

INTERVIEWS WRITER: **TAMI EGONU**
A TALENT OF THE FUTURE...

Over the last few years many readers have been searching for stories with spiritual depth and the discovery of novels written by gifted African authors has transported them to different realities.

An author who has been inspired by such novels is British born Tami Egonu (her surname, in case you're wondering, is Igbo). Tami's grandfather, **Uzo Egonu**, was a prolific Nigerian artist whose art has been exhibited around the world, and more than twenty years after his death his paintings continue to be sold at Bonhams. His granddaughter follows in his creative footsteps and puts words to paper instead of oils to canvas.

Tinashe Akikara interviewed **Tami** on a warm spring day high up at the Gong Bar in London.

Q: This is a great place to conduct an interview. The views are amazing. Tell me does London still inspire you?

TE: How can it not. It's forever changing and I love that about it. One of my favourite walks is along the river. I used to work in Stratford and I'd get the DLR to Canary Wharf and walk to Wapping or on to St Katherine Dock, then head home. Sometimes I'd get the Thames Clipper to Embankment and back again, but mostly I'd walk. I got most of my inspiration from those walks. My Bird Trilogy was written all along the river and so I have extra special affection attached to those memories. I was born in a hospital on the Strand and I'm as much a city girl as you're gonna get. The hospital's not there anymore, it's a police station now.

Q: What gave you the idea to self-publish instead of being published traditionally?

TE: It was about taking my fate into my own hands. I didn't want to wait for an agent, or worse give up my ambition entirely. Hope is an important factor. It's a competitive field and most agents and publishers want a sure thing. I get it, it's a business, but for me it's about creativity and expression, and I'm fulfilling that dream.

Q: How many books have you published?

TE: I'm proud to say I've published six novels thanks to my tech wizard Lee, and of course Amazon. My biggest market is the US and it's really great seeing sales around the world. Knowing readers are choosing my books is amazing.



Q: Where do you find your inspiration? Some of your stories have an element of the supernatural.

TE: You mean ghosts? Yeah, there's an element of that in most of the stories I've written. The living are just as interesting to me as the dead, obviously I can't hear dead people (laughs) but my characters do make themselves heard. I guess from when I was a kid I'd watch ghost films and being petrified proved to be an inspiration of sorts. Years later I read horror and ghost stories and the juxtaposition between life and the afterlife interests me. A very good friend of mine introduced me to the works of Chinua Achebe and I never looked back. My Bird trilogy tackles arranged marriage and racism in an historical setting but these are sadly very modern issues.

Q: How do you record your thoughts?

TE: I've got a note book and when I forget to take it I use my phone. People inspire and wind up some way in a book. There's always some colourful conversation taking place. The interaction between people is important to me and I strive to make chemistry and interesting conversations and life journeys between my characters that readers can hopefully connect with.

YOU CAN FIND TAMI EGONU'S NOVELS AT AMAZON, BARNES & NOBLE AND KOBO.



Photo: G Camps

