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ZAM

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NELSON MANDELA LECTURE
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Profile

ELNATHAN JOHN

Born 1982, North-West Nigeria. Lives in Berlin. Novelist, satirist, lawyer.

- Education: Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and Nigerian Law School: jurist.
- Published in The Economist, The Guardian, Le Monde Diplomatique, Financial Times, ZAM Magazine, Chimurenga Chronic
- 1st novel *Born on a Tuesday* (2015), published by Cassava Republic, Lagos/London. Translated into French and Dutch.
- 2nd book *Be(coming) Nigerian, A Guide* (2018), published by Cassava en Grove, US.
- 3rd book, a comic *On Ajayi Crowther Street* (2019)
- Judge 2019 Man Booker International Prize.

Twice on shortlist Caine Prize of African Writing. Winner Betty Trask Award (2017) and Les Prix Littéraires les Afriques (2019)

Interview *The Observer*, "[I want to show that things are never simple](#)"


Short story *1843 Magazine*, "[How to walk through a Berlin Park](#)"

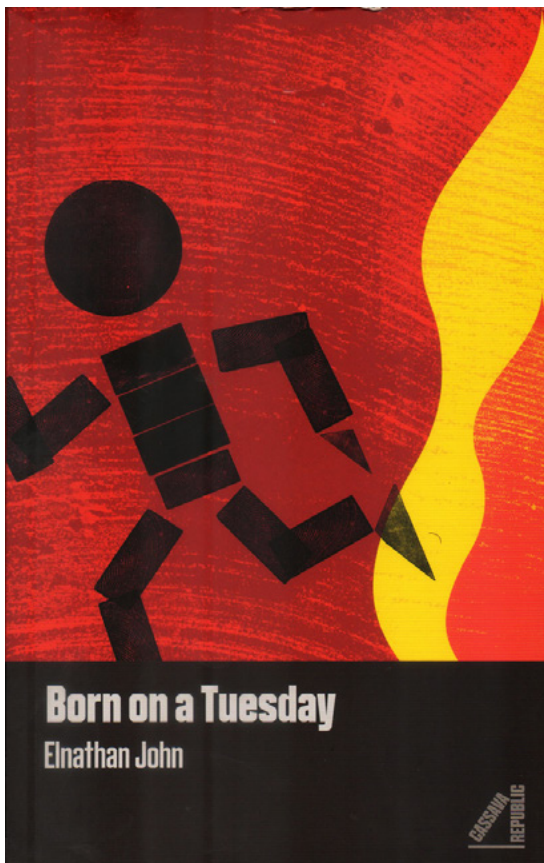
[Review](#) *Born of a Tuesday*, Chika Unigwe.

Over *Born of a Tuesday*:

[How to run a Nigerian NGO](#), ZAM Magazine.

More about Elnathan John

 The Writer Formerly Known as Elnathan [@elnathan_john](#)
<https://elnathanjohn.com>



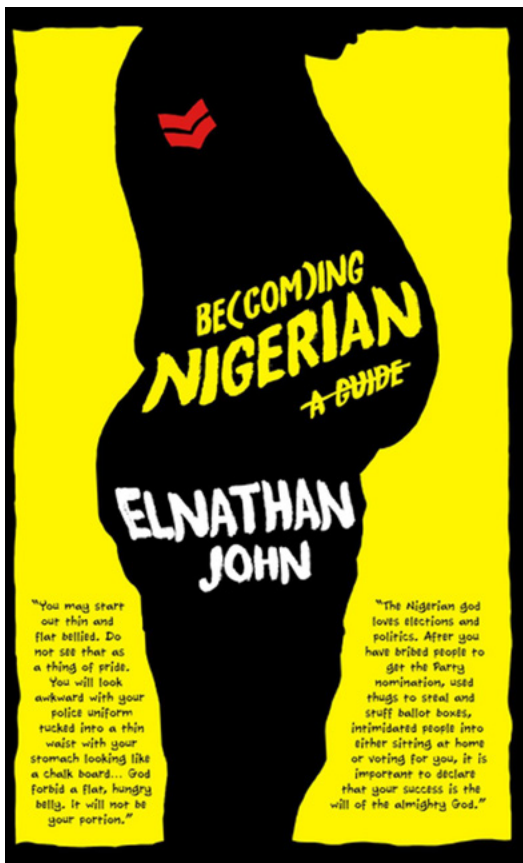
ABOUT "BORN ON A TUESDAY"

Dantala lives in Bayan Layi and is a student in a Sufi quranic school, far away from home. By chance he starts to follow gang leader Banda, a nominal Muslim. Dantala is thrust into a world with fluid rules and casual violence. In the bloody aftermath of the Nigeria elections he runs away and ends up living in a Salafi mosque. With a simple and practical approach to life, as he teaches himself English, Dantala slowly embraces the Salafism preached by his new benefactor, Sheikh Jamal.

