

**We Are Yet To Kill The Cattle**

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Rithuli Orleyn

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## **Abstract**

My novella comprises inter-linked fragments that combine fiction, autobiography and creative non-fiction. Ranging fluidly from pre-colonial times to the present, and largely set in South Africa but cutting across the native/diaspora divide, the project draws on historical and archival documents, found and fictive letters, oral testimonies and inadmissible facts, mythologies, ghost voices and fictional speculation. It uses the slim slippery voice of autobiography to cast a big shadow of doubt on the certitudes of authorial truth, harnessing multiple voices to disorient settled notions about self/other, black/white and man/machine. My intention is to explore possibilities of being that exceed the human. I draw inspiration from Zoë Wicomb's novella, *You Can't Get Lost In Cape Town*, Mariama Ba's *So Long a Letter* and Mikhail Shishkin's letter-narratives in *Maidenhair*. The narrative voice that threads stand-alone fragments seeks to express the demotics of subjects in search of a language for their unlanguage'd 'grammar of suffering'.

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***carbon black I am: who shall deliver me from this body of death***

*1790s/ Till 1834/ Zaf' iDarkies/ Buz' uMamakho – song of Nongqawuse*

‘words trump swords’ was turooms’ motto. once upon a time, an aristocrat, he fell for weak-chins. hence the motto. pity, in the underworld of carbon black valley where turooms unsprung, he would soon learn: one had to shakes-both-speares. both hamlet and okapi; brains and brawn, just to breathe.

wielding ballpoints for swords, weak-chin turooms played games with god.

now unkulu-nkulu is not a horse, akaqalwa.

the games he played had him staggering on all fours, had him piecing pieces, had him picking his god-dumped-hardened-crud in site and services.

hundred-years after the fact of his previous-aristocracy life, turooms had withered into a schizophrenic shadow, a cat trapped in mouse-skin anxieties.

it surprised turooms too to find himself in the bodyguard entourage, an escort trusted to deliver the ‘weaker sex’— that’s what his christian-circle believed, safe at their door steps. today: cleo’s.

in the aftermath of marathon-long late-night prayer-meetings – a tradition there (lasting well into the night) – turooms had been firmly planted. twice on sundays: the everyone’s-cup-of-tea service; later: *jesus celebration nocturnals*. monday: men’s meeting. tuesday: bible-study. wednesday: staple diet prayer. thursday: ladies’, till miracle conceptions slapped parents across the face ‘*wakey wakey abantwana bayaphela phandl’ aph’*. friday, choir. saturday more devil-may-care jamboree. sunday, the resurrection regimen excuse; later— 7, 6,5,4,3,2... back at 1.

turooms prides himself for being igwala ngezigalo.

“me, i’m a lover, not fighter”. older he brags:

“i pray-eat-love through the okapi. out-lived misplace-worriers that rose and fell right here before the watchful eyes of my scars”, tworooms parades his guile, his trophy.

indeed the motto: “kuyahlekwa kulogwala, kuyalilwa kulokroti” was his shield and breastplate – straight from a bible verse.

“but let me school you on the nuance to that motto ntwanayam... (he insists):

‘igwala’, veer veer ... has its place, but taken too far... igwala die many times before his day.

so, factor this bhoza yam: if i’m coward, i’m the kind that says ‘*anger* fighting for freedom is better than *happiness* in slavery’.”

that disclaimer was turooms’ joburg sambrela. worked perfectly in winter rains, and just the same for summer-rays. that ‘igwala’ nuance, had a face. a walk. and two feet: felicia’s.

that nuance was the glitter of gold on felicia’s dusty feet, golden and pressed down, shaken together and overflowing. her heart: a mansion with children running buck wild. her manifold (ngqondo-ngqondo) mind: strutting in molten-hot personality. her hair-follicles on mine, cascading. our waterfalls fusing us lips to lips, hip to hip, and toes shrieking a Mass requiem.

nuance was felicia’s curves, precisely where the rush-hour missed a turn.

nuance was her generation-to-generation magic. her dust-breathing feet. her gravity-defying man-made-filth. all of that: buoyant and cordial with the clouds. her nuance was curated breaths gone adrift. gone high, as in hanging: wheezing with start and fits. not without carrying herself with grace. her ‘fourth man in the fire’ signature note; though a deserved bow for her was dimly lit on the visible weighbridge.

felicia is the girl to whom i wrote my lousy poems. the girl who read their subtext beneath awful rhymes and laboured alliterations. letters i delivered at her house disguised in biology text. books of flame slipped in her king james. bookmarkers she courteously returned in stolen kisses. stolen in the long kaffirs’ only beach walks – where god turned his back. turned his back on carbon blacks: us down there. us: a valley bustling with questionable but nonetheless life.

no backyard-zozo in our names— too underage for such ‘my room’ indulgencies. the next best thing the bold & the beautiful suggested, as great spot for budding romance, was the beach.

walks there couldn’t dare hurt.

*you think?* i thought.

error of my life, to think.

especially because once twice, t'was fun.

we jogged saturday mornings. got up with the New Dawn. and strolled back xa ilanga lisithi ndithenge; hand-in-hand, like an old couple. we watched our carnal knowledge days like the bioscope of baby-hair from receding hairline distance. of all the things that willed themselves to rise or stand in us, things that go by such legs as 'lust' and 'last', such things as the lusting of Man and the lasting passions of a woman, none stood attention to our excess. nothing gave salute to our whim. nothing but the sentinels of hair collecting on our paws – a picket fence avalanche of them. gathering and masking the threat of peace in the underneath of township covers. nothing stands and keeps standing but muscle memory now. nothing but the recounting minutes – volumes that once flowed freely, like the water. flowing in warm blood. blood coursing through our veins. the tingling of bent spines sending a wallowing current of re-membrance. the piecing of things upright gone with the wind. drives with beaded sweat on their foreheads paused. paused between 'then' and 'now', a flow curdled into distant-home and this curse of a shoreline. instinct spiked up to the heavens, like heads impaled between heaven and earth, between quirks of the Most-High and their Christian promise of hell. in all of that: holding on to the warmth slicing between the clutching of water-wrinkled puppy-love hands. making the staccato of time seem to flow freely again. in all that: the rings of yearning, black as coffee under our eyes, making love keep spinning and spinning. making it go round and round, even as it takes turns with a whole lot of hate.

just love. no sex. not before marriage. that's the big *no-no of our cult that got us jogging in the first place*. No sex before marriage was motto. no: it was more than motto. it was shit that held shit together, motored us back and forth, twice on sundays.

carbon black cowed under a ton of carbon-footprint, the manufacturing plant iron mantle nearby.

(all our ghetto-valley primus stoves, put together, had nothing on that plantation).

sewage smell stewed in khaki. the kak partitioned – from our valley – by a national road.

don't ask me what the plantation-sewer standoff was all about. could have been an arm-wrestling between botha's stony heart and vlakplaas unlimited budget... anyone's guess to this very day. but it was there, our genesis 1 verse 2: hovering on the surface of a dark, empty, formless deep.

there, i brushed with death. shielding felicia from more. left for dead in the hands of utsotsi wielding an okapi, tuning me: “msunu kanyoko fokoff *and leave me this bitch to rape*”. i saw red –my gushing out blood. i saw too late; too late to confront the assumption that: ‘raping’ and ‘manhood’ share a Faustian pact. too late to say ‘the two are no siamese twins’.

only after gushing-out-blood did okapi take the form of its evil intentions, toxic invasion: rape. *rape? here in the open? open-season in broad daylight?* the fact of it had never crossed my mind, but only as a sick joke; one resembling seasickness your stomach gets used to. ought to get used to. must. or if too sensitive – to normalized filth of our underworld– it’s a slippery slope to plum crazy. in a mental asylum. for you.

in a public facility (dora nginza) i was one foot in ancestors’ company, trying to breathe myself back to felicia. burdening one working lung. the other (lung) collapsed in my own well of blood— from internal bleeding. i had been carved. i had been butchered. and i had been left for dead, on a national road... soaking crimson ... for clothes.

my sin: i intervened in a rape scene. lunged in pure naiveté. turned back the blade-arms of time. so that the *every six seconds a woman is raped*-hour delays.

*not on my watch*, i wound time. and space. anticlockwise. bit the concrete structure of violence one bite too many. *like the 16 kids – all black june ’76 power of them.*

pushed back, hoping barricade of the concrete in my mouth would cede. and let me & felicia breathe.

muscle fibre in my body charged. compelled by the logic of this motherhood philosophy: mmangwana o tshwara thipa ka mo bogaleng.

the nozala consciousness saw me *handle a knife on its blade side for the sake of... love & justice*, just as a mother would. the one-on-one violence, i

displaced.

deprived.

shifted.

and stalled...

but in no-time the damned beast found an outlet in that ghetto-valley pressure cook:

the violent nature of our valley trumped a chuck-norris starring-dead.

the ghetto: *i'm violence in my natural habitat. born and bred here. son of a mother. son of a father. the beast with no reasoning faculties: koloni-nali-zim. Jr.*

the violence burst the naïve wounded-hero in me open. it was ready to claim my life when it could not find its immediate fix: the many ways it permanently scarred a woman with humiliation and trauma.

death by knife took silverware from none of the aids, cancer, diabetes and listeria sports codes. i lived beyond the meaninglessness of my trauma, like most live at the mercy of our faceless and nameless pain; every day down there.

scarred physically and bruised emotionally (on account of a brush with death) i fidgeted when one tsotsi-looking – sagging oversized pants, allstar don and dickies spotty (bucket hat) drawn (drawn down to beneath eyeline) – approached our prayer-meeting security escort.

we were on our way from *jesus celebration*. tsotsi sniffed our devil-may-care behinds. broached; followed by a hoard. his limping gait leading crescent frames hell-bent to evil thrusts: the horse-power that motored the night. frames ready to rush our king james and fake bookmarkers in 'hosh nongoloza' side-steps.

well, we didn't have money. so the means-of-production bladesides sufficed with pushing us around. frustrated by our bazalwana-uselessness to their unfurled nets. frustrated that for their trouble there were no jack purcells to bag. and no eye-drops to pickpocket for their cherries.

“ekse sana unebele”, tsotsi-looking blurted. “ring' i-vaar bhoza, packs kwai dairy dis thing”, a symphony of filth accompanied comrade-tsosi's harambe.

singling cleo out. putting her apart: labia on fishhooks, brains in a jam jar, ass in a vixen cage on trace & channel o, juggling her melons in his mouth... *force and vulgar the attribute of affection between people.*

comrade-tsotsi drooled for cleo to climb, put under and conquer in the meeting of thighs. *not unlike the koppie. the koppie that gifted the miners with bullet of recognition: rare gifts unbequeathed to the bustling-of-life-in-the-valley; acknowledgement that we did form an ensemble of human capacity down-there instead of a collection of kaffirs.* unlike the koppie,

however, in this narrow-vision ensemble of comrade-tsotsi, one sought street-cred validation amongst his equally ignorant johnny-come-late-peers.

i was startled by the audacity: to single out a stranger crossing for the other side of the street, a woman you don't know from a bar of soap. make her feel that parts of her body were under unwarranted police inspection. intrusive surveillance. all because she's a woman walking. and you are a prick breathing. the ghetto breeds these in abundance though; pricks and 'dirty tricks'.

*i can see now, with some measure of clarity of thought... that cleo's body, by looks alone, was marked for cracking the whip. i know now that that day cleo was a victim of male verbal bullying. just as i fell victim strolling with felicia, ending up exchanging fluids with death because i frustrated a fantasy outlet men count on when they think of women as their ego crutches.*

*this is the version of male-domination taking place in our carbon black valley... everywhere; an unmerited permission granted to males; a privilege to objectify.*

*abuse.*

*and kill:*

*a re-productive violence in the making of our social fabric;*

*a one-size-fits-all violence that tattoos our cemetery – for homes – with cobblestone scandals;*

*the 'rest in peace' ambivalence. the 'I can't breathe down here' scandals..., fashioned in genuflecting grave marks. chilling at a corner. or up a toilet window, scouting to put talon ammunition in one Mandela Bay supermodel. on Valentines: blood in, for blood out. for muscle-memory of unfinished wars coursing in the arteries: the dark alleys, the scarring of tar in Public Works Programme: our streets and our gap-taps ekasi.*

the ring of 'ibele' shrivelled my nervous thought. i had never heard i-"bele" pronounced with such bluster. but unlike how i had fizzled into a state of paralysis— afraid that the tsotsi entourage may follow their violent gaze on cleo's breast by permitting themselves the joys of further pounce at us (clip our balls and press the bladeside of okapi against our worthless skin)— cleo's voice was the braver. in the face of intrusive 'compliment.'

“enkosi”, abruptly and matter-of-factly she stomached their nauseating comments. that awkward rapport, between cleo, tsotsi and his crew, rose and fell faster than cleo’s weakness for tramaine hawkins’ overtones: “what shall i do/ what steps should i take/ what move should i make/ oh lord, what shall i do.”

tsotsi crew, like 24-frame/second came and passed. but its trauma left something still mildly shook. a leaf for a life, not worth the three-star okapi that rips its inner-life into tripe. leaving you holding your own *bene goed* in a Checkers plastic bag. rushing to the nearest hospital; begging the flesh of your dakada not to touch the ground. dodging the inaugural *umhlaba emhlabeni, uthuli eluthulini* rite of passage. that pensive little moment of fright and flight in blackness—on our way from church—we laughed at. buried it in the daily trauma of our silence and silencing. (our prayers). and more tramaine hawkins: “*i’m going to wait/for an answer from you/... /... / oh lord what shall i do*”

*what a wretched man i am. who shall deliver me from this body of death*

## Nyoso

*Restless settlers/ Scramble pots of gold/ Behind rainbow/ Kukhal' riffle-butt* – song of Nongqawuse

Author: Turooms

Date: 16 Msintsi, - 366

Dear Diary

My body was given back to me sprawled out, distorted, re-coloured, clad in mourning on that white winter day.

The Trash approaches, like an injured animal. He sneaks up to me, jerks my tail up and sniffs my behind. He's Trash, an animal. He's bad. Mean like a Hottentot, ugly like a Bantu.

Nyoso he is. Nuisance. Annoyance he is, when he corners a sister, forcing a pickup line down her throat... all because he has a penis: i-license yokushela.

A license that grunts him ever-ready permission to pounce at a sister, like the advances of a partially-used, chilling on the wardrobe corner, bored as fuck hanger.

A hanger, hangers-on catching a sister walks past, trailed by a glitter of gold in her feet, mind: a hard-drive torqueing her blazing-hot pace, mind: storage partitioned into Nehanda, Ndzinga and Cheikh Anta Diop,

personality: waterfalls majestic, smile: sunny, its rays: driving the clouds adrift, until a hangers-on sneaks up to her, flanks her sizzling bhawula pretty-wings, push against the cushions that hug her hipbone, push against them with his fantasies, bludgeons her rented itunes peace, with: 'ekse mabhebeza, k' theni waba anti-social e-taxini ... awumvang' udriv' uthi ngu-fourfour mas' hlalisane'?

That annoyance, worse: violence. That annoyance was captured somewhere drenched in a language that used a grammar of literature soaked wet with political jabs, dipping dense with psyche gab.

But before diving that deep, that psyche-deep, that socio-politico deep, I wish to share with you Dear Diary a disruption, a disruption I pulled. Something that restrained the extent to which the very "annoyance" I'm talking about here unfolded before my eyes.

Queued up at a filling station, ‘convenience store’ to be precis, Gabrielle Union beauty-meter works her double-shift at the till. She’s the eye-candy behind a glass-meddled cabin. A Nyoso: (queueing up in front), some blast from the past Drool Hill Looking To Court Her Shoulders High Horizontal Lips and Pelvis Bone Couched Vertical Lips. Me: waiting my turn behind him.

He has been served. Served his perishable goods and a bhasela. Bhasela: the unbillable humanizing & imperishable small-talk. Bhasela: the generous disbursement of eye-contact. Bhasela: the coy chuckles from her. Served extra. Served from that inventory of umntu nomntu transaction truly. Served from the knowledge base that to be free, is to do ‘more than’ the confines of right & wrong. Served from the knowledge that: to be umntu proper is to be ‘more than’ the stipulations of safe & unsafe. ‘More than’ the explicit requirements of ‘do’ & ‘don’t’, ‘more than’ fit the grid of this or that analysis. So, she served him his need to flirt too. Served: freshly baked, warm, lingering-on-the-corners-of-a-Nubian-queen-making-music-on-cash-register-keys patience.

Then, her upbeat on the keyboard dies. Her yellow canary whistles break into off-key islands. Tactonic plates drowning the drumming tempo of a double-shift. Bracelet-heavy wrists. Brazen marked skin. In the seabed of the Atlantic. Drowned. Her face: growing wrinkles on sight, from fatigue. And the curved-to-the-heavens corners of her mouth: haggard. Out With A Bang of distress, the Job’s affliction whimper.

Dog-ears droopy, comrades-plus-two-oceans soggy, the fire of her smile extinct, like the bounce Ubuntu gearing down, gearing down radically... down to run of the mill tired. ANNOYED.

Then, a thought: sitting up crooked on its elbows: dealing the Nyoso a taste of his own medicine. Not without a pat on the shoulder from me. I give Nyoso the first of three generous doses. And Nyoso: turning to stand attention to my intrusive ‘friendly’ poke – with an audience curious to see what I have up my now exaggerated gay-like burnt sleeves, my collagen deficient looking wrists, wrists turned droopy like the queen behind the till, her: tired as her disappeared smile... Nyoso, force-fed his own medicine. Dosage number two: caricatured gay-pitch by me, me: breaking his Nyoso bullshit as follows (dosage three):

“hi bhuti, you look cute, cela ubengumntu wam man, s’thandane toe”. Crass. Vulgar all-round.

His shelaring license revoked. Extinguished by the audiences’ roaring laughter. Laughter at my attempt to paint the picture: ‘stop now, you are annoying the sister, she is busy working, take your insensitive shela mood elsewhere’.

One Nyoso down, I add the sister on facebook. On my timeline she ‘shares’ a post by some Yahalel avatar. I request her to make the thing ‘shareable’, after I add ‘like’ to her update:

“Is it just me or are Jozi cats on some hyper shelling mode. What unsettles me is that it does not try to be romantic but an exercise in impunity; an illicit privilege to perceive womxn with a progressively violent gaze. Here the speech is empty, it’s the voice as such, the timing and such attendant gestures: the act(s) of signalling your presence, and potential escalations, forcefully imposing yourself to a perfect stranger, cornering her into giving you attention, even for a brief second, her consent unsolicited. Interestingly, this smacks of a kind of impotence in its political and libidinal dimensions. Oh wells”

I ask myself: What possibly could be the more underlying – unconscious – source of the woman oshelwayo being repulsed by a powerless blackman, a Nyoso at a convenient store?

By that I have in mind more than the happy-go-lucky instance, the instance I witnessed at a filling station convenient store – where a Nyoso, visibly my peer group-junior, left in a homophobic huff.

I have in mind other less dismissible, by humour’s wisdom, instances.

I’m asking: if the site of violence, that moment a man (who’s not a Man) grants himself vulgar liberties to shela a sister, I’m fingerprints dusting for that moment of a presumptuous, nameless and faceless things (the land-less, job-less, and soul-less), I’m asking:

to what extent is that sight of violence – when the landless/jobless/soulless, say, in a taxi, forces a sister to pay attention to his deadbeat shelaring self (a dick floating without its body, a displaced self, nameless, and faceless self, a vulgar sight for ‘self’, a dick walking up to you ‘self’, walk up to you & ask your hand in some union, dance sort of union, a dance with

death), I'm asking: what's the auction block price per head?

Also, to what extent is the dick, the one up on your face repulsive? Repulsive because he undoubtedly cloaks himself in garments of which he doesn't quite make the cut; such as disregard for abafazi. Stillborn, his violence with him jogs out of the convenient store.

Not a jogging place township though:

The township is a refuse for Human-remains, a morgue of freezing over lifeless hell. There are hardly people there. Just manure, for the evergreen White picket fenced lawns. No life to be made. Or life chances to be had. Not there. There, is just social death, rations at child-grunt per finished silly youth... Grey's Public Works Expended Programme: Expended: per kill-bugs-dead par finish&\_klaat imagination. Inside concrete walls of dead imagination, there I lived. There, I was butchered. & left for dead, jogging. Jogging like any one very bored by himself Nyoso.

People I love died there. Easy cum easy go, they disappeared there. Likely to die my damned self there, at the discretion of someone who calls me 'chief', worse 'comrade'. Likely to die there, in the hands of someone I had my last supper with.

The only jogging elokshini, is running away from stories of people I meet etywaleni. People who tell me of how less-than-cheap life is there; stories that haunt. Stories told in sparse machine code: ones and zeros: stories drilled on memory in fragments. There's hardly bonds of love and semblance of devotion to kin & kilt there. Not in the township. It's just one marginally better Parkman chowing another: one low-hanging at the mercies of a less-powerless. One school of fish feasting on another. Dog-eat-dog vulgar. All in the name of the *father, the son and the espirtus*: the trinity of our commodity-fetishism-religion.

Out. I'm out testing the limits of my township jogging theory:

The buttons of my fastened shirt, buried beneath my jacket, hide my #MenAreTrash. Scars tattooed by a rusted okapi blade, the edge of a fabulous ghetto signing on the dotted line 'booked a crimson red shipment status'. A shipment out. Out of my miserable township existence. Out soaked in blood; one lung drenched in internal bleeding. Out by a throw of

dice between adjusting to injustice – witnessing rape – and a sadistic trash bent to dehumanize a sister, *while I provide audience for his fetish*. He, the trash, hopes. Out by a throw of exit-door dice, a dice of doomed choices. The choice of delaying rape stats by risking death.

Between imminent rape and possible death, I made the choice of the doomed: *no rape today trash, even if that mode of dissent spills my blood and costs me my life*. I resolved.

It's hardly three months since my mother's body roasted like a spitbraai; turning to whims of feasting worms, feasting six-feet under, under cemetery shrubs & foliage in Veerplas, P.E. Hardly three months to the day of her fee-free courier to oomkhulu, noomakhulu. Hardly three months since that ferry to over-&-over the clouds whipped up an appetite for another from that tasty bloodline: yours truly. Hardly three months and another sbhilivane se-telegram was tendered ba sirhosh' uthixo to secure me a provisional place – a yoyo-onefoot-in place there, in ancestral realm. Nge three-star. That a rusted okapi blade shortlisted me, in registers yonder, still stings a reminder of the fact. Especially in this cold weather. My operation stitches have now turned a crude weather forecast meter. When the weather changes, the parts where the trash's blade carved, sends a stinging ringtone. Re-living the stabbing event; the wonders of a body that keeps no records of wrong.

Of the two trashes in duel, one) wielding a butcher's knife, the other) at the mercies of township chance, I was the latter. I was reminded, that:

“trash (me), who do you think you are? What the fuck were you doing trying to be a clever-darkie? Busy jogging eksen' with 'dirty tricks' elokshin'? Nyoging nyoging my ass. Yoqhath' izifombo. I know you're trying to get inside that *bitches* pants. Now, let me show you how fast an okapi beats your longwindedness. Let me show you how fast a blade puts these *hores* in their place. On their backs: legs stiff like tilts. Spread, passive: like a treasure trove map with dirty intentions fingering its crags. Them: resounding: echoes of 'empty land' in Die Stem.

“Nyogging, nyogging. What did you you hope would happen in the dark alleys, the underworld gorges, the carbon black weaned on lust for blood, where glimmering fangs sommer push out of a press-button shell just nje, its unbridled Rambo holster like a disease

jettisoned as msoko okapi takes over the reigns in 'means of production' tampered by appetite for blood, ngathi yinyoka yothwala ekwakuthylwa ngayo uVantyi, uNocool-aid no Fudumele? Did your brief stint in Rondebosch leafy, safer suburbs, make you forget how rough these streets are?

"Oh, I see!

"Now let's put the fear of God in your free-citizen-movements nge-okapi. S'febe se coconut-wannabe.

"Let's remind you that this is where your life is not too precious. Akhose UCT apha. Or Wits. Or Rhodes. Let's carve you open, like a bag of tik. Bitch! Butcher you mofucker. For your trusted 'he he nyagency, nyagency'. For delaying the inevitable twins of this underworld: Rape and Murder. I mean, how far did you think your 'I nyispect women mna, i nyispect women' was go-last? Fucken little *shoemaker* shit. How long did you really think your s'shumane bubble was go-last?"



## Aint Mad Ma I'm Grown

*Cheated betrayed/ Their (our) lack turned to b-lack/ Darkies loomed large/ After bullets reined – song of Nongqawuse*

your love and tswai jammed the kitchen Dizzy in that two-rooms wezozo emva kwendlu. There, a tiny corner hissed: onion rings on the primus stove. Rhythm of cooking-oil shaking a tambourine against the frying pan. ii-Fumes ze-paraffin greedy to take the place ye-s'shebo in our enamel plates. Your improvs zamaqanda, ne-bisto, assaulting our tastebuds kuloo ntswahla. The noise in our nostrils nipples puckered with your signature note, ezimbizeni. The whiff from the gate colored *blou oog*, from beatings of appetite on that strait to the door. Your mpepho incense cleaving 20 years on to the triply. hanging intimately caked. Rations of August showing us flames, through wallpapered cleavages: the dust evula kuvaliwe. turning our tyotyombe innards as coarse as ghetto. as sandy as 'grains' of spekko, chopstic & some no-name.

the scent of your kitchen globe-trotting the two hemispheres: the 'now', and 'then'. your gatvol voice splicing your 'yonder' and 'here'. the eager cooker: popping. Suckling. Your yellow hands: drippings. gossip darting through the slivers. through cracks: the passion of ghetto single-beds crooning 'silala sibabibi, sivuke sibathathu.'

humming slits: prising the inside out, and the outside in with resilience. hangry cracks: feeding on remains, like vultures in the wild.

... your life: coded in bullet points, in; steel-panel reinforced triply. Your memory: soaked in the colour of umdiyadiya. the humble divider ngehiya that forged most of what we called 'two' in that tin-town... 'two' hokkie rooms. 'two' families. 'two' why-lens (both on). 'two' sdalaz burning like Usher for each other. And me: Turooms. the vinyl-sheeting – 'tapeit' *we called it* – covering an uneven wooden-floor.

It's tempting to paint you 'a saint', because jiki-jiki you made your transition. But we both know that no human trait is that strait – not that narrow. You spared not the noble rod. But sometimes... sometimes through it, you vented; airing your pain, through all its cheap exit doors.

Like a diva carving an unrehearsed dirge, you raised us. us: your unleavened bread. raised us as if impossible didn't exist. The nuclear, and extended, nestled warm in your gifts. your:

“serve”, “suffer”, “sacrifice” trinity.

Elegantly you dressed. Sublime you were... through the dirt and the grime. After your nurture fashioned my nature.

Then, one ominous ghetto day we were rudely disconnected. We’d come to the depot of our lives stitched by seams of under-age sex anyway... easily split, I guess, that’s why we could be... Molotov missiles gone in a thousand cardinal points; rend asunder like Fox and Latifah in *Set It Off*. On your way out: three kittens around your bedside, us you called. Callous I postponed that day because anger seethed under the scab of a two-rooms shelter. angry at the paraffin stench drowning your 7-colour bland, in my mouth.

The shuttle of Manna and the ferry of Jabula (soup) winding all our last days to pay-day a bit too often. way too often for preference. Something of that routine – in me – packing up. Like obedience that otherwise teemed, brewing more and more indifference in me. Squalling wheels moaning the cry of dead breaks. Traction skids singing a new way of dying. Tar and rubber grieving. That day... FUCK! ‘You Ms’ coming to death-stop at 39.

Me: gagging up all your dishes of hardwork, an ocean of vomit going back to the day your breast milk kissed my lips, Me: storming out disgusted.

In discontent discord with you parting. A boy-child livid – for lack of life;

For lack of Feeling consumed in affectionate feud.

Asking: Why didn’t you coax rubber,  
when he soiled your gem with unfaithful sadza?

Slamming the door—in his head, venting. Anger billows and fumes adrift.

Paused between verses. These verses: distilled in stolen glances. Now from a distance distressed by a moment he knows shall never *return*. Watching you hand-in-hand with Gabriel,

you: disappearing, swallowed by pale hospital bedlinen.

The ring of your words— a noose twined around his neck:  
*take care of my children my boy.*

him: haunted

by a fashioning into Protector-Provider blanket cover. haunted: by mothering attributes—  
‘serve’, ‘suffer’, ‘sacrifice’. haunted: kicking himself with boots of un-forgiveness, for  
postponing that bedside hour because it sapped from him his imagined male-power.

There would be next: him projecting. If only he knew that that hour, by your bedside, was his  
last...

Years beyond his age’s maturity, failing him. Maturity Darkies shoulder their siblings with,  
betraying him.

A look inside  
making him  
well.

Eyes brimming with brine  
muttering a book.

Pages bleeding  
stories wedged between his lazy lips.

In his sleep turning to a face that mumbles a quip.

In his sleep turning to a soul unforgiven.

In his sleep turning to a billow that disappears swiftly.

In his sleep, his dreams, turning to smiling-eyes fading like footprints in the beach.

Waking up to desires for peace, but breaking the fasting on force: pieces of peace that taste  
like tyranny.

Dreaming of ways to say: UXolo Mama, I was young.

Dreaming of ways to say: Uxolo I refused to come around your bedside.

That ‘i’ threw a tantrum,

A quirk for the silver-spooned.

That I put your last words at bay.

That I harmed you with my antics.

That I was not complete in the mind...

That I threw everything away.

You— my most valuable— away

That I never shared a tear— at your funeral,

That I did only in my dreams, where I reckoned I was free.

That only now I want to call it truss,

& let these chains loose.

