

WRITERS AGAINST AIDS AND TOBACCO SMOKING



ABSTINENCE

A Collection of Poems and Short Stories on HIV/AIDS

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ABSTINENCE

I couldn't resist Desmond's captivating eyeballs as he focused them on me. I was almost draining like an imprisoned salt.

"Ifeoma ... a million words isn't enough to describe the feelings I have for you," he said and placed his hand gently on my thighs in a way that made me shiver. He was sitting beside me on the three-sitter couch. I managed to push his hand gently away.

I didn't sit comfortably. I had arrived at his rented apartment (a three bedroom flat) at Lagos Island about twenty minutes ago. Desmond and I were close friends in my secondary school at Owerri. That was eight years ago. Since then we had lost contact until two months ago when I encountered him at my supermarket at Ikoyi.

And I found him to be more handsome than he was in those days. He was fair, tall and had a good physique that really turned me on. He looked like the popular Hollywood actor, Van Vicker. Immediately we saw each other, we embraced affectionately. After receiving my contact, he had been troubling me for two weeks to pay him a visit, and now there I was. He was pleading for a romantic relationship. I didn't show that I had fallen for him already.

"I don't think that will be possible," I said hesitantly, fondling with the golden ring around my finger, "I have told you that I am already in my matrimonial home. I suppose you already have a fiancée."

Desmond's head slumped, and he sighed as he showed back his face.

"I can't lie to you that I don't have girlfriends, but I don't really love any of them. The last time

I set my eyes on you, it was as if I had never seen a girl in my entire life ... you are now looking like an angel sent from heaven,” he said, wearing a solemn look. I felt like I was at the top of the world inside of me, “I wish I had met you before your husband did ... But it’s sad I came late.”

He uttered the last word with a sorrowful tone that made me get anxious. He shook his head while his eyelids drooped. It was visible that he was disappointed.

It was four months ago I wedded my husband, Edward Patrick. He was a business man. He was good-looking, and had a great sense of humour; although Desmond was much more handsome than him. Patrick had swept me off my feet with his sugar-coated tongue. Apart from handsomeness, I also loved a man that would

always cheer me up with jokes. That was Patrick for me.

I wondered if I should console Desmond or tell him I had accepted his proposal as a secret lover. The more I looked at him, the more my heart beat for him.

I cleared my voice, and said, “Um ... umm. I have accepted what you said.”

“Oh! Really?” Desmond’s face brightened up as if he had just won a jackpot.

“Yes,” I nodded with a slow motion, wearing a look of assurance, “but we shall make it secret.”

“I don’t mind, Ifeoma,” he said, and was apparently out of breath with excitement as he grabbed my both hands, “It doesn’t matter. You’ve just said what I have been longing for ... I love you so much.”

“I love you too,” The word had escaped my lips before I realized I had let go that hidden

emotion. I should have just smiled in response to that. As much as I loved protecting my pride, it wasn't working in Desmond's presence.

At that moment my phone rang out. It was my best friend, Angelina. I had kept her waiting in the car for long. That was a sign that it was time for us to leave. I had to go and prepare my husband's meal.

I explained that to Desmond, and excused myself. I told him I would come to his place, probably on the following week. We embraced affectionately before bidding each other farewell.

“So, Ify baby, you dey go out with that guy?” Angelina queried after I told her all we discussed inside.

I was behind the wheel of my range rover sport - 2010 model. Angelina was beside me on the passenger seat.

“I no fit wait to get laid by that dude.” I said.

“Please, make una play safe o, my friend.” Angelina said, pulling her right ear to emphasize her statement.

“Wetin you mean by that?”

Angelina formed a circle with her fingers and winked at me. I knew she meant ‘condom’ by that sign.

“I don’t like that trash. I really wish to feel his naked skin inside of me.”

“If you must do that, both of you have to go for a test the way Patrick had done before you got married.”

“For me, I am perfect. I am sure Desmond is, too. Patrick was just being sentimental - nothing was wrong with me eventually, after the useless

HIV/AIDS test. I told Patrick that I was healthy before he insisted that we must do it. Can't you see Desmond is also looking very healthy? Besides, it would appear as an embarrassment to ask him for a medical check-up since we are only doing it secretly?"

Angelina said I shouldn't sleep with him, at all, if we couldn't use protection. I believed Angelina was jealous of me. I noticed the way she was staring at Desmond when I introduced her to him earlier on.

"We shall go for the test. Okay?" I lied.

I needed to bury it there - Angelina is really a talkative.

I found it difficult to sleep during the night, thinking about Desmond. Patrick lay asleep beside me with his hands cupped around my full, luscious breasts, and his right leg across my

thighs. If those parts were Desmond's, my panties might have been saturated. The present day was Friday. I wished to visit Desmond on Monday. Since 10pm that I had lain on my back in bed, I managed to fall sleep by past 12am.

