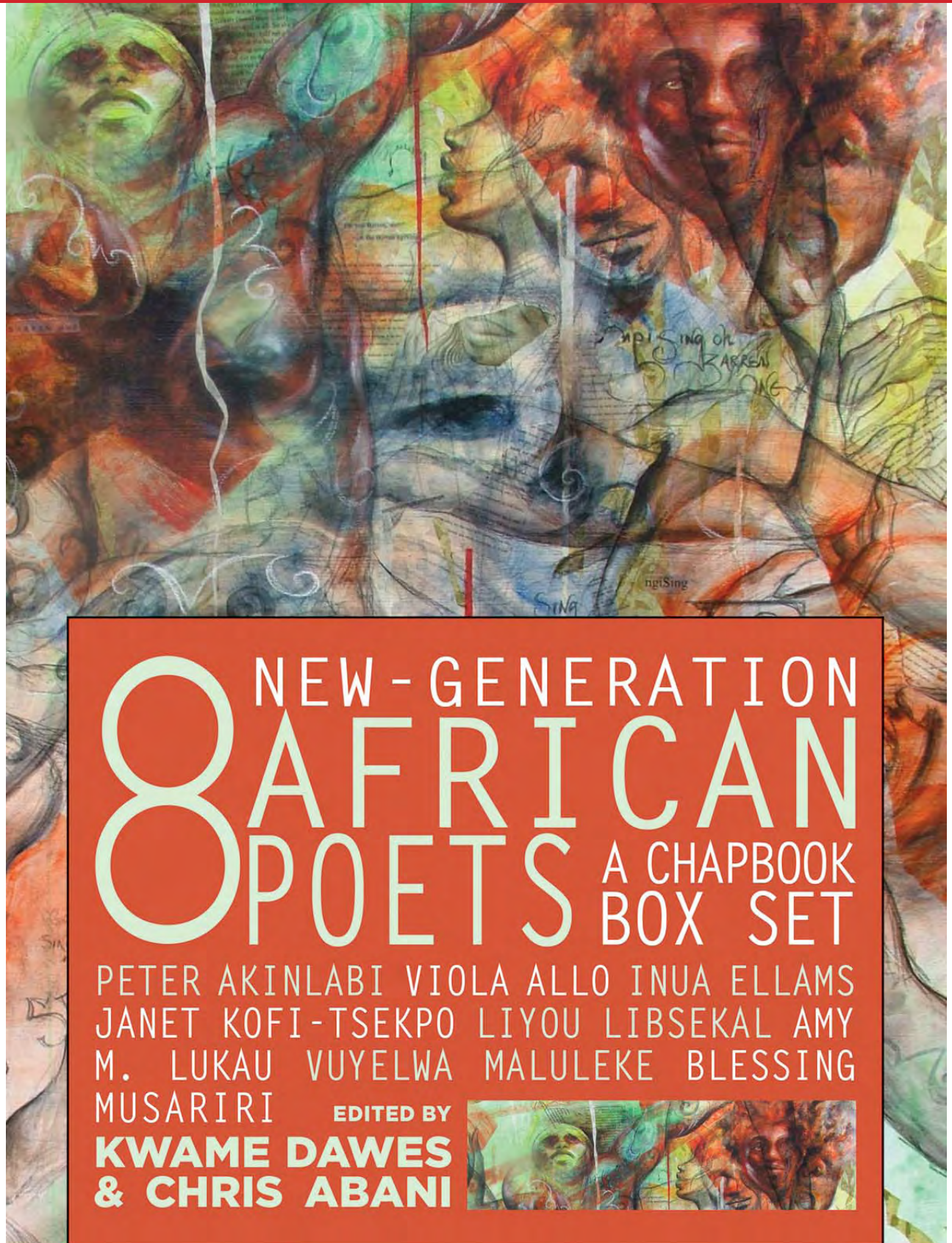


FORTHCOMING FROM AKASHIC BOOKS APRIL 7, 2015

# SALES KIT



# NEW-GENERATION 8 AFRICAN POETS A CHAPBOOK BOX SET

PETER AKINLABI VIOLA ALLO INUA ELLAMS  
JANET KOFI-TSEKPO LIYOU LIBSEKAL AMY  
M. LUKAU VUYELWA MALULEKE BLESSING  
MUSARIRI

EDITED BY

**KWAME DAWES  
& CHRIS ABANI**



## Biography

Liyou Mesfin Libsekal was born January 6<sup>th</sup> 1990 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. She spent her childhood traveling and lived in Tanzania, Kenya, and Italy before returning to Ethiopia in 2005. She attended The George Washington University in 2008 where she earned her BA in Anthropology in 2012. She now lives in her home country where she is pursuing a degree in Fashion Design and occasionally writing for a monthly business magazine.

