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From the Selected Works of Everett N K Ofori

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July 15, 2011

# Writing Showcase

Everett N K Ofori



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# Writing Showcase

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## Reading Beyond "The Usual Suspects"

Any would-be writer who asks for advice about how to become a better writer is sure to get an earful about the need to read some of the best writers in the English language.

And who are these best writers? The usual suspects turn out to be William Faulkner, William Shakespeare, William...I mean, Ernest Hemingway, and other dear-departed souls.

William, William, Ernest, and other British and American writers beloved by English literature professors, deserve all the attention they command for the richness of their prose, the suppleness of their thinking, and the deftness with which they weave worlds with words.

It would be folly not to study their techniques or to imbibe what wisdom their works impart.

In addition to "the usual suspects," however, you would enrich yourself enormously by consciously extending your literary reach to connect with minds you might not have considered before.

Perhaps, you have not had the chance to read any Australian writers. Why not start with Craig Sherborne, and his works such as *The Amateur Science of Love*, *Hoi Polloi*, and *Muck*.

How many Japanese books translated into English have you read? Shall we start with Banana Yoshimoto's *Kitchen*, *Asleep*, *Goodbye Tsugumi*, *Lizard*, *Amrita*, or *Moonlight Shadow*?

Or what about Miyuki Miyabe's *Shadow Family*? We won't even talk about Haruki Murakami and his works.

Ever read a book by an African writer? Can't read Swahili, Fante, or Yoruba? Don't worry.

Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe, the Charles P. Stevenson Professor of Languages and Literature at Bard College in Annandale-on-Hudson, New York, is a master of the English language. His book, *Armor of God* might just be the book to get you going. Or, how about South African writer, Athol Fugard, who wrote *The Blood Knot*.

In recent years, another African writer who has been making mighty waves is Chimamanda Adichie. Check out her works.

And oh, there's Latin America with master writers such as Juan Rulfo, Carmen Naranjo, and Gabriela Mistral.

And Canada, which gave us Margaret Laurence, Margaret Atwood and Margaret...OK. Maybe, not that many Margarets....

My horizon on humanity is enlarged by reading the writers of poems, seeing a painting, listening to some music, some opera, which has nothing at all to do with a volatile human condition or struggle or whatever. It enriches me as a human being.

- **Wole Soyinka**,  
Nigerian Writer

July 15, 2011  
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Charlene Chau, *High School Student*  
(Hong Kong SAR)



### FPTP versus AV

The UK government has run the country for centuries. To decide who will lead the government, there are different methods being used around the globe. We are going to focus on two of them: namely, First Past the Post and Alternative Vote. Although they are both methods for voting the government party into power, they differ in process.

First Past the Post is the usual method for choosing a government party in Europe, like the United Kingdom, whereas Alternative Vote is less used around the world, but this method is used in Australia.

First Past the Post means that people choose the governing party by voting once. The political party with the most seats in an election becomes the government, while the party leader becomes the Prime Minister. However, Alternative Vote requires a different set of rules. Alternative Vote uses preference. Voters can rank the parties in order of preference. The party with the fewest votes is eliminated until one candidate is left as the governing party.

In the United Kingdom, different people have different views towards these two voting methods. Some show favoritism towards First Past the Post – a method used for ages in Britain. Nevertheless, some support the Alternative Vote.

Those who favor First Past the Post, for example, Prime Minister David Cameron, think that this system leads to a more stable government, shown throughout history. It is also straightforward and easy to understand.

To the contrary, those who support Alternative Vote, like the Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg, argue that First Past the Post is time-consuming as many votes are effectively wasted with no single party having a large majority; also, it discourages people from voting.

Personally, I like First Past the Post more, because it is familiar to people as it has been used for centuries. Furthermore, it is easier to understand, simpler, and more convenient.

I think, whatever the methods are for choosing the future governing party, the future remains bright for the United Kingdom.

*It's hard to see  
your own  
shortcomings  
when you are so  
busy counting  
those of others.*

- Everett Ofori

## The Past Ten Years



This year is the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my marriage. This is a time for me to look back on some of the things that have happened over this time period.

