

Part A: Thesis

**Poems Caught In Dreams**

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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by

**Nthabiseng R. JahRose Jafta**

**20J1944**

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## **Draft Thesis Abstract**

### **Title: Poems Caught In Dreams**

My thesis is a collection of Lyrical and Prose Poetry

I am strongly influenced by Marina Tsvetaeva's observation that "The condition of creation is a condition of dreaming." As a writer I want to contribute to human knowledge by drawing from a wide literary ancestry, participating in a community of distinct voices and styles to capture and preserve the language of dreams. I fuse inherited knowledge, visions, dreams, my own experiences and what I have discovered through listening to music, reading and my own experiments in exploring poetry in dreams, thoughts and lived experiences. I am inspired by Sindiwe Magona, how she chose to express her spirituality and personal narratives into her work, and Aimé Césaire's vision "The ground of poetic knowledge, [is] an astonishing mobilization of all human and cosmic forces."

I particularly enjoy intense forms of expression that hold substance and provoke one to elevate in knowledge and in writing. Exploring these combination of forces from these writers affords me an opportunity to write my dreams as reality. Exploring the characters, the different scenes, symbols and colours as poems flashing super/naturally yet leave one with fathomable felt, though sometimes hazy interpretations.

# My Tribe

Song: “O tswa kae? Ha Mantilatilane  
Wa jang? Bohobe  
Wa futswela kang? Ka metsi a pula  
Thella hee re utlwe”

## 1. Chaba

Ramasedi chabela lesedi sechabeng sa rantsho  
Chabana se tsohang le letsatsi  
Chabana sa mobu  
Chabana se phahamang ka nqane ho lefifi.

Chaba sechaba sa Ramasedi  
Chaba ngwana ngwedi le letsatsi  
Chaba tloholo sa mobu  
Mahlasedi a hao a o dumella  
Lesedi ho tswa ntshwanatsatsi kwana.  
Kganya e aparetseng hlohonolo la hao ke e fahlang.

Ha o tlo sitiswa le ho tshoswa ke ba sa e boneng  
Kapa bona bana ba lefifi  
Bonesa lampi katleho eo sale morao  
Mollo mofuthu wa tsela  
E tswe ya hao tema ke bophelo le ponelopele.

Phela. Chaba. Kganya.

## Rise

There's a tribe named after the Sun  
Star-light babies  
Shining in dark events  
Clothed with soil finest of love

Africa brought all her light  
For this nation to wake up  
Like the sun to itself  
With all the light powers infused

The God of the Sun  
Ushered rays of blessings  
To each one who lit another's soul  
Right where the sun was born

The rays were aligned  
With the glow of the moon  
For the soil-child to advance  
Light up your lamp, prosperity awaits

Children of a dark world  
With their blocked vision  
Throw rocks countering your radiance

Do not fear them

Your soul's flames are activated  
To warm up lonely journeys  
Yours is to sprinkle sparkly life-seeds

Soft-headed to perceive tomorrow

Live. Rise. Luminare.

### Sechaba means nation

**In my quest to dismantle words: sechaba means a nation rising with the sun**

- Ra – Masedi: God of light – also Kemetic
- Lehlohonolo means blessings

**Although Le-hloho-nolo may be literally translated as soft headed, it means the one with the ability, gift or faculty to perceive events and situations. Often sees into people or the future, a dreamer and the sensitive one.**

## 2. Brown days

Hello soil child your father's  
Herds are in the kraal  
We will learn from you

Apparels of the brown ones  
Thethana the original Tutu skirt  
Tightly holding the waist  
Breasts like mountains pointing with pride

Mother-wildflower  
Called mmae-Shweshwe  
With her shweshwe fabrics  
Her colours sewn on her Queens's cloth  
Crowned with Seanamarena  
Bohadi's celebratory blanket

Aunt chants Bafokeng ba ha Makgetha  
Granny joins with her grandchildren, Bakwena  
Passing gratitude to the ancestry before us  
Praising the God of yesterdays  
Inspiring the days when  
Respect was soul food  
Love brewed in the hearts of men  
Botho in abundance of the stars

Hello soil child your father's  
Herds are in the kraal  
We will learn from you  
You became a true cultural shepherd  
Mother of the brown ones  
Mmabasootho

### 3. It's in our names

A child bearing gifts as I trot the earth  
To unknot life's mysteries  
Every branch in the family tree has a name.

