

Antoinette Tidjani Alou: "Tina shot me between the eyes and other stories"



At the **Frankfurt Book Fair 2018** , I met on stage the **Lettres d'Afrique** , a program organized by Raphaël Thierry , which featured African editions (and other francophone publishers from Vietnam and Haiti), the Nigerian journalist and blogger Olatoun Williams . She enthusiastically told me that the following day she would host a reading with a conversation with **Antoinette Tidjani Alou** , whose first collection of stories was published this year in the Senegalese Editions Amalion .

Tidjani Alou was born in Jamaica and now lives in Niger. She teaches French and Comparative Literature at the Université Abdou Moumouni de Niamey. Her writing in English and French includes life-writing, poetry and short stories. She also works as a translator. In 2014 she came to Sweden with the sixth *Residency for African Women Writers* from Femrite to Sweden at the *Baltic Center for Writers and Translators* on Gotland.

The fifteen stories testify that here speaks a literary voice that we can not ignore, which we have to translate into German.

My English is not trained enough for the subtleties of the lyrics, this inadequacy I associate with the call to those people who are interested in female African literature in Germany, to translate the book and publish (or translation and publishing).

My English is sufficient to feel how much the author works with her characters to achieve an exterior and vice versa: crossing borders, strangers, alienation, seeking

homeland, deception, disappointment. Tidjani Alou is not afraid to talk about violence, sexuality and religion. The crashes that characterize her stories speak of connections, roots.

So begins the eponymous story ***Tina shoot me between the eyes*** for the man with the end:

Tina shot me between the eyes. I should have come, but I had not. In an epiphany of red, I discovered that I had gone too far. The pain, too, went away as I gushed out, what catapulted up and away from my body. In a state of shock, I resisted the blue light. I could not leave. I hovered obstinately above the scene.

The stubborn hovering over the blood-filled scenery uses the protagonist to roll up his life, his relationship with Tina, his love, which eventually turns into jealousy and violence. Since the end is at the beginning, it is interesting to find the place where the change has gone bad.

Tidjani Alou works with changes of perspective, so in ***Odds and Ends*** the death of a dog, which was overrun by a truck driver, is told several times. As a result, a seemingly insignificant process loses its banality, it shows how much the owner of the animal was a life companion.

*"But ... anyway ... the poor beast is dead, Mama!"
"Beast, y'rass!" The Old Lady shouted.
"I'm not fucking your mother and this dog has a name!"*

Play many of the stories in Africa and speak of different languages that can not communicate with each other, and of different religions, customs, social expectations, we feel the roots of the author especially in ***Granpa Joseph*** and ***Woman to Woman*** .

(As a reader, though, I'm always under the mistake of seeing the author's mirror reflections in the figures, but I'm convinced of the existence of a sincere letter in which the author / author uses her characters to make a real search, to learn something about yourself.)

Woman to Woman ends with the question:

Does she say all this for my mother or for me?

Here it is not important who *she* is, but that this question seems familiar to me. The existential question of the generation succession: We can not deny our roots. We must not lose our roots.

Worth reading! About SetValue!

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