

NELSON MANDELA
UNIVERSITY

International Mother Tongue Day
Celebrations 2021

*Moments in
Mother Tongue*

Digital Multilingual Poetry

**Communication and Marketing in collaboration
with the
Faculty of Humanities presents:**

**International Mother Tongue Day Celebrations
2021**

Foreword

International Mother Tongue Day is officially recognized worldwide. This day of celebration observes multilingual diversity. The theme for 2021 is **“Fostering multilingualism for inclusion in education and society”**. It is specified on the UNESCO annual calendar and is held on 21 February this year. The primary aim is towards promoting awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity; and to promote multilingualism. Nelson Mandela University recognizes the importance of this day and its meaning. This digital multilingual poetry publication titled, *Moments in Mother Tongue*, is one such effort to this end.

This contribution forms part of a collaboration between Communication and Marketing and the Faculty of Humanities. Existing writings have been taken from poetry anthologies produced by these university departments. These poems were composed by students, staff and alumni of the institution. This collection profiles poems in some of the dominant Eastern Cape languages, namely isiXhosa, English and Afrikaans.

Poetry is an expression of emotions that allows truth to be told in ways that evoke action. The willingness of the contributors to share signals hope for cultural transformation and deeper inclusion through this multilingual project.



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Hombani!

Khanihombe mahomba ndini!
Nto zikaMnguni, lolwen'olulwimi,
Hombani nto zikaXhosa, yeyenu lenkcubeko.
Magqiyazana khani xakathe ingciyo, nje ngesizukulana sikaMalangana,
Bafana bezizwe ndodani ngenigqayi, uNkosiyantu uyakugcoba
Bafazana xa kathani emizini nihlonele uTshawe nendlu yakhe.
Ngeba ndithi hambani ngalenkcubeko yenu, ningalahli imbo ngophoyiyana!
Kaloku thina sizalwa ziingqanga, ingangalala kwendini,
Ezibhonga kuve noseNtshona, intwezibodla kuhluthe kunyikime umhlaba,
Ndihlaba ikwelo kuni sizukulwana zikaPhalo, ndithi masizingceni ngale nkcubeko!
UmnguXhosa ngolwimi nenkcubeko yakho!
Isizwe sethu sakhiwe ngalemveli yethu, ngoko ke!
Tshilani nitshotshe ngala mawele akuthi!
Yitshoni umyiyizane bafazane yeyethu le ndebe,
Mawethu makuhonjwe, kugcotywe ngalenkcubeko

- Sandiswa Mdudo, *Moments in Mother Tongue*, 2021



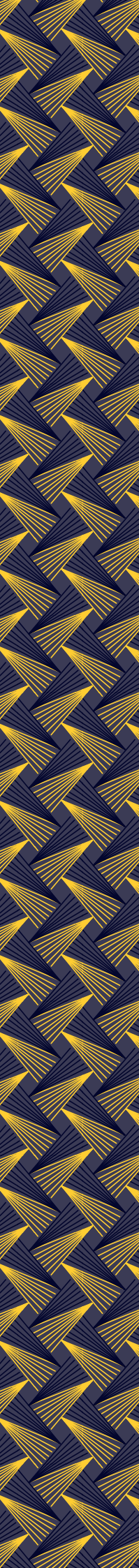
Ikoon vir ewig

(Skatpligtig aan Nelson Mandela)

18 Julie 1918

reeds is die datum volmaak
'n dag wanneer die gode
jou aan die aarde skenk
jy wat die wêreld sou verander
nee, bang sou jy nimmer wees
jou skalkse glimlag versteek 'n skatkis vol wyskede
sewe-en-sestig jaar
het jy die land... die heelal gedien...
hermes en hebe sou waarlik trots wees op jou
vreesloos, vooruitgang, vergifnis
die fondament vir jou kragtige innovasie
moeilikheidmaker het jou vader jou gedoop,
maar jy het die boom se grootste takke gebreek en gesnoei
en jou plat op die aarde essensie aan dit geskenk
jou taak was volbring
die boom sterk aan die bloei
geen uithoek onaangeraak
en op 'n warm somersdag
het die tuin met heimwee
vir sy dienswerker en tata
vaarwel gesê

- Marnu Fourie, NVision, 2014



A letter to the English language

Dear English I am sorry.
I'm sorry for using you as a measure of intelligence I did not know any better.
I am sorry that my father cannot stand you
He thinks that I ran off with you
Left home
And forgot all about my roots.