Ke theoha kgulong la Matselane le Mpho  
I am a native to Mother of Journeys  
and Father of Gifts.

I suckled on a mammoth of Inheritance  
Named – Lefa      Father to a Builder – Agang  
I left the same milk for Gratitude – Kelebohile.

A delighted Rainbow Child  
Bringing forth Words – Lentsoe my Sun  
In Union with –Bonngoe a Sister to Change – Phethoho.

The chapter is now wrapped by Revelations  
of Wealth – Tshenolo ya Lehumo  
The lineage paused here.

Bitso lebe ke seromo  
We live to follow our names  
Mine is Nthabiseng – Rejoice with me.

#### **4. Lesedi**

I am from a tribe of the sunrise  
Mpumalanga ululates my mornings  
My sun is set in gratitude

The rabbit in the moon  
Sees the twinkle in my eyes  
After all, stars recognize each other

You cannot cover my glory  
With your shadow and if you do  
Know it's only for a season

Midday salvation songs release me  
The only time the sun allows me  
To stand on top of my own silhouette

In tracing frozen candle tears  
That brought forth eternal soul flames  
Lesedi laka mponesetse tsela  
Our tears are that of pleasure

# Flashing Memories

The branches that fell unseen

## 5. Rakgadi

(Calling my father from Rakgadi's house)

Rakgadi's house was not for kids  
Braso' cleaned golden ornaments  
Shiny Cobra lavender-smelling floors  
Polished mirrors and black shoes  
Do not touch her glitter table or diamond spoons  
You knock and greet – she gives you money  
And immediately kisses you goodbye.

We, the nieces and nephews,  
Noticed her stone heart  
The freezing cold felt in her kitchen  
The strange smell of a morgue  
Leaving hair feeling creepy.

All her departed children,  
Husband and siblings are in her closet  
My dad is in there too  
A dark, locked soul storeroom  
Do they come out at night to clean?

Twenty-five years later – not resting in peace  
He must be exhausted  
Lost in the wilderness of ancestry  
Rakgadi you have to release my father  
His resting place yells his name, Mpho  
What type of a cry will reach your mercy?

I wish your eerie closet wiggles  
All those souls like horses  
Must run to their final homes  
It's time you clean your house yourself  
I want these souls to slap you hard  
So you may repent and open your curtains  
That dark room deserves the sunlight.

Enough! Open that closet  
Its skeletons are already out  
Tombstones tilted  
Plastic flowers dull and dusty  
Its over        Rakgadi  
Let go.

## 6. My cousin and me

Red-and-black tricycle  
Next to the berry tree shade  
Thorny but could not stop the fun

My cousin's first visit in the city  
I dodged first grade to play  
Pink and purple kitchen set toys

Playing tea sipping games  
Barbie hairless loose head  
Combed every string out

My aunt's mobile perm salon  
My own hair's stubborn diaries  
Step-one smell dealt with me rather than my curls

No playing with soil permitted  
Our shiny hair must remain sparkly  
Glycerine dripping shine in the sun

Cousin could knit clothes for her dolls  
My brown scotch not-so-old dress  
Became a whole wardrobe for mine

Trousers and skirts with the same fabric  
Head wraps with matching brown bags  
I trusted my fashion tales of a tailor

## 7. Family visit

Mom's joy was seen in her cheeks  
Her younger sister's visit brought happiness  
All night chats in the dark