I was finally at his doorstep on Monday afternoon. Desmond had called me in the morning that he would be around. I knocked the polished door several times, and my heart-throb appeared with a warm smile. I replied the smile and followed after him. I was wearing high heels and a pink skirt and blouse which carved out my shapely, fair figure. He served me an orange juice and had one goblet to himself too. Before I took a sip, we toasted to our re-union. We talked lengthily about our secondary school days, and the beautiful reminiscences fed my mouth with childish laughter.

At one point we were both at loss for words, and kept exchanging seductive eye contacts. I was forced to take away my face and blush babyishly. Something in Desmond's eyes always made me lose my senses. At last he made a move. He came across to me from the opposite one-sitter couch he had been sitting on. He sat close to me and I felt his gentle fingers around my waist. I attempted to take the hand away, trying to feign a protest. He placed his index finger over my lips and shushed.

"Don't pretend to me," he said softly, "I can see it in your eyes."

I became dumb as he advanced his lips towards mine. We had tongue-and-lips' tussle for what seemed like decades, and I was gasping to gulp more of his delicious saliva. I didn't realize Desmond had pulled up my skirt until he dipped into his pocket and produced a packaged

condom. It was then I realized he was prepared for me

“No, I hate that shit.” I said, waving it away.

“It’s for your own benefit.” Desmond whispered.

I objected to it again.

My gasps and moans soon rose to the air when he was pounding me against the leather couch.

After the scene, I felt as though a heavy load was taken off my body. I quickly dressed up and picked up my bag. Desmond saw me off to the car.

“That was how I must have contacted HIV, Doctor,” I burst into tears after pouring out my troubles, “Desmond was the only man I had met after my husband.”

I had arrived at our Doctor’s office twenty-five minutes ago, narrating my past experience on

how I must have contacted HIV. I had come for a medical check-up when I began to have sore throat, rashes on my body, and fatigues.

“So, the young man actually advised you to use protection, but you refused?”

“Yes, sir.” I nodded.

“You must have infected your husband then.”

“No,” I shook my head, “Patrick didn’t sleep with me before he went for his business in the US, over three months ago.”

The Doctor shook his head and sighed, “Anyway, I will prescribe some drugs for you.”

Ajenifuja Adetokunbo. L

AJENIFUJA ADETOKUNBO. L *hails from Ogun state. He had his secondary Education at Iganmode Grammar School (IGS) Ota, Ogun state. Ajenifuja studied Fine/Applied Arts at Federal College of Education (Technical) Akoka, Lagos. He developed an interest in creative writing (prose and poems) right from my secondary school.*

FATAL COEXISTENCE

A wind from outer space
Invaded, years before today
Scrambled for volumes to consume,
Loosely hanged curtains
With swirling gaps to intrude

Fix broken locks; replace broken chimes
The raider is loose
Fadelessly swirling with air
Indistinguishable to nostrils
Notoriously legendary
Dances its way through
The faintest of sighs

Like a hunter, it lurks
For as long as it takes
To be brought within proximity
By any proxy of fate

Unlike a hunter who retires
With his captive
Our dear little friends
Build an empire within victims

Unperceivable members of creation
Working together, as brothers should
Only to prevail against extinction
Unified strength exerted
Keeps them on radar of existence
Reducing an effervescent host
Into a nibble of memory

They mean only to cohabit
Yet our porches must repel
Every uninvited footstep
We must barricade our driveways
And employ ourselves as our own guards

Pleasure enslaves reason
Drilling defenselessness within enchanted souls
The easiest route to desolation
Lies in our own unending quest for limitless
euphoria

Yet, in a world where reason governs notions
And actions are results of prudent volition
Existence is preserved like history
That lives not only as a memory

Ali-Balogun Nurain Oladeji

Ali-Balogun Nurain Oladeji recently graduated from the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta. He is a writer of Poetry and Prose. He has no published work (in print or electronic form) except those on his blog and on Literary Community websites for reviews.

ULTIMATE DEFEAT
(DIARY OF A NOBLE LAUREATE)

The thunder struck loudly and it began raining heavily for a long time. It was clear to me that I have experienced this sort of rainfall.

I just received the most prestigious and honourable award in the world and as I walked down the hallway, faces smiled congratulatory at me, hands shook mine, friends and strangers hugged me. I felt on top of the world thinking of the number of lives I have saved. Then I remembered that my life was empty; I remembered mother.

If only she is still living, she will indeed be the proudest mother ever. TV reporters hurriedly approached with their mics, cameras asking the same question.

" How did you do it?"

To me, it was an error that veered into a miracle during a lab experiment. Anyway I replied that it was by God's grace.

