

Books & Literature: When Poetry defines one's Destiny, Meet Marrily



When Marrily Runoona sent us an email about her life as a poet, our curiosity about the 24-year-old Gemini who is based in Germany was instantly set off and we decided to have an online one on one. Everyone loves achievers, last year, the born rhymester was nominated for the prestigious Poet of the Year by the International Society of Poets based in the USA and for such a great achievement, and she was awarded with a silver bowl and award medallion. Apart from excelling in the art of Poetry, an academic, Marrily is currently studying Economics at the University of Paderborn in Germany.

And she writes like a poet...

itsbho: Tell us about Germany, how long you have you been there, the people, the food, what you find really strange.

M: Living in Germany is splendid! I am impressed by the quality of life, education and infrastructure. I have lived here since the 1st January 2002. Germans are friendly, direct and disciplined people who stick to rules. Talking of food, I prefer English to German dishes. As a family oriented person, I find it strange that family bonds don't seem to be very strong in this country.

itsbho: Your life in Zimbabwe, your family, where you stay, what you love doing when you're here?

M: Born an only child, I spent the early years of my childhood in Jerera. I loved traveling especially taking breaks at local resorts and in the countryside.

itsbho: What do you miss most about home?

M: The lifestyle, sociability and naturalness of the people and not forgetting the sunny, warm weather and great taste of indigenous fruits together with local dishes.

itsbho: How did you get into writing poetry? Enlighten us on the beginning, the frustrations and when you decided to take it on professionally.

M: I started writing at twelve. With events so twisted, the loss of my father at twelve, I felt so unnatural that it left a lot of unanswered questions, which curved me into a hamlet of my time. My mother slipped the corridors of existence at sixteen leaving me plunging further into depression. I felt besmirched by the heavens and the planet. Therefore I used poetry as a form of escapism out of my predicament.



Over the years, I wrote many poems most of which were elegies. Last year I decided to take an IQ Test in poetry. With my passion for poetry I wasn't surprised I got everything correct. The results suggested that I had an excellent grasp of poetic form, structure, and technique. Besides, I was among the most talented of poetic artists. I wrote "Explosions of Pain Crack My Lips" and decided to enter a poetry contest in which I won several prizes. Thereafter, a friend referred me to Publish America where I submitted my first manuscript. It took a couple of weeks for my work to be accepted for publication. Thereafter, I signed my contract for my first book *We Belong to Each Other* (ISBN: 1-4241-2596-0).

itsbho: Tell me about being awarded with a silver bowl and award medallion by the International Society of Poets in the US. What does such an achievement feel like and has it changed your whole outlook in terms of your career and on a personal level?

M: I thank the Living God for my poetic achievements. It was an honor to be nominated Poet of Year 2005. My achievement marked the beginning of my poetic career at international heights. I am confident greater things are yet to come and the sky is the limit.

itsbho: What criteria do they use for the selection process and how many people were in the running for this award?

M: The international library of poets runs open contests in which anyone can enter and so it's hard to figure out how many participants take part in a contest. The Judging Committee evaluates poems based on creativity, originality, style, subject, use of language/word choice, cohesiveness, consistency, interpretability and general poetic merit. The judges also consider the six basic elements of a poem namely images, discourse, rhythm, line breaks, figures of speech, word music and formal structures.

itsbho: Let's talk about your book, 61 poems; you just have to tell us how long that took you and what the creative process encompassed?

M: Fuelled by passion, *We Belong to Each Other* was written from a loveseat and completed within four weeks.

itsbho: What does it really take to be a poet? What are some of the attributes you have to possess? Fill us in.

M: It's difficult to tell what it takes to be a poet. In my case, I combined a photographic mind, desire to illustrate captured images in relation to my experiences and my ability to dive down into the language to reveal my feelings.

itsbho: If you could describe your poetry in 5 words, what would you say?

M: My poetry communicates, "Words describing how I feel."

itsbho: In your opinion, is there a ready market for poetry, in Zimbabwe, Africa and the world over?

M: Because poems are speculative in their way of experimenting with language, different shapes and patterns of art, there is a ready market for this genre everywhere across the globe.

itsbho: Who is your favorite poet?

M: There are several poets whose talents and abilities I highly appreciate. However, I have a high regard for Chenjerai Hove's quality of mind and exceptional exactitude.

itsbho: Of all the poems you've written, which is your favorite? And why? Can you write us a sample of it?

M: "Explosions of Pain Crack My Lips" is evident of the creativity of the hands of my own brains, hence my favorite. Written from the edge of the loving age, it serves as a warning to everyone that falling in love could be and often is hazardous to one's health. Below is a sample of the poem:

Explosions of pain crack my lips

*(To my unborn child;
Love becomes pain once you give it away.)*

*A shapeless nameless thing
Crawls upon my shoulders
Nestles on my head and
Wriggles in my heart It poisons my lungs
Burrowing deeper into my soul
I am restless, I am breathless
My voice is grave
Sadness crushes my chest
I am dying, he is breaking my heart
The action man, so miserly
He will not waste words on me
Soul shaker, he is
For hours, for days he says nothing
He says nothing at all
We are not speaking, we are arguing
An unspoken argument!*

Published in Eternal Portraits (Watermark Press 2005)

itsbho: Favorite book/author?

M: There are a lot of talented authors whose complete works deserve my utmost credit among them William Shakespeare, John Grisham, Yan Martel, Yvonne Vera, Chenjerai Hove and Tsitsi Dangarembga.



itsbho: Who has been your greatest inspiration and what has made the greatest impact in your life?

M: My parents; I wouldn't have made it this far without them. They established the basis of my existence, strived to bring out the best in me and taught me to take responsibility of the choices I made in life. For this, I will always be grateful.

itsbho: Where would you like to be professionally in ten years?

M: The spot is in the making.

itsbho: What are your immediate plans professionally?

M: Writing and getting more books published and at the same time proceeding with my studies up to doctorate level before integrating myself into the business world.

itsbho: Where would you like to be personally in ten years?

M: Doing my thing but, much better!

itsbho: How would you best like to be remembered?

M: For my triumph over affliction.

itsbho: Artists get really frustrated when they decide to go commercial, what would you say to the talented lot those are ready to give in?

M: Although my break-through into the publishing world was a walk through the park, going commercial means putting up with seemingly endless frustrations and rejections that threaten the livelihood as every upcoming artist. I made it and so can you!

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