

## **CALL FOR PAPERS**

### **AFRICAN LITERATURE TODAY (ALT) 42: Oral and Written African Poetry and Poetics**

**EDITOR: Ernest N. Emenyonu**

*African Literature Today* plans to publish a special issue (*ALT 42*) with a focus on “Poetry and Poetics” and hereby calls for well researched articles for the volume. The issue seeks to appraise crucial developments in the broad field of African poetry (written and oral) and poetics since the publication of its first and second special issues on poetry, *ALT 6* (1973) and *ALT 16* (1989) respectively. The former volume explored some of the prevailing subjects and debates of the period: primarily the resistance to Western cultural hegemony, the African poet’s authentic sources of inspiration and poetics, the utilitarian purpose of poetry, and the tradition in which the work of an African poet ought to be anchored. The attention paid in the volume to both written and oral poetry makes a categorical statement of purpose just as the representative body of poetry discussed virtually established the hegemonic faction of African poetry at that time, with the expected focus on the offerings of Leopold Sedar Senghor, Christopher Okigbo, Wole Soyinka, and Dennis Brutus.

Sixteen years later, *ALT 16* extended the frontiers of several critical issues raised in *ALT 6*, especially the kinship between African oral and written literatures, questions on poetics and the social relevance of poetry. Moreover, Soyinka, and Okigbo continue to dominate critical attention, and though Niyi Osundare and Isidore Okpewho appear in the volume, they do so as critics.

Almost half a century after *ALT 6* and thirty-three years after *ALT 16*, what has changed and what is still focalized? There is a compelling need to examine the field in considerable detail, with a view to highlighting major developments and continuities in the practice of the art of poetry in the continent. Are there national or even regional imperatives? Are there global movements that reverberate as praxis of African poets? Are there continuities in the tradition(s) established by Africa’s pioneer poets and the work of the younger generations, and between the oral indigenous traditions and contemporary written poetry? Who are currently Africa’s foremost poets? Are there crucial innovations in the arts? Are the forces responsible for the increasing attention to eco-poetry and the like and the practice of the so-called “spoken word poetry” internal or external? Potentially productive questions that can possibly be raised about the trajectory of a field as broad as African Poetry and Poetics in the past several decades are diverse and legion! Intending contributors could focus, among other topical and related subjects, on the following:

1. Theories and Criticism of African poetry and presiding debates on current practice
2. The current state of the art, its preoccupations, preferred forms and key players
3. The nexus between Africa’s oral poetic heritage and written poetry
4. New themes and forms such as eco poetry and spoken word poetry

5. Tradition(s) of African poetry: consolidations or interrogations in current practice
6. The impact of important Literary Prizes such as the Nigeria Literature Prize on the development of African poetry
7. National and regional imperatives in the practice of African poetry
8. The production and readership of African poetry
9. Innovations in African orality
10. Interviews with important African Poets

Submissions are also invited for:

**LITERARY SUPPLEMENT**– short creative writing selections – poetry, short stories, one-act plays.

**FEATURED ARTICLES** – non-themed articles on any aspect of African Literature (not more than 5000 words).

Contributors should please note that submissions that include extracts in African languages must be translated with permission obtained by the authors for this to be done. Such submissions must include the permission for translation from the original authors (who should also give permission for use of their works). “Fair use” rules may apply for very short excerpts: To be confirmed with the Publisher.

All items should be submitted as a Word document to the Series Editor: [ernest@umich.edu](mailto:ernest@umich.edu) on or before **31 October 2023**.

*Books for review (2 copies) to be sent to the Reviews Editor: Obi Nwakanma, University of Central Florida, English Department, Colburn Hall, 12790 Aquarius Agora Drive, Orlando, FL 32816, USA. [Obi.Nwakanma@ucf.edu](mailto:Obi.Nwakanma@ucf.edu). Reviews should not exceed 2,000 words.*

Authors and book reviewers should follow the ALT Author Guideline for Submissions:

<https://boydellandbrewer.com/search-results/?series=african-literature-today>