

# The 2022

## *SprinNG Writing Fellowship Report*



SprinNG

A Nigerian Literary Society

[www.SprinNG.org](http://www.SprinNG.org)

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SprinNG - [www.SprinNG.org](http://www.SprinNG.org)



Established in May 2016 as Sprinng Literary Movement and re-branded as SprinNG in December 2019.

**Our mission:** "SprinNG is a Literary Movement and **Society for the Promotion, Revitalization, and Improvement of New Nigerian Generations** in writing and literature."

- Through our website, we publish reviews, poems, stories, essays, and fiction, all of which engender the soul of national literature.
- We founded and manage a Nigerian Writers Database that hosts the biography of 400+ writers.
- We have a SprinNG Lit page dedicated to promoting other literary websites worldwide and informing writers of opportunities outside what SprinNG offers.
- We conduct an annual creative writing fellowship, providing 6-weeks of free mentorship to select writers with resources such as airtime, paid access to books, and more during the fellowship.
- The SprinNG Advancement Fellowship is a self-paced (3 weeks) fellowship that helps develop career content and improve your professional communication skills to attain academic and career goals.
- We discover and promote female Nigerian authors with the Annual SprinNG Women Authors Prize #SWAP – combating the unequal gender representation and participation in Nigeria's literary industry.
- We also run an annual SprinNG Poetry Contest with a unique theme to celebrate our anniversary.

You can donate to SprinNG: [www.sprinng.org/donate](http://www.sprinng.org/donate)

Email: [Contact@SprinNG.org](mailto:Contact@SprinNG.org)

Social Media: @SprinnGLM

## **The SprinNG Fellowships**

SprinNG provides two fellowships to support Creative Writing and Career Advancement.

### **SprinNG Writing Fellowship (SWF):**

This programme focuses on six (6) genres of literature: Poetry, Fiction, Non-Fiction, Book Review, Play/Drama, and Blogging. For six (6) weeks, mentees will contact their mentors and send them writing pieces to get reviews and commentaries. Mentors and mentees will aim to work on at least one (1) piece of writing in their select genre per week. The SprinNG Writing Fellowship is only open to writers that **have not** published a book before (eBook/hardcopy).

The communication medium between the mentors and mentees throughout this programme will be via email, phone calls, WhatsApp, and text messages. In addition, all mentees will be provided weekly N500/¢10 airtime during the programme and paid access to an online bookstore to read books that support their programme learning.

### **SprinNG Writing Fellowship (SWF) Eligibility**

- Applicant must be a Nigerian or Ghanaian citizen residing in Nigeria or Ghana.
- Applicant must be between the ages of 18 to 25.
- The SprinNG Writing Fellowship (SWF) is only open to writers that have not published a book before (eBook/hardcopy).

### **The SprinNG Writing Fellowship Timeline**

- January 1 – April 15: Application opens and closes
- March: 2020 Mentors will be announced
- April 15 - May 15: The SprinNG Team will review application submissions
- May 15: Finalists will be notified
- May 21: Mentees and mentors will be paired
- June 1 – July 15: Fellowship Period
- July 7 – 20: Fellowship rounds up
- August/September: Mentees profiles and fellowship reports will be released
- December: Publication of mentees anthology

### **SprinNG Advancement Fellowship (SAF):**

The SprinNG Advancement Fellowship (SAF) is a self-paced (3 weeks) programme that helps develop career content and improve professional communication skills to attain academic and career goals. The fellowship covers six core courses: Resume Writing, Cover Letter Writing, Personal Statement Writing, Interview Preparation, Answering Interview Questions, and S.M.A.R.T Goal-Setting.

Fellowship participants are provided concise learning materials, including videos, worksheets, short guides, and assignments to build their career portfolios for pursuing opportunities like jobs, internships, fellowships, university admissions, and more. In addition, they will receive feedback and guidance from SprinNG to perfect their career content and stand out.

The fellowship is designed to be completed over three (3) weeks. Fellowship participants will also receive a certificate upon completing the fellowship.

## **SprinNG's Fellowship Accomplishments**

Past mentees of our fellowships have gone ahead to win writing contests, publish books, secure jobs, internships, scholarships, and university admission opportunities to top programs nationally and internationally.

### **Key accomplishments of our fellowship alumni include:**

- Okpara Ugochukwu Damian was selected in the Chimamanda Adichie's Purple Hibiscus Workshop and became 2nd Prize winner of the Nigerian Student's Poetry Prize (N100,000) in 2019.
- Pamilerin Jacob published *Memoir of Crushed Petals*, has won several contests, and even secured leadership roles, including the Poetry Column of Nigerian News Direct.
- Ibrahim Nureni, a two-time fellow (both in the writing and advancement fellowship), received two (2) fully funded postgraduate scholarships.
- Obinna Tony-Francis Ochem won several contests in 2020, including the Tush Magazine Writing Bi-Monthly Contest, Kito Diaries Prize for Writing Longlist, and Punocracy Prize for Satire Longlist.
- Taiwo Hassan's poem, *Here*, was a Best of the Net Nominee, and his chapbook, *Birds Don't Fly for Pleasure*, is forthcoming by River Glass Books this year.
- Olumide Emmanuel got shortlisted for several prizes and published his first poetry collection, *Supplication for Years in Sands*, in 2021.
- Chideraa Ike-Akaenyi secured internship at Isele Magazine, was promoted to Assistant Editor. She was shortlisted for the 2021 Awele Creative Trust Prize.
- Oluwasegun Daramola published over 25 poems in International Journals, got two (2) Pushcart Nominations, and has done four (4) Poetry readings.
- Abdulmued Balogun won the 2021 Annual Kreative Diadem Poetry Contest and was a Finalist for the 2021 Wingless Dreamer Book of Black Poetry Contest.
- Damilola Omotoyinbo won the 2021 SprinNG Poetry Contest, was Second Place in the Poets In Nigeria (PIN) March 2022 Poetry Contest, and got a scholarship to Lolwe Classes which her SprinNG Mentor recommended. She has been published on Agbowo, Brittle Paper, NND Poetry Column, and Pepper Coast Lit (the first literary magazine in Liberia). She also joined the Frontiers Collective.

At SprinNG, we educate individuals on how to be strategic in accomplishing their goals. We support them in the content-creation aspect of their goals and provide resources to ensure their success. Even after the fellowship, we ensure they have a network that supports them.

For all inquiries regarding the SprinNG Fellowships, email: [Fellowship@SprinNG.org](mailto:Fellowship@SprinNG.org)

***Follow us on social media and sign up for our newsletter to stay informed about the fellowships.***

# The 2022 SprinNG Writing Fellowship Report



In July 2018, we launched the first edition of the SprinNG Writing Fellowship with 21 applications and 9 mentees paired with 9 mentors for the fellowship year. Since then, we have recorded an increase in the number of applications received, mentees admitted for each fellowship year, and mentors who joyfully honour us with their skills, time, and commitment.

I am always thrilled about the SprinNG Writing Fellowship, and we are creating a solid community for young writers to sharpen their creative skills. In addition, I draw inspiration from the mentors' willingness to serve and their passionate commitment to the growth and success of their mentees' by unrestrainedly and generously sharing their expertise.

This year, we recorded stellar growth as we received 801 applications for the SprinNG Writing Fellowship. We accepted 44 mentees into the programme, 41 who completed the fellowship requirements and received their certifications, while 40 mentors volunteered for this year's fellowship.

It is no exaggeration that the mentors, through their participation, dedication, teachings, guidance, and feedback, have helped make this experience a meaningful and remarkable one for the mentees — proof of which is documented in this yearbook as expressed by the mentees in their feedback forms.

They spoke of each mentor's empathy, sensitivity, commitment, brilliance, reliability, friendliness, and kindness. Although the fellowship was only 6 to 7 weeks, these mentees have gained life-changing and transformational experiences they will forever treasure. These amazing fellows have awakened their greatness and unlocked a greater dimension of confidence.

For many, this fellowship has been redefining and inspiring. It has changed their perspective and disposition towards their writing. Also, many mentees now feel confident to send their works to journals for publication, participate in writing competitions, engage in more writing workshops, pursue an MFA, and publish works on various literary genres.



Beyond their creative development, mentees have also learned social, soft, and interpersonal skills for overall self-development. They learned patience, discipline, doggedness, communication skills, time management, active listening, proactiveness, compassion, networking, and more. Some have successfully developed relationships with their mentors which they hope to sustain beyond the programme.

Two comments that enthrall me are excerpts from Chukwuemerie Aginah and Ubaha Gideon Emmanuel's words — mentees of Loic Ekinga and Faith Emmanuel, respectively. Ubaha Gideon Emmanuel said,

*There is an improvement in how I read and write my poems – being directional. I saw a change in how I view a mentor-mentee relationship. I noticed that I no longer feel a thing like “writer's block.” My usage of punctuation marks in the correct way improved. Bold to say that since I began the fellowship, I've received more than five amazing acceptance emails for my writings. I won a poetry contest a day after I recovered from my sickness. I remember that my mentor dropped some notes to read and keep me busy. I was also chosen to be a reader for some dream magazines. I know it is impossible to be perfect, but I'm glad I'm far from being imperfect.*

In Chukwuemerie Aginah's words,

*I wanted to see further and have a connection with someone who understands my work and tends to it with all the tenderness it deserves while still nudging me beyond my perceived limits. Loic was kind enough to let me stand on his shoulder to see the directions he was pointing at.*

*From the activities my mentor engaged me in, I was able to break out from writing poems only when I felt a particular way. I was able to gather my thoughts and write them down without having to subject myself to that one feeling – this was really important for me because it redefined what I initially called writer's block. My mentor's reviews have helped develop my craft. Now, there's precision in writing my poems, and I write now knowing that the first draft doesn't have to be the final draft; it can be improved. I tried this with a poem I had written sometime in the past, and the resulting edition was amazing. With the fellowship and words from my mentor, I'm confident about my voice and will work tirelessly to breathe my writing dreams to life.*

Their words capture the true essence of this fellowship — community, support, and growth.

This year, we provided an opportunity to mentors who wanted to be mentored! We congratulate the following mentors for their commitment to self-development and thank those that supported their learnings during the fellowship.

<b>Mentor</b>	<b>Mentee</b>
Adedayo Agarau	Faith Emmanuel
Ebukun Ogunyemi	Gimbiya Galadima
Pamilerin Jacob	Michael Emmanuel
Eketi Edima Ete	Roseline Mgbodichinma Anya Okorie

The SprinNG Team is exceedingly grateful to the mentors for their service and the mentees, for their commitment to the learning process. We also thank the sponsors who provided scholarships for select graduating mentees to pursue the SprinNG Advancement Fellowship. Also, special thanks to Adedolapo Lawal and Oyindamola Shoola for managing this year's fellowship.

**Facts and figures by the 2022 mentees and mentors of the fellowship:**

All mentees agreed that

- Enough thought was put into the fellowship.
- The group chats helped them express their concerns and ask questions.
- The weekly emails were useful in helping them start their week.

- The fellowship helped them to push boundaries in their writing skills.

97.1% identified that the fellowship improved their confidence and provided a sense of direction to their creative writing pursuits.

97.1% acknowledged that the weekly airtime was useful to support them during the programme.

94.1% found the contest as a motivating factor in their fellowship experience.

94.1% noted the fellowship impacted their professional development and etiquette.

88.2% said they would re-apply to be SprinNG fellows in a different genre and category.

79.4% found the WhatsApp group chat useful in conversing and connecting with other mentees of the fellowship

86.7% of mentors said they want to be mentors again.

**Fellowship completion timeline:**

- 20.6% of mentees completed the fellowship in 7 weeks
- 32.4% of mentees finished the fellowship in 6 weeks
- 35.3% of mentees completed the fellowship in 5 weeks
- 8.8% of mentees completed theirs in 4 weeks
- 2.9% of mentees completed the programme in 3 weeks

SprinNG will keep pursuing its goal of revitalizing Nigerian literature with passion, commitment, and the right support.

