

# *Iridescent Reflections*



## **FOREWARD**

*This is a collection of poems and short stories written by the youth who attend the (Association Francois-Xavier Bagnoud) FXB South Africa After School programs. These are orphan and vulnerable children aged between 12 and 18 years who live in Alexandra Township, Soweto and Witbank who have been exposed to the harsher sides of HIV/Aids and the violent acts of abuse.*

*The idea of writing in all forms, gives the youth the platform to express their inner thoughts and feelings. This form of expression is the most powerful of all because it helps one to heal, and at the very same time, let go of all the hurt they have experienced in their young lives.*

*Some of these poems and stories will sound clinical, harsh, are straight to the point and unemotional, because, in reality, abuse and especially rape, is 'just another statistic' in South Africa.*

*These poems and stories' tell it like it is'*

*Life in our homes,*

*Life in our towns,*

*Lives of our youth*

*We thank the youth for trusting us enough to share their thoughts and feelings, as harsh as it was for some. Some names have been changed to protect the youth - some have wished to stay anonymous.*

*As water mirrors the face, one heart responds to another.....*

*Writers who have faced similar challenges will always relate and find a common ground. Whatever challenges we have faced in our lives, it is of practical value to like oneself. You spend so much time with yourself, you might as well get some satisfaction out of the relationship!*

*Just love thyself first, then others will love you! Keep in mind that being positive is not an action – but a choice, and / or even a way of life. Positivity breeds positivity, as negativity breeds negativity.*

*So Live,*

*Love,*

*Learn*

*And most of all,*

*Laugh in the positive*

Xoliswa Mpotulo

## MY MUM

My honey mum  
You are like the sun up in the sky  
Shining,  
For me to walk through  
You are the one for me,  
The one who carried me for nine months.  
You're the one, when I couldn't see  
You're the one, when I couldn't speak  
You're the one, when I couldn't walk  
Who took care of me.  
You showed me the light when I couldn't see  
You put me through to GOD when I couldn't pray.  
You understood when I made mistakes.  
You fill my heart with precious love  
You fill my empty heart  
With your honey love.  
You saved me through sickness  
You protected me when I was in danger.  
You are a lovely mum, to be loved by someone like me.  
I love you mum.  
My only one,  
My beautiful flower,  
MY MUM

Written by : Mohau Leeba

## **I AM A PERSON**

I am a person with respect and dignity  
I am a person who salutes danger  
I am a person who's not scared to say something even though it's hard.  
I am a person who believes in equality  
I am a person who believes in honesty  
I am a person who believes in humanity  
I am a person who lives life positively – not negatively  
I am proud of being me

**I AM MICHAEL**

By Michael

## MOTHER

She is a lady,  
Herself.  
Powerful and brave.  
She brought me into this land –  
Her mother-land.  
She's beautiful and creative.  
How can a lady be so strong ?  
She walks the walk -  
She talks the talk.  
Wow ! how can she  
I never saw anything like this  
That beautiful,  
Her respect,  
Her Love.  
She can take care of me,  
Her smile,  
Her looks.  
Oh! She is beautiful.  
She is my inspiration,  
My role model.  
How can the world live without her ?  
She has [is} the controller  
SHE IS POWER !

Written by : Sibongile

## WHY DO I HAVE TO SUFFER

Why do I have to suffer ?

Suffer from the pain –

Suffer from the abuse you committed.

If I were, I will be sorry.

If my feelings would have controlled me,

I would have made you feel the pain –

The pain I had

and feelings.

Why do I have to suffer

Please apologize to me.

Maybe I'll be sorry,

but your heart will be the same.

It will never change

Because you've hurt me.

Badly,

So much.

But because I love you - I won't.

You are breathing through my face

And I ask myself;

Why do I have to forgive.

Things you have done to me

They will never be washed away

Or be sealed by anybody.

Why do I have to suffer ?

But because of love,

I will forgive you.

Written by : Busisiwe

## I AM NOT YET FREE

Yes I am a prisoner –  
A prisoner with no chains on my hands and feet  
But a prisoner with chains on my heart and nerves.  
I always trusted you –  
Always thought you were my life proof  
And you would protect me .....  
From those who would destroy me.  
But you were the one who became my worst enemy.  
You are the one who dragged me down,  
When I was trying to climb from harm.

MAMA!  
I never dreamed in my whole life.....  
I never dreamed that out of all people.....  
You could be the one to destroy me !  
You can see me smiling and say - I am yet free.  
But I am not free !  
Yes my body is free,  
But my mind is still in chains.  
Chained by who ?  
Chained by you.

