Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor is a story teller who lives in Nairobi. She has contributed numerous short stories to different publications worldwide. Her story about the consequences of regional civil strife, Weight of Whispers, won the Caine Prize for African Writing in 2003. She has at last finalised work on her first novel, working title Red Rain. A contributor to Kwani, and a traveller, she is suddenly rabidly possessive about her country, Kenya.

A Moment - Y. A Owuor

Yesterday I met a past presidential candidate in a meeting that was trip-tropping, trip-tropping on a bridge looking for a peaceful solution to an unstated problem with Kenya. He was well-oiled, and fat, bleary eyed and bored with the tears of the peace-seekers.

Smarmy.

Good luck he smirked after he heard what the peace keepers had said. Indifferent face shifting, shoulder shrugging.

Too bad. He meant. Play with this shit. I have what I want. After you peasants kill yourselves, I'll still be standing. I have planes and pilots on standby. Houses in London, boats on the Riviera. When you are done burning down Kenya, I'll return. I'll reign over you. Since you'll be starving anyway, you'll be glad to just be able to kiss my butt."

He strode out of the room, a confident man. The door closed behind him. He cackled. Along the corridor he must have met an acquaintance whom he hailed in a raw but hearty voice.

Outside, near the park, the Poof! of a tear gas cannister exploding, a woman screamed and screamed and screamed.

Inside, we were silent.

For a moment.