That I want to say: *'I Aint mad Ma I'm grown'*

That tomorrow I plan to take this letter to your six-foot drilled box of things – words:

Your six-foot deep letterbox and say:

*Dear Mama,*



\*\*\*

*Dear Mama*

*Ndim Usana Lwakho.*

*Ngempilo azimntakaNgqika wethu...*

*Andinobasabuza ke kuwe, ngoba sewa gqitha kweligada lomngqusho namahlaba.*

*I did pretty well wethu Nozala, even if I have to say it myself.*

*With nothing but a big heart Jambase, I made fire from ice*

*Ndilihlumelo lakho... Bendizothini?*

*Injalo ke, ndenze nje ngawe lo.*

*Ayina lweyile na-waterproof kaloku imfuzo, lilifu lemvula, ayigqithi iyaphumelisa...*

*Untloko (ngathi nd'tshilo... hahahaha), your kitten...*

*(bezoth' umakazi: 'inceku le yakhe'),*

*... is a star;*

*wasishiya ke kodwa yena udadwabo: oh, mhlab' yafihla. Samzama yena kodwa shem unontombi, ngekh' us' bek' ebala. Sisenotata ke ngoko. Samzama samzama samenzela ne send-off nge casket.*

*She is in a more memorable place now, Even more memorable than where your body lies...*

*oh! uDibashe, she coves up in your breast-feeding side now, much safer there.*

*Kay' funi kak' bi ke le ka 'Ntloko', kodwa shem, thathe wena ke ngobuhle usisi. Caba ithi lanto '....'kho beauty' ezoskip' a-generation apha'*

*She turned your brasso-polishing chants to world music side-by-side Joan-Armatrading (your favourite singer).*

*Fondly, I remember now, well... almost fondly.*

*Ndikhumbula indlela la two-rooms eghetto was cursed from foundations up:*

*a makeshift kwamarhadebe' e back*

*Can you believe the irony?*

*Buza kaloku wena ba 'i-rony yantoni na ngoku?'*

*... 'Botshwanga mnweni kaloku andithethi ntwenye*

*Ngekh' ubenabhongo:*

*Yithi 'ngantoni kaloku?' wena, ndikuphendule ndithi:*

*yam bo uHenrik Verwoerd?*

*Yithi ndik' xelele: eza rations zakhe zomhlaba e-loction, are much bigger than i'better life for all' esayipronyiswa ngu-New Dawn, by far Mama.*

*Mxim, mane besithi snyocial-contract, snyocial contract, betheth' ububhanxa. Fana nqwa nalo wakowenu oneminw' emide xa enxilile. Masela! Masel' engxow' enye.*

*Your sister kaloku, thirsty to binge,  
tip-toed, pawned... your can't-gets for Autum Harvest Crackling*

*Yho! Andinabhongo legumla thixo!*

*Mqhekeko, uqhekeza de uqhekeze nesmilo esi sembala. Gumla limtsh' umntu afunukhonjelw' indlela yee-silver pieces nguJudas webhayibhile.*

*Envious shem usisi... she Harvested lodging rent out of you. Kaloku you owed her umabuyekwendeni fee. A rent premium for your bragging rights.*

*your: 'been married, done that, got the t-shit'.*

*bragging rights: for refusing what no-man ever offered her to refuse... well, maybe.*

*hey, mandifak' u'maybe' apho Jambase. Just in case. Eish..., mandithule, ndingayingeni. Kuthwa yingenwa futh' into yabantababini.*

*Endiyaziyo kodwa yona yile: uMakhul' eNex-door, conveniently called me Two-rooms...*

*'turooms', she called: 'ndizakuph' ibeta nomqolo, vasa pha ezambiza zentlanzi...*

*That was yesterday.*

*I lie. It's just that everything feels like yesterday Ma.*

*“Turooms”: what a way to coin an inner-life!*

*inner-life engenawo noMdiya-diya for the exterior. Engenayo nalo-fig leaf: commissioned to curdle the shack at least into: indawo yokutya, indawo yolala, indawo yovasa, nendawo yochama. All that could-have-been: Bathtub/kitchen-sink/toilet/bedroom/sitting-room, crammed in a mattress-by-two space. A lack of inner-life that saw the shack break into Power-rush jeers, and liquor-dipped murmurs. The shack: where my beauty hours stood impaled. The shack: where the triply replaced umdiyadiya sele kudala konakala. The shack Mama: where the mother fucker between your sheets was still audible when he insisted ‘the kid is asleep’. The shack of heaving and panting Mama. Loud and selfish shack Mama. Moaning and squalling. Above all, the shack of no holds barred: the business of nooks uncornered, the business of night’s fall with nowhere to hide. Nowhere to hide Nina’s ‘Feelings’. The shack: rocking me to sleep with its din of beings, the clamour from nexdoor. the noise of traffic a spittle spray away. the screams of muffled walls working hard to silence the abuse...*

*Next time I’ll tell you all about the abuse ...Mama.*

*Oh Mama, I carry different scars clearly.*

*Wounds that won’t heal, I guess...*

*Beneath the scab of these verses, scars are still raw: emoting all sorts of anxieties Mama.. Fear that I could never be a-good-anything, let alone a good father. Fear that I was never adequately circumcised, not into Manhood, not to Man-of-the-house. . .*

*Even with face hugged by pitch-black beard; body wrapped in beer and whiskey’s girth, though making love like a man... I hobble and break like a little girl.*

*Warmest regards*

*Yours*

*Usana Lwakho*

*\*\*\**

## Ubuntu Died 34 Times In Marikana

*Abundance shrinks/ Picket fences increase/ Pickets loom large/... every second street – song of Nongawuse*

*1. Obscene: is in stealing what you can't hide, with it lining your pockets. It: pressed in notes, in coins. It: squeezed in vaults, compounds, match-boxes, livid in colour bars.*

2. Her Name: no-Buntu, his name: Turooms

3. his name: Makgoba re fetotswe

4. her name: Marikana

5. his name: gauta, matla a setjhaba a hodise ba ditjhabeng

6. her name: gutsanyanatsaka defeletseteng

7. The sun overslept; nothing odd. Just a day in the life of a smalltown's morning. The weather: finicky, as people are fussy and ultimately nasty here. Finally: curtain-rays of the sun draw open; putting vigour to the bustling and hustling. Add an hour: and the 7<sup>th</sup> of May begins. But not before: not before its 8minutes delay, the cosmic interval it takes to join Hlalani (the strato wedded to my *erf No*) to the out-and-out stratos-fears.

8. Even as the sun is up on its elbows, shedding its glee in stingy sunrays, reluctance: its texture, icy: its feel, beams do cuddle around our Autumn-half of the globe; not buddy-buddy, but good-old embrace nonetheless. This is the place of my rainbow-honeymoon, the equivalent of the american dream, my class-mobility corner, the nooks and crannies of my tiny speck existence, my memory strung in illusory myths, stories on which erects my complex, a complex under cathedral-huge egos, ravenous identities: as hungry for validation as any this Saturday Morning. The sun is here. And somewhat like me. Not quite at home.

9. God-forsaken mornings are plenty in Hlalani (or Hlalela, as in Hlalela pha). They roam like cosmic hobos, rabid midlwembe scurrying rubbish-bins... donkey: its doppelganger, snacking wasted packaging, likely: orphaned-half-eaten-burgers, or remains of chocolate in Kit-kat wraps.

10. Three babalazed musketeers (one of them, yours-truly): nervous as the gingerly coddling rays, rays: hesitantly twined around a guilt-ridden 7<sup>th</sup> of May. One musketeer: gathers

resolve from the furnace in the sky, wipes his morning drool, gives up a washrag and brush to his Blushing Visitor. She follows routine, like the sun wipes sleep off its gleaming face.

11. one musketeer (the woman from last-night: his company) goes via the other two. They drive past the Chemist who rights their wrongs. The Chemist who tunes their blood-alcohol frequency to morning-after debauchery scales. Wrongs and liquefied demons onerous now, coursing 'right' through his veins, their manner, their mood, not merely from previous' night binge. But from all previous-ness: the vulgar perviousness of loss in each and every natal occasion, the spit in the face of birth this place is, the occasioning it: probes scouting bodies, bodies for prison, bodies for graves.

12. Make it right: the Chemist works his magic. Right: for an eight-to-five. Right: for big match temperament (ahead). Right: for Surveillance and Punishment. Right on the easy-side: the happy-go-lucky that comes with 'out-of-town out of sight, out of 'petticoat government' eyes, out of mind'.

13. Via?

14. Yes, 'vaya'.

15. Coz: all Rhodes lead to Kimberly; the canyon of anxiety that swallows you whole, early on Saturday Morning. Why? Because the sins from yesterday are taxing the meniscus levels in your body. Because: you left home driving to this forsaken place? This: spirit-breaking dungeon. This: obscene mental asylum. This: 100-years war haunted GhostTown. This: freezing over lonely hell. Why leave home for home-to-brokenness Chisanyama? Why leave home to chill with handed down gifts, wills and bodies rendered asunder: The "mess" of "I" unfit for a page, the fret of 'I' unsettling these chapters and book-ladders.

16. Let it suffice to say: we detoured here. On account of busy-ness. As opposed to: business. Business: the explorer's run-around, from the strait of gibraltar to madagascar. The feeling that gives you a false comfort. The: 'you're doing something important for others' whisper up your ass. The: 'you're a trailblazer, the needed entrepreneur'... the voice you cover your fig leaf shame with... when sun sets, by end of business day.

16. Chemist's solutions: shots of Bourbon and guzzles of Windhoek, thinning your blood: to fix your head, to bulk up your game, big match temperament tweaked, bulk up your game: injustice adjusted indifferent to pain, hops: into the car, big-match-temperament: now behind the wheel. One musketeer: the driver, swallows Hlalela, swallows the roadworks joining the N12, swallows the tarmac, cruising, site-seeing, going-no-where-slowly, swallows the

sidewalk, swallows its marvels and its pristine desert, the shock: low-case-man deserted, low-case-man: jettisoned there, by the limousine of history, by wills and wheels of forgotten wars, man: one with soil, crimson in imbola-hue, man: one with shrubs, the trees and the signs, hugging the N2, men and women thumbs up, hitchhiking, signals: on and off ,waxing, up, down, some: stealthy, some: (on you face) bold, all: part-man-part-road signs.

17. Beneath the scab, seethes the wound: a black crawling beast, for a car. Car: hours later growling to a halt. Chisanyama, the spot. Beast: parking-bays prowling. The men and woman: treading and strutting (the pavement), beast facing them facing Chisanyama entrance. Joza: the festering wound. A wound that the dusty township, like the Kimberly of anxiety in his gut, hides. Hides below the bustling and hustling, behind: the devil may care appearances.

18. The Chisanyama is Ace, Mzoli, (Gil Scot Heron's) The Corner, and The Busy Corner glued together. Here: we are in our well-mannered grins, our bobbing of heads in gestures of politeness, our greetings in street-cred cries 'eita', strangers exchanging pleasantries, exchanging beer & whisky, bottles: turning us one big family,... readers, thugs, writers, terrorists, trash, tricks, Poqo, Mau-Mau; a family of warm bodies responding one-night-locus-standi to Foucault's sting of desire (if we liked).

19. Bottles: hand-in-hand, meat and drink elated. She: the previous night's violin, or a chess game piece; held by the left and played by the right, withheld by the dark and contained by the buff: A people in office told by the people in power to show her the girdles that hold 'whose' girth, 'whose' loins, who's migrant sparse, and who's picket-fence together... this Saturday Morning.

20. Mornings later:

"lonely too, wish to see you but afraid, afraid: if we meet we'll feel, and act, and hurt, hurt: people (we love), hurt at the rate that our scuttling desire drives dimwit eating the curb at the corner of Hlalani, or Hlalela, so: please sisi, hlalela pha" – Him.

Him: joseph escaping umfazi kapotifaro. His bag: flung over his shoulders running, his heels: knocking together there running, grasping at straws of sanity for possession, running and running, rejecting the sway of 'lonely' on his 'resolve'.

21. him: breaking it gently to the young woman from fine arts

22. Back and forth they dance, back and forth: whatsapp text growing less and less, exchanges: turning rites to desires rightly miscarried...

[...]

34. She thanks him: for the losing hand/and the final frame, Winehouses Back To Black and calls it: “your honesty”. The Flirts chorus to fade: less, and less, ... and then no more.

1. Where the story begins?

2. Decolonial Aesthesis Induction week: Fine Arts Department labs (computers’). Here: for assignment. One left to collect overdue cobwebs. Assignment: supposed to have done & dusted when Sol Platjie, Wits, and Rhodes together sang: ‘you good for our higher-degrees programme this year’ ...

3. Feeling giddy at a computer lab, off-balanced by three flirts in unison – Rhodes, Wits, Platjie – a mutual friend introduces us: ‘my name is..., my name is...’ Handshake, handshake – the elaborate way. She, my-name-is, gags up all her traces of life in a single breath.

4. Next: my turn. To pour out mine, with hardly a comma:

born reactionary/school-system raised: to love and aspire to everything not-me/from day-zero, taught to hate ‘self’/sold & bought the ‘pull yourself by the bootstraps’/reviled the kill-joys, those who *spoiled* our ‘there’s a place in the sun, where there’s hope for everyone’ with their: we were mauled here massacred/ dragged here dispossessed/ held: the ‘bootstraps’ song we sang in primary close to my heart:

5. yintwan’ encinane

6. yintwan’ engekhooyo

7. ebamb’ izidenge

8. zingafun’ ukufunda

9. zixovul’ udaka

10. ebusika kubanda

11. fundani bantwana

12. ningangen’ engozini

13. nothandwa ngabantu

14. ngenyameko yenu

... that: we are poor (most) because we're lazy/ ugly (as we are)/ & backward/ went through life empty/ ignorant/ 'bout my history/ 'bout our genius/ went through: ill at ease 'bout our kindness/ in two minds 'bout our social fabric/ secretly lauding the savagery at the core of this current one/ because mathematics we didn't invent/ and history: ought be matter of fact/ & english universal/ the language of science and everything higher/ Until [...] I Read What I Like/ still an infant as you can see: still on a search/ with only a handful of years/ gradually with my back to the lies/ the myths of colour-bars/ complicity by which I took to the genocide/ (like the duck takes to the water... : the devil may care brashness)/ the way we are force-fed everywhere: our ruin/

... slowly recovering / more critical now/ More aware now/ And committed. I said.

15. My impression of her? Kind, a bit too churchy... the Giny' uYesu Brigade I once studied under. I don't judge. I was this thing too.

16. No! Worse. I counted among the jamboree's obstinate worst. Truly: the "heavenly minded, earthly useless" (as we were called in some quarters).

17. Besides, I have always found the seat of judgement thorny, & thistles ridden for my fragile backside.

18. Fastforward: the weekend of visas. The Friday before Chisanyama. One of the boys has 'my wife out of town Schengen'. All three musketeers at his place. All three diehards: vinyl scratching, jazz in the background.

19. The three: jazz-play-list boring: a dozen published books between them. Nonetheless: bandits. Manslaughter: their suspended sentence... 8 dead, guilty as charged under their collective belt. Our varied: '*die boss of die tronk*' captivity.

20. one) struggling polotitian, booted out of his cushy parliament job.

21. another) their understudy. Like a dirge, boredom bends their heads, eyes fixed on phone-screens. Beer & Brandy: the only clients to whore their boredom (our boredom) out to...

22. an ironic twist of whores parcelling out 'enjoyment', rules of the trade turned on their heads. Fidelity plunged in the cracks of boredom: our trade on its head. Jack cums: not without a premium, R249.90, a bottle sexy as fuck ... legs: pouring out a glistening mahogany. the vessel: melanin buffered, shiny & blue-sealed.

23. Beer, his groupie ... trailing (the motherfucker).
24. Motherfucker: just sits there, looks R249.90 pretty for days. Pretty for when our cranky ol' sugar diabetes murmurs: *give me a romp 'signal Mama'*. wishes our powder crushed tired bones can't do shit fokol about. shit fokol about between two alcohol-paid-for yellow bones.
25. one, of us old hags, stretches. reaching out for his quick fix in mahogany Bourbon vessel.
26. A hand searching: head bent, eyes fixed. no: pinned. pinned to the phone screen. pinned on a multi-universe, fingertips dancing: here (dancing), there (dancing). multiple lives pressed under his thumb. everyone and everything motioned at a button. everything ready to be swayed: to 'lol'. to 'wow'. to 'angry'. to-emoticons: virtual 'love'. All: at a fee.
26. fingers fingering parallel timelines. One: pizza order, microwave-ready timeline.
27. Another: A hag's hand fumbling, like something stiff searching, searching in Tennessee, searching for Brazilian shaves. a hag: fumbling: like a blindman's cane reaching out under the marshal of adrenaline. Shots. limb: stretched out. Limb: limping. Staggering. lockstep to hormonal charges. Charged by something stiff, something hooked and misfiring. wires of ol' age: gone egg-and-mayonnaise, gone as obsolete as their ol' tricks. On this timeline: a limb reaching for the mahogany bottled-leg, reaching for its rims, for its in-betweens, touching it, torching himself giddy with it, silly with youthfulness, with desire. desires: pressed crinkled, like a negro's curls cut between pages. Cut: like cut-out chapters bygone, leaving by the way side. In edgewise between reams & reams. There: a negro. Sandwiched. Lynchpin to misfired lust. The lust that sparked his "black lives meta"-birth. meta-birth: woven one with his quivering in white winter cold kaffir equivalent. both: splicing the 'meta' that distilled them in tables. distilled them: in voices on soapbox. in manifestos: the first stock and stock-exchange. The making of small-case-man on auction-block. distilled: demons. demons liquefied, seated there, pretty and bottled. in mahogany vessels.
28. Knock at the door: Three misfit loners, ol' geezers. saved by the proverbial bell. Door throws itself open. There: at a poet's feet, lays itself prostrate. Saunters the poet. in: julia Roberts. in Noting Hill: The 'Slim Figure That Casts A Big Shadow'. a figure wafting like fog sweeping an open field. a figure: creeps, then glides. across the room.
29. her outfit: mary jane's chocolate skin, kissed by the unrestrained glee of the sun.
30. bheki mseleku on keys. counting her steps in syncopation. Shifts of accents: unaccented 30min 'do' 're' 'mi' 'va' 'so' 'la' 'te' (back to 'do'). piano tinkering. counting: in incompleteness set. as set as Set Theory. asset as Gödel on improv. set in jazz.

halfway through the songs: roman pizza rolls in. down the scooter it climbs, clutched in rented delivery-hands, the algorithm in the phone timeline: the enslaving of things, machines, tasked to better our lives. our existence. making it better. by: 'alt' 'delete' & 'shift', under our thumbs. & between finger-tips.

on the meddling 'phone-screen': a 'touch' that don't know how to 'touch'. a 'touch' that rants and (o) presses. that rents the rend, pressing them under its greased thumbs.

31. on the delivery menu is: 'my name is, my name is, handshake-handshake, from Fine Arts...

32. The Churchy Young Thing? Willing to get off her churchy high-horse.

33. today: she drinks. drinks the miracle of Canna: water turned 'wine'.

34. She suckles on a 440ml cider, a can of Blush... and blushes (for one: yours truly) all night.

1. now: we are five, like technology solutions. three beakers of testosterone, two oestrogen titration tubes; Jack & Beer: the pipet endpoints. the sickness and cure for babalaz at the Chemist the next morning.

2. It's past five (gone five more minutes after twelve, to be exact): past Jack&Beer.

3. The curfews of midnight are upon us.

4. We split, the long division method.

5. All was good, while it lasted. We talked, again,... as we do again and again. talked about the force that brought us here, how we were sold and how we were bought, how we bought one another ... bought each other in and bought one another out, how, when split, we are never alone. how:  $1+1 = 2$  may not always hold. how: bonding over our nothingness burns like the (biblical) fourth-man in the fire,

6. there,

7. feeling,

8. there: family. there: one...

9. how: like oil and water, Black clings too slippery to Power,

10. how: we call things that be no(gh)t as though they were...

11. The struggling polotician: shuttles us. the Slim Figure That Casts A Big Shadow: mary-jane first at her doorstep,

12. the churchy-young-thing: back at fine arts,
13. it's locked. she can't access her keys, can't access her room,
14. comes home with (yours truly): a home-that's-not-home. She's 'home' with the One she blushed for (all night),
15. we're sardines on a bed the size of a grow man's body-bag. we fidget, all night. we face: this way. that way. each other's stew: each other's sting of desire.
16. feet face lips. torched bodies leak: memory

\*\*\*

*Dear Mama,*

*re-member I said I'd tell all about the abuse...*

*I'm a nappy-haired Castro's-dirty-beard boasting, a Spoiler who cannot 'let bygones be bygones' Mama. The 'morbid pity-party pessimists'.*

*All because: I learnt to savour the supple taste of labia dipped in viscous cum at a tender age of eight – because I started school too early. And it didn't help that the school system made me skip a class and two grades. I still got jammed along the way. by makings not my own. higher-primary was lit with teargas and petrol-bomb. To Sheshegu, the closest boycott-free standard three, you shipped me. Remember? Sally Hemings tender lobes, marked by fledgling pubes of innocence-lost, lost too early: me weaned to grootman-things on the first milk of her miscarriage. Turned into a revolting pleaser half-way through the suckling. Those okapi blade on the clock, whiling down time, sculpting out of me this rattled identity. An identity perpetually searching for validation. And approval. Approval from people who can only feed it the grime of humiliation and phlegm of disgust. People who enjoy when I bend over backwards to their whims. One of those was an Auntie, Mama. Auntie Jemima. She stormed my dreams saying to you 'hayi rha, wazi ntoni uTurooms, ngumntan' intaiyo.*

*Makazolalaphecam' kwam'. A grown woman whose toes faced my lips in bed. Toes: telling stories. How she, like a slave, had escaped her own plantation of abuse in the hands of a step-father. She might have been a cousin Mama. Perhaps much younger than my scars care to keep records of wrongs. A cousin who, on that shared mattress of banishment – mine: innocence, hers: 'Feeling thou art loose' too early – taught me the "pleasures of sin", the Manhood of "force" and code of glory: the view of enjoyment from the top.*

*Sins whose whiff still swell in the chambers of my "poetic memory".*

16. *we were torched, bodies as they were at birth. Stewing, in the sting of desire. , under: Discipline & Punish Surveillance...*

*Under Discipline & Punish Surveillance: Fucking promising 'I'll put you both to sleep'. The Devil in our heaving gently nodding. The reluctant police in Nina Simone's Just The Two Of Us/In The Dark washing their Pontius Pilate, going awol. No-goes, gingerly touched: this and that body-part Feeling, and eager to be felt. Panting: the cruel sound track: 'overslept' sun coming up. get up. talk: about everything under the sun, but how her...*

17. image

18 ... was in folds leaking 'come in' tones...

19 .. how: when tv tires...

20. past third beer,

21. past the episode of cops edging for bed... she was nudging 'fill 22. me, feel me'

23. .. how: she closed her eyes to quiet the night... in our

34. green blankets

25. how: the wind of her wings:... vinyl-needling the razor wire, cordoned in that which was cordoned off, off: in our squatter camps, our backyard dwellings, begging: 'let's ride off to another world, alter our consciousness...'

25. Consciousness: where anxieties of be-ing are shared, where straits of anarchy burst the meddling accumulation bubbles, where the land refuses ownership as the clouds blow with the wind, where life: equally adrift in its beauty commits only to music: sings only of its be-come-ing

26. Him: didn't quite catch your name.

27. Her: my name is marikana...

28. Him: but (humanity) died in marikana...

29. ... then: no talk of how he's the man in green: no name, no subtitle...

under the clump...

clump of bodies stapled

on skulls, skulls: coming off loose, on man: coming off unformed...

30. No talk: of lands *yonder*: how they receive man naked

how the earth – *in this Ari Sitas* – eats his stitch back to thread...

to life, to lead the hill

to song...

31. Then: she finally speaks, says to him: ... asphalt the lakes...

darken the mirrors...

switch off the moon...

because (humanity) died in marikana...

32. She turns to her lover's necklace. the one out-of-sight in this body-bag. she turns to the only thing covering her body, their connection forged in precious stone. the majuba stony turned nasty, like pigs turning on their young...

33. a shaft: [splicing] her slender neck. The threading of Reason through which: she takes him inside of her. Inside: through the cleavage, where Simone's *Four Women* shows him supple fingers fingering:

*[a president (s) elect]* counting scalps in his vaults

34. she's the mascot...

1. a totem... pacing through the blood

2. blood: goading her on

3. *[she]*: who loved the dead-alive

4. now mum. No talk of: ... harsh landscapes ... woven green,

... new rage behind the rainbow, behind the pot of gold: the noose of bad-copy in her neck,

5. no talk of: ... who declared the strike 'over!'...

6. no talk of: why the dead man [are back] to work...

7. no talk of: how ubuntu died in marikana...8. just: "horny",...9. just: "lonely"10. Then: a break with bad-copy...:"lonely too... but i'm afraid [of what happened in marikana]". [...] 34. Her reply: "thanks for your honesty."

## **Black Friday lullaby: ‘27’ O’ Clock**

... *bruised/ Broken/ Degraded/ Isolated* – song of Nongqawuse

Two-rooms had been vomited violently by the system. The Green creatures’ shit-stem; One that Mole Leggasick and his ilk – of forced smiles, of yellow kernels behind their wire-thin lips, of festering trash for breath, of something dead: fished by racy words from deep inside their bellies, of shifty gaze: their green envious eyes dancing to their nerves – had come to impose. A system of captive values. A system they installed upon stepping their pale feet on the coast lines and seashores: gorges that cupped pristine and vast landscapes. With their pale feet, green scales falling off of scurvy oozing skin, and with a stench of pestilence in their breath, they had Turooms vomited out into a banishment worse than death.

That system wrecked massive swells. Shoring up rejects borne in lowing westerly winds. Winds which battled opposing encounters; storms that rocked in fomenting mighty Agulhas currents. Whirlwinds that parked at thresholds of most RDP houses; elements that had now taken the character of personal turmoil only solvable by landing work, rather than working land.

Upon refusing *i-card lobulungu*, the set standard to aspire to. Ubulungu education; ubulungu women and ubulungu desires. The currents tossed my body to and fro. Turning it, body, like spit-braai licked by flames, sutured in a dirty-ghetto-mattress. My body held breathless for shores. Shores of reprieve. There was hardly respite in sight. That season, when I was ‘between jobs’ (frankly: jobless), no reprieve came. And I couldn’t go back to Mole. Not to beg. Not as he wished for me to beg for *ubulungu*— beg for membership.

Unlike Vasco da Gamma, who broke through to the east. From the Old to The New World. Broke by sailing around the southern tip of Africa, 1497. And up its east coast. To Malindi. Unlike him, I had no expert (Indian) pilots. Pilots who knew how to navigate the seasonal monsoon winds. I had no-one to help put a bathtub-stopper to that whirlwind.

Between my continent of starvation and respite lands of subsistence, no social safety net would catch my breath. Or breathe myself out of this state of Ghetto rut. So, I rocked between my permanent states of funk: mass-grave & maximum prison. Funk I was in. Funk the ghetto had immersed and entrenched us all in.

The grave being the only real opinion that gaped hangrily. The grave: spread-wide and loose. Spread-lovingly and without demands. Just waiting. Always waiting to put a full-stop to the carcass existence that was my life. Is my life. From birth to death.

Shuttling between one 'fated-when' of grave and prison, elaborate thoughts of suicide let me cove up to their Mammy and Medusa orgies. Their Aunt Jemima endowments and Sara Bartman cleavages. Unlike babies, in protective embraced of loving parents, I rocked on the cradle of nervous instability. That instability brewed in poisonous advice. From the Devil himself. Brewed in tears and sticky drool drenching my pillow. Satan's advice: mixed and stirred. Mixed and stirred my nightmares every sunset. Adding the yeast of township vulgarity to isqo that packed a punch and kicked mean-ass. 'Off yourself.' Satan suggested. He persuaded. Gently sometimes. I could hear his Morgan Freeman voice faced with my disgusting reflection in the mirror. The good ol' devil was convincing. "Get rid of this blob of unrealized dreams, the expectations you have un-become. Be fair and relieve the world: your friends, your family; relieve them of the burden of carrying your wanting, wasting-away, and emaciated frame. Relieve them this miser you are; the miser your 'head in the clouds' brewed! That's the only sensible and honourable thing. Or: you would rather be a joke to your peers? 'Cumbersome'... remember? Remember the exact words? Needy and 'cumbersome' that you can hardly put candle lights on. Let alone load pre-paid electricity. Devil's sermon rang, & soothingly condemned.

The last candle my money could buy sunk and disappeared in a spice gold empty-bottle. Just a week prior wading these murky waters of destitution, I had landed from British airways peeving on a white passenger: browsing through an article that bore my name. But niks nyuku had collected in my name for the work. It would be six solid moons pressing their whole weight on my thinning frame before the grudging three Rands a word – from the prestigious publication – hoists their damned weight off of me. Off by a stratosphere clear from my kak magnetizing skin.

The deplorable state of the country. The lack of radical imagination for fundamental change. I had waxed a full-spread about. Did they not turn my lot faster than I could say R3/word?

Just this morning, I was on national radio talking to Arundhati Roy, Foucault and Spivak: issues of power and power-over. "Words are sanctioned by power, nywere nywere nywere." More immediate though was electric power bill.

Power bill: within its grid I was determined (without). With words ‘power’ had fled. Like contents of a toolbox – one by one file up, and, from all cardinal corners, fuck off. The nywere-nywere I spewed over beer, with friends and acquaintances, had turned a noose. ‘Words’, equal or better than Gutto’s, Mbembe’s and Friedman’s, put together. Theirs: paid the bill. Mine: choked to the ching-ching sounds of a till.

‘I should have opted for *ubulungu* instead of this worm and wretched thing I am: sinking in God-forsaken dirty ghetto mattress’, mulled Two-Rooms in a moment of weakness. A moment spattered with traces of contradiction, and uncertainty.

The makeshift candle-stand, the *empty*, a Caribbean rum alcohol container, courtesy of rowdy friends who stormed my depression serenity forty Sundays ago, with all things take-away, booze and junk-food, was left: a memento. To raise a temple to their visit: one violin player had sent them. Sent them scouting disgruntled youth for talents. A *clarion call*– by the hustler – was on the cards. The Ace no-one saw coming – in all his things both platitudinous & cunning – was the hustler’s skill. The skill to ‘hold us by the left, and play us by the right’.