My own mother,  
My own flesh and blood.  
You should have made [had] an abortion !  
If you knew you weren't good enough to be my own mother,  
[rather than] giving birth to me and abusing me.  
Some say that I am free .....  
But  
I am not yet free.

Written by : Thulani



## EDUCATION

Education is life

Education is a key to success

Education is a key to a good life

Education is a key to riches

Without education – you are nothing.

No education - no good life

You won't be anything

Until you educate your mind.

Education is a life time destination.

Everyone wants an education.

To fulfill your dreams ..... you need an education,

To achieve your goals ..... you need an education,

To reach your destination ..... you need an education.

Education is life !

EDUCATION

Written by : Paballo

## **CRIES OF AN ORPHAN**

Why should HIV/AIDS pass to a child  
who has a future to build.  
Why should the innocent be infected ?  
Why should children be affected ?  
AIDS does not spare.  
Departed parent of HIV / AIDS, makes children become paupers.  
Uncles, Aunts do not offer shelter.

Rescue the future generation from AIDS  
Inevitable ramifications  
Feel for children orphaned by AIDS.  
Children should not suffer a wrong  
To be abandoned without a remedy.  
Help children, help youth,  
In the midst of the HIV/AIDS pandemic  
There is still a light you can make  
So that we can smile with less pain.

Written by : Ntombi

## DIVORCE

Why do you hate me ?  
Why am I the one you are always yelling at ?  
You hate me so much and you wish I could die.  
But I will say one thing,  
I say it, and I always will –  
I believe !  
I believe what I see  
I believe what I hear  
I believe the unbelievable.

Why do you always have to act while there are no cameras ?  
I don't understand why parents hurt their children.  
They make children - and after they make them suffer.  
Parents say they don't want to see their children hurt  
Whereas they are the ones hurting us.  
I don't understand why parents should marry ..... then after,  
They split up.  
I really don't understand ..... if [only] I could understand !  
Other children are having fun because they know each day they will see their parents.  
Other children don't, because their parents have split up.  
*Parents,*  
*please don't split up, because we are the ones who get hurt.*  
*Let your children have fun with you -*  
*Stop splitting up -*  
*It's out of fashion !*

Written by : Buhle

## STIGMATIZATION AND DISCRIMINATION

Oh brothers and sisters  
Why should we stigmatize  
Why should we discriminate  
Against people living with HIV/AIDS ?  
Oh brothers and sisters,  
Why should we discriminate against our colour ?  
Why should we discriminate against the human race ?  
Why should we discriminate just because of HIV ?  
Oh brothers and sisters  
HIV is just a disease like other diseases,  
HIV is just like malaria or tuberculosis –  
HIV is just like FEVER or typhoid !  
Oh brothers and sisters,  
HIV does not know the rich nor the poor  
HIV does not know the blacks nor the whites,  
HIV is not a religious nor a traditional problem.  
Oh brothers and sisters,  
If you are not infected – you are affected !  
For you may have someone close ... a friend ... a relative  
Who is living with HIV.  
Oh brothers and sisters,  
HIV does not stigmatize,  
HIV does not discriminate,  
So let's not stigmatize nor discriminate  
Against people living with HIV

Written by : Patricia

## LIFE

Sometimes, I imagine,

being left alone in this world.

Sometimes, I imagine myself,

being left alone in this world with no light,

No people,

Just me,

Alone !

They say that life is difficult without parents.

They say that life is full of disappointments.

They say life is full of surprises.

But I can't wait for those surprises

because they will turn out to be disappointments.

I am the bubbling that comes from your belly.

I am the daughter of blue skies.

I am the core that comes from the seas,

oceans

and rivers.

I am back

grain by grain.

Written by : Gontse

## CHILDREN

Children ..... Children ..... The Rights of a Child !

People, stop abusing children,

They need a future,

They need to live,

They need the love.

We want what we want -

What do you have to give us ?

People ..... People ..... Love your children !

Stop abusing, abusing children, because....

They are important in our lives.

Give us love,

Love,

Love us.

Please parents,

[Give us] the love we need.

We need your support.

Written by : Paulina

## THE TRUST

In a small town,

    In a school,

        a boy caught a tired butterfly.

And as she tried to get free,

    the purple-blue of her wings,

        was powdered into the air.

The boy put her on the table,

        under a paperweight.

He burned her wings with matches,

        he cut her corpse in half with his pen knife.

That boy has gone, but, for 30 years,

        I have his dirty pen knife,

And on the pen knife,

        those brownish-yellow bloodstains ..... trouble me.

