



Comrade Mkpoinsonke Umoette is an emerging voice in contemporary literature, bringing fresh perspectives to themes of loss, resilience, and human connection. A graduate of English and Literary Studies from Akwa Ibom State University, she completed her National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) in June 2024, marking the beginning of her literary career. Her academic background in English and Literary Studies provides a strong foundation for her craft, while her recent entry into the literary world brings a contemporary relevance to timeless themes of human experience. Through her work, Umoette demonstrates an understanding of how

## About the Author & The Book

fiction can serve as both mirror and lamp—reflecting our experiences while illuminating paths forward through life's most challenging moments.

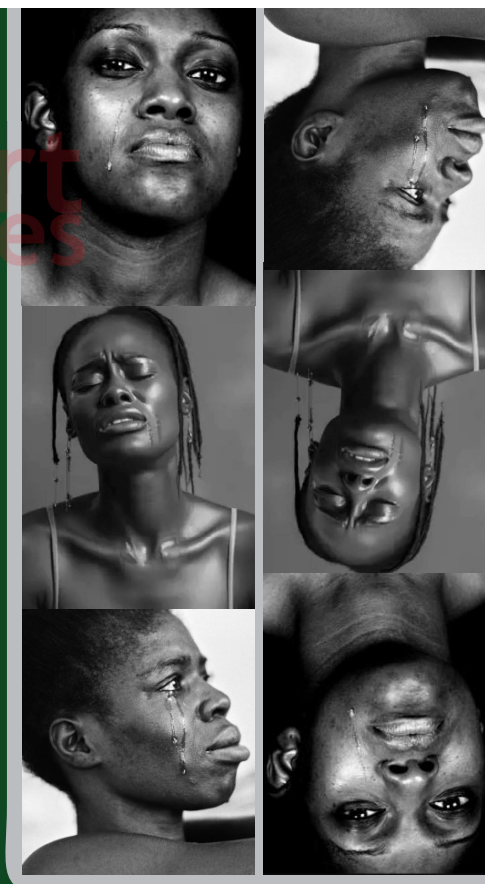
Umoette's writing journey began with her debut publication *My Origin* in December 2024, followed by *Diary of a Black Woman* in April 2025. Her latest work, *Coming out of Grief*, continues to establish her as a thoughtful storyteller who tackles complex emotional landscapes with sensitivity and depth. *Coming out of Grief* is a powerful collection of fictional stories that explores the profound journey through loss and healing. Rather than providing prescriptive advice, this book presents a gathering of narratives about ordinary people navigating extraordinary pain and discovering that healing doesn't mean forgetting—it means remembering but in a another way.

The collection delves into the uncharted territory of grief, where familiar rhythms of life are suddenly broken and everything becomes unfamiliar. Through its pages, readers encounter characters who falter, rage, and retreat, but who slowly begin to climb out of their darkness. These are stories of fierce love, unexpected courage, and quiet triumphs—the stories we often struggle to tell but desperately need to hear. It promises to make a fantastic reading!

Short  
Stories

Coming Out of Grief

Mkpoinsonke Umoette



# Coming Out of Grief

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“Healing isn't forgetting. Healing is remembering differently. Loving differently. Living again — not in spite of the loss, but because of it.”

**ai Nkuru**

*Humanist, Poet, Researcher and Editor*

# Coming Out of Grief

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**A Collection of Short Stories**

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**Mkpoisonke Umoette**

*Coming Out of Grief*

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it beside you, even if in quiet solidarity. There is strength in your sorrow — a quiet, enduring kind of strength that grows with each step you take. Even when progress feels invisible, healing is unfolding beneath the surface.

Let go of guilt, of the belief that you should be “over it” by now. There is no “getting over” profound loss — only learning to live with it, carry it, and allow it to transform you. What matters is not how quickly you move forward, but that you do so with honesty and self-compassion. In time, grief may soften, not because the love fades, but because you grow stronger in carrying it. Hold on to the beauty of what once was. Keep the memories, but do not be bound by the sorrow. Carry the love with you — not as a burden, but as a quiet flame to light your way. Let it inspire you to live more fully, to cherish more deeply, and to open your heart once again, even if it feels risky. Love, after all, is what brought you here — and love, in its many forms, will carry you forward.

