Interview with Tumelo Khoza
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SD: Good morning, Tumelo. As you are a young inspirational writer, performance poet, motivator, actress and role model to the young girls out there who look up to you, I’d like to ask you a few questions. When did you first start writing and were there any incidents in your life that made you want to write?
TK: I started writing at the age of 11, and since I have found reason to write in everything that I see, go through, feel, need to project or reflect, in other people and their experiences too.

SD: Who is your favorite writer and for what reason are they your favorite writer?
TK: At the moment I am enjoying the work of Buddy Wakefield. The honesty and sincerity in some of his poems hits home inside of me.

SD: Do you sit and think through every word of every stanza or do you just write freely and allowing the words to flow?
TK: It depends. It differs with each poem. Some poems require me to choose the words carefully (dependant on the flow and rhythm), other poems pour out of me like a leaking jug.

SD: Do you care whether or not your words mean something to anyone, or is the writing a self serving exercise?
TK: I’d say both. If the next person did not find any form of meaning in my work then I’d be doing it in vain. In the same way, if I did not find meaning in my own work, something worth healing wounds, worth growing me as a person, answers, questions, life, etc, it would all be in vain.

SD: How long have you been writing poetry? When did you write your first poem? How
old were you?
TK: This question is similar to the first question. I started writing when I was 11 years old and have been writing for 12 years since.

SD: What might inspire you to write a poem?

SD: What does poetry mean to you? How important is poetry to you?
TK: Poems are lungs. The words are oxygen. To me, poetry is as important as breathing.

SD: Do you have an "audience" who gets to read or hear your poems or do you submit them to websites?
TK: The former. I haven’t submitted any of my poetry to any site in years.

SD: Have you ever published your poetry or considered publishing it?
TK: I have published only twice, in Kill the Poet and Letter to South Africa, Poets Calling the State to Order. Both anthologies were a collection of poems from different writers. I am working on publishing my own anthology now, which should be done in 2013.

SD: How do you feel when someone reads one of your poems and comes up with an interpretation of it far from what you intended?
TK: I do not argue with them. Everyone has their own interpretation of any form of art and to argue with another person’s point of view is to discriminate against them.

SD: And what has been your most memorable performance and how did you feel after that performance?
TK: The most memorable performance this year has to be the Poetry Africa Festival. It was my dream to do so since the age of 15. I felt as though I had accomplished something great in my life, that that was only a stepping stone for future endeavours.

SD: Does your family read your poetry?
TK: Hahahaha, no, but they do listen to it sometimes. They come to a show whenever they are
SD: Do your family members encourage you, and who is your most supportive person in your family?
TK: Yes they do. My mother and my grandmother have been supportive throughout the years. This makes life that much easier.

SD: With the interception of technology, what role would you say is being played by technology in delivering poetry out there?
TK: I’d say by means of being able to access other people’s poetry, music, or any form of art that could inspire a person. It also creates a platform for one to share their craft with the world and build a network.

SD: In closing, what advice would you give any township or rural girl or suburban girl who aspires to be like you?
TK: Write yourself a letter that states where you’d like to see yourself in the future. Put it away. Work on getting there. If you find yourself losing track, go back to that letter, read it, put it away and focus on your goal again.

SD: Thank you so much for your time and we wish you all the best, may you continue to inspire all types of people with your work.
TK: Thank you.