An acid taste on my tongue,

        a tense fatigue,

                        I'bone-weary,

                        and I can't sleep.....

Writer : anonymous

## **RAPE**

Are you a boy ?

Are you a brother ?

Are you a grandfather ?

***Are you a man ?***

How do you feel after raping

Your daughter ?

Your sister ?

Your wife ?

Your mother ?

Your grandmother ?

**How do you feel ?**

Sad ?

Happy ?

Or are you going to feel like killing that person ?

So please men, really.....

Behave like human beings

because we are also people .....

We feel the pain.

**SO LET US STAND TOGETHER AND SAY NO TO RAPE**

Written by : Hazel



## STILL FRIENDS

I liked it before you knew,

We were buddies -

We hugged and kissed

We shared pizza

We swam together.

But it has all changed now,

*Now that you know.*

I had it long before you knew

And we were so close.

And now you can't bear to look at me anymore.

You feel hurt,

You feel betrayed,

You feel sorry for me

And you can't deal with it.

But what has really changed ?

The only thing that has changed between us,

*is you.*

Because now you know,

[you think] I am a different person.

Because I have it,

I am the one who has to deal with it.

*You can't get it.*

You don't get it !

You can't judge me because of this,

there is only one judge who decides .....

Writte by : Nompumelelo

## NEIGHBOUR

We are a family,

Brother, sister, mother and father.

Where is our ubuntu ?

We used to chart ever day of our lives.

Where did that chart go ?

We used to talk about

Violence, crime, floods, development - ever day.

We used to stop unwanted things in our area,

But now, everything has gone with the river.

We don't know anything !

We hear it on TV or on hear-say.

What went wrong in this democracy.

Our busy lives.

Let us go back and do things with ubuntu.

Things will be normal,

Our kids will respect,

Knowing that we are one thing.

Writer : anonymous

## LOVE

Why do we have to fall in love

Knowing ..... one day,

It will break again.

Is it because we are slaves of love ?

Writer : anonymous

## FAILING A TEST

If you fail a test,

Don't sit there and cry,

You can always do better

The next time you try.

There are many people

Some famous one's too

Who looked at their tests

And hadn't a clue.

The world won't end

If you make a mistake

Just prepare yourself more

For the test that you take

Failing is not the issue !

Written by : Nomthandazo

## PERFECT LOVE

Love always protects

always trusts.

Always hopes

and never gives up.

Learning to love is a big challenge.

Perfect love is hard to achieve

It doesn't demand it's own way, instead....

it puts the other person first.

Love is gentle as we grow older.

We realize,

that there is more than one kind of love.

We love our parents differently to the way we love cake.

We love our teachers differently to the way we love pets.

We love God differently to the way we love a special girl or boyfriend.

If we have perfect love as the basis on which we build the rest of our lives

We are sure to have a good foundation.

Written by : Khanyisile

## TAKE ME INTO YOUR ARMS

At times, I sit by myself,  
I wonder....  
When will you love me as one of your own.  
You look at me as if I am nothing,  
as if I am the seed you never wanted.  
*Take me into your arms !*  
Yes I know you're going through some hard times –  
He swears,  
kicks you like a ball and punches you like a boxing bag.  
You of all people know how painful that is  
but you do the same to me !  
*Why won't you take me into your arms ?*  
I cry constantly  
longing for some motherly love,  
Throwing myself at men who promise me the world ....  
and all in it.  
Having an outer experience every time I allow them to take a piece of my soul !  
If only you had loved as one of your own.  
Pain is all I know in this world -  
have never had someone who loves me - for *me*.  
Pain is all I know.  
Mother when will you ever take me into your arms .....  
I am your child !!!!!!!  
Don't throw me into the world - walk beside me.  
Give me love MOTHER  
Cause I am tired of hurt,  
It's just too much!

Written by : Xoliswa

## ABUSE

Abuse, what do you want from people ?  
Emotions – you make people to hurt their loved ones.  
You make people to abuse others,  
    their wives,  
    their children,  
    and their husbands.  
You make people not to know their rights and responsibilities.  
Abuse, we don't want you in our lives.  
Abuse, where do you come from ?  
Why can't we just be free in our world ?  
We don't need you in our lives.  
Look here, people rape each other  
Because they don't know what tomorrow holds for them.  
    People kill their family[ies]  
    Because they want the money.  
Look, before we were born Whites used to abuse Blacks  
Because they wanted to rule the country.  
    You are invisible.  
We don't want you in our country.  
Would you just give us a break !!!  
We need to live free in our world and our countries.  
We want to be not scared anytime we sleep and everywhere we go.  
    We want to enjoy our lives.  
    Abuse, who sent you here?  
    What do you want from us ?  
    GO AWAY  
    ABUSE, GO AWAY !

