



**INTERNATIONAL  
HUMAN  
RIGHTS ART  
MOVEMENT**



**AFRICAN HUMAN  
RIGHTS SPOKEN  
WORDS CONTEST**



**First Prize**



**Suffer In Silence By Jon Kote, Nigeria**

Jon Kote, a queer poet based in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, utilizes poetry as a tool for fostering social change. His work delves into themes such as politics, climate change, and sexuality. Jon seeks solace in the embrace of words and the melodic cadence of poetry. Connect with him on Instagram [@jon\\_kote](https://www.instagram.com/jon_kote).

## **SUFFER IN SILENCE**

Let me show you how I wear my pearls  
I wear them like a long string of shiny silence on my neck  
So the world can see my pain but not feel it  
So the world can admire from a distance  
The beauty of a buried being  
A free bird that cannot sing

On this continent,  
The ultimate prize is what you pay for being gay  
If you are queer  
You cannot be here  
Here, Love lives in jail  
14 years in Nigeria, a lifetime in Uganda  
And a long list of dishonourable mentions in many black nations  
We say  
The gays are the end of days  
The last plague before humanity is wiped away  
So we numb our heart and rake the gays into dungeons of pain

We mob them in their parties, hound them in their houses  
And when we can't find a flimsy excuse to maim them, we chain them  
We plant, in their brains, shame and water it with a mother's love  
And watch it flourish into a fortress where they perpetually suffer in silence