Eleanor A. Dasi, "Entry on: Sing to the Moon by Nansubuga Nagadya Isdahl, Sandra Van Doorn", peer-reviewed by Divine Che Neba, Daniel A. Nkemleke and Elizabeth Hale. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2022). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/1544. Entry version as of November 11, 2026.

Nansubuga Nagadya Isdahl , Sandra Van Doorn

Sing to the Moon

United Kingdom (2018)

TAGS: African Storytelling African Traditions



We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
Title of the work	Sing to the Moon
Country of the First Edition	United Kingdom
Country/countries of popularity	UK, Uganda
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2018
First Edition Details	Nansubuga Nagadya Isdahl, *Sing to the Moon*. Ill. Sandra van Doorn, [Newbury]: Lantana Publishing: 2018, 40 pp.
ISBN	9781911373391
Genre	Fiction
Target Audience	Children (5–9 years)
Author of the Entry	Eleanor A. Dasi, University of Yaounde I, wandasi5@yahoo.com
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Creators



Nansubuga Nagadya Isdahl (Author)

Nansubuga Nagadja Isdahl was born in Cambridge, USA to Ugandan parents. She studied for a bachelor's degree in Sociology and a master's degree in Diplomacy. Later, she went to Kampala, Uganda to work in International development, a position she held for about ten years in Eastern and Southern Africa. In her current role as technical writer and editor, she produces written works for International organizations such as the United Nations and the World Bank. To her, creative writing has always been a way to go back to her cultural heritage. Her first children's book is *Sleep Well, Siba and Saba*. She lives in Johannesburg with her family.

Sources:

Nansubuga Nagadya Isdahl at aalbc.com (accessed: March 15, 2021).

Meet children's author Nansubuga Nagadya Isdahl at Lantana Publishing YouTube channel (accessed: March 15, 2021).

Bio prepared by Eleanor A. Dasi, University of Yaounde I, wandasi5@yahoo.com



Sandra Van Doorn (Illustrator)

Sandra Van Doorn was born in France. She studied for a degree in International Trade and Marketing after which she took interest in photography and attended art classes at Emily Carr University, Vancouver, Canada. Then she decided to take a career as illustrator up till 2019 when she shifted from illustrating and found the Red

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Paper Kite, a publishing house for picture books. She lives in Sunny Perth, Australia with her husband.

Sources:

Official website (accessed: March 15, 2021).

Interview with Sandra van Doorn of Red Paper Kite at firebirdfeathers.com (accessed: March 15, 2021).

Bio prepared by Eleanor A. Dasi, University of Yaounde I, wandasi5@yahoo.com

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Additional information

Summary

The narrator, a young boy, expresses his wish to venture to the Moon, to Zanzibar to gaze at an old spice market, to traverse the forest and encounter the mythical beast and eat a monstrous feast upon return. He is disappointed as he wakes up to reality on a rainy day and finds Jjajja (grandfather) who has been waiting for him for breakfast, after which they clean the house while the former recounts his childhood stories. Among the stories Jjajja tells are: adventures with his best friend Kirabo, who always smiled, climbing guava trees (to which the boy response is: “I love that too”), tales of lost cities and heaps of gold, fishing trips with his father, African kingdoms and sights to behold, how the sky rose and fell. As they sit out to watch the moon and stars at night, Jjajja tells the young boy of how he is being loved by the stars above. They wish each other good night and go to bed. Jjajja kisses the young boy on the head and quietly tells him as always to “sing to the moon.”

Analysis

Children often dream of travelling to places that are fantastic but unreal. This is the case with the young narrator in the story. Nonetheless, he returns to reality to find his grandfather who takes him to another dimension of adventure, but this time, telling him stories that will help him come to terms with and appreciate reality. The boy’s acknowledgement of his love to climb guava trees is a sign that he is beginning to feel part of the family lineage and will continue the line by also handing down the stories about the family’s past; their exploits that instill in them a sense of pride in their heritage. The story about Kirabo is one of relationships that should be kept and remembered as it reminds of quality time shared together (symbolized by his never-ending smile). Such relationships breed love much in the same way as the relationship between Jjajja and his own father.

Grandparents are known to be repertories of cultural knowledge embedded in the tales and myths of the land. By telling the young boy stories about great African kingdoms, sights that are inviting, the myth of how the sky rose and fell, Jjajja is initiating him into the traditions and culture to which he belongs, and whose values he is called upon to uphold and transmit.

Though the characters in the book do not look real, they nonetheless

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	represent real Ugandan people engaged in different activities in an imagined landscape. The illustrations are carefully crafted such that each image captures the wishes that will carry children to a world of fantasy and back (across the ocean to Zanzibar spice market through the forest to a feast rendered with colourful pictures of cakes and assorted fruits).
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	African Storytelling African Traditions
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Adventure Boys Family Heritage Love Relationships
Further Reading	Bates, James S. and Todd. L. Goodsell, “Male kin relationships: Grandfathers, Grandsons, and Generativity”, *Marriage & Family Review* 49.1 (2013): 26–50.

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