

POETRY & SHORT STORIES

Scribbles Magazine

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IN ITS PROPER PLACE)

Vocal flame is
our December
Poetry Contest
Winner

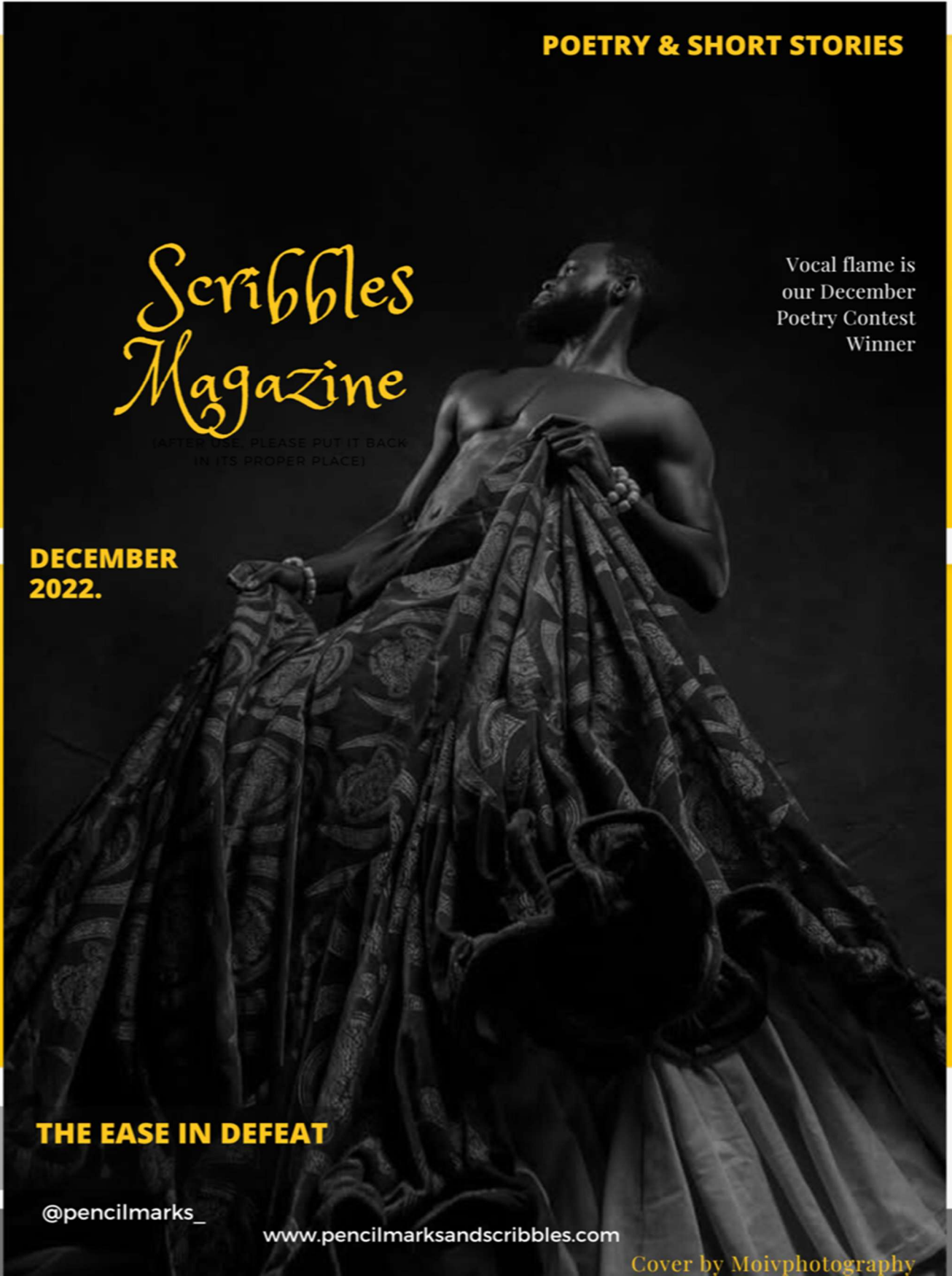
**DECEMBER
2022.**

THE EASE IN DEFEAT

@pencilmarks_

www.pencilmarksandscribbles.com

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FOREWORD

Develop an interest in life as you see it; the people, things, literature, music-the world is so rich, simply throbbing with rich treasures, beautiful souls, and interesting people. Forget yourself - Henry Miller.