I am sorry for selling you short
I guess I just wanted to fit in
Tricking you into asking "wud" "hud" and "wuw"
I just wanted to sound cool.

Dear English,
I am sorry for dimming down your light
Using you to spread hate, jealousy and war, I am sorry...
I am sorry for...
-using you.

- Ndileka Puthumo, AMAZWI, 2019

Ulwimi

Ulwimi lwam lomthonyama
Ulwimi lwam lwenkobe
Ulwazi lwam lwemveli
Lilizwi eliphuma kum ngesiXhosa

Liqhayiya kwisizwe sakowethu
Libhongo kwisizwe sakwaNtu
Lulwimi olungacacisekiyo kutsokotha
Ngoba kaloku lulwimi lwemveli
Lulwimi olugcambu nde ngemvelaphi

Bayakubaleka babhenele kwezinye ilwimi
Suka lona likulandele ulwimi lwenkobe
Luphawu kum ngebala lam
Nditsho nangonwele lwam
Lwimi olunzima silubhala singalithethi
Lwimi olunzima silubhala singaluboni
Lwacaca ulwimi lwemveli kwantlandlolo
Lwangqinwa yindalo yomveli ngqangi
Ndavuka ngesifingo ndajonga empuma
Ndabona inkwekhwezi kanti likhwezi
Yabasisiqalo sokuthetha kwam olulwimi

Bafika abasemzini balibhubhisa
Salandela ulwimi oluvela entshona
Bathi bakufika lwapotyana ulwimi lwenkobe
Batshintsha ukuthetha okhokho barhanuka
Yaba kukuqhawuka kukanobathana
Lwashiyeka ulutsha nesisizemazema solwimi

Labuya ulwimi lwakowethu magwalandini
Kunamhla sinegugu neqhayiya ngolulwimi
Sabuya isiXhosa sakowethu magwalandini
Besinga lahlekanga kuthi baziyo
Besizinyelisiwe engaqondi amavelatanci
Lwimi lwenkobe olunzima kubatshakazi
Kakade iinkobe zidliwa ngabahlakulayo

Qongqololo gongqo, ndathunga ndijonge ebandla. Larhosha irhamba

- Ncedo Nikelo, Moments in Mother Tongue

Voorgeskrewe Werk

in die poetry section van 'n tweedehandse boekwinkel
vind ek mos eendag 'n naamlose muse
'n hardeband antwoord tot die lewe
wat ek binne minute verslind
en toe herverbeel het
woord vir woord
toe
letter op letter
toe
punt vir punt
want die muse het nes die tikmasjien se inks vervaag en toe sommer heeltemal
verdof
ek't begin om Instagram-poetry
nootlose lirieke
halwe stories te skryf
alles net verbeeldingsvlugte in die lug gehou deur sinonieme
en overused metaphors en clichés
van dit wat daardie dag tussen stowwerige boekrakke was
toe sy gunsteling boek my lewenslyn geword

- Jané de Wet, *Moments in Mother Tongue*, 2021



Mother tongue

My language is a warm, soft blanket
with stitches hooked together in gentle wool,
telling her story of childhood comfort and care.

The words and memories she holds
enfold and offer tender reminiscence.

The mantle of linked thoughts
is a genesis and birthing.

This cover allows connecting
encourages reaching out to those
wrapped in differently knitted comfort.

- Margie Childs, *Carved onto the Page*, 2016



Makubuyelwe Embo

Inde lendlela inamahla ndenyuka
Inde lendlela inamakramncwa
Inde lendlela inobungozi

Bantwana bomzi ka Palo
Bantwana bomzi ka Rharhabe
Bantwana bomzi ka Sgcawu
Sabelani xanibizwa niyabizwa ngoku!