That didn’t keep my Caribbean rum empty bottle friends up at night. We expected as much from hustlers: the Pusha Pressa Phanda who’s gift (of the gap) fabricated their pressure sensors wherever the winds flipped and flopped them.

What was of immediate concern for me was how the *empty*, jettisoned by not-so-hungry comrades – an *empty* carrying with it good tidings and spirited winds of change – left a false psychographic trail in my trash-can. The green beer bottles and junk-food wrappers did not reflect my Life Style Measurement. Not my spending patterns. My visitor’s perhaps, yes. But certainly not mine. About that I was left agonizing.

This distorted well-to-do litmus test, avowed by my trash-can, worried me. I was worried by both imagined researchers – the nosey mofuckers who would storm my bin and find false spending trajectories creased in receipts and intentions not of my making –and the garbage-men’s penchant for gossip. Since that area was their ‘office’ (as good as mobile office gets), it left little to imagination that they would while their time there blowing the gasket over my obvious hypocrisy.

What will they say, seeing me totter to the outside toilet in skeletal frame? What will they say, catching a sight of me in the wee hour – their collection shift? What orgy of rubbish ideas they shall feast on, faced with contents of a bin that says one thing about me, yet they

bear witness (week in week out) of another me: the undernourished. What bosh circumstance indeed, that one's rubbish bin boasts 'ndingumlung' wakho wena'. While its owner can't spare even Bojangle's chinking coins, on Christmas collection-day, for that 'wena'? I was down and out. But had enough pride still left in me to insist: "I'm not about to go down that double-dealing two-faced liner."

I was still cheeky enough to take my body through the worst demands made on it by my convictions. But I just could not immerse the *fact* of ghetto in Olympics of suffering. I could not split hairs about my emaciated body or my body-position. I had knocked on doors that on paper qualified my ass as middle-class. One who didn't have the entourage of luxuries that came with that labelling. Like: sieving boiled eggs through the filter of breakfast time, and calibrating stiff pap meals for dinner time perhaps. Yet the men and women who came for my rubbish, every week, were 'men' and 'women' – pillars to their households – precisely because that filter defined their plates, everyday. Being out there, feeding it by the run of the mill, made it unthinkable otherwise.

And there I was, blurring the bloody lines between walking and crawling creatures.

I couldn't bring myself to trust the surface difference. So I drowned it for a sentiment way superior than the difference my hunger pangs imposed.

Pitched against clarion-call-hustlers, garbage collector and Spice Gold *empty* tippers, that fine-dining filter, who's shores I couldn't even smell in my crawling-creature state, wouldn't, couldn't, didn't allow me to tip over: adapting me to indifference for the line. I couldn't bow to some uncritical sea of class disparities. Not into a packing order that comes: small, medium, large. A labelling fixed to fit all 'classes' and or sizes.

I had to see the glass-meddling of colour. Had to see it make complex what the rungs of fixed labels made simple. I had to see something that cheat-value-exchange made simple but throes of colour threw off its purported mark by a mile.

My problems, the fact of my being here, don't begin with hunger. My problems don't begin with anything that falls under the hat 'scarce'. My problems begin with colour: what it was used to 'pass' and what it was used to rebar. Essentially: everything abundant like it (colour), that under this sun, outside my door, kissed: kissed-me-all-shades-of-nice-and-mahogany. Even when that colour has turned invisible manure – invisible to those who deny its smell. Me: I can still smell its stench from a 400 years distance.

The bottle-neck opening of the *empty* provided a mould where the candle-stump sunk. There: the wax pressed and fixed securely.

The burning candle wick gasped and choked, in over-supply of oxygen.

*Oxygen supports combustion— we were taught in grade 5 or 6. I wouldn't put it past a possible mention if I combed through a grade 9 textbook (Bantu education science class). The glowing splinter experiment – burns like Usher in oxygen, pops (like ghetto heads on tire-necklaces) in nitrogen, maybe hydrogen, can't remember. An experiment I only know as pictures in an outdated science book.*

So, here, unlike the experiment (*a splinter burns into bright flame in the presence of oxygen*), the damned oxygen was choking the poor wick. *That, and the water filtration experiment, fortified my science preparation for university entry. Later, at the cost of life-long corrections, the balance would come.*

*Later, I'd learn that: excess of it, oxygen – its oversupply – has the effect of killing a flame (candle wick flame in my case.) Learned: in its liquid form, can cut through any thickness of molten iron. Rend grown-man's torso-wide bogie wheels asunder. Nay, blow the snake of steel that stands on them in half. That extra bit on oxygen properties I acquired in my stumbles against mis-education (from my formative years).*

An inch below the grooves of the *empty*: a makeshift bottle-plinth (Caribbean Rum), there, air was trapped. Where the candle butt ended and the void inside the empty bottle started – cascades of void hugging the walls – something precarious there hung.

Of the burning stump remains, initially: proud Egyptian obelisk standing attention like a convicted patriot perched on a cause, now: soggy, and beat by the elements, a 'screw-cap' size muzzling the bottle-mouth was left. The burning wick flame forced the candle stump to cave in. The changing viscosity from once erect wax, all soft. Resolve: melted by bludgeoning time. The thinning bottom of the candle-stump, cupping molten wax a meniscus too heavy to carry. Too heavy to carry for the emaciated base. There, raptured. Trapped air, inside the bottle-stand, charged. Through the raptured candle base: the charge spliced the 'in' and the 'out'. The orifice forged by the ever-present pressure and temperature, was peas in a pod. Made noticeable by a quest for balance.

Between vacuum located outside the bottle, and pressure built from within, the wick gasped its last. Breathless, the flame died. Gone: with no rites to make its life worthy of recognition. Gone: with the scavenging darkness. A darkness ebikad' ibamb' iskhonkolo on the surface of the walls. Gone as vapour fetched by the ether, at lost-and-found. Found and called home to come rest permanently. The boom gate of paint, a paint film constraining a menacing darkness behind appearance, on the borders of in/out/visible coating, that thin coating of paint, a film holding the corners of the room up to light, collapsed too. Its defences coming down crashing. Roaring as did the divide when the 'cold' between East and West Germany warmed up like true-north glacier. The intangible fence turning honeycomb porous. The long awaiting darkness engulfing. With ravenous appetite: gorging sight, its corridors, and all its pathways. Putting TuRoom's flickering hope out.

Putting my windowpane of hope in shards.

*It's a curious fit how we all live our 'now' by events referenced in the 'future'. And when the light of those events (in the future) dims today, not only do dreams we harbour (for that future) tend to run helter skelter (in the future), but our solid anchor in 'now' wobbles and gets shook. Shifts, like quick sand under feet.*

*As with resistance muscled out by weak candle glow, so too resolutions flee when pitted against a greater threat.*

*Which bet is safe in this game of threats? The six-feet cut to the chase, or ubulungu? Had no clue. But as the saying goes: when in doubt, keep cutting.*

'... ndiwunikela kuwe umowa wam' the wick sampled the last of *the seven words*. *God's son on the tree hung like Strange Fruit*. Bowed out. Carrying the room's darkness like a cross. Light-support down to traces and shadows in my mind, I sat up straight. Against a pillow. Head craned, for the bag with the last bit of mieli -mieli groza: its contents. Readied myself for more than a take-over by darkness.

I've not switched off the lights in years. Precisely to keep away imagined mice. And now, in a space contested by rats, I doubted I'd sleep a wink.

Yes, I lived like most in the ghetto. Within arms-reach of any and everything I need in a room. The night-bucket for passing out urine: next to my suspended mattress. Groceries: on beer crate next to it. Mayonnaise, butter and onion: in a wardrobe shelf, an arm-and-a-hanger

length from anywhere in the room. Radio: on my mobile phone, assaulting my eardrum. Television: a file of ants away. A plug-point: under my hat-&jacket-hanging nail. My jacket: my arm's length above my pillow. Light switch: a broom-stick reach from my brick-suspended bed. Toiletry— sunlight bar soap, dual-booting as *Colgate*. A fatigued toothbrush. Vaseline blue seal: taking turns with cooking oil when seals of integrity come off. A bible: in I Write What I Like, under the pillow. And a ladder of books – words to ship me out of that hole. Words softening like a lowing cow chewing the cud. Steadying the nervous charge of ignorance, squeezing more time from the stubborn clock.

I lived within reach of butcher-knives for arms of time: okapis cutting my beeline, locking it in circular lack.

I couldn't help the temptation to test the knives cutting resolve, help: pushing back costly miseducation by a millennia. If the cist buried beneath the scab we call 'the township', if there I found *i-timing* ilahlile, I pushed.

I pushed and bit more than I could chew. The was late to chew the cud.

Extraordinary days indeed these were.

Staple diet: ration of one egg per day. All week. Two eggs on Sunday. With a portion of stiff pap to hedge for uncertainty in times of dwindling 'food-security'.

*Food security? You must listen to experts on food security. Listen to them moan about woes and threats. Threats to food distribution systems. Moan about the great mystery of which, in that 'value chain', is under most threat. Moan about: This and that 'distribution' unknown. All big parts of food-security threats.*

*... at such brouhaha I always wonder...: 'have you been hungry? So hungry that you wished you were either disabled (to access grant) or incarcerated (to access meals, wifi and tv in jail)?*

*Because: your last line of defence— self-pride, will not let you shake off the unintended pity braided in subsistence of mercies. Leftover mercies from good-hearted neighbours nextdoor; left over there in amaqithiqithi they spare you. Spare you to spare themselves the shame of witnessing a grown-man's body emaciated. An abled-body stewing in starvation?*

*'Security'? Hold on to it until Gooding Anxiety knocks at your nex-doors. There stands, tuning you: "fuck security"*

***Anxiety:** Hi Good Neighbour, my name is Gooding Anxiety, from ubuntu philosophy. I come from a tradition: 'unyawo alunampumlo'. loosely: feet land the body in the most precarious and awkward of places. because feet do't come in devices replete with nose for where they go. Don't come with premonition for danger. or barometer for stranger and strangeness.*

*Hi, my name is Gooding Anxiety, I'm like energy. I cannot be created. and cannot be destroyed. I'm inborn in You. Him. and that moFucker crossing to the other side of the street. If you want to see a picture of me younger, here: forest pregnant in a seed.*

*Hi, my name is Gooding Anxiety. I'm a little like Sartre's freedom – the idea that 'we are condemned to be free'. I'm hard-coded in all that 'ought not be, but is.' Like Mikiti, Manyalo, Mafu invites, I was born to be spread uninhibited. Unfortunately, this neighbourhood we share, put me on a straitjacket on arrival.*

*hi, my name is Gooding Anxiety.*

*Where I come from: we think it healthy to let me loose. To play with other in 'umntu ngumntu ngabantu' park. there – in umntu ngumntu ngabantu – we find what Maslow's hierarchy of needs missed. that: when Life has secured clothes on your back (and in your wardrobe), food in your stomach (and cupboards), roof over your head (even in the strangest and most foreign lands), life-truly is not the stuff in your vault and storeroom, not the black plastic rectangle that fits cuddly in your wallet, and the SUV parked in your garage, Life truly is gift-exchange: the free gifts of 'sawubona' . the handshakes you give and take from your Good Neighbour. in other words: ukuphila kukuphilisana.*

*Hi, my name is Gooding Anxiety. Where I come from: we treat Life like we puff a zol: puff and pass, innandi ngendebe ezininzi..*

*but, here... ha.a: not this neighbourhood. This neighbourhood won't budge to higher ways of the zol. This neighbourhood has one group, pale and distant, guilty feet with hardly rhythm, holding on to the zol pathetically, no: pathologically, bloating themselves puckered with anxiety: shrunken like raisins, in guns under pillows, crammed in gated communities on an 'security' response app, pressed under surveillance buttons, breathing in fits and starts under*

*some bully fingers, 'on your haunches!' they send a Good Neighbour. under some heavy thumbs.*

*hi, my name is Gooding Anxiety. Frankly, the ways of this neighbourhood is shit! fenced by Slovo museum barricades, its people amputated from Feeling: enclosed, locked in a marked zone: a tourist destination bush sandwiched by loitering game, god's humour pegged on Brett Murray Spear: hung as the kangaroo pouch, wedged between sagging pants and thick thighs: starved thick and food-for-thought poor, pushed to a corner like a rat poor, by too much 'security' response, cornered by the pointing of muzzles in steady hands, looked at through safari prism: the Schadenfreude's 20-20, his fantasy view, his locus of enjoyment, the sunburnt-skin magnetizing bullet like bucks in their museum enclosures, regarded with contempt when they cross their museum border into Camps Bay demarcation lines: where they enters its high-walls only to be greeted by all manner of 'high alert': not to breach what Sandton frontiers staves off of Alex,*

*Hi, my name is Gooding Anxiety. If this neighbourhood dropped its safari prism: the view keeping Khayelitsha from crossing, Slovo from crossing over anxiety bottlenecks, bottlenecks drawn in 40km abyssal lines, the gap between Nkanini and Rondebosch south, Nyanga and upper Claremont... ... this neighbourhood would have no need for its prized 'security' response. If only it woke up one morning and let anxiety loose, loose to roam more freely...*

*If this neighbourhood paused for a second, stopped thinking in terms of sharing food and wealth, but started in terms of sharing a healthy dose of anxiety... A Gooding Anxiety... who knows what Good would come of it?*

So, indeed to hedge for my food crisis: I devised to boil the whole half-dozen of eggs at once. Eggs dumped in pick n pay plastic bags monthly. With baked-beans. Tin-fish. And beefstock. At my door. Dumped there by a sympathetic youth-pastor.

I had gotten him to be so embarrassed seeing me in that state. Giving-up. So embarrassed that, on a day he came bearing news of a mutual friend that had passed, and on seeing my decrepit state, me: knee-deep in my own unmarked grave-plot, he climbed down from his mzalwana high-horse. Turned coat for another code, bro-code. Thinking on his feet, he opted to steal. Broke a sacred law to restore with it umntu who had lost all sense of sacredness.

*An extra food-parcel meant starving the widowed, the aged, and all sorts of invalids and unfit (where I guessed I belonged), starving them for one day in thirty. Women who formed part of a program by this old-friend-turned-man-of-God, felt pity for me. And being moved: they came together and figured they could do some tit for tat cross subsidizing. Value for value: I would help their grandchildren with school mathematics.*

*I didn't bother fighting for the precise: the premise underlying my being 'invalid' and 'unfit'. A category I shared with people who made strong bonds from threads of weakness. I had figured: among Sartre Orphan Noir I was Roman in Rome. Whatever social packing Order, if abantu were housed there, that house was my home too.*

*Happier than me, for a moratorium on starvation, was a colony of bullying rats. Rats I shared with my church-provision stash.*

Batch boiling kept going. A way to stall more troubled days, when it didn't just rain but poured. Boiling half-a-dozen eggs lasted me for a week. That gave me peace of mind in hell. For a week: the batch-cooking subtracted from my shoulders the cross of pre-paid electricity. When the cold weather growled and sneered, baring its piercing teeth, and the heavens dropped its deadstock of misery in floods and torrents, Western Cape winters (minus pre-paid worries) was as good a reprieve as any.

I had just enough pre-paid to spread over one more week of 'unknowns' and 'unhedged'. A week pushing back the rustling of anxiety in my gut. That chastity belt for lusts of the stomach factored: A day of cooking skipped, a day stretching my one meal ration of stiff pap to cover two days, put a week of electricity back on the grid by end of the week. The belt on my waist, by hooks jumping their regular holes, turned receding lipids to kwh units, and a once glowing bright skin to units of a pacing anxiety, locked away in a makeshift straitjacket.

I had only but one option for my crawling-friends: the part in the Lord's Prayer that goes: "forgive us father, as we forgive those that trespass our mielie meal sachets". My cohabiting with rats could not be improved beyond the 'our father who art in heaven' prayer. So I contented with sharing the house – house still under construction – with pervading rats.

The devil-incarnates played their marsupial fool. Not unlike their ruthless next of kin outside, kids drowning my hunger pang growls with their din marshals. Turning the thinking voice in my head into drones of inaudible 'futsek futsek niyangxola... can't here myself think in this shit'.

Kids taking turns to mock me for being so pathetic a creature. Endowed with IQ that can stand its own among formidable equals, but dololo shit to show for it.

What that din outside seemed to intuitively grasp was that: if my useless IQ behind walls that had rats mustering guts to downgrade a human by coronating him (me) 'king of the crawling world', the Mingus' Pithecanthropus (upright) there'. And doing it in style: showering him, his food (my food), with pallets of shit and drizzles of piss. Then they too could do with me as though I was a New Creation. A crawling creature. The kids' voices I imagined. Imagined slipping in and out of consciousness. A sign of waning from upright to crawling-consciousness: a consciousness wringed simple by hunger. Maybe I didn't imagine. Maybe they were there. Maybe they were not. Maybe it's not 'poor' that's the matter with my state. Maybe its consciousness. Maybe in its nature consciousness is always, somehow, somewhere in between. Between 'sleep' and 'woke'. Between what 'is' and what 'is not'.

Before darkness drowned my tired toothbrush; my beer-crate stands; and many a rags meant to cover my back, and washing rags strewn like chair-backs and armrest doilies on an old sofa opposite my boat-shaped mattress (on bricks), before darkness drove a through-line of uniformity between me and the list of chattel in the room, I took a jab at remains of mielie mielie contents in a tilted container, a container feeling lost, a sack feeling misplaced in my hands. I reached out my under-nourished arm, and a stubborn breath for the vulnerable sack. I noticed that the fine powdery IWISA granules bore tattoos of footprints. Some fine art work of disappearing paws. The picture reminding me of *bare feet in the beach* by Michael Franks.

Mice had left not only evidence that rend my groceries. Nay: pity-rations from a man-of-God. Not only was my groceries rend into happy-valley and joy-ride theme park for rats. The mice also left pallets of shit-deposits; and territorial marking of ammonium stench. The pungent piss: to let me know who was boss there.

Eviction orders don't get more eloquent. Nevermore than a guy (crawling creature in my case) coming to piss and shit on your groceries to give you a good indication that: one of you is not welcome there. Not welcome no more. I got the memo. But time was not on my side to leave the rats to be in peace.

Rent money had long dried up by the time the rats kicked down my door forcing me to share their anxiety for lack of Maslow's basics. Kids I had assisted with maths were becoming increasingly irregular with their tutorial fees. Those that owed me for my services I talked my

soul to believe they were ‘total cost of ownership of all the risks one takes on taking up an entrepreneurial challenge’. I clubbed them with that part of the Lord’s Prayer I reserved for the four-legged intruders: Grey faired, dirty whiskers, and pink twitchy nose.

I was in arrears. And though the land-lord was a friend, I had niggling suspicion that I had stretched our relationship very thin. The debt I owed him ate into our bro-code. They say money makes funny: long overdue payment cross subsidized as patience turned cowardice, kindness turned weakness, difference turned irreverence. Worse: a lack of mutual respect. Our friendship pulled the plug on its life-support.

As hunger pangs gnawed on my pancreas, I felt the bile from my liver rise and rise. My teeth collected the bitter taste that came with my changing body. Their brightness transformed into maize-kernel yellow. The *seven years yendlala* colour. A despicable sight of kernels suspended on bleeding gums. My bright smile retreated with each receding lipid layer. Left on my skin was sheathe of unhealthy-blackness laminating my cranium; reconstructing my figure into a sculptor dangling an *improper fraction*: head disproportionately weighing on my thinning neck and shrunk shoulders. Rather than adding to my facial contours flesh and exuberance of life, my otherwise bright smile became a hybrid between grin and sneer. Just short of a Guernica for a growl.

The gulags of butter-yellowish bodies. Bodies with upper epidermis layer peeling off. Peeling off to reveal cream-off-white nakedness beneath their sunburn. Their otherwise melanin outfit. Recurred in my dreams. The bodies thawed in trays that collected fat and sticky blood-film. The bodies wrapped in translucent plastic bags, bags stashed for disposal. Without much attention for detail, these bodies seemed to puke traces of life; life that kicked their death-binds and undertaker refrigeration trays beneath their toy toying, and stomping feet.

The bodies seemed to charge headless. Gutless. Naked. They charged dripping sweat; glimmering fat; drenched in clots and gore. The bodies charged after me. I ran in fright and flight. I ran escaping what I knew to be death that has the power to rub-off from across the grave’s abyssal line.

The bodies nestled on sharp edges, skewers in panga blades. Bodies riveted on hammers. Skulls cracking edges of steel, gorging the okapi helpless. In my path skulls: cupped melted iron. Some open skulls played back their hammer bashing. On their slits and cracks an ugly din went on repeat: on protest mode. Each skull bore a scar that set it apart from others.

Scarring with unique names: Names that described more conditions that individual experiences; Nontsokolo; Matlakala; Mnyamana-nengcuka; Manyiki; Mfenana; Piki; S’pikiri, Mavis, Gilbert, Johannes, kaffir. Yet the claim they made, as witnesses to their doubtful recollection, defied contingency; defied reason, defied unique motivation. They seemed to chorus that, there need not be reason offered. That the scarring, like a ritual, preceded Reason. That the scarring was its own rationale. A kind of: I do *because I can*. That was what birthed the wounds yawning a protest in fuzzy logic.

I woke up thinking; I have Zille’s direct digits. I had left my number and a bucket of number-two on her porch, after our better days serving her Springfield Chardonnay glasses, her: fascinated that I could trace my surname to the Rudge’s 1699 consignment, me: the permanent exile of some of mine in the Favelas across the Atlantic keeping the sun switched on at night. Maybe I could call her and apologize for the kak stunt. Better still she could put the whole thing on her twitter handle, and prime time TV will bite. And run with it. I could get her to sign me up for *ubulungu like the MEC of housing*. Get her to milk the *reconciliation* tab. And me: escape my moral high-ground inflicted pangs. I woke up thinking; maybe I should accept the money-bag offer. Assuage my state of social death. But. But something more stubborn than the demands of the stomach lingered. That thing was consciousness; how consciousness implies time, and how its incompleteness implicates time in the same.

I woke up and shook hands with Biko. Nontsizi too. She was there in a bonfire, where millions gathered like angels on a needle tip. Nontsizi fished out of her inxili – an accessory that suspended on her hip by a strand hugging her torso (from the shoulders up), a strand sandwiching her trunk in beaded art work. The inxili was made from umbhaco cloth, with lustre and swag. On drawing her hand out of the carrier, a bastille flashed. She dipped two fingers in it, and came up with something that looked like lip gloss. A balm. The Balm of Gilead. Smearing my body with it felt soothing. The sensation on my burns: the difference of a warm shower after the sting of winter and rainy Cape Town on a job-hunting skin. I felt the weight of doors shutting on my face lifted. Burns I had no clue hurt before the rub: breaking free, becoming openly queer. Biko showed me a news-paper cut-out, from a community publication. The publication reported on a queer candle fire. “Winter Fires In Khayelitsha Claim An Unemployed University Graduate”. I had dozed off before the candle wick died.

The more I drew the blankets over my head, the more cold accosted my feet. My thighs. My back. The bed that had locked my constant ‘yitshiii’. ‘Yitshii’ accompanied by self-consolation ‘thimnci’. The natural attempts of a body in bed trying to defuse the bacteria. Attempts against the Order that didn’t put up with such sickness. Attempts that held me shaking like a rabbit cornered by fangs, oceanic drools of harangues by overzealous canines, canines barking a thighbone of anxiety through my behind, a bone I could feel tingling my resistant innards.

I had been vomited violently by the system. The bacteria curdled my body into ‘witchcraft’ and ‘superstition’: one) ‘Makhulu’s ginger and mhlonyane concoction’, and) ‘an attitude of prayer shifting the furnisher of consciousness huddled in solid plans and reliable forward march of time in my head’,

in bed:

my body curled like dirty laundry. puffing heavens-seeking plumes of stench, drawing every-which-last-drag of ‘mpepho’ kicking, and screaming, kicking and screaming out of the sunbeam-polish lid-turned-incense-vase.

something ‘fruity’ burning on the stove.

something ‘musty’: from the struggle of roll-on trudging up the hill of fever and perspiration under my armpit.

body in folds between sores.

sweat

and a menacing nosebleed.

tucked inside the third-order of concentric spheres.

trapped: by a giant block kabompi, freezing

trapped: in three sheet-covers – Time, Space, Feeling.

sketched: in contours.

drawn: over, under, and around.

me: below-room-temperature tucked.

body: a cadaver in indeterminate consciousness.

a body: baptized in Makhulu's for-cold concoction.

concoction: I had had.

had: before blowing out the candle and starting on a 'valley of the shadow of death' path,  
... through the night.

there...

on a column-thin mattress: convulsing. Tossing. Snoring. Turning Skewing in 'umfuziselo wokufa', Makhulu's words.

words: key now ...

as key as the concoction itself.

Makhulu: the person who had reliably passed the mixture this far down the generation-gap.  
like intsomi, ... this 'consciousness of death'.

Bent.

bent: on her knees, by her bedside.

me: a ngudu the height that shares eye-level view with Ngilindoda in the kernel, outside.

Makhulu: with Ma'Olady's voice between worlds, between timelines tempered by her  
prayerful attitude.

her whole being alloyed between human-rhythm and a heartbeat bobbing to the language  
spared for such solemn cracks in our intelligible continuity.

Makhulu: bowed down in such fuzzy addresses: like Locations strung in dis-location.

... time-space-ships fashioned to slip isibhilivane, some kind of telegram, under God's door,  
the study where he (God) files all Makhulu's emotive:

'Ngweletshetshe yendlukaS' rayeli', no 'Dear' etiquettes.

'uzugcin' abantwana bam', no Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

'uthi naxa sisenza lo mfuziselo wokufa ngokuhlw'a nje ube ngumqulu womlilo ofukame  
phezu kwabo', no abyssal line drawn between the 'mystic' and the 'natural', nothing the  
shape of difference between the bible's mythopoetry and the ghetto's mytho-historical.

'ubakhusele', tunning God to: effectively, turn bullets into Mlanjeni's water, the Makhanda-  
madness.

'ngoba wena mngcinin kaSrayeli awozeli awulali', qualifying the mystic by reference and  
cross-reference, qualifying the queer proper by reliability with which she makes the Word  
auto-critical, self-searching in-line with scripture

beseching ... :

‘imiphefumlo yabo uyilondoloze’, in scribbles of the mute.

‘ude uthi tha umsobomvu ekuzeni kokusa’, her heart beating compassion, beating the scale of time in ‘13’, ‘18’ and ‘27’ o’ clock.

‘Amen.’: to Marikana: Is Not Over Just Because It Stopped,

Amen to: a time-space-ship woven in Word, ‘word’ Busing the forward march of time in fits and starts.

Amen: paused between comas, colons and metaphors.

... paused by feeling alone.

... a feeling that solidifies the viscosity of time rock-solid.

moment-solid: standing still to her attention, attentive to her prayerful desires till the morning,

then:...

... in the morning: I wake up on this side of her consciousness of death. to a body drowned. a body buoyed-wingless in a puddle of blood. blood tempered by the smell of piss.

I wake up to fingers, mine, fishing the bloody leak in wonder, phishing for ‘DNA reliable’ in the groves between my fingerprints.

then: ....

... coming out of that forensic exercise sorely disappointed. disappointed by a thick scarlet-red, red from a distance, red discolouring very fast, discolouring into pale yellow, yellowish when brought under my nose. I wake up astounded by the thickness with which the ‘yellowish’ and its humidity now flowed:

... the thickness of sweat, dry as Cerebos on my fingers...

fingers running through a database yoosiyazi in security-guard uniform.

fingers at a cemetery unable to steady my nerves.

the officer, who guards the entrance to a cemetery (where my mother lies cold,

drawing more blanks, than my fingers, to my question: ‘where’s the rest of the recorded dead?’

I wake up battling sleeps, eyes covered much deeper than the covers of darkness

I wake up blank.

blank where a register book of the dead should bear, my mother’s grave plot and the year of her death, next to her maiden names: ‘Dorothy Jambase’.

I wake up breathing mind-boggling integrity gaps: ...

.... entries of loved-ones shored up

blown up

lines between the six-foot tall and the six-feet under all blurred.

I wake up to integrity and coherence scrubbed haywire and incoherent.

I wake up innards turned inside out...

...inside out: from beneath the reliable half-by-two-meter-and-six-feet-deep plots, six-feet lynchpin mounds rend hand grenade split, split into hairs of fraudulent identities.

Identities, me: on delirium split, mother: on mass-grave split, father: fethwel' umnqwazi split, brother (I never had): with his cares split in search of our mother's gardens, sister: withheld from the devastation by keeping mum ngelishwangusha, domnci: saying 'le ifuna iintonga', mzala saying: let's try the database office, Malume: in agreement with both split, Makhulu: the fork lifter between heaven and earth split. all strung cross-less. all strung date-less. all strung nameless. all forged by lack of *feelings*, all made faceless.

Faceless by lack of consideration.

*black-holes.*

holes drilled in the timeline of reliable-history, honeycombed like a weak argument in a debate tournament, or a poorly normalized database.

spots of perforation this side of the millennium railroad, blemishes zomle defying lofty periodization.

black spots sewn in strings of doubtful-humanity, black-strings strung in mass-grave theory. covers drawn: in Dreams, in Thought and a tinkering with Feelings (a disastrous tinkering with).

Covers: covering my turooms cadaver.

Covers: because I'm feeling cold.

Cold in bed

in sweat

in blood

goaded gore by a visit to the grave.

only to meet intsoni: my mother never countenanced in the records of existence ever: as in Sorry Ms Jackson are you for real?

intsoni emini, intsoni not told with the reverence of 'day' and 'night' time difference: the 'chosi chosi ndingaphum' impondo' difference answering: "... forever ever...".

.... The whispers of an officer occupying the highest authority possible, the escalation high query level, anticipates my trauma to “my mother’s grave records disappeared” in these words:

‘yabona ke grootman, before we go and look for your mother in the database, I must give you an interview.’

