

**WAYOUT POEMS READ BY JOHN HANEY FOR POETRYSLABS  
AT PORTICO GALLERY FOR BLACK HISTORY MONTH  
1 OCTOBER 2017, OCTOBER FEAST**

**IBRAHIM SORIE BANGURA (aka Cleffy)**

I was born in a village near Lungi in northern Sierra Leone in 1992. Presently I'm living in Freetown, where I'm studying music production and graphic design at WAYout. I'm a musician, songwriter, storyteller and a devoted Sierra Leonean poet. I love music and literature deeply. My dream is to have a music studio and a poetry institute.

**UNCLE'S HAPPIEST TIME**

My uncle; a seventy-year-old vein-filled man  
Who loved listening to sixties and seventies songs  
Anytime I wanted to eat his food at night  
I fed his old radio six Tiger batteries

I used to wait at his door when the day  
Was handing over duty to the night  
As I collected his black, blue, yellow, white, sleeping mat  
And spread it openly where the moon gleams

To shake up his musical heart I tuned  
The wrong channel. "Uh, don't mess up!  
That's not the station, go up, up, up, yeah!" he'd say  
Clearing his throat before lying down. "Ehh-ehh"

Whistling, he'd put the radio up to his long, cane-rabbit right ear  
Take off his shirt, cross his right foot over the left, emotion clinging  
Tightly to him like starch glue on a paper or a tick on a dog's flesh  
Then he'd call, "Sorrie Lol, check inside my food pan and enjoy yourself."  
*(Sorrie Lol means Little Sorrie in the Temne language)*

### **MICHAEL KAMARA (aka Meeky Superstar)**

I was born in Freetown, where I still live, in 1992. I am a singer-songwriter studying music production and poetry at WAYout. I am influenced by the poetry of Benjamin Zephaniah. Recently I performed one of my songs, 'I Must Lose You', with UK musician Frank Turner.

### **AN INDEPENDENT MAN**

Before 1961 I was ample, roomy, spacious and commodious

Exhaustively capable

When I was under the rule of the British Empire Crew

I was phenomenal

Fantastic, terrific, bulky, very weighty

In 1961, I became an independent man

A contingency

I became a totally autonomous free man

Still in puberty

I was taught having independence

Was the best solution for society  
Not knowing I was doing more harm to myself  
Than good  
I was taught I was strong and fit enough  
To gain independence  
Which I am not  
I think I need to be recolonised by the British Empire Crew

*(The opinion that Sierra Leone was not ready for independence and that life might be better if the British still governed, is not uncommon)*

### **MUSA SEMA CONTEH (aka Muzay)**

I was born in 1993 in Kamakwie in Northern Sierra Leone and raised by a single parent. I now live in Freetown, where I am studying film making and creative writing at WAYout.

### **DAMAGED JUSTICE**

The leaders' title is corruption  
Damaged justice  
The innocent suffer for the wicked  
Damaged justice

You can see it in their eyes, flowing like the Red Sea,  
Paper chasers licking currencies like hungry flies  
Impure hearts, faces - they too are racist

Is this democracy?

Damaged justice

Every day my nose smells injustice

What the eyes see the mouth can't speak

Every day my skin cries with pain

What the heart says the mouth can't speak

The law is in their blood

Drinking it like morning tea

From the masses' mugs

No justice for the poor

Damaged justice

### **SULAIMAN BANGURA (aka Sulcut)**

I was born in Freetown, where I still live, in 199. I am a musician, guitarist and poet presently studying sound engineering and poetry at WAYout. My future aim is to achieve my musical and poetry dreams.

### **VILLAGE BROTHERS**

About eight the sun rose

Our spirits softly shone like a rainbow.

As we lay low we fell in love

My brother was half my age.

We were pelting around our village

Speaking different languages.  
With the light of life that shines so bright,  
That's brighter than the moon,  
Brighter than yesterday  
I was lost in blessings' dust.  
With tradition for protection  
Everything seemed promising to us.  
I pledged my love and loyalty,  
Soundly we sang our native songs.  
Clearly, loudly, with love  
The hills and valleys sang our praise.

### **ISHMEAL TURAY (aka Turkish)**

I was born in Freetown in 1989 and am now studying film-making, music production and graphic design at WAYout. People call me Turkish because of my wish to be a poet. I have fallen seriously in love with poetry – her beautiful devices have seduced me.

### **COLONIALISM RAP**

Black is Black  
Black people, Black nation  
Serra da Lyoa – Lion Mountain  
Our home was called  
By the Portuguese in 1462  
Green, white and blue

Our flag waves like hot stew  
Name changed to Sierra Leone  
Here comes the British Crew  
Opened our eyes to see through  
1951 created a framework for everyone  
1953 came with responsibility  
Sir Milton Margai  
First appointed Black guy  
Black people, Black nation  
Sierra Leone. This is our home!

*(Sir Milton Augustus Strieby Margai (1895 – 1964) was a Sierra Leonean doctor and politician. In 1951 he oversaw the drafting of a new constitution which triggered the process of decolonisation and in 1953 he was made Chief Minister. Knighted in 1959, he was Prime Minister at the time of Independence on 27<sup>th</sup> April 1961.)*

## **WILFRED EZEBOULAH COLE**

I was born in 1992. I live in Freetown, where I am studying film-making and creative writing at WAYout. My poetry is influenced by the rhyme and rhythm, up and down, right and left, tussle and hassle of living on the street. I hope that people will read more of me in the future.

## **BLACK HISTORY**

Sometimes in the day  
After all the black display, I feel total dismay

I gather grief on the trails of black  
I feel as if am beaten down by lack  
Even seeing anguish as a scar  
Bundles of regret in my black mouth  
The pain is pathetic as a bad wish  
I try to change the decoder disc  
But it keeps playing in my head like a last wish  
Every now and then there's a bad clash  
Oh, Black History  
Oh, Black History  
I try to find my home  
Then I realise I was never alone  
It's as if I need wings  
To travel to the spring and sing