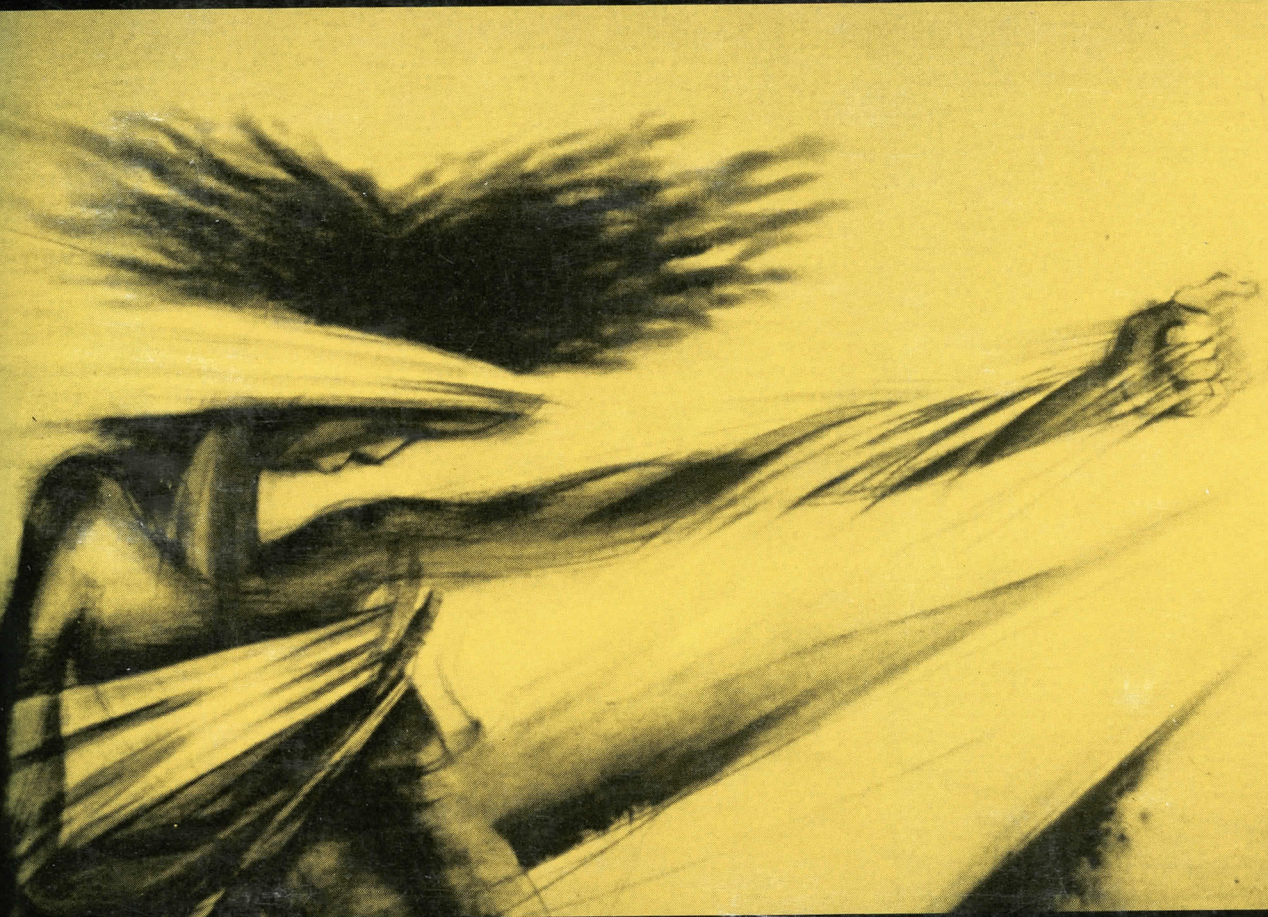


**A SPECIAL DOUBLE ISSUE  
ART AGAINST APARTHEID**

**IKON**  
creativity  
and  
change



**ART AGAINST  
APARTHEID  
WORKS FOR FREEDOM**

INTRODUCTION BY ALICE WALKER



---

# ART AGAINST APARTHEID

---

there is a spirit of justice among us. standing. against apartheid. against disenfranchisement. displacement. poverty. against occupying armies. in south africa. lesotho. namibia. against armies attempting to destabilize angola. botswana. mozambique.

there is this extraordinary human strength. surviving resisting daring to imagine a just and free future for southern africa. the mandelas, the sisulus, tutu, the many others whose names we know or do not yet know, standing among us. daring to live and name and dream.

in solidarity with the international outcry against the apartheid system, art against apartheid and ikon magazine have collaborated to present artists from the americas bringing the imagination and courage of their own struggles for survival to join the peoples of southern africa fighting for freedom and justice.

it is our hope that each revolution, each turn in time and the human heart, brings us closer to the world that southern african women, men and children are giving their lives daily for. let us hope that each act, each demonstration, each empowered voice will contribute to the dawning of a free southern africa and, one day, a free and just world.

***This special issue is dedicated to  
VICTORIA MXENGE, BENJAMIN MOLOISE, and MICHAEL STEWART***

***And the living  
and the work before us***

---

**IKON**  
creativity  
and  
change

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# A STATEMENT OF SUPPORT

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Major-General Joseph N. Garba (CFR)  
Chairman, United Nations Special  
Committee against Apartheid

I count it as a privilege to have been requested to write an introduction to this anthology of art for liberation. *Apartheid* at all times and in all forms remains as an affront to the conscience and dignity of mankind and a crime against humanity. *Apartheid* in South Africa is a way of life; the cosmology of evil, therefore action against it must be expressed and initiated on many levels. It is in this connection that this art collection makes a unique and powerful contribution to the struggle against apartheid. The art forms, which dually depict on the one hand the anguish, crisis and agony in South Africa, and on the other hand the imperative dimensions for action against *apartheid* capture the essence of the liberation struggle in South Africa today. Cultural action against *apartheid* is invaluable. These works serve to educate international public opinion and refute the whitewashed propaganda of racist South Africa. In contemporary South Africa the regime engages in secret and unspeakable abuses and atrocities against the indigenous majority population. Coupled with the State of Emergency and its prohibitions of foreign press coverage of the internal situation, this work makes its entrance at a crucial and auspicious moment. I wish to greatly commend the artists who have contributed their works to this volume out of their innate humanitarian convictions that racism and *apartheid* have no place in our world.

No less deserving of commendation is Art against *Apartheid* as an organization of visual, literary and performing artists who are effectively using art as a weapon against *apartheid*. Through a variety of exhibition and cultural events they continue to inform and educate the public as to the aggressive and racist nature of the regime in Pretoria as well as depicting the heroic struggle of the people of South Africa and Namibia to rid themselves of the South African tyrants and racists. This grass-root action is effectively mobilizing and building support for the liberation struggle in South Africa in helping to sustain the current irreversible momentum against the Pretoria regime.

In conclusion let me again commend all those who have contributed to this volume and call on other artists to support cultural and artistic action against *apartheid* as well as diversifying and escalating action against the regime of *apartheid*.



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to SCOTT BARTON for work

"above and beyond..."

& to MICHAEL SYKES typesetter

"extraordinaire" & friend

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# **The People Do Not Despair**

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## **An Introduction to**

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## ***Art Against Apartheid***

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## **ALICE WALKER**

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I remember the afternoon that I became viscerally aware that millions of black human beings remain in slavery on this planet. A young black activist invited me to see some South African films about the lives of black women; he hoped, after seeing them, I would write a review. I said of course. Then I saw the films. I believe they were three: "South Africa Belongs to Us," "You Have Struck a Rock," and "Crossroads: South Africa." In each film I could see the incredible suffering of the people. See the pain and bewilderment of the adults, female and male, and the infinite devastation of the children. I saw the men forced to leave their families for work in the gold and diamond mines, then turn, often, to drunkenness in an effort to forget; I saw the women living in cells and closets at the beck and call of the white man and his woman and child day and night; everywhere I saw the children, playing in the streets, in garbage, eating whatever their frantic little hands found. They would grow up to replace their parents as workers in the mines and kitchens of South Africa. There was no other plan for them—except the Bantustans (i.e., "African Homelands") set up for "surplus" blacks by the white South African government. These "Homelands" made the urban ghettos look attractive. Barren, dry. No grass. No fields. Poor housing. Insufficient water. The kind of food, in other countries, reserved for livestock. The people in the Bantustans sagged as they walked: they understood they were "removed" to these places to rot.

I tried hard to hang on to the optimism inspired by the rebellious, singing women in one of the films as they refused to accept the pass laws for women in the 1950s, but my heart was reeling from the realization that my eyes were beholding modern day slavery and massive physical, spiritual and cultural genocide. I realized I was witnessing the destruction of the "Indians" of Africa.

I staggered home from these films and attempted to coordinate my thoughts sufficiently to approach my pen. I could not. I felt a terror and a sorrow and an anger that, for a period, nearly conquered my ability to respond positively to what I had seen. What I now, only too painfully, *and as a full adult*, understood: Slavery was alive. Genocide was not dead.

I never wrote reviews of the films. After a while, the young activist ceased to question me about them. I couldn't explain my inaction to him, either; I marvelled that he could show these same films, and others even more piercing, over

and over, many times a week, and remain among the sane. It was as if my soul had sustained a blow that sent reason into retreat. It was nearly a year before I could act in solidarity with the people of South Africa consistent with my dreams.

That first effort, too, I remember. I chose to introduce these same films to a large group of mostly white people ("hip" ones), in the village of Mendocino, near the valley where I live. Also on the program was a beautiful black sister from Oakland who had recently returned from South Africa where she was a guest of the African National Congress and had worked with several women's groups. Her name was Pearl Alice Marsh and she stood before us, the very model of black intelligence, commitment and womanhood, and her face, her voice, her confidence in the people of South Africa gave me the energy to also address the crowd. The people do not despair, she said. But how hard it was still to say to a room full of well-off and well-meaning whites that my people are still in slavery: give up your Kruggerands!

For the first time I felt what the black abolitionists of our country must have felt, even more overwhelmingly, as they toiled to raise white people's consciousness about slavery in the decades preceding the Civil War. I said a prayer of thanks to them for speaking out during even harder, more white dominated times than these. Like them, very much their daughter, as I felt myself to be that day, I managed, but afterwards I was thoroughly sick. One of my friends, a white woman, walked with me out to the cliffs overlooking the ocean and attempted to massage my headache away. The irony of this too seemed to make my headache dance.

I do not tell this story to invite either empathy or annoyance. Having lived through a period of brokenness, where South Africa is concerned, I now cheerfully and with full confidence in South Africa's future, function. In writing about that time I remind myself how fragile and humanly vulnerable we all are. Of how hard it sometimes is to confront what scares us to death—and to life. Like the other artists in this anthology I add my voice, my testimony, to the sometimes hidden, unexpected debilitation evil does in the world. But I know too, as they do, the restorative power of a sister's resolute travel and presence (bringing back both the message and the attitude), a brother's persistent work and voice, a comrade's attempt to heal. South Africa will be free because we are a people whose very "disabilities" have forced us to become able. And we have not forgotten our own tragic past enough to find rest acceptable while our brothers and sisters live it. These are two of the things I love most about us: they have been hard lessons, but maybe we truly are learning them.



---

# ALICE WALKER

---

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## The Diamonds on Liz's Bosom

---

The diamonds on Liz's bosom  
are not as bright  
as his eyes  
the morning they took him  
to work in the mines  
The rubies in Nancy's  
jewel box (Oh, how he  
loves red!)  
not as vivid  
as the despair  
in his children's  
frowns.

Oh, those Africans!

Everywhere you look  
they're bleeding  
and crying  
Crying and bleeding  
on some of the whitest necks  
in your town.

---

## Attentiveness

---

When you can no longer  
eat  
for thinking of those  
who starve  
is the time to look  
beneath the skin  
of someone close to you.

Relative, I see the bones  
shining  
in your face  
your hungry eye  
prominent as a skull

I see your dreams  
are ashes  
That attentiveness alone  
does not feed you.

---

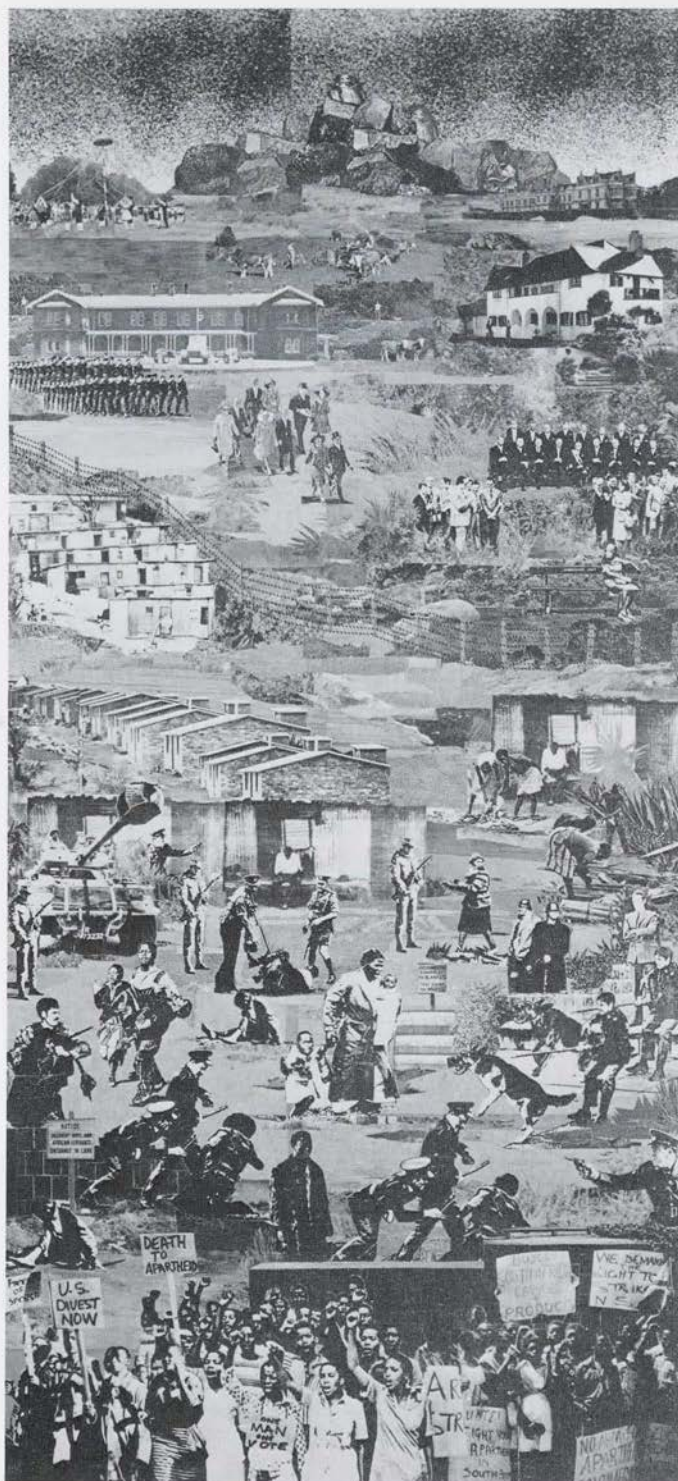
## We Alone

---

We alone can devalue gold  
by not caring  
if it falls or rises  
in the market place.  
Wherever there is gold  
there is a chain, you know.  
And if your chain  
is gold  
so much the worse  
for you.

Feathers, shells  
and sea shaped stones  
are all as rare.

This could be our revolution:  
To love what is plentiful  
as much as  
what's scarce.



---

# Southern Africans Speak

---

"Death to Apartheid" GEORGE "GEO" SMITH



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# BENJAMIN MOLOISE

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In our whole life's melody the music is broken off, here and there,  
by rests,  
and we foolishly think we have come to the end of the tune.  
God sends a time of forced leisure, sickness,  
disappointed plans,  
frustrated efforts,  
and makes a sudden pause in the choral hymn of our lives.  
And we lament that our voices must be silent.  
Our part missing in the music which goes up  
to the ear of the Creator from His world.

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All the armies that ever marched  
All the parliaments that ever sat  
have not affected the life of man on earth  
as much as one solitary life  
I am proud to be what I am  
The storm of oppression will be followed by the reign of my blood  
I am proud to give my life, my one solitary life

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*A carpenter and poet sympathetic to the ANC, Benjamin Moloise was executed at age thirty, 1985, by the South African Government. He was on the scene when the "Spear of the Nation" eliminated a Black policeman informer/collaborator. The government could not locate the real assailants, so they pinned the responsibility on Moloise. Despite his innocence, he was executed.*

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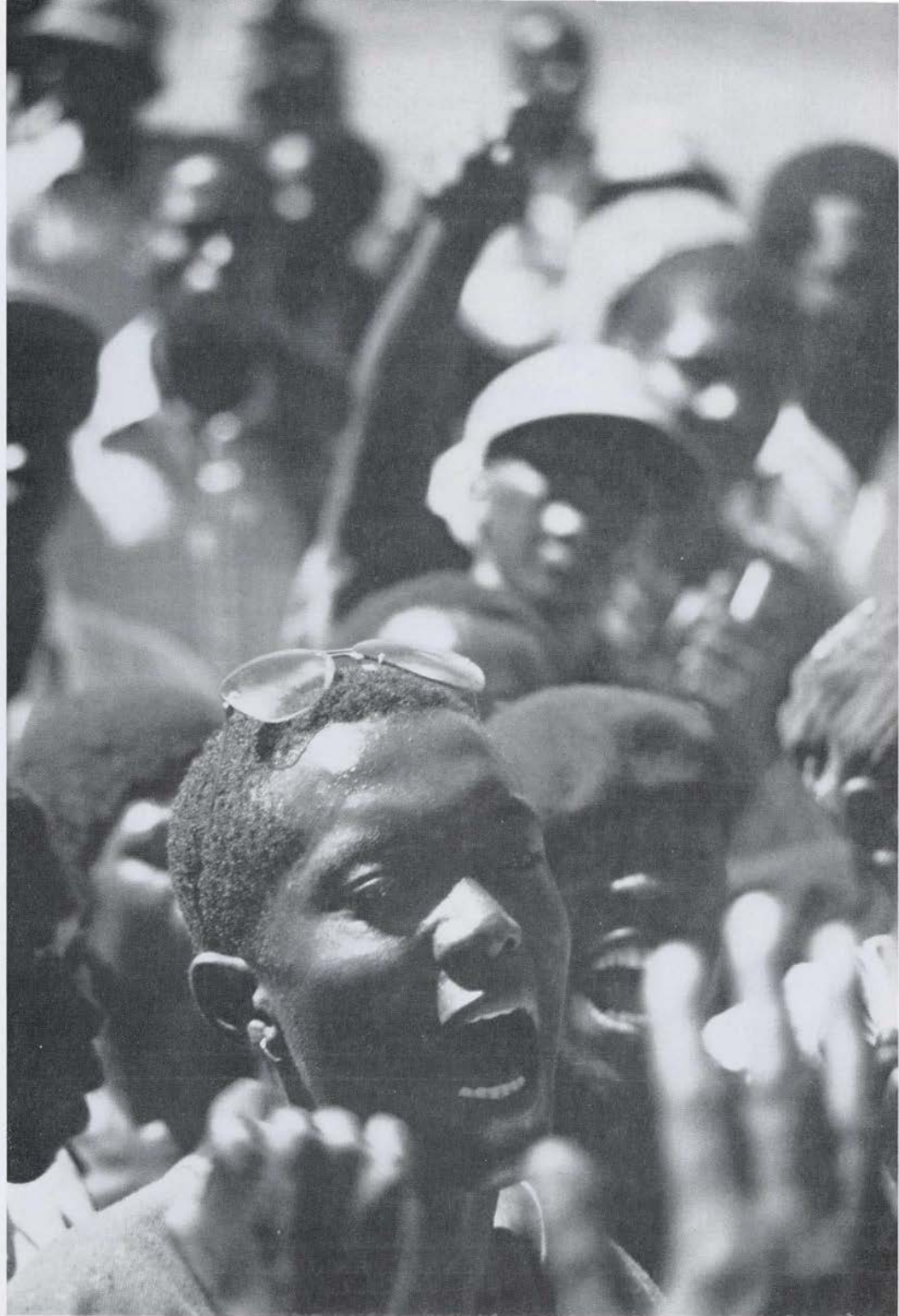


PHOTO: JEANNE MOUTOUSSAMY-ASHE





PHOTO: JEANNE MOUTOUSSAMY-ASHE

# ALBERTINA SISULU

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*ALBERTINA SISULU is the current president of the United Democratic Front and a co-founder of the Federation of South African Women.*

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To begin with, in this country Black people have no freedom. They are oppressed in all ways, financially and otherwise. We have no political platform where we can voice our grievances you know against the government. We are just shut up and in most cases whilst we are shut up, things are happening to the Black people. They are being killed, detained without trial, they are being jailed just for speaking out aloud and saying, "Apartheid must be dismantled," because we think apartheid is the source of evil in this country.

The government is not prepared to meet the leaders. Who is going to speak for the African people who are oppressed? African people have no salaries; they work for nothing really. Because if in the office I am working with a white woman she is going to get 2000 and I'm getting 150 rands. Can you get that we are getting to the same shop. Everything is the same, we buy from the same shops, what is the difference? Because she is white she must be comfortable and she must be covered.

In your own house, if you have children, if there is a quarrel between your children, you must settle that. You must sit down round the table and ask questions. Have the two stories from both sides and you will be able to judge. How is the government going to know what the people want. We have tabulated all our demands but they were never met. Instead our organizations are banned. We have no political platform in the country, we are not citizens in this country, do you know that? We are not citizens. So and you'll be surprised, not being citizens, we are charged with treason. Charged with treason. We are not citizens in this country. How can a foreigner be charged with treason? That is the set up of this country.

We are very happy really with the assistance of the anti-apartheid movement and all those who are with us. Because now they consider the world is watching them, and they can see that the world has seen some of the terrible things that are happening in this country. We don't actually know what the government is going to do, but I am definitely sure that if the pressure from outside was on that they will definitely change their minds and there will be change in this country. Yes, of course, change will come, but if it's only inside South Africa, it will take a long time.

We have one thing, we know that there is nothing without an end. It does not matter how long it will take, but the future is bright for the Black people of this country. If perhaps you go around South Africa, even the whites of this country, even the members of Parliament, some of them, have been saying to Botha,



"Look, before it is too late, let us change." It gives us hope that even those who are still with him will come down and say, "Look, people are right." This country eventually will be ruled by the owners of this country. The truth is one that this country will be ruled by the oppressed Black people of this country.

What type of life do women lead in this country? If your child is arrested, you will never know where he is. He will be detained incommunicado. And sometimes the next thing you hear he is dead. Killed in the cell. And the story was that he committed suicide. When they forcibly remove us, the women are the most sufferers. Say you have a baby of one month, two months, you are dumped in a veld (*field*). The baby gets sick. There are no medical facilities around. What are you going to do? The child is going to die in your hands.

Say you are political. Your child will go from school to school because they are afraid that your child is going to poison every child. That child must be dismissed. Often there is nothing against the child, but somehow the child will be found faulted. If he or she is admitted, you are always worried for how long. You know my daughter, the young one, the last one, she is twenty-nine. You wouldn't believe me, she is still doing her second year B.A., when she passed her Form 4 at the age of seventeen. Because she has been roaming from school to school, been dismissed. During 1976, she spent two years without school. She wouldn't be admitted in any of the schools around here until she had to go Natal. That is where she completed Form 5. She wasted a lot of time there. She could not get any university around here until last year. She is doing her second year this year. At the age of twenty-nine.

So all these things are happening to women. They are the mothers. They must consider the welfare of the house. They must see to the welfare of the children. Their education. Everything. The mother is responsible for the home. And all these things are happening. A policeman will just come at dawn. Where is the young one? Here he is. Which school do you belong? The child will tell him. "Come on and get into the van." Nobody knows why. No explanation. The children are being harassed. Sometimes the policemen will just come in and say "Eh, you committed an offense at such and such a time." The child at that time was at school. If he resists, he has been shot, he will die in your arms.

That is the type of the life that women are living in South Africa. Everything is worse with them. There is no woman who would not like to say that their children prosper. Their fathers are arrested. You are faced with children, five, six, in the house. You are alone, the only breadwinner. You are picked up, you get into jail. You leave those children. In 1973, I left my children. They had just come home from school. The policeman just came to pick me up. I left them standing there. And they had to go back to school without me. I had to do three months. 90 days detention. When they were here, during their holidays. Who looks after them? They're alone. Who pays the school fees? They have been chased out of school because the school fees were not paid. The breadwinner is in jail. That is the type of life women lead in this country.

I don't know how many times I've been in and out of jail. My husband is serving life imprisonment. I'm the only person in the house, but I'm in and out of jail. Because of such conditions, my second born was already admitted at Fort Hare, but when I was arrested she couldn't go. That is the life the women are leading in

this country. And with all that we must just keep quiet and say, "All is right." Political prisoners are being hanged. Mrs. Moloise is going to Pretoria on Thursday, her child is going to be hanged. That is terrible.

As far as the women are concerned, the oppression here is more than you can think. Because look you have got bright children, they can't be admitted in any university here. The children will never leave South Africa, he'll never get a passport to leave South Africa. I've got three people now who can not be with me even if I can die. My husband is serving life imprisonment. I've got two children in exile. One of them is a girl. A child who was detained in 1976, the whole year up until 1977. For what? Tortured. You know when she came out of jail she was mentally effected. I sent her to Swaziland and somebody helped me. She was admitted to the hospital for two months and she was told not to look at a book for a year.

Even if there's help from abroad, you will never get it. If it's under my name it will get to South Africa, but in South Africa it will be turned back. You won't believe me, but in all this I've got five children. How much was I getting? 135 rand a month. With all my children in a boarding school. Knowing that there was nobody that could help me from overseas. Nothing would come here under my name.

So that's how the women are suffering in South Africa. Children are dying from diarrhea because there isn't suitable feed for the children. The mother and the father is out of work. You won't believe me that even today a man who has got four or five children, the wife is bed-ridden, she's sick, can't work. That man will get 58 rand a week and he is paying a rent of 57 rand a month. How much does he

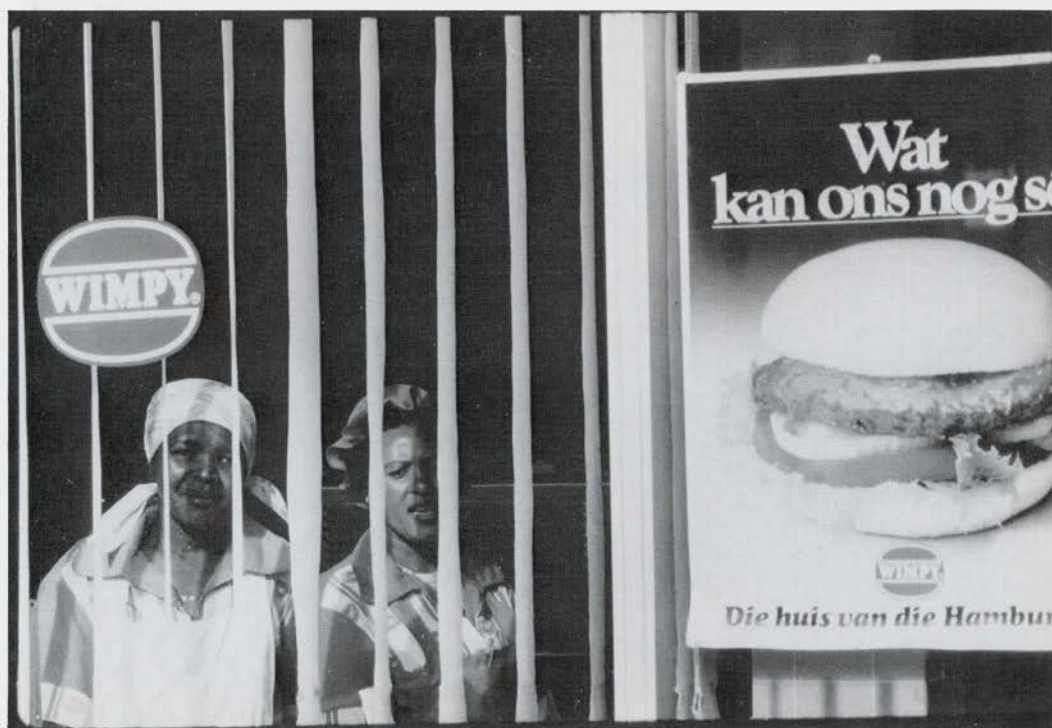


PHOTO: CATHERINE ALLPORT



put up for the rent! How much does he have for the people to eat in the house? Undernourished children. TB is rife with African people here, because there is no food. In a rich country like South Africa. That is the life we lead here.

Things are happening in South Africa and they are all terrible. At least the world knows now what is happening. Where have you ever heard of a prisoner going for interrogation and dies in the interrogation room. And the verdict is that he just dropped from a chair and cracked his skull and died. From a chair! He dropped and cracked his skull and died! So there's nobody to blame. This is what is happening.

One of them in Pretoria jail during the prison trial, the first treason trial, died in the cell, and the next thing they said he hanged himself by a scarf. When you get into the cell even your belt is removed from you. You can't get anything when you're in the cell. Your belt, your scarf, anything you can use to hang yourself with has been removed from you. Why was it possible for this man to have his scarf in the cell and hang himself? Such stories! Our people are just dying in jails. They are in single cells but when they die, "prisoners have killed them."

There is no change in South Africa. The government is deceiving the world by saying there is change. Apartheid is still very much alive and kicking. That is the life we lead in South Africa.