Ziyanibiza inkosi ezandulela eli
Bathi buyelani kubo emva
Buyelani embo masithatheni imithwalo yethu
Siyifake konomgcana nakwitrunki
Obunzima sibuthweleyo ayibobethu
Ezintlungu sizivayo azingangathi
Anithi inoba inkosi zisiflathele?

Sakhetha uziflathela ezinkosi
Saqalisa ukunyemba izithethe nesintu zethu
Salandela ezamangesi izithethe nezintu
Mangesi lawo asithathela umhlaba

Sizilibele ukuba sizalwa ngobani thina
Siilibele nemvelaphi yethu kude kubenje nje
Sathi xasithetha ngelali sithi kuse maXhoseni
Asisazazi ilali koko safika eKapa

Imbi lendlela inzima
Amashwangusha esinawo awasifanelanga
MaXhosa buyelani embo nina
Kuba ningabantu amabalahlekiyo ngoku

- Fikelele Poswa, Moments in Mother Tongue, 2021



Die skoonheid van ons tale

Kom nader en sien
Die skoonheid van diversiteit in ons tale
Jy sou dink dat hulle ons sou verdeel
Maar nee! Hulle verenig ons selfs meer
Die rede vir skoonheid in hierdie land, is die diversiteit in ons tale
Dit skitter in Suid-Afrika, 'n lieflike aangesig
Elke mens het 'n reg om te weet
Ten minste elf tale
Kyk net en sien die skoonheid en mens
Wat alleen praat en skryf met soveel tale en met selfvertroue.
Hulle is nes die sterre in die hemel
Elke taal is helder
Ieder en elk klink uniek in eie reg
Die rede vir skoonheid in hierdie land is die diversiteit in ons tale.

- Ayabonga Poswa, AMAZWI, 2019
(Translated from isiXhosa)



After the rain

How I longed for summer
in the wake of abandonment;
longed for the sun to gaze upon my back,
transforming my flesh, a darker tan,
and have the night jealously look upon my face,
lost in the unknown.

Then welcome winter with warm embrace –
cumulonimbus clouds a mirror.

The heaviness inside
like a dam ready to break
erupting into a cyclone;
I find myself in its eye, reflecting on the I:
trapped, searching for freedom.

But spring's surprised kiss
wakes my sleeping heart,
blossoms bloom upon my spirit
a holly movement,
wholly dancing in the rain.
And as the droplets touch the sand
I am found.

- Nehemiah Latolla, *Carved onto the Page*, 2016



Umthandazo Kasaartjie Baartman

Kwilizwe lempucuko
ubuvalelwe okwesilwanyana
kwaye kufuneka ulindele ukuqhawuka kwesiqalekiso
“Thixo, ndingomnye wolutsha lwakho
kodwa ababantu bonke bathi ndiyinambuzane sukubavumela bandonzakalise
okanye bandibulale
kodwa ukuba ulangazelelo luyakuluma
ngowuye kwindawo engcono
nomthandazo wakho ohamba ze ngeenyawo:
Thixo ukuba kwakhona uthumel izinambuzane zemvula ukuze zizokujonga ukuba
kune ngokwaneleyo na
ndicela uzixelele ukuba zizokundilanda
mhlana udiana* esiza neentsalela zakho zisuka engqeleni ulusu lwakho lweva ilanga
laseAfrika
sazisa imbeko:
Thixo namhlanje sifuna ukwenza ingxelo –
akusekho nto iseleyo enokulwelwa
okanye yokuzibuza ngoxolelo nokulibala
ngokuba uSaartjie ukhululekile.
*Unikezelwe kuDiana Ferrus. Umbongo wakhe othi, “Vir Sara Baartman” [For Sara Baartman] upapashwe kumthetho wesiFrentshi owavula indlela kukwazeke ukubuya kweentsalela zomzimba kaBaartman.