I especially resonate with this quote because it is a testament to our connection as humans. We're so alike and yet so different in the most beautiful ways. One thing that continues to bring us together is the gift of literature- words that hold weight and travel through time and place to reside in our heart. There is a story, a poem, a book for everybody out there and it makes life worth living.

It is a beautiful phenomenon to hold onto, a hope that reminds you that are not alone.

The stories we have been privileged to share are ones that we hold so dearly, the talent undiscovered and potentials unlocked are one of the many reasons we came to be and we hope you enjoy them as well.

This is an ode to writers and readers alike, thank you for making this world so much better, for the yarns of love you continue to sew onto the earth.

Timileyin Akinsanya,

Handler, Pencilmarks and Scribbles Magazine.

WELCOME!

Welcome to Pencilmarks & Scribbles!

We are a literary community and bi-yearly publication focused on amateur poets and writers.

We take weekly submissions for our online publishing and run a bi-yearly poetry contest. The best pieces at the end of both halves are collated and this magazine is published.

Reach out to us at any of the social media platforms, the handle is on the cover. We can't wait to tell your story

PENCILMARKS AND SCRIBBLES PUBLISHING HOUSE, OCTOBER 2021.

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“In the shaping of a life, chance and the ability to respond to chance are everything.”

– Eric Hoffer

THE WINNERS AND RUNNERS UP FOR THE JUST CONCLUDED DECEMBER CONTEST.

The theme was "It feels like Christmas"

Second Runner Up

It Feels Like Christmas by Owoeye Taiwo Bisola

When the smell hit your nostrils and you inhale deeply the coolness,

When your body shivers to the heartbeat of winter vibrating in your bones,

When the mist manifests her shrewdness by covering up the atmosphere,

And you can't see a thing even when you use Harry Potter glasses, doubled,

When the sun hid her warmth and sparkles at one of the four corners of heaven,

It feels like Christmas, that frostiness crawling up your fingers onto your face.

It feels like Christmas without the Christmas trees tumbling with flickers of light,

When that time is near and we wear not glasses like goggles as we did as kids,

Without those new clothes that glisten on us with their newness & glitters,

Without the jollof rice cooked with big meats and our teeth chewing away at them,

We are adults now and without all these things, it still feels like CHRISTMAS!

First Runner Up

IT FEELS LIKE CHRISTMAS by Flourish Johnny

It feels like Christmas; No, it smells like Christmas.

The ashy residue from the 'knock outs' that still lingered in the air,

The scent of new Christmas clothes we

lacked this year At this time of the year,

there was no more 'my dear', Only the

clanking of pots, and the bleating of goats

As they were dragged into neighbors

houses on our roads. And we had... None.

Now envy filled the air with it's stench odour,

We tend to forget that green is a Christmas colour.

Winner

IT FEELS LIKE CHRISTMAS by Ismaleek Raji

There's a glow in the December sky

Beautiful as fireworks on Bastille day

Where giggles of playful kids mingle

With the colors of the rainbow street It feels like Christmas again

Sing aloud with Santa once it's jingle bells

O, dance and merry it's a season of love

When happy families feast and rejoice

And lovers revel sweetly on moving carousel Sing and dance,

It's Christmas day!

The Winner's Bio.

Name: Raji Malik Abimbola (Volcaflame)

A young Civil engineering undergrad at the prestigious University of Lagos. 200L. Volcaflame is an astute writer whose pen games portray beauty and colors. Although good in all forms of creative writing, his has a penchant for poetry.

He intends to show the world through his writings, that life no matter how grim, is an extension of God's perfection thus it's beauty. His favorite quotes is "Live. Love. Smile."