*Edited from an interview taped by Catherine Allport, August 1985*



*Funeral of slain civil rights lawyer, Victoria Mxenge.*

**PHOTO: CATHERINE ALLPORT**

# FROM WOMEN OF THE CALABASH

*Xhosa songs written and recorded in 1985 by South African workers in the Transvaal; as performed by Women Of The Calabash, New York, N.Y.*

ILIZWE NGELETHU

Kudala sisebenzela amabunu  
Basebenzi masihlanganeni  
Amandla awethu  
Basebenzi masihlanganeni  
Ilizwe ngelethu  
Basebenzi masihlanganeni  
So lima ejele  
Kudala sisebenzela amabunu  
Basebenzi masihlanganeni

(This Land Belongs To Us)

We have long been laboring  
Workers let's unite  
Power is ours  
Workers let's unite  
This land belongs to us  
Workers let's unite  
We'd rather land in jail  
We have long been laboring  
Workers let's unite

KE FOSATU

Ke FOSATU  
Ke ya rona ethusang badiri mobathapi.  
Hore batle babone  
Ditshanno tsa bona mobathaphing  
Amandla awethu  
Niyabasaba  
Asibasabi Siyabafuna

This FOSATU  
*(FOSATU is the Federation Of South African Trade Unions)*

This FOSATU  
Is ours, it helps the workers in their struggle.  
Against the employers  
So they can get their rights from the employers  
The power is ours  
Are you afraid of them?  
We are not afraid, we want to get them!



PHOTO: CATHERINE ALLPORT



# HELEN JOSEPH

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*HELEN JOSEPH was the first person to be put under "house arrest" in South Africa, part of the 1950's treason trial, one of the co-founders of The Federation of South African Women.*

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Take your money out of South Africa. Take your business away from South Africa. Don't be here under the pretensions that you are bringing benefits to South Africa . . . This is what has to be clearly understood. That we are engaged in a war—I want to say this—I think this is very important—there is a war going on, an undeclared war. And it is a war which on the one side has got all the arms, the weapons and the might that the white people have, that the government has. The great armory it's got that drains our resources every year and the money that should be spent on putting food in the children's bellies keeps on buying guns, bigger and better guns, bigger and better airplanes, and everything else.

On the one side you've got that. On the other side you've got the millions of people. What I think you have to understand is they are the unarmed people and their weapons are stones and bricks and axes and fire. So people must not hold up their hands in horror, because the people are burning and they are killing people. They don't have the guns. They are using the only weapons they are allowed to have.

A box of matches.

That's their weapons. A little box of matches in their hands. They haven't got the other weapons. And now we have gotten to the pitch when the people, I think their tolerance is almost totally exhausted, and why it didn't get exhausted long before this, I do not know. We have gotten used to the idea that the patience of the African people is inexhaustible. It is not. It is very near to the bottom of the barrel. And the patience of the people is gradually disappearing. And this is what we have to face, and what people are afraid to face. What I think people overseas are afraid to face too. They don't want to accept that this is the real picture. The people are coming to the end of their patience.

And what is going to come after that.

And the other thing that makes me so angry is—try and make your people over there understand that when you talk about violence, you must not only think of the sticks and stones and the boxes of matches of the Black people. You must think of the violence that is being perpetrated on the Black people by this government and by its forces. Think of what the police is doing to the people. Think of the sixty, seventy people that have died in detention.

Think of the merciless, ruthless crushing of the people that this government is going on with. It is institutionalized violence. And even if you come to think about removals—when you remove a whole community from this place to that place where they are going to starve, is that not violence? You must try to make people understand that violence doesn't only mean the gun in your hand, it means much more than that. It means what the government is doing to the people. It is all violence. It is a whole violation of people. It is destruction of

privacy. It is the destruction of the right to live. The total inadequate separated education that children are being dishd out with, which we call Bantu. All that is a form of violence. Try to make people understand that.

Violence is not something that has just started up in the last couple of years. It has not. It has been going on for years and years and years. It is coming at the people all the time from the side of authority. That is violence. And violence engenders violence.

The main thing that we can continue to do is to keep on telling the truth about South Africa. This is what I think is of the utmost importance and this is why I take every opportunity, with telly interview, radio interview and with everything else to shout my mouth out and say what is really going on here. So that people must not be allowed ever to say that "We did not know." You do know. You people outside do know. You have never been allowed not to know in the last twenty years. There are going to be people who say, "Oh, we didn't know it was so bad." Of course it is, and you are seeing it here now. You know what is going on during the State of Emergency.

I think I have said enough.



**PHOTO: CATHERINE ALLPORT**

*Edited from an interview taped by Catherine Allport, August 1985*



**Moment  
by Moment  
for the fallen  
heroes  
May 27, 1983**

JUNE 16

JUNE 16

JUNE 16

and god closed his ears

JUNE 16

JUNE 16

speaks  
sings  
dreams  
From a thousand graves

## MOMENT BY MOMENT



PHOTO: PETER MAGUBANE



# ATESTIMONY

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*of a white South African whose name must be withheld.*

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The American population feels what's happening in South Africa is a Black/white polarization and that's not what it is. What the Reagan administration is doing at the moment is forcing Botha to feel that apartheid is not accepted within the community of the common world and the Americas. They are forcing him to form an internal settlement with the moderate Black leaders of the country, but it will never happen.

You see the ANC is being left out in the cold and the soul and spirit of the people belongs to the ANC. And if we do not come and speak directly to the leaders of the ANC, we are all wasting our time in South Africa. It will be destroyed with a situation of revolution. There will be bloodshed. That will not only be white against Black, it will be the system of things that will be destroyed. You see, the ANC, and the UDF stand for a non-racial society that is Black, whites, Indians and coloureds to live peacefully in South Africa. Controlled by democracy within the ranks of the people—that's the whole story.

If you come'd to speak to me four days ago in my shop in ———, we had seven policemen wanting to close the shop down. That's the only white shop that's been supported by the people. And they wanted to close the shop down under the laws of the emergency act. And they put two policemen on the outside of the doors and they said, listen here, the two of you will not move outside the store. Watch everyone that comes in and take their names down. My brother in turn said, if they are not removed immediately, I'll get a hold of CBS and come and televise this, and within an hour CBS was there, and he told them exactly what he thought about the system in South Africa.

The same things happened in Rugby in 1974. In 1974 we told them what to do—we said go and form a non-racial board with the Black people because they are the majority. When I say Black people I'm talking the terms of Black-white confrontation in South Africa. So you understand what I'm trying to say. When we talk about the ANC or the UDF we talk about people as non-racial residents. We told them in 1974, affiliate and get involved with the Black community and let's form a non-racial rugby board. They refused point blank. We as a family went over and we joined the Black unions. When we joined them, we were known as communists, as racists over television, and our bank accounts and our every business movement is monitored by the security system.

Today talking to you my telephones are monitored. I cannot speak freely to you. Even now speaking to you I can fear for my life. I can be shot at any time. I can be gotten rid of at any time. People have told me to turn it down or else you'll be gotten rid of sometime in the future. This is why when I speak you might feel that I'm very emotional, but this is very dear to me because I've seen a lot of my friends be killed. A lot of my friends have been murdered. Under the disguise of emergency laws. Under the disguise of detentions. Personal friends of mine and

that's what hurts me. That's why I get emotional. Sometimes I think, is it worth staying in this country? Shouldn't I rather leave the country and go somewhere else? But I can't do it. I have to stay internally because I love my country, I love my people. And this is why we stay. We fight the system at all costs. Today we should be a people with high standing in the community but we're not, we're treated as lepers by the white population. Because we've got to stay in white areas.

They don't want to speak to us, they don't want to get involved with us because we are known as terrorists, communists, as radicals. Because of the publicity that the newspapers have given to everything and distorted the whole concept of what we want to create.

Who are the terrorists? Are the terrorists the people who are coming into the country or are the terrorists those who are fighting to keep the majority of people from coming in to live in their own country—for themselves, and together, as a people, with some status, with some type of foundation, and with some loyalty to their communities, to their families, to their children.

You people are not told about this. This is why when a South African like me speaks about something like this you get emotional, you get worked up, because it means so much to us. It is not words anymore. It's not a philosophy, it's a way of life. I'm involved with it personally. I'm right into it. I'm not a politician. I can see what is happening, I can see lives being destroyed. Families being destroyed. Children being destroyed. People are having to flee the country. That's why I get involved. Some of my friends have been told, either you work with the system, or you leave the country or you get killed. You've got three options. Take one of the three.

We've tried on all levels to get the Black and white leaderships to meet. The white community do not want to meet with the true leaders of the country. They refuse to point blank. They want to enforce their laws, enforce their educational systems upon the Black man. Or give the Black man a vote with them holding the power. Which is incorrect. Which is deception.

You see that's how bad it is. I'll give an example. Personal friends of mine, \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_, who I knew personally—all of a sudden they disappeared, not to be seen. Still today no one knows where they are. But we know they have been eliminated. And more of this is happening on a daily basis.

So now you know how I feel.

Because of our involvement with the Black people, they have told us personally, and this has come from high authorities, that they'll destroy and cripple us as a family. But we don't care. We have told them, if you want to cripple us go right ahead. If you want to close us up go right ahead. Because it's in your power to do it; it's not in my power. It's in your power. And this is how we feel about things. At the moment, we live from a day to day existence.

I was speaking to some American professors there. And they don't understand the situation in South Africa. They were seeing it as a Black/white confrontation. They said to me, Don't go back to Africa. And I turned around and I said, listen here, I know the Africans, I've grown up with them; I speak the language fluently. So to them, they are my friends, they are my brothers, they are my sisters. And I spoke as a man with feeling toward their culture which I'm not. And it's not a cultural difference. It's got nothing to do with that. That we live harmoniously to-



gether. And this is the important thing for the American people to know. That we live together. That we speak the same language. We get involved with each other. It's not Black and white. We want a system to rule that the people of South Africa will accept. That's Black, white and whatever other color comes on the scene. We are saying to everyone, let's live together as brothers and sisters. That we must love one another. The situation that is wrong is when every time everything is defined as either Black or white or it's communist or it's capitalism. And it's not Blacks fighting Blacks either. It's the system which has infiltrated some of the Black communities and given them positions of wealth to fight the other Blacks.

The ANC controls 80% of the peoples' minds in South Africa, their spirits. They've grown up with it. They want that ideology, they're longing for it. They're longing for that freedom, that understanding. Those leaders are the leaders who should be leading the country at the moment. And we cannot do anything in South Africa without speaking to the true leaders—Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo, and all the executive members that will count. South Africa will eventually, whether we like it or not, will sometime in the future be controlled by the ANC. And the sooner we get to grips with that situation the better for everybody in South Africa.

We as a family have said that we will not fight on the borders of South Africa for an ideology that we don't believe in. That we will stay within the ranks of the Black community and work there where the lives, the personalities, the characters, the families of people are more important than fighting for something we don't understand and we don't want.

The Americans, the European common market can force the South Africans to speak to the ANC. They can withhold credit facilities, boycott, withdraw all ambassadors and stop any flights outside of South Africa to any other countries. There's a lot of ways of putting the pressure on South Africa to speak to the ANC. An internal settlement will come through the ANC and no other way.

85% of the kids belong to the ANC organizations and the sooner that we realize that we have Nelson Mandelas that are 6 years old, we have Oliver Tambos that are five years old being conscientized by who, by the system. A system ignorant to the aspiration of the Black man. The sooner they realize they're dealing with highly intelligent, sophisticated people, the sooner they will come to a compromise with them. But we keep thinking we are dealing with subordinate unintellectual barbaric people. That is not the situation.

Guns and ammunition cannot keep us away from the goals, the aspiration of the children who are growing up. There's only 4 million white and there are 26 million Blacks and on the borders of our country there must be another 100 million so we are definitely going to win. So the sooner the people of America would accept the realities of the situation, the better.

# BOTSWANA RAID

## A DOCUMENTATION



**PHOTO: FRANK DEXTER BROWN**

We awake about 1:30 a.m. on Friday, June 14, as what sounds like machine-gun fire shatters the peaceful slumber of Gaborone, Botswana. Intermittent explosions penetrate the stillness.

The first timid rays of light confirm the unthinkable. South African commandos in white Datsun mini-buses and Ford Cortina vans had careened through their quiet residential neighborhoods, attacking ten widely-scattered houses simultaneously with heavy artillery—hand grenades, machine guns, mortar shells.

Who were the "terrorists?" . . . Two elderly men 60 and 71. A six year old child, two teenage house cleaners; an artist, a science student; a government social worker, secondary school teacher . . .





**PHOTO: FRANK DEXTER BROWN**

Duke Mashobane's family is asleep when the lock is blasted off the back door of their tiny four-room house in the No-Mathata section of Gaborone. (No-Mathata means 'no problems.') Their six-year-old nephew Peter, visiting from Lesotho, runs crying from the bedroom. Duke is sprayed with multiple rounds of machine-gun fire at point-blank range. His body shelters Rose, his wife; uninjured, she is allowed to escape. "We're not interested in women, only terrorists," they snarl, as they pump six bullets into little Peter's belly . . .

"The operation was planned to be clean and clinical," says one South African official.



**PHOTO: FRANK DEXTER BROWN**

It takes several hours to extinguish the flames that engulfed the home of the Old Man called Mkhulu (Grandad). His sixty-year-old wife, affectionately known as Gogo ('Grandma'), crawls out a back window with gunshot wounds in the legs. One little grandchild manages to flee unharmed. At the back of the house blood stains trail from the window, a child's bloody palm prints map out the frantic escape route. As the fire is put out, ten-year-old Busiziwe is heard crying and is rescued from the smoldering inferno; she is wounded in the thigh. But the Old Man, his 71-year-old body riddled with bullets, is burnt to a crisp . . .

*FRANK DEXTER BROWN      JEANNE M. WOODS*



# ***You are mad: and I mean it***

## **PHUMZILE ZULU**

What did you mean when you called me benighted  
Savage pagan barbarian  
You must have been mad  
I know now  
I say it and I mean it

When you found me here in Africa  
You said I was hungry  
You came carrying a big book called "BIBLE"  
And you called yourself "missionary"

You were going to offer  
Food for my life  
But to my surprise  
Never was I hungry like this before

Instead of bread you gave crumbs  
Maybe you just want me to salivate  
Why do you act like this  
Fat controlling experimenter  
Who at the beginning called himself "Good SAMARITAN"

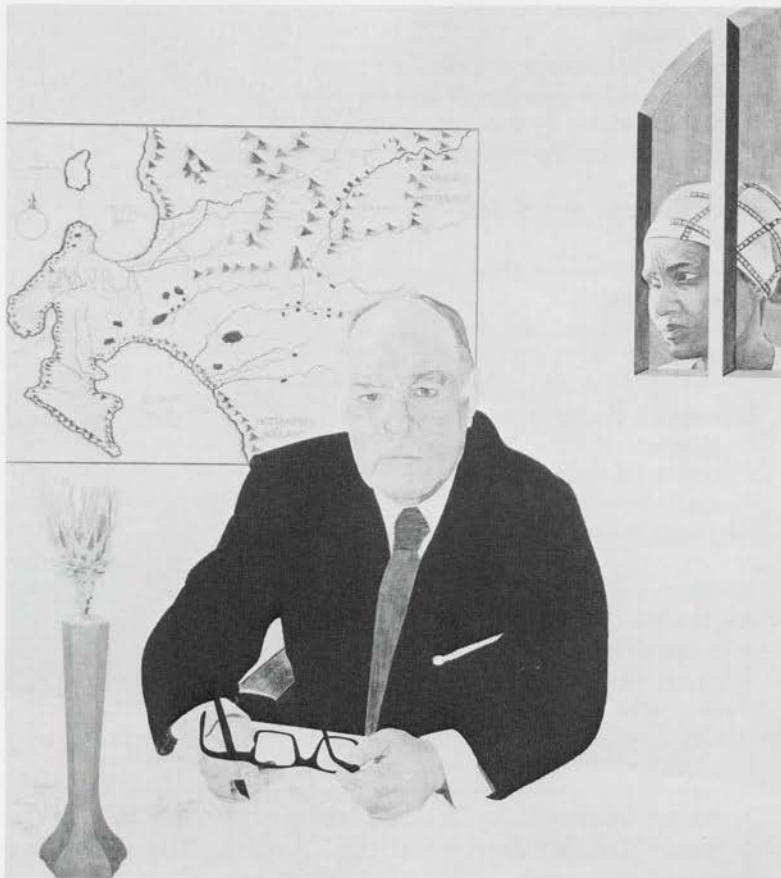
I have realized that you did not mean all that good  
You had come here to explore my wealth  
Bloody spy in camouflage of a missionary  
Did you think you would succeed forever and ever?

Look here . . .  
Now that you are aware  
That I am hard to get  
You try and play monkey tricks  
But you have failed with your BANTU EDUCATION  
You thought I would bow down till when?

You stole my forefathers' land  
You thought I would bow down till when? . . . Huh!  
I mean it  
And I mean it  
I am not going to stand your lie  
You found me comfortable  
You requested that I give you fresh water and vegetables  
And at the end my blood has become your water  
My body your vegetables  
I have given a hand  
But now you want the whole arm  
You are not going to get me  
And I mean it!

You tell me you are going to give me scattered portions  
Of my own soil  
And now you claim that this is a whiteman's country  
You forget how you came here  
You are a fool  
You are mad  
And I mean it!

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**ROBIN MICHALS**



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# ***Skyscape: A Constructivist Poem***

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## ***MFUNDI VUNDLA***

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Between the sky and the earth  
A space lies  
A skyscape of  
Delco battery signs  
Ford Motor Company signs  
GM VW IBM & 3M signs

Between the sky and the earth  
A space lies  
Enveloped by smoke oozing out of chimneys  
That populate the skyscape as stars the milky way  
A skyscape littered by coal-dark sputums &  
Stones that invade the interiors of the breasts of young babes

Between the sky and the earth  
A space lies  
A skyscape of masses and masses of trudging legs  
Steamy mouths  
Zeroing towards the land-prison of conveyor belts  
& foremen

Between the sky and the earth  
A space lies  
A skyscape of limited nuclear war  
Apartheid allies &  
Nazi sweethearts

Between the sky and the earth  
A space lies  
A skyscape visited by MK<sup>1</sup> and the AK<sup>2</sup>.  
Shooting those that loot the skyscape of its  
Trees water stones and labor

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1. MK=Umkhonto WeSizwe; the military arm of the African National Congress (South Africa)

2. AK=Kalashnikov assault automatic rifle

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# BARBARA MASEKELA

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*BARBARA MASEKELA's poetry is published in Somehow We Survive (Thunder's Mouth Press). She taught African literature and women's literature at Rutgers from 1972–82. She is an active member of the ANC Women's Section in Lusaka and has represented the ANC in several international meetings. She was born in 1941.*

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My name is Barbara Masekela, and I am the administrative secretary of the African National Congress Department of Arts and Culture. Previously our department fell under the Education Department but due to the pressure of work in that department and because of the growth in the needs of our school in Tanzania and the various educational projects we have in our movement, it was decided that culture needed its own office to concentrate only in that field.

*Q. When was it formed exactly?*

The Department of Arts and Culture was formed toward the end of 1982, but even before that we had the Ad-Hoc Committee for Culture. It dealt mostly with *Amandla*—a very exciting group of ANC cadres who first came together in 1977 at FESTAC in Nigeria. They were part of the ANC delegation to that great festival of African culture. They have since become a full-fledged theatre group which does music and dance, both traditional and modern, poetry, drama and agitprop theatre. They were never professionals, but very talented. They have thus been received very warmly and enthusiastically internationally. Their depiction of the criminality of apartheid, as well as of various aspects of our struggle has been very effective. They portray the history of the ANC as well as project our ideas for a united democratic culture in a free South Africa.

I don't need to tell you how some of the most brilliant and profound political speeches and resolutions fall on deaf ears, while music and dance due to its immediacy can have a remarkable and lasting effect. *Amandla* has to date performed in Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Zambia, Mozambique, Angola, Tanzania, FRG, Holland, Brazil and the Socialist countries. In July they had two performances at the World Youth Festival in Moscow. They have just completed a three-month tour of the U.K. after which they proceeded to Ghana and Nigeria. We hope it won't be too long before they can come to the United States and Canada.

*Q. Why haven't they been to the U.S.?*

You need a large capital investment for a group like *Amandla* who number thirty. And then of course there's the political message that they carry. It is not watered down, but quite explicit about the suffering, courage and determination of our



people through the years of struggle. *Amandla*, as well as being a showcase of the wealth and diversity of South African culture, is also a documentary of our struggle.

The group is very talented despite the fact that under apartheid they could not benefit from an artistic education which is the preserve of the whites. We are proud of *Amandla*, because like other formations in our country they demonstrate that despite oppression, repression, even murder, talent not only abounds but asserts itself in many ways within our people. Above all that talent is often linked to the concept of freedom, which cannot ever be buried.

*Q: In addition to Amandla, what other activities do you undertake?*

Whatever we do in the ANC, we have this aim in mind—not only to overthrow the apartheid regime and every vestige of its criminal policies, but also to establish a united, non-racial democratic state. Thus we view our task as also setting the foundations for the infrastructure of the future—in culture, in education, etc.

One day soon when we go home we will have to grapple concretely with among other things cultural institutions and issues, such as the legacy of Bantustanisation which has attempted to divide our people and deny our cultural unity. So one of our tasks in the cultural department is to find ways and means to assert the real, the authentic culture of South Africa. For instance, *Amandla* uses all the languages and dances of South Africa. There is no emphasis on one region or the other because in the Freedom Charter we say South Africa belongs to all who live in it. Believe it or not, some people fail to understand that we mean to take over all of South Africa and that we regard whatever achievements in technology as ours because we built all those museums, theatres, galleries and whatever and we mean to run them. So we must train people in all those fields.

We are now at the stage of running workshops in theatre, poetry, and the different crafts as a way of initiating our training. It is also a way of identifying persons with particular interests and talents. Further we have identified several institutions where the younger people can begin formal study in the performing arts. It is also in this area that we are relying on solidarity groups to help us find scholarships. When qualified, these trained cadres will be our first, own qualified art teachers.

Cultural activity inside South Africa is varied and extensive and it is essential that the liberation movement keep in step with these developments, and be in a position to contribute in all ways necessary to further development. Of course, in our view cultural work is integral to the entire political programme of the movement, and in this context we see no separation between what is happening inside and outside the country. Let us look at the cultural boycott, for instance: it has, to a large extent, been spearheaded and supported by people inside South Africa. But the racists try to give the impression that it emanates from outside. When the great singer Ray Charles went to South Africa to perform, he found that he had such a small audience, and he is a man who is greatly revered in cultural circles at home in South Africa. But people just felt that they could not support his venture there. And they took a stand.

*Q: How strong would you say the cultural boycott is in South Africa right now?*

Very, very strong. But the regime is making a concerted effort to establish a Black middle class very quickly. And these blacks have no political power or rights. All they qualify for is conspicuous consumption and its inevitable status symbols. They are the ones who go to Sun City. But to the majority, hard-working poor, Sun City is an obscenity and quite irrelevant. They are the ones who suffer the greatest burden of apartheid. They support the cultural boycott. They have analyzed the situation correctly, and they can see that these artists who are brought to South Africa to come and perform for them are really a sop, something to placate them, lull them, so that they won't think of the real issues. These artists are, in fact, used to advance the public relations of the racist regime—to salvage the regime from international isolation. But then even the Nazi Hitler sought the glamour of entertainers to camouflage his crimes against humanity, and apartheid is akin to Nazism in innumerable ways.

*Q: It's interesting in the United States the South Africans have particularly targeted Black musicians to bring to South Africa.*

The whole propaganda system of the apartheid regime is very systematized and sophisticated. And since they can not kill the liberation movement and because we are growing from strength to strength, one of the ways that fascists always try to hit you is to lower your morale. What more obvious method can they use to achieve this than utilize Black Americans as an instrument to demoralise us? Consequently, they have made a special effort to recruit black artists and sportsmen from the United States and the Caribbean to break the boycott. The massive sums they give them as remuneration are the sweat and blood of black workers in South Africa. On the other hand, it would be as painful for us if someone like Pete Seeger went to South Africa or any other peoples' artist who had used his talent to promote the cause of working people. Is it not true that many factories closed in the United States are opened in another guise in South Africa where profits are much higher because of slave wages and lack of workers' rights? And is not that money invested in our country to bolster the racists who repress and kill us? We are not naive, thus we are not demoralised.

Much to the disappointment of the apartheid propagandists, a significant number of these cultural mercenaries, once they leave their plush hotel rooms, begin to understand they have been had, and that the color of their skin places them in a position where they count for nothing in apartheid land.

On the more positive side, let us acknowledge that there are happily more principled artists, many of whom have turned down millions of dollars rather than soil their hands with blood money. Their example is an inspiration and encouragement to our fighting people. I am here referring to people like Roberta Flack, Harry Belafonte, Third World, Diana Ross and many others, black and white, who have said, "NO" loud and clearly to apartheid. It would be remiss to omit South African artists abroad who have refused to be lured back to South Africa and who give of their time and talent to hasten the day of liberation in South Africa.



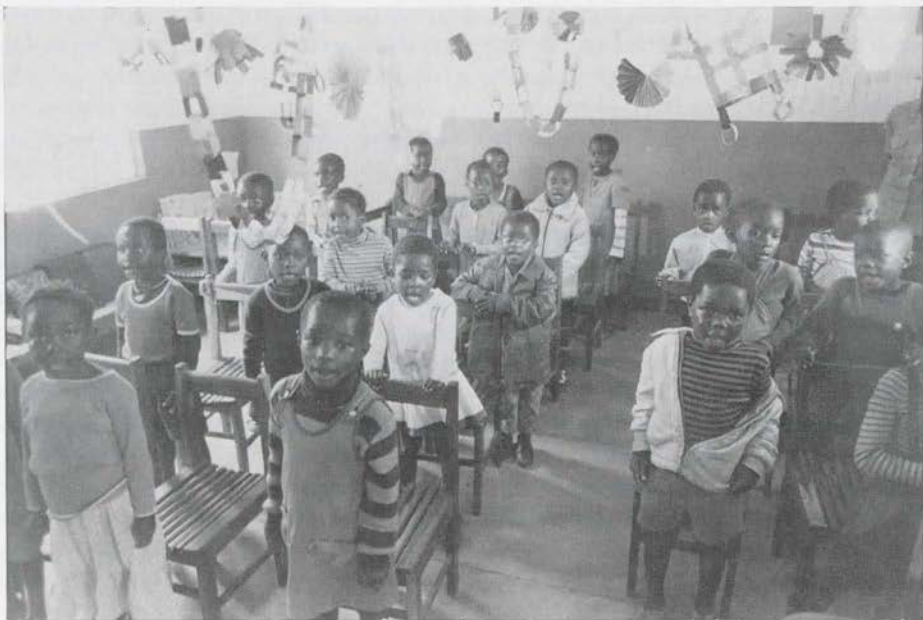
*Q: You've worked with the group Amandla, and you've also been involved with training people. You've been trying to collect and promote the culture that is in South Africa today, as well as working on the Cultural Boycott. Are there other things that your department does as well?*

Last year in June we brought out our, that is the ANC, Cultural Journal, *Rixaka* which will be a quarterly publishing poetry, fiction, interviews, essays, reviews and commentary by South African and anti-apartheid writers. We have many writers in the ranks of the ANC like Keorapetse Kgositsile, Barry Feinberg, Mongane Serote, Mandla Langa and many others. We would particularly like to show off our young writers in the movement.

We would also like to bring books, films, etc., from the outside world to our people. For example, many, many documentaries have been made of the situation within our country that many of us have not had the opportunity to see. So we have been asking for assistance from friends for video machines and tapes so that our cadres can see directly the connection between the work they are doing and the results at home.

Further we would like to have access to good films made all over the world whether they are Russian, American, Italian, Cuban or whatever as a way of keeping apprised of other cultures, not to mention for recreational and entertainment purposes. Video is a great boon to a program like ours. Artists Against Apartheid groups internationally can play a very important role in this area and that of music, including musical instruments.

On the other hand, we will soon be extending invitations to artists in performing arts to come and run workshops with us, once our Cultural Centre in Tanzania is habitable. We want to develop cultural workers who can serve future



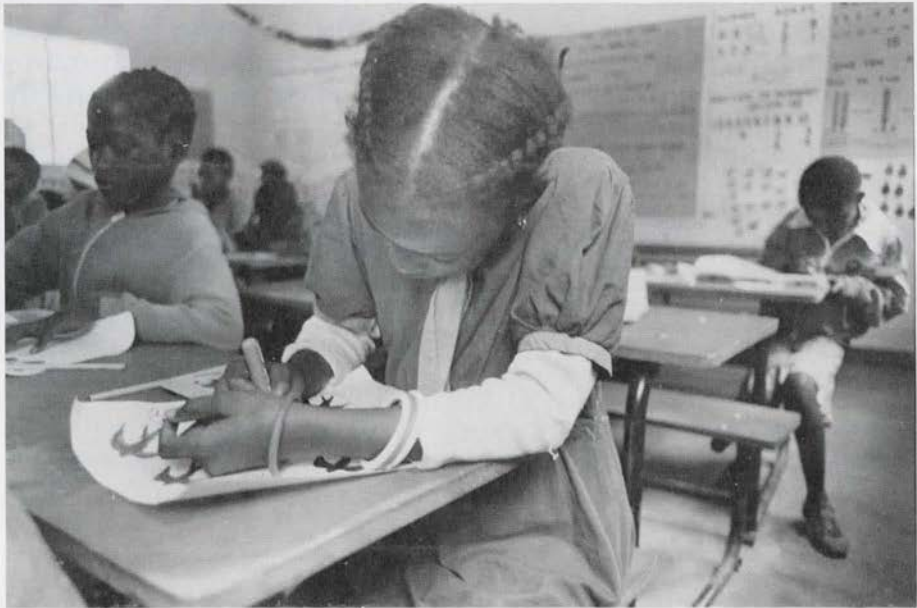
**PHOTO: FRANK DEXTER BROWN**

South Africa. Consequently, we have been working on including a cultural core into our school syllabus so that our pupils and students can begin studies in different performing and visual arts at an early age to prepare them for higher cultural studies.

One of the prevailing notions about culture is that it is limited to entertainment and/or recreation. But for us, the very fact of being a liberation movement, of resistance to our oppressors is in itself an act of culture, a part of our cultural heritage. It is something which has helped us to survive, which continues to sustain us.