Remember, healing doesn't always look heroic. Sometimes it's just choosing to rise in the morning, to get dressed, to step outside, to breathe through another day. Other times, healing bursts forth in laughter that surprises you, or a moment of peace that catches you off guard. Honour these moments — they are evidence of life still pulsing through you. If you take nothing else from this note, take this: You are not broken. You are becoming. Grief may reshape you, but it will not destroy you. Let the quiet moments speak. Let the light return — even if it comes slowly, even if it flickers at first.

May you find peace in moments, comfort in community, and strength in your own quiet resilience. You are still here. Keep walking. Light will find you.

— **The Author**

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### **A Last Note on Grief and Loss**

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**G**rief is not a weakness, and loss is not a punishment. They are inevitable threads in the tapestry of human experience — a reflection of our capacity to love deeply and connect meaningfully. To grieve is to have loved, and to lose is to have lived. The heaviness you feel in your heart is not a sign of failure, but a testament to the depth of your attachment, your compassion, and your humanity. That ache is love, displaced but not diminished — love that no longer has a place to land.

There is no universal roadmap for navigating grief. The path is rarely linear. Healing doesn't arrive in stages as neatly as some might suggest. It moves in waves — unpredictable, sometimes crashing over you when you least expect it. Some days will feel manageable; others may feel unbearable. Let them come, and let them pass. Allow yourself to feel what you feel without judgment. There is no correct way to mourn, no right way to remember, and no set timeline for moving forward.

Be gentle with yourself through it all. Cry when you must, and laugh when you can — both are part of the same sacred process. Grief lives alongside joy; they are not enemies. You may find yourself remembering vividly one day and forgetting the next, and that, too, is okay. Every tear, every smile, every memory — they all have a rightful place in your journey toward healing.

When the silence around you feels deafening or the world becomes too loud to bear, know that you are not alone. Though grief can be isolating, it is a shared human experience. Others have walked this road, and many still walk

### **Dedication**

This book is dedicated to God, and to all who are walking through one form of grief or another

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every choice to help another person find their way back to the light.

The lighthouse beam swept across the water, eternal and constant, just like love itself. And Nkoyo smiled, finally understanding that she was home---not just in this place, but in herself, in her purpose, in the beautiful, difficult, necessary work of being fully alive in a world that breaks hearts and heals them in equal measure.

She had come out of grief not by leaving it behind, but by allowing it to teach her how to love more deeply, serve more completely, and shine more brightly than she had ever imagined possible. And in that shining, Ubong lived on, and Ima lived on, and all the love that had ever been lost was found again in the endless, generous light of human connection.

**THE END**

the water, just as it had for over a century, just as it would for centuries to come. Nkoyo smiled as she watched it, understanding finally that she had become part of that tradition---not a keeper of the literal light, but a keeper of the light that human beings can be for each other.

She climbed down the spiral stairs and walked back to the cottage, where Edidiong was preparing dinner and the evening's first guests were arriving. The house glowed with warmth and welcome, and Nkoyo realized that this was what resurrection looked like---not the return of what was lost, but the transformation of loss into something beautiful and life-giving. As she opened the door to let her friends in, Nkoyo felt Ubong's presence like a blessing, like a hand on her shoulder, like a whisper of approval. She had learned the most important lesson of all: that love doesn't end with death, grief doesn't end with healing, and the best way to honor those we've lost is to become who they would be proud to see us become.

She was no longer the woman who had fled this place in desperate sorrow. She was not the same person who had lived here in innocent happiness. She was someone new, someone who had been forged in the fire of loss and emerged not broken, but transformed. She was a lighthouse keeper of the human heart, and her light would shine as long as there were people who needed to find their way home to themselves.