Before I got married, I worked at a hospital in Tsuchiura City, Ibaraki Prefecture, as a *shiatsu* master, while living in Tsukuba, also in Ibaraki. The work had mainly to do with rehabilitation for elderly people, the infirm, or the injured. It was very tough work and I had to be very sensitive and considerate but the work was a lot of fun for me. At that job, I worked hard everyday except Sunday.

However, when I thought of the idea of getting married, I realized that the salary I was getting at the hospital was really too low for me. Because I wanted to get married, I took on the challenge of going to Tokyo to work at a place that specialized in *shiatsu*. I was then able to get married and to rent an apartment in Saitama.

I started a new life with my wife.

After that, I had some good times. But I experienced sad and tough times too.

What is an example of “good times” for me? Well, we went to Hawaii three times; we didn’t know why we liked the atmosphere of Hawaii so much. Was it the landscape, the joy of swimming in the sea, or the American food?

American food, by the way, is very dangerous because it has big portions! It is easy to get fat eating that kind of food.

Another example of a good time involved taking some domestic trips with my wife’s family; we visited a lot of restaurants that served truly delicious food.

In particular, my wife and I discovered that we have the same preference in sushi restaurants in terms of atmosphere, taste, and sushi size.

One sad time in my life was when my father died of cancer and my mother died of cerebral hemorrhage. My father’s cancer was suddenly discovered one day and after only six months, he passed away.

Looking back, I cannot believe some of the events we went through after my father’s passing; one morning, my mother suddenly fainted. She could not speak and she could not move one half of her body. She could not think of anything.

After two weeks, she went to another world. I regret to this day that I could not hear what my mother had wanted to say.

After my parents’ death, our surroundings changed. I experienced people’s cold-heartedness and warm-heartedness. From that experience, I learned that I must be fully responsible for myself. I could not expect anybody to protect me. I learned that life could be truly harsh.

In 2009, I opened my *shiatsu* center in Tsukuba. At first, I felt uneasy everyday, but now I can enjoy life everyday. For example, when my *shiatsu* center is not busy I can read many books, learn English, or relax in my *shiatsu* room.

On the other hand, when my *shiatsu* center is busy, I can work very hard all day hoping all clients get well.

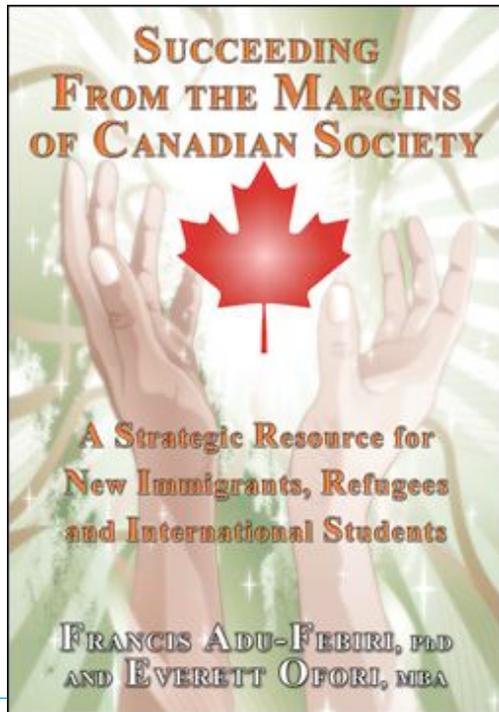
During my English lesson, Mr. Everett has often remarked, “That’s life.”

After I heard these words, I began to feel at ease and more easily accept anything that happened in my life. I respect Mr. Everett.

In conclusion, there are many opinions in the world but I think marriage is a wonderful thing. I am going to continue to live with my wife peacefully and happily in Tsukuba.

If possible, I want to go abroad this year in celebration of our tenth wedding anniversary.

## Succeeding from the Margins of Canadian Society



### About the Authors

Dr. Adu-Febiri is currently Sociology Professor in the Department of Social Sciences at Camosun College, British Columbia, Canada. Francis is also an Associate Member of the Faculty of Graduate Studies at the University of Victoria. He is the author of *First Nations Students Talk Back: Voices of a Learning People*. Dr. Adu-Febiri is the founder and president of Workplace Diversity Consulting Services (WDCS), and serves as the Chair of the Ethnocultural Advisory Committee of the Ministry of Children and Family Development, Victoria, British Columbia. He has been the president of the Canadian Chapter of the International Institute for Human Factor Development (IIHFD) since 2000.