Functioning as a department in this area also has its own peculiarities in that our work overlaps with that of other units. We have to observe strict consultation with other ANC Departments and work closely and cooperatively with them. For instance, what I referred to earlier, introducing a cultural core to our educational syllabus means that we have to work very closely with our Education Department, with publications we have to confer closely with our colleagues in Information and Publicity and so on. Thus we prefer to use the term "cultural worker" because it is not only the artist who does cultural work.

There is no doubt about the political importance we attach to cultural work. The area of film, even popular film which is pure recreation, we still view as an educational tool. It becomes an excellent starting point for political discussions. Thus we are not only interested in showing political films. For instance, something like "Four Hundred Blows" by Truffaut is an acknowledged classic. It is about the human situation, it depicts something—I don't want to use the word "universal" because you find sometimes in American intellectual circles the word "universal" is used to exclude anything particular, like a Black, you know. The reality unfortunately in Africa today is that people see mostly Western films. There are great filmmakers like Dusmane Sembene from Senegal whose films are



**PHOTO: FRANK DEXTER BROWN**



not seen widely because they do not fit into the preconceived film distribution system. This is where you see how we are hooked askew to a wider world. Viewed clearly, you also see a loss on the part of audiences all over the world, who themselves, because of a monopolist film distribution system have not got access to Sembene or others like him who have a valid message to make. We all get a selective view of reality. We talk so much of global politics, global this and that, but in fact we are still subject to a parochialism of the past. And in the ANC, while prosecuting the struggle is a priority, we are also fastidious about keeping up a world view.

*Q: What kind of culture, as an ANC person, would you wish to have in an independent, liberated South Africa?*

It is rather difficult to define or describe it, because culture is something that evolves. And it evolves out of the parts that make us a people, out of the political, economic and sociological conditions that prevail at different stages of struggle and even struggle after victory. In the ANC we are trying to mirror what we consider the best that has been produced in the world, to depict and project the pitch and tenor of our people, our history. Our struggle represents the raw material from which we will fashion our art. We are confident of the correctness of our principles and of the eventual outcome. We will win.

There is light music. There is serious music. There is traditional music. We want all of that. We want it all in all disciplines. We want it for our whole country and our people are determined to fight for it and daily our blood flows for it in our land. What it will evolve into is something we cannot predict, but it is imperative that it unify our people, reflect their lives. Thus guided in this way we can make an effort to shape it harmoniously. And because the majority of our population is black, to a large extent the products of culture will reflect that fact. We will take the best and discard the useless and regressive. When we are free in our country, when we are running the cultural institutions we will have more to say and to do in order to shape our country's destiny. And we will be guided by our people.

*Edited from an interview conducted and taped by James Cason and Michael Fleshman in Lusaka, 12/6/84 and revised and brought up to date by Barbara Masekela, December 1985.*

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*The photos are of Namibian children at a SWAPO refugee camp, Nyango, Zambia. ANC and SWAPO refugee settlements are similar in the type of support provided to refugees from both South Africa and Namibia.*

# JEREMY CRONIN

## WALKING ON AIR

### PROLOGUE

In the prison workshop, also known as the seminar room;

In the seminar room, sawdust up the nose, feet in plane shavings, old jam tins on racks, a dropped plank, planks, a stack of mason's floats waiting assembly, Warder von Loggerenberg sitting in the corner;

In the prison workshop, also and otherwise named, where work is done by enforced dosage, between political discussion, theoretical discussion, tactical discussion, bemoaning of life without women, sawdust up the nose, while raging at bench 4, for a week long, a discussion raging, above the hum of the exhaust fans, on how to distinguish the concept 'Productive' from the concept . . . 'Unproductive Labour';

In the prison workshop, then, over the months, over the screech of the grindstone, I'm asking John Matthews about his life and times, as I crank the handle, he's sharpening a plane blade, holding it up in the light to check on its bevel, dipping the blade to cool in a tin of water, then back to the grindstone, sparks fly: 'I work for myself'—he says—'not for the boere';

In the prison workshop, with John Matthews making contraband goeters, boxes, ashtrays, smokkel salt cellars of, oh, delicate dovetailings;

Over the months, then, in the prison workshop, I'm asking John Matthews, while he works intently, he likes manual work, he likes the feel of woodgrain, he doesn't like talking too much, the making and fixing of things he likes, he likes, agh no, hayikona, slap-bang-bang, work for the jailers;

In the prison workshop, then, I ask John Matthews, was he present on the two days of Kliptown . . . 1955? . . . when the People's Congress adopted the Freedom Charter?

Actually

No he wasn't

He was there the day before, he built the platform



In the prison workshop, then, over the hum of exhaust fans, between the knocking in of nails, the concept 'Productive', the concept 'Unproductive Labour', feet in plane shavings, John Matthews speaks by snatches, the making and fixing of things he likes, though much, never, much you won't catch him speaking;

But here, pieced together, here from many months, from the prison workshop

Here is one comrade's story.

\* \* \*

Born to Bez Valley, Joburg  
into the last of his jail term  
stooped now he has grown

In this undernourished frame  
that dates back  
to those first years of his life.

He was nine  
when his father came  
blacklisted home

From the 1922  
Rand Revolt,  
and there with a makeshift

Forge in their backyard  
a never again to be employed  
father passed on to his son

A lifelong  
love for the making  
and fixing of things.

From Bez Valley it was,  
veiled like a bride in fine  
mine-dump dust

He went out  
to whom it may concern  
comma

A dependable lad  
comma  
his spelling is good.

At fifteen he became  
office boy at Katzenellenbogen's  
cnr. von Wielligh

And President streets  
where he earned: £1 a week,  
where he learned:

\* Good spelling doesn't always count.  
\* The GPO telegram charge is reckoned per word.  
\* A word is 15 letters max.  
\* You have to drop ONE / from Katzenellenbogen Inc or  
HEAR ME BOY?! nex' time  
YOU'S gonna pay extra one word  
charge your bliksem self.

And the recession came  
but he got a bookkeeping job  
with Kobe Silk

On the same block  
—John Edward  
Matthews

Mondays to Fridays  
on that same block  
for 37 unbroken years until

The security police  
picked him up . . . . But first  
way back to the thirties.

WEEKENDS IN THE THIRTIES:  
church and picnics  
by Zoo Lake.

And later, deedle-deedle  
—Dulcie, heel-toe,  
his future wife

Whom he courted with  
(he can still do it)  
diddle-diddle: the cake-walk

And always  
on Sundays it was  
church and church.

And then to Kobe Silk  
there came  
a new clerk

Myer Chames by name  
a short little bugger who talked  
Economics at lunch-break

And Myer Chames talked  
of all hitherto existing societies,  
the history of freeman

And slave, lord, serf,  
guildmaster, journeyman,  
bourgeois, proletarian and

In a word  
John Matthews stopped  
going to church.

His name got inscribed  
inside  
of a red party card.

He'd sell Inkululekos down by  
Jeppetown  
Friday nights

While the bourgeois press wrote  
RUSSIA HAS GONE SOFT ON HITLER  
He learnt to fix duplicators and typewriters.

He was still selling  
Inkululekos in 1943  
when even the bourgeois press wrote

RED ARMY HAS BROKEN  
BROKEN  
THE BACK OF HITLER

In the year 1943—born  
to Dulcie and John  
a daughter

Their first child  
first of seven.  
And now

Into the last months  
of his 15 years  
prison term

At nights in his cell  
he peeps down at his face  
in a mirror

In a mirror held low, about  
belly-height,  
wondering how he'll seem

To his grandchildren  
from down there  
next year when he comes out.

But that's later . . . back  
to 1950  
The Suppression of Communism Act

Membership becomes a punishable crime.  
But laws only  
postpone matters—somewhat.

There were still duplicators to fix  
and typewriters to mend  
through the 50s

Passive Resistance, the Congress Alliance,  
Defiance Campaign, Pass Burnings, Bus Boycott,  
Potato Boycott, the Women's March, the Treason  
Trial, the Freedom Charter, until

Until 1960: the massacre  
Sharpeville  
and Langa.



And people said: 'Enough,  
our patience, it has limits' . . . and so  
it was no longer just typewriters and duplicators  
to mend.  
A man would come to the backyard and whisper:  
30 ignitors.

And John Matthews would make 30, to be  
delivered to X.

And a man would come in the dead of night  
These need storing comrade, some things  
wrapped in waterproof cloth.

#### TERRORISTS BOMB POWERLINES

He would read in the bourgeois press, or  
MIDNIGHT PASS OFFICE BLAST

He'd sigh a small sigh  
—Hadh't been sure  
Those damned ignitors would work.

Finally.  
1964.  
After a quarter century in the struggle

A security police swoop  
and John Matthews was one  
among several detained.

White and 52  
so they treated him nice.  
They only made him stand

On two bricks  
for three days  
and three nights and

When he asked to go to the lavatory  
they said:  
Shit in your pants.

But the State needed witnesses  
So they changed their tune.  
Tried sweet-talking him round.  
Think of your career  
(that didn't work)  
Think of the shame of going to jail  
(that thought only  
filled him with pride)  
You really want kaffirs to rule?  
(like you said)

Think of your wife  
(Dulcie. Dulcie.  
7 kids. Dulcie.  
She's not political at all).

And there they had him.  
On that score he was worried, it's true.  
And they promised him freedom.  
And they pressed him for weeks on end  
Until finally he said:

Okay, agreed.

—But first I must speak with my wife.

Barely an hour it took them to find  
and rush Dulcie Matthews  
out to Pretoria Jail.

Then looking nice, because they let him shave, let him  
comb his hair, looking nice then, chaperoned by  
smiling, matrimonial policemen, shaven and combed,  
John Matthews got led out to his wife, and holding her  
hand, they let him hold her hand, he said

—Do you know why they've brought you?  
And she said  
—I do.  
And he said  
—Dulcie, I will never betray my comrades.  
And with a frog in her throat she replied  
—I'm behind you. One hundred percent.

So back they hauled John Matthews then  
and there,

back to the cells,  
that was that, then, but  
all the way down the passage  
toe-heel, heel-toe, diddle-diddle  
ONE HUNDRED PERCENT  
I mean, he was high  
off the ground, man.

He was walking on air.



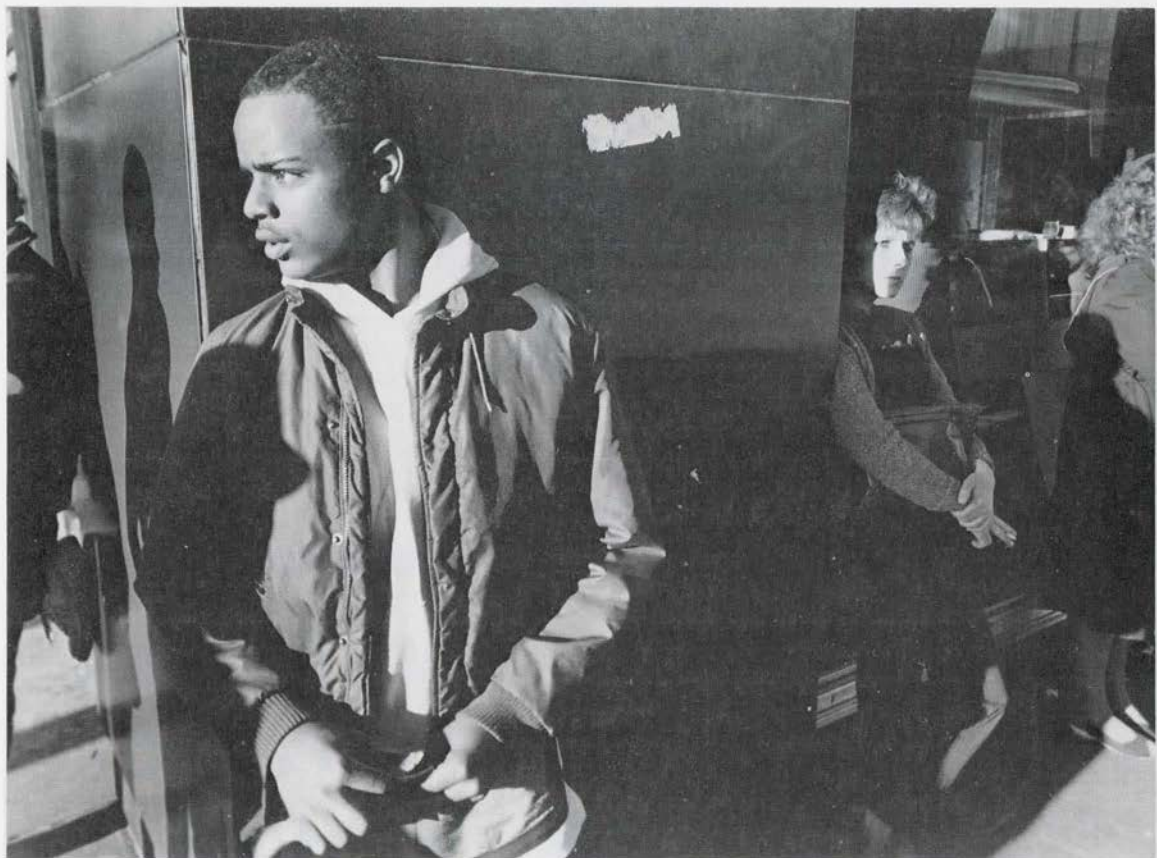
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# **Art Against Apartheid: Works for Freedom**

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**"Apartheid No" (detail) VALERIE MAYNARD**





**PHOTO: DAWOUD BEY**

# Audre Lorde APARTHEID U.S.A.

New York City, 1985. The high sign that rules this summer is increasing fragmentation. I am filled with a sense of urgency and dread: dread at the apparently random waves of assaults against people and institutions closest to me; urgency to unearth the connections between these assaults. Those connections lurk beneath the newspaper reports of teargassed funeral processions in Tembisa, South Africa, and the charred remains of Baldwin Hills, CA, flourishing Black neighborhood leveled by arson.

I sit before the typewriter for days and nothing comes. It feels as if underlining these assaults, lining them up one after the other and looking at them squarely will give them an unbearable power. Yet I know exactly the opposite is true—no matter how difficult it may be to look at the realities of our lives, it is there that we will find the strength to change them. And to suppress any truth is to give it power beyond endurance.

As I write these words I am listening to the UN Special Session considering the 'state of emergency' in South Africa, their euphemism for the suspension of human rights for Blacks, which is the response of the Pretoria regime to the increasingly spontaneous eruptions in Black townships across that country. These outbursts against apartheid have greatly increased in the last 11 months since a new SA constitution further solidified the exclusion of the 22 million Black majority from the South African political process. These outbreaks, however severely curtailed by the SA police and military, are beginning to accomplish what Oliver Tambo, head of the African Nationalist Congress, hoped for in his call to make South Africa under apartheid "ungovernable."

So much Black blood has been shed upon that land, I thought, and so much more will fall. But blood will tell, and now the blood is speaking. Has it finally started? What some of us prayed and worked and believed would—must—happen, wondering when, because so few of us here in America even seemed to know what was going on in South Africa, nor cared to hear. The connections had not been made, and they must be if African-Americans are to articulate our power in the struggle against a worldwide escalation of forces aligned against people of color the world over; institutionalized racism grown more and more aggressive in the service of shrinking profit-oriented economies.

And who would have thought we'd live to see the day when Black South Africa took center stage on the world platform? As Ellen Kuzwayo, Black South African writer would say, this is where we are right now in the world's story. . . . Perhaps this is how Europe must have felt in the fall of 1939, on the brink. I remember that Sunday of December 7, 1941 and the chill certainty that some threat endured on my six year old horizon had been finally made real and frontal. August 6, 1945. Hiroshima. My father's tears who I had never seen cry before, and at first I thought



it was sweat—a 46 year old Black man in his vigor yet only seven years away from death by overwork. He said, humanity can now destroy itself, and he wept.

That's how it feels, except this time we know we're on the winning side. South Africa *will* be free, I thought, beneath the clatter of my waiting typewriter and the sonorous tones of the United Nations broadcast, the USA delegate, along with the one from Great Britain, talking their rot about what 'we' have done for Black South Africa.

South Africa. 87% of the people, Black, occupy 13% of the land. 13% of the people, white, own 85% of the land. White South Africa has the highest standard of living of any nation in the world including the USA, yet half the Black children born in South Africa die before they reach the age of five. Every 30 minutes six Black children starve to death in South Africa. In response to questions about apartheid from a white USA reporter, a white South African reporter retorts—'you have solved the problem of your indigenous people—we are solving ours. You called them indians, didn't you?' Apartheid—South Africa's Final Solution patterned after Nazi Germany's genocidal plan for European Jews.

We must learn to establish the connections instantly between consistent patterns of slaughter of Black children and youth in the roads of Sebokeng and Soweto in the name of law and order in Johannesburg, and white america's not so silent applause for the smiling white vigilante who coolly guns down four Black youths in the New York City subway, or the white policemen guarding the store of a Middle Eastern shopkeeper who kills three Black children in Brooklyn in a dispute over one can of Coca Cola.

Made more arrogant daily by the connivance of the US dollar and the encouragement of the US policy of constructive engagement, South African police jail and murder six year old children, kick 12 year old Johannes to death in front of his garden, leave 9 year old Joyce bleeding to death on her granny's floor. Decades of these actions are finally escalating into the world's consciousness.

How long will it take to escalate into our consciousness that it is only a matter of location and progression and time and intensity from the molotov cocktails that were hurled into brush in Los Angeles starting the conflagration that burned out Baldwin Hills, well-to-do Black neighborhood—53 homes gone, 3 lives. In California, USA, where the Aryan Brotherhood and the Order and the Posse Comitatus and other white racist survivalist groups flourish rampant and poisonous, fertilized by a secretly sympathetic law enforcement team.

Eleanor Bumpers, 66, Black grandmother, evicted from her Bronx New York Housing Authority apartment with two shotgun blasts from NYC Housing police.

Allene Richardson, 64, gunned down in her Detroit apartment house hallway by a policewoman after she was locked out of her apartment and a neighbor called the police to help her get back in.

It is ten years since a policeman shot 10 year old Clifford Glover early one Saturday morning in front of his father in Queens New York, eight years since another white cop walked up on Thanksgiving Day to Randy Evans, while he sat on his stoop talking with friends, and blew his 15 year old brains out. Temporary insanity, said the jury that acquitted that policeman. Countless others since then, Seattle, New Orleans, Dallas. This summer, Edmund Perry, 17, Black, graduate of exclusive white schools, on his way up via Stanford University and a summer job

in banking, judged by an undercover policeman's bullet in his chest. Our dead line our dreams, their deaths becoming more and more commonplace.

In 1947, within my memory, apartheid was not the state policy of South Africa, but the supposedly farout dream of the Afrikaner Broederbond. Living conditions of Black South Africans, although bad, were not yet governed by policies of institutional genocide. Blacks owned land, attended schools. With the 1948 election of the Afrikaner white supremacy advocate Malibon and the implementation of apartheid, the step by step attack upon Black existence was accelerated, and the dismantling of any human rights as they pertained to Black people. Now, white South Africans who protest are being jailed and brutalized and blown up, also. Once liberal english-speaking white South Africans had to be conned into accepting this dismantling, lulled long enough for the apparatus which was to insure all white privileged survival to be cemented into place by H. Verwoerd, its architect and later, SA Prime Minister.

Now Johannesburg, city of gold, sits literally upon a mountain of gold and Black blood. After a Sharpeville, why not a Soweto? After a Michael Stewart, young Black artist beaten to death by transit police, why not a Bernard Goetz? After a New York Eight Plus, why not a Philadelphia, where the Black mayor allows a white police chief to bomb a houseful of Black people into submission, killing eleven people and burning down a whole Black neighborhood to do it. Firemen refused to douse the flames. Seven of those killed were children. Police pinned them down with gunfire when the occupants sought to escape the flames. Making sure these Black people died. Because they were dirty and Black and obnoxious and Black and arrogant and Black and poor and Black and Black and Black and Black. And the Mayor who allowed this to happen says he accepts full responsibility, and he is Black, too. How are we persuaded to participate in our own destruction by maintaining our silences? How is the american public persuaded to accept as natural the fact that at a time when prolonged negotiations with Arab freedom fighters can effect the release of hostages, or terminate an armed confrontation with police outside a white survivalist encampment, a mayor of an american city can order an incendiary device dropped on a house with seven children in it and police pin down the occupants until they perish? Yes, African Americans can still walk the streets of america without passbooks, for the time being.

In October 1984, 500 agents of the Joint Terrorist Task Force (see what your taxes are paying for?) rounded up eight middle-income Black radicals whose only crime seems to be their insistence upon their right to dissent, to call themselves Marxist-Leninists, and to question the oppressive nature of this US society. They are currently imprisoned, and being tried in a Grand Jury proceeding that reads like the Star Chamber reports, or the Spanish Inquisition. Twenty-two months of round the clock surveillance has so far not provided any evidence at all that these Black men and women, some grandmothers, were terrorists. I am reminded of the Johannesburg courts filled with cases brought against Black clericals and salesgirls accused of reading a book or wearing a t-shirt or listening to music thought to be sympathetic to the African Nationalist Congress. Two years hard labor for pamphlets discovered in an office desk drawer. How is the systematic erosion of freedoms gradually accomplished?

What kind of gradual erosion of our status as US citizens will Black people be persuaded first to ignore and then to accept?



In Louisville, Kentucky, Workman's Compensation awards \$231. weekly disability payments to a 39 year old sanitation supervisor, white, for a mental breakdown he says he suffered as a result of having to work with Black people.

A peaceful, licensed march to the Haitian Embassy in New York to protest living conditions on that island, and the imprisonment of three priests, is set upon by New York City mounted police and trained attack dogs. Sixteen people are injured, including women and children, and one man, struck in the head by hooves, may lose his eye. The next day, no major newspaper or TV news station carries a report of the incident, except for the Black media.

In New York, the self-confessed and convicted white ex-GI killer of at least six Black men in New York City and Buffalo is quietly released from jail after less than one year, on a technicality. Christopher had been sentenced to life for 3 of the murders, and never tried on the others. White men attack 3 Black transit workers in Brooklyn, stomping one to death. Of the three who are tried for murder, two are sentenced to less than one year in prison, and one goes scot-free. So the message goes, stock in Black human life in the USA, never high, is plunging rapidly in the sight of white american complacencies. But as African Americans we cannot afford to play that market; it is our lives and the lives of our children.

The political and social flavour of the African American position in the 80's feels analogous to occurrences in the Black South African communities of the 50's, during the postwar construction of the apparati of apartheid, reaction, and suppression. Reaction in a large, manipulated and oppressed population, particularly one where minimal material possessions allow a spurious comparison for the better to one's neighbors—reaction in such a population is always slow in coming, preceded as it is by the preoccupation of energies in having to cope daily with worsening symptoms of threatened physical survival.

There has recently been increased discussion in the African American community concerning crime and social breakdown within our communities, signalled in urban areas by highly visible groups of unemployed Black youths, already hopeless and distrustful of their or their elders' abilities to connect with any meaningful future. Our young Black people, sacrifice to a society's determination to destroy whoever it no longer needs for cheap labor or cannon fodder.

A different stage exists in South Africa, where a cheap labor pool of Blacks is still pivotal to the economy. But the maintenance of the two systems are closely related, and they are both guided primarily by the needs of a white marketplace. Of course no one in the United States government will openly defend apartheid, they don't have to. Just support it by empty rhetorical slaps on the wrist and solid financial investments, while honoring South African orders for arms, nuclear technology, and sophisticated computerized riot control mechanisms. The bully boys stick together.

I remember stories in the 60's about the roving growing bands of homeless and predatory *tsotsis*, disenchanted and furious Black youths roaming the evening streets of Sharpesville and Soweto and other Black townships.

The fact that African Americans can still move about relatively freely, do not yet have to carry passbooks or battle an officially named policy of apartheid, should not blind us for a minute to the disturbing similarities of the Black situation in each one of these profit-oriented economies. We examine these similarities

so that we can devise mutually supportive strategies for action, at the same time as we remain acutely aware of our differences. Like the volcano which is one form of extreme earth-change, in any revolutionary process there is a period of intensification and a period of explosion. We must become familiar with the requirements and symptoms of each period, and use the differences between them to our mutual advantage, learning and supporting each other's battles.

Every year over 500 million american dollars flow into the white South African death machine. No matter what liberal commitment to human rights is mouthed in international circles by the US government, we know it will not move beyond its investments in South Africa unless we make it unprofitable to invest in South Africa. For it is economic divestment not moral sanction that South Africa fears most. No one will free us but ourselves, here or there. So our survivals are not separate, even though the terms under which we struggle differ. African Americans are bound to the Black struggle in South Africa by politics as well as blood. As Malcolm X observed more than 20 years ago, a militant free Africa is a necessity to the dignity of African American identity.

The mendacity of the US Ambassador to the UN as he recited all the 'help' this country has given to Black South Africans is matched only by the cynicism of the South African president who self-righteously condemns the spontaneous violence against Black collaborators in the Black townships, calling that the reason for the current state of emergency. Of course, it is the picture of Blacks killing a Black that is flashed over and over across the white world's TV screens, not the



**PHOTO: DAWOUD BEY**



images of white SA police firing into groups of Black schoolchildren, stomping 12 year old Johannes to death, driving over Black schoolgirls. And I think about my feelings concerning that Black mayor of Philadelphia, and about Clarence Pendleton, Black man, Reagan-appointed head of the Federal Civil Rights Commission and mouthpiece of corruption, saying to young students at Cornell University, "the economic pie is just too small for everyone to have a fair share, and that's not the function of civil rights." Eventually institutional racism becomes a question of power and privilege rather than merely color, which then serves as a blind.

The connections between Africans, and African-Americans, African-Europeans, African-Asians, is real—however dimly seen at times—and we all need to examine without sentimentality or stereotype what the injection of Africanness into the socio-political consciousness of the world could mean. We need to join our differences and articulate our particular strengths in the service of our mutual survivals, and against the desperate backlash which attempts to keep that Africanness from altering the very basis of current world power and privilege.



**PHOTO: DAWOUD BEY**

# SISTERS IN ARMS

The edge of our bed was a wide grid  
where your fifteen year old daughter was hanging  
gut-sprung on police wheels  
a cablegram nailed to the wood  
next to a map of the Western Reserve.  
I could not return with you to bury the body  
reconstruct your nightly cardboards  
against the seeping Transvaal cold  
I could not plant the other limpet mine  
against a wall at the railroad station  
nor carry either of your souls back from the river  
in a calabash upon my head  
so I bought you a ticket to Durban  
on my american express  
and we lay together  
in the first light of a new season.

Now clearing roughage from my autumn garden  
cow-sorrel overgrown rocket gone to seed  
I reach for the taste of today  
The New York Times finally mentions your country  
a half-page story  
of the first white south african killed in the "unrest"  
not of Black children massacred at Sebokeng  
six-year-olds imprisoned for threatening the state  
not of Thabo Sibeko, first grader, in his own blood  
on his grandmother's parlour floor  
Joyce, nine, trying to crawl to him  
shitting through her navel  
not of a three week old infant, nameless,  
lost under the burnt beds of Tembisa  
my hand comes down like a brown vise over the marigolds  
reckless through despair  
we were two Black women touching our flame  
and we left our dead behind us  
I hovered you rose the last ritual of healing  
"It is spring," you whispered  
"I sold the ticket for guns and sulfur  
I leave for home tomorrow"

and wherever I touch you  
I lick cold from my fingers  
taste rage  
like salt from the lips of a woman  
who had killed too often to forget  
and carried each death in her eyes.  
Your mouth  
a parting orchid  
"Someday you will come to my country  
and we will fight side by side?"

Keys jingle in door ajar threatening  
whatever is coming belongs here  
I reach for your sweetness  
but silence explodes like a pregnant belly  
into my face  
a vomit of nevers.

Yaa Mmanthatisi turns away from the cloth  
her daughters-in-law are dyeing  
the baby drools milk from her breast  
she hands him half-asleep to his sister  
dresses again for war  
knowing the men will follow.  
In the intricate Maseru twilights  
quick sad vital  
she maps the next day's battles  
dreams of Durban sometimes  
visions the deep wry song of beach pebbles  
running after the sea.