Being born in the city  
Has its perks  
My school only a few streets away

But I hear Tat Mkhulu's homestead  
Was a jam too, his kraal fed the whole family  
Thaba Nchu *Stasie* was his inheritance

I don't recall much except his Bushman stories  
Xha xhan xhi xhin xho xho  
He says that's how fast they were, even in speech

They could smell tobacco from afar  
In Kimberly, whilst in Bloem  
We giggled until sleep snuck in – I miss him  
Pity my cousins don't visit as often

## 8. Village in the city

One matchstick left  
Light the candle  
Then primus stove

Burnt pap  
Fried spicy onion relish  
Black tea, reused teabags  
Tummy full

Tin fire  
House warm  
It's story time  
At times songs composed  
Comical madness sang

'Satane o shwele  
*(The devil died)*  
Dihele di kwetswe  
*(Hell's doors shut)*  
Re ne re le teng –ko tebellong  
*(We were at the night vigil)*  
Ra ja dibeko –dibeko ka tee  
*(We ate fat cakes and tea)*  
Ra ba bina – 'ujola no bani usathani'  
*(We sang- 'who dares to date Satan')*

They built the village in the city  
Well Dad died  
Granddad too

Music retained the warmth  
Mahlathini and the Mahotella queens  
Sometimes Bob Marley and The Wailers  
Books and vinyls kept us sane

## 9. Mama comes home

As the clouds set to mingle  
The hair on my arms fly  
A blanket seeking to cover my cold self

Sitting on the stairs with my brother  
The streets are clearing  
The white doves are also rushing home

We can see the main road from our corner house  
We are counting each car passing by  
Every taxi that stops is a chase  
To meet Mama half way

From the drizzle  
Mama comes out  
Carrying Pick n Pay plastics  
Her presence creates warmth  
Mint tea and flapjacks ritual  
Lebo Sekhobela's Mangeloi song playing softly  
Mama is a cure to all our madness

## 10. My grandmother left

She left  
Three daughters  
A husband  
Her sisters  
Her mother  
Behind

My grandmother left  
She packed up  
Disappeared

Was my grandfather that bad?  
They say he was a man who lived  
For the streets and loved its noise

Did she find happiness  
Or baskets of adventure or love  
Did she have other children?

They say she ended up as a domestic worker  
In a white home raising someone else's kids

How did she block her soul?  
Made no attempt to reconnect  
Left her daughters without conversation

My grandfather was silent throughout  
How can such silence cure?

She came home to pass over  
Carrying weariness and a bag

### 10.1 Erased

Grandmothers are sweet, strict and gentle. I wouldn't know that warmth – mine chose not to know us. Her pain shattered her world. We too were erased from her palms, no move made to meet us. Does she know us as an ancestor?

## 10.2 Trillion questions

I imagine the purple pin she used to scratch her dandruff  
The money knotted in her handkerchief  
Sweets planted in her breasts  
Did she also put snuff  
Under her tongue and talk with a blocked nose?  
Was she a classy old lady with properly trimmed suits  
Rocking hat fascinators?  
Did she imitate her boss when gone?  
Did she sip exotic teas from their overseas trips?  
Or indulge in expensive cocktails from the main house?  
Did she and other domestic workers dangle  
Their feet in the swimming pool like in the movies?  
When she heard on the news about a girl child missing  
A girl brutally raped and murdered  
Did she yearn to be alone?  
Did her appendix curl or her intestines cramp?

How do you miss someone you have never met?  
I caught a drop from the roof  
Wiped my tears with rainwater  
I miss my grandmother.

## **Dreams Caught**

Discerning thoughts from messages is always tricky but the feeling hints the direction.  
Confirmed by the ones relived throughout the day.

## **11. Collecting memory**

This week was filled with dreams haunting. Call me a dreamcatcher. Even my departed grandfather visited. As I opened the kitchen door, he showed me his hands, dirty and greasy black hands. He asked for water instead I focused on his blackened nails and I left him to go pick up the nail-clipper. Upon my return he was gone. Regret clothed my mind. I questioned my abilities to listen. Why didn't I offer him water? Besides, I was happy for the encounter yet worried about him.