Best,

Ebukun Gbemisola Ogunyemi - *SprinNG's Director*

***“You can’t use up creativity.  
The more you use, the more you have.”  
— Maya Angelou***

**List of Graduating Mentees**  
**Class of 2022 - Congratulations on this milestone!**

Abdulkareem Abdulkareem Adamu Yahuza Abdullahi Aderohunmu Abdulrokeeb Adedayo Adika Ethel Aginah, Chukwuemelie Emmanuel Alo Oluwatomisin Faith Bridget Chioma Okpara Bryan Obinna Joseph Okwesili Chigozie Precious Nneka Dylan Harold Abakah Ese Gift Orakpoghenor Faith Emmanuel Gimbiya Galadima	Goodness Daniels Grace Olubiyo Grace Omolola Ashele Hassan Aduragbemi Usman Iduh Simon Akagwu Ifunanya Juliet Ottih Ishola Quwam Abolaji Judith Laphilai Maikaho Kawthar Arinola Omisore Mgbabor Emmanuel Chukwudalu Michael Emmanuel Moses Chukwuemeka Chimereze Moyosoluwa Elizabeth Olotu	Nnagboro Chinenye Vivian Olaitan Joy Damilola Oluwafunmilayo Ojeniyi Oluwaseun Ojo Prince Acquah Roseline Mgbodichinma Anya Okorie Solomon David Soyebo Abdul-Ahmed Olaoluwa Testimony Akinkunmi Titalayo Areola Daramola Ubaha Gideon Emmanuel Zainab Abubakar
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**List of 2022 Mentors**

*We thank you for participating in this opportunity of service to improve and revitalize Nigerian literature through mentorship!*

Abdul Dante Abdulsalam Abdulwasiu Ishola Adedayo Agarau Chideraa Ike-Akaenyi Christtie Jay Ebukun Ogunyemi Ehi-kowochio Ogwiji Ejiro Elizabeth Eketi Edima Ette Faith Emmanuel Fui Can-Tamakloe Gimbiya Galadima Goodness Olanrewaju Ayoola Hope Joseph	Ibrahim Nureni Ilerioluwa Olatunde Iliya kambai Dennis Iyanu Adebisi Jide Badmus Kanyinsola Olorunnisola Karimot Odebode Loic Ekinga Michael Emmanuel Mosobalaje M. Abimbola Ogundeyi Tolu Emmanuel Ogunfowodu Olufemi Ola W. Halim Olowo Qudus	Olumuyiwa Adesokun Oyindamola Shoola Pamilerin Jacob Pelumi Salako Ridwan Tukur Roseline Anya Okorie Samuel A. Adeyemi Sarpong Osei Asamoah Seun Lari-Williams Sherif Ogundele Tola Ijalusi Ugochukwu Damian Okpara
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## Notable Mentions

**Contest Winners in the 2022 SprinNG Writing Fellowship:** The following participants were semi-finalists and winners of contests included in the fellowship.

### Why I Write – Week 1

**The winner:** Aginah, Chukwuemeli Emmanuel

#### Other Semi-finalists

- Gimbiya Galadima – First Runner Up
- Olubiyo Grace – Second Runner Up
- Solomon David – Notable Mention

### Poetry Contest – Week 2

**The winners:** Abdulkareem Abdulkareem

#### Other Semi-finalists

- Chigozie Precious Nneka – First Runner Up
- Hassan A. Usman – Second Runner Up
- Soyebo Abdul-Ahmed Olaoluwa – Notable Mention

### Flash Fiction Contest – Week 3

**The winner:** Gimbiya Galadima

#### Other Semi-finalists

- Grace Olubiyo – First Runner Up
- Kawthar Arinola Omisore – Second Runner Up
- Aginah, Chukwuemeli Emmanuel – Notable Mention

**Honorary Ribbon & Star Recognitions:** The following SprinNG Writing Fellowship participants received an honorary ribbon and star on their certification for demonstrating exemplary performance, consistency, perseverance, and achievement during the fellowship.

- Aginah, Chukwuemeli Emmanuel
- Chigozie Precious Nneka
- Gimbiya Galadinma
- Nnagboro Chinenye Vivian
- Titilayo Areola Daramola
- Zainab Abubakar
- Aderohunmu Abdulrokee Adedayo
- Ubaha Gideon Emmanuel
- Ifunanya Juliet Ottih
- Grace Olubiyo
- Judith Laphilai Maikaho
- Adika Ethel
- Adamu Yahuza Abdullahi
- Testimony Akinkunmi
- Kawthar Arinola Omisore
- Olaitan Joy Damilola

**SprinNG Advancement Fellowship Scholarship Recipients:** The following SprinNG Writing Fellowship participants received a N25,000 scholarship to the SprinNG Advancement Fellowship.

- Vivian Nnagboro
- Chigozie Precious Nneka
- Zainab Abubakar
- Titilayo Areola Daramola

- Judith Laphilai Maikaho
- Chukwuemelie Aginah
- Ethel Adika
- Winifred Odunoku
- Ubaha Gideon Emmanuel
- Kawthar Omisore Arinola
- Olaitan Joy Damilola



# 2022 Fellows Biographies and Commentaries

## **We asked our mentees the following questions...**

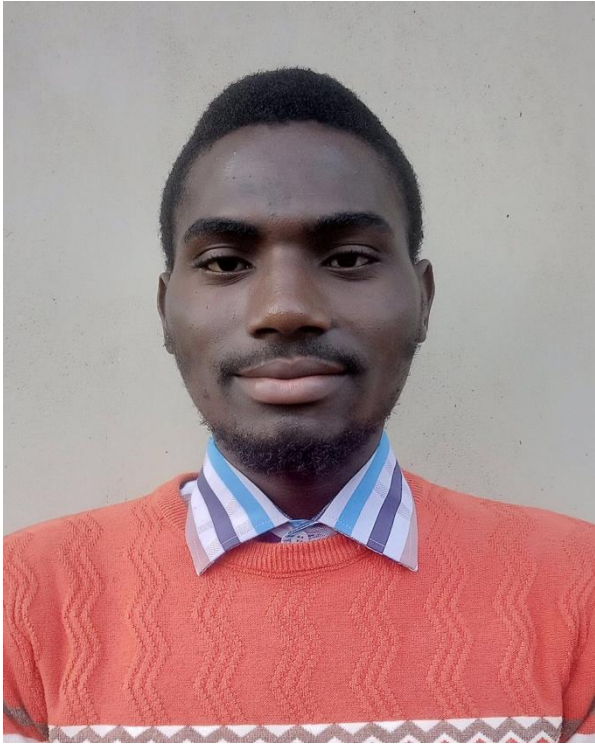
What part of the fellowship did you find most thoughtful, surprising, or engaging?

Did the fellowship boost your confidence and sense of direction about your creative writing pursuits?

Did you face any challenges during the programme?

What is your honest appraisal of your mentor?

How did you improve during the programme?



**Mentee:** Abdul-Ahmed Soyebó  
**Mentor:** Abdulwasíu Ishola

*I applied for the fellowship because, even though I had developed an interest in fiction, I wanted to learn the story writing process one-on-one. The fellowship provided me with this and more. Now, I have more confidence in my creative pursuit - chiefly story writing.*

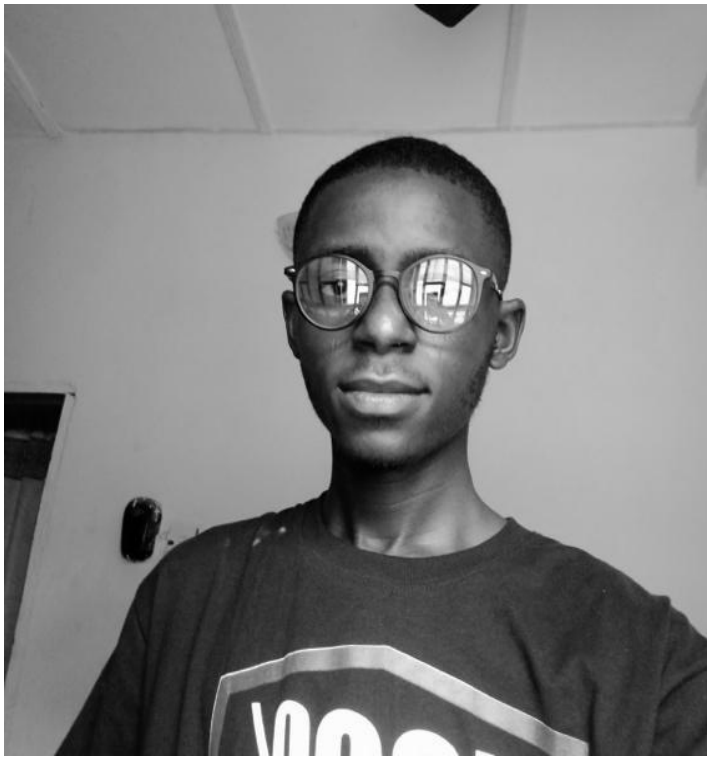
*My major challenge throughout the fellowship was my busy schedule which hampered my practice time. Beyond this, it was or would have been a completely free ride. I connected with my mentor very well, and the program was well planned and not overwhelming for me.*

*My mentor was dedicated, which was the most important thing for me. He reached out to me very well, and it really gingered my motivation. He is a good mentor because he understood me well and came to my level when explaining things to me. His comments and feedback were honest and allowed room for improvement. He once rejected one of my pieces. He rejected it with kind words. He believed I could do better. The second piece I submitted afterward eventually got a notable mention in one of our weekly contests. He listened to me and my plights. He considered me and my opinions during decision-making. He remained committed throughout the fellowship. He is simply amazing and communicates well. He was dedicated and committed to the fellowship and my growth as a writer.*

*During the fellowship, I wrote up to two pieces - a minimum of one – weekly, made friends from the fellowship, grasped my strengths and weaknesses, read a substantial number of books, and learned better how to communicate with my peers and superiors.*

*If I could change something about the fellowship, it would be making it into a physical or hybrid one.*

**Abdul-Ahmed Soyebó** is a fiction writer and an Intern Pharmacist at the University College Hospital, Ibadan. A second runner-up of the Fitrah Review Short Story Contest 2020, he tells stories to explore life's intricacies and entertain. He is sometimes amazed at how his pharmacy profession pairs well with writing for him, and he wonders if his second degree would be in Creative Writing. With Leila Abouelela, Chinua Achebe, Chigozie Obioma, and Sefi Atta as some of his favorite established authors, Abdul-Ahmed hopes to publish a novel and a collection of stories in the future.



**Mentee:** Abdulkareem Abdulkareem

**Mentor:** Iyanu Adebisi

*Getting feedback from my mentor on my work was the best part of the fellowship. Also, the in-house competition was really thoughtful and engaging.*

*I plan on pursuing an MFA program in the future. The improvements in my writing and the chats with my mentor about this goal gave me a sense of confidence.*

*My mentor is a perfect example of what a mentor should be. I remember the first time we connected, she called me using her airtime, and we spoke for a long period. She asked about my goals, my plan for MFA, writing challenges, and everything. She is inspiring and always reminds me, "you are talented." She helped shape the weak points of my writing and introduced me to many things. With her support, I improved on my usage of lineation,*

*punctuation, how to attend to and expand on themes, musicality, and everything.*

*Providing airtime for the fellowship, especially as a Nigerian Student, helped us a lot.*

**Abdulkareem Abdulkareem, Frontier III**, is a Nigerian writer and Linguist. He loves writing about everything that trembles his heart and everything that softens it. He is currently a final year student of Linguistics at the University of Ilorin. He won the University of Ilorin SU Writers Competition (Poetry Category) 2022. In addition, he was shortlisted for the top entries of the Nigerian Students Poetry Prize (NSPP) 2021, PIN 10 Day Poetry Competition 2022, and Brigitte Poirson Poetry Contest February/March 2022.

He was a mentee at the SprinNG Writing Fellowship 2022. His works have appeared and are forthcoming in POETRY Magazine, West Trade Review, Off Topic Publishing, Orion's Belt, Better Than Starbucks, Aster Lit, Poetry Column-NND, Words and Whispers, Afro Literary Magazine, The Shore Poetry, Brittle Paper, Rulerless Magazine, Lumiere Review, Claw and Blossom, Olney Magazine, FERAL, Rigorous, Kissing Dynamite, and elsewhere. He is currently a poetry reader at Agbowó Magazine and Frontier Poetry. He is also a member of the Frontiers Collective and tweets @panini500bc and on Instagram: @panini500bc.