## HAIR

I left Africa carrying my skin  
and my father's thick ringlets

braids were for children,  
tussled locks for grown women

eleven and unaware

a black child in a white playground  
learns new words

girls flock to touch a tamed head  
weaved by loving hands

and chemical cravings set in

rolled ready for feverish waves  
who convert to *straight*

what a word

## Biography

Inua Ellams was born in Nigeria in 1984. He lives and works in London as a poet, playwright, performer, graphic artist & designer.

His first play, *The 14th Tale* (Flipped Eye, 2010) won a Fringe First Award at the Edinburgh Festival in 2009 before transferring to National Theatre of England where it was the first one-man-show performed by an African. Other plays include *Knight Watch* (Oberon), *Untitled* (Oberon), *Cape* (Oberon) and most recently *Black T-Shirt Collection* (Oberon) which also ran at the National Theatre. Other works include *Wild Blood*, *The Ballad of Abdul Hafiz* (BBC Radio 3) and *Mostly Like Blue* (ICTheatre).

His poems have been published in two pamphlets *Thirteen Fairy Negro Tales* (Flipped Eye), *Candy Coated Unicorns and Converse All Stars* (Flipped Eye) and in various magazines and anthologies including the *Salt Book of Younger Poets* (Salt, 2011), *Mud Wrestling with Words* (Burning Eye, 2013) *Chorus* (MTV Books, 2012), *Waterfront* (Louis Vuitton), *The ScapeGallow* (Tate Modern), *Robin Hood - To a friend* (Magma), *Class Zero* (Wasafiri) *Dear Tina* (Pen International) *Leather Comets* (Literay Dundee), *Lovers Liars Conjurers and Thieves* (Pen Pusher Magazine).

## OF BRUCE LEE AND CHUCK NORRIS

It was vocal mortal combat.

    Soon as the bell gonged  
for break, we rushed into  
    the mid-afternoon light,  
split in two groups like rival  
    Kung-Fu schools hurling insults  
across the playground divide.

The far-fetched ones of us  
    claimed Bruce Lee's mother  
had loved Afro Beat, he was born  
    to Fela Kuti crooning  
/ I no be gentleman at all oh! /  
    so fluid were his movements,  
the Ogun River in his veins.

The stoic ones of us  
praised his grim focus  
and strict solemnity  
when commencing battle,  
the desert-viper still  
of his face, a ruthless,  
absolute, governing of his mind.

The street-smart ones of us  
acted out his swagger,  
his taunting of rivals,  
hopping foot to foot,  
so Okonkwo-like was his spirit  
brawling, brash, brazen,  
our rebels ruled his bones.

The learned ones of us  
lectured on unity: we fought  
for independence, survived civil war  
but allowed the divide  
and rule trick to stay / they're using  
martial arts to confuse us! /  
but should they have to choose,  
Bruce would be their guy.

And the wild ones of us  
    who cared even less for rhythm  
than we did for stillness, spirit  
    or discourse, us, who never learned  
to tame our tongues shouted  
    / Oyinbo! / –  
how Chuck Norris was just too white.

## Biography

Janet Kofi-Tsekpo has Ghanaian, English, Irish and Scottish heritage and Caribbean family. She lives in London. This is her first short collection.

## COAST

Had we not taken the slow middle path  
stretching inland from the broken neck

of the archipelago, the shape of a fish  
on a hook, one eye brimming with betrayal;

had we travelled to that province, cut out  
like a stolen wing, egg blue on the map,

where some trade freely and others are cattle,  
and had taken the road to Saltpond or Winneba

from the Keta Lagoon, we might have rolled  
like gold coins on the thin lip of the shore.

Instead, we sailed back across the lines,  
the sore red lines of our would-be captors.