## 12. Dreamcatcher

*(For the girl child who gets beaten for waking up with dreams)*

She dreamt of the dead  
Told yet nobody listened  
She saw her mother lying in a coffin  
With strange men around her

Gazing from a distance  
She caught a glimpse  
Of her mother's relaxed hair pushed back  
It looked freshly done,  
Soft with golden highlights

A big belly man stood besides her mother  
Opened her jaw, like an elastic it re-closed

As he continued to press her chest  
Robotically  
She sat up and laid down again

### 13. Whisperer

She lives in her head  
Absorbed in her world  
One morning jogging  
From dropping her son from school  
A photo shoot with meerkats Imagined  
Talking and directing their poses

Minutes later  
Two meerkats crossed the road  
One followed her  
Walk away she said  
It stood up and looked away  
When she stopped  
It also stopped  
When she started walking  
It joined in  
Until she reached her doorstep

The moon ring surrounds her  
At night Impalas sit on her doorway  
Even though she dreams of lions  
Flocking around her street  
Bulls giving birth on the hill next to her house  
At times dogs chasing and sometimes tickling her  
There's always a huge encounter with love  
And a deep sense of security

## 14. I have been here

A mansion built on a cloud,  
a roof with lightening handcuffs,

Its ability to imprison rain  
drowning those who do not believe.

A cave filled with bones in the corner,  
with strawberry sundown dimming on us.

A storm like machetes,  
nearing closer and closer,

To slaughter soul's throat,  
of the weary and the poor.

Lungs strangled,  
longing for a gasp,

A break – a chance,  
for how long must we wait?

Rain drizzles like blood drops,  
falls down on your skin,

Poke the holes of your pores further,  
keep your mind steady.

Your faith is not meant to tremble,  
the daymare is far from finished.

Control your head cloud,  
gear up your heart drive,

All residing in memory,  
I have been here.

Only the rooted ones stand,  
Otherwise no escape in the rainbow colours.

It's a slow death – you suffocate,  
and exit only by waiting long enough.

The nightmare never ceases,  
Just as the prayer never stops.

## 15. Un-wink

I am waiting to meet a stranger,  
A destiny helper clothed in visions,  
My eye-twitch confirmed  
In a six seconds premonition

I am told he holds gifting's  
Spectacles connecting time,  
You wear them wide-awake,  
For your clairvoyance initiation

Fears ironed from snot-filled thoughts,  
There is silence in the eardrum,  
The power under your feet  
Continues knocking the floor,

Un-blink with the beat as you link the dance,  
Hold what you see whilst in trance,  
Blink twice, you are safe,  
You may un-wink

Your muses are with you.

## **16. Not a troubled child**

Her power-gifts viewed as demonic  
She was sent to deliverance sessions  
With pastors laying their hands on her  
If not beaten at home

Churches are not erected for her kind  
Deemed a troubled child  
Her escape was mapped in her expressions  
Found in her visionary artistic prowess

## **17. Let her rest**

When dreams are not caught, they vanish .Don't wake her up when she is resting, for she could be in faraway lands exploring various exotic Chinese dishes, though she doesn't love eating while sleeping for she chokes on chicken breasts every time she tries to swallow. One recurring dream leaving her out of breath from sleep paralysis. When she finally awakes, give her space to recollect her dreams, sum her thoughts before morning conversations begin.