**Mentee:** Adamu Yahuza Abdullahi

**Mentor:** Michael Emmanuel

*The fellowship's first and last weeks were the most thoughtful and engaging for me. In the first week, I read about Safia Elhillo and loved the simplicity and fluidity of her poems.*

*Overall, I have improved my writing and learned to use various poetic devices to paint simple but strong imageries. I improved in my use of tenses and ability to paint simple imageries yet provoking. I have learned how to write prose (which I haven't attempted before) and improved in writing the different forms of poetry—Like haiku, couplets, and more.*

*My mentor was very thoughtful, considerate, and always ready to listen. Michael would respond to your message even when it came at the last hours of the night. He always has that non-prideful manner of correcting your errors. He's always ready to impact, so far you are there to receive. I will remember my mentor for his simplicity, generosity, and humility.*

*Overall, this fellowship was well planned. Kudos! I have learned, relearned, and unlearned. This fellowship has opened my eyes to other creative doors. I have learned how to write both poetry and prose.*

**Adamu Yahuza Abdullahi** is a poet and a spoken word artist from Kwara State, Nigeria. His works have appeared or are forthcoming in notable journals/ magazines, such as Synchronized Chaos, Angel Rust, Kalahari Review, Ngiga Review, Arkorewrites, Konyashamsrumi, Arts Lounge, Teenlit journal, Pine Cone Review, Mixed Magazine, Oneblackboylikethat Review, and Borgu Book Club. He bagged the NAKS (a Student Union body in Kwara State) Poet of the year award in 2021. In addition, his poem, "Catalogue of memories," has been nominated by Oneblackboylikethat Review for 2023 Best of the Net Prize by Sundress Publications. He is a lover of books and flavored tea. When not writing, he reads other poets and creatives; when he is not reading, he is stuck in the daydreams of Kemanji—his hometown, transforming into one of the world's renowned cities.





**Mentee:** Aderohunmu Abdulrookeb

**Mentor:** Ejiro Elizabeth

*I enjoyed the fellowship from the beginning to the end. I learned several things, ranging from the use of language, diction, and infusion of imagery to poems, forms, and scientific poems. The fellowship dared me to bring out my best. It also struck the fire of reading in me.*

*The first criticism of my work really did me somehow, and I had to rewrite a poem countless times before getting what my mentor meant. Also, my mentor had to change the timing of our tutorials due to her busy schedule. In all, I enjoy the fellowship and gained this boldness that my work is good for submission. I no longer seek validation before believing in the power of my work.*

*I will remember my mentor for her effort in making me know what's useful in my art. Her lectures were torchlight, moving wheels, moving my art to the home of deepness. Her language analysis shaped me a lot – the aftermath of which birthed brilliant poems with strong language usage. Also, her recommendation of some poets helped me too.*

*Reading their works made a significant impact on my art.*

*My mentor, Ejiro Elizabeth, taught me how to give striking titles to my poems. We discussed poem structure and line connectivity. The assignments challenged me to do more. It quelled the lazy part of me. My mentor expanded my wisp of hope in poetry. I enjoyed her style of teaching, the humour embedded in them, and the strict part. Her introduction to speculative poetry and analysis of *Soft Science* by Choi Franny made me go back to all speculative poetry I have read before. I appreciate the time she allotted to every lecture, despite her busy schedule.*

**Aderohunmu Abdulrookeb** is an undergraduate at the University of Ibadan. He's a poet who writes mostly about family issues and partly about the world's grief. He's working towards being the best of himself and, at the same time, assisting young poets willing to be on the path.

His works have been published in *Kalahari Review*, *Kalonopia Magazine*, *commune writers*, *voice lux journal*, *Roi Faineant*, and elsewhere. He hopes to win an MFA in poetry, and his dream magazines are *New Yorker*, *poetry column*, *Lumiere Review*, and *20. 35 anthology*. He loves the presence of little children and hopes to become a philanthropist in the future.





**Mentee:** Alo Oluwatomisin Faith

**Mentor:** Ibrahim Nureni

*I enjoyed the first contest, "Why I Write." It was fun to really dig into myself to answer that question. I never intended to write other than as a hobby. But this fellowship showed me that it could be much more than a hobby.*

*My mentor, Ibrahim, was effective and thorough. He was helpful and easy to communicate with throughout the fellowship. I will remember Ibrahim for his editing skill and promptitude. Before the fellowship, I was insecure about my writing and didn't know much about my chosen genre. But I obtained a lot of new insights and knowledge that I didn't have before. In addition, I was able to see more faults in my work than I previously could. For example, how to correctly order my writing and connect one paragraph to the next.*

*Also, having someone commend my work showed me that I wasn't as horrible as I thought before the fellowship, which greatly boosted my confidence. Furthermore, my grammatical errors have significantly decreased, hence, improving the quality of my writing.*

*I don't believe anything needs to be changed about the fellowship. Everything went perfectly for me throughout the fellowship.*

**Alo Oluwatomisin Faith** is a freelance writer and book critic, with published works in top magazines such as OnlineBookClub.org, Independent Book Review, and Reedsy Discovery. Oluwatomisin currently works with a self-published author as an assistant writer for his second book.

As a blogger, Oluwatomisin writes and publishes content on art, literature, and health-related matters at [stylusreviews.wordpress.com](http://stylusreviews.wordpress.com). She also enjoys reading books on romance, historical fiction, self-help, mystery, and thrillers. [@BookLov30440990](https://twitter.com/BookLov30440990) is Oluwatomisin's alter-ego on Twitter.



**Mentee:** Bridget Okpara

**Mentor:** Ogunfowodu Olufemi

*The weekly reflection was engaging, and the weekly airtime was thoughtful. SprinNG is a very good platform for all to learn and develop their skills, as many provisions have been made for contingencies. The considerate administration is also very surprising. I almost thought I would be dismissed when I had issues with my phone.*

*My pieces over the years have revealed a sense of fear from the writer. I was stuck between making a definite conclusion of my view. Hence, it appeared I had always ended with some rhetorical questions that tell the reader to make their own decision. My journey at SprinNG has helped improve my confidence. I now know I have an audience who will always be ready to read my honest view, and I do not have to please all.*

*Asides from the personal challenge with my gadget, I had no challenge with the fellowship. To be candid, it was initially overwhelming, but adaptability is a*

*virtue for growth. My mentor did reach me even when I was off for some days. Mr. Ogunfowodu is an observer and a competent writer. He discovered many flaws in my writing that I didn't think existed. He really helped to ensure I put down many weights I had as discouragement on this journey.*

*His words were encouraging. I guess I would not have been this confident if I was not his mentee. He was also considerate. I will remember Mr. Ogunfowodu for these words out of many; "the genre of poetry I need to learn and understand is to be honest with myself." In addition, my reading habit for poetry improved. I have developed confidence in writing and now write simple and comprehensive poems. I wrote fiction, and it came out nice. Going back to an already written piece used to be a challenge for me. I learned the act of giving my piece some time to breathe before rereading and editing it. Above all, it would be nice if the number of mentees could be increased.*

**Bridget Okpara** is a Nigerian poet, spoken word artist, product designer, and fashion designer. She is a fourth-year Physiotherapy student at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, and her works have appeared in Distinct Africa Magazines and Poetry Chat magazines, among others. She began writing due to its therapeutic benefits.

She is inspired by human experiences and societal and environmental issues. When she is not writing, she is crafting ideas of the mind. She is on Facebook @Bridget.Okpara, LinkedIn: Bridget Okpara, and IG: @pet\_\_bridge.



**Mentee:** Bryan Okwesili

**Mentor:** Ugochukwu Damian Okpara

*I found the one-mentee-one mentor approach to learning most thoughtful. The intention behind my art and its direction were most important to my mentor, which helped me hone and steer towards a practical goal.*

*Ugochukwu Damian Okpara was thoughtful and kind, sharp-witted, and enlightened. I will remember him for his thoughtfulness, wit, and kindness.*

*During the fellowship, I read a lot of poetry recommendations that steered my imagination. I learned to balance redundancy and verbosity and understand content and form. Now, I have a clearer goal for my writing and experimentation with forms of poetry.*

**Bryan Okwesili** is a queer Nigerian poet and storyteller. His work explores the interiority and tensions of queerness in a heteronormative culture in which he imagines a world of inclusivity. A two-time Pushcart Prize nominee and a finalist for the Tupelo Quarterly Open Fiction Prize, Bryan's works have appeared in CRAFT, SLICE, SmokeLong Quarterly, Isele Magazine, Foglifter, Tupelo Quarterly, Brittle Paper, PANK, and elsewhere. He is currently a law student at the University of Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria. You can connect with him on Twitter at [@meet\\_bryan\\_](https://twitter.com/meet_bryan_).





**Mentee:** Chukwuemelie Aginah

**Mentor:** Loic Ekinga

*I found the trying of different genres very thoughtful and engaging – where all mentees, in the first three weeks of the programme, were expected to try out different writing genres. I loved that the resources for the know-how were also made available in the fellowship's manual. Adedolapo, the fellowship manager was amazingly resourceful.*

*I initially started writing poetry just for fun and to release emotional stress. For most of it, I didn't have the confidence to share my poems, and upon much persuasion from friends, I would occasionally send some to journals for publication. Each rejection mail I got nibbed my confidence the more. (I never got any acceptance mail.)*

*In my application for the fellowship, I mentioned two things that resonated with me: Isaac Newton's saying, "that if he has seen further, it's by standing on the shoulders of great men; I wanted to see further and have a connection with someone who understands my work and tends to it with all the tenderness it deserves while still nudging me beyond my perceived limits. Loic was kind enough to let me stand on his shoulder to see the directions he was pointing at. I remember the first assignment he gave me about writing in form and the materials he made available for that assignment. It was all that I needed to start appreciating poetry better. I remember the joy in my voice while discussing the week's journey with him.*

*Before the start of the fellowship, my biggest fear was connecting with my mentor, but it was seamless, and this has given me the confidence to at least dare to connect with other people. His critiques of my poems were sincere. He did not embellish them unduly, yet he cared not to crush my spirit. I could bet it was his soft-spoken voice that did that magic, but no, he was intentional about it. He was intentional about the assignments he gave. Wherever he saw a slack, he notified me and let me go on a journey of discovery while pointing out the direction. He was also very understanding and prioritized my mental health. It wasn't hard at all connecting with him. He was readily available to walk me through any challenge. Also, he kept appointments, and if there were to be any changes, he would reach out. He made it easy for me to reach out to him, to ask him any question that I may have, and introduced me to poets that I share similar writing styles and themes with. Importantly, he prioritized me coming out from this mentorship as a better version of myself, not a distorted reflection of himself or even his perfect image. Simply put, Loic was awesome. I will remember him for "use less words and trust your reader more."*

*From the activities my mentor engaged me in, I was able to break out from writing poems only when I felt a particular way. I was able to gather my thoughts and write them down without having to subject myself to that one feeling – this was really important for me because it redefined what I initially called writer's block. My mentor's reviews have helped develop my craft. Now, there's precision in writing my poems, and I write now knowing that the first draft doesn't have to be the final draft; it can be improved. I tried this with a poem I had written sometime in the past, and the resulting edition was amazing. With the fellowship and words from my mentor, I'm confident about my voice and will work tirelessly to breathe my writing dreams to life.*

**Chukwuemelie Aginah** is a budding writer from Nigeria whose works focus on loss, depression, longing, and the multiplicity of human experiences. He believes literature is therapeutic and words are potent medicine. He is a first-class graduate of Medical Physiology from Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Uli, Anambra. He has his short story, "Farsighted," published with Okadabooks. When he is not reading or writing, he travels out of this world on the wings of music. He considers himself a pro shower singer and dancer.



