

If I still want to breathe

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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by

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Abstract

One theme of this collection is the joy and the deep seated grief of my community of Kwa-Nobuhle; the brightness of hope on the faces on children running around our streets, the strides made by their mothers, the confusion of factory workers who are lost in darkness since the dawn of new dispensation. Then there are more personal poems: my own joys as well as the difficulties that have kept me from sleep and strangled my dreams as a writer, even though like Mafika Gwala, I believe that “words are born the way mothers beget children/words are born to survive time”. My style is influenced by imagistic, mystic and soulful poetry, such as the haunting Spanish voice of Garcia Lorca who wrote “I lose myself in the heart of certain children” and the absorbing isiXhosa voice of S E K Mqhayi. In response to their poetry my offering will be words that enliven us; my style will be what I see in the mirror, through the window, the sound of rain on my zinc roof and what frightens me.

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Beyond the cries

i've learnt to love what I see
it has been like this
since I first saw the sun

i have to sleep at night
especially on weekends
beyond the cries
and inyakanyaka music
from my neighbours
who sometimes rejoice at nothing

sometimes i have to let go
of things i should have stood against

i don't want to be forgotten by history
only to be remembered
by the streets of kwa-nobuhle

in the dark and shining hours
if i still want to breathe
let me love this moment
and myself in it.

Year after year

a loud blast of screams

laughter

hugs and kisses

hands shaking

children running around

barefoot

hooray! hooray!

happy new year!

people pouring out into the streets

announcing a “new hope”

a nearby tavern playing *sankomota*

the music full of passion

young men and girls entering in full swing

with wine glasses on their hands

to shake off the numbness

of the earth and the sky

from their flesh.

Primus stove

Even today
each time i enter the kitchen
of my grandmother
i am struck by the smell of paraffin
that still floats through those walls

Even today
each time i see the primus stove in the window
of dajees shop at durban street
i am fixed to its glare
as if it's saying something

Even today
each time i see old man *cirha*
on his rusty wheelchair
i am still taken by the gift of his hands
that once repaired our primus stove
then we had supper
and we licked our plates.

Still waiting

on
a pavement
in this township

i watched you
scratching
your chiskop

i heard the sound
of your teeth
turning to sand

we were young then
longed for the sun
to light the future

now
i hear you are working
as a petrol attendant
in king williams town

still waiting
for your life to
begin.

Thabo

stutters when he speaks
and asks for two rands
on a regular basis
for cigarettes

a neighbour found him
naked drunk
on top of his grandmother

he cried and
said he'd been bewitched.

Behind him

Sunday morning after 10 am
he closed a rusty gate
wearing a black and white suit
with a bible in his left hand
a zol in his mouth
and a chest full of pain
from generations
and his grandson running behind him.

All they know

after Han-Shan

When men see *uQhingqa*
they run away
they say he is possessed
by amafufunyana
that's all they know
since his star floods the sky

Always dressed in rags
with acrid smell of human flesh
dragging black plastic bags
through the streets wandering

No one understands
what he always mumbles
all he says to those he meet:
"kuyatsha kuyatsha, cima"

Mountain Of Sins

to the township of eRhini

Sometimes
it begins to rain
when your guests land

The city becomes theirs
the stages pulpits
the instruments
and props

Souls waiting
to be fed
shaking the dust
laughing and crying

Celebrating humanity
at the settlers monument
clapping hands
without
Joza

Tantyi
you sit under the dark shade
of intaba yezono
sinking to the bottom
of Settlers Monument
in a parade of those
who have conquered you.

KwaNobuhle overcast

I walk alone
in your bare streets without trees
snail pace drowning
adapt to every season
change my mood if it's overcast
like a chameleon on a branch

KwaNobuhle just for once
keep those who can make you
a place to raise children
not this sulphurous cage
where we watch dreams suffocate

Everything is dying here
you were once the colourful stars
until the floodgates opened
the Somalis took
all the shops in your streets
and the Chinese squashed
your children into a corner
now it's they who
put the bread and salt
in your kitchen

You are no longer the same
you are like one who is afraid of the sea
to deny himself the fish
to feed his children

KwaNobuhle I wake up
to live like a limping bird
and smile at the four walls
of an RDP house.

||

Blue collar

days and weeks
in tight
safety shoes

the same scream
from the bell
on top of us

perturbs
our ten minutes
of tea time

on a factory floor
dreams expire

no comfort in routine
life is defined
by 8 hours

of clocking
in and out
of here.

She waits

she paces up and down at the factory gate
sweating like a fighting bull
with one broken-heel shoe in her hand

she is waiting
to rip out the heart of the father
of the child trapped on her back
crying helplessly

he clocks out in a rush
in his blue overall
carrying a lunchbox
and a daily-sun paper in one hand

“buti he’s your child also
what do you think he will eat?”
the man forces a cold smile
trying to calm the beast
he digs into his wallet
and takes out mandela notes
without an utterance
looking deep
into her accusing eyes

she grabs them
stashes them in her breast
leaves him frozen
his head spinning

he stands there
listening to the footsteps
of other workers
rushing to their own miseries.

Buyile

he was not one of them
he was that breed that was touched
by the humbleness of sobukwe
so they came for him
ama-comrade necklaced him
in broad daylight
while children were watching

next saturday
ama-afrika buried him
when the sun stood still

when they filled the grave
with the last scoop of the soil
anger evaporated
the police were there at a distance
watching with a smile
when the open palms were raised

later ama-comrade came again
to dig him out from his grave
in the presence of the police
and they burnt him in his coffin
screaming "mayibuye i-afrika!"