The part about ‘interview’ flies right over my grasp. I’m confused, but patient enough to hear the record-of-the-dead-database-keeper, the-man-slash-interviewer, slash-officer, interview me.

I listen: ‘yabona ke grootman, ii-recodes zethu aziphelelanga. our records of passed on people are reliable only up to 2012’.

So... so. you mean. that. all the people. who died. before 2012.... may have been lost. permanently. to history. to existence? I inquire.

He replies in the affirmative. an embarrassing tale he tells in muffled tones. eyes beat-down with shame. their knees weak. too weak to lock with mine, as we toast to ‘freedom’. free to be wiped off from the face of existence.

His shame is cloaked in garments of a janitor that turns the crank to this time-machine. a time-machine of violence. his shame is that of an officer rented at a fee to tell tales of unimaginable ‘force-removals’: how we are still forced out, graves shored up, with our weed of invisibility running the racket like ghosts in this here Ghostown.

.... iintsoni emini forced out of his mouth, in hourly-rate salary.

shame: cupped in his fence-sitting insular identity. his chance-privilege. his fancy: with his ‘leave’ days. That: ‘I will take leave from work next week, take a bus to Sheshegu, there, at home, a spittle away from umbona and the latrine toilet, there, where lies my grandfather’s grave, I will go, ndifike ndibase impetho, ndibize izihlwele nge-confidence ethi: apha kulele ithamba lamathambo am’...

... he will take leave, board a bus to Sheshegu, pay a visit to the grave in his backyard, a site marked only by foliage in which remains of his loved-ones are carried in matt-finish lush leaves, green finishes like false colours of a corpse-operation, a grave going back to frontier

wars, a grave preserved only in vegetation and its refreshing breeze, breeze tempered in Chenin blank scents: the existential seal livening that grave mound in Mimosa orange and shades of grass-blade, the *Acacia that Grey brought from the* south eastern Australia, acacia sharing the landscape with native qaqqa, as natives as trial-runs of the Queen's benevolent mission rehearsed in New South Wales assignment, and perfected in South Africa, the incorporation of the extinct Tasmania unintended by him (Grey) to grab hold in Sheshegu soil, the marriage of the Mediterranean: its warm and temperate mood, its highland tropical landscapes espousing Sheshegu Kaffraria unintended, unintended by him (Grey), unintended to save him (the database officer) and split me as he did, unintended to conquer us and still in the post-war era of RDP put us in unmarked mass-graves.

I can't bark my disappointment at the database officer. Nothing of my bottled 161 years is worth spilling here, at his office: not in this cubicle, not this mass production of lifelessness on an office-chair skewing in unintended chances of history, a database-officer feeling ashamed for what he cannot do or undo, feeling ashamed for being the coal face of the passage of times motored at my expense, indebted to me, not in this cubicle: where everyone now swerves in debt-induced nervousness, the mort-guage don like a Markhams mannequin, a body starched like a mummy, covered in blue salesman pants and a matching jacket, feet drenched in kiwi-polish brown, the shirt underneath: one that comes in a batch of three: white, blue (and an offkey colour that throws you a curved ball, like hospital bedlinen pink, or the culinary school beige and mink uniform). Nothing of my bottled 161 years is worth spilling on this officer: in a cardigan, and church-service shoes to match, one pair: brown, like a scar battling to heal, the other: black, faded under the shadow that his spinning throne – his seat behind a Windows database programme – casts.

Nothing.

It's a Friday, between evening and morning. The Friday that broke me into pieces: space-time-consciousness, pieces that broke the ties that bind me to Monday follows Sunday, follows Saturday, follows Friday: time as we know it. It's a Friday that broke me to Thought, Dream and Feeling, time untied, rend into pieces, pieces of a lullaby, a song to lull the consciousness, consciousness back to sleep, back to sleep, back to sleep again:

\*\*\*

## Black Friday lullaby

*Beziba Zithwala/ Amatyalazo/ Neziqalekiso/ Zikathixo Waz'* - song of Nongqawuse

... in the morning of new beginnings, I was the android, a (hue)man-slash-machine. A Grey Invention, a nosebleed pulsing intension in the thin abyss of my bed, bacteria working hard to *affect* the Robot. To Up-<sup>set</sup> its New Wor(l)d course, to upset the set-Order, fighting hard to toss it a lifeline; fighting hard to socialize it to the chance of shared anxiety, fighting hard to arrest: arrest its Black Friday Maafa discount (at the auction block). soften its rigid cloak of tar & fat, from beefing up wasting away marked-skins. Soften and pushback – its imminent plunge;

b a c k ////////////\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\ from crossing the 'abyssal dead-end line'.

caulk the boat. and buoy its cliff-edge

B(lack)exit      *///*

....

(... one more time)

Hold at bay, the (Hue)Man~~oid~~-capsize, the plunge into faceless, nameless massgrave. sing its roughshod fragility to sleep. make a stab at healing; maul back the robota from plunging Feelinglessness first into a b-lack-hole. Maul back the automata, the part-thing-part-(hue)man, pause it in the seam of 'questionable people' ... pose the question: who is more alive, the one who reflects life in the mirrors of pain and *affect*, or the one perfect in blissful ignorance to all pain, who is 'us'? who is the AGE-old-android...?

Ask the question: who is We... who danced. Who toy. And toy. Toy with certitudes of 'fact' by casting a big-shadow of fantastical-doubts. We: who sing. And harm the 'natural' with 'mystic'. And crooned, and crooned, flailing, winded. gasping&wheezing, whizzing, for breath – in the noose of diss: our everyday penning with faeces. and instruments – the middle-pass-AGEold-android. still. are.

Us, now demo-cutting our choking (conditions) on earth wind & fire falsetto: 'This Woman's Work'

(max-welled

in concrete, peddling breathless

for reprieve) ...

drowning in the promise of Thuma Mina, batho pele bunkers, and VAT.

Android, chained on piano keys. Jitterbugging to the terror of the mundane. Gay! Rocking the soulless alps off-white, pale against the paygrade yobumsulwa, ubumhlophe nobulungisa.

Compelling the order to broach: *Make Me Wanna Holler Inner City Blues*... upgrade.

r&b & r.a.p, us. Hip-hopping over the seas, us. Machine screaming Ses' Zwile.

Guz coursing screams: Yambona Nangufile. Bubble gumming: Hay' Ng' yak' Saba

myChief u-dangerous. Fosta Nje ngoMzekezeke Kwai-too. We... us, who House mbhaqanga

in Gqom. Amandla Ensemble in mute; choking trumpets & traum-bones with a fondle of

Dizzy airs in bed. blowing saxophones... (straight se-Jack, ne-jacket) ... Kippies. just to take

the edge off blowing the world

into pieces

Us

We

Hue-We

p  
s i c  
ece  
-

nurturing a social life in ghetto sewages. J Edgar Hoover hating on every crumb of that b.r.e.a.k\fast programme. Fast/forward: Ta-Nehisi/Bavino Bachana; and many a cobblers of the same toolbox ziKhand' ukuza k' aNxele ngoMaskandi: Memoirs; from souls up, the penthouse of 'no hope'. Not another Messiah-scapegoat. Not another 'Palace coup'

platinum

belt

encrusted

Criminal

Not another chance-Malume on stereo twang... hoarding 'hong hong' dishonourable sidekicks in his *new dawn*.

We. Us the hueman-slash-machine: middle-pass-Ageold-androids. robots of indefatigable

'tic toc' ...

'tic toc' ...

'tic toc...' timelessness, timelessness stitching its fragments in our slaughterhouse of dis-  
Locations...

standing in the skid marks of millenniums. standing in the no-thoroughfare abyss. hoping,  
hoping that grunted 'a little 'tic toc' pause longer, the world may will its face towards the  
mirror, behold its imperfection. consider its botched Hue-Man course; its Black Friday  
auction block.

change its ways. Maybe. change its spots.

## A smile for Heather

*They blamed one another/ For settler's massacre/ Many thought it was/ Sanctioned By the gods/ To punish their sins – song of Nongqawuse*

Why do Morgue-bound pulses matter?

Why do dots on her heart-beat monitor spell hope. Why does that pulse of eternity, shaped in her womb, something to write home about. Why does that lifeblood of forever in new wineskins the matter? Why is that threshold-huddled future – the ruin of bygone peaceful suffering, the matter? Why is that re-write of defiance in the face of Joza's 'fated when' matter? Why is that exit-door out of Joza Veza – her mental poverty – a thing: the gatvol hope with god at gunpoint, our condemnation called out like Lazarus, the push back on 'manifest destiny' and against 'right of conquest', little ones made Word, Gods of second chances in the flesh, the last made first, and first last, the ill-sequenced of history, the glitch cloaked in gore, cloaked in broken-water, cloaked in shimmering blood-pearls, in placenta fat, in residual cum, fists full of preconscious tears matter? Why do their hardly off ol' pure-cotton napkins, hardly weaned half-a-decade on potty training – for work experience – penned with faeces, still teething youngings matter for? Or matter so little. Or not at all.

All that maybe. And that maybe not. Definitely, on that maybe scale of neither here nor there: blame me on history. Blame me on anxiety too burdensome a share to carry?

Blame my temperamental me on the fear that: every time I turn the corner, from the toilet, or the shop, the boardroom, or the lecture hall, the fear of meeting a glistening okapi, erect but unprovoked, ready to cow me under its bladeside, breathe down my neck, for fucks sakes.

Blame me for being there – wrong place. Wrong time. Wrong subjectivity. Wrong bias.

Wrong mould. It's all me, I accept. As rongo as Bantu. As rongo as Native. As rongo as Kaffir: as Mammy, as Medusa, as Nigger, as Bushman, as Khoi, as San, as Khoekhoena, as Gqunukhwebe, as Mbokondo. And sometimes. as Tokoloshe, Witch-doctor, and Savage. It's all my doing. It has to be.

Like it was mine to invite Christ, fresh from potty training innocence?

Yes, maybe I did. Maybe I didn't ... with my mouth confessed and my heart believed. I did. I must concede. Concede innocence: Me. I am innocence. No?

Well, I did miss a few aims with the margin of error that the burden of squeezing a foreskin at the tub, more precisely i-pheyile, comes with? I must. Must have. It ought. Ought to have. Ought to have been me. Has been me. Been. Me: a has been.

Was it me though? Before, I mean.

Maybe. But now? Not anymore.

Can I be sure, be sure of anything in this grid of appearances?

Well, 'yes' and 'no'. Was it my impatience for newness, perhaps? Perhaps it was my 'anything but this' temperament. That immature throw of the towel that grew my feet. Torqued my bench-warming behind hobbling for a confessional. Looking for an altar at six?

The altar of change at 9, 11, maybe 12.

Wouldn't put 'zero' past it.

'unborn', even: a) hormonally uncharged, b) unprotected vagaries of lust, c) swimming up the birth uncontrolled canal.

Swimming quantum leap episodes on rewind.

Turning back the hands of time. By 20. By 40. By 400. Maybe 2000 years.

Still. Still, couldn't know what Christ had for me in mind. So, I confessed. And believed.

Or could I. Could I believe?

Can't put anything past His stalker passion... his meaculpa first esguqweni sezono guilt-tripin. So I took Him on His word.

Ityala aliboli, was his Word. I guess that's why a sizable fraction of the globe is in a huff - every Sunday - in a huff to make good of the 2000 years-old Faustian pact. The pact god made with Man. The pact to balance him like a good Shepherd does his flock - 'balance me here quickly': you mean you little ones have two strays per lifetime ration; and they have 777 by comparison? Pact: the fall-back-on plan for the fallen-ness of Man. Make him and her childlike depended. God has. Does he?

How nice, for Man and God in jest. One: hung, god-forsaken *strange fruit, blood on the leaves, poplar tree swinging, sewer breeze choking, choking like the N2 into Soweto.*

The other: God-forsaken strange fruit, khakied interns sipping Mampoer in a cognac glass, body-temperature in white-knuckled palms, a dash of blood dripping from branches above..., contents downed at once as in Eucharist rites...

spitbraai sizzling a playlist: happy-go-lucky Delarey high on life. playing dozens with nakedman's clothes, under that tree. nakedman's crotch in his mouth. sampling himself whole. shame in full view on the decks: the umlungu phez' komuntu/ omunye phez' komunye. the ones and twos cross-wired, wired to an electricity contraption, to the SUV bakkie, to the ignition, to the turnkey I.T solutions.

I – for 'I'm ready to sing like a canary? T – for 'take you tyranny of love and keep it/ I don't... need it.

No need to come into one's life – barely-off-napkins. Come there claiming they confessed and believed. yes napkins: mine.

Maybe my mother's. Since the sperm-donor bastard denied I'm his. Because he pulled out just in the nick of time. Like the timing of Christ? Never early, never late. Christ for what though? To alter me? Save me from the rejection of the Man who denied me perhaps? Make me into a New Creature? As in: "If anyone (think toddlers too) is in Christ he is a New Creation. The old (count: milky teeth, oral, anal and phallic Freudian stages) has passed. Behold, a new creation is born."?

That? Can the promise of newness save me? Really? Though reeking of rancid sour stench – my mother's lactating mammary glands (no newborn in sight)? Save me from fetching her three-times double-D *bhodi*, from off the washline? Or is it DD cupsized bra? Body bimbling platinum belt complex? Its breastmilk of minerals busting at the nipples?

With klein-bass john suckling her. Her: singing him to sleep. One, fit for a lullaby. The other, singing him Trace, feeding his grown ass Channel O video vixen nipples? So that I may be negated, denied. Maybe neglected. So she can take turns between putting Klein Bass to sleep and being the altered, the Transformed: into Mrs Harvey's Hoover. Her: a broom in hand? A

washing machine 3D printed on her flayed wrist-joints. Wrist-joints held together by her Mammy passed down copper bracelets?

So she could transform to carpet-cleaner on her fours? His Hustler fetish for her yellow bone? Her yellowbone back-of-the-knee tendons gleaming. Glistening side-by-side a chandelier reflected on lavender buffered floor, Mrs Harvey's. For?

So that her pent down image lies prostrate. Legs stiff like sexbot tilts. Spread from the strait of Gibraltar to Madagascar? Her: the image of lascivious histories – begging the generosity of groot bass john's timely pay. Generosity enveloped and signed 'Harvey', with ill-timed sprays on pay day. An envelop of prey and spray with lactating mammary glands the only evidence of her escalation up to the shadows where he keeps his files. his bloodstained archives. mampoer and chardonnay. Where she keeps his lost and found cufflinks. And naïve SADF safety pins and receipts of forced miscarriages.

Where his wife walks in? In on them? In master bondman interpersonal transaction? Where she leaves their skelotonayana be, mum. locked away there. because: uMama sis'karitji to their 'means justify ends'. Really?

Need their son – who had turned maid-kaffir-lover and Umkhonto Wesizwe communist – need he be punished via her denigration? Need she be the target practice for an aim on him, his own?

Need Mrs Harvey's house turn mother into an algorithm for perfectly ironed, retailstore shelf folded golf and bowling shirts, hung and packed away button-downs (and fly, trousers?) while the madam went out bowling? Need she pretend she saw nothing worth the line 'john we need to talk' on returning?

Break-free from that mould? Of course. Free from the noose on which Dimbaza and Makhaza, like strange fruit, hang? The balcony from where Veeplaas and Joza like Nat Nakasa jumped off. Like music offkey? The soap on which Diepkloof and Diepsloot tripped and fell, fell on to its death?

Wasn't it enough to jump heart first into the SADF bankrolled bazalwana occult: Lion Life? Wasn't it enough to land on my unsuspecting broad smile for Heather, my hungry for Beckett mind? Wasn't it enough to break-free like Mandela: from Victor Verster; to a house with the

same prison plan and architecture? Was it so bad to be impatient to be born again? Born again at 9, 11 maybe 14?

As the new born, born-again: Lion Life recruit at one Sumcay campsite near Dispatch persuaded with their Romans ten eleven?

Born into 2nd Corinthians' call: calling everyone – 'come one, come all. Turn from your ways and become New Creation. Come one kaffir, come all. Come broken.' Cum: second Corinthians broken from its mythopoetry. Forget the bible, come forged in White. As white as snow. Come to Heather's baptizing my gawky smile. with her priceless in-corpse-oration and recognition. Come into ukugxavula nokudlwengula Manhood?

Yes that. That I heard: come into Whiteness, white as snow.

I came: ushered in by young Heather. In: in Christ's qualification, me and her, toddlers of the same rainbow honeymoon, we made it. In Heather's approval I became New Mama.

*Dear Mama*

*The ankle-turning meisie's name is Mbali, Mama. Flower. I put a salve in a letter for my mother's wounds, wounds bent on never to heal. We are now equal Mama. I assured her. Assured her that we shared pissing and eating spaces.*

*Sounds nice enough. She says. In my head. She was a Christian when she slipped into her underworld. Once a Christian, always is. Root, stem, fruits and seed. I was that seed. The seed she planted when she took me there before I could string: '... yesu ndiyakwamnkela... '*

That seed, my Christian drenched sensibilities, found her, Heather, STRIKINGLY beautiful. Lilly of the valley, Heather parading my smile for anyone who cared to see in that Lion Life zootopia.

*She couldn't believe that a bible-thumping darky, from the township – right about the time of Poqo's matchette- relieving St James the burden of carrying his head, his church, his bible and his rifle-butt – could boast such affective, unsuspecting, happy-go-lucky, beautiful smile. A smile as beautiful as mine Mama?*

*The beauty pageant runner up, my smile, was on the front row, short of putting on it the 'Crown'. The Crown of Her approval, approving my ugga bugga unthreatening face?*

*That's how the story pretends to begin Mama.*

*Truth is: none, whatsoever. None – from the neutral and disinterested – blew the whistle to mark the beginning of this clash of the titans. Titans? This is a story of: No beginnings. And No ends Mama.*

*Never told a soul how it made me feel to fit into Heather's STRIKING beauty approvals. Fit hand in glove. Fit with my king kong lips. My nose. My hands and my ornament-third-leg. Was no small fit to Feel.*

*I Felt. Elated. High. Cloud nine. Godly. 'New Creation', indeed!*

*Fuck. Jesus. Works.  
With Heather, I was in. Like a Mohawk.*

**Out With A Bang.**

*Ngombayimbayi sathathelwa/ Neenkokheli zasityeshela/ Bubo obo ke ubumnyama/ Kukubunjwa ngentswelo/ nangombayimbayi – song of Nongqawuse*

*... the reservation... is a place of ill fame, peopled by men of evil repute.  
They are born there, it matters little where or how; they die there, it matters not where,  
nor how... Frantz Fanon*

winter blankets drawn. bodies: coiled foetal from under. feet: a din of second-hand Nik Naks  
stench, something moist gone Ocean Basket expiration date off,

a school of armpits: jumping-castle noisy,

the rot: jasmine and lavender gone awol,

corrugated zinc and triply contraption: tightened by Machiya's wicked incense, shit primed to  
send trolls ricocheting back from whence they crawled,

the rot: on dual-boot, one potpourri downloading from the allstar pair huddled at the door,

the other: dirty socks don feet, wrestling for prime-time recognition under the muffling of  
blankets...

in sum: unrelenting aroma, rotten like feet curdled from dirty socks.

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it's the small hour, two bodies sardines on a bed the size of a body-bag,

the manly of the two: back from taking a wee outside, now cuddling the less-manly from  
behind, cuddling suggestively, biting her goose-pimpled ear-lobe, lobes tucked-in in a head  
wrap, crunchy lobes, cartilage sticking out, leaking out of ol' stockings doek,

early morning glory on Stinky Feet's mind,

on hers: the yoke of two-hours, the two-hours window between now and kicking the blankets  
off, the gap between now and off to work,

but not before boiling water in a kettle, washing in a basin, putting on an extra Vaseline  
membrane, to insulate her from ii-taxi ezi-bind-ayo & bus-stop cold queues,

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black stockings for her office-job put on, to raise her pent down shoulders, to prop up a cadaver on mascara, eyebrow-pencil and stiletto crutches raised on platform shoes, on alternate days, a rogue lipstick, in the bus, a scarlet-red cutex on her way,

in the bus to work: the travelling sponsored 'tic toc' winding down, time not afforded to her in her underworld mirror, time scooped generously now in the bus, like an extra bowl of icecream on Mother's Day, time owing to traversing light-years of banishment, time owing to bridging spatial planning disconnect, time put paid to by fences between labour posts and their dormitory reserves,

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hours stacked to the heavens in light-years stretch, a distance she spends on a Monday to Friday loop: a loop jumping hoops bridging reluctant abyssal-line, looping in the bus, looping on her way, loop in her ovaries, attempting to turn back the cruel hands of time, every morning, looping to no avail,

on her troubled mind: a calendar of events, first on agenda: to open herself up to a chain-of-plantation-command, open herself up to its running the train in her cookie, in two-hours.

on her mind: the two-hours yoke, the burden of how she must make room for his laid-off dick too inside it, dick stiff as her bare tits, tits licked by the freezing heat,

heat Mr smelly-feet brought to their blankets, from outside, him pressing its whether beaten shaky shaft gingerly, gingerly against her warmth, against her monthly-waged-warm ass, him pressing and prodding, her trembling lustfully, him pressing and prodding, her a deer panting for the waters, him peering through her ass crack, through the hole in her worn pyjamas,

her: reluctant but can't postpone the feeling, reluctant but can't mortgage off her hunger collecting, uncurdling in her like the morning mist collecting outside, bulging into droplets, into rain, the groundswell funneling down, down to draw her curtain-length labia open...

open: the magic between her knees, open: his foetal tilt unwound, open: facing up the crinkled cut corrugated roof open, raised on her elbows open, kicking the blankets open, curtains drawn open,

her: making ready to cushion his dick open,

nursing: more than his hard, brass-heavy, brittle ego, in the wallets of her yellowbones open,

the crack of her ass: p.h.a.t (phat) with loving, open,

him: nestled, understood, the handshake that strips foreplay off its decorum, fat-trimmed sensible to his needs, open

her emotive response: cocked dry, to receive him broken, broken into something ‘empty-shell’ and wet, something hard at the head with guilt, boiled-egg stiff with doubt, something shoring up putrid, something miscarried, like clots of little niggers unfit down the tubes, feeling unfit, feeling inadequate,

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her hoping: he goes on his haunches as usual, put two coatings of saliva to oil a language wedged unlanguage (and dry) at the meeting of her thighs,

as usual: her facing away, to avoid his revolting black-label morning stench,

him: cold palms nestled, nestle where her Aunt Jemima and Sara Bartman endowments form a cleavage, part sober, part dutiful, thinking: she put paid to it, the e-wallet she wired yesterday, the chicken liver and beer - its residue – coddled to his veins still,

him, indebted to her, with every breath he takes,

her, angled dry, doubly indebted to him, with every drop that moistures her vertically poised pelvis lips, poised to spit deep,

angled with him in mind,

his: to drive a plug deep, deep where her slues gates are about to brake floods flung open,

deep: where her heaving rattles dimwit and rams into his shaft.

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him, all of him and their unborn: in her ovaries,

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both: fidgeting, ganging up negatives to her wish.

“What?”, her asking,

“are you not ...?”

”No”, his not-well-thought-through answer.

“I mean... yes, yes I am, but...”

“But what?”

him: choked, dry, dry too, the concrete block of Reason, un-enlightenment chunk-sizes scarring his mouth, words unable to soften into easy shorthand, unspoken code for: *why a hard dick at 4 could be a cruel irony, empty libido curdled in ‘muscle’ and ‘memory’.*

him, unable to crinkle her toes, powerless to heating her spot, impotent to satisfy her with answers,

answers to: “why turn like sprinklers turned on inside me, but only with a fraction of the force that sends a spittle covering some pleasing distance?”

him, unable to say how he moved from stiff – as tilts – to ice pick, prods and cathodes jabbing, scarring her ovaries,

him unable to say: “this got shit fokol with how we lay, but everything with dick and power curdled into ingqaka ne ntloya”

him, curdled by a life three-months housed in her stomach,

curdled by being rammed permanently ‘between jobs’...

curdled by sixty rands morning-after-pill out of his pocket reach, curdled today just as he was three months ago,

curdled by the month-end honk of his four-year old ‘transport’ fitting him inside ugly pigeonholes, ugly names he calls himself in his Dick-head...

curdled by the countdown to impending Black-out, blacking out from seeing another babymama-drama turn the corner, slurs charging his way,

him reaching out, in vain, for matchless eloquence from Nobel laureate,

him: portrait of a winding down coiled foetal whimper, chorus-to-fade end rather than a bang... his laid-off ass life-perhaps morning after morning, a life-perhaps intimating:

*This is not the way the world ends; This is not the way the world ends;*

*Not with a bang,*

*but a whimper?*

... a life stuck in one place,

Dick trying to fix his computer, and still,

still here fixing his auction block selling point fat and tar on CV, watching the damned thing giving him grief..., telling him how unsecured in this digital disconnect he is, how vulnerable to thieves, how everything hangs on him forking this and that amount, picking this and that tab, how to part with more monthly instalments to Mr Security Avast piggy-bank, just to breathe, just to breathe a sigh of: concrete jungle hunting relief,

in these treacherous alleys of disconnect,

Dick here tired, exhausted actually, tongue-out panting like a working girl, yes a working-girl counting down her client's last 15seconds, seconds to go servicing a stranger's dick up his pissing slit, farKing-post renting 15min a session in his needle hole, for 15 minutes strangers cock coved up her less-manly-now insides, inside her part-man-part-machine-body, yes Dick dogged tongue-out pissed, dog shimmering drool hanging, hanging languidly, exhausted, hanging spent, spent finished by hours and hours of watching application after application download, and update, upgrade-patches coming and disappearing, disappearing with his data, info vanishing into billable antivirus installations, his peace waning, causing him headache, headaches that drive him furthest from his finicky working 'between jobs' rhythm,

Dick captive, to nervous stomping of feet like a thief scurrying for nyaope nickels, chink chink shaky in sync with his heartbeat, no...

worse,

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captive to a nervous thumping, and stomping, stomping a din of something other than his heartbeat, something plugged in, in a cavity not its own, a cavity not his heat's domicillium citande et executandi, stomping a din of something vacated, his heart served eviction order, by thumping and stomping, by curdling into knots, knots of tension in the nape of his neck, the hard as rock region hardened by microsoft and google chrome leashes, and his heart palpitations for sitting, sitting stuck just watching, watching nameless and faceless agents run

off with his meager bank balance fig leaf, watching, feeling helpless to the demands of this machine world of disconnect, a world he is so intricately woven one-with, feeling his body-parts dismantle, curdle by sitting alone, sitting stuck, waiting, watching, studying that gleaming blue browser search, the tiny ring thing turn and turn, spin and spin – like them niggers rims gleaming and spinning in his sexbots channel O reveries – here stuck and gorged his ...

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last monthly ration of strained patience, inches from the edge of nursing a nervous breakdown caused by suffering untold, untold tedium, Dick feeling like a punching bag, bobbing to blockchain assault, and bitcoins coddled end-to-end to promises, the promise of seamless solutions,

... bursting the stitching of his tender sanity at the seams, here, stuck, feeling overgrown in silicon dippers, body twined around service-delivery and service providers,

twined around promises...

... the promise of 'simpler, better, faster' covenants, observing nothing 'better', nothing 'faster' and nothing more complicated than being a responsive hardware,

A Dick knees open wide-loose – like JILL SCOTT... open-loose – to farKing power excesses, a fucking couched in SOFT-wolves-in-sheep's-pen-WARE: 'bang bang thank you mam bye',

Filling in the missing word between 'bang' 'bang', I'm here... contamplating: My world is forged in vegetated state... In sperm banks and stem cells, in the religion of mutual disconnect,

Forged in digital harem Dick arguing: ... *if my life begins between desire ('laid-in' rather than 'laid-off')*

*And the spasm of a horn, at 4, dripping down my knack, up my unfit, my inaptitude, Dick and power curdled into iingqaka netloya) ...*

*if being a Dick begins between impotence and laid-off existence by the way side – the underworld disconnect.*

*then, then maybe, just maybe, its attachment, its consignment, to that curdled underworld will fall with a violent*

*((bang!))*

*rather than whimper,*

a whimper of Dick wresting Negri's *Bare Life* on one end,

and Slotagjik's *Rage Capital* on another. A phallus severed from its body,

pathetic me: with never enough "rage capital", never enough to end the disconnect

me, jobseeker write-off. towing mute lines of the 'so powerful they never have to raise their voices',

me: sat across – a libidinal stimuli mosaic – across a power-masturbating interviewer,

... sat across an Afrikaaner woman in her late 40's, burning 4 eyes through my powder-bones

Her, in Judge Judy gaze, pain-porn spectacles for lubrication,

Her dick, Eiffel Tower hard with power rush,

her gaze: content I cum at dime a dozen,

Me, a fleeting jack-off utility image, to her whims. Me, fidgeting. Me, nervous. Her, putting it to me sticky and fetishistic, a disavowal Dickhead wrapped in question... just to prick in me the muscle memory of what god created man-full-fledge, but the socious – for seasons of dry spell – created foetal. created ice pick scurrying her ovaries, back at home,

Me, chattel... part-man-part-object,

Me, ever-morphing citadel: an algorithm that began with mangling chains, and steel-mutes-in-your-mouth, steel-mute-on-your-horn, steel technology, still mangled at sea, the sea of disconnect, mangled at the ship's hold, the meddling disconnect between Man-and-His-machine,

me, flesh buoyed, body barking up the wronged tree, me flesh caulking holes, ship holes sealed-off from a looming capsized threat,

me, the meddling body, body holding the fort of York turned New, Zealand turned New,  
Windsor Castle turned New Castle,

Her, the 40-plus Afrikaaner woman, with the upper-hand. asking me to *standup straight, on  
two feet, like a Man* (not so overtly),

Her saying: *unwrite the stars that wrote you kaffir* (not in so many words)

Her, knowing only a 'hue' I could ever be in her presence, never 'Man'...

Nevertheless prodding my-life-perhaps to try the garment of Manhood on,

Her, with soft-spoken Inquisition: "If I were to lean over your shoulder, to ask a friend that  
knows you quite well, ask him or her: what kind of person *this dick-head is*, what would they  
say, what would they say 'bout you in one word?"