**Mentee:** Chigozie Precious Nneka

**Mentor:** Ehi-Kowochio Okwiji

*The mentor-mentee initiative was a big addition to the program. Before I encountered SprinNG Fellowship, my poems, as my mentor told me, were "thoughts and random thoughts" put together. However, with time I learned to infuse literary devices to make my poems look actually like a poem.*

*Communication with my mentor was very enlightening but slow and fluctuating. She played a big role in my writing journey, but the long spaces where I needed her and was unavailable sometimes created doubts. Apart from this, we connected well.*

*She spent time reviewing my work and gave honest feedback. Her insight challenged me and brought me out of my comfort zone. Irrespective of her busy schedule, my writing journey was blessed. Instead*

*of random thoughts, I wrote real poetry. I learned what poetry is and what is expected of me. Also, I learned how to use poetic devices and discovered poem types and wrote them, e.g., acrostic poems, concrete poems, etc. Although book review(s) wasn't my genre, I conquered procrastination and learned how to use book reviews to appreciate a poet's work. Most importantly, I developed the confidence to share my work.*

*I would like to see the fellowship create better mentor-mentee progress tracking to ensure nobody is left behind.*

**Chigozie Precious Nneka** is a budding poet based in Nigeria. Her previous travels outside Nigeria have broadened her love for written words and exposed her to a world of emotional creativity and ambiance. Chigozie identified with her talent when she first won the Creative Minds Award in 2019, organized by her faculty, the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Studies University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Her writing has also been recognized by the Healthleap Initiative Foundation, a medical foundation whose objective is to help explore the fiction world by young writers in the medical field. Amongst reading, watching movies, and other hobbies, writing is her favorite thing to do, especially when she is unhappy. The combination of words on paper or the mere clicks of pads on the keyboard lifts her spirits – soaking away the negative energy.





**Mentee:** Solomon David

**Mentor:** Lucas Ogundeyi

*The first two weeks of August with the new mentor, Lucas, and the very first week, with my first mentor were my favourites. They were both nice and have helped a lot.*

*Now, I am more intentional about my poems' line connection and musicality. I have finally gotten the hang of writing the first draft – the key to allowing the poem to take its direction, and I feel I'll be finishing many of the drafts in my docs file.*

*The most challenging thing for me was combining this fellowship with other programmes towards the end. It slowed down my progress. My mentor is good; the best part was his sacrifice toward my growth. He's a doctor and a very busy person, but that never stopped him. And beyond words, I am truly grateful to him*

*and Ayomide.*

*I will remember his determination to get me out of my comfortable grief-themed themes (lol). I can now draw inspiration from almost everything. I know how to use stories from my life to insert sincerity into my writing. I understand line connections and fluidity. I am more conscious of the musicality of my poems. I understand how to let a poem find its voice by not allowing the perfectionist in me to intervene.*

**David Solomon** is a Nigerian poet and student of Human Anatomy at the University of Maiduguri. He is passionate about all things art and stans Ocean Vuong. His works have appeared or are forthcoming in various magazines, including Kalahari Review, African Writers, MadSwirl, and others. He tweets [@Hena\\_David\\_S](https://twitter.com/Hena_David_S).



**Mentee:** Dylan Harold Abakah  
**Mentor:** Ola W. Halim

*I found the lecture sessions with my mentor most engaging. I have learned a lot about the writing process from the experience. He has helped remove the scales from my eyes by helping me work through my writing biases and giving helpful advice and tips to help improve my writing and sharpen my style and voice.*

*Yes, some problems were encountered during this fellowship such as scheduling issues, airtime allocations coming late, and finding the programme overwhelming at times as it clashed with my academic work.*

*However, my mentor, Ola W. Halim, was a very engaging mentor who always gave feedback and interacted very well. He provided constant and honest feedback and constructive criticism of my work. In addition, he showed genuine interest in my craft and was eager to help me discover my writing style.*

*I improved my writing discipline due to the deadlines I had to meet every week. Also, I have developed a writing style that works best for me. I have identified a plotting style that works best for me and learned “rules” for better writing, making my work now more readable. Additionally, I have discovered the POV I am most effective in writing.*

*Overall, I would love to see more engagement between the fellows as the interaction was low and limited to only sharing concerns on the WhatsApp platform.*

**Dylan Harold Abakah** is interested in stories about identity, oppression, and the limits of humanity and explores them in his writing projects. His favorite books include the Left Behind series and the A Song of Ice and Fire series. When he's not writing, he's poisoning his roommates with new recipes, dancing to his favourite songs, or catching up on his favorite TV shows. Dylan is currently a final year Industrial Engineering student.



**Mentee:** Ese Gift Orakpoghenor

**Mentor:** Olowo Qudus

*Considering that participation in the fellowship was free (even though a few applications were selected from the numerous applications received), I found the weekly stipends thoughtful. For me, it helped to complement my usual data subscription.*

*Although I found the WhatsApp group somewhat interactive and hoped to connect with a few people, I longed for a more interactive online session, just like the introductory class or a day set aside where the weekly activities would be discussed. Or, aside from the general, people in the same line could be paired to interact.*

*Before now, writing for me was more of a leisure activity. Even though I have participated in and received prizes for some of my writing pieces, I still write just for the sake of writing. However, I only recently made it a point of duty to become more deliberate, a reason I applied for the fellowship.*

*I found the fellowship overwhelming at some point due to personal events. Trying to merge major activities happening outside the fellowship was difficult, but my mentor was really understanding and considerate. I love his approach when it comes to giving reviews. He tells me when I need to do better and encourages me to do it. Despite his background knowledge about my academic pursuit, he didn't assume anything. He walked me through every process. He never waits for me to remind him when it's time for class. And when he is absent, he explains and always makes up for the missed class.*

*Most significantly, my consistency improved. I was able to maintain a level of consistency in writing. Again, I learned certain rules I didn't see as anything before when writing. My ability to engage my readers and my willingness to show my writing to the world improved. In all, I wouldn't change anything about this programme. I just would wish for a more interactive live session. However, the one-on-one strategy makes a whole lot of sense.*

**Ese Gift Orakpoghenor** is a Nigerian poet & essayist. She was born and bred in Northern Nigeria but originally hailed from Eku, Ethiope-East Local Government Area of Delta State. Ese spent almost two decades living in Zaria, Kaduna State, where she was born. Her ardent belief that writing is a powerful tool for reconstructing and questioning motives initiated her passion for writing.

Most of her literary works revolve around love, religion & political dynamics. Apart from being a creative writer, Ese is also passionate about children and teenage development. She strongly supports the empowerment of young people as she believes they are the future. The works of George Herbert and Alfred Tennyson, among others, are frequently cited as her sources of inspiration.

Apart from creative writing, Ese creates and edits unique pieces that help to reveal brand identity. She has partnered with several organizations and is looking forward to more partnerships in that line of skills. Additionally, she has received notable recognitions and several awards for her creative works. She has also worked and served in different religious and social leadership capacities.

Ese has a certificate in Education from the Federal College of Education, Zaria, amidst other online professional certifications in Writing, Business Management, Social Media Management, and Marketing. In addition, she is a final year English and Literary Studies Student at the Federal University of Lokoja, Kogi State.





**Mentee:** Ethel Adika

**Mentor:** Sarpong Osei Asamoah

*The Weekly Contest and the prizes given to winners were very thoughtful, surprising, and engaging. As a result of this fellowship, I have become conscious of my diction, punctuation, and the effective use of literary devices.*

*I was also exposed to reading many materials from experts, which helped me to model my works along their style. Unfortunately, my mentor and I had very busy schedules, which sometimes hindered our plans for feedback sessions.*

*I also had a problem uploading my files. Whenever I try uploading my word docs, it doesn't upload, so I had to compile my works and feedback questions and answers into a word doc and submit them to coordinators.*

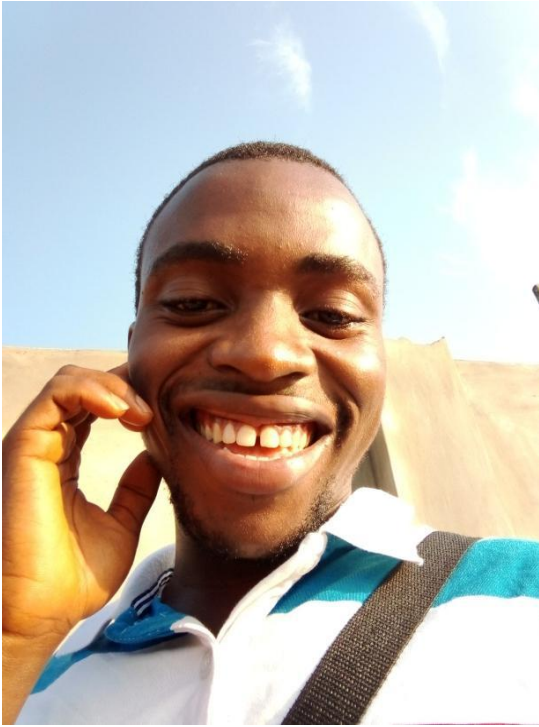
*At some point, the fellowship became overwhelming as assignments kept rising and tight schedules restricted me from meeting deadlines. However, I would like to commend my mentor for a great job done. He was very*

*open, honest, welcoming, and an active person. He had a busy schedule, but he always tried to make time for our teaching, learning, discussions, and feedback sessions.*

*Mr. Sarpong is a passionate mentor. He was supportive and provided me with varieties of reading materials. He allowed me to think and discover things by myself before he came in, especially during feedback sessions on my work. I recommend him for future appointments as a mentor for upcoming editions of the SprinNG Writing Fellowships. I will remember my mentor for his patience, clarity of feedback, and constant motivation whenever he saw improvement in me.*

*I have learned to write my words fully and not in contracted forms. I have developed the ability to effectively employ imagery and vivid description in writing poems. Unarguably, I have become abreast with the effective use of figures of speech, especially similes. Unlike before, I have learned to punctuate my poems effectively. I have been exposed to other genres of writing, especially fiction.*

**Ethel Adika** is a Ghanaian writer who is literate in English and French. She is the Deputy General Secretary and the Vice President of the Writers' and Debaters Club at Mount Mary College of Education. She was the First Runner Up (2nd position) of the Maiden Edition of the TWJ Writing Contest (2022). She won the Poem Writer of the Year and Talented and Most Creative Student of the Year in the Maiden Edition of TTAG-EGA Excellence Awards. She is a columnist in the TTAG Weekly Journal (TWJ). Her work can be found on her blog: <https://emiinspirations.com>.



**Mentee:** Ubaha Gideon Emmanuel

**Mentor:** Faith Emmanuel

*I love that the fellowship helped me have a smooth relationship with people, especially with my mentor. I was fascinated the first time we were introduced to the group.*

*It was also an amazing moment for me to meet friends I know in the creative world in a fellowship like this. Also, I appreciate the moderators for always checking up on us. It was great that the fellowship's moderator gave us space to rest and check up on our mental health. I thought it'd be a strict gathering, but to my surprise, it wasn't. The weekly feedback forms were a lever for me to speed up my reading and deadlines.*

*Lastly, it was shocking and uplifting getting to know that some of the mentors are my friends. I screamed the moment I saw some faces I knew. I thank the SprinNG team for curating such a moment/movement.*

*Indeed, there have been improvements. However, I wouldn't be where I am in my creative journey if I had not been selected to participate in this fellowship.*

*My first class with my mentor was on how to be a better poet, to write good poems. He pointed out my flaws even without telling me. Although it wasn't easy scheduling a time for class, I love my mentor. He wasn't blunt in bringing out my flaws. I'm the type who loves to write when it's close to a deadline, but he made me understand how bad it is. Though I felt bad, I soon realized that he was right. His vast knowledge of things is one I would love to emulate, and the way he shows care and attention to detail is top-notch. My mentor has a tenacious character.*

*There is an improvement in how I read and write my poems – being directional. I saw a change in how I view a mentor-mentee relationship. I noticed that I no longer feel a thing like “writer's block.” My usage of punctuation marks in the correct way improved. Bold to say that since I began the fellowship, I've received more than five amazing acceptance emails for my writings. I won a poetry contest a day after I recovered from my sickness. I remember that my mentor dropped some notes to read and keep me busy. I was also chosen to be a reader for some dream magazines. I know it is impossible to be perfect, but I'm glad I'm far from being imperfect.*

**Ubaha Gideon Emmanuel** (he/him) is a young poet and teacher from Lagos, Nigeria, who adores nature and children. His poems have appeared in Eboquills, U\_Rights Magazine, Arthut Anthology, Boardspeck, Street Child Anthology, Terror House, Agape Review, Poemify Publisher, Fiery Scribe Review, Brittle Papers & Flat Ink Journal, Stripes Magazine, Nigerian NewsDirect, International Human Rights Arts Festival (IHRAF), Adoptee Reclaimed, The Lumiere Review, Mausoleum Press, Stonecoast Review Literary Journal. Winner of World Voices Magazine's June 2022 Poetry Contest.