Audre Lorde

*Mmanthatisi: warrior queen and leader of the Sotho people  
during one of the greatest crises in South African history.*



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# South Africa In The West (Auralpoem)

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## SEKOU SUNDIATA

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this song comes from a gold  
that does not tarnish or corrode  
a human conductor of electricity and heat  
a gold deeper than a gold mine  
a mind holier than church  
a starvation greater than flesh

this song sings South Africa in the west

this song comes from the moonwalk yard  
where the latest dances break and pop  
slide and spin, a secret code  
between heart and earth  
opposites mean the opposite  
Monday is the day after Friday  
nothing spooky, just a root need  
for face and music  
a logical flow of anything natural

this song comes from the democracy of time  
punching out its stupid numbers

this song comes down the line  
from a scene in the midAtlantic  
expressed by the steady, fateful rhythm  
of the good ship cutting the ocean  
pressing an unspeakable, hypnotic madness  
into a dangerous skin destined for a blazing sunset  
where America would be

this song comes from the colors  
red for the Left, white for the Right  
blue for the ups and downs  
this song comes from knowing too much

this song sings South Africa in the west

this song comes from the street corner routine  
identification papers, murder  
short of that, hard geography and murder style

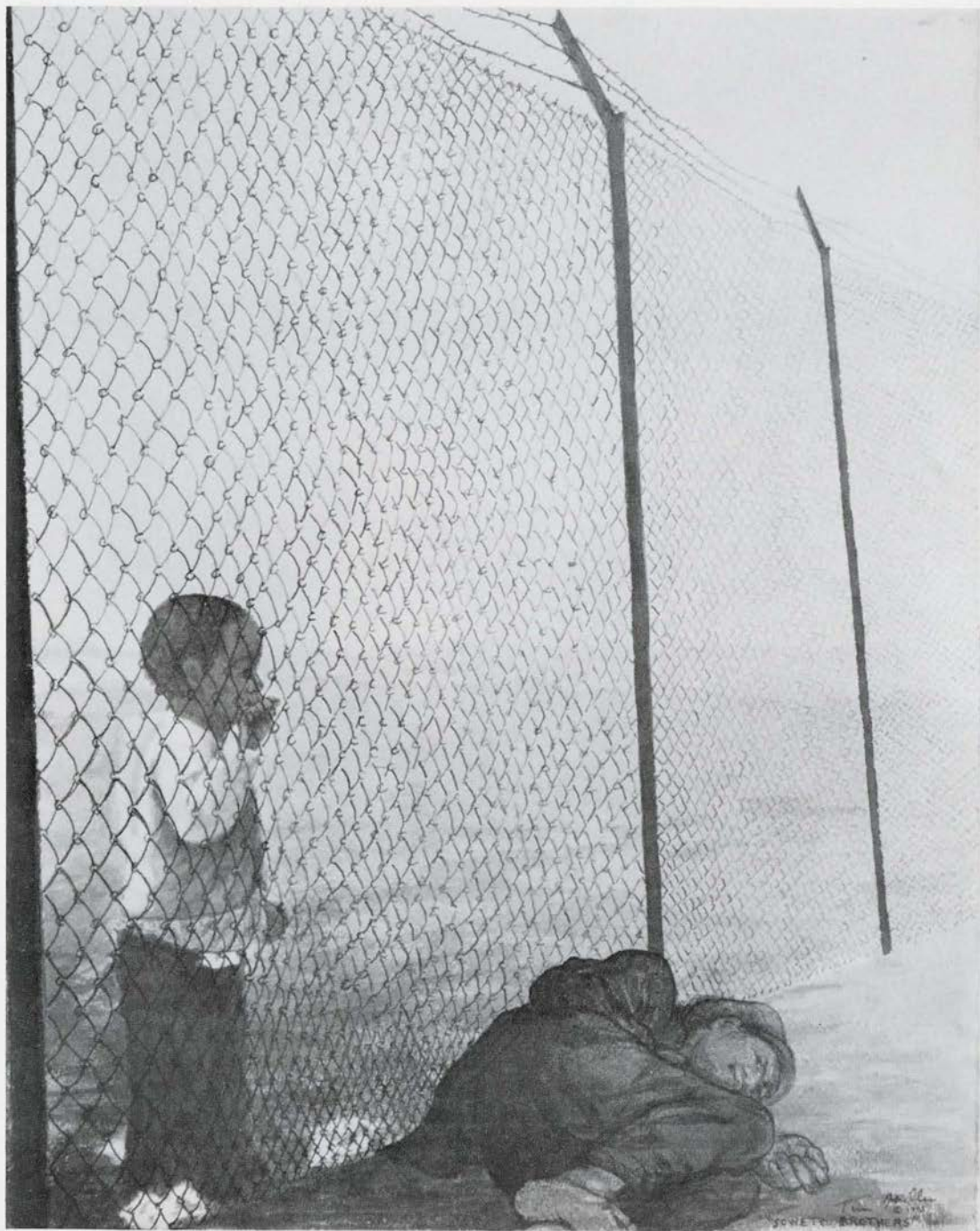
this song comes from the women  
who are telling everything they know  
and the men who know  
everything they're telling

this song comes from the absence  
of a bleary eyed South Africa music video  
not even a crossed over tune to sway the nation  
no rocking, popping stars pretending integration  
(some have sung a strange song in a stranger land)

this song comes from the nervous, vertical world  
apart, tight, other than the bantustand  
on the far right of the radio dial

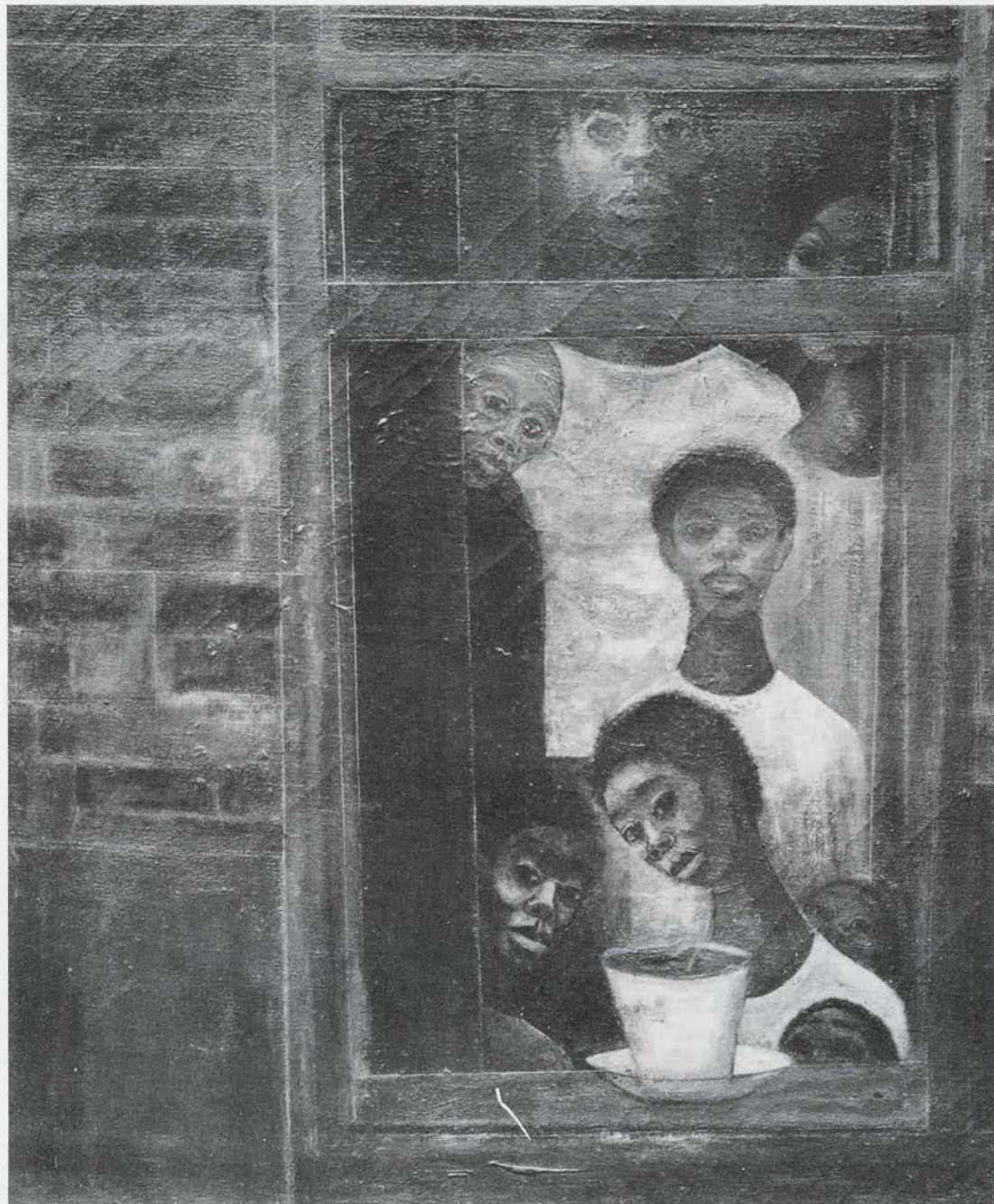
this song comes from a round earth  
in a flat world, to be sung  
wherever flatness happens in the harmony

this song sings South Africa in the west



**"Soweto Brothers" TIM HILLIS**





"The Window" CLIFF JOSEPH

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# A Letter to Ezekiel Mphahlele

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## SONIA SANCHEZ

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dear zeke,

i've just left your house where you and rebecca served a dinner of peace to me and my sons. the ride home is not as long as the way i came, two centuries of hunger brought me along many detours before i recognized your house. it is raining and as i watch the raindrops spin like colored beads on the windshield, i hear your voice calling out to your ancestors to prepare a place for you, for you were returning home leaving the skeleton rites of twenty years behind.

you and rebecca have been walking a long time. your feet have crossed the african continent to this western one where you moved amid leaden eyes and laughter that froze you in snow/capped memories. your journey began in 1957, when the ruling class could not understand your yawns of freedom, the motion of a million eyes to see for themselves what life was/is and could be, and you cut across the burial grounds of south africa where many of your comrades slept and you cut across those black africans smiling their long smiles from diplomatic teeth. now you are returning home. now your mother's womb cries out to you. now your history demands your heartbeat. and you turn your body toward the whirlwind of change, toward young black voices calling for a dignity speeding beyond control, on the right side of the road. but this nite full of whispering summer trees, this nite nodding with south african faces, heard you say, sonia. i must be buried in my country in my own homeland, my bones must replenish the black earth from whence they came, our bones must fertilize the ground on which we walk or we shall never walk as men and women in the 21st century.

i talked to my sons as the car chased the longlegged rain running before us. i told them that men and women are measured by their acts not by their swaggering speech or walk, or the money they have stashed between their legs. i talked to my sons about bravery outside of bruce lee grunts and jabs, outside of star wars' knights fertilizing america's green youth into continued fantasies while reality explodes underground in neutron boldness. i said you have just sat and eaten amid bravery. relish the taste. stir it around and around in your mouth until the quick sweetness of it becomes bitter, then swallow it slowly, letting this new astringent taste burn the throat. bravery is no easy taste to swallow. i said this man and woman we have just left this nite have decided to walk like panthers in their country, to breathe again their own breath suspended by twenty years of exile, to settle in the mater-



nal space of their birth where there are men who "shake hands without hearts" waiting for them. they are a fixed portrait of courage.

it is 2 a.m., my children stretch themselves in dreams, kicking away the room's shadows. i stare at the night piling in little heaps near my bed. zeke. maybe you are a madman. i a madwoman to want to walk across the sea, to saddle time while singing a future note. we follow the new day's breath, we answer old bruises waiting to descend upon our heads, we answer screams creeping out of holes and shells buried by memories waiting to be cleansed. you invoking the ghosts lurking inside this child/woman. you breaking my curtain of silence. i love the tom-tom days you are marching, your feet rooted in the sea. save a space for me and mine zeke and rebecca. this lost woman, who walks her own shadow for peace.

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## Reflections After the June 12th March for Disarmament

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I have come to you tonite out of the depths  
of slavery  
from white hands peeling black skins over  
america;  
I have come out to you from reconstruction eyes  
that closed on black humanity  
that reduced black hope to the dark  
huts of america;  
I have come to you from the lynching years,  
the exploitation of black men and women by  
a country that allowed the swinging of  
strange fruits from southern trees;  
I have come to you tonite thru the  
delaney years, the du bois years, the  
b.t. washington years, the robeson  
years, the garvey years, the  
depression years, the you can't eat  
or sit or live just die here years,  
the civil rights years, the black power  
years, the black nationalist years, the  
affirmative action years, the liberal  
years, the neo-conservative years;  
I have come to say that those years  
were not in vain, the ghosts of our  
ancestors searching this american dust for  
rest were not in vain, black women

walking their lives in clots were not  
in vain, the years walked  
sideways in a forsaken land were not  
in vain;

I have come to you tonite as an equal,  
as a comrade, as a black woman  
walking down a corridor of tears,  
looking neither to the left or the right,  
pulling my history with bruised  
heels,  
beckoning to the illusion of america  
daring you to look me in the eyes to  
see these faces, the exploitation of a  
people because of skin pigmentation;  
I have come to you tonite because no people  
have been asked to be modern day people  
with the history of slavery, and still  
we walk, and still we talk, and  
still we plan, and still we hope and  
still we sing;

I have come to you tonite because there are  
inhumanitarians in the world. they are not  
new. they are old. they go back into history.  
they were called explorers, soldiers, mercenaries,  
imperialists, missionaries, adventurers,  
but they looked at the world for what  
it would give up to them and they violated  
the land and the people, they looked  
at the land and sectioned it up for  
private ownership, they looked at the  
people and decided how to manipulate  
them thru fear and ignorance, they looked  
at the gold and began to hoard and  
worship it;

I have come to you because it is time  
for us all to purge capitalism from  
our dreams, to purge materialism  
from our eyes, from the planet earth  
to deliver the earth again into the hands  
of the humanitarians;

I have come to you tonite not just for the stoppage  
of nuclear proliferation, nuclear  
plants, nuclear bombs, nuclear  
waste, but to stop the proliferation  
of nuclear minds, of nuclear generals,  
of nuclear presidents, of nuclear scientists,  
who spread human and nuclear waste  
over the world;



I come to you because the world needs to be  
saved for the future generations who must  
return the earth to peace, who will not  
be startled by a man's/woman's skin color;  
I come to you because the world needs sanity  
now, needs men and women who will  
not work to produce nuclear weapons,  
who will give up their need for excess  
wealth and learn how to share the  
world's resources, who will never  
again as scientists invent again just  
for the sake of inventing;  
I come to you because we need to turn our  
eyes to the beauty of this planet, to the  
bright green laughter of trees, to the beautiful  
human animals waiting to smile their unprostituted smiles;  
I have come to you to talk about our inexperience  
at living as human beings, thru death marches and camps,  
thru middle passages and slavery  
and thundering countries raining hungry faces;  
I am here to move against  
leaving our shadows implanted on the  
earth while our bodies disintegrate in  
nuclear lightning;  
I am here between the voices of our ancestors  
and the noise of the planet,  
between the surprise of death and life;  
I am here because I shall not give the  
earth up to non-dreamers and earth molesters;  
I am here to say to you:  
my body is full of veins  
like the bombs waiting to burst  
with blood.  
we must learn to suckle life not  
bombs and rhetoric  
rising up in redwhiteandblue patriotism;  
I am here. and my breath/our breaths  
must thunder across this land  
arousing new breaths. new life.  
new people, who will live in peace  
and honor.



EVA COLE ROFT



# GALE JACKSON

## On Nites Like These

on nites too cold for human possibility  
i think of the future  
and i think of you  
undressing. unafraid. this time  
illuminated by your eyes like  
the soft lite of waning moon  
and the heat makes me shiver  
as women will.

on nites this cold i think of palestine  
of modern diaspora  
of thin dark women and children  
hushed with an urgency  
only those who have lived  
by the gun will understand  
and on nites this cold i worry  
for all the wanderers who just go  
when they say home  
in a shopping bag or two

i worry on a nite like this  
for cabbies for people out here  
learning english the city the road  
simultaneously  
and i keep whispering "be careful"  
on nites like this i want  
to be following this pretty young  
woman and i want to push back  
hard  
when i'm pushed on nites like this  
my tongue is sharp my breath frost  
my heart wax melting longing  
to take it all into my arms

on nites like this i am the  
quintessential lover limited only  
by my reach aching to stretch  
my arms like wings for flight  
to undress fear in the lites and darks  
of blackness aching for the nite  
streets in new york or capetown  
to be mine to be mine i think

like this on nites this cold  
i/ wish/ that/ kid/ wouldn't/ steal/ that  
old black lady's pocketbook/ i/ just  
wish he won't  
and is cold unbearable naked as  
i am  
on the streets where i walk bundled  
against the cold when the wind  
chill factor mocks our hip hop wisdom  
taking cold into deep freeze and ice  
into reservations of pain  
and we be so separate torn  
like dancers on a vast stage  
but when all is still on nites like this  
i think of freedom the future palestine  
south africa how nothing really dies i think  
of twilight and the language of the city  
and i think of you undressing unafraid  
this time illuminated by your eyes  
where the vision of the future the freedom  
unfolds like the lite of a waning  
moon  
and the heat gives me warmth  
to dream in

# **namibian folktale. the jackal and the hen.**

hen. she work. lay her nest. and live up in a tree.  
jackal. he scavenge. always wantin to eat for free.  
so when he saw hen, in her nest, just coolin out  
jackal stood under her tree and started to shout  
"girl throw me down one of those sweet nest eggs  
fore i fly up there and bite off your legs"  
but hen knew what the deal was she said "man you a lie  
ain't no such thing as a jackal that can fly"  
at which jackal made a leap at that tree  
so hen had to fly higher to keep herself free  
"tomorrow i'll be back hen and you betta heed my word  
else tomorrow, jackal, gonna fly like a bird."

well the next day he was back and talkin loud  
puffing up his chest and actin proud  
". . . hen, can you hear, throw me some of those eggs  
fore i fly up there and bite your legs"  
but hen held her ground  
turned her head around  
said "man i know that you a lie  
everybody know jackal can't fly."  
he said "how you know"  
and she replied "flamingo told me so"

well jackal ran off to the pond and he stalk the reeds  
and poor flamingo didn't have a chance to cry or balk his deeds  
fore he'd bit off her foot and part of her leg  
and was running back to the tree to claim that egg  
"your friend flamingo" he shouted to hen "was flying thru the sky"  
but she ain't no better flyer than i  
to wit he held up flamingo's bleeding leg  
and repeated "now girl betta drop that egg"  
at which, trembling, she dropped one and then another  
until she just could not keep going any further  
she had dropped three eggs and jackal was still shouting for more  
and truth be told she was in the same bind as before  
"jackal" she said "i can't take no more  
you gonna have to kill me like you said you would before"  
and she held her breath and waited to die  
but of course nothing happened cause jackal can't fly.

hen paid three eggs to learn these things  
and none of them is about no wings  
the first is about getting past fear  
how you gotta fight for what you hold dear  
next bout being quiet on your source of edification  
and the last one about trusting robbers for truthful information.

GALE JACKSON



# KATHY ENGEL

## I'M GRATEFUL TO KNOW AND BE COUNTED

*For my father on his 60th birthday  
and for Billie Jean Young who said: Even though . . . I'm glad I know.*

Even though I dream  
October caucuses  
not autumn crocus  
even though I dream leaflets fires  
even though I dream raids  
rainbows

Even though I turn my face to the sky  
open my mouth for air  
blink my eyes for an instant and see water  
everywhere and see a man's clothing drifting  
upstream and see the face of the woman  
in her hands  
who found her husband like that  
down to his soggy shredded shirt  
and the answer hear the answer  
from the authorities

Even though the ripples  
beat the tide into waves

and we need those waves to survive

Even though organizations  
get in bed with me at night  
and when I see the word: caution  
I think it says: coalition

Even though at weddings and parties  
I want to pass a bucket  
take up a collection  
tax-deductible  
and hand out leaflets

Even though this lake and these trees and those deer and  
that hill seem too too beautiful too still too lovely

and we need those waves to survive

Even though an official of the U.S. government proclaimed  
that the hungry are not hungry  
just picky  
in this country

Even though the map  
indicating "bad news for people"  
like "storms coming"  
is wider and overlaps more each day  
and hurts even the paper it's drawn on  
bleeds even

Even though this is the year of the end of the decade  
of the woman—our year women!  
the year of the nutritional risk for the child  
the year for no farmer  
no dirt  
even though this is the trigger happy year  
the grandstand year

and the ripples and the dreams and the rainbows  
reeling and rocking  
and roaring

Even though this is the year of an island  
the year of a murder  
the year of a sickness festering and infecting  
the year of a pounding in the head and the heart  
like a rotten tooth aching

Even though this is the year of Grenada  
that was singing  
and mourns and is mourned turning over in the iron sand and under  
the salt and grievous sea  
and was violated

and no dream left undamaged

Even though the ripples beat the tide into waves  
and we can see those who rowed before  
those who stumbled and those who dove  
those who were driven and those who drowned  
a curve of humanity  
howling

Even though I dream  
Even though I dream  
meetings marches I dream: my belly round and low before me  
a new miracle stretching inside  
from the long love two people cried



Even though this is the year of apartheid  
like last year  
and the one before and like that  
meaning  
take it all away

starting with a name

Even though names don't die  
but are buried like treasures by the river  
only to be reclaimed by the child who grows up learning:  
love your language, strap your syntax to your side,  
clasp your name like an infant to your heart

and the face of the woman  
in her hands rises out of the water like steam  
bubbles of air reading rhyme, reading: this time this time  
and her hair holds her village in it like a wreath  
and her hands live on  
planting the earth with their pain

and their promise:  
Pan Con Dignidad

Even though the ones who rowed their souls hard  
into the sooty dangerous storm  
into the unspeakable  
into the horror and into the marvel

they are the ones  
who let us come here  
now, who let us know

Even though contradiction stuns me  
in my tracks, holds me like a baby  
in the morning as the blinding sun catches the day with no permission

Even though I don't know  
and I don't know

I am grateful  
I am honored and privileged  
to know enough  
to not forget to never forget  
and to be able

to work at calling  
a rainbow  
the colors it is  
and move after it, to join, into it

with sweat  
and memory

and the love it takes to endure

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**"Apartheid/Genocide" NANCY SPERO**



# ESSEX HEMPHILL

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## Surrender is Treason

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I'm a desperate man.  
I lock myself indoors at night.  
I know the streets  
will not be safe  
if I walk.  
I haven't killed anyone  
or robbed anyone  
or used any violence.  
I'm young enough  
and black enough to be accused.  
One lone soldier  
guards my soul in the valley.  
Satan watches that soldier.  
Fear is the only grip  
I have on sanity.  
Fear of sirens  
screaming to shatter  
the night's delicate testicles.  
Fear of bloody fangs.  
Fear of smoking guns.  
Fear of executions  
by a state which pushes me  
to the edge  
like a crowd with pointed sticks,  
throwing rocks and bricks.  
A mass of unreasoning hatred  
God has yet to quell.  
When I fall I will not die.  
Only the promises I made as a citizen.  
I am no longer a clear thinking man.  
My citizenship has always been questionable.  
I hurt and ache and crave.  
I can't cry.  
I can't afford my addictions.  
I steal my weapons  
from a kitchen, a tool box.  
I make sharp things  
out of things I find on the streets—  
old umbrellas, loose tongues,

limbs of trees I sharpen into knives.  
I'm a lean man, a man of color.  
My youth is against me and for me.  
It can make me a profit or a criminal.  
I could sell myself but  
I don't want to compromise anymore.  
I don't want to sleep anymore.  
I don't want to beg, but I have begged.  
I don't want sympathy—  
there is no ego left to appreciate it.  
I don't believe in anything anymore.  
I don't want to rape.  
I don't want to kill.  
I don't want to lie.  
I don't want to cheat or steal.  
I don't want to spill blood, but if I must . . .  
I don't want to run, but if I must . . .  
Satan watches me like a vulture.  
I'm fucking the Angel of Death.  
I don't dream because dreams make me hungry.  
I'm young enough, Black enough  
to be shot on sight, questioned—later.  
I am a son. My life is a hunter's season.  
Dark men, men of color  
must always be alert.  
Surprise is life-costing.  
Surrender is treason.

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# U.S. Planning to Wage War in Space

—*Washington Post*, January 1977

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We have yet to correctly name  
all the wreckage.

Some still wait  
in line for their elbows,

for their fingers  
that once wore wedding rings,

for the speech  
to sprout in their throats again  
like buds on a barren bush.

We have yet to bear sons  
in the gaps  
and silences  
of misplaced fathers.

There is loose talk  
of arming the constellations  
with machine guns,

of digging trenches  
in clusters of stars.

The plans call  
for camouflaging the planets;

and even the docile moon  
has to make a decision

to move right  
or left.

*Essex Hemphill*



**SETH TOBOCMAN**





**"1985—South Africa" LEON GOLUB**

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# SOWETO REMEMBRANCE

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## GEOFFREY JACQUES

in langa in the bronx they shoot us down like dogs  
it matters little that its a day lovers stroll through spring newborn  
    green  
a day for loving children  
a day for barrels full of smiles

along dusty broadway new galaxies of sleepers lie together in the  
    chilling rain  
honoring the swaddling dead  
readying the stake for her executioner

(2)

(July 24, 1967. Detroit, MI)

we grew up on roads just wide enough for the police & their tanks  
roads in a city of fathers without work  
a city too old to die too young to have known a rush hour

we spent the afternoon with rocks in our hands & freedom on our  
    minds  
while fat old men with tin shields & shotguns shriek at curious  
    children  
"go do your plotting somewhere else"

any three of us on the same corner you see  
a grave danger to the social order



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# SUSAN SHERMAN

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## Ten Years After

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1.

How does one find words to speak the things that are too large for words. How does one fit an idea into a page, a feeling into a syllable. A room is not a world. A city is not a continent. These streets do not border the edges of a universe. But the people who move in them, the people who live in them are a world, a continent, a universe.

There were things I never learned, even though I began, a little, to reach out, to believe I could reach out.

Ten years. What does it mean? Ten years. *Elegua*. Guardian of the paths. Opener of the Doors. Trickster. The Juggler. The Balance. The Fool. The way the world goes past our understanding, resolves itself in our blood. How we play out our days, something very great, and something very small.

The image of the sea comes too often. The city is another voice. My own body a boundary harder to resolve. Life is a series of choices. By which we include or exclude all we ever hoped for or dreamed of. Love is a series of choices, by which we include or exclude the world.

2.

If I could speak in the images of dreams. If I could play the words, stretch them across a mile of thought. Say it has been so long since I have allowed myself to feel that now I feel too much.

But the words of a poem are silent, make no sound. Reach across space hands cannot touch. Part of me has grown old seeing how people move. At different intervals. At different speeds.

Sometimes, at night, when I am alone, I hear a voice that calls my name. I am haunted by the memory of every person I have ever known, will ever know. I am haunted by the presence of every person I have ever loved, will ever love.

If I could mold myself into a poem, shape myself into a syllable, a group of words. What would it mean?

My memories are ghosts which surround me as I write. My future lies before me like a kind of space. I would ask for a different sense of timing from the world, knowing full well, at that moment, time itself would end and motion cease.

3.

What does it mean to lose. To invest in loss. To invest in the possibility of loss.

We move from a sense of need. Both others and our own. But what we move toward is what moves us most.

The wasted days, the wasted hours, the piles of waste that make up much of our lives, that are part of our lives. The time lost. The time spent. The time destroyed.

I want to wake up. Rise up. I want to be awake. To see.

I had almost forgotten what it was like to be next to someone, to be warmed by them. To feel warm. I think of death, more than anything else, as a very cold place. As a place where contact ceases, where a world ends.

I know what it is to lose contact. To see the world grow smaller and smaller. To be unable to reach out. To be unable to speak. I know what death is like, what it means.

As everything begins to fall away.

4.

I would like to write a poem that could solve the world, could solve my place in it. Could make my fantasies into something real. But I know a poem, words, even these words, as they come, from my pen, as they sing, as the poem always sings, as words are used, as motion, as change.

I know a poem can do none of these things.

Cannot stop the minutes, cannot turn even one hour, cannot bring into being what does not exist.

Because in all these years, with all this strength that has grown up in me. With all these words that have grown up in me. I still cannot find speech to say what it is I feel, when I really care.

5.

If a poem were a hand, if it were alive, warm. If it could reach out. If it could enter places I cannot. If it could do things that make me afraid.

There is this thing that changes, that allows change to exist. The poem is part of it, is its voice, this thing that is.

Any struggle is first that deep feeling that grows from the center of a person, a people. The poem is not separate from me, from the person I am. It is not the poem, but I who feels. It is not the poem, but I, who loves.

To hope, to have hope, to be hopeful, to hope against hope, to believe in change, to believe in the possibility of change, to know when to stay. And when to leave.

6.

To discover people is to discover a world. To find out what is important and what is not.

What does it mean to open yourself, to become open, to feel. What does it mean to open yourself to other people, to allow them to enter, to allow them to become part of your life.



The mountain stands still; above it fire flames up and does not tarry. Strange lands and separation are the wanderer's lot.

I am driven by love, *Elegua*. I am driven by love. I cover my madness, *Elegua*. I cover my pain. Make a place for me in your house. Protect me as I move. *Elegua. Elegua.* Guardian of the Doors. Opener of the Paths.

Cover my years. *Elegua*. Cover my years.

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# - Facts -

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1.

*What you see is what you get*  
What you hear is

often lies

Burnt out buildings

on Ave. C

Speculators buy and sell empty shells

where people used to live

& still do

illegally now

among the ruins

I used to live there once

on Ave. C

twice really—at different times

1963     1971

chased out finally by rats

& thieves

& a man's throat cut

in front of our building

on an otherwise pleasant summer night

Most important

I was lucky—

I had somewhere else to go

The neighborhood hasn't "gone up"

since then

regardless of what the papers say

It's gone down

Down to money

& greed

disregard for human needs  
& illusion

That "things are getting better"

At least for some

2.

South Africa

September 1984

A story in the *New York Times*

South Africa

40 miles south of Johannesburg

28 dead

600 detained in one weekend

Picked up at the funerals of their loved ones  
and their friends

The photo shows death

rebellion

Black people moved again

as they were before

and before

and continue to be

(except in our press)

to action

Resisting

the lie

Underneath the photo—a caption

No explanation

A statement of fact

A lie of omission

"Police Quell a Riot"

as if implying they were doing  
a commendable  
act

So many injured  
So many killed  
& how many times in our papers  
do they tell us

"Why?"

3.

In my class I ask  
"What is a fact?"  
A student answers  
"What you hear on the 5 o'clock news."

I laugh but it isn't funny  
& I am the only one  
who gets the joke

4.

"Why" is not "how"  
is not a recital of physical causes  
physical effects  
It is meaning

The bullet pierced her flesh  
because a finger pressed a trigger  
& she was in the way  
is "how"

Why that gun was there at all  
why she was in front of it  
why that policeman's finger pressed the trigger

not muscles but years are behind the answer  
not reflexes  
people

5.

I clip the photo from the paper  
pin it on my wall  
rip the caption into shreds

Apartheid  
what it means

Separation

Separation from land  
Separation from family  
loved ones  
education

home

Apartheid  
facts left undefined  
that lead nowhere  
that separate us  
rob us  
of meaning

Apartheid  
It destroys us all

6.