Me, in retort: "one word?" Her: "yes, just one word"... Me: "cheap-whore!"

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Me: up on my feet, head so high I'm piecing the sky.

Walking out, into the streets. On the road: mangled ankles jamming the traffic. rands-per-  
hour-me in rear-view mirror, split like drunks who bully motorists on the road in the  
township on weekeneds. I'm disconnected like the drunk I saw from a distance stiching both  
lanes of the road with his bobbing and staggering gait. Lef; right: gait buoyed on a strong nip  
yamagqirha or viceroy. Left, right: surfing the wavey tarroad. Wide open loose gap where his  
biting-abilities used to be. dull-red gums spitting a menacing bark: Sprays of spit making up  
for slurry syllables jammed between his teeth. motorists stares now on me like I'm the  
chimera, the figure of a madman and a drunk in concert. looks on me slide past like I  
accosted everyone, including nyaopes, with 'noma yhini malume'. pavement habitants avoid  
my eyes, as though still trouble-shooting 'if he's mad or just drunk'. hooting morotist: livid at  
the sight of my 'high': an image disappearing in their rearview mirrors. *'He doesn't seem to  
mind that he's short and thin. It doesn't seem to bother him that he's taken his shirt off. that  
we can count his sparse ribs. That we can see the sack of punchingbag alcohol turned him to  
be. The ribs look quit fragile, too fragile to stomach a fist. Let alone a fight from the lot of us  
pissed-off motorist. Those who desire to moer him, zitsho iimbambo zingcazelane.'* The looks  
from men and women behind the wheels seem to say. I shout out a recital mantra with strong  
seTswana accent *the black-green-&-gold want to centralize power into a dictatorship like the*

*government of Mobutho Sisseseke*. I can't speak a word of seTswana. Surely something has entered me. One passenger, in reply, shouts "that's true!" It comes out of his mouth almost involuntarily. The driver next to him jabs me with his eyes and finds mine already fixated on his. "Rock!" He salutes. Pointing up a thumb. To his affirming response I reply *and I don't like it!* I suspect I have lost touch with reality. This reality, at least. I've disconnected: a disconnect after my own image: a 9.58seconds flat split (disconnect): Husain Bolt satanic green on my face and the tentative drumming of freedom in my ribcage. Out with a *suicidal* bang split! Disconnected from the meeting of her crinkled-pork thighs. Disconnected from her working my rented dick in her Mines, at 4am: where I curdle: body separate from mind, curdle: body to its emotive drive put asunder, curdle: rotting feet and dirty socks.

## **WE ARE YET TO KILL THE CATTLE: The Repressed Returns**

*Abundance shrinks/ Picket fences increase/ Pickets loom large/ In every second street – song of Nongqawuse*

Aviwe: no, you don't say...

Turooms: Yes 'you do say'. If you don't believe, Google it.

Aviwe: Don't tell me 'Google' is your best bet...?

Turooms: Well, in the absence of ...Look, I know what I know. Soccer began as an after-war victory stampede. A frantic rush and pillaging frenzy. A conquest code in their villages. What I don't know is the year, especially seeing Bafana Bafana lifting their second World Cup...

Aviwe: Can I finish my story...?

Turooms: I know your story. I'm just surprised we went that far back, but please... go on...

Aviwe: 'Went back'?

Turooms: yes.

Aviwe: Or...?

Turooms: Or we didn't move at all. I mean: the 'obscene' looks quite intact beneath the 'airbrushed' of TV as you put it...

Aviwe: You do listen after all. So, as I was saying. No. Actually, you were saying. You were saying: you knew about the part where they dig mass-graves, and the first skull to shore up the cemetery intact is kicked around in a tug-of-war fashion, till...

Turooms: till the winner takes it all. Takes history, the women's 'yes' and 'no'. Gold. And turn the damned children to slaves...

Aviwe: it's 'algorithm' now, no longer 'slaves'. You know what the spoilers say?

Turooms: Spoilers?

Aviwe: My God, you haven't heard ...?

Turooms: are they some menace to society I should know about...?

Aviwe: you sound like you could be one of them.

Turooms: I could, because... ?

Aviwe: Well, my litmus has not failed me yet. Let's see your t-shirt. Under your sweater.

Turooms: Ufuna ndikhulule ngoku apha ebhasini?

Aviwe: Yes, off. Take it all off... sweater I mean...

*: not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip, but seeking to empty their soul, ... by a kind of perverted logic, the Order turns to the past, their past, ... distorts, disfigures and destroys it,*

Aviwe: I could live off of spotting your kind.

Turooms: 'Kind'? I have had this t-shirt for years. And I'm seeing these words for the first time, like you.

Aviwe: Yeah, I believe you.

Turooms: Yes, you must.

Aviwe: You also outlawed irony and sarcasm from your world?

Turooms: I do come from a world. But a world built by (W)rites & words, like yours. I'm thinking now: Maybe I did meet up with these... 'spoilers' you say? Hold on... There's something about war and time-machine I remember seeing at this one exhibition stand in Khayelitsha.

Aviwe: Khayelitsha, the Museum you mean?

Turooms: Yes. There's a couple of them, old ghettos, I curate. The irony is that: the more they hit the decommission-mark, and are turned to museums, the more new ones spring up. But I didn't buy anything from there. Nothing from 'spoilers' you say? I just grabbed a pamphlet and left. Couldn't stay in that stampede.

You mean, 'violence'.

Maybe...

No, I'm telling you. The spoilers say: the first time-machine is violence. And that's about the only thing I've ever seen on their marketing material. You know what they say: we listen to believe, and see only what we know.

Look ... their pamphlet. I remember this open-air talk in front of Makhaza shopping centre. Remember their hired PA system. Ordinary people taking turns on a roaming mic. To speak their mind, about the scourge in that Khayelitsha museum. The punitive means used to quell petty criminals. I remember. A speaker saying something about torching children for ubamb' abasebenz' inkunz' ekseni. Speaking against torching them for break-ins. For stealing cellphones. Then another came. Spoke of police hiding the fact. Fact that more had been killed this way than reported dead in their files. One man, in his 50s, with hands carved for the field, and a garden under his nails, a thunder for a voice, and a timbre of compassion in his voice-box. Spoke. Of how the 'Order took the music from us', he clarified. 'They took our music and gave us perfect bodies'. Bodies that might-as-well-have-been-man-made-steel. He explained. Steel devoid of Feeling trapped in foreign souls. He connected the scourge to this denial. Our denial of music. He was hackled. He was accused. Of condoning these criminal elements, he was accused. Hackled, he was. For speaking against the 'unparalleled', for speaking against the unfit means of retribution: 'necklacing'. his words. When he was not allowed airtime on the mic, he scribbled down words. Words he gave to a little boy. School-going age must have been boy. To read. The words. Had music. Music native to them. I felt something '... perhaps that was the resonance. the frequency that tuned me in. Maybe that's what the t-shirt remembers from that place...

Aviwe: Let me see the words the little boy read out...

Turooms: Here: *Our people are quick to pounce on one another. Oh, how our people sanction maximum violence for their backyard, their children, their parents, their partners. But come cap in hand before their enemies. How we are impatient with our own, how we can't wait to douse a face like ours with petrol, set alight, how we can't wait to put our own in their historic place of sweeping dishonour, how we can do so much harm to one another, but are slow to anger when confronted with enemies across the fence... how we are zombies of the underworld, sardinesed in tin-shacks, cordoned off, banished, in our tyoks-villes, mkhukhu-villes, matchbox-villes, how pulling the rug of music under our feet left us unFelt and unFeeling, left us attacking the values of ubuntu bethu, from within...*

Turooms: here, you can read it for yourself:

Turooms: Please tell me about your connection with these spoilers. Clearly, I had an encounter.

Aviwe: This is now quite personal. Oh, I'm already letting you in on the 'personal'. And I don't even know your name. You know the saying: ithambo lenyoka lihlab' elimzondayo...

Turooms: Yes. Literally means: long after the snake is dead, its remains of bones can take up the fight again, and kill you.

Aviwe: Aren't words like that too, somehow? Like bones of a dead snake, seething out of sync, charging to finish what was left unfinished?

Turooms: out of sync like a kungfu movie character 'you killed my father, now I'm coming to kill you...'

Aviwe: Yha, words are a kind of ghost. Ghosts of good and bad events, triggers of joy and pain, both re-lived.

Turooms: I work with words you know— a stint at the Dictionary Institute. Contracts running out soon, issue for another day. My protest there, lately, has been: words are the first time-machine. So, yha... couldn't agree with you more.

Aviwe: 'Through words, a couple sleeping in the same bed could feel wor(l)ds apart'... someone once said.

Turooms: And affection on a page can close a thousand kilometres with an A4sheet cover, maybe two. They say...

Aviwe: Spoilers, you think...?

Turooms: So, if words shuttle like ghosts between eons and eternities, then perhaps the Order is an order of words, not numbers...no? well...

Aviwe: You mean with all the tech savvy that has put us ahead, we're still stuck in the barbaric prowess of Roman figures? Not a shred of modern after their brutal killing of the Lord?

Turooms: We go back only as far as their memory of law, and write it in Times New Roman 1.5 linespacing... don't we? Modernize, I'm sure we did: we modernized because instead of being swallowed by the ocean, we swallowed it. That was after it buoyed us across

hemispheres. We modernized: moved from kicking around each other's skulls, across villages, to kicking king's: King Hints; from this part of that global village. The year, what year did you say it is...?

Aviwe tuned TuRooms of the age of predictive analytics. Tuned him that Hanah was the soul in which our bodies lived. Moved. And had their being. That she (Hanna) was the new Queen. A software Most High and more important than the Greenwich meridian. She tuned him that: it was the reign of random numbers. Cold-hearted precise numbers. Numbers with implacable logic, behind their madness. Numbers and more numbers at the helms. The age of the sanguine. And we, its people, happy go lucky penguins. She told him of our achievements: Hanah's that is. How she pushed us all, man and animal, over the bridge of physical infirmities. How we were now all indebted to the Order, with our souls. And since our health was perfect, perfect no matter what. We had little use for our bodies; except perhaps for a hand few who couldn't be pleased: Spoilers. Spoilers romanticized about a paradise called *feeling*. Saying: 'it is the blackbox of our forced landing'. Spoilers spelt it with capital 'F'. They were those who accosted every second street with their ground-stomping barbaric-music. And propaganda. Music of a pre-Order bliss. 'Bliss much superior than our inerrancy, our exact science of big data, internet of things and 3D printers'. Spoilers spread their word.

These spoilers call themselves The Order Of Nongqawuse. They mushroomed faster than Zille's retweets. Everywhere they went, red green and black followed. Replete with their time-warp pay-off line: We Are Yet To Kill The Cattle.

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**Aviwe:** Untying a naughty but captive gaze on mine, the brother introduced himself as 'Two-Rooms'. A healthy dose of self-knowing and contentment in his own skin put rhythm to how he pressed his lips, flashed his teeth, and willed his musical breath into words. I would recall his hand against mine feeling as familiar on my skin as my hot water bottle did in bed. He wasn't big on charisma. A bit too eager to please perhaps. But generally pleasant. He brought to my world a whole host of words. Called them: 'the time machine prototype, the first spaceship to cross the boundaries of time.' His world of many words, like a snail carrying a shell crafted from gold dust, left a lingering taste that 'you are okay just as you are Aviwe'.

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**Turooms:** She wrests my window-seat view from me, forcing it to slip from the clutches of my sweaty palms, *like sovereign title to territory*. Here: on two butt-cheeks by thighbone-grabbed-leather-seat, she sits scanning the Cape. It's a shadow of its former self: once lush green blades are now stingily blanketing the flora. Sparse aloe and fynbos collage rush through the window to give me tongue. Tongues of strangers stealing permission from loose morals of a dark-corner at a club. Then: like a naughty kid taunts my face with a long-stretched 'nyweeee'. For struggling to enjoy the fauna. I hardly could from my isle-seat. No, the 'nyweeee' was for hardly landing a single jab. Aviwe made me feel I had to pay her rent to enjoy a view she found me there enjoying. Rent: paid by a craned neck from the isle. I shouldn't be enduring this sight, I remember feeling. *Wild vegetation nestled between the paradise below and sunbeams digging the sun's corpuscular shafts deep in the soil*, a glimpse of that I at least caught. *The day/night break in the horizon shouldn't frustrate me for lunging heart-first on a double-crossing democracy sky*, I sat there frustrated. *I should be watching its pact of betrayal with its back flat on the ground easily from my window-seat*. But 'force removal' came with a smile this time. The black, gold and ruling green: screaming "Y". Its hands up, resigned. Brits and Dutch bands flanking it. In tricolour stripes: (red, white and blue) the policing chokehold in government singing Die Stem with one South African voice. There: *shouldn't be a place I mount a 1.7m gripe cloaked in 'polite', 'chivalry' 'Bojangles' grin' and schizophrenic 'cap in hand'*. *But it was:* I was there figuring out how I lost my seat. I was there figuring: *how did the slit of fecundity in my crotch got to be fingered by grave-digging nails zika Aviwe.*

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**Aviwe:** The bus sails past mountains. Rushes through pristine Cape at Cheetah spurts. Hugged by towering boulders on both sides, funnels through the Huguenot tunnel. With each steep incline: grumbling. Belching out a muffled moan. A protest: pointing to deep cuts left unstitched by the yarn of history. Unstitched by the magic of a prisoner turned president. And an englican bishop scrambling for hand-me-down-gold behind the rainbow. Truth and reconciliation tattoos wrought haemorrhaging by goads and picks of a lingering past. A past: stains-stubborn, birthmarks dotted there by the French Huguenots looting. A past: a slash-and-burn brought to bear, even to this very day.

"I saved a seat for you." Warmly he rasped, suppressing an eager smile. Cleared his Alice Walker – perched on as a stand-in passenger – and I grabbed the seat enthusiastically.

*Travels light*, privately I mulled. *Nomadic type – allergic to commitment*. I chewed the cud in my mind. Mr Generous Charmer was too kind, weak. So, I fleeced his seat with a grin-smile hybrid. *Asozwe lankenenkene eli. Its wound-rations, I didn't create. It came from the womb of God midwifed by peasant Dutch rebels: the slagter nek ring-leaders: otherwise-martyrs, with plaques for watering Boer-Nationalism, which, to this very day, crafts our trigger-itchy-finger kinship.*

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**Turooms:** *The quick coffee errand has seen you lose your place?* Thought couches me like a shrink. Rubs my eyes. Puts my reading glasses back on, and wipes my humid palms for a good grip on Alice Walker's *In Search For My Mother's Garden*. Thought continues: *Accuracy played by the ear, these people never loved us.* Love and Us: not peas in a pod. Neither when the match strikes the rubber dressing our neck, night-vigils breaking into song. Nor when its flame chokes, and Eric Garner succumbs to the hold. There's no exact science for these things. Not for measuring how a mother moves: this or that side of a 'Garden' or 'Mass Grave'. How she plugs shut a noisy little trap, with a squeeze of raisin-tight sweet-things. Or: a woman on a soapbox on love. Cupped between her nipples forces of attraction and repulsion, here next to me. Me: the grown-man whining moo. Glued, like the wild in heat. Nothing exact when skin cymbals against skin. Its rings squeezing torrents from *Flowers of The Nation* in *arpeggio-nation*. Not when lips, dry as gunpowder, flank vows of mutes blowing plumes of discontent in brass. Blowing amputated sounds side-by-side prayer sections. Denied music rising: hard as a plinth. Begging whichever diety that gives a fuck: 'Bona/Izwe/Lakowethu'. Resolve up on its feet standing tall. Tall: stitching white curdled street-lanes like the staggering of a drunk, or unforcastable gait of a madman. Tall: holding up blue clouds adrift, carrying on their tradition: 'this too shall pass', under white heavens, heavens growing paler and paler: their out of step and offkey nature.

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**Aviwe:** My dark side unfurled its probing fangs, patting down the room-on-wheels for an informed opinion about this here-next-to-me man. I suspected he (my bus companion) suffered weaning complexes. I confirmed that TuRooms was indeed a mushy pushover when he climbed out of a gas-filling bus: out TuRooms ran, and as quickly as he had sprung up returned carrying two cups of coffee. His kiss-kiss gait – legs-trestle-stand-shaped – stitching the narrow bus aisle. His pants starched to his knees. The sound of his to-and-fro, in-and-out

the bus, whining about something. Something or-other. Things he didn't have the balls to tell me to my face. I had not shown even a morsel of feigned interest for TuRooms. Yet: he showed me his sticky-sweet side. Suffice to say I bullied him off his window-seat view. And wrested a cup of free coffee from him, to sweeten the deal. Blasted Robert Glasper's blackradio. Especially blasting it against the order of the day. But also blasting it to visibly push him, push him to the margins of recognition.

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**Turooms:** "Today feels different; the voices cradle me gently". She confided on a piece of paper. Shy had now left Aviwe, accosted by a wipe-swab she used to scale down the makeup cake on her face. In a makeshift Checkers-rubbish bag, lodged under her seat, the beauty accessories said their 'till death us do part' vows; living happily ever after. Reclined, the sermon from Aviwe poured. Like the drizzles outside. The doppelganger masseuse that put me to sleep. An odd gobsmack from her storytelling animations sat me up. Sat me up from time to time. Me: on my elbows. To catch the animations of her face. Her: cracking the love-handle closest to the window-side, the one kissing the beast's innards at the border of the bus' in and out. Catching her daring a part of her curves to contradict her truisms, pleased me to no decimal place.

((((Boom!))).

Rubber on tar-road squeals. Then? Chaos! The 'letting out' hysteria of one *gatvol* Congolese bangs the door of society. at that moment society goes 'deaf' to her kind. The *return of the repressed* shrieks, turning the establishment... debris.

From deep sleep I hear her voice bringing the rafters of our house-on-wheels down. I see the bus filling up dangerously, verging on vomiting flames. I see it fly; a dolphin blown into steam. Blown hovering over the waters: the flames of rough seas, tides and seaweed dug up. And lumped on a bumpy tar-road. Then: the bus hobbles to a halt. Whitey: body curled foetal behind driver. His blue marbles dancing to the tune of his nerves. His brass skin: a shabby tan. The blonde of generations on his scalp: clutched in his hands. Flakes of regret: coming off of his dry lips. "Another hobo pissing on Verwoerd's order." I jeer beneath my breath. *What is a whitey doing on a mass-market coach? Doesn't he know, to be ghetto and poor is history kicking your door down? But across the colourbar: it's pissing on good god great father Verwoerd?* My mind slogs; putting a bridge over hundred-years-troubled-waters. My

mind works overtime: framing this picture of a blond-cat among pigeons. The beast bends with each whim of the road. When the force of ‘boom!’ we heard go off broached to break it bi-polar, the beast morphed. Morphed into a toolbox contraption. Inside: brimming with speaking and anxious tools – us. Us: cogs. Cogs to well-oiled time-machine. A machine undisrupted by ‘newness’. A machine unreconciled to truth and its horse-and-trailer justice.

Fuming from under our weight – njenges’ thunywa samazayoni sisindwa ngumntu onghambululanga – the beast let go of its rubber slip-ons first. Next: All that bottled-Congo-forest returned puckered. Returned pressed down and overflowing. Forcing its clogged pore open. The clogged ‘emergency exit’ yielded. The memory of the Congo: dipped in crumpled wrath blowing the gasket, gorging our wheels home, wagging its exhaust-tail-turned-scorpion-and-molotov-cheeky. The memory of the Congo: gave the passive (the passenger proper) a taste of ‘manifest destiny’. Destiny turned on its head. Destiny that made things we own end up owning us. Destiny: the algorithms we enslaved. The ‘enslaved’: turned against the master-mind. We rush for the door, where our coughs bottle-neck. The stampede of bodies swelling the exit-ways transform both door and window-sized wounds. The window size wounds turn into needle-holes. Needle-holes: turning the size of sieves, sieves pulling reins on our black follicles. Sparse pores: lined concentric. Rings: mapped on cymbals. Cymbal: one tiny hole, the size of our nervous pore right before our eyes. We suspend on one another, then one another’s elbows; pushing through rudely. Danger thickens into fear. Fear: into rational faculties. The bus: is going to explode. It explodes, I’m convinced.

((((Boom!)))

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**Aviwe:** Out TuRooms ran, and as quickly as he had sprung up returned carrying two cups of coffee.

Outside: the horizon guzzled down the remains of a bleeding twilight, belching out eerie blackness. The night’s chills had no chill, greedily feeding on my pores, our Feelings: our open sores.

Honestly, I hated the devil-compassion mirror TuRooms held out to me. It unmasked my potential for unfeeling. It said: ‘if the mix of good and bad was the right chemical ratio in the bus, I, too, would be the embodiment of evil’. Self-reflecting cut me up to pieces: *liar, phony,*

*Frankenstein's monster; bitch on a pair of platform shoes. 'Mxim!' I braved a veil to hide the monster-of-the-Order-in-me.*

In no set order: TuRooms 'cosmic hobo diaries' sprawled out in illegible storylines. Devil-may-care cockroaches climbing up my legs. Making illegible lines in the notepad we scribbled on. Where we put our thoughts through the paces of words. Climbed trotting north. Somewhere, between conscious and unconscious impulses, the cockroaches left me parched for inner-balance. To balance: the nocturnal Voortrekker raid, on a lookout for denser pastures. Where my body curved. Where my body curdled. Curdled into outmoded-jungle reduction and solid cosmic fantasies. Fantasies harked back on: *what incubated between my thighs sustained the world's precarious balance.*

*I'm Black and I'm woman...: society's doughnut-hole. 'Stuck up bitch' silent consensus caucused about. The damned object of curiosity deemed: 'unfit' and 'unmotherly'. Unfit and unmotherly for losing a child.*

*More that niggling suspicion tells me: History never built the house 'woman' with me in mind. Niggers in these underworld alleys do as they please with my kind: That's how I come to this whole woman thing. In it I'm the 'many-are-called amongst chosen few'. Mostly perceived: too lascivious for 'woman's' prudish house rules. Other times: too masculine for its delicate felicity. Too suspect when I excel by unprecedented margins: the grunting gorilla on tennis court; the caster anomaly on racetrack.*

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**Turooms:** Bombed and broken. We were stretched. Stretched to the limits, by unthinkable service-delivery. I was thinly spread on a cam-belt tensile endurance. Spread like synthetic durability about to give in. Inevitably our thinly-hanging strand of patience joined the cam-belt. Snapped! Forcing the beast to limp out of agility, right into scrap-age.

Tilili: phones beep. Beep sixty apologies. Sms-text for all sixty *gatvol* of us. We are passengers, passive, waiting, seated on steel benches. We are paid-up patrons, customers waiting, begging (almost), for home. We are huddled seamlessly with our perishable goods. There, on those waiting steel benches, something key died. A dimension of ethics was absent. A certain fundamental attribute of relatedness between human and goods, *umntu nezinto*, disappeared.

The *wound-kinship* that had fixed the family-tree of niggers and kaffirs was spread. Its overreaches, in scab, covering the bus terminus too. The cargo, our transatlantic sojourn costumed us in (in the hold), across seas seasoned by our fat, and waters salted by our tears, there, at that bus terminus, hundred years later, reappeared. It reappeared crammed in fragments: minute(s). That scandal made a comeback. It materialized when time stood still. It materialized when unFeeling watched people lumped: flesh-and-bag; watched people huddled: things-for-bottom-line.

Something – that couldn't wait for words to step up – was in the air. That 'something' could no longer put up with this inability to tell apart wrong from right, freedom from slavery. Like spark, on flammable gas, that thing broke fundamentally with 'well-mannered'. The fashion in which it put to question the prevailing tyranny of peace, wasn't neat. Wasn't step-by-step. Wasn't sterile reasoning. It was gatvol. Volcanic! It was alive (again, it seemed), after a dormant spell. From a meek 'please don't mess with us' prayers, something more spirited in our petitions grazed the edge of eruption: 'I dare you to fuck with us. I dare you!' It raged. That rage became flesh: flesh into which we – grieved customers – heaped and stitched. That heap had a Congolese 'gatvol' gushing out its fountain-head. Ignited, set alight, the sting of the dead possessed a worrier mother. Doek-queen-and-all mother. That site boiled into an ungovernable SHRIEK; snowballed into a mother of all protests: 'people before profits!' We were reminded of that old mind-fuck moment – four to five hundred years ago... perhaps six – when our gentle humanity was *thrown under the bus*. *Ran-over* by 'traders' and 'explorers'.

We were reminded of how our humanity stumbled, heart first, at the door step of modernity's barbarism (*the world as we know it*). Now, here, today one boiling Congolese woman put paid to that continuous ride on our back. Put paid to it by a shriek that said (in not so many words): *feta kgomo o tshware motho– people before profits*.

I shrug. Walk away. Thinking: *wherever we congregate, the most timid of occurrences, whether in township or bus-terminus, wherever we congregate lurks potential for senseless tragedy. Not because we attract poor service-delivery, but because our life is a life on death-row; a life whose vitality is doubtful. Other than ladder rungs for ascent, our value is doubtful.*

I leave the chattering scabs and wounds. And at once, with my eyes, meet uniquely interested, privately dressed securities (standing two paces away), looking puzzled, as though wishing to hide something vulgar in plain sight, but can't. They draw my attention. I

approach. To gather facts about this Groundhogs Day. This repetitious grip of throwing furtive tantrum. Tantrums strewn between cap-in-hand *'please let me in'* and a prevalent me me me spectacle refrain: *'I'll make a scene, if you don't'*... let me in.

What I want to know from the privately dressed security guards is: *Who's In Charge?*

The scuffle that broke has now partitioned into distinct characters. One character: not so wordy; not so pen, scripts and paper ready. Not so eager for *consumer ombudsman to remedy our pain*. That portion of the scuffle is wild and unruly. It is distilled in blood; smudges dirtying office floor. The other character of the scuffle is costumed in words and feminist paperbacks. I trail the latter with reams and reams: of 'who', 'what', 'when' documented evidence.

The Congolese woman *now* takes the centre of the outbreak where blood dots the floor. She is crimson. Her left hand is wrapped in the colour of danger. Her head-wrap – attempting to arrest her bleeding. Flares up. She paces. She is fixing to out-hurt the black-gold-and-ruling-green pickpockets in her mind. Out-hurt them all the way to their cushy and comfy headquarters. Their private boardrooms, dinner tables and bedrooms; Swiss accounts and Dubai lofts: where leeching laps hungrily. She looks. She finds: a wooden post (twice her height). It's reinforced by steel panels. With it, she strikes: deconstructing a structure built on *our* blood, sweat and misery. Missiles of our pain, in her un-worded Molotov, throb the establishment's tenuous (im)balance.

Before the Congolese reduced the establishment into shards and debris, she held us in trance. She poised to address us.

One-by-one now the gatvol visitor – to our south-end corner – singles out sets-of-balls. Balls passed their expiration. Sacks peering through the fig leaf pants. Her accusing gaze skips figures of women peppered all over the stranded crowd. As if to absolve them. Perhaps '[w]omen in general are [indeed] not a part of the corruption of the past...' The gatvol doek-don mother towers above our impish height. Fixes us on her palm. Folds us in her balled fists. Tucks us in inside the folds of her panties. And rolls her skirt's where curious elastic band peers through. Peering through her love-handles, winking at us an off-white that could not be sexualized.

((qhwaaaa)) watsho epoc' ipenti.

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**Aviwe:** “Cockroach”, trolled down my lip onto a page to rustle TuRooms peace. He rolled his A4 scribbles, handing me the baton (an arsenal to send the nocturnal devils to their ancestors). Said: “clearly the bus is so cheap even cockroaches can afford the ride.” Put it down, I said. Reading it, my face cracked. Unmasking a genuine smile. His cheesy wit, feeding off of my pleasure, fattened his confidence. I was fattened too, in many ways. Our chemistry jumped off the page. In my exaggerated scale, he buoyed with wings and halo. When I made an effort to court the impressive suitor, he continued to be swallowed by his own cares.

I’d been served... my own dish of ice. TuRooms had seduced me only to reject me. The quiet type tend do that. I spiced up his cold shoulder treatment, ballooning it to universal theories about men: *They draw you in, pluck your flesh, and out they spit your soul.*

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((((Qhwaaaaa!!!)))

**Turooms:** The gobsmack on her war knelling hips go off like a limpet. Old scars above her knees pour out. Flesh under her dress unmask. Disturbing kinship with violence lay bare: on her skin traces of her attempts at out-running danger, scaling down borders and fences, wading through rivers and braving crocodiles... all in attempts to stitch war-torn Berlin Conference borders, dot like a map of memory to a treasure trove.

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**Aviwe:** TuRooms’ coy disregard had cast a catchment for me. The net swelled and swelled like a spider’s web. Until what began as *fuck-you fuck-you disregard for each other* turned rubber-on-tar clout. He, in that tar-rubber relation: coarse as gravel. I: the grinding-down rubber. His indifference unsettled me; outing a curiosity banned beneath my cool. I had a fixation to pry him open. A fixation to ask: “what type of species are you?”

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**Turooms:** Rocking, possessed by hysteria, she gyrates a 360°. Revolution. Her body bobs and weaves. Her feet stomp and rumba. She steadies her stomping feet to Sounds of Blackness chant:

‘Hold on just a little while longerX2/

Everything’s gone be alright...’