- Selwyn Milborrow, AMAZWI, 2019
(Translated from English)

Gister s'n

ek skryf so skuins voor die mooiste, mooiste maand
'n potloodgedig oor en van 'n werkwoord
'n woord wat die sterlig en skande van genade
lag-lag met behaagde vrees na binne skree
terwyl hy met 'n geur van een of ander soort geskiedenis
'n pyn aldeur die hart van menigte laat skiet
'n woord wat met elke somerson en winterreën my siel ongenaakbaar,
onweekbaar skil terwyl ek treur oor dit wat was
dit is my hart, 'n hart wat bloei en blom
met elke val van die woord
as hy val so sag soos die veer van 'n lang vergete berggans
en die aardesoor tref,
so hard so hard
'n woord wat oopskiet soos 'n granaat
gevol met sneeufloukkie-gedagtes en rooswolk liriek
wat ligvoets op die paaie van die glanse heelal wandel
om uiteindelik die einde-begin van almal se verhaal te word
daar waar stille eensaamheid nie meer soek na aanraking
nóg troos maar eerder ontvlug
na al die plekke waar hy eenmaal was
'n woord wat die oog stil maak,
die hart behier
en drome van vrede verwaai
wat nie is wat hy wil of kan wees nie,
maar wat steeds sy verlate liefde agterlaat
soos die nagte verdonker, verwinter
'n woord wat elke polsslag, hartklop kunstig deurvleg
terwyl die res soos druppels teen ruite
die winterwind probeer najaag ek skryf so skuins voor die mooiste, mooiste maand
'n pengedig oor en van 'n wêreldwoord
'n woord wat verkeerd geval het
in die siel en op die oor
wat weer saam met sy al sy speelmaats
in die maanskyn ryp sal word
Erfenis. dis maar al.

- Jané de Wet, Moments in Mother Tongue, 2021

Friendly city

"Gelvan, Schauder, Cleary Park!"
The sliding door operator barks
as he dangles from the taxi,
yelling, goading, flirting and spitting
till the twilight hour.
I watch from my window
as the lights become a thread of gold
and the road stretches on
like a lock of black hair,
twisting and turning into the root of the city.
The city, this city, my city
shows me its dark splendour
what it gives me is what it gives you,
it's a dance, a fast dance –
my city gives me hope, experience, warmth
that my window reflects back and forth
until it is a part of me, part of you,
shattering my loneliness, shaping my destiny,
twisting and turning in the heart of humanity:
like the sliding door operator,
my city beckons me.

- Allisa Matroos, *Poetry Piece by Piece*, 2015



Intlalo kaXhosa

Kwathi ke kaloku ngantsomi,
Chosi ntsomi.
Lawo yayingawo amaxesha amnandi,
Intsapho zidibana zifundisana ngobomi.

Kusadliwa ngendebe endala,
Amantombazana namakhwenkwana,
Bezonwabisa ngemidlalo yemveli.
Ray-ray ndinanto yam jikelele ngqu!
Yinja!

limbongi zakuthi zifudula zibonga,
Indalo, amaqhawe, Ikumkani,
Kwakunye neziganeko ezazisenzeka.
Zidandalazisa umba ngamaqhalo, izaci,
Izikelele kwakunye nezifaniso.
Oosona, bona yona,
Izimelabizo zoqobo zakwaXhosa.

Ingoma nokombela oku,
Zizinto zokonwaba kwaXhosa.
Ngumtshato, ngumgidi, yintonjane,
Zonke zinengoma zoza.
Siyatyityimba, siyaxhentsa, ngumgqungqo, ngumteyo.

