say;
It's all vanity.*

7 love stories to read beyond Val's Day

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years?"

The love story ends well with a reunion, but had she been waiting for Yaro to be a 'Super Man,' find her wherever she was and take her away? There is virtually no hint of that throughout the story, but perhaps it is simply an attempt to show how a woman can cunningly refrain from taking responsibility or expect a man to know when he ought to exert certain control.

The Valentine's Day Anthology 2015 has a total of seven stories written by authors from Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire, Kenya and Liberia. It comes with an endearing concept which includes translations of each story into different African languages and also audio versions. Some of the stories, although very creative, have great depth, reads like a maze and so sometimes a reader could be lost in the twisted words of the writers. A typical example is 'Candy' by Hawa Jande Jolakai and 'The Idea is to be Sealed in' by Binyavanga Wainaina.

From the beginning to the end of these stories, the main ideas appear to be lost. However, with the translations and audio recordings, Africans will surely have a treat in stories they can relate with, either in form of narrative style or language.



Chuma Nwokolo



Toni Kan

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By distinguishing him with this poetic panegyric: 'Emir Muhammad Sanusi II: The Toast of Kanawa,' Khalid Imam has memorably succeeded in joining the long chain of master oral artists, palace courtiers and great Hausa praise singers such as the legendary late Salihu Jankidi, the talented late Alhaji Musa Dankwairo Maradun and the multi-talented late (Dr.) Mammam Shata, who, from time immemorial, have served as the feeding rivulets that ceaselessly feed the rich river

of Hausa oral literature.

Another compelling evidence of Khalid Imam's deftness in handling a poem like this one is his ability to not only celebrate the persona but equally showcase the uniqueness of Kano emirate and its historical eminence which the grandeur of the present emir's great ancestors successful leadership reinforces, as vividly captured in this unique book.

Finally, the poet, Khalid Imam, has in more ways than one, reinforced that a poet could wear different garbs. Here, the poet serves as a modern palace courtier

or praise singer who writes his poetry or song in English yet, enriches it as a revivalist poet, cultural diarist and quasi-historian of the Kano palace through an effective medium to reach his readers. By and large, they are poems written to address readers both at home and abroad just like the subject, who is equally the toast of his people back at home and a shining star internationally.

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To the formalist poets, a poem should exist and be beautiful hence the 'art for art's sake' gospel is given prominence