I saw all this

after apartheid

In daylight

bitterly cold

you came running

to force a woman

with a child on her back

out of her house

In daylight

everything trembled

you came in full force

with red-ants

to tear shacks apart

suddenly it rained.

Letter from prison

Behind these four pages
I see your bearded face
in a letter I found
in a hanging letterbox
with the red stamp
of correctional services

I could see the guards
in their deep brown uniforms
keys swinging on their waists
shouting your name
at visiting hour

I hear the noise
of the gates opening
the guard leading you
to the visiting room
after searching you
from head to toe
and the doors closing
behind you.

Screams at the carwash

I

you drank
a bottle of commando brandy
only the two of you
while washing cars, staggering
drunk, humming a gospel song
and calling women passing by
witches and whores

later you complained of a violent stomach
before you fell on your face
into the mud and lay quietly
they called you
your tongue hanging out
vomiting blood
you died that saturday
your body tired of the torture

II

numbers have dropped here
this carwash is not the same without you
the rain won't stop
is it you crying
or the gods
on seeing your bruises

rasta, your absence has left a hole
your shoes are too big to fit
others refuse your death
hoping to see you the next day
only to find
your orange bucket of water empty

III

i still have your image hiding
i have not forgotten how you looked
your dirty sagging trousers
a rotten smell from your nike takkies

my eyes used to follow you
when cleaning my car
i never trusted you
sometimes i would be unkind to you

we are the children of this township
that throws us onto its violent streets
it comes between us
a monster

some find themselves
digging into concrete to plant a tree
some sleep flat on their stomachs
on a deserted path.

On a hospital bed

mkhuluwa

we held up
the somali shopkeeper

with okapis
in daylight
with children inside

i look him dead
in the eyes

we want money
wena

with a pleading voice he said
why my friend?

i gave him one hole
in the chest

who's your friend
kwerekwere

i got mad
he fell
i rushed to the till

now i find myself here
in chains

not even a single visit
from my friends.

No time for amagwijo

president

i have no time for a song
for dolo phezulu
for viva chief yam
wathint'abafazi wathint' imbokodo

i have no time for toyi-toyi
i have come to give you a message
from the streets blocked with burning tyres
from the empty jojo tanks in the villages
from the children whose schools are locked for months

i have come to force you to look at my face
in tears running towards dry river

i have come to show you
rage, bitterness
hopelessness and disillusion
from stone-throwing at passing cars
i have not come here to count the stars
and make sketches in the sand
babies are dying at dora nginza hospital

i have no time for a song
you can put your fist down
keep it for your comrades and tenderpreneurs
for when you are composing
amagwijo songs for the masses
from the comfort of your palace

president

i cannot take back a song with me
at least give me something
that will make the sun to smile again
i doubt there is anyone who wants an uprising
if you are able to sleep at night, i'm not.

A life in pieces

Under the bridge
 Zinc house stare
 At the dump hive,
 Man cage by a need
 Of bread
 Cat sitting at the stove,
 Yelling at his shadow
 Anger pushes through his chest,
 On a Sunday morning
 He grab an empty
 Paint tin
 Belt around his neck
 Kick the tin
 Choke, eyes wide open
 Swinging, grabbing
 Breath jumps out
 Dirty life ended
 No one spoke of him.

Cutting the wind

a man swaying sideways
like a trailer
staggering cutting the wind
as if ducking his own shadow

there is something in his sculptured face
a man stuck
in a dry season
where trees have no leaves

pain is everywhere
it spring out spreading all over
from head to toe
forcing grown man to swim in a bottle.

Man cannot live like this

It was dark when he woke up
found himself all alone soaked in urine
appetite and all his senses lost
afraid of the dark
like a man who once saw
what was not meant to be seen

In the morning
sun glowing
he went out into the streets
to find the woman
at the taxi rank
selling vegetables
wearing a rainbow face
and a forgiving heart

It started to rain,
scent of wet soil
fresh like love
they both cried
birds flew away to their nest
with wet feathers.

Tired song

grey clouds hang close
to your face
with a heavy heart

you have become
the wind that comes
with a cold breeze

you are not the first one
nor the last one
to find this place suffocating

does it matter anymore
whether
the night finds you alone.



If I could tell

If I could tell you
About my life in fragments
Dig what I have forgotten
From under the earth
It would console an angry sea

I hope it won't leave a stain
Of a dying heart in you
A curse to a dancing sun

My best poem is
my life
And tears.

Typewriter 1997

you were covered with dust and spiders web
when i bought you

i used to spill out my heart on you, my lamentations
my fingers transferred my voice to you

your click click sound
hid my tears in your letters

you were my piano
a river that flowed to the sea.

Solitude

nina simone

I wish I knew
How to be free
beyond the smiles
grinding of teeth
the loud silence
that could halt
a moving train

children lost
absorbed by the world
into a trance of wanting things

I wish I knew
How to be free
mother kneeling down
in her room
pressing her hands
to her chest
in a prayer

carried by the wind
not the noise of the taxi passing
in the early morning sun

I wish I knew
How to be free

cries rise, scrape the wind
across the day
linger to a stale dusk.