- Ziphozihle Hoboshe, Moments in Mother Tongue, 2021

Sint Rolihlahla

hier in londen kort ek
'n sterk koppie koffie
sint rolihlahla
om oor jou te kan skryf
hier waar op die rooi tapyt
voor flitsende ligte oomblikke
na die ghrend première
filmsterre en prinse
na hul asems snak
gehuil het
geween het
oor die man wat goddank nie
sy naam gestand gedoen het nie
en ek wonder of jy destyds toe jy met
jou kleiosse langs die rivier speel
kon droom
dat jy die wêreld sou verander

- Wessel Stoltz, NVision, 2014



Knowledge

Knowledge
to acquire it, is to learn
to accept it, is to unlearn
learning and unlearning and learning again
leaps and strides in the garden of the mind
thinking and rethinking
misunderstanding and understanding
knowing life

- Taryn Isaacs De Vega, *Carved onto the Page*, 2016



Aa! NTABA KANDODA

Tsii gxada , Muku isinyolokondane
Ndee rhiphu umbilini
Thaphu thaphu ezonyawu zinkulu
Cwaka ingxolo, laqa laqa loomehlo makhulu

Ntsho ukundijonga, Wambu kum ubuthongo obungephi
Sebe sebe okwethutyana
Gxada gxada ukusondela kwingobozi
Xhwi ibhayi lam
Latya latya ukulakantyula, Sithe ehlathini

Ndeendwanya amehlo
Cebu ubuthongo kum, qabu iingqondo
Thwasu ukutshona ehlathini
Ntsho ngamehlo, Menye ibhayi lam
Lakantyu isiNyolokondane nebhayi lam

Gxada gxada ukuleqisa
Sithe ilanga ukuya kunina, Yhuu yhuu izijwili
"Sinyolokondane sinyolokondane zisa ibhayi lam
Ilanga liyandishiya kukude ebhakubha"
Bha bha bha, Bha bha bha
Hayi ukungqukuleka sisiwa, sivuke sithathise
Sicele kooXhongo

Geqe geqe intloko kum andikancami
Ngenxa yeThemba andikanikezeli, kuba kaloku Lona lisentliziweni
Aa! Ntaba kaNdoda !!!

- Athenkosi Feni, Moments in Mother Tongue, 2021

Ek is trots op my taal

Welgedaan! Swart Nasie
Welgedaan! Swart Nasie
Laat my toe, Huis van Ntu
Om mee te deel
Vandag juig nasies
Want die Swart Nasie vier ons tale
Nasie en nasie dra krone
Want die huis van die Xhosa nasie is trots
Dié is die tale van ons voorouers.
Om met die ritme van beskaafdwees saam te gaan sal ons nie help nie!
Verwaarlosing van ons tale is skandalig en afgrylik
Want ons is trots om Xhosa te wees nie
Grense van my land
Vandag is jong mans en vrouens gelukkig
Hulle is vol van vreugde!
Want die tale was eens deur die mense van ouds waardeer
Keer terug na jou wortels, Swart Nasie
Want 'n mens ken iemand aan sy wortels.
My geliefde gemeenskap!
Ek praat oor die taal van die grond
Vandag het skrywers afgeskyd
Want ons tale word erken
Ja, mense!
Ek praat van Mqhayi and Rhubusana
En hulle wat die trompet geblaas het en die isiXhosa-taal verhef het Vandag het
nasies vergader
Want die taal van die amaXhosa word veredel
Vandag dra ons kleurvolle komberse
Ons is baie trots!
Indien ons afkyk onder die hoenderkraal van die taal
Ons veroorsaak wraak en euwel aan die voorouers in hul grafte
Want die Huis van Xhosa van die Swart Nasie blyk om te verdwyn.
Ek roep op die hele Huis van die Swart Nasie
Want ons, die Xhosa's, is 'n nasie wat skouer aan skouer staan
'n Nasie wat mekaar se sere lek

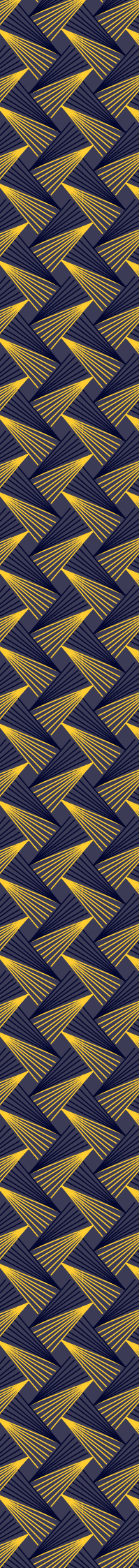
- Yonela Thengimfene, AMAZWI, 2019
(Translated from isiXhosa)

Your legacy

The world will not remember you
for what you have accumulated
and what you have left behind.