The rhythm of her ground-stomping: summons thunder. The brimstone in her feet: kneads a dirge. Kneads a casket for hell. She sifts inches. She shifts the universe through the honey of Kruger and the milkyway of Pounds. Blood-drenched Benjamin-futures thud under her feet. Thud. Splash. (((Ngqu ngqu gqu)))

*..., she unknowingly echoes a plum crazy Z’thathu. One who writes his clan names on a pavement kwaLanga. One who’s impeccable cursive, Grey would be proud of. Except, he is the same One who also turns to the rubbish bin for lunch, supper and breakfast. She vibrates. Turning back her captor’s arms of time.*

In a jerk of fury her right-hand grips firmly on her vagina. She throttles it. Then she eases the noose of her fingers choking her genitalia. She shakes. And shakes. And then her vomiting-finger shakes at us. She pokes. And pokes. At our shameful foreheads. One-by-one a mother’s finger *measures, weighs, and finds us wanting.*

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**Aviwe:** Nkonko (my boyfriend on the phone) had not cheated on me. But I had. I didn’t think he deserved a medal, though the stunt was quite rare. Quite the opposite: I think the hand-few men that do zip up are undoing the sins of their fathers, and their buddies. And good luck. But not from me. I couldn’t be moved. I’m not Joshua Door, I don’t do guarantees ‘stores’. Besides, boys will be boys. I’ve learnt. Men cheat: when they’re happy with their women. Yes ‘women’. And when they aren’t (happy), just the same. I have learnt some valuable lessons from my lowing; those silent lonely nights in the company of a drenched pillow after ndigqibo gixa, ndigxwal’ emswaneni for indoda ngathi ndifelwe. Learnt that men do all sorts of things in the name of love. Including boosting their own wasting-away egos. I mean, even the most seemingly sincere ones. Those who end up before the priest: don in Marlon Brando’s tux & a Nollywood Big Man’s kick&bhoboza. Those who catch your tear-drop doused cheek behind a white wedding veil. They, too, wholesale, suffer from the same

limping-ego disease. Men are like the Order, Hanna's. They only want you when they think they can't have you.

I wasn't going to pretend that I alone was sufficient. Not for taking care of all the things a man's seat of personal identity (ego) needed, needed in order to feel adequate. So, I harboured no such political correctness. No such illusion that 'not all men are cheats,' Quite the contrary. I had been caught redhanded. By Nkonko. Caught cheating. Subsequent my infidelity – with an attitude too suspect and forgiveness too generous – Nkonko opened his proverbial arms and received me back. Unconditionally. All I needed do was beg. And beg I did. Graduating cum laude.

Perhaps it's a bit too hasty to say Nkonko's forgiveness was unconditional. For instance, how do I explain skirting around issues that relate to deserting his bed in the five months we had been apart? I could hardly mention certain words to him... 'Lesotho' for instance. Where I'm set for. Lesotho makes Nkonko's pipi very soft. Worse: if you opened his dictionary of words, you'd find 'Lesotho' sliced between English synonyms for 'betrayal'.

So, beg I did. Until the yawning cleavage between us fairly mended. (or so I thought). Once more I felt the usefulness of my body under his Missionary weight. His Mission: to keep my cheating scrubbed and manicured. Wings-clipped I mean.

Well... curiously afloat, and cautiously content with his 'single round of male-duty when the children went quiet or when a stray donkey brails with a pitch of something so satisfying inside (I would wish it was inside me too), in the wee hour', I settled for some idea I was convinced was my life. In other words: my humanly contradictions got the better of me.

Well, I needed a bit of weight. Don't we all? I reckon: From song to dance, revolution to art, birth to death, weight and duty put bolts and nuts, put rivets that pin our airy ferry lives on something meaningful, ... no? I wanted Nkonko's taking me back to swell in my mind (whilst I gleefully mirrored my satisfied face in *Ndibhal' uNothanda* 'occupied' toilet sanctuary). But Nkonko's insatiable needs suffocated me. I was reminded of why I broke free from his tight leash: 'Woman art loose' I was. For a tenderpreneur *blessor*. A while-down-my-time I met in Maluti ski resort. Those 'ol niggers ababophelelimal' i-eighty grand nge ewallet emasendeni. Yha, things of Lesotho.

Dropping me off at the bus terminus, in Cape Town, to catch this riff raff of a bus, for Nkonko I had forged a fist. I fist I never quite landed: "I was turning the details of my

confession in my head a thousand times. Tailoring the delivery so that it doesn't nurse your castration issues. I was prepping myself for your Spanish Inquisition... which one do you want first bhuti?" That's the limpet mine whose lynchpin I didn't pull.

Instead, I retracted the missive, as I climbed off his car. To bid him farewell. Blowing him a below-contempt grin. A grin followed by something or other. Maybe a diet remark, a lie. And an appeasing 'baby'. Anything to get him off my face for a while. Something with which I successfully curbed whatever stupid comment he had just quipped. I have a Taser of ever-ready lies. A handful of custom-mades useful to fry stupidity looming from afar. Every woman has.

Nkonko shrugged my culling effect. And off he drove.

My escape to Lesotho came at an interesting threshold. An end of one breakup-makeup drama. And: beginning to feel that Nkonko and I had made it okay to sanitize useful pieces of ourselves, pieces that made sleeping together easy. Like the Order, we had successfully amputated unresolved parts we felt unsafe with. Our sex was high-octane horse-power, but zero heart. We could check all the performance check-boxes, save one. Feeling. Something had gone fundamentally wrong. But I didn't have the wisdom of this peeking hole through the corridor of time. Till I found a keyhole Turooms helped me with.

The bus bobbed and weaved, stitching lanes nearest to Bloem.

I extended my little rug-nyana to TuRooms. I could see he was coming down with flu in his macho bed of manhood. Besides: if the Order's officials caught him defying their system like that, going retro and letting the body to Feel and Fall sick, he wouldn't be allowed to finish this journey. Ripe with Feeling, I proceeded with my prying him open.

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**Turoom:** We squirm at her overexposed finger. Her throttling. Her shaking. Her pointing. Her finger writes the subtext of gatvol: gatvol with her underworld residence in the world. She jots minutes at the meeting of her thighs. She rings with one hand. Pokes with another: "You wanti change?"

She breaks into word. Word sanctioned by life from the picketline.

Word from the quarry lime that blinded her eyes.

Word: the cries of newborn's folded in palms.

Word: the symphonies of protest to 'I didn't struggle to be poor' despicable motto.

Word: wrestling that sway of the New World angelus,

it: redrawing the ship's line of march along 'serve', 'suffer', 'sacrifice'!

Her first few words combust. And torch English like a flag forced to fly half-mast by unexpected upheaval.

(Perhaps 'change' is most revealing Freudian slip.)

"... I give you dis one of me and you give me dis thing of you" she proposes the impossible.

"...no my friend, Jesus won put it in the right from the wrong for you. Us we mus fight or never! The little-one back home: not for Jesus feed him scheme. Not for gavment e-ther.

They only cry 'mama mama mama'"

She gasps. And gasps. The man of the Order, a police officer in uniform but off-duty, rushes past. Rushes riling an already fired-up crowd... "donder, them, clobber them ek se! Mos they do this all the time!" He speaks against an Order he gets paid to sustain.

Done playing back a hundred years in fastforward, her tremors subside.

To the police who arrive when she has long calmed, she says they can take my English for her testimony. Short of saying, in Lingala, 'uGorge andimncancanga beleni'

*:I'm for dismantling the assault of the Order by even greater violence, but I'm concerned that leading with the bullet may not be intrinsically disruptive to the rot of our social fabric... in the sunset of open war, it was the witchcraft of the bible, the whisper of its verse, that proved mightier to the bullet. Indeed 'word trumps sword' for the task of unmangling our minds. with invisible chains and a blackbox of self-directed violence wedged between our ears, the Word serviced an empire too bankrupt for gunpowder, an Order too penniless for human capital and military logistics. We must begin where Nongawuse left things unfinished ... and go farther.*

*The available terrain is still the soul that prisons our bodies, the Order that hardens us like cymbals, the available terrain is till the mind that was severed from its emotive drive. There,*

*at that bottomless pit of the mind, we must erect our tents against the Order, bid our time...  
for the end of the world.*

*For the end of the Order.*

*For the end of the world is either early or too late.*

*We have not starved the Order the one resource it feeds off of in this war, the lock, stock and  
barrel of our aping its ways in all we do.*

*We are yet to kill the cattle.*

*in Nongqawuse idiom.*

*We are yet to let scorch-earth policy kick in, we are yet to poison our water, burn our crop,  
kill our cattle and fu%ck off from the alien coming through our pores.*

*we are yet to separate our desires from the Order's,*

*yet to build our kilombos, run our affairs by the model of runaway-slaves,*

*yet to build the blackhouse of resistance,*

*run our homes like we're at war. At war: with our money, our business, our resource, our  
schools, our sport codes, our swimming, our kicking ball, our love letters, our diet, our fast,  
our yoga, our mphepho-burning, our connections, our networks, our security, our padlocks,  
our emails, our bus rides....*

*in taking lessons from below: the people's army against the Order. the defenders of gains we  
have collectively forged in nothingness, ... I do not believe that there are short-cuts,  
'protracted' next to 'struggle' I believe in. feta kgomo o tshware motho, the war against this  
establishment, I believe in... that's just what i believe happened here...*

I pour out a draft. Show it to her. Offer to read it aloud. She says "I'm good". Puts a thumb  
up, and to that adds: "don't change a word".

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**Aviwe:** So I thought to put it to TuRooms, you could, say, over coffee: "That was my  
boyfriend on the phone. Nkonko". I said. Hesitantly opening a door to my vulnerability. I  
disappeared behind a noisy gulp of cold coffee, coffee I hoped masked my nakedness.

Perhaps I milked a sense of psychic comfort in the cold takeaway cup. How else can I explain my difficulty parting with cold coffee? I couldn't care that the coffee was cold. I had other priorities: I didn't want to appear so plain. Not so naked, not so open-a-book to TuRooms. The comfort of holding a cup in which I could conveniently disappear, thinly veiled my stark visibility. It disguised my sky-scraping needs. Flattened them to a dull parking lot.

I shot a prospecting glance for tell-tale movements on TuRooms bearded face; *dololo* expression. I drained his blank reply – to my boyfriend-comment – down. Down it went along with my room-temperature coffee fixation.

The bus, too, swallowed the distance between the Cape and Bloem. Swiftly weaving night traffic signs to symbols that cupped in words. My pitch-Black Afro against the window blended evenly with the mood of night, outside. There dotted stars, fleeting floodlights, and lit electric poles charged: out of a darkness that pushed through us as we pushed through it; a yawning of blackness that at once trailed behind and laid before us.

“Boyfriend finds it difficult to sleep without you by his side?” TuRooms mocked-inquired.

Pensiveness shorn off of my face like Minora's close-shave: *insightful, perceptive man (only if he knew it's me who suffers more than Nkonko on that score)*. Its own exaggerated opinions about TuRooms my mind volunteered. He had found my letters and read each aloud. Unlike Roberta's (Flack) flirt,

‘he [didn't] look right through me/As if I wasn't there’.

He looked right into me with nakedness so unashamed it stripped him of all armour of defensive masculinity. TuRooms stripped down to a bonding vulnerability, a Feeling, Nkonko never trusted me with.

In TuRooms I found a windowpane, something to let the light of another in. We responded to our desires in childlike earnestness. We clutched hands melding into fluent gestures my worst scepticism could not stop. We thickened into pregnancy I had no grammar to midwife, like the familiar warm feeling of a hot water bottle in winter, in bed.

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**Turooms:** I don't brood for too long; the bus is here. We board and disappear. Not into mops, brooms and giant yellow-dusters. Not into brand-manual chokes – Black/Green/Gold – on wheels. Not into queues where we wait. And wait. To do as we're told.

The bus is here. We board and disappear. Not into *Things* that make the (hu<sup>^e</sup>)~~man~~-world stitch together; like Humpty Dumpty's glue.

The Bus, like a spaces shuttle of words, is here. We queue to climb up. But before we climb – as we always do – we blues. We wait: studying one another's cracked backs. We pluck out remains of hundred-years-whip as one does with porcupine quills. We are trained in docility, so we are adept at waiting. It's an attribute left in our ailing psyche – left there by the okapi of history. The deconstruction which unmade (hu<sup>^e</sup>)~~man~~ into beast – us. Beasts of burden.

The Bus is here, to lift the cap on vitality dormant beneath our skin.

If you look closely you can see it: reams and reams of formless Feeling. Feeling pressed paper-thin and quarantined. An hourglass of life vacillating between shy and livid. Life crouched beneath our skin. Our bent spines. There, eager to straighten up and fly right.

The bus is here: Aviwe's oatmeal skin towers in front of me suspended on Jimmy Choo heels. At long last she climbs up. In: the beast of the Order swallows her.



## *Coloured View Of The World*

*That which you think defenceless, is defended by the shadows* – Victor Hugo

*My African people/ My Black Nation* - song of Nongqawuse

Sequence 1, Enters *TV*:

Lance comes home. Finds her frail wife in a poorer state than he left her, She's wasting away, body cupped in bed-lined, pale. Her bed-side: sickle-shaped by their four children, a relative on one arc end, a friend on another. MaOl'ady-The Help – on her haunches, scrubbing her vomit, off of His Coloured's-skin stitched carpet. On her bedside a choir of heads are bowed down, screams hurled at the set chorused to fade

Sequence 2, enters *Mia and Lance Picture*:

In a flash their room is empty. Mia and her celebrity husband are alone in their stadium-size lush bedroom. A chink of the help's shadow – MaO'lady – through the slit of a closing bedroom door closes behind her, closes (an old chapter) and opens (a new one); opens and closes, at once. In the bedroom the moment is egg-yolk-rare with emotion. Mia has rid her face of her plastic-beauty crutches. No mascara, no eyebrow pencil, no lipstick, no hair-extension, no Jimmy Choo heel, No Luella tees. He's hovering head-craned six-feet on top of her. Anxious. Concerned. Their eyes lock. Intensity as old as the hills meld... The kind summoned only by the gravitas of death huddled at the door. Death pitching up dressed in cancer. Death impatient to collect loved-ones, loved-ones only it seems.

Sequence 2b, Enters *Death*, stalled by *Semblance of Sanity*...

sanity from a track on repeat in my *Backyard of Things*, track brooding over a hundred-years *Sequence*... a track – the only evidence of life – perched on the corner of a furnisher piece, furnisher about to be exodused back to the hold of the furnisher-shop, on account of arrears... back whence the piece came.

Sequence 3: enters *Death Knell*.

*His* bloody hands – from reading razor brails GPS – twined around *Not Complete In The Mind's* waist. Their parched faces doused in spattering of blood. They got here with one wiper working, the passenger side wiper, blood smudging the windscreen, blurring Death Knell's vision. My plasma screen is a sponge, oozing blood, and puss, leaking something out of sequence. A cane clasped in *Not Complete In My Mind's* hand (left), its tapered end feeling against boulders, knocking against cans, trash brimming, cane's tip scurrying tramways and railway lines, looking to put something in the *Playlist* on repeat, track 3 to be precise, looking for unpigeonholeable things in my backyard, my Backyard Of Things. There: things bound and unbound all at once, there: looking for related and unrelated things, chained and unchained, things on track 3, chained and unchained. Things in my Backyard Arrears.

Sequence 3b, enters Death Knell (screaming): *pay me niggas... they should have never given you niggers money, never...*

Sequence 4,

Enters Registration Form:

Name: ..... Izithunywa.

Surname: ..... Zohlanga

Nickname: ..... Track 3

Age: 1min: ..... 42sec:

Favourite dish: ..... Something tangled and abruptly shifting, margherita pasty, gory, origanum wild, morgue smelly, cadaver fantastical and exaggerated, time-warped and looping around a stronghold of Soledad Brothers & Souls On Ice chaos, a topping of death, maggots for parmesan shavings, wretched shreds freshly ground and peppered indifferently, gorgonzola dashed, something exotic stewed in Voltaire's green envy & Pityana's betrayal, bouquet of remorse staling the morning dew, something Huey and Cleaver FBI-recorded beefy.

In a relationship..... like a Man and his sexbot

Children..... Medusa, Mammy, Mbokodo, plus a village

Been to the airport..... if memory serves me well, yes  
 Flown on a plane..... I was 'in' the damned thing, not 'on'  
 Cried over someone..... I think the bit about being situated 'over', is a  
 little too kinky for public consumption. But if you mean: "has loss ever  
 reduced you to tears?", the answer is in the affirmative  
 Fell in love..... like beer without alcohol, the full Monty but  
 the 'fall'  
 Watched someone give birth..... not my culture  
 Watched someone die..... I was 8 maybe 9, eSheshegu. witnessed  
 someone owayelahlwe sis'pokro, a grown man, mauled naked by three  
 staggering children, children falling over from his unconscious weight, a lanky  
 oldman dragged quivering from the gate outside, jettisoned kuRonta, wrapped  
 in blankets like a helpless newborn, kept warm by the fire eziko kuronta,  
 inside: grade 5, 7, & 9 boy-children breathed a sigh, relieved by adults who  
 came to put a meddling blanket between the man and his maker, I was one of  
 the boys who proceeded to drop anchors of papa and rhewu – mcuku when put  
 together – a foundation for an all-day-at-school, a base on which stood their  
 dreams, a grade at a time, a base to carry them and their bags, for 40 km to and  
 fro every school day. I was 8, 9, 10 maybe 11, eSheshegu. I was one of those  
 'duck takes to the water' Vaseline blues sealed from life, shoebrush combed  
 kaffirhare, unsettled by a man as tall as a horse on hind legs, as heavy as  
 Grey's Public Works, and as close to his maker as shipment in Rudge for  
 South America, his groaning played my nerves like Madala Kunene's guitar,  
 his kicking the ghost shaking its last like bossanova and a Pentecostal's  
 tambourine. That, took me back to the 2 kg frame I began as... the dot of hope  
 on my mother's heart-beat monitor, the pulse of eternity shaped in her womb,  
 the lifeblood of forever in new wineskins, the future zoomed in, the ruin of  
 mcuku's peaceful suffering, the re-write of defiance in the face of Sheshegu's  
 'fated when', the exit door out of that Ronta's mental poverty forever, gatvol  
 hope with god at gunpoint, our condemnation called out like Lazarus, the  
 'manifest destiny' of grab & capture put to question, the unregistered 'more  
 than' in the accounted for, the burden of freedom un-campaigned and unvoted  
 for, small miracles made Word, Gods of second chances costumed in flesh and  
 in blood, the last made first, and first last, the ill-sequenced of history I began

as, the glitch cloaked in gore, cloaked in broken-water, cloaked in shimmering blood-pearls, in placenta fat, in residual cum, fists full of preconscious tears. That, catching a man die on my way to school had the effect of beaming me back to a bundle of sorrow pushing through hope, pushing hope against hope, pushing between my mother's thighs, beamed back to a time when I skipped the sequence of time by pushing from between my mother's knees straight to potty-training...:

Sequence 5:

Enters *Chapter 6, Page 167*:

“The Negro symbolized the biological... he enters puberty at the age of nine, and he's a father at the age of 11....”

Ridden in an ambulance..... aplenty

Gotten into a street fight..... too many times, and lost a 100-years-long war to Right Of Conquest and Manifest Destiny.

Surgeries..... one excised by okapi, the other: esuthwini's surgical precision minus anaesthetics

Stayed in a hospital..... twice

Donated blood..... no, they say our blood is treated with suspect, like our humanity.

Smoked weed..... i meditate with the help of herbs, a teabag of beer & percolated crops.

Drank alcohol..... on occasion.

Have a crush on ..... my Oedipal complex.

Ethnicity..... City of Johannesburg, Soweto dusty red-ethnicity streets.

Are you a robot..... obvious

Are you a robot: ..... maybe

Sequence 6: enters *Question Are You A Robot*.....

Sequence 7, Enters *Playlist in something perched on a furnisher piece on Ellerines arrears*:

0min: 12sec: [*Majola Phum' etilongweni* background chant sets the mood... ululations rise and fall... brooding/reflective mood lingers on]

0min: 24 sec [Loud hailer climbs on the back of sombre chant, the poet's voice swells within an earshot of his audience, he rallies people to a community meeting; agenda: youth unemployment]

0min: 59sec: [Retired *maOl'ady* gives an interview account of her domestic-worker working days, she's the sage the poet gathered us around to listen to. MaO'lady takes us down memory lane, she recounts her working-life, her working days kwaMlungu]:

1min: 00sec: [Hailer fades, chant retreats to the background, MaO'lady's aging voice steps out of anonymity, climbs up *Majola Phum' etilongweni* soapbox, plants her feet there and rides the chant]:

sequence 7, enters *MaO'lady Vernacular Voice*:

1min: 11sec: "Bebengasifuni nasemisebenzini (they hated us, even as they needed us to clean after them)

19:60: "Buyasebenza, bunezitya zakho... ezibekwa phandle (as a domestic, you were confined to cutlery & crockery meant for you and only you. Your cutlery & crockery was confined outside the Madam & Master's house, mixing your kaffir spoons and plates was a cardinal sin)

18:57:"Ezezinja neekati zisendlini, ezikhabhatini (cats and dogs were valued higher than us, kaffir, Dog's spoons & plates could be kept together with Madam & Master's spoons and plates, sharing space in the main-house "ezi-cupboard-ini/khabhatini")

19:94: "Wena ubunezityana ohlalanazo phandle (kaffir, spoons & plates, outside)

20:12: "Nokutya, uyakutyela phandle

(k.a.f.f.I r eats outside)

08:12: “KukwaMlungu apha, kaloku wena uqeshiwe (with kaffir, Madam & Master don’t share humanity; kaffir is a broom extension, a baby-sitter vendor & a washing-machine on two feet),

1min: 20sec: “Ubungenolala endlini ungenaPass (without dompass, it wasn’t safe to spend the night in your own house, not inside the house, not in bed with loved-ones)

1min:25sec: “Bekufikwa ebusuku, kukhaty’ ucango (because any minute police felt like, they could kick your door down, no courtesy of knocking was afforded kaffirs)

5:000 (rounds of bullets): “Bekungankqonkqozwa, bekukhaty’ ucango (knocking at the door was civility not reserved for kaffir , the law in practice was ‘kick her door down’)

1min:39sec: “Lonto yenze ke ukuba ungalali endlini, ulale phandle (it was safer to be at the mercy of the elements outside, it was better to sleep outside your own house)

-0min: 3sec: [MaO’lady’s Vernacular Voice leaves the mic, her community address hands mic over to Majola Phum’ etilongweni chant, ululations briefly return, they rise and fall.]

1min: 38 seconds: lapses....

1:39

1:40

1:41

1:42]

Sequence 7, enters END

Sequence 1, enters *Lance and Mia Picture*: All of that unspoken archive, their whispered words, their amputated gestures, their off-key vibration fill the room, and paint the cardinality of their four walls: ‘wound-relations’, gore, bloody and magenta.

Sequence 1, enters *Lance and Mia Picture*: their eyes lock. He strings impotent sentences. She returns his wor(l)ds with a courageous fight against cancer. Eyes braving an expression

of love for her patriarch. His words crumble into something chock-held, something horse, something tryvon martin & margaret garner, Krotwa and Zara, Mhlakaza & Nongqawuse.

His football-player masculinity, a relic of tears un-cry-able now; a permanent well of sorrow, premature glaucoma sequenced in closing-in vision, sequenced by hardening membrane for tears.

Sequence 1, enters *Lance Picture*: clumsy and too manly... his tears climb up his nose, hugging his face.

Sequence 2, enter "*I love you*" edgewise, his ruse of cuckold hurt kicked off like seductive morning blankets, the murmur of his lips in restraint, the inarticulate silence filed up in gobsmacks.

Sequence 3, enters "I love you too": She acknowledges his forgiveness. She acknowledges his four-kids-later-protracted-cancer-struggle-too-little-too-late forgiveness. She has on many accounts extended her mercy, on many occasions extended her grace, mercy & grace for his many indiscretions. She, on many occasions, buried the hatchet before he even knew what he had done wrong (by her).

Sequence 4, enters #Since1652ManAreTrash: He will never know the kind of first-level-order trash he is, for taking so long to come to the forgiveness table.

Under his oppressive first-level-order trash, she composes all kinds of sounds and feelings, to arrest and de-compose the rigid vibe of violence against her, against them, against *us*. She gets off bed, throws the bedlinen off of her body. She dances and sings, kisses him deeply, kisses him a sad long *I will always love you parting shot*, to harness her flailing and whizzing in the noose of everyday sequence, everyday reality. Under his oppression, she turns our choking conditions to earth wind & fire falsetto... our Emmett Till hands on piano keys, chained in ebony & ivory, in jazz, keys as blues as her blue-i-s, chained on blind Man's cane, in rock, in soul, in fusion, in hip-hop, in bubble gum, in guz, in kwaito, in joyous, in Michael, in Usher, in R&B. Under his oppression she blows trumpets, trombones and saxophones. Under his oppression she blows trumpets, trombones, and penniless-whistles... to take her mind off things, to take her mind off the urge to blow his world into pieces...

Sequence 5, *Mind Enters Her Body*: if I were to stick around, around just for a little while longer – she thinks – maybe he will take a good look at the sequence, take a look in the mirror, perhaps He will self-reflect, consider His evil, and change His ways.

Sequence 6, enters the song of Nongqawuse.

Sequence 7: thought enters *MaO'lady body*: These creatures are poor at their makeup core. They know no-better. Will never know, if a hundred years later, they are no-closer to refinement than they began with. *That which you think defenceless is defended by the shadows...*

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## Feet on the dashboard

*Sonakalisiwe/ Sophukile/ Silinxiwa/ Iintsalu nembacu* – song of Nongqawuse

*Mama, the nigger's going to eat me up.* Frank revises the conversation in his head. Discovers: his exchange with Virginia – daughter to his girlfriend, Alice – had two melodies on play. His description of the one tune: *Negrophobia; that neurotic little ditty tune the orchestra plays when confronted by energetic movements of Black bodies.*

*Virginia's racist torrent* heaved behind preconscious floodgates. The *repressed* undercurrent not an out and out verse. Not a refrain: Freudian slip. But certainly something of that song's refrain bubbling from under. An unrest from seasoned rein of a subtle kind. Something of an MC's who is used to bite her tongue in public.

Peeking through her gift-of-the-gab-wrap Frank was already convinced that Virginia's words, what was buried beneath them, omened something as callous as: '*... land of the free... home of the brave*'. Nothing fit for Black Lives Matter hotline all by its self yet. But certainly something worth watching out for. For: when he will need to dig into his racism self-help kit for the emergency fire sticks. For: SOS reprieve, and ultimately escape. In those words, her coldness could be felt pace the floor of her mother's house. Could be felt cracking the whip, peeling away at the flayed thin-film: Frank's borrowed warmth there. Borrowed warmth in whose *affect* her mother's house couched. A house where shadows of the underworld held steady but threatened to unhinge.

Whatever concerns Virginia harboured: climbing into her department's elevator, out the Mezzanine floor, into her car, out the lot, through the pavement, into her house, under her carport, out the grumbling engine, into her living room, past her kitchen, up the stairs, through her door knob, into Alice's bedroom – her mother, finding her cosy in Frank's ugga-bugga Negro arms, whatever genuine chit-chat she had hoped for, crumbled to discordant associational speech – a thinly bridled torrent.

Receptacle for all her vexation put on the easy mask: they masked as *invasions of hip-hop & jazz dance*. A thuggery art of sorts poised to swallow her entire curriculum whole.

'errybuddy in amerikkka got a Nigger in their brain'. & so it was that in Virginia's Klan-brain was a nigger. A nigger perched with a nervous bonbon: white teeth enveloped in listeria infected watermelon. Sophisticated nigger – this time, but nigger nonetheless.

A nigger in bed, with her mom. *Not unlike the king kong monstrosity of hip-hop & jazz dance soiling ballet lessons. Hers. A descent barefoot in her mother's bedroom too. Dropped by hooks and crooks of poetry on her white linen. An assault rifle in Huey P Hands. Aimed at her superior scholarship. Aimed to dirty her curriculum.* That's what she saw on entering her mother's room.

*Dear diary: bonding over phobia of the black imago – the shivering of a nigger in winter, mistook for quivering in rage, a hunger for the little boy's pork-skin and blue-eyed delicacy – long happened. Long before Alice and I ...*

it happened the day of the white traffic cop routine check.

*dear diary... was a stupid joke Frank...!*

*Dear diary: Alice pulls over. Cop enthuses on seeing bare feet rested on a dashboard (mine). Me: relaxed. Reading poetry to her ... nicely cocooned in our highbrow hermetic world (of words):*

'gee lady, where did you get that Negro foot ornament? I'd like one for my dashboard.'

gee lady: 'haven't I seen those feet on a *Wanted Poster*?'

ha ... ha...

off the Pig's tyranny of care hooks. parting shot: 'mam. are. you. *sure. you. alright?*'

'ha... what a sweet cherub face he had' – Alice's attempt at thawing the winter (biting all the way into their hermetic world). frank cackles and clucks... implodes with murderous thoughts. thoughts that register as blah blah blah, even to himself.

peeping through shuttered subjectivity-moulds are his clicks. clicks all tourists enthrall themselves over with when they see a nigger taps. maybe a kaffir jitterbugs.

Something's the matter. But she can't see the fuss. Short of saying:

'sien,... yekel' uba serious'.

But single-line Kwaito verses are not cut out to drown this Armageddon.

Frank's livid... with anger. The closest he ever comes to, from across his *abyssal*, to broach *the zone of the living*. Might spice their sex up tonight. Might scream 'Wakanda!' when she nestles his 'questionable humanity' in her pork-*aven*. Might come within a touching distance of his Manhood too... let out a Serena growl (maybe groan) on her Brazilian-shave.

Might busk on his shake-shakes, strewn between cold and rage— her fetish for part-human-part-beast. his desire for more man than beast. She might soil herself: *dirt is good, and my whiteness unbeatable*. Piss on her fathers: 'once you go black...' unfounded cautions.

'[Bullshit], I have the bible to prove it: I have authority to lay my [whiteness] down and take it up again'— John chapter 10 verse 18...

Might queer her father's holycows... & blacken them to a 'horny' that fucks *dos* and *donts* where the body hardly has an orifice to swallow a post.

Might have Virginia revising her vulgarity. Clutching at straws to bury her torrent even: 'maybe hip-hop fits within some mould of art. perhaps some structure, some system, that behind its free-style craft I could never grasp. Wellerr... I happen to think: that that thing, needs to open its own thuggish department.

Her fatal politeness, for bed linen infidels. Her single sympathetic bullet, through their hermetic poetry: our *Kafkaresque* and *Beckettian* temples gushing out invisible blood.