He has a shy personality but never fails to talk when needed. In his leisure, he reads, writes, play games and of course, a football lover. He loves nature and diversity thus his climate change activism.

The craft of orchestrating words together in immaculate strings has earned him awe and praises from all eyes that beheld his art. And his dream of getting his work published would come true when he entered a poetry contest by Pencilmarks and Scribbles, his first poetry contest, and he won!

The Pencilmark's Editor's Pack.

The Pencilmark's Editor's Pack is a list of the best works submitted to the publishing house in any given half of the year. The listing is not according to preference.

The Pencilmark's Editor's Pack for 2022 Second Half.

- 1. There Are Not Enough Poems About Love by Betini Udo (Poetry)*
- 2. Trying To Find Me by Emmanuella Abasiékong (Poetry)*
- 3. Ini Ere by Tari Diète (Poetry)*
- 4. Our love, Our music by Sayofunmi (Asteriqq) Soyewo (Poetry)*
- 5. I knew then that I loved you by Shoteh Ologun. (Poetry)*
- 6. Who will console you well enough by Victor Ola-Matthew (Short Story)*

There Are Not Enough Poems About Love by Betini Udo

*In the smallness of my grief,
I hold all that we used to be.
Broken vows and playlists
I do not listen to anymore.
In the smallness of my grief,
I hold who I used to be with you
And what I am now without.
A shadow lurking in your corner,
Hoping the light of your smile
Will bring to the surface my humanness.
I hold in the smallness of my grief
All that I remember of you.
The thickness that I could never comb
That was your curls.
The weightlessness of your lips,
The caress of your eyes,
The warmth of your hands on me.
The love of your words and the
Comfort of your promises.
In the smallness of my grief
I hold my dreams.
I compare it with what is before my eyes
And I wish to be no more alive.
I wish to journey into my dreams
Where you are
And live out my happily ever after.
In the smallness of my grief
I hold my broken heart.
Pieces that break my skin with
Their sharp edges of betrayal.
In the smallness of my grief
I hold what is left of us
To cherish and to hold,*

*For better and for worse,
For richer and for poorer,
Till death do us part.*

Trying To Find Me by Emmanuella Abasiékong

*My love is no longer unconditional
You must pass the test to get a taste of
how it feels to be loved by me.
The midnight texts, calls or even the
appearance in poetry, these are things
I just can't give freely.
I have been broken too many times to
even give you a piece of me.
So the little I have left, I'm trying so hard to protect.
Please respect my space and give me peace
Because I can't keep doing this.
Giving till I have nothing left in me.
Just like empty pottery I'm resounding loudly, everything I need
screams back at me
Give me time let me rebuild to who I want to be,
And not give you scraps of my personality,
Or fake it so bad that you'll see right through me.
I'm setting boundaries for myself because I know I need help
and it's something you can't give me
In the meantime please don't wait for me,*

*When all this is done you might not recognize me
I might not be who you want me to be,
Your dreams might not be my reality
But at least I'll be happy with the new me.*

*Ini Ere by Tari Diете**INI ERE**Meaning “my name” in ijaw (nembe) language**Of all the things they took from you, the name was the most delicate**A name you were identified by in your fatherland**How many times did they take what you had**First your paradise, then your pride**They did not call you Chigozie but they called you Chi, the ‘i’ pronounced as a ‘y’**They couldn’t pronounce Ayibanengiyefa so they called you Ay**You answered because it sounded nice but didn’t know why**It wasn’t your fault,**with their tiny nostrils**how are they to pronounce a name so strong**that your father sang with pride the day you strode your first mile**Now you’ve colored your skin white**Chemicals and bases straighten the curls from your fro,**your halo light**With every passing time you are new**Depending on where they place you**Do you remember the name they called you?**The familiar name mama used to yell from the backyard**The very same name you write in initials at job applications**Yes that name**Answer it,**Wear it,**hold it for what is a man without a name,**a name from the root he was planted.**So the next time the oyinbo immigration**officer fails to pronounce your “hard name” correctly,**take a breath, teach him with each of his**alphabet that it is Ebiegberi*