**Mentee:** Gimbiya Ekene Galadima

**Mentor:** Ebukun Ogunyemi

*I found the reading assignment discussions very engaging and thoughtful. My mentor introduced me to different poetry forms written by authors whose work I had never read before. As a result, I have discovered new authors, especially female writers, that write really well.*

*Before the fellowship, I had taken a break from writing poetry. I wrote once in a while, partly because I was busy with schoolwork and partly because I found content writing more financially rewarding. However, this fellowship has strengthened my resolve to keep writing creative pieces and submit these pieces to more journals. As a result, I feel more emboldened to try new poetry forms, and I believe that in the years to come, I will have more published creative work.*

*My major challenge was combining being a mentee and a mentor while undergoing the ALX VA programme. At some point, I felt overwhelmed, but I took a weekend break and resolved to give my all to both programmes.*

*My mentor gave her all to the mentorship. She would call me on WhatsApp and patiently explain my errors and how a poem could be better. We had discussions on the books and articles she sent me: the discussions were interesting. She encouraged my writing and pushed me to improve my poems. The most amazing part is that she took her time to read my work. I think understanding your mentee's writing style is key for adequate mentorship. She understood my writing style well and encouraged me to try new poetry forms. She is also passionate about writing and genuinely interested in my growth. She took her time to review my work even when she was not feeling too well. I think she is patient and a good mentor that any mentee would be lucky to have. I will remember her as the mentor who took her time to read my work: poems, stories, and even a technology article that most writers would consider boring.*

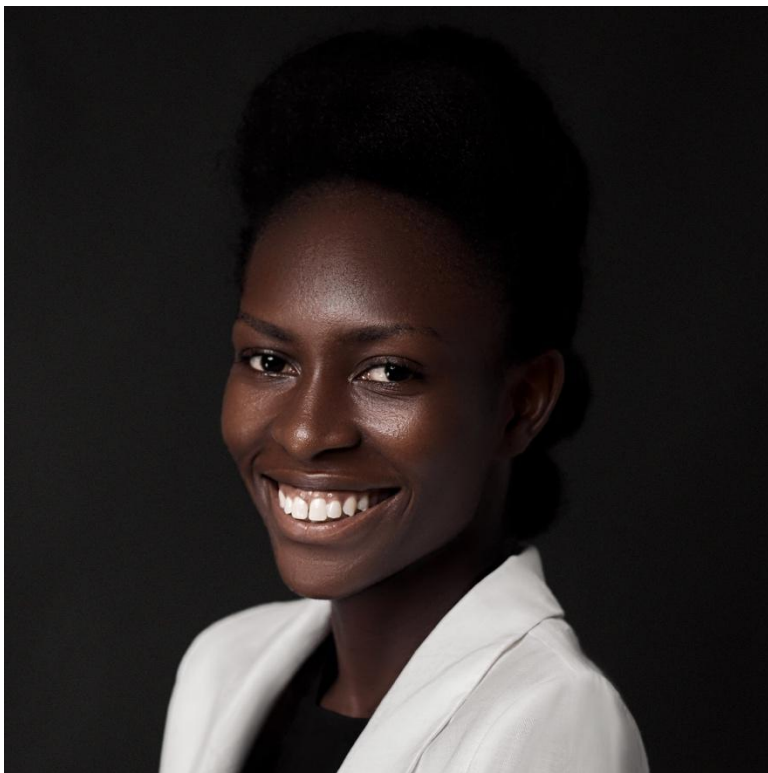
*I think I improved by 8 out of 10 points. My use of punctuation in poems is better, and I have adequate knowledge of poetic structure. Before, I used to just write poems without understanding the rules. Now, I know better, and I write with more intentionality.*

*If there is anything I'd like to change about the fellowship, it will be the time frame. I think it can be longer, considering the time it takes for young writers to grow. I also feel like the first week can start from the basics of a writing genre, be it poetry, prose, or essay writing. It would create a more solid foundation for writers.*

**Gimbiya Ekene Galadima** is a Poet, Storyteller, and Content Writer. She is currently a Medical Student at the University of Benin, Nigeria. Her works have been published in Ibua Journal, Okadabooks, NSPP, SubSaharan Magazine, and Kreative Diadem. In 2019, she released her first poetry collection T.I.R.E.D. – a collection of humorous poems that highlight pressing societal issues. Her poems are written to tell unique Nigerian family stories that are relatable and funny at the same time. In addition, she is an avid cinephile and proud book collector.

When she is not writing poems and short stories, she writes technical pieces and articles under the pseudonym Juxtathinka. In 2021, she was a HackerNoon Blogging Fellow and contributed over thirty articles in different niches on the website. Since then, she has written more articles across the tech, crypto, and finance industries. Her articles can be found on the HackerNoon website at <https://www.hackernoon.com/u/juxtathinka>, and she is on Twitter @juxtathinka, IG, and LinkedIn: Gimbiya Galadima.





**Mentee:** Goodness Daniels

**Mentor:** Pelumi Salako

*The entire fellowship was good. However, the part I found most thoughtful is that a mentor had just one mentee to train so they could focus on helping to bring the very best out of the mentees.*

*Before the fellowship, I had difficulties reading essays outside academics. I found most too lengthy, couldn't comprehend, and didn't appreciate the beauty of language. Being mentored in the essay genre has helped dispel any fear I might have nursed. I no longer find travel essays boring or have difficulties reading lengthy essays outside academics.*

*Before starting the fellowship, I took no notice of paragraphing and "wordiness," my mentor*

*kept pointing it out until I noticed and changed. I had issues connecting with my mentor for two weeks. However, over time, I understood that one of the reasons he gave me enough time to work on my own was to avoid burnout and hone my research skills. Also, due to the nature of his job, feedback on my essays stalled, leading to my being behind in submission dates. At a point, I was almost overwhelmed, but I'm glad I reached out to Adedolapo, as advised, who reached out to Oyindamola, and I got the help I needed.*

*My mentor's comments on paragraphing improved the way I tell stories. He was very patient too. I feel we flowed more via phone conversations than mail which I'd have loved more of. My mentor was also very kind. The first two essays I submitted got mixed up due to the editing app I used, yet he gave positive feedback after nicely effecting corrections for the third time. The articles he shared weekly and the ones I sourced on my end have informed me about several writing styles and how to carve an interesting report. He believed I could improve, and I have over seven weeks. I will remember him for his gentleness, sense of humour, and humility. He would always thank me for being patient, whereas he was the one who exhibited the highest level of patience.*

*I have improved in paragraphing. I pay more attention to tenses now and have learned the types of essays. Overall, the programme has helped hone my research skills, and there is nothing I would change about the fellowship. It was well structured, and accommodations were made for lapses, making the experience less cumbersome.*

**Goodness Daniels** is an educator with over three years of experience in teaching. A sign language interpreter, poet, and essayist, she reviews literature as a hobby and has two unpublished poetry anthologies and a novel in progress. In addition, she runs Book Barn Community, an online book club aimed at promoting literacy and providing educational materials to underprivileged children in rural communities. You can find her on Facebook and LinkedIn @Goodness Daniels and Instagram @goodnessdaniels\_books.



**Mentee:** Grace Olubiyo

**Mentor:** Ayoola Goodness Olanrewaju

*I found the fellowship very supportive. The weekly airtime was very thoughtful — I have to give that to the organizers. I find the gesture very helpful.*

*This fellowship has helped me in my overall confidence as a writer. Before this fellowship, I never let anyone read anything I wrote. I was too conscious of mistakes and strived too hard for perfection, which I never attained. I have improved greatly and have bigger ambitions for myself as a writer.*

*For the first two weeks of the fellowship, I fell ill and that disrupted schedules and communications with my mentor. However, my mentor worked at my pace. My mentor is a very kind person. Mr. Goodness is one of the best people I've ever met. He's very understanding and patient and teaches with so much expertise. He's never in a hurry for me to learn anything. He's ever willing to answer my questions. He is also a motivator. He is a great cheerleader and takes his time to ask about my health whenever I'm down. I have a lot to thank him for, and I'll remember him for his kindness.*

*At the end of this fellowship, I have greatly improved my communication, confidence, knowledge, reading culture, and writing habits. So, no, I do not have anything I wish to change about this fellowship.*

**Grace Olubiyo** is a self-acclaimed 'Her-storian' writer and poet. As an adventurer who believes in the relevance of her dreams, her writing covers people, history, gender studies, and societal stereotypes. In May 2022, she wrote and acted in a short film in partnership with Anap Foundation. Currently, she writes for Asa Historical Magazine, creates content for ProjectGive2Girls (PG2G): an online movement against period poverty in Nigeria, and volunteers as Campus Ambassador on communications for Girlup Nigeria. When Grace is not writing, she is either listening to music or following up on a movie series on TV. Say Hi to her at [graceoluwapelumi4me@gmail.com](mailto:graceoluwapelumi4me@gmail.com).



**Mentee:** Hassan A. Usman  
**Mentor:** Abdulsalam Dante

*I found the weekly contests most engaging. At the end of the fellowship, I realized that poetry was made for me and vice versa.*

*My mentor made everything look simple. He guided me through the difficulties I experienced with writing and made me believe nothing is complicated if you put your mind to it.*

*My mentor is good, no doubt. I'll always boast of him everywhere. He has a good knowledge of books, ancient poets, poetry forms, and styles. In fact, everything about creative writing. I will remember him for his creativity.*

*Through this fellowship, I have improved my reasoning. I read amazing poets whose works inspired me and hugely impacted my writing. I learned new forms of writing, and that exploration has helped me improve my writing as regards contemporary poetry.*

*I really don't think there's anything I would change about the fellowship. It seems to be well-structured and perfect.*

**Hassan A. Usman**, NGP II, is an emerging poet from Kwara, Nigeria. An undergraduate student of Counselor Education at the University of Ilorin, Nigeria. Winner of Poetry Unlimited 3.0, 2nd place winner Dawnprojectnetwork Poetry & Pictures competition 2021, 2nd runner up BKPW Poetry contest (February 2022 Edition), top 10 BBPC April/May Edition. His works have appeared or forthcoming in Paper Lanterns, Trampset, Icefloe Press, Poetrycolumn-NND, Nymph, Brittle Paper, SprinNG, Kissing Dynamite Poetry, The Shallow Tales Review, Olumo Review, Lunar Review, Afrocritik, Arts Lounge, Five South, and elsewhere. Hassan enjoys cooking, listening to Nigerian street music, and juggling writing with modelling. Say hi to him on Twitter or Instagram @Billio\_Speaks.