## Judiciary junta

*Joined by sound and dance/ Stitched with love/ Came along settlers/ To balkanize us – song of Nongqawuse*

Because his terribly distilled whisky, the gore of zarbar rimming, the phallatio that tingled his hernia – at the backseat of a fast-aging motorcade. Because youngings gurgle his balls like shit-shuttling pipes, with his pubes flossing their milky-teeth : first-years with brasso steady writs – Mrs Harvey’s brasso – on his knob working like M’aOlady ‘kuba kaloku uqashiwe’. Because famished rhodes to feemustfall, university residents parched dry with his ‘men in black’ seamen & sardines of un-fathered children, lead to his abuses of the public purse:

Children flung from joe slovo roof tops. Flung as body-shields. As objects: the last figleaf for shame. As attempted murder, kaffir for a f/a/other, squeezed to the docks, filtered down Polsmoor, down St Albans Maximum, a sibling (me) staving off grumbling stomach kamarago, a cadaver for a mother, in government, breathless, cold, rotting, gone doing same... gone under...

Under:

The irony of ‘three meals’ REGIMEN/REGIMENT, and ‘shelter’, under ‘surveillance’, in prison, a prison palpable at this meeting place of OBJECTIVE and SUBJECTIVE violence, the STATE's violence and the f/A/OTHER’s violence, the SOLID STATE pattern of assault and his de-patterning ATTEMPT. The irony of his LIFE, tattooed: ATTEMPTED (but failed) MURDER/ER (like toni morrison’s Seth and Beloved; slaves). A ‘failed’ murderer. A ‘failure’ unfit for the name ‘FATHER’. The irony of an assailant, magnetizing prison with his every-turn-on-the-roof-of-his-banishment. A failure unfit to couch his ATTEMPTS, both at BEING and at being a ‘FATHER’. The irony of display of actions that (that spawn poor outcomes... sprung and flung off roof tops) ...

results: poor outcomes for a fA/O/THER. The irony of his own doing. doing: magnetizing Man-handling, from police; Man-handling under whose Big Brother eye his unfit/un-fatherly/unhuman ROOF FLUNG (...) actions (means) produce, always, always SURVEILLANCE.

The irony of a din of disgust, from us his police, us: voyeurs, his surveillance, designated provocateurs, and choice saboteurs, panel beating him into line --the straitjacket of MASTER's MORALS/MASTER's ETHICS. The irony of a NEGRO WELL HUNG to make a baby (but can't feed/shelter them); a NEGRO inviting to himself the crack of the whip; the lashing of our tongues, screaming: "but how does he get it up, how does he condense the movement – in and out – of his shaft inside baby-mama in rounds of beaded sweat on his dewy forehead, his musty back, his 38 years grown hairy torso, how does he... without enough monthly-pay to earn, to earn his habit, to earn his stamina, his stamina between the sheets, for life he regularly dips in in search of, a life always wedged in the kiss-kiss of his and her loins, a life always lurking between her thighs... her wide hips"? The irony of prison, now, a sure source of shelter to a nation of unfit – anyways – fathers:

The irony of ... An arrangement funded by the public purse. A purse possessed of political power to finger, to single-out, to locate, e-Lockshin, and dislocate, dismember from FEELING. The irony of threatening your own child with death -- the community, your audience, held split between camps of disgust (on one hand) and empathy (on another) for such visceral display of both vulnerability and untold desperation. The irony of that threat - a fA/O/THER captive to self-dissolution - winding up his own hope for stretching his days (dead-drive per child). The irony of such self-immolation, self-directed killing, buttressed by criminal charges; all filed up to one end (that): the fa/OTHER (the racialized-other) comes to the world already radically wedded to prison. The irony of the OTHER who comes to LIFE already constituted by an ACTing (a 'letting out') -- if indeed a true acting out of his own WILL TO POWER -- ... already constituted by a THEATER of EVENTS that at every turn harness CAPTIVITY.

CAPTIVITY: the distance by which CIVILITY distinguishes itself from me, him and you... me: the immanent, and you: the imminent object of BARBARITY "no-longer at the door, but savagery at the core".

HIM: A Black f/a/OTHER -- that ALIENating/sepaRATING modality between CIVILITY and its own trigger-itching-finger, a threshold away from swallowing itself savage and gore in its intrinsic-bLACKness: LACK-made FLESH. The barbarity (of): MODERNITY. Here, not under Grey, or Smuts, or Botha or De Klerk, but here: in Port Elizabeth, in Joe Slovo's tin-shacks, we encounter the divine providence of a f/a/O/THER blowing hot and COLD

through the ROOF. The irony of a father sacrificing his 'only begotten child' in order to reconcile a WOR(L)D in chinks. Here, is a fa/O/THER nestling in his own death (as one... as father) the possibility of a dialogue/dialectics between a wor(1)d that thrives by displacing the Other... and the Other speaking back the unlanguage SHRIEKS of a freak (on the roof of his banishment) - Frankenstein's Monsters (un-fatherly monsters in the hands of this STATE of modernity).

Here we encounter: The self-directed destruction, engineered by the hand of Man. Our genocide: their livelihood.

## Failure

*Bemanyene ngomngqungqo/ Bethungwe ngothando/ Fik' umdubi/ Wenzimbambano* – song of Nongqawuse

If, say, for Sunday-kos (also known as soul-food), you've had humble brands of rice – like Chopsticks, No-name or Speko – then you sure have had run-ins with that odd sand granule in your mouth. The one that escapes all attempts – by you to be rid of its company among grains of rice. You would have done your part to obey the orders of any responsible mother's motto for her children: my child 'cleanliness is next to godliness' – thorough long-wash. You would have recorded the long-wash process in a double-entry accounting systems of 'repeat wash-and-rinse', if required, but to no avail. The stubborn foreign-grain would have cleaved and clung in the nook and crannies of sameness, like a chameleon to surrounding foliage and flora.

After queueing for hours at a communal tap, meant for twenty to fifty households, in some Tyoks-ville community somewhere, somewhere in the unoccupied banishment corners of the land, where your parents come to sleep after eking your Speko supper on haunches. 100kms away, a universe of meaning away from your universe of fixing... the fixing of a community rationing spring gone unfix for months: a broke-tap-underground-piping showing its dusk mauve mink sunset clause magenta palette, tap's innards turned inside-out: out in springs rations.

'Escape attempts'? To rid the damned thing – a molehill skotile or heaped pot –of all imperceptible low-key foreign particles. Particles that look one, in purpose, with modest grains of rice. Modest: until the foreign grain stands out. Stands out: taking turns with native-grains, for Sunday-kos grind, between your teeth.

Words fail to shape the annoyance into consonants and syllables. Words fail to capture that encounter with an imposter at the height of your eating pleasure.

Tow to tow, imposter to native granule grinding, is that moment of collapse. When life collapses all around you. Collapsed under the weight of the word 'failure': your descriptor.

'failure': collecting faster than sheath of dust on deserted house windowpanes. 'failure', leaving you feeling more abandoned.

Doesn't-grind-too-nice 'failure': Man to man with you in the mirror. Not unlike the sand granule in Spekko rice.

But perhaps there is something fundamental to be gained when you, the man in the mirror, take a pause, for a second, and then a second longer ... in that mirror-standoff. Perhaps there's something foundational and potentially progressive in 'failure'. Something from which to build.

When you confront it, when you try on the easy-come-easy-to-dish 'you are a failure' accusation. When you try on that menacing voice of blame cornering you breathless in the fitting room of private reflections. Perhaps there, in the fitting-room contraption, exists, after all, something not so akin to a jury of one's peers. Perhaps the image of an accusing finger pointed at you, by the many-in-you, a finger flexing its muscles, but not its reflexivity, with the aim to democratise blame – as vastly as storms, fires, and earthquakes of damnation lick the spectre of public life democracy. Maybe there, God appears... appears to you, appears with two-tablets, turooms, to writer and re-write you in 10 commandments. Maybe re-write you in 42 principles of ma'at. Maybe she, god, appears, not in 'kuzolunga' exaggerated optimism, but maybe she appears as a writer's self-mining gem, maybe she appears as a writer's writing base.

Afterall, it is not in the character of Gods to shout. Because to have power is never having to raise your voice. Gods: subtle motherfuckers (their voice that is:) not found in great and strong winds that rend the mountains into pieces of rocks.... Gods: subtle motherfuckers who defy the wind and the earthquake; Gods who will not be found in the earthquake.... And after the earthquake, fire... sublime motherfuckers not in the fire... but lo and behold after the fire. There you will find... Gods: don in still and small voices... with an attitude that says 'take it, don't take; use it, don't use it... it's all up to you.'

A whisper in the mirror unravelling you when you're least ready to hear, hear someone tells you, for instance, that: "you are bad with money." The whisper you naturally relegate, the whisper that for a while now you refuse to heed... But ultimately you introspect, painfully, and get it. Seek to heed it, the criticism. And change.

Like the reflection in the mirror tells you : *you live in your head – a variation from many who have told you before: 'your head is in the clouds',...clouds ...* The whisper: "you need to come down, get off your high-horse, dirty yourself with the legwork, be more practical..."

It pains you first. And then you learn to take the feedback. Reflect. And, by your own act of will, learn to balance: 1) your elevated abstraction, your high-end ruminations; 2) actions tested in the crucible of practice.

But ...

But not everyone heeds 'failure' ... not for what it is...

So 'failure', as a grounding wire... as old as the three ship that docked their tails on our shoreline – call it theorizing failure – keeps casting its nets. Cast as far as the damp and funky crevices within which we fall. Crevices that draw the horizon that motors the ink jets of a pen (mine).

Take talent, for instance, say, it (talent) budding at 11, perhaps 14. Take that budding talent to mean: a fair grading of yet to be nurtured, yet to be harnessed, statement of one's lifetime abilities.

Fast track along that timeline; skip a few frames, voila: you've hit your early to mid-20s. You are at the showcase prime of such talent. Whether as a mathematician, a fast bowler or politician.

Late bloomers are forgivable, as they trickle-in, in their late 20s lacklustre.

Any other thing – talent or fell-through-the-cracks-frauds – by any stretch of 'brilliant' imagination, is unimaginable. Unimaginable trudging up a beginner's steep climb. Unimaginable in a karate-class-equivalent. Unimaginable in a white-belt girdled girth. Unimaginable in clenched fists karate-suit all suited up. Shouting: 'each!', 'knee!', 'sun!' 'koo!' and 'bake beans for supper'. Unimaginable wrinkled, ancient-of-days with worries, worries playing back in Berry White crooning fantasy voice in your head. Worries on playback because you are back at your mama's sofa, at 43.

There: Reading your friend's memoirs, the dishonest motherfucker who embellishes on facts way beyond the vulgar 'boiler' line. You were there. You know the truth. You can tell it with the honesty it warrants. Motherfucker who tells lies about the facts of 2004 (you wanna set him straight):

Steve Tshwete, minister of sports, letting the whole nation in on a rumour: Cyril (aka Silili, aka Buffalo, aka 'blood on your hands'), Phosa & Tokyo are plotting against the president of

the republic.

Your facts embellishing friend, let's call him TuRooms (Me), and two other friends passing by Tuynhuis, Rondebosch. Three drunks (we are, put together) shouting, mindlessly regurgitating what's common-knowledge in all news outlets: "down with Mbeki... down with Mbeki..."

We are from the Cavendish side of the marathon long fence in which our own whitehouse version is enclosed.

By the time we reach the end of the fence nearest rondebosch shopping centre: Pigs, Marcells, Vertigo & the dingy place Jimmy Dlundu frequented, a white quantum gapes its sliding door open, for us. In: we are swallowed

We're abducted by the republic's special security forces, we reckon, though mum in our white-powder-with-shocked-black-bodies. Not unlike in Hollywood movies.

Whatever pluck we had – coming from a jolly Cavendish moments of friends, banter, and drinks (that gave us a high to push over the edge) – has vanished.

After many turns inside the presidential yard, we climb down our detention-without-trial-on-wheels. And face question from a detective who has an entire police station, inside the yard, all to himself... from where we stand, it seems.

We are pissing in our pants, literally. Prayin: Please God, or Ghordan, don't make Thabo come out of the big house. Don't let him totter a kilometer stretch – from the inhouse police station, where we stand forlorn – to our direction. Don't lets him waltz from that Universal Church wide entrance/exit door, robed in lily White cotton night-gown. Not in Slip-ons oh God. Not his short & stout figure Thixowam. Not the Saxon University economics, MSc bagged haggard and heavy in his gravitas. Not the sight of his girdled waist hanging with a loose swag. Girth relaxed. Glenfidich in his breath. Fuck-off cold shrills scribbled on his forehead lines. And a lush englush pipe languidly poised on his Shakespearesque lower-lip.

Please God, don't make Zizi come out here embarrassed. Let him be embarrassed by

everything under our thick-skulls and ‘Mandela’s ugly shoes’, and the sun, but not by us. Let him not pick up that our english has traces of Xhosa nostra. That we are enrolled at UCT. Please God of Nxele, Mlanjeni and Godot, Don’t make him come out charging:

"eeh wena kwedini, yes you enetshebe, ungumni"

“Ndingu Jola tata.”

Coz I can’t say: “ndinguZizi, uFakade, uNgxubenoboya, uMhlan’ utshile.”

Oh, unguJola.

OK... awu, mzukulwana wenkwakhwa. Nenza ntoni ke apha nindi embarasa nje makwedini, hee... ndingekafinishi ne third-term yam. I mean, second?

Hayi, xolo, tata, besithetha nje siqhutywa ngumqhelo. Sibhidwe butywala wena Zizi, ungaqumbi de uqalekise.

Hayi, ngekhe ndiqumbele inyani makwedini, thyini! Ndiyinqawa, nditshayiwe kakade? Ndiyawazi lamamene-mene, uCyril, Tokyo no Phosa. Futhi ziinyoka nje zomhlaba, azikho poisonous. Inyoka enobuhlungu (poisonous) lelaqaba lomzulu. That's why I want a third term.

For real Tbos?

Ewe. Thyini, Ngenani ngaphakathi makwedini.

hee yazi, natsi maan eyona into ebendifuna ukuyitsho kuni makwedini: I’m an African. And today is Afrika day. Think of it as Zizi day. Think of it as Majola day. Even Madiba day, though I hate his shoes and how he casts a more menacing shadow over myself (and whomever else succeeds us) than your embarrassment ever could.

Me: so, you mean to say that...

Mbeki: no, don't think about it too much. Yes, all of us africans have one day.

Me: and the rest of the year...?

The rest of the year is white, as we know it. I mean, NEUTRAL (shit)!

Neutral as the culture of stripper clubs for indiscretions patriarchs wants to relish on. In his neutral-culture paying brothel inhabitants a visit is a 'meaningless' shag ... a transgression forgivable within that neutral visitor's culture. Thina: aping visitors, people who come already packaged in a culture that externalizes the essence of who they are in monetary value. Thina: values precede and exceed money left behind. Thina: settle for money, because our visitors settled at money. Then we take it there, and it turns out we don't even know how to do it. He, our visitor, pays 200 for beers at a strip club and goes back to his family. If he's desperate he forks out 400 for a lapdance. If too lonely for equal-economy company, he pays 600 at Diplomat: for the impatience. The transaction, with his working-girl service provider, develops to some form of return/repeat business. But wena mntomnyama: with a 20 meter construction tender split among your buddies in power ("meter" is what you call it (million)... 24 years of democracy later, still: you can't call money by its name), you are going to find that Intern Elahlileyo, pay her 300 000 three-years lease contract in some fancy 5-star lodge, just for your casual shag fantasies.

ruin your home.

mistreat your wife.

and make the poor career-rookie young woman pregnant because you are jealous. you suspect she is sleeping with niggas her age (&she does). you, because you are you, you have other boob-job expenses on your 'ndimfuba'-share. you chase skirts the size of an untucked shirt to fill your void; instead of letting your lack of wholesomeness speak the grammar of suffering that causes the void, heed the voice of the void inside you, let it help you process, let you self-repair, No, that's not an option to you. You are big boss ngagara with shit-loads of pusha pressa panda tender money. you watch too much Trace Music Channel. and it has not occurred to you that, the air brush, and studio lighting filters, plashed on queen-bed size flat screen, are not fantasies you should be picking a tab for. It has not occurred to you that what you see (there) is not what you get – here: a few reality check flight of stairs down).

So you pay your nyatsi to iron out her cellulite and the perfectly natural squiggles on her hips she calls stretchmarks: 80 skoto by ewallet you send, to avoid lifestyle tax trolling. You pay to add Niki's boob-tube cupsizes to your nyatsi's already double-d endowment. You: darkie, you: crass. Because, this leading with money thing is not your thing, but it hasn't occurred to you.

because, hey, we live in "modern" times... Right?

At the strip club: you indulge greedily, in mores foreign to yours.

Four years later: the young woman you detained at 300 000 rands-strong lease contract, for the pleasure of your whim, has two kids by your penis. She's back at her aunts/moms, owing one module to complete her journalism studies. She meets your Malumes, yes Malumes, coz two kids out of wedlock is no whimsical pass-time. To your wife, about your indiscretions, out your Malumes have ratted. Your shenanigans are the reason she is tasked, according to your culture, to facilitate the introduction of your stratweni-namankazana-children, introduced to your ancestors. Effectively, your wife must find it in her heart to accept your nyatsi – your boob-job-put-under-the-knife-and-flushed-80grand-down-the-drain nyatsi – as your second wife.

you are left with a fraction of the 20 meter, and a fraction of your penis' prowess when mr tax-man knocks blood coughs on your aped-chest. When mr tax-man takes both your fractions... and leaves you a kitchen-sink and a chest of drawers: un-paired socks and oversized underwear's ... Says (after he house-to-lets you): what you owe in tax evasion comes up short. You go back to your mom's couch, sports bag in your hands, and used-to-be-display-books clutched under your armpit...

Back where you began. Only now, with senior citizen health problems approaching, like prostate.

nursing mental health diseases: you are no longer cool. And thinking it incorrigible weakness: told no-one about it. you can't confide in the retired 'working-girls' who had a stint at the same brothel you and the neutral-culture man met. (he – neutral cultured– spent an odd hr&-a-half with 900 damages to his pocket, in 6 months.... multiply that daily-rate damage by 3 years, comes up to a miserly = 5700).

He – your brothel companion – still has his family, sanity, social standing, and 20 million (you're darkie, you call it "meter". to say "million" traumatizes you). Companion's estate value has gone through the roof. Because where you squandered your buddies-in-power tender corruption money, his property appreciated, shooting from 60 000 subsidised working class (that his parents were when South End was turned into clearings), to 600 000 when Mandela took the reins, to 6 million when your *green black and gold* came pouring should-have-been-black empowerment rations there, in his neighbourhood.

Then he – your brothel companion– bought the brothel: when Chinese and Indians wanted to buy it to launder their drug-money. they offered him 6 million. He – the Man – cashed on his bitcoin investment and trust-baby land-dispossession inheritance. he is 20 million strong, you can't even get it up (by comparison).

The women who were "beneath you, ...", those "outside your league", pity you now. You have kept your English. More or less polished. With its blast from the past you relay your "another used to be" moments. They call you bra Joe, for Joe Tomas. The "another used to be" crooner. Your crass passes, that used to be sexy, at a strip-joint, and your brutal honesty, that used to fascinate your Nietzsche and Samuel Beckett groupies (in Bramfontein at Kitchener's) are now disgusting. even to the new-breed of 'working-girls', two floors up (yes Kitchener's, used to be, and has gone back to being a brothel again).

Your kids don't visit you.

And your wife is dating one of your turned-lesbian nyatsis.

They are same-sex happy, zanele muholi jet set calibre of fine breeds in the arts. They own a fleet of uber wheels too. Just for control... add a dozen employees they rent-out to bored and unsatisfied ministers' wives In The Name Of Gender Freedom (their same-sex lobby NGO).

And?

you are honest: your gold medal from chasing skirts... the Olympics you made time for twenty years ago.

You are a 'failure', with less than a short at life.

'honesty': is still your fetish.

Inside the meant-for-display-books, you have a bookmark-letter from Nongqawuse. A letter whose authenticity no-one believes, except for the TRC letterheads on it and Thabo Mbeki's authentic signature. You could go to jail for charges of fraud. Or the letter could be your vip ticket to enter the pitfalls of national consciousness conversation.

## Dear Malume Mhlakaza (aka Scatterings)

*Beziba Zithwala/ Amatyalazo/ Neziqalekiso/ Zikathixo Waz'* - song of Nongqawuse

Hheee, yiva ndik' xelele mntakaBawo. Mna ndodwa ndiya believe-a that i-space: both in the sense of open air, and its enclosing concrete and invisible walls, like the white walls shaping this black-ink into sense on this page, as ndisitsho: I believe ba, i-space ne consciousness: i-consciousness ke in the sense of hearing and heeding a rhythm, in the sense of tuning in: as with pausing briefly to be in sync with the rope's skipping time-ing, as in calibrating that no-man's-land gap, that part of no-part, before umntu axhentse ngesingqi sikagqaphu. Uyandiva phofu Malume...?

Maan, Malume ndiz' m' ukuthi. I believe that: ikhonco of time-space-consciousness is a thread that makes and unmakes this trinity of stand-alone strands.

That's why ke Malume, I believe: people give their lives not only to one another's flesh and whims. Not only to one's children, and siblings. Or parents. That's why I believe that we can easily give our lives over to someone behind bars. Hheee, Malule, khe ndababona abantu apha kule trongo bejola iminyaka nabantu abababona kuphela kwincwadana zembalelwano. If the exchange of words is tuned right, I've seen it melt iron prison bars.

I've seen the power of the word kuletrongo Malume. I've seen it wring people's last breaths, breaths collecting in casks of years, collecting on reams and reams of thin sheets. On tall towers sharp on Feelings. Piercing through God's artery, making god as high as his name: Most High.

Isn't that what we had in mind when we gathered kings zamaNdlambe, amaNgqika, Amagcaleka, amaGqunukhwebe and sent word to Moshoeshe? Didn't we put that saddle of Feeling when called them to gallop, when we called them to action? An action to organize our people around our INVENTION of Naphakade and Sifubasibanzi? Didn't the upheavals faced by the children of Israel require the story of a MOSES and a rod that would part the seas? How would the children of Phalo have parted their own sea then, if not by their own inventions?

Who could stand to the tidal Grey's wave. Ishwangusha that docked in ships. Only uKrwecizulu to surf elashwangusha. One the height of Naphakade, the son of Sifubasibanzi? How would we have survived to this day if not ngenkom' etshobo? Itshobo that always turns

the up side down, and the down side up? Is that not the formula of Sharpvile/Langa, to turn things upside down? Is that not the formula of Ngoye to turn things upside down. Is that not the way of June 16 Soweto, to dare the sting of death for izihlwele – the community of the living, the unborn and the living-dead – to arise in concert?

I have seen the daughter of Mathe, Thenjwayo, Mzila Nkatho, put an idling grave-plot next to Jambase's, without a clue in the world that she would join him only 40 years later.

I believe Malume, that when 'space', 'time', and 'consciousness' align, and that alignment has been perfected – for whatever cause or conviction – we literary get to shuttle up and down the highways of eternity. That, we literary get to soar and ebb the crests and troughs of 'impossible'. Is it not that tidal wave of impossible we sought to surf when we sent word to stay away from use of medicines (of course our medicine is 'witchcraft'... sizobasayithinina le bhokile Malume). Shall we not send word for the sponge to rub Grey's horizon, word to drink up all the rivers that bear his names? Shall we not steer the earth away from the spears of a blood-dripping second sun? What was more worthy than the sacrifice to put hands off the plough, to send word for a tilling sabbatical, to put down the lung dis-ease, and halt the crop that went blind down bellies of bottomless appetite for death?

Was it not rustling our herds that got us gorged landless, lakes and rivers gone with the ether? That in our call to action – kill the thing that feeds their greed – the gorging was foiled? That attempt, by Grey, to drink up the whole ocean, harden a heart that beats Feeling, a heart that beat compassion? Was it not on that cross where they hung their own god, that we foiled ours to be killed too? For Ubuntu: uzwelwano, it seems to me we are yet to kill the cattle Malume. On Grey's tree of shame, the lynching trees, did we not purpose to stymie their tree of life?

So, why would we not get rid of the cattle, like some now want to get rid of monopoly on capital. Don't even mind the uncanny co-relation: 'cattle' and 'capital'. Asithethi ngaleyo namhlanje Malume.

Namhlanje sithetha ngale yokuba: I believe that we are always jellylike degrees of rigidity away from set forms Malume. I believe that we are a hybrid of flowy looseness between pendulum swings of extreme makeups. So, ndiyabhidwa wena Malume. Ndibhindwa yile yoba funeka ndityikitye ndityibele ndityatyadule ngo bunto yinto endibubo. No bunto yinto endiyiyo. Ndibhentsise endikuko kwesisibhiliwane esibizwa Affidavit. Andingomntu na? Kutheni ngoku ngathi Ubuntu bam buyathandabuzisa?

Don't all our relationships provide us with a coin-resembling mirror na Malume? On the one side: faced by our scary potential for greatness. On the other: the thorny side that either breaks or grounds us, humbles, keeps us in healthy check of distance between our (hue)manhood and our Godliness? Ayithethi ke lonto ukuba ndingumntu, uThix' uzazi Malume? Ngoku, kutheni ndithandabuzisa kodwa sendigqibile ukuzithandabuza kwesispili sintlangothi mbini: Ubuntu nobuThixo bam?

All of this ke tells me Maluma that: we are all wrong and untimely.

But.

But we have the power to frame that chaos of wrongness and untimeliness. Frame it by our beliefs, our imagination, and our fierce convictions. And no-one but God and Nature must stand in our way. Whether that conviction nguYesu okanye nguNaphakade. Qamata kaTayi, or Nyana womNtu. Yahova wemikhosi okanye Sfubasibanzi wamakhosi.

There are people who have transitioned to other realms of 'time', 'space', 'consciousness', just like you have done Malume. People that one – nje ngam lo intombi yakho – love and will always love. Perhaps love more than the people she wouldn't hesitate to lay down her life for.

Such people, nje ngawe lo, may not always bring out the best, say: take our tried and failed attempts to skip to the rope of that silver lining shared between ii-convictions zamaqaba namagqobhoka, iinkolo zomthonyama nezoGrey nooVan Der Kemp. Perhaps we were ahead of our time Malume, we will never know. Only eternity yet to be can go back to say 'nay' or 'yea' to my guesswork.

Line-item for line-item Malume, such people may not even be convincingly great. But your tuning fork shakes to the rhythm of their two-pronged musical device. Not convincingly great, but you are the tenor sax there, and they are the double base in that jam session. You are the tambourine, they are your spanish guitar.

They are a rarity. One that in all the species that chanced forth from the tools of God stand out. The special ones like you Malume. Who fire imagination in the most ordinary of mortals, carrying them off into enchanted realms.

... at once idealist and man of action.

Njengawe lo Malume. You, who could tow the masses with. Lift them out of themselves. And put a label on their vague cravings.

The meter of your word, the pulse of its craft, beating the poetry of your nature. A dance – for life – flavoured with fierce passion for your own. Our people.

Never was there a face more ready to bend to the quirks of humour than yours Malume. A body ready to coil around the mere pleasure of another being there, just *being*. Squeeze the wet of its beauty like spent bones wringing their marrow in dew drops, their essence: *kathathu nge mini okwecephe leyeza*. There: to watch over the first through to last-borns. The grand through to great-grands. A face more quick to reflect the viscera of its mind. A face more outraged by bullying and wanton abuse. Never was there a face softer to sympathy's voice and more yielding to its calls to save ubuntu bethu. Never one greater than yours Malume.

Dreaming dreams torched your days, like the sun touches the sky bright and blue Malume. And you got to light up my fire for fiction too Malume. Yes fiction: the self-fulfilling prophesies of which there is none more 'self'-directed and more 'fulfilling' than the myth on which the New World of Grey built itself, the foundations on which erects this phallic centred Order, this Feelinglessness of Grey's obsession with turning our allegiance to Britain.

By your imagination at the Gxarha gorge I was lit Malume. Not unlike the children of #RhodesMustFall. Lit as the night lights the stars. As the full moon feeds back the sun with its tempered ego, tempered in the mirrors of night. The night of Cattle Killing: Nestled in the lush greens of hope for a better tomorrow. A hope moist on my pillow. That: *noba itshoba lingalal' umbethe, kodwa inkungu ilala kwintaba ngentaba*. The hope in the knowledge that death is not the end but a stop sign. That, there's a turn – left or right – after the sign. A turn to another Monday. Another Tuesday. Another Wednesday of working and re-working what failed. The hope that a shining moon cannot contradict, on its face, the promises of a sun eager to make a turn tomorrow. A sun that even when it has crossed its horizon, sends 'word' through the moon. Word to say: see the future and its grand intentions now. Its intentions for us to shuttle the highways of eternity on the wheels of dream. And gas of faith.

You taught me all this Malume. That faith is strength. Whether in the individual or in the nation. That all will vanish, go, but one thing will remain: Feeling! Yes, feeling. Only feeling, in all our before and after, remains Malume. Feeling for one. And feeling for other. That

Feeling is the greatest of all human forces. One under whose whim the earth willingly orbits the sun. You taught me Malume.

“It seems clear to me”, were Grey’s words Malume, “that he is a man of sincerity and simple nobility. One who wishes with all his heart to do what he can for the fellow men.” That was Grey’s test of all public efforts. Well, I don’t know if the same could be said where the kaffir, us, was concerned.

His , Grey’s, trinity of destruction: our medicine, which he called ‘witchcraft’, our prayer and Feeling, which he called ‘superstitions’, and our law which he called ‘barbaric’, the law in our veins, our gorges and our river, which he sought to displace with magistrates and judges, doesn’t seem to reflect this Grey. This Grey who holds such lofty sentiment for how we saw fit to marry ‘good’ and ‘public’.

“Hardly was I in England this time”, he wrote, “than I had a letter from Froude”, an old friend of his. A letter “intimating how glad he would be to put my name forward for that high distinction”; his Oxford and Cambridge honorary degrees.