Written by: Dorcas

## WHY I CRY

I am crying tears of [a] broken heart

My heart is broken because of you !

You said you are my father .....

but no action !

Sometimes I blame Jesus about giving me you.

I wish I could raze [erase] that name .....

that you are my father.

I didn't choose you to be my father

But GOD give me you.

Why ?

Why are you my father .....

Coz you don't want to be my father any more,

...but fine !

I know that you don't think about me

You just think about alcohol.

Sometimes I blame alcohol .

Alcohol who are you ?

They say 'uyashelela',

but you rule my fathers life.

My father is like you

[he] isn't alive

It's like you died .....

but you are alive.

That makes me cry.

Written by : Anonymous



## **I BELIEVE IN MYSELF**

I know I am an abusive child –

Abusive, because of no parents.

I know I need help,

I know ..... I know !

I know I have people who are helpful,

Because of love.

loved by people.

I know I have no one now because of death

I know I have goals –

Goals of playing soccer, rugby ....

I will make education my number one priority

I will be the best I can be,

And achieve at my highest level

I will set a good example for myself and others

I will treat all people and myself with respect and dignity

I will come to school on time, and I will be well prepared

I will solve challenges without arguing or fighting

I will trust my school and my home with respect

Contributing if I can to any school

And my country.

Written by : Nontobeko

## **ABUSE**

I am a ward, in which I am taken advantage of  
And all people show and express their strength by using me.

I wonder if I didn't exist at all  
Life here on earth would be better.

Some people turn into abuse

Not knowing how boring I am

How painful I am

How selfish I am

A creature with no life.

Written by : Anonymous

## I AM ME

There will not ever be anyone like me.

I am special because I am unique

I am stardust ..... And dreams .....

I am a light !

I am love and hope

I am hugs and sometimes tears

I am the words "I love You"

I am swirls of blue, green, red, yellow purple

And colours no one can name.

I am the sky

The sea

The earth

I trust, yet I fear

I hide, yet I fear

I hide yet I don't hold anything back.

I am free

I am a child not coming an adult

I am me

And me its just right !

Written by : Bonolo

## WHY IT'S SO PAINFUL TO LOSE A MOTHER

How am I supposed to live without you ?

Should I cry all the time I think about you ?

When it gets dark, I think of;

What am I going to eat

Where am I going to sleep

What am I going to wear to cover my body

***It's cold !***

And I ask myself;

Do I have to suffer ?

Why was I born ?

Should I live like this ?

***Is this life ?***

Is it GOD who did this to me ?

My heart is dark,

full of tears.

All the times I just wish if you were here

Because I need to feel your love,

your touch.

I need your secureness in all of my life

But one thing that I told myself is;

.... If it wasn't for GOD you would still be alive.

The smile that you gave me ..... it's no more -

Love is ..... no more.

***I MISS YOU !***

Written by : Emeldah

## WHY ME AS A CHILD

Why me as a child of this world -

As a soul of this world

As a special creature .....

A beautiful flower.

WHY WHY WHY

Did you do this to me

Why did you kill me

Why did you rape ?

I tried to stop you .....

I tried to scream .....

But no one was listening to me.

You were laughing at me

Love laughed at me !

Why did you have to limit my life

Destroy my future

Fill my heart with hatred

Pain

Sores in the heart

WHY

I thought you were my mother, my brother, my sister, my uncle !

Why am I a mistake

Or a piece of trash

I am not that .....

*Please love me !*

Written by : Vuka

## MY ADVICE

To the people and the youth around us ; [on HIV]

If you are negative - stay negative

And look after yourself and loved ones.

If you are positive - look and take care of yourself

And you will see a difference.

You will have a long life if you don't separate yourself from others.

Try to get ideas from others about how they manage to stay positive with this sickness.

Join a support group

so you can get a chance to say all that which you dislike.

Also you can grow in the field of HIV.

Try to take medication prescribed by the doctor

Follow your appointments.

Written by : Zandile

## TO MY GRANNY

In this busy world where time passes so quickly

I was not always able to be with you as much as I wanted to.

But time never goes so quickly that I don't think of you, my grandmother,

Because I love you so much.

A grandmother is love that you never outgrow.

Through passing years and changing times, a grandmothers love endures.

