

POEMS FROM A LOG BOOK¹

PATRICK JUDE MUGISHA

Poem 1: Before the House Is Built

We gathered like neighbors at a village well,
Each with a dream, a story to tell.
"Let's build a great thing," someone said with cheer,
But no one asked who'd clear or steer.

You brought the mission, he brought the name,
Another came with a donor to blame.
Yet without a plan or a shared direction,
We ran ahead – no real connection.

We swapped long texts with no real thread,
Ideas half-cooked, assumptions widespread.
No floor was drawn, no roles were set,
Just hope and hustle on the internet.

But even as we stumbled and spun,
The seed of partnership had begun.
Next time, before we dance or cheer,
Let's make the ground firm and the vision clear.

Poem 2: The Meeting Before the Meeting

They smiled on the Zoom call
polite and bright,
But side chats buzzed well into the night.
The Lead came heavy, cloak of power worn,
And soon, the fabric of trust was torn.

A paper appeared
terms tight and tall,
Drafted in secret, not shared at all.
"What is this?" one whispered low,
"It feels like digging with a borrowed hoe."

¹ Log Book Title: *REFLECTIONS ON NAVIGATING CONSORTIUM PARTNERSHIP BROKERING AMONG LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS IN THE ERA OF GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT AID LOCALIZATION*

Meetings were held
but not with the lead,
A coalition of whispers began to breed.
The storm had come, thunder in tone,
And none could fix this storm alone.

Then I stepped in
(not to silence or scold)
To warm them all as talks ran cold.
To hold up the mirror, not the sword,
And steer the group to one accord.

Now when I hear the word “team”
I think again
Of calm after storm
And lessons from rain.

Poem 3: We Sat Down and Talked

Under the Ancestors tree,
We sat down not to shout, but to share,
Not to win the fight, but to clear the air.

The lead took off their heavy coat,
And others too found their softer note.
No gongs were struck, no grand parade,
But, step by step, new ground was laid.
We passed the draft, line by line,
Each clause maturing like aged wine.

We named the fears, we owned the mess,
We stitched new trust from broken threads.
And in that space where storms once played,
A real partnership found its shade.

Now when they say, “let’s build as one,”
I ask, “Have we talked till the talking is done?”

Poem 4: We Water Slowly Now

No more racing carts before the cows,
We water slowly, now we know how.
The noise has thinned, the pace is wise,
Mutual respect no longer hides.

Roles are shared like plates at a feast,
And even the quiet ones speak with ease.

We post updates, not just demands,
We shake new ideas with steady hands.

One partner left, another stepped in,
Still, the drumbeat holds from deep within.
We've learned it's not results we chase,
But how we hold the partnership space.

So, if tomorrow brings heat or rain,
We've built the structure to stand again.

Poem 5: The Drumbeat Was Shared

The chief had no throne and the circle had grown,
We gathered in shade where tall grass was sown.

Each voice held weight, no one spoke twice,
But everyone mattered, and that was nice.

The loud stepped back, the quiet leaned in,
And something began, that felt like a win.

Poem 6: The Broker I Became

I once ran to fix, to fill every gap,
To silence the storm with a clever re-cap.
But brokering, I learned, is not about might,
It's walking the edge with purpose and light.

I held the room, not the crown,
Met power with principle, not backing down.
I learned to pause, to name what's true,
To see beyond "what" into the "who."

Some days, I was drum. Other days, soil.
Both are needed in this brokering toil.

I never brokered for show or fame,
But for small voices to earn their name.

And now, as new calls echo my way,
I broker with vision, not just for today.
For partnerships grounded, not built on sand,
Greeting justice and equity with outstretched hand.