"it is unbelievable"

Indeed it was unbelievable decades ago. Man believed there was no cure but surprisingly mother said there was cure for it. She told me I had the cure then I laughed at her. At the time she passed on, she was only 36 but looked older. That day I will never forget.

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I left school because mother's sickness worsened and she was unable to work. She made some money doing our neighbours hair, rumour began that she deliberately pricked her customer's body, they stopped patronizing her. I started doing odd jobs to fend for myself and her. When i had saved enough for hospital

treatment, she vehemently refused to go claiming that her sickness was temporal and it was a waste of money to go. I did not doubt her until one night I found her crying and wriggling in pain. She lied that she was praying because of the nightmare she had.

I sat beside her, consoling and trying to make her go back to sleep. We held hands together-mother and son as if it was going to be our last moment together. The pains in her eyes moved me to tears, when she told me she was going to die, I wept the more, and not that it was not obvious, the thought of losing her hit me and sent cold shiver down my spine.

“Please don't say that” I said imagining how I was going to live without her-the only relation I knew.

“You should be strong, tomorrow you must go to hospital” I said

“Hospital has no cure for my sickness” she said coughing.

“then God will heal you" I assured. She smiled and was silent for a while. Mother does not go to church except on special occasions like a friend’s wedding. She lived her life with the belief that God was angry with her.

“God can cure me but he won't because I deserve it" she said. I looked quizzically at her and asked “what do you mean?"

She narrated the events of her past life, when she was young living wild and free. She was orphaned and relatives abandoned her. She resorted to prostitution to survive and sponsor her education. When her colleagues began dying in droves, she wondered why she was not claimed as well. “They died of HIV/aids" she said.

In her days, the disease was prevalent. “It claimed young people, most of my friends died of it” mother said shaking her heads.

“I did not know about it, if not I would not have been involved in prostitution. Ebuka please don’t let what claimed your mother claim you” she advised sorrowfully.

“Beware of this young girls flocking around you” she continued coughing incessantly. I was glad the cough came, if not she would have started recounting the number of girl friends I had. “If only I had someone to advise me” she continued. “Now I have lived with it for more than 16 years and you think God has not tried for me” She concluded. Then I realized why mother was always transiting from one sickness to another. Gratefully, I did not get the virus because of mother’s careful actions during my birth. She joked that she had strong white blood

cells." End of discussion, you must go and see a doctor tomorrow" I said to her.

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The following day, mom and I got ready for hospital visitation. She reluctantly dressed up, freely entering her skinny body into her dress. I looked pitifully at her, dreading the disease that got the loveliest person in my life. Then, I knew little about the disease except that it takes people when life was still enjoyable.

“Ebuka, you will go to work first, when you return, we will now go to hospital “she said with a tone that shows her death was imminent

“You are more important" I protested. We argued and argued until a decision was made. I was to go and buy drugs to ease her pain.

When I had purchased the drugs, it began raining. I thought about going home but remembered mom's stern warning. So I delved

into a friend's house and was soon absorbed in a soccer game which I won. When it finally stopped raining and the utility of playing the game diminished, I remembered home.

She was still lying in the same position when I left except that she was motionless. She did not turn to know who entered the room, she did not respond to my greetings. At that moment, I held myself from crying, she really knew she was going. She was still beautiful even in death.

She left a note that read "only you can find it and be a good boy". Find what? I thought. I recalled our last night discussion.

I wish I was there by her side when she passed on, holding her hands before she breathed her last. I blamed myself for not coming back while it was raining. I blamed her for getting the virus. She should have prevented it. She was too

beautiful to die, too lovely to leave me when I needed her the most.

Then and there, I decided to pursue the dreams she had for me and I vowed to fight and conquer the disease that fought and conquered her.

Onuselogu Ezinwa Sandra

Onuselogu Ezinwa, an indigene of Anambra state and resides in Enugu. He is currently a Biochemistry student of the Anambra State University ,Uli. His hobbies are reading, writing e.t.c.

FORTRESS

As snares are laid
around
With enticing fruits, I
Battle with an array of
Conflicting pills to swallow
As the desires quell
The multiple aches within
Heightens, pictures of comparisons
Of after effects begin to
Play itself before my eyes

Should I indulge or wait till
The foxes are roosting?
As I glance deeper steel into
The scenario, the after effects of
Quelling each ache begins to
Play out itself before me
As my choice of pills is settled

I ascend into a level of inner
Tranquility and elements of defense
Sprout all around me
Enabling me to fortify my
Undiluted freshness for
A future festivity

Patrick Chukwuemeke Daco Olisehamaka

Daco wrote this poem a couple of years ago in response to a feeling of nausea that he felt and still feel now, towards the issue of HIV/AIDS. He felt there is need to inculcate in people, especially our youths, the need to abstain from sexual recklessness.