Horn screaming

to Zim Ngqawana

i feel your horn screaming

vadzimu

vadzimu

where noise is silenced

screams trapped

with a note

from a bleeding heart

crowded with faces

ingoma yakho

i feel it in the air

combining restless souls

in *zimphonic suites*

“mayenzeke intando yakho”

a voice moans like a futile wind

leaving a soul lying on dust

one among many

zim-zim

this way i'm with you

the tears which hide

the gathering of clouds

zimology

in cold silence

your spirit crowds me

your *san songs*

are the light coming through

to a sad-eyed blackman

today, i begin to live

have a brief solace.

Who's there

at least i have my children
with me
calling their mother "mother"
i've been married for
some time
but where is my mother

there is a knock at the door.

From her breast

Until now

I have collected
Punctured dreams
From the empty skies
Of my mother
Who was a kitchen girl
To some misses

I have collected
Vanishing horizons
At evening dusk
For my mother
Who is a maid
At the Cape of Good Hope
Until now.

Dying moon

The moon
starts to crack
we listen to its call
The howl
keeps rising
in darkness

We look through the window
dog at the gate
owl on the pole
staring at the warning crescent moon
warning us with eyes
that see through human bones

It's a bad omen for us
when we hear
its familiar cry
a sorrow song
we stay indoors
and call the children inside
tikoloshe will come
into our house

The moon disappears.

Say it again

let me say it again
i have realised
i'm forgetting how to live
my lips are dry
from not talking to others
recently, i'm annoyed by the sun

let me say it again
the township throws the baggage of its street
on my shoulders to carry
so that others may find their balance
jesus left long a time ago
he said he would return
to take us away
until this day i'm still counting the stars

so let me say it again
these streets refuse to sleep
always have gory stories
to tell in the morning
i drag the sky to weep with me
since i'm afraid
of carrying the basket of tears alone
to hide my pains under the wind.

In the midst of all this

after Fernando Pessoa

I have indigestion of the soul
I drift into vague sleep
In the empty air that surrounds us

I am a widowed house
I find things because
I wander

In the windows moans resistance
I see all this with the eyes of a god
I understand without knowledge

I return
To what I am
Or what I dream I am

I see the empty threshing-floor
Immediately lose sight
I remain unmoved

I'm sad
But I'm not definite
I am split between

In the abandoned regions of the streets
I hear time falling
Drop by drop

I've made a hollow
I can abandon myself to life
In a dark room dreaming.

Trust a stone

people say
rather trust a stone
than a human
a stone will not
break your heart
a stone will not complain
after a long day of work

i wish my poems
could be like stones
if thrown into the green sea
they will stay there
until the next generation
dive to the deep
to look for them.

Countless songs

Loneliness eats me up
As my poems tower
Above the silence
Growing big,
Created for ancestors
But sculptured
For my fellow men
As they walk
On burning sand

Loneliness swells in me
Spills in my desert
As I collect
My scattered dreams
In this township
That never sleeps
With songs in worship
From tent churches of Nigerians
With blasts of house music
In taverns
With seductive dances
From young girls.

Finding love

to my wife dieketso

i found love in a storm
in my country
in kwazakhele
in streets that smell violence
where terror rules

i lifted my arms
to catch a shooting star
my eyes are satisfied

i found myself laughing at death
and holding someone
who comforted me
without any regrets.

In the morning

today i understand
why some men
jump from the van stardens bridge
or hang themselves from the ceiling

silently i know
i could not stand emptiness
without you
i could not survive a day
without the hiss from the kettle
as you make coffee for me

our confrontations and arguments
i take them as flashes of lightning
and in the morning
the sky turns blue

since i married you
i have discovered
that tears can mean many things.

On this day

today
the morning sea is grey from a distance
 splashing pieces of sadness
tearing dense clouds into tears
 in the afternoon
 and i found myself without you
 in the evening
i won't let them take you away
from me.

I love you

after eight hours in a dense mist
of planting my flesh
in someone's garden

i want nothing except you
whatever they take
you renew it with a smile
your voice lasts longer
than their insults and instructions

i love the happiness you induce
in me and in my days
i love your forgiving eyes
that always look at the bright side
lifting your head
under the armpit of the wind
breathing on my neck.

Written in silence

i do not have a title yet
it will only be four lines
i will read them on your funeral

*under the rotten star
only the sky is eternal
and the black earth that feed us
rest now if god has not forgotten you*

i hope i won't break
i will grieve not for too long

do the same for me
if i kiss the dust first.

In a silent way

I look for God
in the broken windows
of my neighbour
covered in cardboard
and pieces of cloth

In the eyes of a child
walking long distance
to a falling down school

I look for God
in the pleading cry
of Lenasia residents
whose houses have been bulldozed

In the sleepless nights
of widows whose husbands
fell at the koppie in Marikana

I look for God
in the church of pretend-sermons
where Priests feed
their horny desires
on altar boys

In the Quranic verses
where young girls are abducted
in the name of Allah

In a silent way
i look for God.

Time and words

to mxolisi nyezwa

each moment I read
 from pages of your book
 still I'm haunted
 by a pulsing voice
that makes all pains unnecessary

each moment
 someone quotes your words
 i am moved by the aura
 that they can still breathe
in this fresh poisonous atmosphere.

Morning star dance

after federico garcia lorca

in silence

you dance
barefooted

wordless
in melodies
like warbling birds

dancing

moving in motions
of an upright bass

morning star hover above
our dark pit

dancing

to empty
mystic yearnings
and begin once more
to live.

Umhlaba Umanzi

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I N T S H A Y E L E L O

Ndixomolozze ndiboph' amaxonya, ndisenza eli linge lokuzama ukuxhathalaza kulo msinga uzakutshayela ulwimi lwethu. Nantso ke incwadana ndiyithe qhiwu ngendebe endiyithiye ngegama elithi *Umhlaba Umanzi*.