He falls in love with Sheikh's daughter, Aisha, and tries to woo her without breaking the rules. All the while, Sheikh struggles to deal with growing jihadist extremism within his own ranks.

Narrated in Dantala's raw yet inquisitive voice, this debut novel explores friendship, brotherhood, religious fundamentalism, and loss against the backdrop of one of the most turbulent periods in contemporary Northern Nigeria.

Born on a Tuesday has been translated into German (*An Einem Dienstag Geboren*) and French (*Né Un Mardi*)

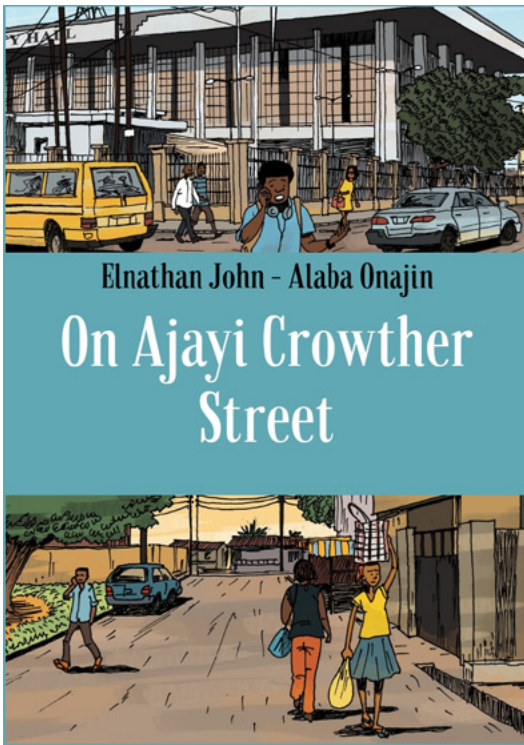


ABOUT “BE(COMING) NIGERIAN”

Be(com)ing Nigerian: A guide is a satirical collection that takes a searing look at how different forms of power are abused, negotiated and performed both in the private and public realm.

Through attempting to satirise those who abuse privilege or power, it recognises that power can be found everywhere: in politics, business, religious institutions and in homes.

From the exploration of religious hypocrisy in *How To Worship The Nigerian God*, to *A Letter to My Future Kidnapper* which tackles the growing scourge of kidnapping, the collection is a jab at Nigerian society and what it means to be a Nigerian. Beyond poking fun at the holders of power, it is a summon, a provocation and a call for introspection among all levels of society. As it is often said in Nigeria, when you point with one finger, there are four others pointing back at you. This is an engrossing read for Nigerian watchers, and strangers to Nigeria alike, with its tongue-in-cheek look at Nigeria’s relationship to the world, both culturally and politically.



ABOUT “ON AJAYTI CROWTHER STREET”

On the noisy Ajayi Crowther Street in cosmopolitan Lagos, neighbours gather to gossip, discuss noise complaints, and faithfully head to church each Sunday. But beneath the surface lies a hidden world of clandestine love affairs, hidden pregnancy, spiritual quackery and hypocrisy, that threatens to destroy the community from within.

On Ajayi Crowther Street peels back the curtains on the lives of Reverend Akpoborie and his family, to reveal a tumultuous world full of secrets and lies. His only son, Godstime, is struggling to hide his sexuality from his parents whilst his daughter Keturah must hide the truth of her pregnancy by her pastor boyfriend to preserve her and her family's image. But it is the Reverend himself who hides the darkest secret of them all, as his wandering eye lands on Kyauta, their young live-in maid.

On Ajayi Crowther Street is a story of urban and religious Nigeria's contradictions and complexities; of the hypocrisies in middle-class Nigeria.