You will be remembered for
touching the lives of others
to make a difference to the world.

- Logamurthie Athiemoolam, *Carved onto the Page*, 2016



uThixo nomnqamlezo

Ngulowo ungumdali wezulu nehlabathi
Ngulowo wasifela emnqamlezweni
Mnqamlezo lowo ndiqhayisa ngawo maxa onke
Mnqamlezo lowo ndizuza khona Amandla
Abanye bakhankanya inqwelo zamahashi
Abanye bakhankanya kothixo ababunjiweyo
Kodwa mna ndikhankanya igama likaYesu uThixo wethu
Mve noMpostile uPaulos esithi" mna ke mandingekhe ndiqhayise ngento
Ingenguwo umnqamlezo weNkosi uYesu Kristu"

KukuThixo nasemnqamlezwemi apho sakuzuza Amandla xa ephela
Kulapho sakuzuza ithemba xa selikroxa
Kulapho sizuza khona uxolo kwiintliziyo ezidandathekileyo
Kulapho wabandalazisa khona uthando lwakho ngakuthi

Zikhetheleni lo Thixo ke nani
Othi ancame ubomi bakhe encamela aboni abafana nathi
Sise amehlo kuyo imbangi nomgqibelelisi wokholo lwethu uYesu
Owathi ngenxa yovuyo olwalubekwe phambi kwakhe
Wawunyamezela umnqamlezo elidelile ihlazo

- Zintle Mtsokoba, Moments in Mother Tongue, 2021

Ons skryf in ons tale

Indien ek die kans gegun sou wees,
En my pyn so gegiet, in my eie taal.
Om te praat, te prys,
In my eie taal.
My wil sou volbring wees.
My drome vervul.

Dié kettings het my hande seergemaak
Gee vir my die sleutels sodat ek dié dinge kan breek
Sodat ek die woorde vandaar kan hoor, "Bly stil".
Gee vir my 'n pen en 'n papier om die kwaad se vermy,
Wat my siel, en my kop, vasvang.
My onsamehangendheid is omrede ek probeer om die verhoog op te stel
Ek skryf in my eie taal want ek is my eie taal.
Ek is 'n lig wat skyn op moedertale.
Ek is 'n kuur wat hulle wat vermorsel teenstaan,
My tale.
'Ndi' 'Kri' 'Ngqi' 'Gri' 'Nzi' My tale is baie kwaai
Laat ons in ons eie tale skryf.

- Mzoli Mavimbela, *AMAZWI*, 2019
(Translated from isiXhosa)

Linguistics of Life

Free to come
Free to go
Free to write what I feel
Free to earn
Free to learn
Free to speak what I know
Free to be
Free to read so my mind can grow
Free to fight
Free to flee
Free to listen and not just hear
Free – to be me

- Natalie Wood, *Carved onto the Page*, 2016



Ndingumntu

Vul'amehlo ndingumntu, ndinik'ithuba ndize ngenkqu, ndakukunkunkutha,
ndikubhukuqe,
ndikuthembis'izulu nomhlaba,
ndikukhohlise . . . kaloku ndingumntu,
kaloku ndingumntu.

Ndakuluthath'uthando lwakho ndiluxovule,
ndakuzibuth'ingqaqambo zakho ndizisondeze,
lumka kaloku, vul'amehlo mntwan'omntu,
twez'indleb'uv' oku, Ndingumntu.

Ndakukudanis'ungabinathemba,
ndakukufanis'ubeneskhwele,
ndakukukhohlis'ungathembi namnye,
vul'intliziyo yakh'ungandiniki yonke,
kuba ndakuy'ishiy'ilihlwil'elingenakulungiswa.

Ndifana ndodwa,
kodwa ndithi thotha,
ndifana nabo bonk'ingamampunge ke lawo,
ndilumkele ndingumntu

- **Sisanda Mrgwebi, Poetry Piece by Piece, 2015.**



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