**Mentee:** Ifunanya Juliet Ottih

**Mentor:** Muyiwa Adesokun

*I enjoyed the writing contests. When my mentor likened my writing to Poetolu's, I quickly searched to find out who he was. I saw a few of his works and was shocked that my mentor understood my voice to know to whose it is similar. My mentor gave me more confidence in my writing when he called me a powerful writer with a strong voice.*

*He helped me see my writing through a different lens, which has helped me condense my writing mistakes within the fellowship period. My mentor taught me simplicity and conciseness in writing poetry. He made me see the audience who read my poems and connects with them. He never failed to tell me "well done" once I was done with a task. I am grateful to him for everything. I will remember him for his words of encouragement and for making me write many drafts of one poem.*

*My greatest challenge during the fellowship would be communicating with my mentor. Though I know I contributed to the break in transmission the week I fell ill, the pace at which he worked with me was very slow. And I understand this could be because of his schedule. But, in all, I am grateful he came through for me.*

*I believe I improved rapidly by participating in this fellowship. I say this because I used to write and edit my poems simultaneously. But I have learned how to write my first draft the way it comes to me and then later structure it better. I trashed vagueness and aimed for clarity. My mentor made me see how the poems I showed (described more) are far better than those I told (told more). I understood the power of showing than telling. In all, the fellowship helped me understand my voice as a writer.*

*One thing I'd change about the fellowship would be communication. I wish the fellowship would have a calendar that involves the mentors holding virtual meetings where they highlight most feedback to their mentees with word of mouth. It aids interaction and faster improvements. It's just like a masterclass. It makes the mentor ask questions better, so the mentee can better answer. Using WhatsApp was sometimes challenging because I could not catch my mentor online once he replied. He would disappear the next minute (Lol).*

*I want to thank the organizers of this fellowship, especially Oyindamola Shoola and Adedolapo Lawal. They formed a greater positive part of my experience. They were always there to answer my questions, give me clarity and solve my problems. Seeing a fellowship or conference with such an amazing welfare segment is hard. Beyond my writing, they also prioritized my mental health and physical well-being. I want to say that I love you both so much and thank you a million times.*

**Ifunanya Juliet Ottih**, a Nigerian writer and poet, is a Linguistics and Communication Studies graduate from the University of Calabar, Nigeria. In May 2021, she was awarded the most outstanding delegate in the 55.0 Online International Model United Nations Conference. In addition, she is the second prize winner of the February to March 2021 edition of the Brigitte Poirson Poetry Contest (BPPC) and a 2018 finalist of the World Youth Essay Competition (WYEC). Furthermore, she has been published in the Nigerian Students Poetry Prize (NSPP) 2020 anthology, Kalahari Review, The VAW Journal, Bansi iii, and was longlisted for the 2020 PIN Annual Food Poetry Contest.

Ifunanya is the Assistant Secretary (Intern) of Poets In Nigeria Initiative, Moderator of the PIN 10-Day Poetry Challenge, GlassDoor Initiative's Poetically Written Prose Contest, and the Pioneer Moderator of the PIN Connect Centers Poetry Writing Contest (CCPWC), Initiatives of Poets In Nigeria.





**Mentee:** Judith Laphilai Maikaho

**Mentor:** Christie Jay

*The weekly feedback form was most engaging for me because it put me in a position where I had to reflect on my progress during the program and put it in writing. This has helped me analyse my learning pace and whether or not I was achieving the goals I had set for the program.*

*Responding to the prompts “Why I Write” and “How I Write” was the first time I reflected on why I write in the first place and how I have achieved it so far. Writing the essay helped me realise that my experiences, first with grief and its aftermath; and then with insurgency and terrorism, have shaped how I see the world and why I write. This realisation also helped me choose to write from a place of compassion and hope rather than hate, despair, and/or prejudice.*

*My major challenge during the fellowship was keeping up with schedules. There were constant blackouts where I lived – one lasted almost a week, and I found it difficult charging my phone to read and write. This was a huge challenge, especially as it frustrated my enthusiasm, but knowing the value of what I was pursuing kept me going.*

*Christie was attentive and motivating throughout the fellowship. She'd take her time to explain things and give feedback on my work. However, at some point, I became disconnected. Sometimes after editing my piece, it'd look more like a new piece in her words rather than an edited version of mine. I figured this was due to differences in style and thematic preference, and we would go back and forth on one piece of work. Overall, Christie was cheerful and supportive. We always ended our sessions with her laughing heartily through yawns and me, energised and optimistic. I will remember Christie Jay for her hearty laughter and brutally honest lectures that I need to be diligent to do better than average.*

*The first area I improved in was reading wide. It sharpened my skills and improved my diction. My horizons were widened through the diverse books and articles I read. I discovered new writers and styles and grew more confident in my craft. Also, I discovered the magical wand of editing. Beginning the fellowship, the first piece I wrote looked silly compared to the final edition, proof that proper editing can make all the difference. Finally, I learned to be proactive. Sometimes, I'd send in my work, and my mentor would not send in feedback as scheduled or would not give me an assignment for the week. But I noticed that when I reminded her to send feedback or asked if I could proceed with the schedules outlined in the manual, she'd respond positively and clear my doubts.*

*I would like the fellowship duration to be increased to 8 weeks rather than four, with 2-weeks extension on request.*

**Judith Laphilai Maikaho** (AKA JLF) is a Nigerian poet, storyteller, and essayist. Her works have appeared or are forthcoming in Poetry Pacific, Trouvaille Review, Nnoko Stories, Kalahari Review, Eboquills, Literary Yard, Trouvaille Review, Arts Lounge (IssueII), Spillwords, Parousia Magazine, and elsewhere. She explores diverse themes but mostly writes about climate change, gender equality, mythology, mysticism, history, and science. A SprinNG fellow (2022 cohort), her works have been shortlisted for the inaugural MAFEELDA Essay Contest and the CCGSU Creative Day Contest, fiction category (2018), where she placed third.

Passionate about peace and conflict resolution, she spends her time volunteering on peace projects and lending her voice to the need for peaceful coexistence. She was previously on the creativity panel for the MERRI Project, sponsored by the US Mission Nigeria and SDG Gombe. She is also a member of the Creative Club at Gombe State University and the Gombe Jewel Writers Association. Furthermore, JLF is the Founding Editor and Secretary of Influencers Writers Initiative, INWI. Currently, JLF is a student at Gombe State University, and she lives with her family in the state's capital. You can find her on Twitter @JlfMaikaho and Facebook as JLF Maikaho.



**Mentee:** Kawthar Arinola Omisore

**Mentor:** Ilerioluwa Olatunde

*I found the "Why I Write" activity most engaging. Before the fellowship, I never considered my work for submission for publication on different literary platforms. However, having worked with my mentor on how best to write a stellar book review, churning in tons of selected published works, and learning from them, and also having my flash fiction taking the 3rd runner-up position, I am more than confident that capitalising on what I've learned so far, it can only get better, moving forward.*

*One of the challenges I had during the fellowship was feeling overloaded with work. However, I realised that everything was towards my growth, and when, if not now, to work on myself? All I had to do was prioritize my time and work hand-in-hand with my mentor, which went a long way!*

*I love that my mentor was genuinely concerned about my growth and took her time to correct my work (in the best ways that don't leave me feeling sad afterward but rather energized to do better) despite her tight schedule. She was also very observant and even went to the length of recording voice notes to explain why she thinks I've not been sending in more reviews as expected and how we could work around it. I will remember her as a reliable, intelligent, and warm-hearted person.*

*Through the fellowship, I understood the intricacies of book reviews better, and I am more confident in submitting my work for publication. Also, I became a vast reader who hardly goes a day without reading a publication online. In addition, I got more creative with my writing as I studied and kept studying the other write-ups. Most importantly, I became a published writer (my flash fiction came 3rd runner-up in the SprinNG Writing contest). I have also improved as regards my circle. I now have more individuals (connected with those who won the contest and other notable organisers and participants of the fellowship) who, by watching their activities online, reminds me of the path I've chosen as a writer and why I need to improve myself.*

*To be honest, there is nothing I would like to change about the fellowship. The activities, airtimes, reminders, conversations in the group, connections made, and my mentor all made it a wonderful experience!!!*

**Kawthar Arinola Omisore** is a book reviewer, award-winning poet, and published writer. Her works are featured in the UI Monus Anthology and the YouthxYouth Activist Global Publication.

Kawthar founded KuwaysirRediscovery, a book review platform that helps readers in Nigeria and the diaspora discover their next favorite read. Within a year of reviewing books, she reviewed 34 books, got over 12,697 views, and secured a book partnership deal with BookCraft Africa.

Passionate about impacting lives, Kawthar currently provides educational and personal development training for the children in her community and runs a library wherein she shapes the children's minds through the books she puts in their hands.



**Mentee:** Mgbabor Emmanuel Chukwudalu

**Mentor:** Iliya Kambai Dennis

*My favourite part of the fellowship was learning about and gaining clarity. It's something I've been battling for a long time and was indeed an eye-opener for me.*

*Since I began writing, I've always pondered the question: who am I? Why do I write? And frankly, providing answers to that question was quite "head aching," but through the fellowship, I discovered my purpose and drive – that was a great achievement.*

*I faced a lot of challenges during the fellowship. First, it was network issue. My network is usually crazy at night, so that was a stumbling block, and there was a time I fell ill. Also, my mentor had a busy schedule, which was very understandable. But none of these could hold us down from achieving our goal.*

*There is so much to say about my mentor. First, I love how much he treated me as a father would treat his son – leading me through every area I found difficult. When I was ill, he never ceased to check up on me. Also, how he admits the junctures with limited knowledge was everything to me. It's something I find difficult to do. There is much to say about him, but I'd love to stop here. I'll always remember him for his immeasurable care.*

*I have grown so much since participating in this fellowship. My poems have improved so much in terms of clarity. I now focus on the message more than imageries. Also, self-discovery, purpose – I have discovered my purpose, and that's something huge for me. Also, this is the first time I've been under someone as a mentee. So, the programme gave me so much exposure. I was able to push myself beyond my limits. Especially in the kind of assignment my mentor assigned to me. And yes, I got to read more often. I got to write more often. And so much more.*

*I wish the classes would be more on Telegram than WhatsApp. So, one can easily go back to the lectures whenever one wishes. And also, the distractions on WhatsApp are most times interrupting. But overall, the fellowship was an amazing experience.*

**Mgbabor Emmanuel Chukwudalu** is a Nigerian poet and a member of the Frontiers Collective. He was 1st Runner-up in the Poetically-Written Prose (2021) organized by PIN Initiative and a winner of the My Shuzia Poetry Competition (2021). His works have been published and forthcoming in various magazines and journals, including The Shallow Tales Review, Augment Review, My shuzia magazine, Poetrycolumnn, Icefloe Press, Evokelit, Walled City Journal, Queerlings, Wine Cellar Press Mag, The African Writers Review, amongst others. He tweets @literati22.





**Mentee:** Moses Chukwuemeka Chimeremeze

**Mentor:** Tukur Loba Ridwan

*I particularly benefited from the first writing challenge, “Why I Write.” It was very challenging because it required heavy amounts of soul searching to come up with an honest response. Truth is paramount to me as a writer, so it set the tone for my experience with the fellowship. If I weren't going to be truthful with myself, I would rather not attempt writing.*

*I would say that I am a bit uncertain about the sense of direction thing. Of course, this fellowship has opened a world of new information to me, so I am like an untethered compass spinning wildly, but that doesn't have to be a bad thing. As for confidence, mine is a bit subdued because I realised how much I don't know yet.*

*I faced quite a few challenges, especially the peculiar*

*trouble of living in Nigeria towards the end.*

*My mentor is a highly intelligent individual and, from what I could gather, a respected person within the ranks. He was friendly and willing to assist. I will remember him for his high intellect.*

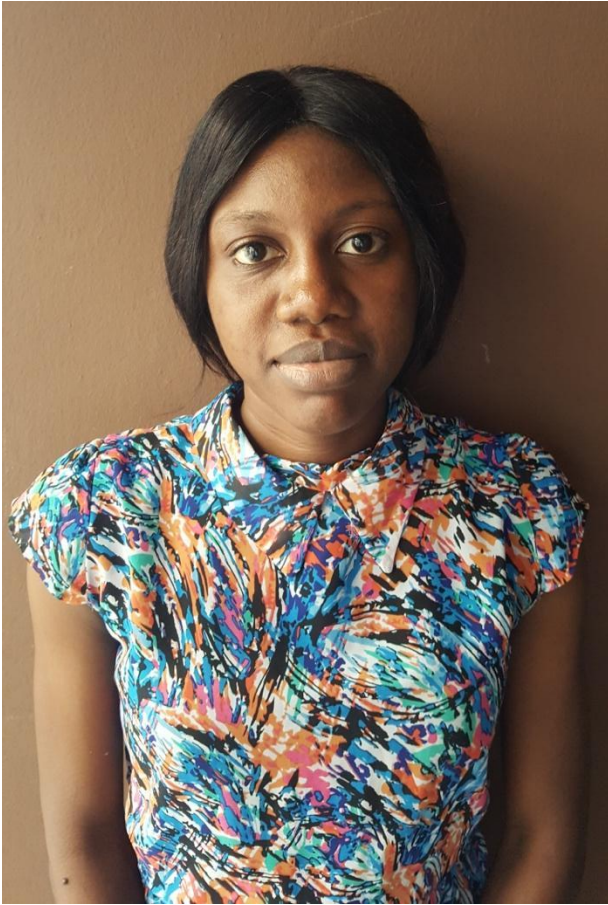
*By participating in this fellowship, I have learned to trust my writing. Before the fellowship, I fiercely protected my poetry because I wanted to preserve the illusion of perfection, but I am learning to open up. I learned that the only way out is through – you have to write to improve. Also, I learned how my personality can affect my poetry, how to lean into it, and how to identify established poets with my writing temperament. I also learned to read myself and make changes objectively.*

*If I could change anything about the fellowship, I would institute group projects, maybe not particularly writing projects but conversation assignments with other mentees. I would have loved to interview my mentor, too. I believe that would have been fun. Writing is about human beings, and I wanted more human interaction. I met other mentees virtually, and we have already established friendships. They are so talented, brilliant, and kind.*

**Moses Chukwuemeka Chimeremeze** lives in Lagos, Nigeria. He is a product designer and a half-hearted believer in eloquent tragedies. He was a political columnist at Mixed Mag and wrote quizzes for Zikoko Mag. He is an alumnus of the SprinNG Writing Fellowship, and his poems have appeared in Variety Pack and Readers Sketch.