Everett Ofori is the author of *Prepare for Greatness: How to Make Your Success Inevitable* and *The Changing Japanese Woman: From Yamatonadeshiko to Yamatonadegucci*.

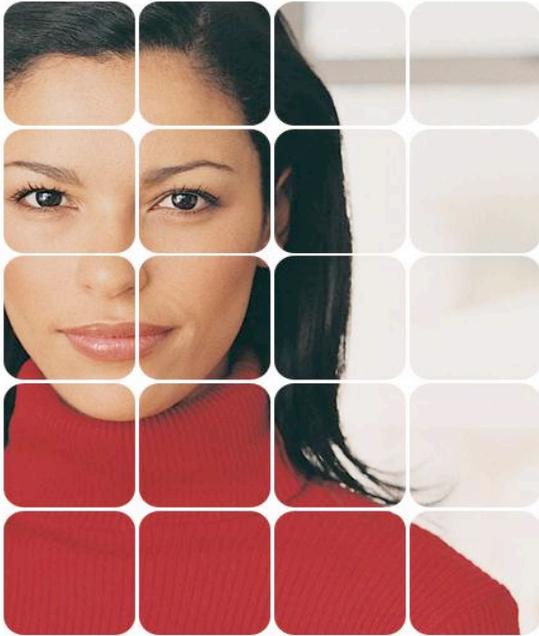
It is possible to overcome barriers to minority success in Canada. The stance of this book is that new immigrants, refugees and international students do not have to settle for underachievement despite the cultural and structural disadvantages they face in Canada. The fact is, the unequal social structure of Canada has some cracks, and many minorities have used strategic resources to open up these cracks and achieved tremendous upward social mobility in Canadian society from the margins. These documented minority successes in Canada in the face of systemic marginalization provide lessons and hope for new immigrants, refugees and international students.

The economic, political, social and cultural problems that minorities encounter in Canadian institutions, organizations, communities and from individuals overwhelm and break many of them. However, some minorities break records in the face of the frustrations they encounter. What accounts for the success of the latter group of immigrants, refugees and international students in Canada? Individual efforts and personal ambitions are not enough to explain these success stories. This book highlights strategies and support systems that facilitate minority strategic connections with Canadian mainstream institutions, organizations and individuals to win from the margins of society.

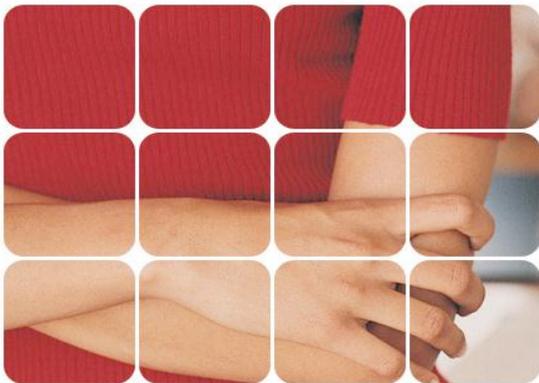
Although the book does not get into the theories of inequality, equity and diversity, it does acknowledge the structural and cultural barriers to minority success in Canada. That is, it does not blame individual minorities for not making it in Canada. Rather, it points to strategic resources that new immigrants, refugees and international students can use to help them overcome some of the barriers to success in Canada.

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## Writing Showcase



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## Writing Showcase



Mutsumi Matsugu, Japanese Instructor  
(Tokyo, Japan)

### Fireworks

When summer comes, I look forward to fireworks. There are many fireworks festivals in our country. Summer is so hot in Japan, but I can forget the heat when I see the beauty of fireworks.

There are some fireworks on Independence Days or at festivals in other countries.

I can see fireworks these days in Japan much like those in foreign countries. But, in Japan, there is another reason for fireworks besides celebration; this other purpose of fireworks is to grieve for the dead.

The Sumida-River Fireworks Festival, which is held in Asakusa, Tokyo, began in the Edo-period. Tokugawa-Shogun began this fireworks festival to mourn the dead from a mighty famine.

Also there are many fireworks in the *Bon* season, which falls in August.