Umhlaba umanzi ziinyembezi zabalilayo, umanzi kukubila kwabasebenzi besombha eludakeni, ufumile ziinkathazo zeminyaka zesizukulwana sesizukulwana.

Injongo endifuna ukuyifezekisa ngeli nqaku yeyokuba umntu achole ntwana ithile ngokujonga imeko esiphila kuzo gabalala, ekuhlaleni, emakhayeni ethu nakwii ndawo esixelenga kuzo. Mhlawumbi kuyakuvuseleleka iingcinga neenkumbulo zamhla-mnene, okanye ibophe nezilonda ezimanzi.

Ukwanda kwaliwa ngumthakathi. . . Nangomso.

ISIQULATHO

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INYIBIBA

Ntyatyambo emibalabala
ebiza iliso likude
enomtsalane kumabhabhathane

Ukuba lilanga elikwenza nje
ukumbhatsha
ndilizonda kasixhenxe,
ukuba ngumoya oxhwithe
lo magqabi aluhlaza
okwenkuku enomkhuhlane
ndiwuhesha okomshologu.

Ndinga ngendikubone
usakhongozela amanzi,
amagqabi akho evuleke
okweempiko zepikoko
ijonge esibhakabhakeni,
imibala yakho ikukuvela
komnyama emveni kwemvula,
ubuhle bakho buliphandla iliso
umninilo onwabe akukubona.

EDONGWENI

ingaba ndim na lo?
ingaba nguwe na lo?
sijinga edongweni

ndoyame kuwe egxeni
utsho ngobuso obunoncumo
amehlo ethu ethembakele
exel' ikhwezi lokusa,

sisengabantwana sifaniswa neengelosi
sidlala ibhola lide litshon' ilanga
sihlal' esitalatweni sidl' imbadu
sityebis' amehlo kwintombi ezidlulayo

ndakuphos' amehlo kulo mfanekiso
ndasuka ndathi thwanga
ndangathi ndiphululw' intliziyo.

NJENGOMNTWANA

Mandibe nje ngomntwana omncinane
Yena usathambileyo okomthi omanzi
Ugotywa agobeke
Uqoqwa aqoqeke
Onentliziyo engekonakali leli lizwe.

Yena unesifuba esingekaluphefumli' uthuli
Unothando olunwenwezel' okomlilo wethafa
Uxolela de alibale
Uhleka de alile
Kwawakhe amehlo akukho nto inobunzima.

Yena akanazintshaba eluntwini
Uzithandela ukudlala engahoyanga mntu
Etsiba-tsiba
Erhonorhono
Enqwenela konke okuphezulu komhlaba.

Mandibe nje ngomntwana omncinane
Yena ungagxeki anyembe imizamo yabanye
Unezenzo ezinyulu
Unoncumo olunzulu
Uthambisa nentliziyo ebukhedama.

INGOMA YAMAZIYONI

hozana! hozana!

hozana! hozana!

yatsho ingoma yamakholwa
ikhatshwa ligubu lenz' amagam-gam
ligquma okolwandle ludlala
likhatshelwa ngumoya

wavakal' ushixi-shixi wenyawo emhlabeni
kuqhwytywa izandla zikhwez' imifula nengoma
x' inyuka nomoya isitsho "hozana – hozana"
wadanduluka umprofiti "yihla moya"

hozana! hozana!

hozana! hozana!

yenyuk' ingoma ahlahlamba amazinki
azindonga kwindlu yokusithela
wang' umhlaba uyanyikima
kwiimbombo zone

yakhula ngokukhula ingoma
iphumela kwiintunja nezikroba
yade yachukumisa nentliziyo
okwethontsi kumhlaba owomileyo.

INGAFIKI SILELE

Indlala liveliti

Ineenkani okwe nkomo yehlathi

Ifunza phambili ingajiki

Ineempondo nje iyahlaba

Ayiva kunqandwa

Yinzwinini eyenza isithukuthezi sosizi

Mayiqosheliswe kusakhanya

Amathunzi entaba enabile

Ingafiki silele ngecala

Sizamla sizonwaya imizimba

Hleze isongamele

Kuphele nesidima eluntwini.

KWEDINI UTHINI

Kwedinana!

Tata! Tata!

Usabela uphi?

Apha *da*.

Phi na kwedini?

Hee! Utata.

Nyhe! Ntoni?

Hayi kengoku.

Utsho kum xa usitsho?

Hay' ke mandithule.

Thula njandini!

Ngubani lo usebeza naye?

Phi ngoku tata?

Uphi wena?

Apha.

Ke ngoku ubuzantoni?

Ndihleli ndodwa.

Kanti ngubani lo uhlekayo?

Akakho *da*.

O! Akakho kodwa uyahleka.

Ubani tata ngoku?

Ukhe wakroba emphandeni?

Umna *da*?

Yho! Unembudane namhlanje kwedini.

Siyafana (*etsholo phantsi*).

Hii! Uthini Kwedinana?

Andithethi *da*.

Khawuv' apha.