He waxes beautifully, as only a gentleman of his stature should. “Sweet of him to have considered my name” he felt about this egg and mayonnaise, for brains, Froude. “But I was already in possession of both honours”, he continued: “Those of the former I received after my first administration of New Zealand. And those of the latter came with my re-call from South Africa.”

Apparently at Oxford some students, he describes as “possessed with riotous zest” made a spectacle that left him rather awkward. The unruly students sang. Yes sang Malume. I don’t want to imagine how. And please don’t ask. But a kind of awkward, unrehearsed, serenade was dedicated to him, by them. That much I could make out in his letters to me. And about that he says:

“... sang... the King of Cannibal Isles ... King of Cannibals... Which more or less I had been.”

Some of izishiqi zakhe are worn and torn Malume. I have been meaning to send you some of the letters he wrote to me while I was kept at the slave loge in Cape Town. These are some of the words, that with strain, I could make out: “With intent for my welfare and wellbeing as good as any, my good friend had forgotten all about that. Poor Froude. My ‘King of

Cannibals' honour from well-meaning simple folk had slipped his ripe mind. Nevertheless, on jolting his memory he agreed that no man could hope to have such a treat twice."

"At least not in a single lifetime".

I thought counting time in non-linear ways was something closer to us than ooGrey Malume. But here shem he sounds like he has an almost ripe inkling of our ways.

That: time may not be a rigid tunnel we walk through in before-and-after steps, unfolding like the strait from the gate to the door. He, too, seems to suggest. That: time may be much softer than we think. More malleable, bendable, pause-able, fast-trackable. More orbital in its march. Less straight-forward. Less lockstep.

What makes it so? Well Malume, you and I know, we have always known that time implicates consciousness, and consciousness time. We've always known that the two are woven together. I mean, we say: 'kugug' othandayo' (which could loosely translate: one consciously wills one's aging process). Sometimes: we refer to abantu abadala kodwa bengakhulanga. Abanye sithi ngabo: bafuna ukusiwa entabeni, to raise their level of consciousness to be in sync with their number of years (on earth) by a (w)rite of passage. Abanye sithi ngooGogo bebancinci. Sisitsho njalo sibangelwa yile-consciousness yobizo abalusabeleyo. Ubizo that you nudged me ukuba ndilusabele. Or: refer to oomakhulu as 'ntomb' encinci', perhaps because of the tenderness we must consciously apply xa sibatamisa: slowing down our own tic toc... tic toc worlds for them, slowing down our racy forward-marching times to be in sync with theirs. Or: refer to abantwanana abasaqingqayo as 'intomb endala', to usher them into full-fledge consciousness yobuntu.

Also Malume: what we call the living-dead, abaphantsi, izi(imini)nyanya. Ungatsho xa uthanda uthi "abathe 'nya'". Nje ngawe lo. In other words: abanqabileyo, nabakude. About them we don't deny their consciousness reach. But, we acknowledge people like you, people at a distance, to be at a distance one need to labour to close. Close by Feelings. Feelings cupped in the symbols and the signs of (W)rite and Word.

I-funny into yabo ooGrey aba Malume. Bozebathi into siyazi, suke bale. Besithi ayinjalo. De have kubo egileni ukuthi 'hayi, kanti injalo'. Nathi ke, jonga ukukuba zizinqininqini emva

kwabo. Nako sirhorhozela, siyayatheka, sithabatheka, sithathela bonke nje ubuvuvu babo phezulu. Sekhe wayivaphi imfeketho enjalo?

I was thinking ndihlel' e-toilet the other day Malume, trying to pin down the nature of Grey and his kind. I got to conclude that: One sitting at a public toilet cannot imagine more than a knock there. Perhaps from someone too pressed to read the sign 'occupied'. Oh, I don't hope I could help you catch up with every bend of governing whims. How they scarred the earth. Put tar, fat and kalika on it, like they did with our bodies on the auction block. But we have such reveries as are called Public Toilet and Public Office. For ease of understanding, ngumtya nethunga ezonto. Ngoba, if we were to sieve the smokescreen of difference between 'public' and 'private' for us, through igqajolo lezoli, sicobongule, sihlahle siyabe loo nyewe kaPublic noPrivate, we would enter the mouth carnal kaPublic and come out the anus duct kaPrivate. In essence, sisiziba sodondolo lunye ezonto. Nto nje ke yindaba kwamkhozi ukuyithi pahaha loo ntetha.

Only in a bad dream would a doubtful-human, isibhovubhovu, try to kick that 'occupied' sign, with its door canvass, down, at a public toilet. Nehagu le yembalal ayilahlekeli apho ugobe khona ityholo ngasescithini. Kodwa ezi zibhovubhovu zinwele zibulunga zikuphengulula ngophengululo lwezibhalo kuloo gobityholo ungangenwamntu. Zithi zakubhada kuloo bhadakazi weendonga zomdongwe wendalo nomdali, suke zikosele. Zingoneli kukosela, zikubinge, zikupeculule ngeesabile nezintywizisi, zikwenze imibengo nje ngoko zenza kukumnkan' uHintsisa.

The real violence of pushing that private frontier of toilet corner in a public space, couldn't be measured by any form of physical tools Malume. When the animal beyond that 'occupied' mark breaks your private engagement, with a force of his knuckles rustling your nerves, a kick of boots cowing down the clinging of hinges to the wall, a rifle-butt banging against the mechanism, or a glock forcing through the 'occupied' sign, all of that forcing and fighting, kicking you at your weakest, is really one bag of the same rotten tomatoes Malume. It tells you about the nature of the Man. Wouldn't you say wena Malume? To me, the real marker of violence, the tool of all tools, in the hands of such a sibhovubhovu, is the gall of disregard for Ubuntu bakho. Disregards for the business that lies behind the 'occupied' sign. Andazi noba uyandivana Tshiwo. Yithi ndiphume egusheni. The true maker of violence yezizibhovubhovu is their disregard for the public trust in the sign: our common investment in the meaning-makers and meaning-bearers.

Mhlawumbi ndim ndimdlela indlala, so khawuve ba uthini yena lo Gedleyihlekisa xa ezithethela:

“It would have been curious – being so decorated a member of British Parliament – to have missed my way to the cradle at Westminster. Having been a candidate for membership and all. But that house would only come to know me as its visitor. Why, you may be curious to know. Lengthy story. Suffice to say, I met Adderley who once wanted to impeach me. Perhaps I deserved it, I don’t remember.

“I have always been restless with The Old World. And had my own radical ideas for how to permanently leave it behind. Obviously, not without trudging up some mount of skulls, as did the Son of Man.”

Ngumlebelele ke Malume kaTwezikane owabonwa ngu Steve Tshwethe, kudakaswa ngaphaya kwengubo zobukristu nobukhukukazi be Queen.

“As I recollect another incident Lord Robert Cecil in New Zealand, he was... [blah blah blah]”.

Yimfikimfela ke engabonakaliyo enye nenye andibhalele yona uGrey lo. Kodwa ndiyaqonda ukuba apho aya khona is pointed at how he was opposed by the empire to run the colony like his private piggy bank. Hence the recall. He had long given up yena, he had seen the futility of turning us British so forcefully and so directly. His vision was a complex form of divide and conquer flashed out in Federal States: all the conquered, he imagined in their small autonomous corners, self-governing bantustans, but pledging allegiance to the Queen. For this he was their prophet, spraying doom over ours. For this he was their Satan sent, undoing what Maqoma discovered when he said to a fence sitting missionary “now it is possible that you will not die because you are an enemy, but because you are white.” It must be for this that We Are Yet To Kill The Cattle Malume.

Ndatyatyadula Ndingakhange ndibulise nobulisa. Kuyacaca ukuba i-161 years singasathethi mna nawe ayiyondlwana iyanetha.

Oh, Malume, ndim’ intombi ka Phalo, unontsizi wakho. Ndiyathemba ngempilo uyaphila.

I do not know what to include or exclude to make valid the claims this document requires me to state, nje ngoko besenditshilo. How does a person convincingly say “I am”, more than those simple words?

I don't know what to say except to say: ngumhlola lo. I have never seen an ignorance that resists, an ignorance that fights back, ignorance so militant, so aggressive, not to be intimidated; an ignorance that is active, dynamic, that refuses to go quietly in the face of superior knowledge. An ignorance that knows me as Nongqawuse; the evil imp who led dimwit kaffirs savages over the cliff of national suicide, to their ruins.

All I can say Malume is that: A people rejected by an inner-godliness that inclines itself to pull together seamlessly with nature, the evil they carried, was left skulking the unenviable borderline of creation.

From there, it forged its register: 'knock-knock... who's there... Grey mother-fuckers at the door I am!' From marine outlines it barged. Vulgar fantasies on open season went lit. Daydreams chest out. Tempest let loose. Advancing beyond the bulwark of seas wedged between us. Advancing not only to scavenge the bottomless surplus of nature – Ubuntu bethu – but to turn that guesthouse of humanity – existence itself – a den of robbers in wait for the unborn.

I guess only me and you understand Malume.

I hope that more than just the two of us reach this understanding Malume. I hope to write this old understanding yam nawe haunted Malume. Haunted beyond just two, me and you.

Haunted by screams of the new. The new: scaling its rafters Malume. The 'new' turning the Old's innards out Malume. Its truth spawn like babies coming out licked by strands of pubic hair Malume.

I hope I write the monsoon un-twirling a milieu. The forward march of time weak at the knee. Its lockstep-resolve coming undone. Its turning and turning arms of time unfastened at the tender feet of 'no hope', and 'no scapegoat'.

I hope I write as with open palms of karate, empty-hands telling the dromedaries 'hambakhaya, go back whence thou art crawled... out' Malume.

I hope I write in the cusps of a baptismal by fire Malume. Write a gatvol-letter to the gods Malume. Write words that would force their hand to jettison the reigns of Rational Man Malume. Jettison his disaffection for (hue)-lower-case-man nje ngomatiloshe benqanawa eyayisindwa yitalashishi in a ninive bound ship Malume. The story sikaYona. I hope I write a whale to being. To rescue this corner of the Milky Way. Write it to being, to come uncountenance this hundred and sixty-one years Malume...

I hope I write to appeal to a more sensible affectability Malume...

I hope i write in the crevices of wor(*l*)ds ambivalence Malume...

Write: to prise open the unbridled. To breathe the wealth of umntu-ngumntu-ngabantu back into the 161 years slit. Pack some lipids where the years have left skin and bone gaps...

... I hope I write to gesture towards the incertitude of existence Malume – the lacuna of being bigger than the rush that blew Kimberly landless-open Malume ...

I hope I write an intensity beaded with sweat, hanging like umle – the blemish dotting my trivialized ‘i’ Malume.

I hope I write like stray-bullets in the ghetto Malume: Cross the I’s and dot the ts with a pulse that ricochet the bible and the bullet back to their Grey chambers Malume.

... back to their blood-pearls. Back to their surveillance whitelight un-beamed through the 1652 prism. Back to the terror of their docked ships Malume.

I hope I write to freeze-frame the refracted rainbow Malume, peg the terrain of pain on ‘i’,

... I hope to write that nothing ... nothing less than our response in the affirmative okays the wanton folding of our panties to a knot below our hills Malume,

I hope to write that: it is me and you, indiscriminately, bent down on a vomit-heaving tub – decibels of that trumpet dwarfing the rap of the bouncer inches from dislocating his shoulder on a stubborn toilet-door –

Bent sexless, curved up and down to Grey’s ‘bend it like Steenkamp’ power-rush...

I hope to write ‘nothing’ Malume...

Because, sometimes – and much too often – I write where there is no ‘i’. No I of which to write about Malume.

I write from where the ‘I’ is de-crowned and her flame – her candle-wick – is defiled

‘i’ gasping for breath Malume. ‘i’ feeling for air like a blindman’s cane staggering against obstruction, ...

because many times I write like one banned under a laboratory diepsloot beaker Malume; a vas skotile mouth upside-turned-down, there underneath, in that diepsloot underworld, imprisoned...

me: buried under, angled

me:... in strangle-hold to police in my head. the Sobukwe Clause: my thoughts, navy-blue-black naked, at the back of a van, mangled. (my writing), hands and feet mangled Malume,

because: more often than not I write with a schizophrenic delirium split dealing the cards Malume,

... I write with self-dissolution impulse clutching a hat under armpits. Left, right, hands clasped in prayer. lips pursed in coerced speech. definitive article 'the' robbed bespectacled Malume. rediscovery of the emptied ordinary inner-life sprawled languidly Malume.

there... set: as Rhodes Library aircon, is set at: uit die blou van onse ... kwamsoon, set at: kiffir thobi emele if you know what's good for you. Set: begging Malume, begging for a dime here, begging for a nickel there.

I write to you, but I write to Hope against hope too. To 'no Hope'. For parole out of this prison Malume.

I write to you, and I write to a differently calibrated Hope, but mostly I write begging Nina Simone: *please, don't let me be misunderstood* Malume...

... nothing is 'how I write' like I write in weight of a glock to clear the air, the glock to unclog the lungs. to: 'we resist not to establish a form of culture... but (for many reasons) because we can't breathe',

... nothing is 'how I write' like the rat/tat/tat/tat prelude yombhaxa Malume, a singing: willing mrs daisy in her pyjamas to the creek, to the sea Malume...

I write, therefore, against the grain of tradition Malume

My writing to you Malume is in labour, the labour of a blind man's cane looking for yarns to stitch my memory (my memory: your memory). Stitches of destruction, and restoration.

... bridging the impossible gap between my pain, and that of your incommensurate compensation...

I write to you Malume, but I don't think it is within a pen's paygrade to do so Malume...

And so, I'm sure you can see the nervousness. The nervousness that Feeling can shape into words.

But I do hope that making a stab at telling a story of our 'manifest destiny', a destiny veered off course by 'right of conquest' does address our solid wound of history Malume. A history in search of another gathering, another council of kings. for me first: the victims who must act, but not rush Malume.

My labour with these words Malume seeks to respond to a struggle in pursuit of 'remedy in grief.'

I write as much for a people's quest to re-member Malume, as I do for my prerogative to forget. I write with a purpose to reach out, and I write with a will to close in... and close-out. Asinothetha yonke into kaloku, ezindonga zinendlebe...

Uthi athi ke mna, mntu oludwayi: I write for you Malume: the 'bluesman in the life of the mind'; the 'jazzman in the life of ideas'...

The tension is deliberate Malume...

On one hand, the attempt is to carry on tradition. That is, stand in the prophetic call's gap like you taught me Malume. To expose lies and speak truth to power (risking a push deeper into the margins). On the other hand: attempt to speak a shorthand code meant for the initiated ears Malume.

In a manner of speaking, it is in that tension that I see situates this letter Malume, this affidavit: "Proof Of Identity".

I write not so much to 'represent/[reference] experience, but to produce an organizing feeling' Malume,

I write to improvise, to pushback, to stay below the radar of capture and captivity. The captivity of this slave/prison lodge Malume. In that tension, I believe I walk the tightrope of tradition Malume...

In English I write Malume. But with English one never knows Malume.

One is never sure. Never sure when to say ‘on the train’ or ‘in the bus.’ Because of the pictures one’s indigenous tongue draws. Draws on for one’s field of meanings. Though I get it Malume, when someone says: ‘I’m on the train’. However, the image in the mind of my tongue is that of someone on top. Ungafan’ uy’ hleka... kubi Malume. Saba ngamakhoboka ka George kaloku.

‘I’m on my way’, if someone called asking ‘where are you now?’ That much I know Malume. But my writing doesn’t shake the first instinct off of my mother’s tongue. The instinct to describe the same, say, to a caller, as an ‘in’, rather than ‘on’ (as in: “I got inside”).

If I didn’t have the urge, to get in and get on, my writing wouldn’t have the ‘B’(eeline)-cut-from-the-‘lack’ Malume. If not nervous to get ‘in’, so that we could get out, it wouldn’t be la Nongqawuse wakho umaziyo. My writing comes to the world like me Malume. Andinantloni to say. I come to the world nervous; anxious that at whim I can, and highly likely will, be pushed to the margins of existence Malume. So, the use of ‘in’ and ‘on’, different to first-language English speaker, rounds my English off to the nearest mother tongue inflection, as you would expect Malume. A writing of meanings lurking somewhere in English’s proximity, in Grey’s vicinity, but never quite ‘in’; like: *From Unincorporated .... Territories*.

That ‘not quite in’ wakes in me my own sense of growing up sandwiched between the tail-end of Botha-presided Heerenvolk and post-’94 ‘changed fokol’. The post-’94 amputated Truth and Reconciliation project.

Oh, I didn’t tell you Malume. I was cursed with perpetual youth just as prophesy predicted. I get to shore up from our sparse mass graves. the dead’s sting there, every 21 years interval, chooses me to arise. And like some unwanted seaweed I shore up in these townships as their living-dead. Before last I died I went to White City Soweto Malume. Well, 40, 41, years give or take. Last I died i went to Khayelitsha. They’ve turned it into an apartheid museum now. I almost went to Slovo, but someone else who made the news on the roof of a shack took my place.

Many of these foreigners still believe me to be a perpetual childtype, they treat me as such. Even as they deny it nowadays Malume.

The two suns in the sky came through too Malume. Their ‘quaint’, as Grey would have said, name for that second sun, is ‘global warming’.

Amputee, my text, indeed is Malume; as one Beyer is wont to say: “in addition to naming racism, and naming the experience of being a person of colour, [one] also grapples with how our very material of our craft is complicit in the racism experience”.

Because: for ‘Truth’, of post-’94 project to be truth that carries its chin high, torso out, figure bold, walking tall, striding wide, as ‘long’ as Mandela, it would have to ‘allow Nongqawuse to speak. It would have to allow you Mhlakaza to speak’:

‘Reconciliation’ too has to have the ace of ‘Justice’ lurking in the vicinity of its sleeves  
Malume.

Speak we must Malume. And speak I must Malume. Speak to *awaken* my own sense of growing up banished too – in the margins of a ghetto island...

... to colour in the grim and grey yawns of reality with airbrushes of fantasy; turning angst to shush, the kicking down of doors in the small hours to bygone hush-hush, and the anguish of yesterday to sanguine hopes, the play of hands never dealt in the promise of newness, the newness post-’94 began with Malume.

Speak Malume we must. Say ‘morgue’, when they say ‘ghetto’.

The ghetto heaving under a gauntlet— for blue sky. Its rhythm and blues flanking the funk of conquest skulls Malume. Ndingayilibalanjani intloko kakumnkan’ uHintsisa Malume And many other skulls inscribed in bronze, like a coat of arms drenched in gold. its soul: the line of symmetry between pickets and picket fences. The fauna: its residents. The flora: its broken anchor, its lost map to the heaven below.

We must speak Malume to *awaken* the crouching village of children; their devil-may-care rush in and out of squealing wooden floors, their *run-by-force* din, speak to awaken their sound back-to-back the cracking sound of impimpi’s popcorns stewing in sweat and his own bodyfat.

Oh Malume sizibonile izinto ezibuhlungu. Like a moment seized in the wrath of necklacing misjudgement. Seeing a man’s head crashing head first on human error, crashing against the roving bat us children all took turns on. Crashing knocking the head split. Split by empire’s ‘*ousted!*’ screech. Out by a leg before wicket (lwb) technicality. The technicality given to justify bodies pulled apart, forced in straitjackets later by the pulling force of *kuthang’ hlanye/ guerrilla ...*’ ... the charge of hundred Rabadas (and Makhayas) storming the

barricade of Lords' playing field Malume, a charge storming creases of homebound banishment, cordoned put innings after innings Malume, burrowing the fences of *heit* (for apart heid) little by little, like a fox, sending that barbwire of fear around our lives crashing Malume, crashing under a tree, crashing under a tree with landlessness on the agenda Malume...

My writing Malume takes to that place for home, after school. That place: the missionary do-gooders came to, to pick us like glass shards, peek at us after the Cattle Killing. That place: where my mother was on the slavewheel too. In the mill of alternate sleep-in weekends, for breaks. Breaks: from raising the children with their trained footsteps of hate. Hate at her front door. Children with rifles slung on their beefed shoulders. Children: weaned as much on Purity and Formula-milk, as were weaned on screams of 'Dorothy!' Dorothy their automate Ma'Olady button for chores. Dorothy: 'passed' for Christian name. Dorothy: the sex vendor with a doompas. Dorothy: the 3D printed washing machine with a dompass Malume.

Like kilometres of Razor-wire strapped around the head-to-toe-stretch of our tin-&-triplly 'homes', the home that this letter animates, a writing pacing nje ngenj' enomgada, a writing impatient to speak the language that breaks bread with zungu, coks, ndralla, piki, magqamfane, manyiki, maliki, turooms, no-cool-aid, s'nqokwana, s'bharu, nowinile, nofirst, nolast, no-50, maplanga, tapla, varara, mketile, nonkqoyi, ngqhangqha, qokombisa, gidiyon, and gilindoda

Trudging up that mount of skulls Malume— my morgue for home, banishment for being — the tongue of Sngokwana: engqukruleka. Engqukruleka unable to can hold back tears shoring up his denied humanity. His face beaming memories of a man unmade into beast. Him: snivelling. His tears: looping the TRC image of a bulky old blackman betrayed. Betrayed by a compulsion to break down on TV.

That single access point home Malume, from school, amidst military pat-downs, amidst the rummaging of homework handouts in my school bag. Rummaging searching for signs of petrol-bomb-making Malume. Searching for a sketch of Island prisoners, a sedition-inspiring book, that cleavage, that gap-year child ooMalume like you drive to school. A gap-year battalion: in towering beastly steel-armored vehicle, driving themselves, no-longer needing you to drive Malume. Gap-year children: commissioned to kill. Kill to keep this border tightly marked from bursting at the seams with song. Gap-year children keeping the Order, the order to keep the next sleepin-generation fixed, fixed to my-behind-bars-existence

Malume. Fixed in our colourbar template Malume, That Order to razor-wire the ghetto Malume, to fence it, and for us to be at home there Malume, meant to be content in our banishment lot Malume. Here, content: in our yoke, the yoke that Returns The Repressed in this letter Malume.

So, injalo ke Malume.

I've dodged hoping I wouldn't come out this 'no thoroughfare' door. But here I am Malume. As you can see, I've been trying to bail out of this prisonhole ever since Grey's dogs chased me out of Gcuwa. Leaving me with only the clothes on my back. Attempt after attempt has yielded the same contempt Malume: "No" Ngqawule for you. Year in, year out brushoffs.

I write from St Albans maximum prison now, in Algoa Bay. A place known to many as Nelson Mandela Bay, a metro run by irreverent colonizers who speak our mother tongue (as of old). From the Cape Colony I was transferred here Malume, squashed. Naked. Angled. Hands and feet mangled like a dangerous animal Malume.

Perhaps I should get out of the way one confession – something to do with time and God Malume. Something that mass-incarceration drills with every chime of the clock: a day is 'like a thousand years' in here. And "4 hundred?", you ask Malume...

Not enough.

*/Like a cigarette in the rain/*

A single blow of table-salt flares to drop the rain.

I've stopped counting the years now Malume. It's been a minute since that fateful: day 6<sup>th</sup> May 1856. The day I locked eyes on governor Ntsini Menyo – oomaziny' amhlophe kuvele nelokugqibla sisiqhazolo kanti unkonye ukukubulala.

The day: at the Gxarha gorge. Seeing Grey for the first time since assuming his office, two years before (1854). A fundamental shift in my being happened there Malume. That day. When I observed the death of his forced smile, the yellow kernels behind his wire-thin lips, the breath of festering trash fished by his racy words from deep inside his belly and the shifty gaze of his green envious eyes dancing to his nerves. That day: something in the air sang off-key Malume. I have not seen a man more opportunistic, and ruthless Malume.

Those violent monsoons that wrecked many an Ottoman Empire warships near the gorge, vomiting on its serene side Russian and the Crimean alike, have always had a ring of ill-omen about them. That day, when I saw Grey, confirmed my suspicions. Remember ndikubalisela ngesifiri-firi sakhe lo Tsib' uPhungela Nkqu entlanjeni?

Him: Telling me to bury my people alive with stories of 'new man' he didn't understand, 'two suns in the sky', one yellow, one black, he had no clue about, 'resurrection' of izihlewele he could not understand. I remember with his poor attempt at speaking isiXhosa elahlekela koo 'forever young', ooDorian Gray's faustian pacts, noo'toilless wealth' and 'bountiful dowry'? Ndikhumbula ndifilish' ba, 'yhu thixo, nako ndivelelwa ngumlungu'. It turned out that on cattle he stole, personality he emptied, and land he ravaged, digging for Public Works and minerals for his friends, a tower of greenhouse gases would form the second sun, the yellowe-turned-black sun. The one edging creation over a precipice much worse than the exit strategy we 'could', 'would', have undertaken by killing the cattle and hitting the wild with our educated instincts to navigate the bush. It turns out: the destruction of the extra sun came true: as global warming.

Why would a man of Grey's Roman valour and Greek sophistry ask for a savage's hand in marriage Malume? To read him the *editio princeps* of Horace, perhaps? Or recite the twelfth-century manuscript of Christian gospels for our pillow talk? Could the outstanding Victorian age clenched fist of law, pen-pusher, army and Justice, coalesced into the figure of Grey, have wanted iqaba mbola elinje ngam lo? Could it have spared a James Joy thought on ukuthomba? Or Oscar Wild insight on ukushwama? Was I impressionable, stupid, desperate or all three, according to him Malume? Or was I some commodity on sale, to the highest bidder? On sale behind a herd of Jersey cattle? Akanyi perhaps Malume lo mlungu, to be plain and direct ke?

Truthfully, I was put off yazi! Such naked contempt for my qabimbola handles on knowing and total disregard for my thoughts. Insufferable indeed Malume!

Given that I lost my parents in Herry Smith's gruesome war, a decade before, by no means equalled: damsel in distress Cinderella. Andingomdlwembe or mbedlenge. White picket fence parents, their dreams of 2,2 kids an average per family, nuclear shrines, insular existence, all those are not my basic building blocks of community – izihlewele, Malume. At least not the way I know our sociality? Okanye ndiyabhuda na Malume? Hayi ndikorekitshe ke Tshiwo if ndithetha wrong-o.

If he were not so murderous Malume, maybe I would laugh off his sick proposition yomendo. I would have laughed it off ngesiqhazolo salantsini ndandiyihleka ngo 1856. Let that thunderous kaffir cackle irony weaken these prison walls like those of Jericho to Yeshua's brass-section.

Much has changed Malume! Yet, so much more has remained the same. Talk about how we dropped the Gregorian calendar AD for CE – Carbon reduction target Emissions... lonto iyiyo wethu Malume, uGorge andimncancanga beleni kaloku.

As we speak, it could be anytime between the turn of the New Mellenium and COP 37 C.E: the 37<sup>th</sup> annual weather modification talkshop. Where climatologists, environmentalist, even Marxist, all sorts of world leaders, gather. In some exotic, preferably, third-world country.

Malume, I'm afraid you're going to die-again wena. Die from this Newness talk that has gripped everyone's imagination. South Africa, for starters, merged its colonies and spoils into a Republic. Later it was born anew, in Tynhuis and Grootshuur settlements. New: in clandestine te-ta-te and reconciliation alibi. Alibis that swear our land was never taken, our sweat never stolen and our true personality never split down long drop latrines by New World Order Malume.

Can you believe any of this? If you can believe it, like old Winsor Castle turned Pennsylvania's New Castle, York turned New York, Denmark's Zealand displacing aborigines to make way for New Zealand, New South Africa, too, made it to that last lap of New World re-elaborations of the same old idiom of power.

Yithi ndikuhlekise kuqala ngale ka Scatterings, uyithandanjani? The nerve! How vulgar, of many a written 'praise-poems' translating Mhlakaza so word-for-word: Scatterings? How rich!

Hayi kodwa mhlambi banyanisile Malume. There's some sense to it yazi. If you just stop and think. That: one) Identitywise we did a shipment switch of sorts with your 1455, 1498, 1611, 1652, 1820 & 1857. When their first global pillaging assignment, DEIC, docked on the shores of Hintsati/be (of the Khoekhoena in the Cape) our fated-when (when we turned scatterings) began.

You see, you can put nothing pass a European soldier whose idea of a souvenirs, after ‘honourable enemy’s’ war is collecting ‘fine specimen of Xhosa heads in saddle-bags’. Such demonic fantasies, cosmic hobos excesses (proper), are bound to haunt the land to this day.

But greed and sloppiness are old siamese twins Malume, nam ndifana nje ndizothusa. Akukho nento le eyothusayo. How else can you explain that the bible they carried coded an explicit warning for us against them: “Lo! and behold. A nation bitter and impetuous is rising that will dethrone kings and take lands that are not their own”?

Iyho yimpelesi of a verse ke le Malume. It goes as far back as ‘1455, when their Pontifex hardened them ngentelezi of evil Ordinances to dispossess and enslave us’. Hence: their scatterings all around the world wreaking havoc.

Unwittingly though, they also manufactured the same incongruent myths that jar with values of community. A community that showed nothing but kindness to them. The Inka people of the Americas slaughtered their people too. We must believe, they say. Ask me why kaloku wena. Because: they were dumb and barbaric? Uyeva? Yimihlola. We, in turn, just sommer slaughtered our cattle for ‘resurrection’, ‘silverspoon wealth’, ‘two suns in the sky’ and fables of ‘permanent youthfulness’. You’ll be surprised how our own people take to such preposterous claims with little to no qualms Malume. Totally blunted to snide remarks they purport about us. Now this is the straw that broke the camel’s back for me Malume:

‘Mothers reduced to insanity by hunger cooked and ate their own babies’. Ate their own babies? And where did this ‘cooking’ take place Malume: ngasegoqweni mhlambi okanye eziko ku ronta? How sick Malume... how sick to believe that people so proud, so cultured, so reverent (of themselves and others) would turn cannibals, abandoning teeming wild fruit at their disposal? Really?

Zininzi izishiqi nezififi-fifi endifuna ukuchubela zona, kodwa okwangoku mandithi: amade ngawetyala

Usana Lwakho.

Nongqawuse Mhlakaza