October 6—  
"Pretoria Will Use Army to End Riots"  
"Military called in to support the police"  
80 are now dead

October 23—  
2 o'clock in the morning 7,000 South African soldiers  
(along with police) surround a town  
Standing 20 feet apart  
guns in hands  
Two more townships follow  
over 150,000 Blacks are interrogated  
Their hands are stamped  
Their thumbs dipped in orange ink

A general strike is called succeeds  
Now whites also are detained

*In Soweto*  
*The people continue to rebel*  
*In Soweto*  
*The people continue to fight back*  
In Manhattan  
My student looks at the 5 o'clock news

His head is filled with facts  
He knows nothing  
He learns nothing

He doesn't even know "Why?"



# WHO WATCHES, WHO SEES

September 16, 1982

Who is the victim? is one way  
of asking it, as I do: passing that question  
painted in red on the side  
of a boarded-up store. Or  
I bring breakfast back  
ducking the early fall rain  
to sprawl on the bed talking instead  
of smashing an ashtray in fury  
and pain: as the damp newspaper  
stamps the morning's massacre indelible  
behind my eyes: who is the destroyer and who  
feeds the day?

I haul myself up to the roof  
half-crawling knees locked  
pulled past terror by a clear voice calling  
then my own need to see: the height  
that trust makes true unfurling like the question who  
pulls the trigger? Who cuts  
the throats? Who watches; who  
just  
watches?

I watch  
as words of murder blur the fear of falling fill  
my line of vision: staring down  
at this real city lit beneath my shaky feet  
I choose to stand: unanswered  
asking who will push me?  
I'm who's here and  
I won't jump.

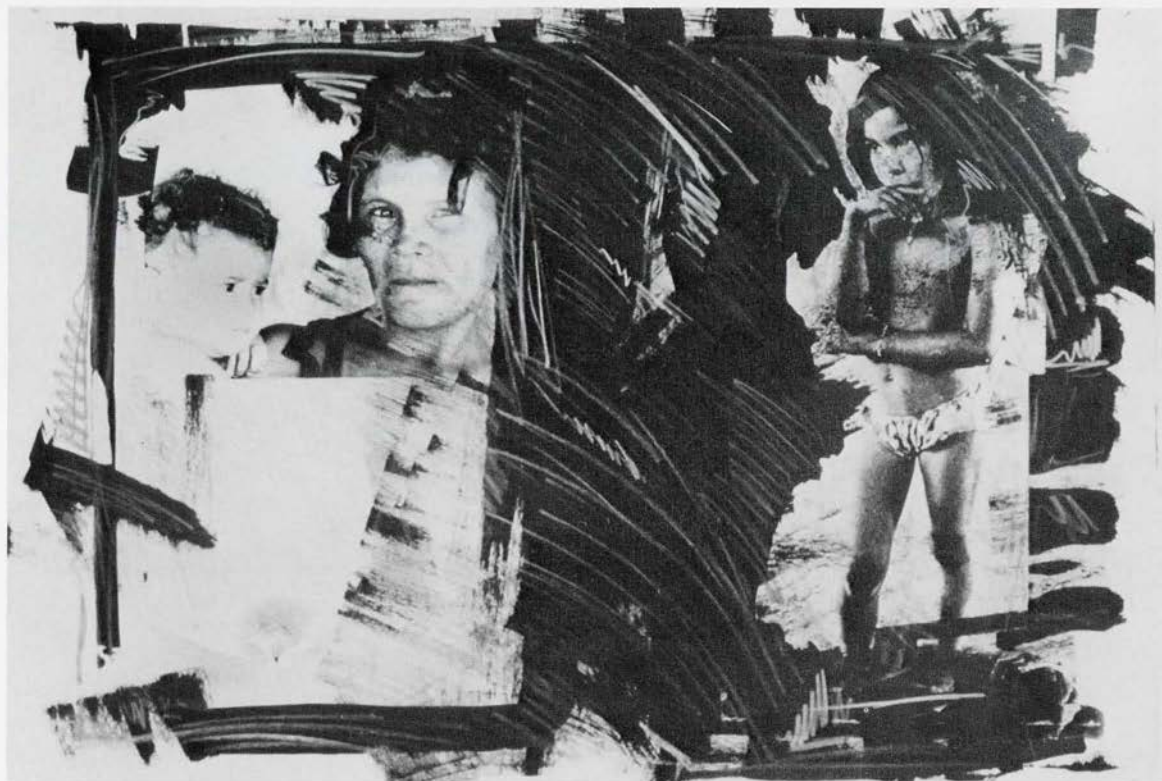
# SARA MILES

## THE NAME OF THIS FLOWER IS THE SAME

for Lupe

*Petunia*. In Spanish, the same—  
like *boycott* you say, as we order our coffee  
then sit down to plan.  
The strike's going badly. We talk  
about tactics and what's to be done—  
Someone approaches, clearing our table  
asking for tips as the night shift comes on.  
*Oreja?* No, *waitress*—  
*pobrecita*, you whisper, in my country too.

The name of this woman  
wearing her tiredness  
is universal language:  
in the camps  
in Soweto  
cleaning offices in Washington her call  
comes the same:  
don't forget us  
keep planning  
arm the women  
*arm the women*—  
we rise  
and this flower blooms  
one name.



**"Ripped Wings—Lost Smiles" JOSELY CARVALHO**



# ***Fighting Demons***

## ***for South Africa***

**SANDRA  
MARÍA  
ESTEVEZ**

What is the difference between there and here?  
Between what is seen and the elusive face  
Fascism or imperialism  
South Africa/New York  
South Bronx/ Soweto/ Harlem/ East Harlem/ Namibia  
Lower East Side/ Sharpeville/ Williamsburg/ Watts/ Johannesburg

What is the difference between sunburnt hands  
Knocking vainly on the blind doors of apartheid  
The haven of disunity  
That forgets how it was molded from the dirt  
Descended from the rich clay wombed mother  
That bore a continent thru slavery  
Here or there denied its inheritance  
Here or there in iron ore chains  
Stripped from the same sacred vessel  
Plucked from the same mountain breast  
That nourished the birth of all creatures  
That brought forth the Yoruba incantations of light  
The science and precision of Maya astrology  
That nourished the passion of the Cherokee  
And filled the sky of the children of the Hopi

Mountains offering homage to a sungod  
Where Arawak rivers of fire blood  
Dance out a heartbeat for the darkness  
And the ocean of a million coquis

Here/there  
What is the difference?  
When hunger thrives from unemployed nightmares  
Created on a neon trip down Madison Avenue  
By mercenaries of the inner soul  
Paying first class rates just above the poverty line

What is the difference of the name of the bank  
That funds the weapons of white racism  
That suppresses the nation of builders  
Into limbo drug depression/regression  
Oppression on a master scale

South Africa/New York  
What is the difference of the face of greed?  
How does it construct its smile  
From the burning bones of Vietnamese families  
Or the music of Chile  
Of a million martyred students  
In a stadium filled horror  
That witnessed the slashing of the poet's tongue  
The murder of Victor Jara

	<p>South Africa/New York  Chile or Puerto Rico  Ireland or Ethiopia  Kent State, Attica, Beirut  What is the difference  Of the perfect equation  That brings food to every table  In a banquet of sharing and dignity applied  That writes the book of truth  That diffuses the bomb of oblivion  And ignites the fire of compassion  That will set South Africa free.</p>
<p><b><i>It is  raining  today</i></b></p>	<p>Each droplet contains a message  Soaks my clothing  The earth is crying  Or is it the sky washing down the clouds?  In the puddles lie reflections  Difficult to see thru oil film staining  Rainbow luminescence  Concentric circles expanding</p> <p>La lluvia contains our history  In the space of each tear Cacique valleys and hills  Taino, Arawak, Carib, Ite, Congo, Angola, Mesa,  Mandinko, Dahome, Amer, African priests tribes  Of the past  Murdered ancestors  Today, voices in the mist</p> <p>Where is our history?</p> <p>What are the names washed down the sewer  In the septic flood?</p> <p>I pray to the rain  Give me back my rituals  Give back truth  Return the remnants of my identity  Bathe me in self-discovered knowledge  Identify my ancestors who have existed suppressed  Invoke their spirits with power  Recreate the circle of the Ayreto  Reunite the family in a universal joining  A shower and penetrating waterfall  Rekindle the folklore  Candles of wisdom with never ending flames</p> <p>Speak to me of rain.</p>
<p><b>SANDRA  MARÍA  ESTEVEZ</b></p>	



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# Constructive Engagement

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## MICHELLE CLIFF

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with: the sisters and brothers on the sun-blasted dried-out bantustans/ the gold-miners/ the white-baby minders/ the diamond miners/ the forced laborers/ the Ford auto workers/ the house workers/ the urban dwellers/ the urban workers/ the coloreds/ the hungry ones/ the old ones/ the prisoners/ the ones whose children are dead/ the ones whose children are still alive/ the schoolchildren/ the law-breakers/ the ones who have no work/ the ones who have been reclassified/ the pass-carriers/ the ones whose passes have been voided/ the white-sewer tenders/ the ones who wear the Black Sash/ the lovers.

with: Mamphela Ramphele/ Albertina Sisulu/ Albert Luthuli/ Ruth First/ Winnie Mandela/ Helen Suzman/ Helen Joseph/ Steve Biko/ Nelson Mandela—a few names I got from reading the papers.

I read the papers every day. I see a picture of a Black girlchild in a courtroom as she describes in her own words where her friend, a seven-year-old boychild, was standing with his bike (at the curb) when a car driven by a white male ran him down and dragged him a hundred feet. Her friend was crushed and she saw all this. The young white male (described as “neatly dressed” by the paper) is on trial for her friend’s murder. When I look at the face of this little girl, framed with braided hair and ribbon bows, and when I read her testimony, I think about her. I ask questions. Did anything stop in her when she saw her friend die? Does she dream about that afternoon? Is she afraid? Does she feel guilty for not saving him? Did she think she could save him? Does she understand what happened? Are there people who will protect her from this knowledge? Does she understand her own courage—for that is what it is—in standing up, schooldress, hair braided, in a white court before a white judge and a white jury and a white defendant and his white friends and white family who claim it was only an accident while she is questioned by a white d.a. and a white defense lawyer and points her slender brown finger to the place on the three-dimensional model of that afternoon where she insists her friend stood—and no amount of tricky questioning can shake her. Does she shake inside? Does she know that she is a loving friend? Does she think about enemies? That her enemy has shown his face to her? Can she realize that there are people who will hate her without ever meeting her? What will happen in her life?

Tell me if I saw what I thought I saw. Tell me if you will whether this happened in New York or Pretoria, L.A. or Johannesburg.

Don’t ever tell me that South Africa makes America better by comparison.

# Mohawk Trail

## BETH BRANT

There is a small body of water in Canada called the Bay of Quinte. Look for three pine trees gnarled and entwined together. Woodland Indians, they call the people who live here. This is a reserve of Mohawks, the People of the Flint. On this reserve lived a woman of the Turtle Clan. Her name was Eliza, and she had many children. Her daughters bore flower names—Pansy, Daisy, Ivy, and Margaret Rose.

Margaret grew up, married Joseph of the Wolf Clan. They had a son. He was Joseph, too. Eight children later, they moved to Detroit, America. More opportunities for Margaret's children. Grandpa Joseph took a mail-order course in drafting. He thought Detroit would educate his Turtle children. It did.

Joseph, the son, met a white woman. Her name is Hazel. Together, they made me. All of Margaret's children married white. So, the children of Margaret's children are different. Half-blood. "Half-breed," Uncle Doug used to tease. But he smiled as he said it. Uncle was a musician and played jazz. They called him Red. Every Christmas Eve, Uncle phoned us kids and pretended he was Santa. He asked, "Were you good little Indians or bad little Indians?" We, of course, would tell tales of our goodness to our mothers and grandmother. Uncle signed off with a "ho ho ho" and a shake of his turtle rattle. Uncle died from alcohol. He was buried in a shiny black suit, his rattle in his hands, and a beaded turtle around his neck.

Some of my aunts went to college. Grandma baked pies and bread for Grandpa to sell in the neighborhood. It helped to pay for the precious education. All of my aunts had skills, had jobs. Shirley became a dietician and cooked meals for kids in school. She was the first Indian in the state of Michigan to get that degree. She was very proud of what she had done for The People. Laura was a secretary. She received a plaque one year from her boss, proclaiming her speed at typing. Someone had painted a picture of an Indian in headdress typing furiously. Laura was supposed to laugh but she didn't. She quit instead. Hazel could do anything. She worked as a cook, as a clerk in a five and ten-cent store. She made jewelry out of shells and stones and sold them door to door. Hazel was the first divorcee in our family. It was thrilling to be the niece of a woman so bold. Elsie was a sickly girl. She didn't go to school and worked in a grocery store, minded women's children for extra money. She caught the streetcar in winter, bundled in Grandma's coat and wearing bits of warmth from her sisters' wardrobes. When she died, it wasn't from consumption or influenza. She died from eight children and cancer of the womb and breast. Colleen became a civil servant, serving the public, selling stamps over the counter.

After marrying white men, my aunts retired their jobs. They became secret artists, putting up huge amounts of quilts, needlework, and beadwork in the fruit cellars. Sometimes, when husbands and children slept, the aunts slipped into the cellars and gazed at their work. Smoothing an imaginary wrinkle from a quilt, running the embroidery silks through their roughened fingers, threading the beads on a small loom, working the red, blue, and yellow stones. By day, the duti-



ful wife. By night, sewing and beading their souls into beauty that will be left behind after death, telling the stories of who these women were.

My dad worked in a factory, making cars he never drove. Mama encouraged dad to go to school. Grandma prayed he would go to school. Between the two forces, Daddy decided to make cars in the morning and go to college at night. Mama took care of children for money. Daddy went to school for years. He eventually became a quiet teacher. He loved his work. His ambition, his dream, was to teach on a reservation. There were so many debts from school. We wore hand-me-downs most of our young lives. Daddy had one suit to teach in. When he wore his beaded necklace, some of the students laughed. His retirement came earlier than expected. The white boys in his Indian History class beat him up as they chanted, "Injun Joe, Injun Joe." My mama stopped taking care of children. Now she takes care of Daddy and passes on the family lore to me.

When I was a little girl, Grandpa taught me Mohawk. He thought I was smart. I thought he was magic. He had a special room that was filled with blueprints. When and if he had a job, he'd get out the exotic paper, and I sat very still, watching him work. As he worked, he told me stories. His room smelled of ink, tobacco, and sometimes, forbidden whiskey. Those times were good when I was a little girl. When Grandpa died, I forgot the language. But in my dreams I remember—*raksotha raoka: ra'.*\*

Margaret had braids that wrapped around her head. It was my delight to un-braid them every night. I would move the brush from the top of her head down through the abundance of silver that was her hair. Once, I brought her hair up to my face. She smelled like smoke and woods. Her eyes were smoke also. Secret fires, banked down. I asked her to tell me about the reserve. She told me her baby had died there, my father's twin. She told me about Eliza. Eliza had dreams of her family flying in the air, becoming seeds that sprouted on new ground. The earth is a turtle where new roots bear new fruit. "Eliza gave me life," Grandma said. Grandmother, you have given me my life.

Late at night, pulling the quilt up to cover me, she whispered, "Don't forget who you are. Don't ever leave your family. They are what matters."

\*my grandfather's story



# For All My Grandmothers

A hairnet covered her head  
a net  
encasing the silver  
a cage  
confining the wildness.  
No thread escaped.

Once, hair spilling,  
you ran through the woods  
hair catching on branches  
filaments gathered leaves  
burrs attached to you.  
You sang.  
Your bare feet skimmed the earth.

Prematurely taken from the land  
giving birth to children  
who grew in a world that is white.  
Prematurely  
you put your hair up  
covered it with a net.

Prematurely grey  
they called it.

Hairbinding.

Damming the flow.

With no words, quietly  
the hair fell out  
formed webs on the dresser  
on the pillow  
in your brush.  
These tangled strands  
pushed to the back of a drawer  
wait for me  
to untangle  
to comb through  
to weave the split fibers  
and make a material  
strong enough  
to encompass our lives.

Beth Brant



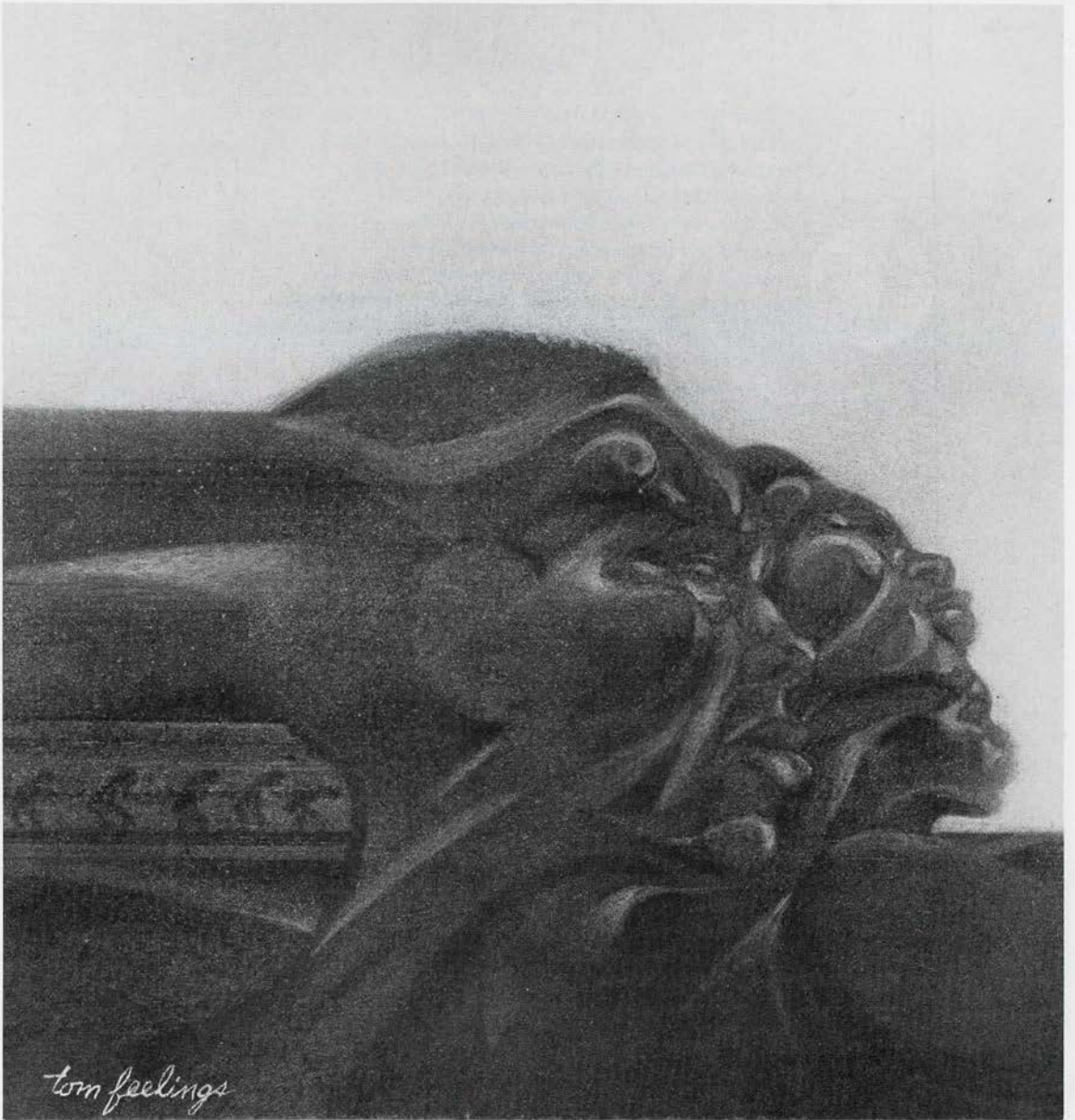
**PHOTO: COLLEEN McKAY**



# Oh, Worrywort

Oh, worrywort, a yellow rose blooms  
on your desk and the sunlight outside your window  
clouds the Oakland hills. Last night an evening  
of poetry sung for battered women, last night an omen  
of things to come, our fields clearly blooming with women  
rising with children singing free from brutality  
of sexism and racism and oh, worrywort, these words,  
these words cling to your mind though you try to release  
them from your throat to imagine tenderness, quince growing  
on your front lawn to no longer see bars  
on your neighbor's window to eradicate the fear  
of being followed in your own neighborhood. Remember,  
yes, remember the dreams of Martin Luther King  
and we will flower truly and our struggles  
will birth eggs the color of turquoise the clarity  
of an emerald sea and if illusions escape you and if  
illusions darken your waking life, remember the days  
of your forebears their survival how they planted rice  
how they sat around fires telling story after story  
and your grandma her hair protected by a cotton kerchief  
and how your grandpa his hair a shock of white  
smiled between gold teeth and maybe he snored  
on a kiang on a pillow of tung wood dreaming their dreams  
of you who dwell in America of you and you in factories  
and offices in homes where freedom is painted  
in orange walls in memories that live in undated  
photographs and your heart leaps. The need for knowledge  
for every detail of the past and the impossibility of writing  
every movement down and the waterfalls of your hands and eyes  
will lift the fatigue the desire for sleep and vacation  
to slip out of your skin to inhabit the apparitions to eat  
with them lop cheong and steamed potatoes and see grandma  
making dow foo and grandpa making a dragonfly kite  
and Ma stirring grass jelly for relief  
from the burning sun for the aches and pains that your body  
carries and to know that your parents were lovers who fought  
to survive the hardships of feeding you and you and grandchildren  
who don't remember who don't see how Ma and Poppa battled  
in Great China Restaurant and how you as auntie and sister  
long to stay alive and does it matter, dear worrywort,  
dear friend, as long as the joy in waking is not buried  
in self-made graves as long as the singing the chanting  
begin and begin again not so much to resist dying oh no  
but to taste and smell and feel and touch everything  
for the first time

Nellie Wong



**"The Struggle Continues" TOM FEELINGS**

# QUINCY TROUPE

## *Las Cruces, New Mexico;*

*for Keith Wilson, Donna Epps Ramsey,  
Andrew Wall, Charles Thomas &  
Thomas Hocksema*

the high, great mesas, flat as vegas gambling tables  
rock-hard, as red dust swirls into miniature tornados  
dancing down roads red with silence, as these  
faces of solitary indians, here where white men quick-tricked  
their way to power with houdini bibles, hidden agendas  
of bullets & schemes of false treaties

& black men alone here in this stark high place of mesquite  
bushes, white sand mountains, colors snapped in incredible  
beauty, eyes walking down vivid sunsets, livid purple scars slashing  
volcanic rock, tomahawking language scalping this ruptured space  
of forgotten teepees, so eye listen to a coyote wind  
howling & yapping across the cactus, dry high vistas  
kicking up skirts of red dirt at the rear end of quiet houses

squatting like dark frogs & crows, etched silhouettes high on live  
wires popping speech, caw-cawing in the sand-blasted wind  
stroked trees, caw-cawing all over the mesilla valley

& here along the rio grande river, dry, parched tongue bed, snaking  
mud, cracked & dammed north in the throat of albuquerque  
mescalara, zuni, apache & navaho live here,  
scratch out their fire-water  
breath, peyote  
secret eyes roaming up & down these gaming table mesas  
their memory dragging chains through these red breathing streets  
while geronimo's raging ghost haunts their lives with what they did  
not do, stretching this death strewn history back to promises  
& hope, a hole in the sky, a red omen moon  
where death ran through  
like water whirlpooling down a sink

& this shaman moon blown here a red target of light, at the end  
of a tunnel of blackness, where a train speeds through now  
towing breaknecking flights of light, where daybreak sits wrapped  
around  
a quiet, ancient navaho, wrapped in cosmic, american colors, sits  
meditating these scorched, white sands, flat



distant high mesas, shaped like royal, "Basotho Hats," chili peppers,  
churls  
pecan groves, roadrunner, chaparral birds, salt cedars sprouting  
parasitic along bone, white ditches, bordering  
riverbeds thirsting for water  
meditates these wide, flat, black lava-rocks  
holding strange imprints of fossilized speech that died  
before they knew what hit them, as did those silent  
clay faced ancestors of this solitary navaho wrapped in breaking  
colors, bursting sunlight, meditating the lay of this enchanting  
blues land, changing its face every mile or so

& in their faces indians carry the sadness of ancestors  
who wished they had listened to those long gone  
flaming words—battlecries!—of geronimo, whose screaming ghost  
prowls these bloody, muddy streets, baked dry now by the flaming eye  
torching the sky, wished they had listened instead of chaining  
his message in these coyote, howling winds  
kicking up skirts of dirt  
whose language yaps like toothless old men & women  
at the rear-end of quiet houses, whose lights dance slack  
at midnight, grow black & silent as death's worn-out breath  
beneath these pipe-organ mountains, bishop's peaked  
caps holding incredible silence, here  
in the mesilla valley

where the rio grande river runs dry  
its thirsty spirit dammed north in the throat of albuquerque  
at the crossroads of fusion & silence, in the red gush swirls—  
whispering litanies sawblading through ribcages, dust memory—  
snaking winds over the mesilla valley brings  
long-gone words of geronimo  
haunting, las cruces, new mexico  
long-gone wind, whispering, geronimo, geronimo



**PHOTO: MEL ROSENTHAL/VISION FOTOS**



**PHOTO: MEL ROSENTHAL/VISION FOTOS**





PHOTO: MEL ROSENTHAL/VISION FOTOS

# Song To My Nisei Mother

—2—

You, sweet mother  
Daughter of the camp,  
Of thee I sing. It took  
twenty years to speak  
of civil rights and  
forty more of rape  
in horsestables,  
in shifting,  
gritty sands.

You,  
and like you, bore  
the country on your  
back. A certain test  
you never passed, or  
the fist-sized rocks  
you threw  
when but  
a child, your naked feet,  
the year you  
would not read,  
a cracker spread  
with margarine,  
turned on  
its head. What had you done?  
What? But they locked  
you up,

Of thee I sing.

Then they let you go—  
You raised three  
children and built  
yourself a home. With  
blistered hands  
you put your fingers  
in the till—making  
money so they  
would not tell you what  
you could and could not do.  
They  
sped across the keys,  
no time to say goodnight,  
to tell me what was  
wrong or right.  
I, with runny nose  
and egg-smeared smile,  
read the barbed wire  
notices on your skin.

I read them all  
and then had  
dreams. It was plan, plan  
for the future,  
and then my hands  
touched  
the broken silver.

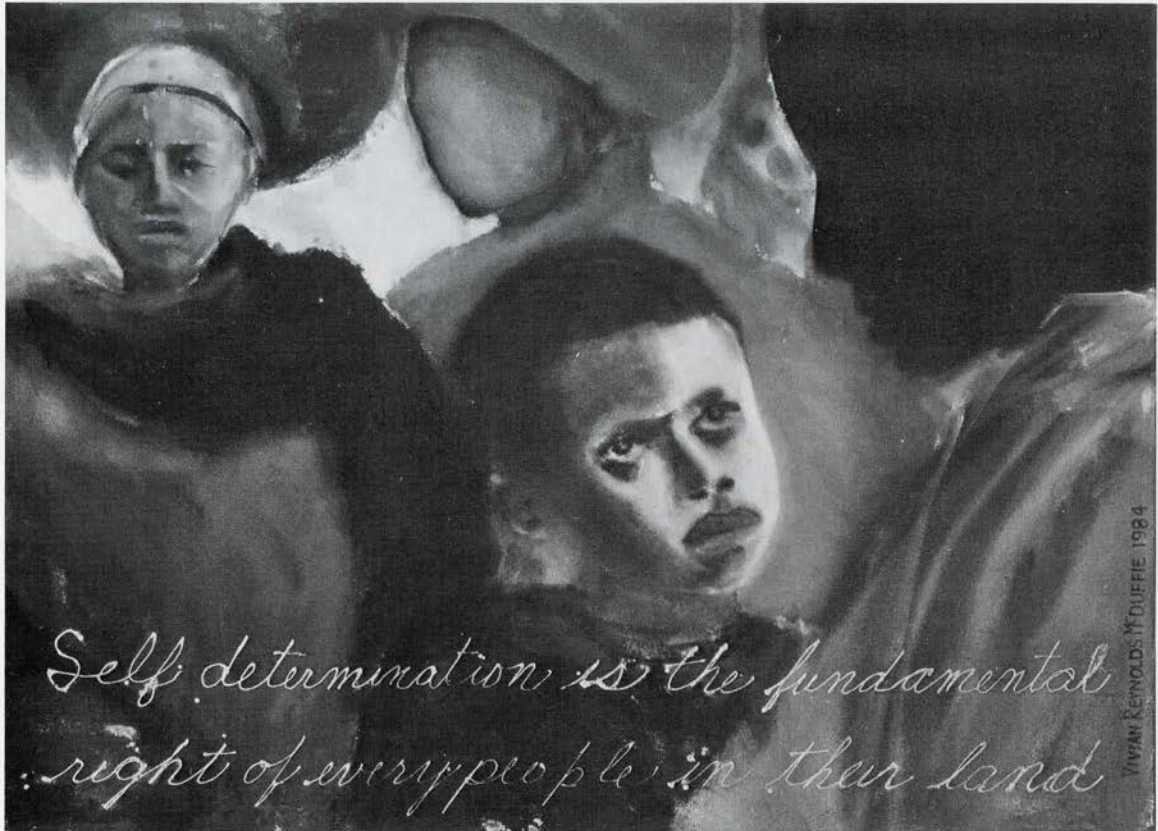
In the mornings, I ran  
screaming past  
the Great Wall, my friends  
and I. And, at night,  
we put our tired  
feet  
to bed.

But, now, we know  
the course by heart. Oh, yes,  
sweet mother, daughter  
of the camp.

We are two veteran runners  
spilling out of a  
cracked liberty cup.  
Mine eyes have seen  
the glory.

Of thee I sing.