Yho! Mama!

da – tata

UNYAKA OMTSHA

Halala! Halala! Ufikile unyaka omtsha
Zayiyizela intombi imizimba iphandle
Batsho njalo abafana bedyusha
Beqhumisa inkaw'za
Wakhala u*Zahara* "Impilo inzima"
Abantwana bengena bephuma
Kumzi ngamnye becela *ihepi*
Oonina beshwantshwatha
Ikukwamthetho zenzele

Nyak'omtsha

Siyavakal' isingqi sakho useza
Usisantanta, wonke umntu ujonge kuwe
Uthwele amaphupha namathemba abunayo
Ungumongo ethanjeni elingenanyama

Thina

Samkela oko sikwabelwa nguwe
Abanye benyukela ngengalo
Bekhangela izixhobo zokudiliz' iintaba.

QHAGQIWA

Ubuhle bakho
Yimizobo yamafu
Ukukhanya kwakho
Kukuqaqamba kwenyanga
Kubusuku obumnyama

Ngenxa yokulunga
Kumhla konakala
Bazimbacu abantwana bakho
Kunamhla isizukulwana
Asikwazi
Sikhumbula u-Tinarha
Wena ulelabadala.

EZONTABA

letsheng la maditlhare

Unyawo alunampumlo
hamba uyakubona izinto
ndizibone ngala wam omabini
iintaba zaseMatatiele
apho kombhathwa i-Sianamarena
xa iqabaka nengqele zombhathise ezo ndulikazi

Kulapho zizondla khona iigusha neenkomo
alale kamnandi apholelwe ngamalanga umalusi wazo
ezo ziintaba ezilangazelelwa nangamehlo
efumana lo nyhweba yokubuka obo buhle bunyulushe
kulapho iintaka zitsholoza khona
ngokungathi zithatha umyalelo kuQamata ngesihomo

Ezontaba zindikhweba ndikude
iliso lam liyanamathela kuzo
kuvele iintlantsi zovuyo
nam ndilangazelela ukuzulazula apho kuzo
ndikhe ndibeke lo mcondo wam kulo ncopho
ndibukabuke okwebhabhathane libhabha

Zintaba zegugu kubantu bazo zibugolide
baneqhayiya ngazo abeSuthu
kuba bazibandakanya noMoshoeshoe
wozibona xa livela ilanga
ingathi ziyalikhahlela zithi kulo “Morena”,
linyange elimileyo kwiinto zonke.

Letsheng la maditlhare – Umthombo wamayeza
Sianamarena – *Ingubo eyombhathwa ngabeSuthu*
Morena - *Nkosi*

AKUKHO KONWABA

izolo

lidlule neento zalo

del' ingubo

evuka mva ikholwa zizagweba

kusile

makuyiwe mawethu, kutya ebilayo

sebenza

umsobomvu uphumile.

ILIZWI

kwakhiwa ngalo umntu
aqoqwe okomthi olulutho
eluntwini
kubukwe obo buhle

liyamakha umntu
oneendlebe zokumamela
alatyise okwenkomo

liyalomeleza usapho
mhla konakala
zakubamanzi iinkophe
kodwa ke liduduma lidlule.

UKUKHULULEKA KWENGQONDO

sisibane sengqondo esinegqange
lesithatha
liqula lokuhlamb' iingqondo
zobudenge
ngumthombo ongapheli manzi
awutshi nangamalanga asehlotyeni

noxha kule mihla ikwalityala
ikwayindlela esinga ekutyhalelweni
emgxobhozweni
ichankatha kumzila kaloliwe

ungagqunyelelwa emathunjeni
omhlaba
ungaveli nangunwele
licinywe nya igama lakho.

ISIFUBA SIZELE

konke endikubonileyo
nendikuva mihla le
kwakha iintaba ngaphakathi kum
endizaziyo nezabanye abantu
abayimitha yelanga
kwiimini zam

konke oko kundivala umoya
ndiwubamba apha naphaya
isifuba sizele zinkathazo

ukuba ubukhona
ngendiphungulela kuwe
ndothule umthwalo emagxeni
phambi kokuba lisithele ithemba
bendakuphakela kuba zivuthiwe imbiza
akulunganga umntu adle yedwa.

UNONJANA

Wayesisidalwa endandisithanda ngokonwabisa
Inja encinane esisiqingatha
Emhlophe ngebala enemilenze emnyama
Esoloko iphakathi kwabantwana
Eleqaleqa ibhola ekhonkotha
Ulwimi luphandle lusihla izincwe
Eman' ukupitshozisa umsila
Ebonisa ukonwaba
Akhonkothe ngokuzimisela emele kude
Akubona ezinye izinja angaziqhelanga
Awubhenq' umsila ecaphukile
Undwendwe uyalijojajoja
Athi elapha abe ephaya esisinxadanxada

Ngaminazana ithile wavela weqikili
Wayoba kwabe kukuphela kwakhe
Walala eludakeni abantwana bebukele.

IHILIHILI

Ndifunana nawe kule lokitshi
Kwiirhontyi zayo namanxiwa ayo
Akubonakali nangetshengele
Kanti ungumntu onjani na wena
Akunasihlahla ulala apho uhlelwe khona

Sixakwe kukulala awufiki
Awuphosi nomnxeba utsho ukuba uphi
Nonomyayi wakho ukhala esinqeni
Kanti uphi selatshona nelanga
Usishiya emaxhaleni

Uphaphatheka unyuka usehla
Okweqegu labanamabhongo
Ulumke, liyakungcolisa iTinarha
Ulibuze kwabalaziyo bayakuxelela
Ulumke liyakuphang' impilo nentlalo

Zizakugalel' iziphango nemibane
Izakuvuthuz' imimoya
Ngath' ilizwe liyatshabalala
Nesantya sakho sehle
Ingaba uyakusithela ngabani?