Patrick Chukwuemeke Daco Olisehamaka,
Forty four years old but prefer to be addressed
as Emeke Daco. He hails from the Ibo speaking

part of Delta state, Nigeria. Daco Attended crèche, primary and secondary schools in Nigeria. He subsequently moved to South Africa to reside and further his education. He currently resides in South Africa.

OLIVIA IS A VICTIM

Blessed of divine creation
Smiles claiming her face in all situation
Olivia! a lady simple to a fault
And anger seems to know her not
Every man wants to have sweet nothings with
her
Because she is as bright as a star
My princess and my goddess
In her, I find my fortress
My only saving grace
Against the cruelty of the world's face
No one beholds her without an affectional
grapple
For she is the most sought apple
Among the thousands of garden fruit
And at her sight, no one remains mute

Only the last score day
The bombshell struck
Secret I never knew
Thoughts I never gave a chance
Olivia has a child
That, gave a wane to my pride
But that wasn't the bother
Who is the child's father?
It was her brother
Oh that is incest!
It wasn't still the problem
The child has an unusual sickness
With a dreaded symptoms
It wasn't still the problem
He was diagnosed of HIV/AIDS
Funnily enough, it wasn't still the problem

But Alas! Olivia is a victim
At the knowledge of that

My whole world crushed instantly
My body became too heavy
For me to contain
My personality was rendered
Tense and swollen
Tender and volatile
There was a block in the strings
Of my thoughts and feelings
As my mind raced from
One uncertainty to another
North to southeast to west
In search of solace
For I felt estranged
From my former being

Oh blind and callous HIV/AIDS
You are more cruel than cruelty
For robbing me my soul joy.

Onah Edwin C.

Onah Edwin C. hails from Enugu state but currently resides with his parents in Benue state. He is a student of the University Of Nigeria, Nsukka. Onah has a great penchant for poetry and it has been his childhood dream to become a renowned poet. He has written many poems on different topics.

THIS WISH

I wish the song
Could play all lifelong and never pause,
Found in everyone's playlist
And command an action at the crossroads of
thoughts.

I wish it could play
And be listened to.

I wish the birds of the sky
Could take turns to sing the song,
The trees of the earth
Wave peacefully without blocking the echo.

I wish the song be played
In every house, clinic, churches, bars and
brothels.

I wish the lyrics
Be recited to a newly born baby at birth
And accorded space in every man's mind.

I wish the drummers could strum the drums and
never tire,
Poets write and never give up,
I wish you could also wish.
I wish men could repent from lust
And be baptized in the realm of this wish
forever,
I wish we could cuddle
And sleep in our matrimonial homes
Without the fear of the unknown.
I wish we could
Keep the flame of love ablaze
and cremate the HIV Virus
Who shall live in the mansions that we built
And accord the children we parented their
space?
Who shall tell the children
When they demand to know the fate of their
parents?

What future do they see in life
When we die so stupid
Like trapped flies in a blair toilet?
The path that leads to the cemetery,
The pill that keeps us going
I wish we could see.
I wish...
You could also wish
And live to fulfill the wish.

Edward Dzonze

Edward Dzonze is a Zimbabwean poet Born on the 4th of June in 1989. He has published works on poem hunter and poetry soup and recently in an anthology by the Society of Young Nigerian Writers in an e-book titled Moonlight songs for Pa Nelson Mandela. Edward writes about human rights, gender issues, black

*consciousness, socio-economic and political
issues.*

ABSTINENCE

Abstinence, the shackled chain, you need to wear.

HIV/AIDS, a noxious bug in monkeys and apes,
Pandemic, to both the young and the aged.

I warn all to abstain!

This epitome of lust will only leads to ails,

Tears and sighs,

Groans and wails,

Like pathetic primates.

I warn all to abstain!

Her odds, visible to the blind,

Audible to the deaf, the unkind,

Yet, many may still board the promiscuous train

Inserting unsterilized blades to people's veins

Are they not weary of an everlasting pain?

I warn all to abstain!

The virus, the true definition of power,
With the gut to defy her sniper,
Could even evade the pores of the latex
(Condom) Shelter,
Her epidemic effect is like a barbaric bomb.
I warn all to abstain!

Usman Abiola Amusat

Poet's Note

Common sense is the right tool to differentiate the bad eggs from the good ones. As for the clowns, and the people with no morals, who consider themselves free. But forgot that worthless is the world's lasting synonym; I warn that they abstain! Illegal lust brings forth your destruction. You will regret the acceptance of this lust when HIV/AIDs creeps like winter stream. It will be too hard to accept the loss,

*abstain from illicit intercourse and plant in
yourself a moral tree! It is the prison we need to
be!*

Usman Abiola Amusat also known as
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akintola university, Ogbomosho, Nigeria. He
hails from Itesiwaju Local Government, Oyo
State. He is a young writer and a lover of poetry.