## 18. Tale of a mirror

I saw the sky on the floor  
blooming tree reflected  
pieces  
blood spot brought in colour  
Yester-afternoon a mirror broke  
pushed the frame  
It tells its own version

with a  
I saw myself in  
grand joy and petite pain  
middle finger impaled by a splinter  
August's strong winds  
A broken mirror lies  
of my unheard tales

## 19. Seeds

Discard toxic seeds  
Pain wrapped  
In seasons unfathomable

Overgrown scars restore sanity  
Survival lessons harvested

Linked to love's redemption  
Your tree of joy  
Prunes those you love

Besides you bloom differently  
When planting on healed lands

## 20. Tree's curse

Standing here tall and fat  
Mute and numb  
In shock as you unzip your trousers  
Pull out a tiny mamba to piss on me

Every minute beyond Autumn  
A dozen of my leaves fall  
And it's normalized.

A dreaded dwarf came  
Lowered his pants  
Sat on my roots and pooped

While a fine looking hunk  
Hanged his pregnant women to death  
Right on my branch

This August I am blooming  
Your piss and my irrigated tears will be tasted  
On every bite of my fruits

While you chop me  
Better guarantee I do not germinate

Do not stutter  
Your attempt knocks on every door  
Will slam your stupid dreams down  
The chair you sit on will give you piles  
The money in your purse will return to me  
Your roof will crush in snowing winter

The woods will call your brain  
To wooden paranoia  
The wood-fire will smoke your eyes red  
That desk will chip your elbows out  
Bleed you fuck  
I want you to slide on those wooden floors  
Hit your head hard and die  
I am setting you ablaze you prick  
Your air will be corrupted  
Your lungs polluted  
I am keeping all my shade to myself.  
Burn  
Your closet will become your casket

This tree is coming for you  
All of you

## 21. Peach tree

Ask,                my peaches are free  
I will give it to you, juicy and sweet

My inner stem cracks and bleeds  
Each time my leaves fall off during fall  
The nakedness is not even amusing  
You don't even make an effort to dress me  
Yet I am your hiding place during summer  
Oh how I envy the evergreens

I have learned to endure all seasons  
The soil holds me  
My cousin Sunlight adopts me  
My brother Nature presents Air  
And Waters of Life

You were supposed to trim me  
And I would blossom and gift you with fruits  
But no! You'd rather steal from me  
Why not chop me down instead?

# Poverty Strings Pull Hard

With hunger, lust and greed.

## 22. One night is enough

Pay a little extra attention  
Look up, five stars take you to Orion dreams  
Galactic modern white bathtub  
White wooden vanity sets the psyche right  
Clean mirror and Tivoli black taps  
The well-finished mosaic in the shower  
Soft white luxurious towels  
The rosemary smelling hair conditioner  
Soothes you into tranquillity  
White Egyptian cotton sheets  
Massage sex tensions out of the glass door

The discounted booking  
Arrivals to a rented room  
With cigarette trapped smoke  
Stale carpet welcomes her nose  
Put down the bag  
Phone reception  
Request detergent  
A broom, a brush, a mop  
White sheets, white towels  
W H I T E everything

Mattress on the wall  
The sweeping clean freak  
A guest brushing hotel walls  
Mopping floors on her knees  
Traces of previous fucks  
So much sex hovering  
In the aura of the room

### **23. Compromising sin**

Poverty has an elastic string  
that has a tendency to defy gravity.  
The more you move through life's maze, the more  
it pulls you back to its knees.  
How do you navigate your survival  
against the very string  
that aims  
to wrestle you  
back?

## 24. No hospitals

Anxiety of the roof  
No one must get sick  
Pandemic  
    diagnosis  
        fear

The death angel nearing  
His claim rates high

Steamed prayer between mint vapour  
Rosemary, ginger and lemon remedies

Backaches like childbirth  
breathless I can't speak

My head hurts and  
The bed hates my back

Antibiotics vs thrush  
I am going in...