The cottage filled with laughter and conversation, with the sound of healing happening in real time, with the music of people discovering that they were not alone in their struggles or their hope. And Nkoyo, standing in the doorway between the darkness outside and the light within, knew that this was what coming out of grief looked like: not the end of love, but its multiplication; not the absence of the dead, but their presence in every act of kindness, every moment of grace,

## Acknowledgments

Writing *Coming Out of Grief* has been a deeply personal and transformative journey. This collection would not have come to life without the grace, support, and encouragement of many individuals to whom I owe immense gratitude.

First, I thank God, the giver of life and strength, for guiding me through seasons of sorrow and healing—and for turning pain into purpose through the power of storytelling.

To my family, who stood with me in moments both silent and stormy, thank you for your love, patience, and belief in me even when words failed. You carried me when I could not carry myself.

To the friends who listened, shared their own grief, or simply sat with me in quiet solidarity—your presence helped shape these stories more than you may ever know. I am especially grateful to those who read early drafts, gave honest feedback, and encouraged me to keep writing when the weight felt too heavy.

My heartfelt thanks to my editor and publishing team, whose careful eyes and steady hands helped shape these stories with care and clarity. Your professional guidance ensured this collection found its best form.

Finally, to every reader who picks up this book in search of healing, comfort, or understanding—thank you. These stories are for you. May they remind you that coming out of grief is not forgetting, but remembering with tenderness and walking forward with hope.

**Mkpoisonke Umoette**

*July, 2025*

## Preface

Grief is a country with no maps. You don't choose to go there — it chooses you. One moment, life moves with all its familiar rhythms, and the next, everything is broken and unfamiliar. What comes after loss often feels like a silence too heavy to bear, a darkness too thick to navigate.

This book was born from that silence.

*Coming out of Grief* is not a manual for mourning. It's a gathering of stories — fictional, but achingly real — about people finding their way through the fog. It is about ordinary men and women facing extraordinary pain and discovering, sometimes against their will, just like ai Nkuru the poet poet would say, that “healing isn't forgetting. Healing is remembering differently. Loving differently. Living again — not in spite of the loss, but because of it.”

Every story in this collection is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit. These characters do not walk easy paths. They falter. They rage. They retreat. But slowly, tenderly, they begin to climb out. They reach for meaning, for connection, for purpose. And as they do, they offer us a mirror — to our own pain, our own survival, our own becoming.

These are not just stories of sadness. They are stories of fierce love, unexpected courage, and quiet triumphs. They are the stories we often don't know how to tell — and yet need most to hear.

If you have ever mourned, ever longed, ever loved someone so much that losing them felt like losing a part of yourself — then this book is for you.

Let these pages hold your hand. Let them remind you that grief may change you, but it does not have to consume you.

There is life on the other side. And you are not alone.

stood once again at the top of the tower, looking out at the ocean. The view was the same, but she saw it differently now. The water that had once represented only loss and danger now also represented possibility and renewal. The horizon that had once seemed like a barrier now looked like an invitation. She thought about Ubong, not with the sharp pain of fresh grief, but with the warm glow of love that had been transformed but not diminished. She could feel his presence not as a ghost haunting her memories, but as a living part of who she had become. His love had taught her how to love others, his strength had shown her how to be strong, his dedication to serving as a beacon had inspired her to become a lighthouse herself.

The cottage was full of life now. Edidiong had moved into the guest room temporarily while she found her footing. The young couple from down the road often stopped by for advice and encouragement. The elderly widower had become a regular dinner guest. The teenage girl, now a polytechnic student, still visited during her breaks, sharing her dreams and plans for the future.

Nkoyo had created something she had never expected: a community of healing, a place where people could come to process their losses and discover their possibilities. She had become what Ubong had been for ships at sea---a constant, reliable presence guiding others safely home to themselves.

As the sun set over the water, painting the sky in the brilliant colors she and Ubong had watched together for so many years, Nkoyo felt a deep sense of completion. Not the completion of an ending, but the completion of a circle. She had learned that coming out of grief didn't mean leaving the dead behind---it meant carrying them forward in new ways, allowing their love to illuminate the path for others still struggling in the darkness. The lighthouse beam swept across