

Intwasa Poetry

(Reviewed by Memory Chirere, University of Zimbabwe)

Intwasa Poetry is a pocket book size collection of ‘memorable poems from inside and outside Zimbabwe.’ All this work has at least been read at the Intwasa Festival in Bulawayo. Intwasa is Bulawayo’s premier Arts festival held in September each year since 2005. Intwasa is Ndebele word for Spring. *Intwasa Poetry* contains fifteen poets.

Julius Chingono’s poetry has always been ‘short’ poetry. He sees the world through the eyes of the weak and the disadvantaged of society. His philosophy seems to be small matters are big matters and big issues are understood through small issues. You see it in poems like About Words and ‘Ditched’.

Chirikure Chirikure’s poetry has always been one that lends itself to both silent reading and performance. Like in his anthology Chamupupuri and his musical album Napukeni, Chirikure is keen on exposing the ironic side of life of ordinary people especially as they ‘misrelate’ with those in various forms of power. In ‘Dancing mother’, a woman dances, vigorously ploughing the earth with her feet so that the powerful IMF could be excited and donate money to restore the ‘dignity’ of the mother and her society.

John Eppel’s is ‘a roundabout poetry’. He tells one story so that you begin to gradually see the other more important story inside the insides of the story. And when you get to it, the poet leaves himself the leeway to say, J. Alfred Prufrock style, “No, that is not what I meant at all”, maybe with a wry smile on his mustachioed face.

The poetry of Owen Sheers ‘who was born in Fiji in 1974 and brought up in South Wales’ is diverse but central to it is the pursuit of and search for values that are permanent and enduring. There is here the life of a Maths teacher who away from the logarithms goes home to look after hens that lay the occasional egg. In another poem a child comes across the picture of its mother at the age of seventeen and cannot believe what it sees on the face of the girl from far back. In yet another piece, a man goes back to his birth place and finds the umbilical tree is long gone, swept away ‘by a hurricane all these years’.

I have never met Deon Marcus but I think he is an old wise man or he is an old young man! He knows that words cost a lot of money. His short poems are over laden with meaning, depending which time of the day you read them. His three line poem *Love* talks about love as an old and over

trodden emotion that remains, if you have the time to touch it, 'soft like a butterfly'. In the poem *There is something* Marcus demonstrates an ability to derive universal meanings in mundane things like 'the sound of a closing door', 'the way a curtain draws' and 'in the root of an age old tree'.

The books helps to show that 'amaBooks could be fast becoming for Bulawayo what Weaver Press is to Harare. You see it in the very meticulous editing and inspired choice and arrangement of artists.

Memory Chirere is an occasional short story writer who lives and works in Harare.