### 24.1 Vigil

Pillow hallucinations  
    Dreams illusions  
        Mental illness; Doctor says  
Spiritual fitness is compulsory

    All night candle light  
        Fasting tears  
Soaked in milk and wild salts  
I am here for the deliverance

## 25. Brown envelope

    Numb corruption  
It has been normalized for too long  
    Can't wait for its abortion  
    Crucify all its dreams  
    It's a heavy cross  
    The economy cannot cope  
    Besides the taps are dehydrated  
It's not just our spirits in poverty  
    There's taxes too  
    We are burning

    Burn the brown envelope  
    The money's in rubbish bags  
    My soul is not for exchange  
Besides this war was never about looting  
    But to bring down  
    Jericho's stagnant walls  
    Pity we fall with them  
    May its demise bring life

# Facing Death

Will we ever accept and embrace it?

## 26. Death smells

A fly at night brought in a strange memory; a search led to a multiple of them lingering on her grandfather's room curtain. Months back, before he faded away. Short conversations in between his medication, they had amputated his right toe. He could no longer walk without his stick. Someone who had made anything and everything for himself was now dependent on others, this paralyzed his heart. She knew death smells because she felt it. She saw the light covered in darkness in his room. No wonder it is a taboo in Mexico to see the eclipse.

### 26.1. Let him go

Mamane pleaded with us to let him go, we thought how insensitive of her but the reality was my grandfather was probably hearing the language of waves sailing him through the river Jordan more than our prayer for additional life and more days.

She longed to see, feel, smell the same death of the father of her child before it happened. But it was the son who felt his father hours before his passing. A phone call revealed the ordeal that left her numb. She still cannot pen it. The depth of her silence...

## 27. Headlines

My mother in poetry died  
No announcement on the news

Perhaps if she was a protest poet  
Reciting poems against apartheid  
The headlines would be buzzing.

Myesha Jenkins was a protest poet  
Her deep erotic voice  
Soaked out the blood  
from her blood-bond poems

Nonetheless she is everywhere  
In the bulletins of my heart

Her passing evoked hidden feelings  
From the open graves death claimed  
I barely cried but last night I slept in floods.

## **28. Saddest season**

There's an owl crying in my city  
Kindly close those open graves

Today  
Bob Mabena's microphone is unplugged

Yesterday  
Sipho Mnyakeni's piano was packed

Songs of countless others mute  
Their dances are no more

Our timelines are filled with sorrow  
What a saddest season we are in

## 29. She

She caught her tears with laughter  
With a million questions  
Written on her forehead  
Who will connect the dots?  
When they leave without fixing  
No apology  
No answers  
No closure.

### **30. Suffering will collapse**

Jesus, Muhammad, Buddha and Krishna  
Their hearts combined weigh less than a feather  
That's how righteousness thrives

The devil will die with his wrath of anger  
His prison of suffering will collapse

We shall be seen through this rough season  
Mental hell will shut down

# **Catching The Wind**

When we engulf people's hearts with our love or is it forced relationships?

### 31. Nothing holds

You            with your bulldozer face  
dominating all over the place

We            with our lowered  
lashes sweeping floors  
Our chins bent to  
necklaces

We            with our timid posture  
Carrying the vulnerability  
of an egg  
Without us the pastry flops  
the fried balls do not hold

Our heads    not your playground  
Careful now

We strike unseen

## 32. Grey petals

It is lockdown; the corner in her bedroom calls her name, with a clear instruction to sit down. She abides to the cold tiled floors, one hand covering her mouth from screaming her lungs out.

Frozen breath.

Soft cotton

Well-suited red dress

With grey petals,

Fruit-smelling scent with lemongrass essential oils roaming the room. She is pondering on the past Friday's plans and how they were ready to bloom, tasks engraved on journals and schedules planted in diaries.

A wave made U-turn ushering still waters, fear of stagnancy back in place. Halt. You are silent.

A lover whose tongue is shut, one would think this would be a bonding time between them.

Twenty-one conversations drawn, crystal moments enough to treasure

Yet you are choosing self-isolation, not only physical distancing but blocked cyber connections too.

Look business shut

Flights grounded

Corruption erupted

Economy collapsing

Not you too?

A quarantine mate and a validator but YOU! You are skating far away.