MAZ' UMNTU

Manditsho ndivume
Amaxesha ngamanye
Kodwa ilanga lisakhanya
Ubusuku busemnyama
Kwinto zonke ezijikajikayo
Ubume bendalo
Ngumzobo kaQamata

Mandishiye noba ngumnqongo
Kuni sapho olusafunisayo
Lo mthombo sophila isizwe
Sisela kuwo

Izinto ziyakutsho zilunge
Ubuntu bubuyela ebantwini
Okweenkomo zisiya ebuhlanti
Zibuyela ekhaya kumninizo

Nto zakwa-Ntu mazin' umntu
Mthandeni
Mxabiseni
Okokubetha kwentliziyo.

KHUMBUL' EKHAYA

kuma-tshipha

Wena ume kude nekhaya
Uyolelwe zizinongo ezizweni
Ulibele apho inkaba yakho ilele khona
Vuk' emaqandeni kusakhanya

Khumbul' ekhaya usenamandla
Ungekabi ngumngqungu kangqikana
Amehlo akho engekabi norhatyazo
Ungekabi ngumlwelwe ozenzelayo

Sondela ekhayeni abantu besekhona
Kroba abantwana besakwazi
Xolisa ezongwevu zisaphila
Vela izinja zisalazi ivumba lakho

Goduka ingeka krokri intliziyo
Goduka iimini zingekakongameli
Goduka indalo yonke isenobubele kuwe
Goduka igama lakho
Likukuvela kwelanga lehlobo.

UNONTOMBI

Yayintombi enesidima
Ezixabisileyo enomfaneleko
Eligqabi eliluhlaza ngamanzi
Ezilungisa unwele nozipho
Ethi yakudlula ebantwini
Ivumba lakhe lishiya
Impepho emnandi

Abafana benza uqash' qashi
Ngaye ezimbuthweni zabo
Bathi bakumbona barhwaqele
Kuthi cwaka banyathelane
Kungekho unesibindi
Sokuzityanda igila
Usana olungakhaliyo
Lufela embelekweni

Zadlula zaliqela inyanga
Engabonakali nandawo
UNontombi ibhongo lelokishi
Ingulowo nalowo ezibuza
“Watshona phi na uNontombi”
Wavela ebeleke usana olubomvu
Lulila emqolo engaluhoyanga
Ecofacofa nonomyayi wakhe.

UMVA EKUDE

uMadonkini igeza elasoloko lihlekile
Amazinyo emhlophe okwefutha labakhwetha
Amadolo egevezela okosana olufunda ukuhamba
Ngumntu onengoma
Oqhwaba nezandla xa enemincili
Ngesingqi samagqirha

Umva ekude ngengxolo xa esiza
Babaleke abantwana
Ukuya emakhayeni abo bekhala
Besoyika uMadonkini besithi sisigebenga
Bazimelise iintsana zabo oomama
Benoncumo

Wombona ecaleni kwendlela
Ethwele imigodlo okwegoduka
Erhuqa ingxowa
Echolachola amaphepha
Okomsebenzi kamasipala
Ehla enyuka izitalato zase-Tinarha
Eman' ukuzonwaya
Kodwa engahluphi mntu

Kukho minazana ithile
Eyakhwanqisa uluntu
Mhla uMadonkini wathi nya
Cwaka akabonakala nangethunzi
Bashiyeka abantu bebuzana
Latshona ilanga abantwana bebhekabheka
Mhla labonakala ixabiso lakhe.

KUBO BONKE

koomama baselokishini

Oomagriza

Oomama

limbokodo zaselokishini

Eziqinisekisa ukuba abantwana bayafunda

Balala betyile banezihlangu zesikolo neencwadi

Kubo bonke

Oomagogo ematyotyombeni

Abavuka bathandaze

Abathengisa amadlaka-dlaka ema-*taxi ranks*

Gquzu! Behleka nengahlekisiyo

Kubo bonke

OoMartha ooGladys

Abaphangela emakhitshini

Behliswa benyuswa ngabantwana bama Bhulu

Begxotha ikati eziko

Kuwe mama ka-Biko

Mama ka-Terra eZwideinja yezulu

Nina nikhulisa amagorha

Azalise ilokishi

Nikhule ningakhokhobi maQhawekazi

Nibone abantwana nesizukulwana senu

Baphumelele baye kwii-Yunivesiti

Baphume nase-ziintolongweni

Ukuze nilale obentlombe.

AMANDLA AKHO MSEBENZI

Amandla akho msebenzi
yinzuzo kwabaphosa imali
engxoweni evuzayo
bonwabile benoyolo
yingeniso oyenzayo
mihla nezolo

Imali ziindonga
phakathi kwabo nawe
wena uyimbongolo
abangafuni nakuva isikhalo sayo
esibenzela isithukuthezi
bona behleka begigitheka

Amandla akho msebenzi
yinzuzo nakubantwana babo
nesizukulwana esingekaliboni ilanga
noxa esakho sisajonge enkalweni
loomhla kogwetywa indlala
kuntuloze nemicelu ekhayeni lakho

lintliziyo zabo zilukhuni
okwelitye legolide engacolwanga
isizathu ikukunyoluka kuzele inkohlakalo
kusombiwa ngomntu umhlaba
libebomvu igada ligazi lakho.