Moses is a forcibly retired athlete, RnB guitarist, and halting speaker of the German language.





**Mentee:** Moyosoluwa Elizabeth Olotu

**Mentor:** Kanyinsola Olorunnisola

*I found the sending of airtimes every week quite thoughtful and surprising. The program was free, yet, they still sent airtimes for free. Not a lot of platforms do that. I also find our WhatsApp platform very engaging. People come at the end of every week to talk about how their week went, and we learn one or two things from each other.*

*I also found personal mentorship very engaging. I could relate with my mentor on a personal level without stress, which was very beautiful. I learned a lot from my experience with SprinNG. My mentor was thoughtful and thorough in his feedback, which helped me constantly improve my writing, and I'm sure this will go a long way to help me in the writing space in the future.*

*I didn't experience any challenges during the fellowship. Kanyin is a very understanding person. He's thorough, detailed, and thoughtful. He never failed to repeat whatever I didn't understand and explain it better. Kanyin pushed me to go beyond my usual sphere of writing. I'm grateful that he mentored me. I will remember him for his feedback on my writings.*

*Because of this fellowship, I can give more details to my writings. I'm able to write something outside the usual style of writing. I can read between the lines in writing better and give proper feedback. Also, I've been able to work on maintaining my tenses in my writing. I've improved on reading my work patiently to correct any errors rather than just skimming through the work in a bid to submit it on time.*

*The fellowship was perfect for me. But I think the only thing I'd not mind including is that mentors and mentees should have a physical meeting at the graduation if possible. This is so that mentees can meet their mentors at least once physically.*

**Moyosoluwa Elizabeth Olotu** is a Nigerian Final Year Student at Federal College of Education (Technical) Akoka, Lagos. She is studying Primary Education and loves her space and meeting people. In addition, I love writing and cooking. She hopes to become a professional in both because they are the two hobbies that have helped her deal with both high and low times of life, especially the lows.



**Mentee:** Olaitan Joy Damilola

**Mentor:** Seun Lari-Williams

*The "Who I Write for" segment was the most engaging. I realized I hadn't put much thought into who I was writing for. I have developed some new writing skills and learned more about how to present my writing to the world.*

*Scheduling was a bit of an issue because sometimes something disrupted the time we'd set up for a meeting, but we resolved that. My mentor is an amazing writer and an excellent educator. He helped me improve my writing by pointing out flaws and showing me how to improve on them. He recommended great reading materials for the things I needed to learn. He helped me discover Wislawa, who I love now.*

*My mentor was consistent and checked up on me when I had trouble reaching out. He was helpful and gracious all through the weeks. Being mentored by him is an opportunity I am very grateful for. I will remember him for his sense of humour and his candor.*

*My use of figures of speech in my poetry improved. My writing has more vibrant imagery now, as I have learned the importance of imagery. I've also learned how to tailor my writing more to an audience. My knowledge of publicity and social media reach for my writing has improved. Same as my understanding of tone and how to use it.*

**Olaitan Joy Damilola**, also known as Ravanjie, is a writer, painter, and medical student. She has loved telling stories for as long as she can remember, creating vivid images with her brush and pen. She seeks to write the best story she can write before she inevitably dies while hoping to live long.

Joy believes there's a story to be told everywhere you look and wants to share how she sees those stories with the world. Her work has appeared in notable publications, such as The Fifth Chinua Achebe Essay/Poetry Anthology, Wndrr, and the Caduceus magazine. She spends her spare time reading, painting, and trying not to overthink everything.



**Mentee:** Oluwafunmilayo Ojeniyi

**Mentor:** Roseline Mgbodichinma Anya Okorie

*Conversations with my mentor were the most engaging for me. I have always wanted to grow as a writer and improve the necessary skills, but I didn't know how. The Fellowship gave me an acute sense of direction.*

*Although it was a bit overwhelming, largely because of my schedule, it was made thoroughly easy with the support of my mentor. Roseline went above and beyond to make sure I was not discouraged on the journey. She helped me to see that I could grow, and she took me by the hand to certain levels of growth; I am so proud of her. I will remember her for her kindness. She is just so kind.*

*I have learned to write really concrete poems, read more, have a good grip on themes, improve on imagery and aesthetics, and have confidence in my writing.*

*If I could change anything, that would be to make it like a physical residence, the same strategy, maybe less weeks, then a team project, like an anthology or a collection of short stories.*

**Oluwafunmilayo Ojeniyi** writes under the name Ayooluniyi. She was born in South-West Nigeria and has lived most of her life there. Even though she completed her bachelor's degree in Microbiology, she is committed to nurturing her creativity through writing, performance poetry, and other artistic sensibilities. Ayooluniyi is the host and producer of a few podcasts, such as The Chronicles Pod and Green Ribbon Podcast. She is also devoted to philanthropy, and her efforts are dedicated to her NGO, Ahavah Africa.

When she is not writing or trying to make the world a better place, she can be found journaling, taking restorative photo walks, reading, and spending time with her Abba.



**Mentee:** Oluwaseun Ojo

**Mentor:** Shoola Oyindamola

*Every part of the fellowship was engaging and thoughtful for me. I now know where I need to pay much attention to improve my writing.*

*My first mentor was not available. So, I got another one. She was calm and tolerant. She generally has what it takes to turn a newbie into a writer. I will remember her for her ability to subtly reveal my weakness in writing.*

*I learned to show through writing rather than telling. I learned the difference between passive and active sentences and the best to use; how filler words should be minimized in writing. Finally, I learned I could be a great writer despite my presence and express ideas with fewer words.*

*For now, nothing I can think of needs to be changed*

*about the fellowship.*

**Oluwaseun Ojo** is a law student, creative nonfiction, and Op-Ed writer. His works have appeared on Daily Trust, Modern Ghana, and Afrorep. He is the winner of an essay contest organized by The Nigerian Lawyers in 2020 and an alumnus of the 2022 SprinNG Writing Fellowship. He writes newsletters at Ojo's Easeletter.





**Mentee:** Prince Acquah

**Mentor:** Fui-Can Tamakloe

*My weekly lessons with my mentor and the weekly assignments were most engaging. Taking part in the fellowship has improved my experience in the course and helped me grow as a writer.*

*I learned about character development, suspense writing, building a strong plot, and killing the darlings. All these were very wonderful experiences.*

*As an ADHDer, I had some overwhelming experiences in the programme sometimes. My mentor was patient and gave me the space I needed to feel much better. I sometimes also had time management and scheduling problems, but my mentor tried to make up for me. He provided practical guidance that motivated and benefited my professional development. He was very helpful and a good mentor. He's a team player.*

*During my session with him, I also realized that he is an excellent influencer and dedicated mentor who supports his mentee through sharing his enthusiasm for the work and having an open-door policy. In addition, he is inspirational, driven, and talented.*

*Overall, the program helped me practice time management. It engaged me in challenging, varied, and interesting work. It helped clarify my ambitions and helped me learn how to receive and apply feedback. I also improved by recognizing my strengths and weaknesses.*

*So far, there is nothing I'd like to change about the fellowship because I think everything is on point.*

**Prince Acquah** is an enthusiastic young writer from Ghana who loves to write fiction, especially on topical issues, with the desire to impact society's thinking and graduate with BA in Theological Studies at Valley View University. Prince's unique writing is mainly related to the coming-of-age genre. Inspired by the inequalities affecting indigenous minority communities, Prince strongly advocates diversity representation in his writing. He believes a writer's pen is the voice to change the world. Hence, Prince uses it to inspire and empower young people through his writing piece. In addition, he enjoys trying out new hobbies when he is not busy reading about current affairs in Ghana.



**Mentee:** Simon Akagwu Iduh

**Mentor:** Samuel A. Adeyemi

*I thought the idea to help us with airtime was thoughtful of the organisers. Although I must say, I was surprised that there was an arrangement like that. I mean, we (mentees) benefit from the fellowship.*

*Minus the fact that we were not asked to pay any money, we were given airtime recharge to help us, and that was surprising for me. Thank you for this. Again, for us (mentees) to have Oyin and Adedolapo available at any time to listen and help us through was more than engaging.*

*My mentor was so gracious to me. He certainly gave me the confidence to get better. Like I said in the mail I sent him, which I copied the organisation, I think my mentor was my mentor by providence. He was tailor-made for me. First was his professionalism and hands-on knowledge of the destination (of the mentorship) and its pathway.*

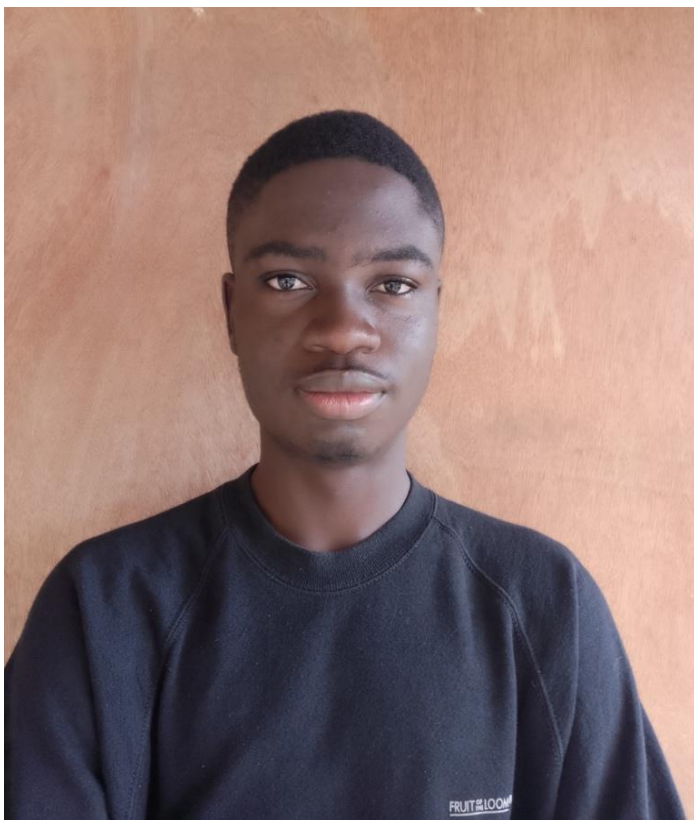
*He started by giving me confidence. He made me feel free; to be myself and express myself. That greatly helped me and formed the basis for my commitment and desire to work regardless of how difficult it is/maybe for me. When he corrects and makes edits, he does it in a way that I do not struggle to understand. Moreover, he was patient with me. He had a good understanding of the pedestal I was. Consequently, he tailored the mentorship for me; at my pace and assimilation ability. But, generally speaking, it is his professionalism that stands him out. If everyone on the mentors' team of this fellowship is like my mentor, Samuel A. Adeyemi, then expect to see, in no long time from now, well-groomed mentees (including me) producing excellent works. I will remember him as the gentleman with that catchy lovely voice. 🙌*

*The major challenge I had was that I broke down in my health during the fellowship. Thankfully, it was towards the end. I have improved by participating in the fellowship. I certainly know where I was before the fellowship. I know where I am now. There is an improvement. I understood the foundational elements for good poems. As I didn't know some of these things, you could bet that my writings were off-acceptable. But armed with this knowledge now, I have improved. My use of imagery got better. I didn't use imagery before or rarely did. Hence my work was less beautiful and too ordinary. But now, it is better. Furthermore, writing freely, in free verse, was a challenge to me before this programme, but now, it is something I love and want to do more than the rhyming way I had known — talk of versatility.*

*Also, during this fellowship, I got to know some great poets, read their works, and like my mentor told me, “the easiest way to become a better poet is to read other poets” – doing so has greatly helped me. Lastly, this is not so connected with writing now. But I tell you, I am more confident as a person. All thanks to the programme.*

*Above all, the way the fellowship is, in my opinion, couldn't have been better planned. They say if it isn't broken, don't fix it. While I believe there is room for improvement, I would leave things the way they are. I appreciate everyone on the team. God bless you all.*

**Simon Akagwu Iduh** is a biochemistry graduate from Kogi State University, Anyigba. An active member of Amnesty International, he is passionate about good governance and protecting human rights. When he is not reading or writing, he enjoys watching football.