**TERU  
KANAZAWA**



**"Self-Determination" VIVIAN REYNOLDS McDUFFIE**





**"Mothers of Soweto" ILSE SCHREIBER**

# A Song for Soweto *for a.b.t.*

# JUNE JORDAN

At the throat of Soweto  
a devil language falls  
slashing  
claw syllables to shred and leave  
raw  
the tongue of the young  
girl  
learning to sing  
her own name

Where she would say  
*water*  
They would teach her to cry  
*blood*  
Where she would save  
*grass*  
They would teach her to crave  
*crawling into the grave*  
Where she would praise  
*father*  
They would teach her to pray  
*somebody please*  
*do not take him away*  
Where she would kiss with her mouth  
*my homeland*  
They would teach her to swallow  
*this dust*

But words live in the spirit of her face and that  
sound will no longer yield to the evil of imperial  
erase

Where they would draw  
*blood*  
She will drink  
*water*  
Where they would deepen  
*the grave*  
She will conjure up  
*grass*  
Where they would take  
*father and family away*  
She will stand  
*under the sun/ she will stay*  
Where they would teach her to swallow  
*this dust*  
She will kiss with her mouth  
*my homeland*  
*and stay*  
with the song of Soweto  
*stay*  
with the song of Soweto

# A SONG

## FOR SOWETO

poem by JUNE JORDAN

music by ADRIENNE TORF

At the throat of So-we-to — a dev-il lan-guage

falls, slash-ing claw syl-la-bles to shred and leave

raw the tongue of the young girl learn-ing to sing her own name. where she would say

wa-ter, they would teach her to cry blood, where she would save grass, they would

teach her to crave crawl-ing-in-to the grave, where she would praise fa-ther, they would

teach her to pray some-bod-y please do not take him a-way, where she would kiss with her mouth my home-land, they would

teach her to swal-low this dust, But words live in the spir-it of her face and that

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sound will no longer yield to the e-----vil of im-per-i-al e-rase where they would draw

blood she will drink wa-ter where they would deep-en the grave she will con-jure up

grass Where they would take fa-ther and fami-ly a-way She will stand un-der the sun/ she will

stay Where they would teach her to swal-low this dust, this dust, She will

kiss with her mouth my home-land and stay with the

song of So-we-to- stay with the song of So-we-to, and

stay with the song of So-we-to- stay

---

---

**“i will never  
forget you,  
South Africa”**

---

---

---

---

**AKUA LEZLI  
HOPE**

---

---

i will never forget you, South Africa  
i know your bantustans in bedstuy, brownsville  
your displacement in my forced gypsy pack on back  
in the press of my city's streetdriven poor  
for newly desirable real estate  
in the torching of my childhood'd firmaments  
the brown dresden of the new world, bronx

i know you in my parents' 400 year fear  
my father's desperate commemorations  
remember this one died for your freedom  
remember this one fought for your soul  
your people come from sierra leone

i will not forget you South Africa  
your daughter Miriam brought me  
my first afro and so twice freed  
my burning scalp  
your music sings like mine  
I heard my heart's cry echoed  
and refracted in the call  
for stolen ones

((me chile lef alone  
at home lawdy lawd  
while i tend another's toil  
lawd lawd))

we know those them  
who still want to send us  
back where one third their genes  
and more, their genius, come from  
undone make us disappear  
to an unmarked village  
weave, chop or plait our lives  
to some timesoftened silence  
sleep in the sweat of niggerlife labor  
Noncitizens in ancestral land  
fruit falls only to serve the seed  
the tree is pillaged to sate other's need  
the death in it stone me.

i will never never forget you South Africa

we share the lash the hose the slash of dogteeth  
close on our tendon slicing our shoulders  
pummeling pounding our childfilled belly  
ripped from our homelands gagged from our language

our labors and travels in earth's befouled bowels  
the work train and thursday night's pay soon parted  
spent in tight ragged juke joints of dive bars  
or dubious discos of brain death  
always sometin' raw very little tender  
never legal

The pass laws      the no pass   no go   genocide laws  
Apartheid is a system of labor control  
Apartheid is a system of mind control  
Apartheid is a system of rule by few  
apartheid is a system which we'll undo

Crossroads women stood strong  
law as a gate against them  
Stopped running, built homes  
with bulldozer laws awaiting  
slim shelters of black plastic and brushwoods,  
the hope of jobs, of food, of momentary peace  
of relative good

We will stand beside you  
we who know the chaingang and the lynchtree  
we who shun the quarterloaf of mulatto citizenry  
We who fight corporate misdeeds

We will stand beside you  
we who pay the unequal tax  
of miseducation,   denigration  
low wage, unmet needs, legislated immorality:

constructive engagement  
means sleep with the devil  
wearing a blood drenched belt  
of black lives.

We know if it looks like it could be Amerikkka, it is.

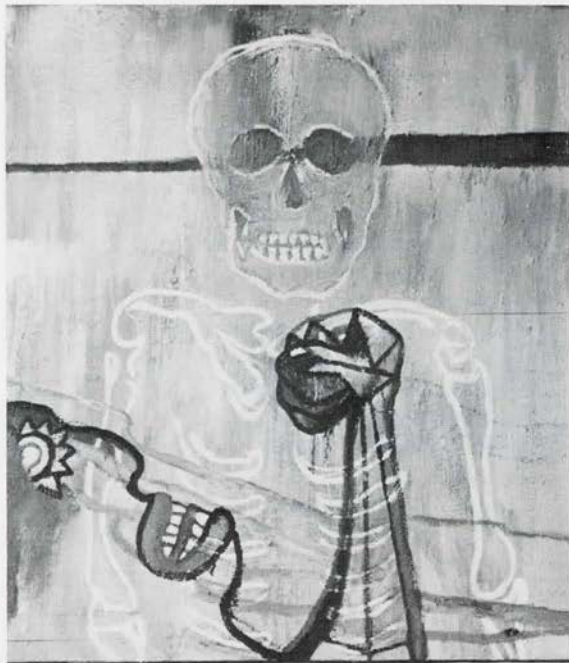
We will never forget  
never forget  
never forget

you

*\*Crying for freedom*  
*Crying for freedom*  
*Crying for freedom*  
in South Africa  
and here!

*\*The conclusion, to be sung, inspired by Sweet Honey in the Rock*





**"Robben Island: Tribute to Dennis Brutus" BENDEL HYDES**

# The Song of Bullets

## JESSICA HAGEDORN

Formalized  
by middle age  
we avoid crowds  
but still  
love music.

Day after day  
with less surprise  
we sit  
in apartments  
and count  
the dead.

Awake,  
my daughter croons  
her sudden cries  
and growls  
my new language.  
While she sleeps  
we memorize  
a list of casualties:

The photographer's brother  
the doctor is missing.  
Or I could say:  
"Victor's brother Oscar  
has been gone for two years . . .  
It's easier for the family  
to think of him dead."

Victor sends  
a Christmas card  
from El Salvador:  
"Things still the same."

And there are others  
who don't play  
by the rules—  
someone else's brother

perhaps mine  
languishes in a hospital;  
everyone's grown tired  
of his nightmares  
and pretends  
he's not there.

Someone else's father  
perhaps mine  
will be executed  
when the time comes.  
Someone else's mother  
perhaps mine  
telephones incessantly  
her husband is absent  
her son has gone mad  
her lover has committed suicide  
she's a survivor  
who can't appreciate  
herself.

The sight  
of my daughter's  
pink and luscious flesh  
undoes me.  
I fight  
my weakening rage  
I must remember  
to commit  
those names to memory  
and stay angry.

Friends send postcards:  
"Alternating between hectic  
*social* Manila life & rural wonders  
of Sagata . . . on to Hongkong and Bangkok—  
Love . . ."

Assassins cruise the streets  
in obtrusive limousines  
sunbathers idle  
on the beach

War is predicted  
in five years  
ten years  
any day now  
I always thought  
it was already happening

snipers and poets locked  
in a secret embrace  
the country  
my child may never see

a heritage  
of women in heat  
and men  
skilled at betrayal

dancing  
to the song  
of bullets.

# For Ben and all the hued men...

## SAFIYA HENDERSON-HOLMES

they hung  
a black poet  
in south africa  
oct. 19th 1985  
8am  
his name was Ben

the rope looped  
and swung

in a land  
where black,  
brown, cinnamon men  
are forced to bend

and i  
can tell  
by the way  
my heart  
and eyes swelled

that i  
was remembering  
how that rope  
had done  
in alabama  
in georgia  
in the carolinas  
of america

black, brown  
cinnamon men  
were forced  
to roll over  
to bend

and  
in south africa  
oct. 19th 1985  
Ben stood  
under the sun

a whistling  
stone skipping  
fish catching  
river wishing  
wood carving  
long walking  
man  
stood roped and knotted  
under the sun

same sun  
over black,  
brown, cinnamon men  
of mississippi  
of texas  
of louisiana

some big trees  
some small mind towns  
of modern america

ropes stung  
ropes swung

so,  
in south africa  
a young black man  
loving family  
and land  
never questioning  
his right  
to every drop of water  
every grain of sand

was knotted  
under sun  
glorious sun

that had pulled  
sweat, spit, bowels

from young  
black, brown,  
cinnamon men

who had fought  
wars for america  
planted the peaches  
the pecans  
scared boll-weevil from the cotton  
crows from the corn  
danced the birth  
of america

yet were forced  
to sit without  
worth  
never blowing the  
plentiful horn

you see  
it wasn't  
long ago

a hundred years or less  
the rope was at its best  
in america

and again  
in south africa  
oct. 19th 1985  
8am  
Ben was stripped  
from his waist  
to his neck

son of a black woman  
lover of a black woman  
father of a would have been  
doctor, lawyer, astronaut,  
magician, teacher, soldier,  
musician, painter, stargazer,  
hellraiser



was stripped  
from his brave  
tight waist  
to his  
hold it steady,  
ever ready  
neck

and  
remember, here  
america, silhouettes  
of grinning faces  
gathered like wolves  
in all those  
hating places

where bodies  
black and wishing  
to move about  
as free as the sea  
were looped  
and condemned to a tree

where white only  
signs were strung  
like precious jewels  
under the sun

which, very often  
were also the business tools  
of america  
under the gun

and  
in south africa  
Ben's chin  
from a family  
of 30 million  
or more  
was stiff  
and centered  
over the knot  
that looped  
over his chest

where bird poems  
and mountain poems  
nested  
growing fat and wide  
each time he swallowed  
each time he opened his eyes

and remember  
the chest of hued  
men of america  
pounding against american nights  
heaving and praying against  
american days  
that didn't allow them  
to walk the roads  
or shop the shops,  
or ride the trains,  
or use the churches  
or use the parks  
or use their brains

just run the plow  
and better not go insane  
just run the plow  
for a little bit  
of leftover grain

and in  
south africa  
oct. 19th 1985  
a land where some  
colorless men  
kill to survive

a black man's chin  
one of 30 million  
and ever more  
was stiffly centered  
over the knot  
over his chest  
over his mother's eyes

that were  
told to stay away

threatened  
with jail  
if she dared  
to say good-bye

as they stripped and knotted  
her son  
under the sun

as they  
spit on her womb's  
inalienable right

as they fouled  
the memory  
of her glorious swelling

some colorless men  
who've stolen the land  
and laws of south africa  
yet kill to survive  
hung a man  
and were very proud  
in the telling

and  
imagine  
how black mothers  
of florida, mississippi,  
must have clenched their fist  
gritted their teeth  
when they were  
told that

how black mothers  
of virginia, dallas,  
kentucky  
must have pounded the earth  
swearing to give birth  
again and again  
when they  
were told  
that

how black mothers  
of new orleans  
must have cursed  
every tree

and the children  
how would they be

hearing of papa  
being strung  
would they grow-up  
blaming the sun

as ropes looped  
and knots stung

as they  
did in  
south africa 1985  
to Ben  
a child of hues men  
who refused to run

and  
i can name  
some in america  
Dick Cooper  
Anthony Grant  
Siles Johnson  
Zachariah Walker  
sometimes bunches  
in rows in america

like strange fruit  
seeded by  
sons of guns  
who hooded and caped america

trying to smother  
the soul of america  
choke the democratic goal  
of america

and  
in south africa  
Ben  
who dared  
to claim  
heart and stake

dared to challenge  
with pen and bare hands  
the multi-headed  
dragon of hate

whose claws ripped through  
sharpeville  
whose fire kills the corn of dimbaza

dared  
to challenge  
the lawless fate  
of all the nights  
his father and mother  
were forced to lay apart  
pray apart  
dream and scheme apart

of days  
when the ever growing  
30 million  
would vote  
and hope  
over all the land  
no matter  
the language, name  
religion or economic stand

and  
Ben  
brother  
of Bheki,  
Andries, Sipho, Mohammed  
many more  
was aware  
that because  
of his inability  
to be scared

that those  
banning against  
his hue

would try  
with money  
guns and lies  
to chill his power  
like Biko  
still his eyes

and  
so  
not  
far from today america

hued men  
daring their  
pores to suck  
the tar and feathers  
and hot oil  
of america

daring their eyes  
to blink or cry  
when pieces  
of them were  
plucked and pickled  
in jars

that decorated  
some of the drinking bars  
of america

you see  
there were  
would have beens  
and could have beens  
piled among the leaves  
in america  
like Ben  
hued men

who could've  
written poems  
or songs  
righting  
the wrongs  
of america

and  
in south africa  
Ben  
son of the on coming  
30 million or more  
had talked to governments  
and gods  
to change things

to mothers  
and lovers  
moon, star  
to hurry-up  
and rearrange things

under the sun  
glorious sun

but ears  
of the fearful, colorless  
few  
who began a war against  
people of hue

disregard voices  
that challenge  
their word or view

disregard  
anything  
that suggests or agrees  
all people  
have the human right  
to be free

and when  
this freedom  
is never given  
one to one  
it may  
have to be  
taken  
through the barrel  
of a gun

reluctantly  
unfortunately  
under the innocent sun

and i  
imagine  
as i swallow  
my screams  
hold in my eyes

how Ben  
like many  
hued men  
braced himself  
with that fact  
how like sky  
he made it cover  
his back

how like thunder  
it made his body shout  
even as his breath  
went under

that neither  
money, bullets  
or ropes that sting  
can keep him  
from the peace  
that fighting  
for truth brings

can keep  
his poems  
from the  
hope they sing

and  
Ben  
like so many  
past and present  
women and men  
decided  
without  
narrowing  
his mind  
or pride

that dying  
for truth  
would be  
his life's  
prize

and i  
think  
as i hold  
my screaming head  
heart and eyes  
that Ben  
and all the others  
ever hung  
or shot  
or beaten  
to bend

can't be far  
sometimes i feel  
them much closer  
than any sun,  
moon  
or star

very near  
like here  
among the us  
the 30 million  
and forever more  
putting the fight  
and love in our hands  
for the poor

overworked  
overtaxed  
overhungry  
overhunted  
overmissed  
in whatever land

yes here  
now,  
Ben and armies  
of hued women  
and men  
standing all around  
bearing strengths  
that death  
no matter how  
fierce  
can't tear down

and yes  
oh, yes  
as screams rise  
and hearts are put  
to the test

such grand feelings  
are doubted  
disbelieved  
as on oct. 19th  
when Ben  
was found  
among  
the leaves

but again  
and whenever necessary  
again and again  
i hold in my fears  
and try to see  
the people free  
and without tears

and know  
like Ben knew  
that i  
and others  
of color and dissent



who want  
to stop  
injustices and pain  
wherever  
however they are  
sent

are many  
not few  
from families  
of millions and billions  
and there will always be mo  
proud, powerful  
rich, poor

capable of joining for love  
or joining for war

and standing for freedom and peace  
above it all  
never bending  
no matter  
how threatening  
or tempting  
the call

and yes  
more than yes  
no matter  
the rise or fall  
of what we do  
being proud  
of our hues

and again  
thanking  
Ben

being proud  
of our women  
being proud  
of our men



**"He Loved to Dream" CANDIDA ALVAREZ**



PHOTO: NINA KUO



# MICHAEL S. HARPER

*Peace is the active presence of Justice.*

The wrinkles on the brown face  
of my carrying case  
conform to the buttocks,  
on which the streaks of water  
from a five-gallon can  
dribble on the tailfront  
of the borrowed shirt  
he would wear if he could  
drain the pus from his swaddling  
bandages, striations of skin  
tunneling into the photograph.

This is no simple mug shot  
of a runaway boy in a training  
film, Soweto's pummeled wire,  
though the turrets of light  
glisten in smoke, the soft  
coal hooding his platform  
entrance, dull and quiet.

His father's miner's shoes  
stand in puddles of polish,  
the black soot baked  
into images of brittle torso,  
an inferno of bullets laid  
out in a letter bomb,  
the frontispiece of one sergeant-  
major blackening his mustache.

On the drive to Evaton  
a blank pass away from Sharpeville  
where the freehold morgans  
were bought by a black bishop  
from Ontario, Canada, on a trek  
northward from the Cape in 1908,  
I speak to myself as the woman  
riding in the backseat talks  
of this day, her husband's  
death, twenty-three years ago,  
run over by an Afrikaner in the wrong  
passing lane; the passbook on the shoulder  
of the road leading to Evaton  
is not the one I have in my hand,  
and the photograph is not of my great-  
grandfather, who set sail for Philadelphia  
in the war year of 1916.

## The Militance of a Photograph in the Passbook of a Bantu under Detention

He did not want a reception, his letters  
embarking on a platform at Queenstown  
where his eloquence struck two Zulu warriors  
pledged to die in the homelands  
because they could not spin their own gold.

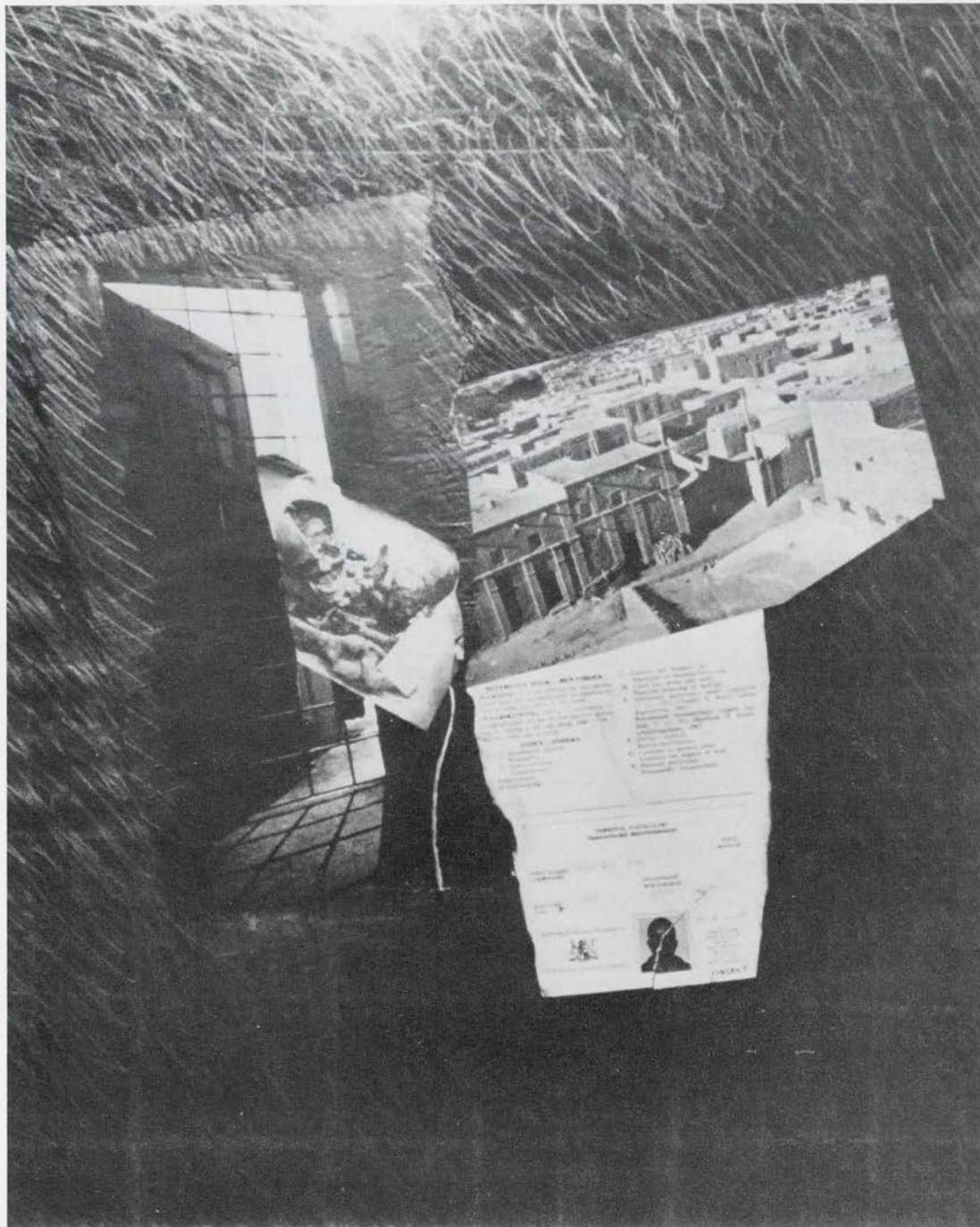
These threaded heads weigh down the ears  
in design of the warrior, Shaka,  
indifferent to the ruthless offerings  
over the dead bodies of his wives,  
childless in his campaigns with the British,  
who sit on the ships of the Indian Ocean  
each kraal shuddering near the borders;

her lips turn in profile  
to the dust rising over a road  
where his house once stood;  
one could think of the women  
carrying firewood as an etching  
in remembrance to the silence,  
commencing at Sharpeville,  
but this is Evaton, where he would come  
from across the galleyship of spears  
turning in his robes to a bookmark;

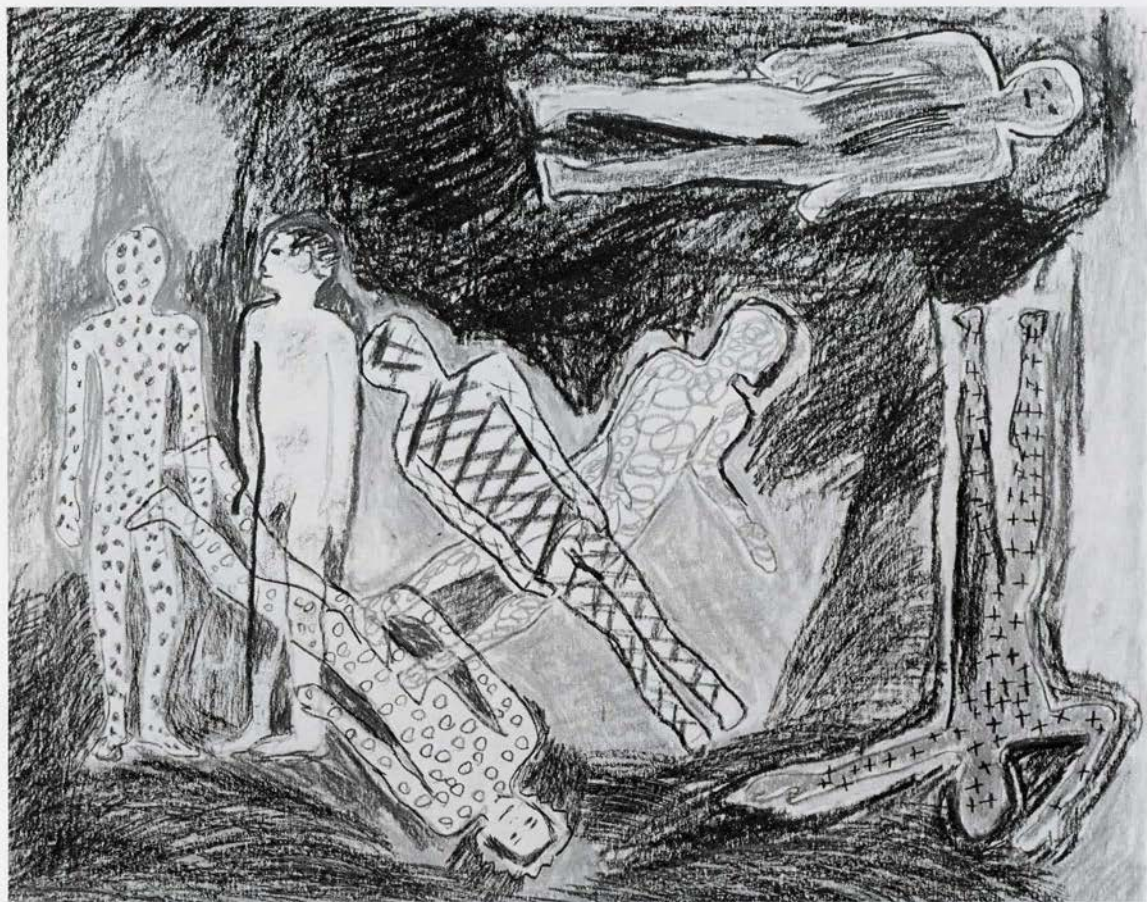
it is a good book, the picture of words  
in the gloss of a photograph,  
the burned image of the man who wears  
this image on the tongue of a child,  
who might hold my hand  
as we walk in late afternoon  
into the predestined sun.

The press of wrinkles on the blanketed  
voice of the man who took the train  
from Johannesburg  
is flattened in Cape Town,  
and the history of this book  
is on a trestle where Gandhi  
worshipped in Natal,  
and the Zulu lullaby  
I cannot sing in Bantu  
is the song in the body  
of a passbook  
and the book passes  
into a shirt  
and the back that wears it.





VINCENT D. SMITH



**"The 5th Wave" GERALD JACKSON**



**The poet  
responds to  
an ad in  
Time magazine  
on a place  
south  
of South...**

**where sun  
always sits  
on your  
shoulders**

**BERNADINE**

tired of contemplating/ trying and not trying  
to comprehend/ tired  
of complaining and complaints/ tired  
of convictions or the lack thereof/ tired  
of taxing your mind with madness/ well why  
not think  
of going where it's summer all seasons and where  
there's sun even in darkness and where night comes  
only when someone pulls your eyelids down, this  
place is absolutely perfect  
for those who like leisure/not looking/and  
sleep, we  
call here the un-  
der world of the world we're so far south and  
lovingly refer to ourselves as  
heaven's closest earthly point to hell and  
we don't think those who haven't seen should  
let their envy overwhelm, rather  
come/enjoy/be envied the country's a kingdom  
for family klans and the like as well as  
those single settlers who don't think they think  
similar thought, come  
be at peace with yourself, relax  
your aggressions here, rest  
your madness in good company, come  
we'll take you to where there is no one  
to criticize slumbering minds and tired tongues, come  
feel free  
to admire jim crow's big brother/whose superfine head  
is a gold bullet, come  
to where the white in your flag is the law, come  
be comfortable  
in the land that provides yours with  
the diamonds you wear and want, come  
to where friendship with other colors is il-  
legal  
as we know you know it should be, watch  
how enforcement—en forces this and glance  
at a deformed justice successfully justifying, come  
to where presidents and some other world  
leaders say even in their silence you should, come  
laugh at the insignificant majority working the mines  
and our other menial jobs who then pass  
back into nothinglands,/oh but for even more than this  
comedy, come to culture/this pinnacle of civilization/  
come to privi-edge/come  
and be among the grand minority/come  
to we the country's wealth/come  
put your shroud of sheets and yourself in  
the land where you belong/come  
to south africa



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# The Woman Who Lives in the Botanical Gardens

---

is a man. who. sleeping on a hill  
and a bench among the Chinese  
maple trees lives there. sleeping in her petticoats  
of ackee leaf  
and banana leaf though neither grows  
in this city: O see: how  
tall she is the tallest lean: O see:  
the delicate spread of her branch  
a thickly muscled arm. how it sways there (quiet)  
how it dreams  
of plantain and rice and the Black Star Line:  
O Jah  
and the hairless face/ the primitive hollow of  
cheeks taut: with re  
bellion. black with the dust of upturned earth and  
the plantings of  
memory.  
O Jah see  
O Jah  
see: the barest of back/ like an island  
and the hair the long: dangling  
mats of hair under arm pits; the perfumed hair  
laden with anarchy:  
hangs from the pit of the arm dangling over the bench.