She struggles to choir conduct your silence

Her flabby arms are not built

To weigh your mute words

The burden so cryptic, knotting her shoulders tense

You are famishing her veins

Hot ice melting her taste buds

Say something or at least

Unmask your nose

Smell her sweat from trying

You are dripping between her fingers

She cannot mould your reasoning into anything

You neither here nor there

She is close to choking you out

Before you bankrupt her sanity

She'll sing 'it is not you but me'

For you are overpowering her lungs,

Don't you see?

Your deeds have always been bound with some virus,

A venom crystallizing her breath.

She cannot crack your code

Enough!

Mr Irreplaceable.

### 33. Ms Options

Look there is a captain sailing towards her shores  
She will self-appoint to be his deputy  
Remember that farmer next to your plot  
Perhaps she will grant him time to farm her land  
Open her rose for him  
The captain or the farmer  
Sail on waters or work the land?

### 34. She is a little pearl

She has it together  
Long legs that walk any ramp  
What she misses is the ring  
Fierce as the tiger-eye worn on her ears  
Her ground bleeds from digging for your heart

Cave sunset lowers her pace  
Clock legs pulsate slowly  
Slow enough to notice  
Feather patterns on a sparrow  
The locust on her veranda  
How weariness lands on them  
They too are in need of a break.

Can clear quarts be this hard to find?

### **35. Explicit fantasies**

Lost in your arms  
Found in your heart  
Heartbeat synchrony  
Foreheads locked  
Lip dance in melody  
Found in my pulsating clit  
And your vibrato comes

### **36. Egg yolk medium**

I cannot stand the smell of eggs  
Boiled, fried or scrambled  
The nausea pellets bubble my chest  
Borrow me some air before I throw up.

I grew to appreciate my ovaries  
The very eggs gifting life, assumed a chance  
From ovulation – prompted tickly nipples  
To oxytocin – released during breastfeeding.

He fed me nutritional warm stews of eggplants  
Heated the eggs in my oven-soil  
Our babies are yet to discover winter cruises  
Nostalgic cabin dinners with the captain's main chef

All eggshells crushed, yolk glued canvass  
Mixed medium finished with acrylics  
A new creation hanged on my wall  
Life began, rooted in delight and bliss.

### 37. No Iron in my hand

I don't do ironing; I may take iron tablets now and then to avoid electric shocks and sparks that fly upon touching a steel surface. I may even clean my brother's golf irons once in a while but that's where it ends. Passion and love can be tainted with loath and hate in no time. Ironing is an invention gone wrong

At 12 years an awkward chore was pinned in my hands to wash and iron my mother's work uniform. Skirts, trousers and shirts for the week, a year round hated mission, these included my school uniform. I became a master of minimal ironing specially in winter. It was unnecessary to iron a shirt when wearing a jersey. I owed a schoolmaster a straightened collar, nothing more. I may have owed myself clean clothes but no one else unwrinkled clothes.

This escalated to shopping; I'd look for *wash and wear* type of fabrics. Viscose shirts were a no go area. That material opposed a steel iron heated on primus stove let alone Phillips classic dry iron, even when a Russell Hobbs steamer smiled while dancing on top of it on a high temperature joy. Still, not in my hand. My back refused to stand next to any ironing board. My heels attested too.

Mom's uniform disturbed me. Could have been the random finger burn that traumatized my brains to run far away from an iron. Post-matric at university I was finally freed from uniformity and blessedly embraced my mother's retirement farewell party too, I mean these milestones meant no ironing. The pins were finally lifted. Hallelujah!

But now that my seven-year-old son is in grade two, another ten years of ironing threatens my thoughts...

### **38. Stretchmarks**

We have earned our stripes  
With stretchmarks to prove it  
The zebra earned its lines  
These marks equate scars  
Their roots run deep  
With spotlight glory  
Misleading ovations  
Art is an initiation  
Circumcised by time