And what a gift it is

To have a grandmother like you.

Written by : Lilian

## MY STORY

The writer of this short story wishes to remain anonymous

Being raped does not mean that a person is asking to be sexually assaulted, nor does wearing a mini skirt mean you are shouting out loud and saying "Rape me !"

This can happen to anyone at any given time, without any knowledge of it happening.

I have been raped and I didn't ask for it. I was not even thinking about it. This was a person I trusted with my all.

How could he do this to me ?

How could this happen to me ?

Oh well it has, and I have no power what-so-ever to take it back.



## BEING ABUSED BY YOUR MOTHER

A short story by Thembisile

A friend of mine is being abused by her mother all the time. She was always at home babysitting her younger sister. Her mother was always drunk and my friend is always forced to cook, clean and babysit. She was not at school and it was painful for me to see her staying at home, knowing that she wanted to go to school.

Her mother would force her to sleep with older men so that they could get money for food. They would sometimes go for days without food. Sometimes the men would sleep with her and not give her money.

She didn't like sleeping with men, but it was the only way she could help and take care of her family. The saddest thing of all was that I, her friend, couldn't help her because I was afraid to tell my aunt or the police because I was going to be in trouble. Those people she use[d] to sleep with threatened to kill me if I said anything to anyone.

My 13 year [old] friend sells her body to older men, deprived of her right to education. Her mother, daily, treats her like trash – that is not fair.

## THIS IS A TRUE STORY

### “LERATO”

Short Story by : Vusiumzi

Lerato's father was a taxi driver and he would come every day to see Lerato's mother. One day when nobody was home, he took Lerato to the bedroom and raped her, and despite her screaming and kicking, he carried on.

When her father was done, he told her that if she ever told her mother, he would surely kill her. In total fright she said she wouldn't tell a soul.

Later that day, Lerato's mother came back from work and saw her daughter sitting, and never took any notice. Lerato refused to eat her food that night. In the following morning, she didn't eat breakfast. When she was taking a bath, her mother walked in and noticed that she was bleeding and crying, and she had her hand placed on her vagina. Her mother asked her what was wrong, and in tears, [she] told her that her father raped her.

Lerato's mother was very mad and went to the police station to open a case against the father. She [Lerato] was very sad and wanted someone to talk to. She told me what happened to her and [I] encouraged her to stay strong and keep her head up high.

Lerato won the case and he[father] is currently behind bars.

## ALL ABOUT ME

A short story by : Selinah

Hi. My name is Selinah. I was born at Baragwanath Hospital by Rebecca and I was supported by my family during that sexual intercourse in 2000, 15 March. I live in Diepkloof, Zone 3, and I attend school at Namedi Secondary.

I've been 90% of goodness. My life is based on success and wealth including disappointment. I love people who hate me, for who am I than those who love me for what / who I am not. I am doing grade 8. Ever since I've been attending school I have never failed. My life has been a great journey. I have met a lot of people. Only a few are great company and others are so out, it even hurts. (work overs)

Sometimes I feel like I am trapped and there is no way out. With all the faith, hope, trust and believe [belief], including strength, I will eventually overcome all **this**. God knows what the future beholds for me, and when it comes to life, that includes love, He knows the perfect guy for me. But in my heart there is a hole - someone must fill it up. I also learned that disappointment needs space. I left one for that. Step by step I will overcome this drama. Anyway life has it's ups and downs. It does move on so I must find my direction. Living with a parent is not nice, more especially a grand father, because I hate him.

Today was fine - for some reason, love is on my mind. Maybe it's because I'm still single or still love two persons, but need to consider a few things. Love hurts, especially if you open up for it. Giving a person all the love you have is never an assurance that they will love you back. Even today, I still pray to God; ....'please help me, let **Phasa** come back.'

I am patient and still waiting because good things come to those who wait. I am on that waiting list. Eventually God will answer my prayer, as always.

## **A MESSAGE TO ALL FATHERS**

Hi fathers,

Please stop to abuse your children. You are raping them and also killing them. The Black nation has passed away. The nation is angry. South Africa - stop killing youth !

By : Thotobolo

## **ABUSE**

Tokelo was abused. She is staying with her two siblings. The elder one, every morning, she will tell Tokelo to go and wash herself at the tap outside. She always beat her every morning.

By : Anonymous

## **IF I CAN TURN THE WORLD**

If the journey of life is like this, I am afraid to leave [live]. If I had powers to change, I could [would] change it.

It is fine – let's take it like that and accept it.

If I can send people back to GOD, I will do so.

By : Modiegi