THE WOMAN WHO LIVES IN THE BOTANICAL GARDENS  
wears underneath her  
banana ackee leaf petticoat the pants of 3  
generations: her grand  
father's her father's: her own.  
THE WOMAN WHO never comes outside  
the gates never comes outside the rags  
around her pine bark hair;  
the reams of rage: O see, O Jah:

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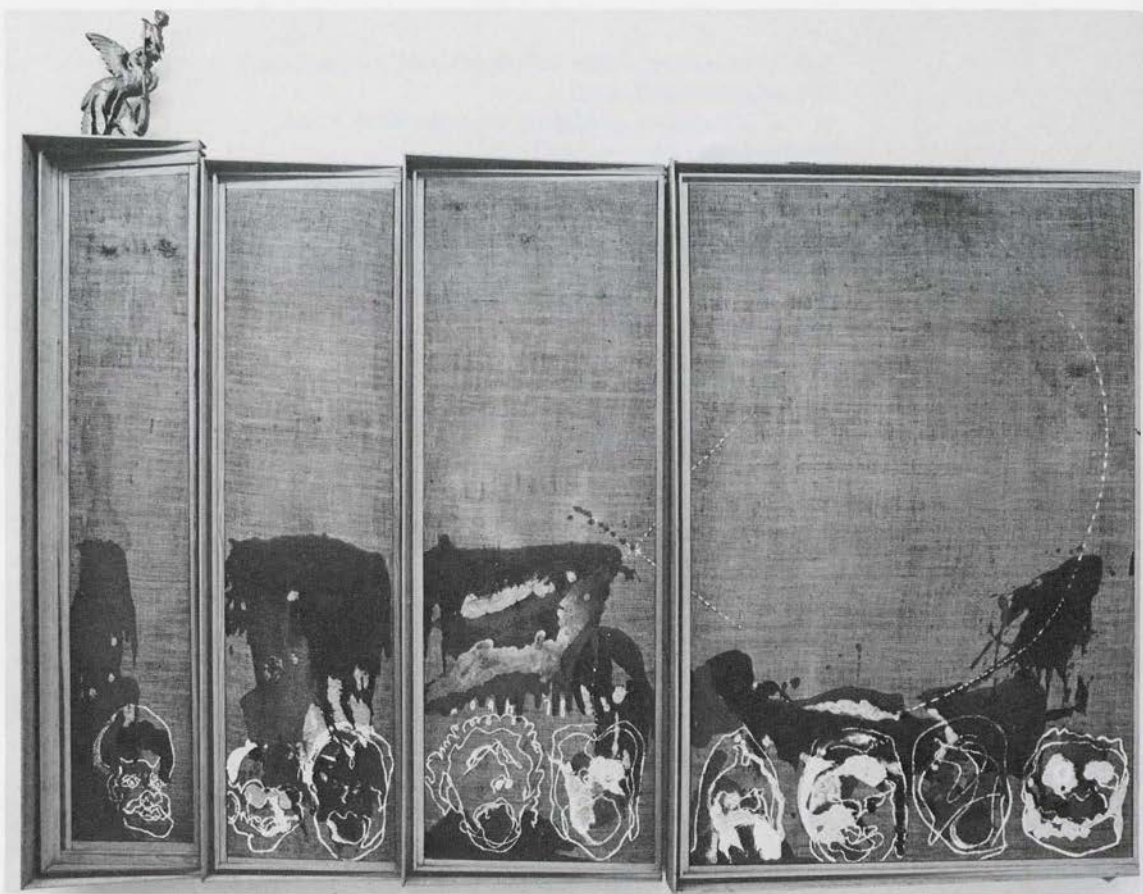
# ALEXIS DE VEAUX

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THE WOMAN WHO LIVES IN THE BOTANICAL GARDENS/  
THE WOMAN WHO LIVES  
IN THE BOTANICAL GARDENS: is named South Africa.  
See there how she  
holds the m-16: how she holds the Gardens hostage.  
and the bullets  
in her earlobes: bullets at her breasts:  
the red green and gold  
rage. And the necklace of fallopian tube  
and the eggs of children  
and the bits of blood of hair  
in the tumours of the homeland: O  
Jah: O Jah: see her how she: stalks the gates.  
O Jah/THE WOMAN WHO  
THE WOMAN WHO LIVES:  
on the squirrels and stray cats of the Garden  
LIVES. like a guard dog. gums bared.  
teeth pointed: she snap at  
the gate:

THERE WILL BE NO VISITORS  
AT THE GARDEN TODAY  
OR TOMORROW NEITHER  
IN FACT  
DON'T COME NO CLOSER:  
I REALLY DO MEAN TO SHOOT UP THE MUSEUM  
I REALLY DO MEAN TO SHOOT UP THE PARKWAY  
I REALLY DO MEAN TO SHOOT UP THE HELICOPTER  
SO: DON'T COME NO CLOSER.

WHO IS ME??  
THIS IS SOUTH AFRICA SPEAKING  
BLACK SOUTH AFRICA  
AND I AM TAKING OVAH THIS SHIT  
I AM TAKING OVAH.



**"Birmingham 1960's South Africa 1980's" NOAH JEMISON**



# Linda Jean Brown

## WITNESS

Paki, a witness. Witness. Paki. A witness.

Sisal grows here as it does on the Carolina coast, and in the Caribbean, near the ocean—wild, pointing skyward. As a child, I used to say, “hair grass” cause it reminded me of Baby Sis’, sticking straight up off her head.

Thandi showed me the best places to pick. The baskets are a different shape—oval, not round: They carry maize, as we do corn: The stalks stretching, sporadically, from the edge of the basket, much like the sisal. Water carried alongside, splashes, bathing the sides of earthenware jugs.

The natural things setting the underlying rhythms of freedom.

In Durban—in a small club where blacks go; unnamed as such, undetected, because assembly by more than a handful is illegal—I listen to hot sounds licking in the air, transcending the instruments. Like in Small’s, say, on 7th Avenue in Harlem. And cool sounds, like ocean. A peaceful mind. Ancient and new as time.

Mornings at the train station where I, and many more must ride in cars intended, in their original, for cattle—there is an old black woman, who sits on a box with a circle of chalk drawn around her. She wears a bandana over one eye, and layers of multi-colored clothes, even on the hottest of days. Selling tobacco leaves, for a penny, by the handful. I ask Thandi her name, if she is from our camp—and not hearing what she answers, I decide the woman’s name to be Grandma, cause, suddenly, I miss my own, long-dead grandma. So, each morning I look for Grandma as an omen for how the day will go. On the one day I did not actually see her face, but only her feet sticking out from under the crowd that gathered round, buying tobacco leaves—I was poked too hard in my back with the prods used to push us into the trains for the trip to and from the city. It hurt for more than the rest of that week.

And the city, actually—steamy and hot, even in cold weather. It sizzles with a fierceness akin to walking over red coals thrown from cooking fires into the middle of traffic in busy intersections.

I flash my US passport, feeling safe, then foolish—then like an asshole—to believe it will protect me. I am accosted in the street by police, frisked, pushed—warned to stay in clearly marked “safe” areas. Not to wander or I’ll be arrested, deported. With my black self.

My passport said “writer” under occupation. I wonder, now, where I acquired that brazenness. At the borders it is not a word, well received. Upon renewal, I changed the occupation space to read blank—nothing at all—which is safer, and at least, until now, still optional.

Came to France, then Tangiers, finally Tunis—laying over six months with barely a word or notice. Meeting with, learning from exiled South African freedom fighters and students who would convince me I could be of use if I would agree to travel there: To report, as it were. Be another eyewitness. Tell yet another story. I agreed. Serving drinks and coffee in no-name bistros. Learning French, then Arabic, then Xhosa, before hearing barely a word. Notice to leave came, of course, in the middle of a beautiful afternoon—with high clouds and a warm wind: The perfect season for a trip into hell.

Being selective. Choosing, making friends whose names open doors. Whose connections validate questions and answers on endless forms. . . .

The story would be: myself as a musician, a singer—studying forms and origins; reaching for a universal peak in my music, timed to coincide with the coming decade of peace and love. And, of course, South Africa would be included in the fallout beam. It was relatively simple. Surprised they believed any of it. But, then, black entertainers from the US, too prolific in number to name singularly, god-help-us, *do* come here to perform—with excuses no longer or sorrier than my fantastic story. Which they believed: Checked out my common name, let me slide by, come in for a while. Perhaps they think I will go back home telling how things are not as bad as is said? It is a “new” government, presently—professing reform of all type and condition. Lies, natural ones—but what better witness could I possibly be if they can restrict my comings and goings and stick me in “safe” areas?

I am playing “Mod Squad.” Uncovering evidence. Writing, furiously, at night. Hiding the journals in a hole I dug at the back of the house, in the ground. I have just volumes of notes. Am more scared than I can ever remember being, in this life. I want to see. See how. Draw conclusions for myself. Tell the world. *Do* something more than sit, watching. Idealistic, for days. But none too wise? At any rate, I am here until put out—if I’m lucky.

I assimilate easy. As pie. Want to shout, “It’s the same blood. *You* sure can’t tell the difference”: The mix seems to be as basic as time—an African and primarily English mixture—brewed, melted, stirred with a great silver-nitrate stick, meant to insure coagulation.

Nonyameko, patience. Patience. Nonyameko.

Thandi’s sister got married and, like anybody, we celebrated with a feast. Went thru the rites of passage—blessing the union; wishing the couple well. Their honeymoon night happened right in the next row of tin houses where we all live. They probably tried to be quiet or invisible, but we heard Amalie’s ecstatic cries in the middle of the perfectly still, too quiet night. At the water pumps the next morning, people congratulated her shyly, as she beamed with no inherited shame from the night before. Soon there will be fat babies, despite the South African government. And life, as it is and always will be, will continue.

I couldn’t help but think of you—who I haven’t seen in so long: In a month of Sundays, as they used to say. Leaving, the words were brief. I stopped crying long enough to say, “Find another girl, I don’t expect you to wait.”



You promised nothing you couldn't keep. Set those contradictory doe-eyes and angular jaw in my direction. Thru all the airports—JFK, Charles De Gaulle, Tangiers, Tunis—the last stopping points before you couldn't come along anymore. Held me fiercely at the gate, then loosened your arm—floating away into the space that separated us on the moving walkway. And I would fly south, around the cape, the horn. Not stopping till Johannesburg. The welcome sign, as well as the land, looming too large, before my eyes. Customs, a nightmare, with my heart in my mouth.

The earth comes up brown and dusty with a fleck of green, every now and then, as the old cattle train speeds us to the center of town. We go to work for whites, for pennies. And collect abuses like talismans hung from rough, stained cord around the neck. Reflectively, this is not too different, at all, from home, for me.

Washerwoman, I do laundry in the mornings in big, galvanized tin tubs, built of the same material as our houses. Working, in contrast to my own, in madam's big, beautiful, sun-filled yard. Enough bluing and scalding hot water to blister my bare hands. And giving a faint, permanent, purplish hue.

Afternoons, I work till good past dark, selling tickets to movies and stage shows at a large theatre in the main square of the city. The government thought it a good place for me to learn about culture. There is always festive entertainment, minstrel shows, for the pleasure of the white masses. And, an occasional show from my hometown country, from across much water.

Had to have a primary job when I came. The government made no mistake about not planning to support me. The students connected me with an Afrikaner family, proper. On holiday in Tunisia, yet. Looking, of course, for a "girl": International people, collecting servants from the entire scope of the 3rd World. They boasted to me about how many dark nationalities and races had worked in their home. I couldn't help wondering why every one of those servants appeared to be transient: Replaceable at such regular intervals. Couldn't help but wonder what had *happened* to them.

An interview was set up at the hotel, at which they were appalled that I didn't curtsy. But were warmed and won again, upon discovering my New York accent. They began pledging all sorts of awe and allegiance to America. I wondered why they were not suspicious.

They left for home from Tunisia, promising to send for me as soon as the papers could be drawn up and processed. I am an expendable commodity. Easier, actually, to keep track of here, than at home. At least, an experiment.

I am a valuable curiosity at social functions. Tho my job is laundry, I am commanded to wait table at all the evening parties. And to speak on prearranged cues, so my accent can be heard, clearly enough, and the probabilities of my life can be discussed when I am not present.

On party nights, the master writes out my excuse to the theatre, plainly, on his own stationery. And they accept it—grinning, shuffling in a way that first told me the importance of his position in Durban society.

Thandi works, cooking, for the same family. The kitchen is where we met. She was ordered to take me home with her and board me with her family. Which she did without protest, or question.



I am grateful to her in so many ways she doesn't understand. She has taught me to survive in ways I would, otherwise, never have learned.

We speak. We work too hard. Break bread together, when we can. I write at night, spending too much on kerosene for the lamp. Thandi asks no questions of me—trusts I am not here to betray, I guess—altho she can't understand why-in-the-world I should want to come. Perhaps, she thinks I am an idiot. And perhaps, in fact, I am.

The black people here, also, at best, find me a curiosity. Some openly distrust me. I don't blame them. I am trying, rapidly, to learn the language, thinking that will help.

But, just the other day, I realized my role here is limited, primarily, to absorbing. To translating. To taking away the scenes, the pictures, the feelings, the stories, inside of me. To—when the time will come—fleeing the hell out of here, lickety-split, with the journals hidden away in my underpants, for example, in a safe spot. If I am lucky enough to ever leave. Finding someone's hands I can trust to put them into back home—who will put them into print, anonymously, for my safety. I keep telling myself it's important to do what I do—and I keep doing it: It is, surely, one way to fight.

I write you letters thru Minnie. Her cover being a proper English white-woman, with a proper Durban street address. And the appropriate credentials to speed a letter on to its destiny. Yet, are we safe?

I wonder if they all get thru—as you seem to choose to answer only a few. Sent the one picture I asked for: An envelope soaked with your perfume on my birthday. I wondered how it passed the inspectors. The power of women, perhaps, to intoxicate, change situations? Yet, are we safe?

Last night I sat at a table outside the little club, by myself, and wrote.

There is rumored to be another American, tho a white one, living in Durban proper, working with the underground. If there's a chance, I would like to see this person. Not meet them. But just to see, from afar. I have learned not to trust everything that seems familiar, at first glance. I would sneak around to the hotel to get a proper glance of them coming or going, I think: Try to sniff the aura of what bounces off from a person's soul. But, I don't think I'd say, hello. You can't be too careful. I haven't been betrayed in anything yet. And I'm too far gone, now, to just walk into it—not really looking—with one eye closed. They'd probably mistrust me, most of all, at first glance.

I hope you are well, reasonably, happy. Find peace more often than I do. I awaken some mornings so saturated with heat, I think I am surely in a hell. And on days, so cold, the mythical image of Africa as the hot continent flies furiously out of the window I left open during the night. Miss everything that is you. I know it does no good to say so.

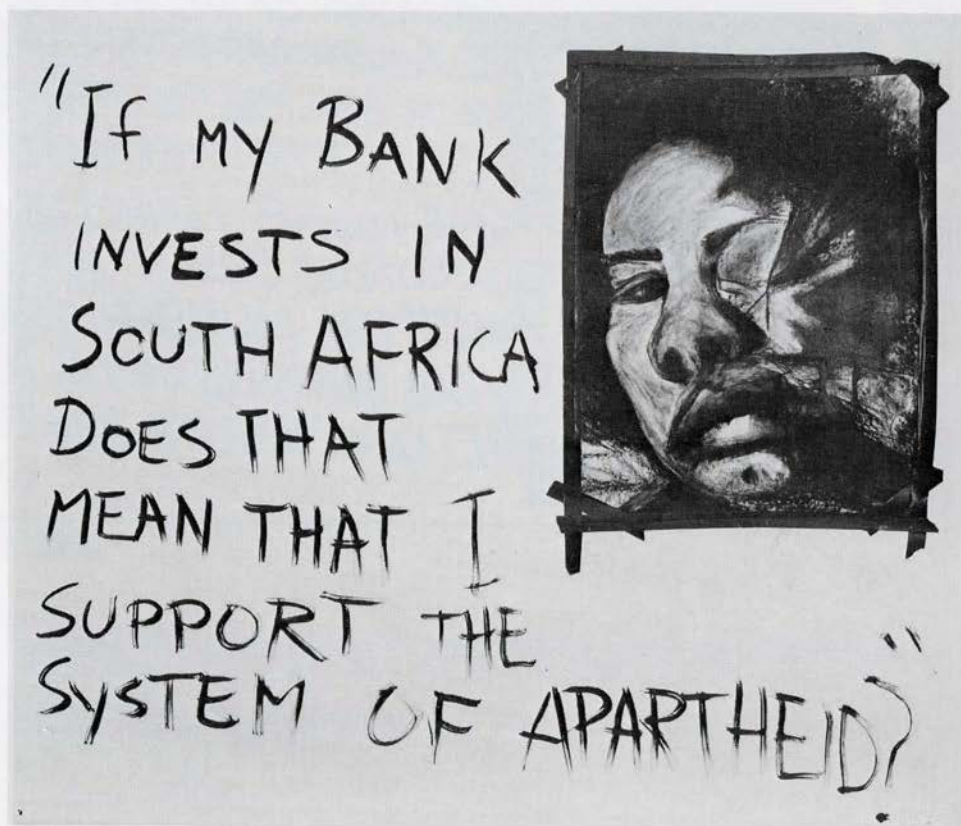
The theatre is closed on Thursdays so I don't have to go to work there. I got home in the late afternoon from the madam's, and fell asleep—fully clothed—across my tiny bed.

I heard someone calling, off in a distance: First, to sound a lot like an animal—a great exotic bird or a soft, fat, long-tailed monkey. The sound jumped quicker, more solid, tho. Seemed to be running down scales from some undecipherable music.

An arrow shot thru the sky in my dream, and I was awake: Sitting nearly upright, leaning slightly on the wall.

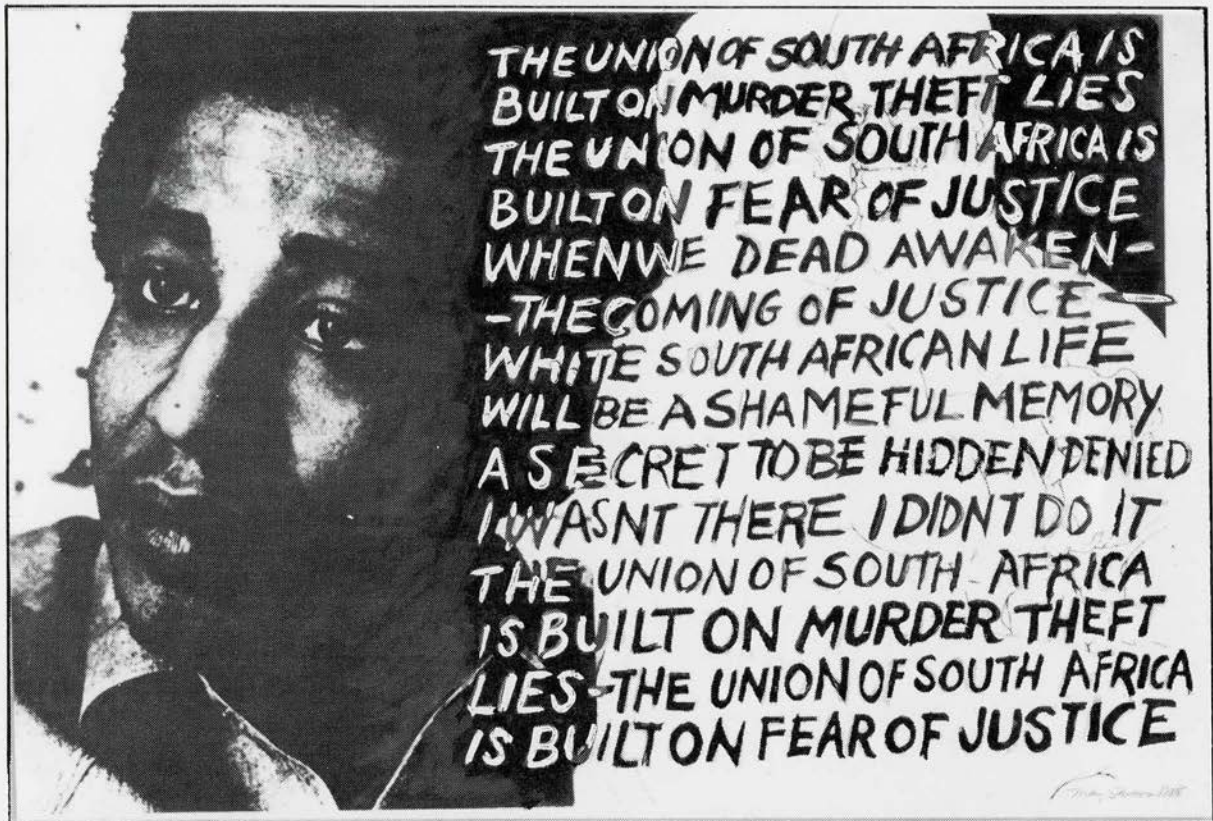
Checking, like always—I'm very vulnerable when I wake up; can't snap to like others can—my eyes passed in front of the window, for a dot of a second: In time to catch the last red streaks, fading to black from indigo in the sky.

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**"Bank Against Apartheid" OLIVIA BEENS**





THE UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA IS  
BUILT ON MURDER THEFT LIES  
THE UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA IS  
BUILT ON FEAR OF JUSTICE  
WHEN WE DEAD AWAKEN -  
-THE COMING OF JUSTICE -  
WHITE SOUTH AFRICAN LIFE  
WILL BE A SHAMEFUL MEMORY  
A SECRET TO BE HIDDEN DENIED  
I WASNT THERE I DIDNT DO IT  
THE UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA  
IS BUILT ON MURDER THEFT  
LIES - THE UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA  
IS BUILT ON FEAR OF JUSTICE

MAY STEVENS



# Cause You Afraid of Guns

*In October 1984, Eleanor Bumpurs owed four months rent. She could not pay. In a "routine" eviction, a New York City Police Swat Team shotgun murdered the 67 year old grandmother.*

## DONALD WOODS

Eleanor Bumpurs  
wielding a big knife  
hunting size

voices call your name  
through steel and deadbolt  
you pull on shoes  
scooting slippers 'neath  
a chair in the kitchen that  
ain't big 'nuff for no grown woman

the cry of steel giving way  
the squeal of metal  
is the sound of your  
ole man's death  
the coffin's lid lowering  
before your 67th birthday

Ain't no marshall nobody  
gonna take my nothin

The door hinges creak  
a sledge hammer rains  
plaster on the welcome mat  
tears well in your eyes

Been here too long  
shoulda left here long ago  
'cept Mary in school  
and that man  
his damn job

standing stock still knife poised  
you watch that door move—  
jesus rolling the stone  
people here to see you  
the old man's wake  
'cept for uniforms  
'cept for white folks

humility falls away scratching  
claw marks in plaster dust  
hot crimson rushes your inner ear  
you plant each step

Ain't no marshall nobody  
gonna take my nothin

and you tasting food  
ate hours before  
feeling the bite  
of elastic at your waist  
smell the blood in your brain  
and your nostrils flare wide

What would you say  
Barbara Stanwyck?  
cause she's your favorite  
yet you steady repeating  
Ain't no marshall

you move  
shiftn one leg before the other  
like they chained  
you move  
with that kitchen knife  
turned dagger turned spear  
turned pointed rock

nothin Ain't no marshall  
surprising your own self  
cause now you mockin'  
Miss Stanwyck speakin tongues—  
a tractor plowing earth

and you move  
Ain't no marshall nobody  
and you walk  
through explosions slamming doors  
you move  
through steel dead bolt voices

the brown flesh opens  
where Mary used to  
lay her little head  
a bullet metal hot  
pierces the old man's favorite

you bleed brown flesh  
gurgling from your breast  
rising from your mouth  
seeping from 'neath eyelids.

the heel of your shoe leaves the floor  
your hip braises the wall  
you movin backward  
and the onion skin elbow  
takes the linoleum first

you thud  
stirring plaster dust  
splattering brown  
dying  
ain't no marshall  
dying  
steel and deadbolt  
dying poor  
dying black  
dying woman.

# TOI DERRICOTTE

## The Black Notebooks

*In 1974, when our family moved to Upper Montclair, we were among the first black families in that section of the city. One of the things that added complexity to my experience was being unrecognized as black because of my light color.*

*July 1977*

Yesterday I put my car in the shop. The neighborhood shop. When I went to pick it up I held a conversation with the man who worked on it. I told him I had been afraid to leave the car there at night with the keys in it. "Don't worry," he said. "You don't have to worry about stealing in Upper Montclair as long as the niggers don't move in." I couldn't believe it. I hoped I had heard him wrong. "What did you say?" I asked. He repeated the same thing without hesitation.

In the past my anger would have swelled quickly. I would have blurted out something, hotly demanded he take my car down off the rack immediately though he had not finished working on it, and taken off in a blaze. I love that reaction. The only feeling of power one can possibly have in a situation in which there is such a sudden feeling of powerlessness is to "do" something, handle the situation. When you "do" something, everything is clear. But for some reason yesterday, I, who have been more concerned lately with understanding my feelings than in reacting, repressed my anger. Instead of reacting, I leaned back in myself, dizzy with pain, fear, sadness, and confused.

I go home and sit with myself for an hour, trying to grasp the feeling—the odor of self-hatred, the biting stench of shame.

*December 1977*

About a month ago we had the guy next door over for dinner. He's about twenty-six. The son of a banker. He lived in a camper truck for a year and came home recently with his dog to "get himself together."

After dinner we got into a conversation about the Hartford Tennis Club, where he is the swimming instructor. I asked him, hesitantly, but unwilling not to get this firsthand information, if blacks were allowed to join. (Everybody on our block belongs to Hartford, were told about "the club" and asked to join as soon as they moved in. We were never told about it or asked to join.) Unemotionally, he said, "No. The man who owns the club won't let blacks in." I said, "You mean the people on this block who have had us over to dinner and who I have invited to my home for dinner, the people I have lived next door to for three years, these same people are ones I can't swim in a pool with?" "That's the rule," he said, as if he were stating a fact with mathematical veracity and as if I would have no feelings. He



told us about one girl, the daughter of the president of a bank, who worked on the desk at the Hartford Club. When they told her black people couldn't join, she quit her job. I looked at him. He is the swimming instructor at the club.

My husband and I are in marriage counseling with a white therapist. The therapist sees us separately. When I came in upset about that conversation, he said he didn't believe people were like this anymore. He said I would have to try to join the club to tell whether in fact this was true.

Four days ago, the woman down the street called me, asking if my son could baby-sit for her. I like this woman. I don't know why. She is Dutch and has that ruddy coloring, red hair, out of a Rubens painting. Easy to talk to. She and her husband are members of the club and I couldn't resist telling her the story of the guy next door to get her reaction. She said, "Oh, Toi, two years ago, John and I wanted to have you and Bruce be our guests at a dinner party at the club. I was just picking up the phone to call and ask you when Holly called [a woman who lives across the street] and said, 'Do you think that's a good idea? You better check with the Fullers [old members of the club] first before you call Bruce and Toi.' I called Steve and he called a meeting of the executive committee. We met together for four hours. Several of us said we would turn in our resignations unless you could come. But the majority of people felt that it wouldn't be a good idea because you would see all the good things about the club and want to join. And since you couldn't join, it would just hurt you and be frustrating. John and I wanted to quit. I feel very ashamed of myself, but the next summer, when I was stuck in the house with the kids with nothing to do, we joined again."

May 1978

I had a dinner party last week. Saturday night, the first dinner party in over a year. The house was dim & green with plants & flowers, light & orange like a fresh fruit tart, openings of color in darkness, shining, the glass in the dark heart of the house opening out.

& I made sangria with white wine adding strawberries & apples & oranges & limes & lemon slices & fresh squeezed juice in an ice clear pitcher with cubes like glass lighting the taste with sound & color.

& the table was abundant.

& they came. one man was a brilliant conversationalist & his wife was happy to offer to help in the kitchen & one woman was quiet & seemed rigid as a fortress & black & stark as night, a wall falling quickly, her brow, that swarthy drop without her, that steep incline away . . . & her husband was a doctor & introduced himself as "dr." & i said "charmed. contessa toinette."

& we were black & white together, we were middle class & we had "been to europe" & the doctors were black & the businessmen were white & the doctors were white & the businessmen were black & the bankers were there too.

& the black people sat on this side of the room & the white people sat on that & they ate cherried chocolates with dainty fingers & told stories.

& soon i found that one couple belonged to the Hartford Club & my heart closed like my eyes narrowing on that corner of the room on that conversation like a beam of light & they said "it isn't our fault. it's the man who owns it." & i was angry & i said it is your fault for you belong & no one made you & suddenly i



wanted to belong i wanted them to let me in or die & wanted to go to court to battle to let crosses burn on my lawn let anything happen they will i will go to hell i will break your goddamned club apart don't give me shit anymore.

bruce said it is illegal & if we wanted to we could get in no matter what the man at the top did & everyone is blaming it on that one ugly man & behind him they hide their own ugliness & behind his big fat ass they hide their puny hopes & don't want to be seen so god will pass over their lives & not touch, hide their little house & little dishwasher, hide like the egyptians hid their children from the face of god, hide their soaked brown evil smelling odor dripping ass. and they were saying don't blame me please throwing up their hands begging not to be seen, but i see them, my eye like a cat seeing into x-ray the bird's blood-brain: i will not pass, like god i will not pass over their evil.

the next day bruce and i talk about it. he still doesn't want to pay 200 dollars to belong. he says it's not worth it to fight about, he doesn't want to fight to belong to something stupid, would rather save his energy to fight for something important. important.

what is important to me?

no large goal like integrating a university. just living here on this cruddy street, taking the street in my heart like an arrow.