*because no white man will bear a child
and name him Dayo instead of John.*

Our love, Our music by Sayofunmi (Asteriqq) Soyewo

*Our crescendos are building,
Let's meet in perfect harmony,
Don't let us drown in a clash
Of discordant notes.
Let's make our own music,
Let's dance to the rhythm and notes of our love.
Let our heartbeats synchronize into the
perfect riddim,
And our roots intertwined as one.
Take my heart in your hand,
Strum my strings,
Let your words be my rhymes,
And mine your lyrics.
Let's dance the night away,
Drunk in love,
and nurtured in emotions.*

*Let me touch every string of emotion in you,
To produce the best sounds to our ears.
Let's dance the night away,
To our music,
To our heartbeats,
To our love.*

I knew then that I loved you by Shoteh Ologun.

Do you remember the night we met for the first time? You wore a yellow jacket.

I always want to go back to that night.

You asked if I was lost and I told you I was waiting for someone. Truth is, I was really lost.

I remember you standing by my side and waiting for your "imaginary friend".

We giggled.

We laughed like we had known each other forever.

I wondered how a person could carry so much light.

You told me how you thought love was more about being in the moment and not about what could be.

Feeling what you feel in that moment and not being worried about if you'd feel the same way tomorrow.

Love is fleeting.

Feel everything you can.

I thought you were insane.

I still think you are.

We stood by the roadside and I swear when your fingers brushed against my cheek, something stirred up inside of me.

You asked me what happiness meant and I told you.

*Happiness is to just be. Happiness is
transient.
Bask in it while you can.
You really laughed and called me crazy.
We really were two crazy people.
You know you lied.
There was no "imaginary friend" because no one came.
I saw you for 22 more nights after that night.
I only ever saw you in the night time.
At the same spot.
In your yellow jacket.
On the 9th night, you sang to me.
I knew then that my life was never going to be the same.
I knew then that I wanted to keep you.
I'm back to our spot.
I can't find you.
All that's left is your yellow jacket.
It's raining but I'll be right here waiting for you.
Will you come tomorrow?*

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Who will console you well enough by Victor Ola-Matthew

Maybe not everyone, but most people, like you, want, after losing somebody really dear to themselves, their consolers to sit still in the parlour and say nothing because everything they utter will never come out right in the moment. You want them to be people you really love, people whose cologne or mere skin smells you know because your nose has once sunk into their flesh the time they made you laugh. You want only your lovers, family or something more, or those with equal importance to you as the deceased to sit there, right beside you, holding your hand in theirs as they stroke their thumb soothingly on the back of your hand. You want your head on their shoulders so you can sulk away from existence.

But what you don't want is Sister Patricia, head of evangelism, and Brother Samson, head of the choir your deceased had forced you to join at sixteen, bringing half the church population, or what you feel is, to your small parlour that seemed to be closing on you when they enter because they feel it is a good gesture. 'After all, it is the best we can do', you imagine them saying before leaving the church that hot Sunday afternoon for your house.

You don't want Sister Patricia saying, 'Peace be unto this house', as she enters because there is no peace right now. There is death. You don't want her and the other women to offer to prepare you food in your kitchen because you don't want them dropping your kitchen utensils in new places you are yet to discover in your clogged cooking space. Besides, you are mourning not handicapped.

They all sit quiet, but it's not the kind you want. Why should twenty five people who have never shown up at your house be here and now quiet? You eye them rudely, because you know once they get home they will forget about the deceased while you have further apparitions and interactions in your dreams, but they don't see your eyes move because your black turban's tip falls and hovers your face.

It all seems bearable until Brother Samson, with his dark fat lips that covers years of developed decaying dentition, says, 'God gives and God takes. Brethren let us rise up and pray'. You wish him death of a loved one, maybe his wife. And even though you shouldn't, you do and you could not care any less. You did not want to hear any religious teaching. Not now, not ever. Even if, just not now.