**Mentee:** Testimony Akinkunmi

**Mentor:** Tola Ijalusi

*I found the feedback sessions with my mentor engaging, though he was a busy man. The few times he criticised my writing, I got uncommon insight. The practice topics and feedback made me understand what I needed to bring into my critical writing.*

*A challenge I faced during the fellowship was my mentor's unavailability. Mr. Ijalusi is a versatile and understanding man. When he has the time to be helpful, he brings unique perspectives to my articles. He has a rare foresight of what matters and what doesn't. Yet, at times, he is too busy. He is also straight to the point.*

*My reviews expanded from only fiction to poetry and nonfiction. I learned that reviews should also be a copywriting exercise apart from the literal analysis. Also, to be good at whatever you are reviewing, you must take the time to understand what the audience*

*expects from the book.*

*I would love it if a template or at least an insight were given concerning copywriting reviews. Also, perhaps, mentorship accountability to make the mentee understand how things are being done. But, apart from that, the fellowship was brilliant. The friends, the credit, and the material were all wise.*

**Testimony Akinkunmi** is a writer of Yoruba descent. He was on the 2022 Libretto African long list, and his works have appeared in the shallow tales review, Rigorous Mag, Word Gathering, WRR, and Gyroscope Review, among others. He always finds it necessary to write about mundane miracles and controversial lifestyles. He is a SprinNG 2022 fellow. He is the Lead Reviewer at edenperspective.home.blog.





**Mentee:** Titilayo Areola Daramola  
**Mentor:** Gimbiya Ekene Galadima

*The fellowship manual is an interesting booklet. I find the write-up most thoughtful. It is a guide I will continue to consult in my writing journey. From my discussions with my mentor and her edits on my work, I feel confident with my write-up and have more clarity in navigating my blogging journey.*

*I found it overwhelming to combine the fellowship with my daily routine, but I'm glad I partook. Ekene is a brilliant mentor who understands the fundamentals of blogging and finds great joy in impacting others. She was very understanding, patient, and caring. I have learned to use punctuation marks correctly and write well-structured sentences. I hope we can keep interacting. She is such a wonderful lady. I will remember her for her lectures.*

*During the fellowship, I improved on how I structure sentences. I improved my blogging knowledge and got better foresight in my blogging career. I learned to write on topics outside my niche and improved my reading skills – now, I read daily.*

*If there is anything I would change, it is the duration of the fellowship because writing is a profession that one needs time to learn.*

**Titilayo Areola Daramola** is a writer. As a child, she had a flair for narratives, such as Moonlight Tales and Ralia the Sugar Girl. She read into the night, then creatively developed her stories in a diary and shared them with her friends. These stories centered on love, birth, nutrition, death, and God.

Having discovered her passion early in life, she was determined to improve her writing and be renowned worldwide. Hence, she applied to the prestigious University of Ilorin to study English Education and emerged as the best in her department. She earned a master's degree in Adult Education from the University of Ibadan.

Her quest to develop her writing skill and expand her professional network resulted in her successful participation in some virtual writing courses. Subsequently, she received full memberships, internships, scholarships, and awards. These programs include: African Writers Tribe, MindMark Agency, Create Initiative, SprinNG Writing Fellowship, Royal Writers Agency, and Write, Your Right, among others.

Titilayo has been a teacher for over a decade. Her writing network motivates her to create content daily, and fans on her social media constantly engage her content. Two of her write-ups are currently under review for publication.

When she is not writing, she is praying and counseling brides-to-be. She also dedicates her time to counseling and guiding pregnant women and nursing mothers on nutrition and breastfeeding, among other vital issues.

She is a Christian on a pilgrim's journey and happily married to Evangelist Daramola Matthew, and they have a beautiful daughter together. She is a source of inspiration for hundreds of young people and women of all ages. She is also a consistent and ardent team player who believes the sky is her starting point.



**Mentee:** Vivian Nnagboro

**Mentor:** Jide Badmus

*I found the weekly contests very engaging because they encouraged creativity beyond the genre I was used to. It was exciting working on them and trying out new things.*

*Before the fellowship, I never felt like my personal experiences were worth writing about, and I also didn't know how to, but the fellowship has helped boost my confidence, and I feel more comfortable writing about them. It has also given me a sense of realizing who I write for. There was never really a purpose for my writing until now. Therefore, keeping in mind who I want to write for has helped shape my writing.*

*Sometimes, during the fellowship, I felt like I wasn't doing anything right and it kind of made me afraid even to try or put any effort into my work. Still, my mentor was very patient with me, and I really appreciated that. I liked how he took a personalized approach to the mentorship. It helped me focus on just my progress. He was very helpful in pointing out some errors I made in my writings that I*

*didn't realize I had made. I liked his method of approach to mentoring and the way he always encouraged me to read all the time. He always gave the best constructive criticisms.*

*I now pay more attention to my tenses when writing than I used to. I think I've gotten a bit better with my use of punctuation. I now go back to edit my works more often instead of just leaving them at the first draft. I realized how helpful it could be to make notes before I begin writing to serve as a guide. I understand how powerful the use of imagery is – if I am able to describe more vivid situations, it will help deliver my piece of writing.*

**Vivian Nnagboro** is a psychology student, writer, and poet who loves to write about the odd things about life; she sees beauty in the broken. She considers herself a certified weirdo. She loves fiction novels and spends most of her time reading, writing, and studying for her degree. She writes hoping people can find a little of themselves in her works.

Vivian has two published works; an article on the Tush Magazine Website and a poem on the Words Rhymes and Rhythm website. Her passions include God, mental health awareness, her craft, food, sleep, and family, in no particular order; Chimamanda Adichie is her biggest source of inspiration. She hopes to one day publish a collection of poems and become a psychology professor.

Vivian currently resides in Abuja and can be reached via email: [vivinnagboro@gmail.com](mailto:vivinnagboro@gmail.com) and Instagram: [\\_miss\\_nenye](#).



**Mentee:** Zainab Abubakar

**Mentor:** Karimot Odebode,

*The part of the fellowship that I found most thoughtful and engaging was how much the moderators reached out to us, which was frequent. Also, how easy they were to also reach out to.*

*Also, the schedule of our week was favourable and encouraging. Almost everything was explained, and obvious that there weren't many difficulties at all. And I also felt like the moderators and the whole fellowship were keen on us getting the best we could from our mentors. The purpose was so fierce that one couldn't help but be encouraged no matter what.*

*I have improved a lot in the sense that now, I know more about story structures. Yeah, I was a poetry mentee, but I feel this also applies to poetry. I also found out what works for me in terms of editing my work, what inspires me, and the type of environment I am most comfortable in. Then there's the issue of language, effective language to be precise, i.e., in the case of abstract and concrete language. I believe I am getting better at using the latter, which gives me much joy.*

*There were times when the programme was overwhelming; this strictly had nothing to do with the fellowship itself but myself, as I had other engagements. But I did manage to pull through. Though I have had issues connecting with my mentor, and I can't say that was really rectified up until the end, she was amazing, no doubt. Pretty much occupied/often busy (seems to me). And well, I can't say we bonded much. However, I would remember her as kind.*

*I improved on writing my biography and use of effective language and gained more insight and knowledge on creating an image for myself as a writer/author (someday). Now I am fascinated with creating my community and not just having audiences alone. In addition, I learned more about my writing style: why I write, when I am most comfortable with writing, and so on. I also improved on reading, lol. I was slacking in that aspect for some time, but this programme pushed me to read and write more.*

*Furthermore, I believe I am becoming a badass editor. I also realized that if one never stops editing, one will eventually find oneself taking out a lot from work the second time than one did the first. I tried some poetry forms, i.e., the haiku, and as it is now, I am trying the shape poetry. It is fun!*

*I honestly don't think there's anything I would like to change about the fellowship.*

**Zainab Abubakar** is a Nigerian poet, blogger, fiction writer, and photographer whose work focuses on loss, identity, mental illness, empowering women, and sometimes love. Her writing has appeared on Lunaris Review, MANI, Kalahari Review, and other online literary platforms. In addition, she was the winner of the TWMN female writers' contest for the poetry category in 2021. She considers poetry a means to transverse through life and whatever it holds. She is currently an undergraduate at ABU Zaria.

Zainab dedicates her free time to learning and reading poetry, capturing nature, volunteering whenever she can, and practicing the spoken word when she is not engrossed in studying biota and all things biology. She lives in Kaduna and blogs at [shiequills.blogspot.com](http://shiequills.blogspot.com). You can also find her tweeting at [xee\\_aboukar](https://twitter.com/xee_aboukar) on Twitter.



**Mentee:** Quwam Ishola  
**Mentor:** Joseph Hope

*The Why I Write assignment was a task I found most engaging. Before the SprinNG Fellowship, I had almost lost the belief that I could excel at writing because I had felt stuck at a skill level. However, the SprinNG Writing Fellowship allowed me to look inward and be accountable to myself for the steps I haven't been taking to aid my progress in the craft.*

*I had realized before SprinNG that I wasn't living the writer's life as I wasn't existing with the constant awareness of a craftsman. However, I have noticed a lot of outward change in my view of creative writing—thanks to SprinNG—and I think I have a clearer image of where I am now.*

*I have been made to see that there's work to be done if I want to be better. The only challenge was my anxiety, and I think I handled it well. Although I never saw my mentor's face, still, from the tone of his voice, I could tell he loved writing.*

*My most notable areas of improvement are my awareness of how to model my environment to help my writing. I improved my understanding of how nuanced superficially facile literary works are. My confidence improved, and I noticed development in some technicalities, such as proper capitalization in poetry, reading, and critical thinking.*

*There is nothing I'd change about the fellowship.*

**Quwam Ishola** is a writer who creates works in the fields of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. The Cell Biology and Genetics graduate freelances during the day and works on his writing projects and blogs at night. Although he mainly writes in English, he perceives himself as an amalgamator of his African oral and literary culture, especially Yoruba, heritage, and English literature. Quwam blogs on Akowekowura.com, where he shares bits of himself and his writing with the world. He enjoys reading classical literature, listening to music, and doing sports. He's @dat\_iq on Twitter.

# Thank you!

We are grateful to the mentees for their honesty and transparency in their feedback about the fellowship and their experiences. We also appreciate you taking the time to read the experiences of the 2022 SprinNG Writing Fellowship mentees. All their thoughts, both positive and identified areas of improvement, will be considered in the upcoming years of our work.

Best,  
The SprinNG Team