*Bon* is an event to mourn and remember one's ancestors. When we attend a fireworks display, we might enjoy the gorgeous fireworks. But after finishing the fireworks, we cannot help but think about the meaning of the fireworks, which is to memorialize the ancestors. The fireworks will end up giving us a renewed and refreshed spirit.

Regrettably, many fireworks festivals were cancelled this summer because of the Great East Japan Earthquake. Also many fireworks festivals need sponsors, and the aftermath of the quake was a time of self-restraint.

It was such big loss that many people died in this earthquake. We have to recover from this misfortune. To encourage one another, we should have had the fireworks festivals as usual even if in reduced form. They need not have been extravagant, but having them would have signaled a sense of continuity.

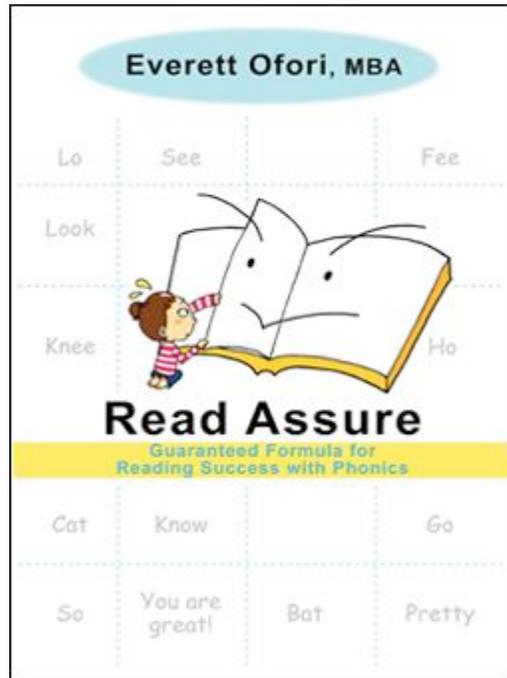
Fireworks give us encouragement and vigor and allow us to be silent if even for a moment. It would be good to hold a memorial service for the dead in this big earthquake with this year's fireworks.

I plan to go to the fireworks festival in Tokyo this weekend. I am looking forward to seeing it. But I will feel that this year's fireworks have a special meaning -- in the importance of recovery for our country.

## Writing Showcase

### Read Assure: Guaranteed Formula for Reading Success with Phonics

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*Read Assure* takes advantage of the best asset all children have in abundance: tremendous brain power hungry for challenges. Children as young as four have successfully mastered reading English through phonics using *Read Assure*. The ability to read raises children's confidence and leads to a love of reading and the desire to devour ever more challenging material.

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#### **About the Author**

Everett Ofori, MBA is a Canadian instructor with more than 20 years of experience as a teacher of English as a Second Language. Currently residing in Japan, Everett has had the privilege of teaching the whole spectrum of learners, from children as young as four to seasoned business executives. The writing of *Read Assure* arose out of the simple observation that many of the methods by which children are taught to speak English miss the point, especially when these children do not have the benefit of regular daily interaction with native speakers. The results obtained from the use of this book have been nothing short of spectacular and it is hoped that parents and teachers who are determined to bequeath the gift of English mastery to young learners will find in this book just what they need

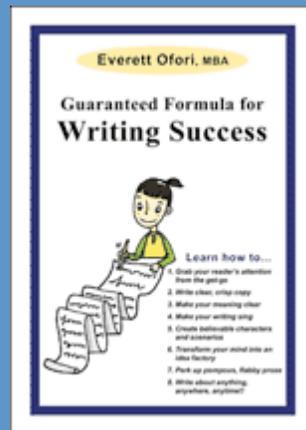
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## Writing Showcase



Tomohiro Yoshida,  
Pharmaceutical Researcher  
(Tsukuba City, Japan)

### Tips for Making One's Dreams Come True

What is an important thing to make our dreams come true, do you think? I think that one of the most important things is not just to dream but to analyze one's dream, to identify the key first step that will take you on to success. The bigger our dream is, the more we realize the difficulty of making it a reality, and finally, we abandon it. However, if we can recognize the gap between the dream and the current situation, and find a road map to the distant goal, all we have to do is to take that first step, and move towards our goal, step by little step.