What you don't want are your friends saying, 'Sorry' or whatever statement they will say, even though you know how conscious and calculated they are about the way they should speak around you. Sorry? Did you fall? You lost somebody, so why would they give you the condolences given to somebody who kicked a bucket and tripped. You don't want them, or anybody at all, calling you and when you eventually pick, you don't want them starting with the rhetoric, 'Is it true?' You're not possibly pulling a joke.

'They must be mad', you say to yourself when you drop the call. You're enraged. Everything irks you and you just don't know why. You don't want your relatives coming around because death is not another reason to party like it is ninety nine. Aunt Christabel arrives first, her silver rosary inconspicuous against her pink blouse and blue wrapper she is putting on. Her makeup reminds you of the village and earlier images of the deceased before you were born in the photo albums; her very thinly drawn eyebrows, amateurly puckered pink lipstick and the plentiful taluc powder rubbed all over her face.

"Nwannem, My baby", she opens wide, her arms, for a hug. "You're looking lean. You've not been eating," she adds the usual overlooked body shaming remark she always greeted you with. You sniff her and she reeks of firewood and worn clothes.

Again, you don't want anyone in your kitchen, but when you see the ugba and abasha for nkwobi in the black cellophane bag she dropped on the ground before hugging you, you don't refuse the offer—nkwobi was the favourite of the deceased—even though later, the delicacy wouldn't pass your throat when you tried to eat it.

Uncle Peter comes in next followed by some others with their children and they dig into the Nkwobi that should have been yours. They discuss the burial arrangements and cows to kill and when they see you pass, they say, 'Just like that, gone', between lamenting hisses. They decide the date first and drag on the venue being Umuahia, Yaba cemetery in Lagos, or just the backyard. You don't want a Party.

When you finally return to your phone to pick a call or reply texts, you don't want to write a pity epistle. 'How did it happen?' 'Cancer?', 'Mere malaria', so you turn off your phone.

Months later, after the family's matching Ankara prints, Jollof rice, stouts, wake keeping and church memorial, when you still cry in bed, looking at photos from months earlier with the deceased at a park and at the Choir competition the church had won, after your younger siblings have slept, you don't want any of the then consolers saying, 'I thought you would have gotten over this by now, you're not the first to lose your mother you know?' If you could, at the sentence's uttering you swear before man that you would have shot the shit out of the speaker.

What you wanted was for Chikezie whom you had broken up with two days before the now deceased died, to show up at your house and struggle to take advantage of the vulnerability you were hiding behind a strong facade. You wanted him to, after holding hands, let you cry on his shoulders, his chest. You want him to say, 'it's okay', and wrap you in his arms on your black spring bed while you both watch the Simpsons.

But instead you got none of what you wanted and all of what you didn't want. You got another sibling who survived while your mother couldn't. You got more responsibility and nobody could console you well enough.

P.S

Hello everyone. You just perused another Scribbles collection. I am thrilled every time I can compile one. The theme of this issue is The Ease in Defeat.

As the community is aware, Pencilmarks went on a hiatus for the better part of last and this year. We resumed in September 2022 with new ideas and more hands. It's been rewarding. We had a feature done by the 49th street. You can read it here: (<https://bit.ly/3vs99X8>)

The reason for this Hiatus is what I'm terming 'an all out of love' phenomenon. Pencilmarks is my baby. Now and always and it killed me when she was not flourishing. But in pursuing our dreams at some point, we will need to pause, to stop, reconsider and to give in to the vulnerability of letting your dream grow.

That was the leg I played this year. Not even just with Pencilmarks. In most areas of my life I had to take a step back and approach it with new ideas. Your dreams never go away once you've birthed them. Rest in that assurance.

The ease I felt when I paused for a bit was new to me. With defeat being so villainized, it was hard for me to feel it as anything other than weakness. But it was not. Thankfully it was not. We can always start again, time and chance can always meet again for your sake. Just step back to see the bigger image and see how many more angles you can take the picture from. Happy New Years. Here's To every second chance.

From the Desk of the Editor-In-Chief & Founder,

Pencilmarks & Scribbles.

JACK, C.I.

Notes:



See you with Issue 3!