

## **MY INTERVIEW**

**Frederick Yamusangie interviewed by Yusuf Omavi the  
editor/journalist of Chaotic Dreams Online (CDO) a literary magazine  
(USA)**

Volume 3/ Issue 2 (2005)

**CDO\_Editor: How long have you been writing and do you write anything other than poetry?**

**Frederick:** I have been writing since my childhood. I was educated at boarding school in Zaire (now known as the Democratic Republic of Congo) in Africa, while there my best way of communicating with my family was writing letters. At that moment, I realized that to give my brothers and sisters the impression that everything was rosy for me, I had to create stories to write to them. And also during holidays, I used to proofread my mother's works. I believe that was why I had the passion of writing at an early age. Besides poetry, I write almost everything. I have written three plays, one novel "Full Circle", few short stories, articles and essays. I write both in French and English.

**CDO\_Editor: What are your sources of inspiration for your poetry?**

**Frederick:** It depends in which field I am writing. Most of the time my inspiration comes from human conditions. When I look around me and I realize that humans are not being treated fairly, it always leads me to write about it. And also the calm of the rivers has always been an important source of my inspiration.

**CDO\_Editor: Are there any notable authors who have influenced your writing?**

**Frederick:** One of biggest influence in my life as a writer has been my mother's works as she used to like to write about the oppression from the oppressed point of view. She was a radical feminist of 1970s. The Guinean (African) novelist and poet Camara Laye especially, his novel "L'Enfant Noir" in French is another one. I believe it is called "African Child" in English. The 1950s were the time of African consciousness and most African writers were trying, through their works, to expose the system that oppressed them for so long. But Camara Laye took a different path. Instead of criticizing the system, he preferred to celebrate his African cultural heritage. Regarding poetry, also Camara Laye's poem "Femme Noir...Femme Africaine" has influenced my writing of poems, especially the way he choose to remind us of the important role of our mothers during our development.

**CDO\_Editor: Is there any research involved in penning your poetry?**

**Frederick:** Yes...In fact I do a lot research on any subjects that interest me, even if I might not use the information immediately. That is why reading has always been an important part of my life. I do a lot of research to make sure my poems carry some sort of message.

**CDO\_Editor: Is there any particular target market you are trying to reach, and what do you want them to get out of your work?**

**Frederick:** There are many sides to my writings. But in case of my poetry, I always try to target those who are seeking to look at things or events through different angles than the established one.

**CDO\_Editor: Do you follow a strict writing schedule or just write when the spirit hits you?**

**Frederick:** That is a part of my writing that I never understood. I write almost anywhere and time as long as it is a quiet place and moment. Maybe it during that time the spirit hits me. I don't know. I always feel like I have to write at any given opportunity otherwise I would think that I am not being productive.

**CDO\_Editor: Have you ever had writer's block and how do you overcome it?**

**Frederick:** Maybe I have had it but I don't remember because to me if I cannot write I might probably put it down to laziness. It could also be because I write in many fields. Once I realize that I cannot write a poem, I write an article or a play or I can even start to edit or rewrite some of my works be it fiction or non-fiction. Like now, I have just complete editing the first poetry book of an upcoming Congolese poet Lady Kafun's "*Le Cri Du Congo*" in French. During that time, I could have been hit by the writer's block, and I didn't realize. Maybe it is also because as I have said it before I write in many fields.

**CDO\_Editor: Is there any particular process or setting you require to stimulate the writing process?**

**Frederick:** No really... as long as there is a minimum of what I call a calm atmosphere.

**CDO\_Editor: How are you working to grow as an artist?**

**Frederick:** I believe that in writing environment one should not stop learning. That is how I see it. To grow as an artist, I do take a lot of short training courses; I go to conferences around the world, meet many of my fellow writers so we can compare notes. But the important thing for me to do is that I have to keep on writing ceaselessly.

**CDO\_Editor: Do you belong to any writing groups? How has that helped you?**

**Frederick:** I belong to Thurrock Writers' Circle. It helps me to meet like-minded people. We do criticize each other's works in a relaxing and friendly manner. And few other groups, bit academic or not. As someone who is also interested in classic literature and in particularly the literary works of Joseph Conrad, I belong to The Joseph Conrad International Society (UK). It helps me to be among the like-minded and also networking with some distinguished university professors or writers around the world.

**CDO\_Editor: What advice would you give to poets who are just starting this literary journey?**

**Frederick:** Writing is a lovely profession especially if one does it primarily for passion. It could be a long road to walk but if you believe in yourself you will make it. Don't associate yourself with negative people or those who don't see the use of poetry. Do your best to be with the like-minded people. If it is possible, join your local poetry club.

**CDO\_Editor:** **Where do you see yourself as a writer ten years in the future?**

**Frederick:** I see myself as an established international writer...Anyway that is what I am working for.

**CDO\_Editor:** **Have you done spoken word? How is this different from written poetry to you?**

**Frederick:** No! But I have been to some events where my poems were read aloud.

**CDO\_Editor:** **Gene Fowler said, "Writing is easy. All you do is stare at a blank sheet of paper until drops of blood form on your forehead." What are your thoughts on this statement?**

**Frederick:** It is very interesting statement. But I don't think I do have anything constructive to say about it at the moment.

**CDO\_Editor:** **Is there anything else you would like to share with our readers?**

**Frederick:** I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to reach your readership. I am very pleased and I hope this is a beginning of a mutual collaboration.

Thanks....