Ichiro Suzuki, one of the greatest baseball players in history, wrote an essay expressing his strong will when he was twelve years old. "My dream is to be a top-class professional baseball player. To achieve this, I must progress to the national baseball tournament at both junior high school and high school, and perform actively there. To achieve these, I need to practice playing baseball a lot. I have been practicing since I was three years old, and I have continued hard training for about 360 out of 365 days a year since I was nine years old. Because I practice very hard, I believe, without doubt, that I will be a professional baseball player," the essay says.

It indicates that his ability to embody his dream has been quite high since he was a child. In fact, it is certainly true that Ichiro also has enough talent for baseball to succeed as a superb player. However, I think that he still continues to make an effort to achieve his current goals.

I would like to talk about my dream. One of my dreams is to communicate freely with foreign people in English. However, to be honest, I had thought that, not having studied abroad before, it would be difficult to improve my English ability up to the high level I wanted. My feeling of resignation changed as I continued to take Everett's English lessons. He always encouraged us to continue studying English, through his lessons and in his pieces in *Writing Showcase*. Now, I think that I have been able to recognize what to do to achieve my goal thanks to his advice.

Unfortunately, now, it is difficult for me to take his lessons like I used to. However, I would like to continue to make an effort to achieve my goal even without his direct support.

**Arimoto Kenji, Manager**  
*International Business Consulting Firm*  
(Tokyo, Japan)

## Explaining the Japanese Team's Win in the World Cup

The Japanese national women's football team won the final match of the FIFA World Cup on July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2011. Japanese people have been really excited by this historic win and been proud of their national team. Before the game, almost all of the sports commentators said that the U.S. team had advantages in every aspect such as height, physical toughness, speed and technique. However, the result was, as I mentioned above, and people who take an interest in the game have been trying to explain what led the Japanese team to the win. In those discussions, you can find a variety of analyses and opinions.

Some people have been trying to relate the win to the disaster that hit northern Japan on March 11<sup>th</sup>. According to this view, as Japanese people have suffered in the aftermath of the earthquake and the nuclear power plant accidents, each member of the team had cultivated her willingness to win the prize in order to give people a ray of hope. This strong will enhanced the team's sense of unity and solidarity and finally led them to the prize. Spike Lee, movie director, tweeted that, "when you face a team that is playing not just to win a game but for a CAUSE it's almost impossible to win. There is too much spirit, will, heart and determination to overcome. Today it was the same with Japan's Women's Team."



He summed up all the ambiguous pieces into a simple saying and that struck me in a big way.

Norio Sasaki, head coach of the Japanese national women's football team, said, "I think we definitely got help from our football god." This expression is quite common in Japan because Japanese people tend to be too modest to say, "We won through our own abilities and talents." At the same time, saying, "We won just by luck," sometimes seems to be far too modest and may seem insufficiently appreciative of the efforts of the team members. So, we bring up, "with the help of God."

U.S. goalkeeper Hope Solo said the same thing in a different and commendable way. She said, "I think there was something bigger pulling for Japan. They are the team of the tournament, and if there's any team that you're going to lose to, I'd put my hat off to them." She didn't directly use the word "God," however, she thought the Japanese team had some mysterious powers behind them in the game.

It is interesting that people have been trying to look for the reason for the Japanese team's win. That means this result is something that requires an explanation.

# Writing Showcase

This newsletter offers an opportunity for English learners around the world to share their thoughts and experiences and get some writing practice in the process. In many areas of life, most people would readily agree that quality is more important than quantity. This is no less true when it comes to writing. To get to the point where you can produce quality writing on a consistent basis, however, you may have to get into the habit of writing regularly knowing that much of what you produce might win no prizes for excellence. As you keep on writing and thinking, however, who knows what hidden gems might emerge?

## Writing Showcase Publication Schedule



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| Issue 2 | March 15         | February 28, 2011   |
| Issue 3 | May 15           | April 30, 2011      |
| Issue 4 | July 15          | June 30, 2011       |
| Issue 5 | September 15     | August 30, 2011     |
| Issue 6 | November 15      | October 30, 2011    |

\* Please note that the maximum number of words = 300.

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### 英語によるライティングコース

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あなたのライティング力が、すぐに飛躍的に向上します！