KWAHLWA KWASA

Kwahla namhla
Lajika lasinikela
Umva ilanga lasekhaya
Lichul' ukunyathela
Liyokuphumla phesheya
Kwentab' ezikude
Libeleka koonina bejingxela

Kwasa ekuseni
Xa kumpondo zankomo
Kwenyuk' amaxhala
Kwabaxelenga kwimizi-mveliso
ngobuninzi
Ikhala lokutsala idyokhwe
Kuxhozulw imikhala
Kushiyeke ithambo

Kukhanywa ukubila
Kwebunzi lenu emilonyeni
Yezinye izidalwa
Kushiye imiqala
Yeentsana zenu
Yome nko

Kwasa kwahla
Ulilel' emazinyweni
Ingoma engenasingqi
Isingqi ikukubetha kwentliziyo
Ithemba ikukukhanya kwenkwenkwezi
Kwisibhakabhaka esimnyama
Sobusuku obude.

ILANGA

lavela linoncumo
lingumbono omhle londlekile

lakujika libuyela kowalo
yakruneka intliziyo inyikinyiki
ingqondo ithath' ibek' amahlande-nyuka

yayincwina ekrakra ibiza abamelwane
kwaduduma zaqoshela imisila izinja
zisenza nomkhulungwane

acima amehlo cwaka bajongana abantu
yazizijwili yayingoma ithwele ukufa
okungade kuqheleke nakwabadala

kombiwa yangumthandazo omde
oyaleza kuMdali
abasele ngemva

kwagqunyelelwa kwahlanjwa izandla
latshon' ilanga emini.

UMHLABA UMANZI

Ufumile umhlaba kukubila
Kwabathengisa ngamandla abo
Ukuze zintshule izityalo
Kube nokuvunwa
Kugcwaliswe oovimba
Kukhale ikomityi ekhishini
Ukuze abantwana badle

Umlaba umanzi
Ziinyembezi zezolo
Zenze imijelo yenkxwaleko
Kru . . . kru . . . kru
Nengxolo yamazinyo
Exhathisile umntu
Ehlakula eludakeni.

MAKHANDA

Mhla nezolo
Sisalinde ezoziprofetesho zakho
Nto yaseMacwerheni
Kanti ziya kuzaliseka
Nini na?
Bawabona amandla
Entelezi yakho
Bade bakuweza ulwandle
Baziphosa enzulwini
Izitshixo zaseSiqhithini
Besoyika lo mandla akho
Kunamhla sisatsho
“Silinde ukubuya kuka-Nxele”
Igqirha lethu.

1857

Laphum' ilanga
Njenga mihla
Yonk' egqithileyo
Abeth' amavalo
Kwabadala
Kwazola kwaXhosa
Kulindwe lo mini
Ibikade ixelwa

Yaba yimini
Yenkxwaleko
Sombhathwa
Yindlala isizwe
Isizukulwana sashiyeka
Sisola lo nyaka
Nesigidimi
Eseza nentombi
Ka-Mhlakaza
Kulo mfula weKhamanga.

LEMINI

yeshumi elinesithandathu kweyeThupha

*Ngalomhla ungasentla lwavakala kabuhlungu udaba lokubulawa
kwabasebenzi basemgodini ngamapolisa ngonyaka ka-2012
eMarikana – eLonmin.*

Lwafika udaba lusithi kugqityiwe
Ngale mini ingenanceba, umhlab' ubomvu
Namhlanje izibane zicimil' eMgodini

Oma amathe emlonyeni kobukeleyo
Zamhlophe inyheke
Zabucandeka okwelitye lasentlango

Angqukruleka engqukrulekile amadoda
Bathuthuzelana oonina neentombi
Kunge khomntu unokubopha lo manxeba

Sinzulu isilonda silisikizi
Zasik' iintliziyo izikhalo zabantwana
Lema nelanga atshonela amafu

Batsho abasebenzi becula ngesingqi esinye
Batsho ngesandi okwesibhakabhaka sizongoma
“Sisebenza emgodini thina sisebenzela amahala
Sisebenza emgodini thina sisebenzela isheleni
Kanti iphi le mali esiyombayo”

Iinyembezi zesizwe zomane ukusulwa
Ngale mini minyaka le
Mhla awa amadoda ebuza
“senzeni na?”

INTSHOLO

Ingoma engeso sithukuthezi
Esazulwini sobume bomntu
Apho usuka khona
Utsho kondleke okungaphakathi

Iphakamisa uthuthu
Lomhlaba owomileyo
Ithi yakungena ngaphakathi
Ifumane indawo yokuhlala
Ithunuke nezilonda
Ezaba kuphola

Le ntsholo
Ikrazula iintliziyo kubini
Sisililo sofelweyo
Sikhumbule ookhokho bethu
Nezihlobo ezanyamalalayo
Phakathi kwezitalato zeedolophu.

KUMHLABA WAKWANDANCAMA

Sikushiye kuQamata ulele kuqaqaqa
Nenyongo ayikagqabuki
Azikadluli neentsuku ezisixhenxe
limpethu zomhlaba azikakuhambeli

Indawo yakho iyabonakala
Ushiye isikroba esingavalekiyo
Nezinja zikhonkotha zingayeki
Zifunisa ngevumba lakho

Thina sakudibana emaphupheni
Undiph' amava obomi
Kuba umkil' ezweni
Ukumhlaba wakwandancama.

PHAMBI KWESIPILI

Phambi kwakho ndingumzobo
Ndiyimitha yelanga ibetha emanzini
Ndisisiqu sinye sohluke kubini
Ndingumntu endinguye
Unwele nozipho
Bona ubuntu bam
Bungenakubonakala kuwe
Bungaphakathi kum
Bona kukubetha kwentliziyo
Yomntu endinguye
Nendzuzo endiyiyo eluntwini
Wena waneza iliso lodwa.

LOO MINI

Ndathi ndakukubona ndabethwa luvalo
Intliziyo yangamaza olwandle ukuzamazama
Woma nko umqala kungaphumi nelizwi
Ndabalekisa amehlo okwesela
Lixhwila impahla yabantu ecingweni

Wathi wakundijonga ngalo mehlo akho
Alubhelu okwentakazana
Kwaxuxuzela isisu izibilini zatsho njalo
Umzimba wahlasimla uzele ziintlantsi

Awu! Kade zisenzeka izinto apha kum
Le ndiyayizibula
Into yokuthabatheka ngumntu olu hlobo
Ixol' intliziyo, uzole umphefumlo.

SIPHOLILE ISILONDA

Intliziyo ithe zava elonwabeni
Kupholile namaфу amhlophe qhwa
Okwekhephu lulele kwiintaba
Zase-Matatiele kwelabe-Suthu
Umphefumlo uhleli emthunzini
lingcinga ziteketisa ingqondo
Ziyikhaphela ngengoma emyoli

Ndaziva ndidlamkile
Ndonwabele ukuna kwemvula
Emveni kwembalela
Kwavuseleleka nezityalo

Emini emaqanda lihlab' umhlaba
Ndehla isitalato ndibeth' umlozi
Bathi manga ababona lo mincili ichichizayo
Ndithe qhiwu ngesandla intliziyo yam.

SUKA KUM

Sukundityhalela emngxunyeni
ndinike umtyhi ndiphefumle

Sukwayama kum encamini yentaba
ndehle ndikuve usithi gxii

Sukususa umbele kum emlonyeni
ndiyeke neemigungqu nemizamo

Sukundixhwitha okwamagqabi omthi
ndiyeke ndizikhulele okokhula

Sukundinyola emehlweni
ndolathise ngob' umhlab'udliwa yinimba

NDOMBHATHISE

ndize

andombhethanga uzwane nonwele
ndibetha ngogaga
igazi lelikaxam ukubanda

ndize

iimpundu zoth' ilanga
isifuba sigang' umoya
ndilicham lamaqhwa neqabaka

ndize

ndiyachabasa ukuhamba
ndihlatywa ngameva
izinja zishiyana ngotyefezo emva kwam

ndize

ndiyathetha abantu abandihoyi
abantwana bolathisana ngam behleka
iimoto ziyapopoza, abantu bavele ngefesitile

ndothuswe sisithonga, iindudumo zigqakraza ndayokuwa
ngomqolo ndantlitheka, ndavuka ndombathiswe ngengubo
kumi wena phezu kwam.

INGOMSO LELAM

Amas' abekwe elangeni
Ndihtlaselwa ziintolo zenyama nomphefumlo
Akukho konwaba
Zindibhenqela itshoba izihlobo
Amazwi aphele emqaleni
Ndomiwa nalukhozo lo mngqusho
Bath' ubumnyama kwandisa
Ukukhanya okuzayo
Kodwa ingomso iselelam

Lishush' idabi
Nangona kunjalo ndisaxhathise
Ngayo yomibini
Ndisusa amahlahla ngezandla
Ukuze kuvulek' umtyhi
Iyabhudl' imimoya yenza isankxwe
Ndithe chu ngethemba
Ubomi ngumzamo
lingxaki zidlula nezolo
Ingomso lelam.

NDITHWELWE LITHEMBA

Ungomso iselusuku
Endilijonge ngamehl' abomvu
Ndithwelwe lithemba
Kwiimeko ezingqongwe
Ngamawa alele umbethe

Ungomso iselusuku
Ndikhangela isitya ebumnyameni
Wehlisa amaxhala kumahlwempu
Kuvela ilanga
Kuzalwa amaphupha

Ungomso libhaso kongalindanga
Ukujikeleza komhlaba
Ungomso ngamagqabi omthi ayizolo.

ISITHUNZI SAM

Ngumhlobo endingenakumlinganisa nakanye
Akasuki ecaleni kwam
Nokuba inkala ixing' etyeni
Uthe ngca apha kum kungangeni namoya
Phakathi kwethu

Wafika nelanga mhla lavela kum
Wombhathiswa kwibhayi
Endandombhathiswe ngalo
Ndingekawisi umtya
Oqhagamshela umhlaba nam

Ngamhla uthile ndicaphukile
Sendikhe ndazama ukumgxotha
Ndisithi kudala ethule engathethi
Uyandilandela qha akaphosi nezwi
Ndakuma naye uyema ngxi

Ndingene emigxobhozweni yeli lizwe
Ndingene kwiingxingwa ezimbi
Yena uhla nam endithe phuhlu
Akhale ndakukhala, ahleke ndakuhleka
Ndakungena ezingubeni

uthi shwaka.

UKUBA IBINGABA KOKWAM UKUTHANDA

ndingantingela emajukujukwini, emafini
nditshile phezulu neentaka ngolonwabo

ndizophose emazantsi enzulwini yolwandle
ndidade neentlanzi kulo manzi acwengileyo

ndingene emathunjeni alo mhlaba utyebileyo
ndibuke lovimba wondla amazwekazi

ndizule kwihlathi elimxinwa neenkomo
ndiphefumle ubumnandi bempepho ephilisayo

ndiphumze le ntloko ingqukuva luxanduva
ndihlazi' umoya wam, hleze ndinganoxolo.