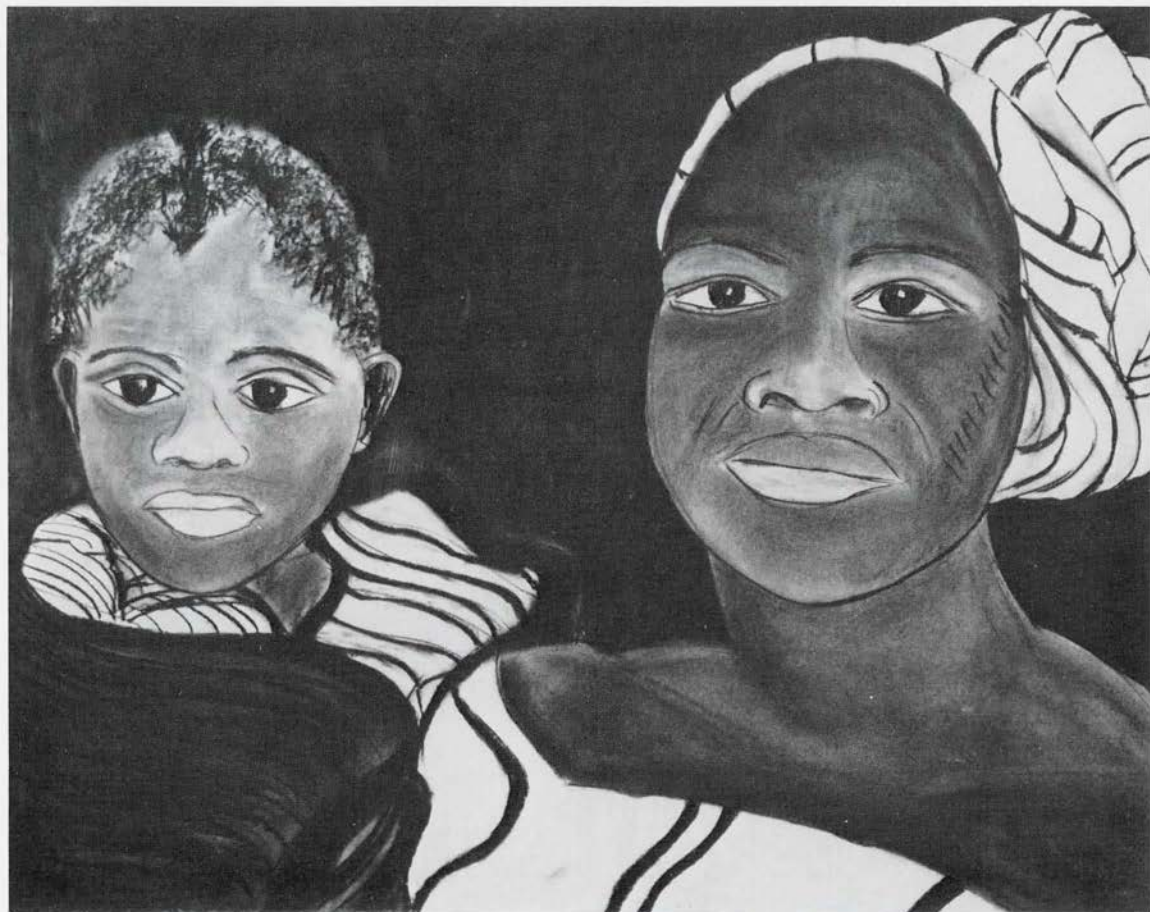
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## After The President Lays a Wreath on Graves at Bitburg

the ethiopian babies, five thousand a week  
perish for the lack of something—is there not enough  
grief to wash away their hunger?  
whose fault, what nazi in a black coat  
has filed his nails on their bones,  
has turned the other way while their bellies grow larger,  
has not turned on the t.v. at the right time  
to hear their silent screams?  
the oven of the sun, the bursting  
bright orange sun  
tortures us loose of our children.  
the death of promise,  
the death of hope,  
the death of imagination—which  
has no mother or father  
when it has no work.  
make suffering real,  
six million names written in blood  
to build a monument to,  
to never let our prayers be silent, to remember  
the dead, not half-  
heartedly, like a drunk remembers his life,  
but true-ly, like at the wailing wall, a

tradition of fires lit for centuries.  
if they ask me where does it hurt, would i  
point to a child watching t.v. fifteen hours a day  
with expressionless eyes?  
would i remember the slaves  
jumping over the sides? the umbilical cord  
has snapped,  
i have been put out on a boat of reeds  
without a loving  
sister to watch me.  
i could point to the bones  
like an altar, the rich  
earth we perished into  
that still gives up its saints.  
so little is evident to those  
with no eyes:  
the seconds go by like invisible lives,  
babies become hopeless children & children  
pedal the wares of grief in port authority.  
see what they never owned—  
themselves, the property of their lives.

*Toi Derricotte*



SUSAN ORTEGA

"NOW YOU HAVE TOUCHED  
THE WOMEN

FREE AFRICA

2178544-1011-1000

UNITY AMONG AFRICAN PEOPLE

DEFEAT THE GLUTTONOUS

FREEDOM FROM APARTHEID / PASS LAWS  
OUTLAW GOVERNMENT  
OF SOUTH AFRICA



DOWN WITH APARTHEID ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION! MAJORITY RULE IN SOUTH AFRICA!

YOU HAVE STRUCK A ROCK  
YOU HAVE DISLODGED A  
BOULDER  
YOU WILL BE CRUSHED

FOR ARTIST AGAINST APARTHEID

THE WOMEN FREEDOM LIG  
THE DEATH OF APARTHEID BY FAITH RINGGOLD 1984

"The Death of Apartheid" FAITH RINGGOLD



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## Organ Mountain/Desert

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Las Cruces, New Mexico

Listen . . . old wolves and young coyote pups:  
I came to turn over ghosts/ visions  
in turning over stones not looking  
for Mormon tea nor turquoise, a tan  
not even snake skin shed for a belt  
or arrowheads/ shards shifting with soil  
as rain opens tunnels into that special antiquity;  
not looking for cities of gold, or the pistol  
which killed Billy the Kid or the blanket  
on which he made love, nor Geronimo's headband.

Few hear the sound of silence,  
noiseless wind passing these mountains,  
or fall of March snow while stars chill night  
and moon stretches broken shadows.  
This astonishing quiet engulfs . . .  
natural reverence enclosing itself.  
There is turquoise this afternoon,  
night glitters in cobalt, snakes do die  
and leave skin for boys, pictoglyphs  
materialize if you search and for scraggy bushes  
of Mormon tea. But stones do not move  
nor barrel cactus, ocotillo, nor this hawk  
feather resting immemorial on the rabbit skull,  
or dew to lick from rocks and thorns.

There is something to carry to Albuquerque  
or Brooklyn, but not arrowheads tipped with  
ancient blood. I wonder if others will find it,  
or the wolves again, the young coyote pups.

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# MAURICE KENNY

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## Beth Brant-1981

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*Letter & Post Card*

*From TEKONWATONTI (Molly Brant 1735-1795)*

There was a dream:

Molly/ Joseph.

I've lost the language.  
What does it mean . . . the dream?  
after all these centuries  
travels across northern lands  
couplings and re-couplings  
bloods and war  
lost.

I've never given them much thought.  
They've entered and left  
playing such a small role  
in my imaginings,  
but they are my history,  
veins and tongue,  
are cousins, grandparents.

I believe in dreams.  
I sort them out,  
place them in piles.  
I fumble their dramas,  
knock on doors, tap windowpanes  
as the dreams demand  
to prove their prophecy.  
I notch cedar; I visit with visitations.  
I believe in dreams.  
I paint them on flint rock, slate, or hide.  
I draw words around them.  
I bag their bones and whispers.  
Molly/ Joseph.  
The Brants and Johnson . . .  
tongues now edited into chronicles  
which are, at best, half truths.  
They lick my breasts.  
What do they want of my night.

I am not frightened,  
but pleased they have entered my shadow.  
I will knock on doors and windowpanes.  
I will sleep them into my embrace.  
I will open my veins for their blood.

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# CHINATOWN

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- I mahjong and dice on the tables upstairs  
confusion of trucks and cars  
children, cats and dogs  
people falling off the mountain of gold:
- eddie died yesterday  
another street kid shot his fucking brains out  
and eddie's in heaven upstream east river  
did you know  
mrs. tong jumped off her building  
looking for peace six stories above mott  
and hey, old louey  
just passed away in his sleep  
the fool, sleeping with the gas pipes  
on, again
- did you hear about lee?  
that he couldn't take his henpecking wife and  
screaming babies and rotten kids and his waiter  
job and promises that couldn't be  
bought with pennies  
that he split before his head did?
- II december 1956, boston to new york  
I saw a sunrise on empty streets  
with old buildings and dark fire escapes  
people running  
to make a dime in factories, restaurants  
trying to beat time  
make some American Dream come true
- I ran  
in restaurants aged 10  
standing on milk cartons washing dishes  
folding papers for the China Times  
stringing beads for the old lady  
and trying to be good  
and trying to be bad  
worrying about brothers and sisters being beat  
in the school yard  
being tough when I wanted to run  
being smartass when I wanted to cry  
trying to be big when I was really small

---

# FAY CHIANG

---

III all the time  
walking on the poverty line  
all the time  
feeling the deprivation  
the wishing and the wanting:

american t.v. sold mickey mouse and donald ducks  
to little alice and jerrys and run spot run  
in the suburbias of white picket fences  
and automobiles  
and american society sold cheap labor and self hatred  
to little chins and wongs and run dog run  
in the ghettos of railroad flats  
and dead end streets

I studied asians in america  
demonstrated against the war in indochina  
shouted chilai! kaiho! amakibaka!  
wrote newsletters, flyers,  
the times we leafleted and petitioned  
for community issues

I struggled to learn to say and to believe:  
right on  
to people's struggle and all power to the people

there is a people spirit and movement  
growing and pushing  
rearranging the order of things  
that nothing can hold back.



## ***golden season***

### **KURTIS LAMKIN**

shoulder my son over dead stalks  
feel him up there rocking, a captain  
taller than we'll ever be alone

he trips cornrows like a one-man  
kindergarten, scattering south  
toward woods senile in far haze  
yelping like a harmonica in search  
of a bootdance

if i could teach him i would tell him  
men are longitude, women latitude  
but wherever you stand is the top  
of the world

what else can you tell a boy who likes  
flying, sparrows, tumbling, and being amazed?

you know he's not a herd of palominos  
but he thinks he's free

## **A Way**

*for Winnie Mandela*

### **CAROLE BOVOSO**

There is a way over distance  
through tight cracks  
of blindness  
through the prison of  
the white man's mind  
Darkness surging, power  
rising, sweet and mean  
like the souls of grand-  
children waiting  
on the pages of the  
white man's paper  
for the woman to return—  
And Winnie waits, Winnie  
waits, while a woman in a  
rocker rocks, "I will die  
here, I will die here."  
And there is a way to do  
this, a way to make us  
whole  
as the souls of grand-  
children listening on  
the pages of the white man's  
paper—for the moment  
of departure  
as grandchildren listening  
for the moment of return.

## The Secret Life of Plants

KATE ELLIS

An almost soundless August heat  
holds beads of a brief rain  
in rows along the iron steps of fire escapes.  
Nothing else moves.  
In Cape Town shots ring out  
through newly washed lace curtains.  
Last night in Santiago I  
could have disappeared at one in the morning.  
What am I waiting for, here in the quiet  
center of the whirlwind?  
Metaphors like this no longer heal.  
Shots I cannot hear are not  
birth pangs, inevitable  
but brief. The edges  
of the world convulse like mountains.  
The center does not crack open.  
My plants need extra water.  
The Sunday paper's heavier than usual.  
Between the smallest useful task  
and the six-sided coffin  
of a two-month-old black child  
can we make ropes of words  
that will not break  
under our own weight?

## where my love is impossible

PAULA FINN

in South Africa  
where do we go?  
how do I follow the moon down to the soft  
palm of your hand  
down to the back of your neck  
down to the mouth of our conversation?  
in South Africa  
if your skin is black  
and mine is white  
there is no conversation  
I cannot call you  
under the law in South Africa  
I cannot kiss your sleeping spine  
in South Africa  
85 percent of the people living on 13 percent of the land  
sift the drying river bottom  
to a cup of filthy water  
85 percent of the people living on 13 percent of the land  
turn the cracked earth  
around the frail stems of corn and peas  
10 percent of the people living on 87 percent of the land  
plant shock batons and search lights  
into the quiet breathing of the night  
  
in South Africa how  
do I follow the moon down to the soft palm  
of your hand?

# AQUITTAL

## Thulani Davis

the state has no case  
against freedom  
there is no guilty  
punishable by anything  
for the liberation struggle  
of a person/ of a people  
our lives are determined  
by our selves  
our souls/ our love  
there is no case  
against what is right  
there is no stopping  
the forces of what will be  
we are a wave, a storm  
at one with the course of the cosmos  
we have the strength  
to leave it to the winds  
to make the last step on faith  
because we believe and have believed

have bled making nothing of it  
because we have seen the mountain  
we have seen and know  
we are part of the mountain's life  
those who seek to destroy us  
fear death, fear living  
fear belief, fear the natural  
course of things, fear us  
fear their indictment  
make ready/ shoot to kill  
frame us in little steel boxes  
pass verdicts  
they fear and do not understand  
they do not see  
the state can have no case  
there is no case  
against freedom.



"Apart=Hate" BLAISE TOBIA



# Dawn in Soweto

Dearly Beloved  
we gather morning  
here  
from the sight of God  
a solace  
known locally  
as  
The Florida Avenue Grill

in blur  
in baptism  
meet the sunrise  
and  
survivors  
again  
another day

it is dawn in Soweto  
curtains fall on The Jewel Box  
Revue  
and at this corner  
others take sustenance  
some sip coffee  
some challenge fate

## For Myriam

i.

She was the kind who  
when she spoke  
spoke softly.  
"Resistance is quiet,"  
she said.  
Her eyebrows a fortress  
Revolution rumbling in her gaze.

And Myriam I think of you now.  
How struggle has changed you.

ii.

The will to live is silent.  
Rubber bullets enforce  
peacetime siege on Belfast.  
Hush riots  
down Sharpeville way.

The world enters a small room  
via satellite.  
A bridge between disasters.  
You oracle the clamoring news.  
We are the next statistics.

# MICHELLE PARKERSON

# I Want You To Hear These Words About Joann Yellowbird (Ars Poetica)

**JIMMIE  
DURHAM**

From what kind of yellow bird comes the name Yellowbird?  
It must mean Kunh gwo, the sacred Yellowhammer.

Ka (But now), no more dreaming or explaining;  
Jo Ann Yellowbird took rat poison and died.

A chorus was provided a year before in  
A pamphlet concerning related events:

"STOP THE GENOCIDE OF INDIAN PEOPLE"

"Jo Ann Yellowbird, an activist in  
the American Indian Movement, was seven months  
pregnant when she was kicked in the stomach  
by a police officer. Two weeks later her  
baby Zintkalazi was born dead. Jo Ann  
has filed suit against the officer who kicked her  
and the authorities who refused her medical treatment."

And to show that I am a sophisticated poet and  
Not a pamphleteer, I quote from the Vocabulary  
Of a Lakota Primer printed to educate those children  
Of the Pine Ridge who have not been kicked to death:

Billy Boy said  
I like the sheriff  
Overtake by night  
starve  
pneumonia  
wash your face  
your face is dirty  
comb your hair  
wash your clothes  
Supervisor  
always take a bath  
be silent!  
My eye hurts  
Commissioner of Indian Affairs  
earth  
plow  
160 acres  
shovel  
allotment  
My chest hurts  
I have none  
Heaven  
the Pope  
Church  
Your ears are dirty  
my ears ache  
wrong procedure  
cut your hair

Billy eya  
canakaa wustuca lake  
a han he ju  
aki ran  
caru na pere  
ete glu ja ja  
ete nu sapa  
glak ca yo  
ha klu ja ja pi  
lgmu wa pa se  
ye han nu wan po  
inila yanka yo  
ista mayazan  
Ta kal Tunkashile ya pi  
maka  
maka iyublic  
maka i yu ta pi sope la  
ma ki pap te  
makove owapi  
maku mayazan  
manice  
Marpiya  
Oyublaye  
Owacekiye  
nure ni sape  
nure opa mayazan  
ogna sni  
pehin gla sla yo

# Lightning from the South: Haiku Series

**GLEND  
FRANK**

Lightning from the south  
the brass mobile  
warns the bush

lightning from the south  
a child cries  
in the Kalahari night

lightning from the south  
the footsteps of rain  
on a newspaper roof

lightning from the south  
a dead rat floats  
past the tarpaper tents

lightning from the south  
quick! roll the blankets  
the trucks have arrived

lightning from the south  
where is your passbook?  
the long snouts of guns

lightning from the south  
"No work today"  
fists in the smile

lightning from the south  
bow your head and  
lower your pants.

lightning from the south  
the cry of the red heron  
echoes through the darkness

lightning from the south  
a black tidal wave  
overflows Soweto

overflows Queenstown  
overflows Johannesburg  
overflows the Transvaal

lightning from the south  
where are my children?  
have you seen my children?

lightning from the south  
the drowning cry of mammals  
wave after wave in the red moon

lightning from the south  
a handful of food  
machine guns in the distance

lightning from the south  
gray birds cover the sun  
the dust explodes

lightning from the south  
have you seen my husband?  
where is my husband?

lightning from the south  
a small child  
crying in the road

lightning from the south  
dirt beneath their fingernails  
fresh mound beneath the mopani tree

lightning from the south  
treestubbleinthesmokingtown  
ironwood and stinkwood burning in Knysna

lightning from the south  
searching through the rubble  
dirty fingernails

lightning from the south  
laying the cornerstone  
black and white at ceremony

lightning from the south  
a chain of diamonds  
beneath the morning star



# The Vulture Culture

**AUDRE  
GRICE**

Evil preys

on Umtata, South Africa  
Mbabane, South Africa  
Maseru, South Africa

like rabid dogs

like tenement rats

like bold vultures

Evil wears swastika bands

its beak

grins apartheid teeth

grips Swazis and Nama tribes

chain squeezes their necks

bulges their eyes

its venomous claw

strips Zulu warrior bones of sepia flesh

feasts on their marrow

its passcard laws

squeeze nations of Khoikhoi into one room iron

shanties

shrunken remnants

overcrowded huts

where cholera festers in starvation wounds

feeds on dehydrated human guts

leaves only a withered carcass

like Klu Klux Klansmen gloat after a hanging, apartheid

cultivates corpse fields—

Ibm

Mobil oil

Exxon corporation

Citicorporation

Eastman

Kodak Companies brag more documentary films,

Allied powers strive to show poverty

to show pain

they make money to grow sane to give pain to breed pain

to

breed

vultures

APARTHEIDRACISMAPARTHEIDRACISM—APARTHEIDRACISM

South Africans, robbed of orange sunrise in Capetown

robbed of inalienable rights

like fire spits on gasoline

evil vultures blaze non-stop

Eight hundred more die again today

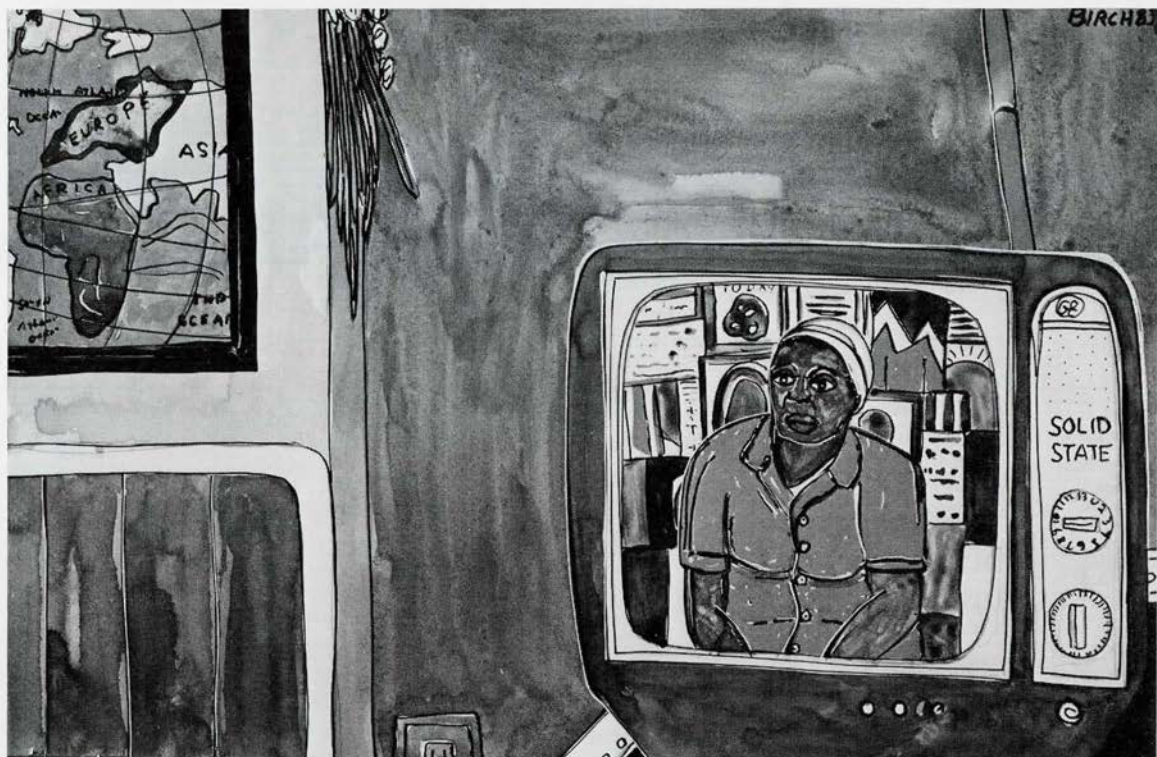
cause evil power

rips sight from unborn eyes

steals hope from tomorrow

Unmasked, pure evil is hate

apartheid condemns life. . . .



from "Solid State" Series WILLIE BIRCH

# HOMEGROWN APARTHEID

## MATTHEW JONES

Where one race has il-lu-sions and a-no-ther race has con-fu-sions

Where one race is called the chief and a-no-ther race is called the

thief you know RA-CI-SM IS HOME-GROWN A-PAR-THEID IN THE GOOD OLD U.S.A

- OH YEAH, you know OH YEAH, Where one race cre-ates a maze  
and a-no-ther race is in a daze

Where one race is al-ways dy-ing and a-no-ther race is al-ways ly-ing

Where one race is try-ing to please and a-no-ther race is try-ing to seize

Where one race is in the street and a-no-ther race is in the suite

Where one race is in the jail and a-no-ther race won't give no bail

Where one race has all the cash and a-no-ther race is called the trash



Where one race is e-mas-cu-la-ted and a-no-ther race is au-then-ti-ca-ted

Where one race is e-ra-di-ca-ted and a-no-ther race is e-du-ca-ted *Refrain*

Where one race is op-pres-sive and a-no-ther race is ex-pres-sive

Where one race wants to be free and a-no-ther race says that can't be *Refrain*



"Commemorative Stamp" JANET KOENIG

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# MUTABARUKA ANY MEANS NESSASERY

wi caw teck it nuh langa  
opression still a govern afrika  
wi caw teck it nuh langga  
apartheid still exist ina afrika

but wi afi free south afrika  
wi afi free namibia  
wi afi start rule wi destiny  
by any means nessasery

suh wi afi free afrika  
even if wi use likkle obeah  
an' if de obeah wont do  
wi mite afi use likkle voodoo

but afrika mus free  
by any means nessasery  
wedda is guns bombs  
or de elements of creation  
wi aguh wage a war fi free de nation

de i.m.f 'ave a plan  
a use dem money fi control wi lan'  
an leaders of de state  
jus a grab jus a grab dem a swallow de bait

religious wars exist  
everyone prayin fi justice  
but de tinkin of big nations  
a spoil up creation

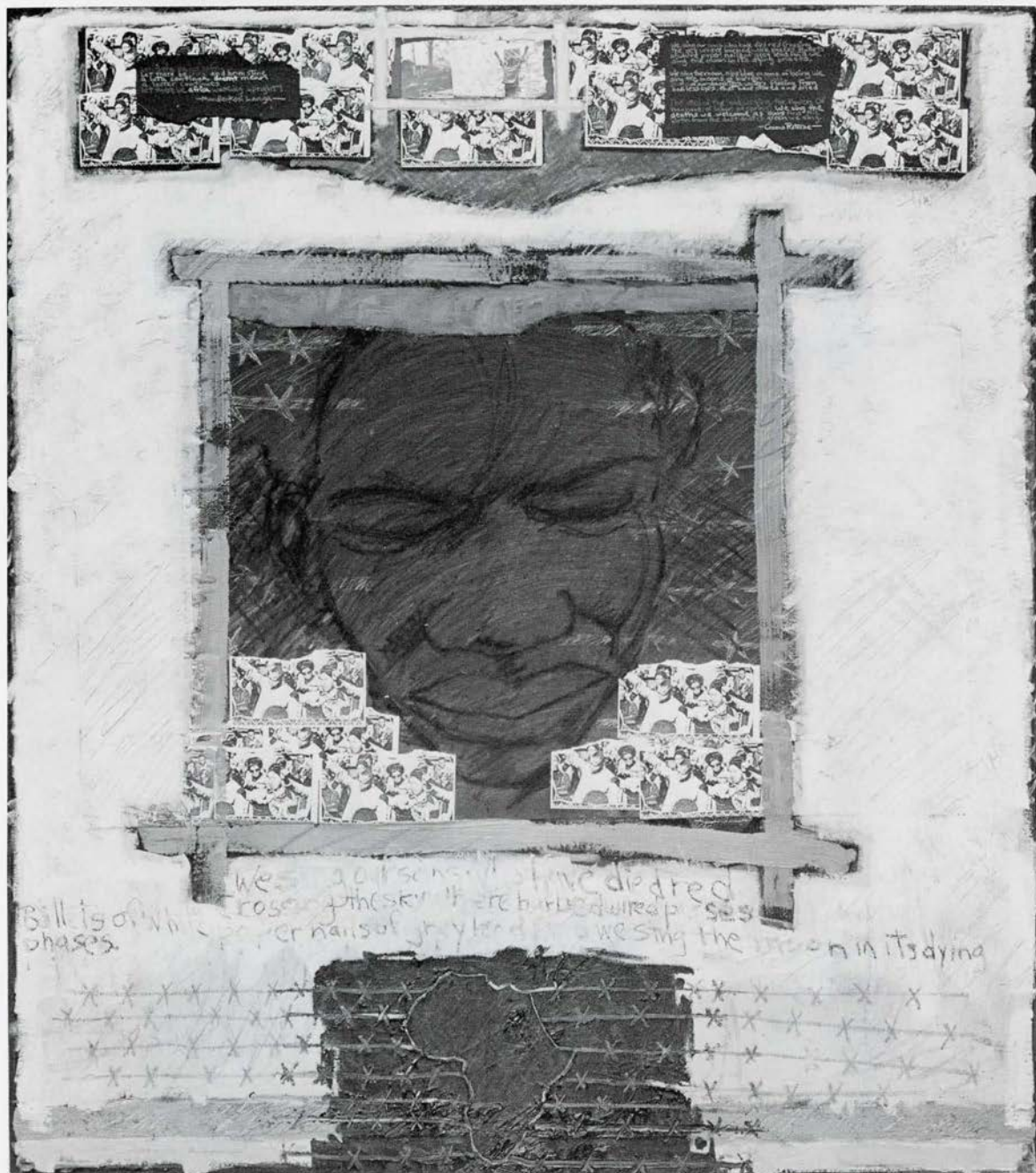
dis mite soun' like fun  
but gad mite afi teck up im gun

repeat. but wi afi free south afrika

suh wi afi free afrika even if wi use likkle obeah  
an if de obeah wont do  
wi mite afi use likkle juju

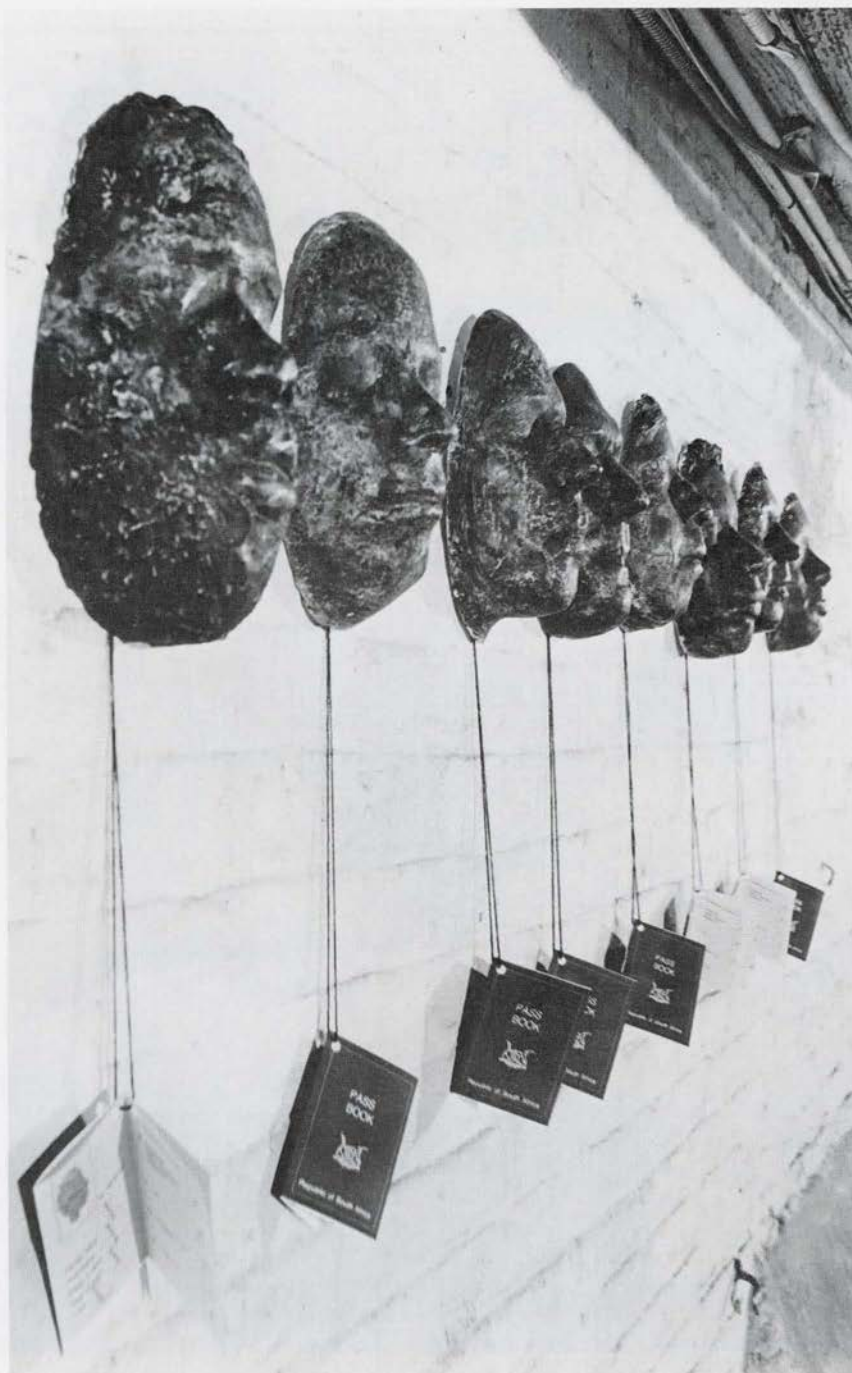
now listen to dis reality  
big nations a fite fi wi  
seh dem want to set wi free  
but dis is jus a stratigey  
cause likkle more wi back in slavery  
if a earthwquake lightennin  
de soun of tunder  
wi afi chase apartheid cast it asunder

repeat but wi afi free south afrika



"Against Apartheid (We Sing)" JUAN SANCHEZ





**"They All Look Alike, Don't They?" (Detail)  
VIRGINIA MAKSYMOWICZ, EMILY PHILLIPS**





**"No White Republic" SUE COE**



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# *In South Africa*

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## *CHARLES FREDERICK*

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*One of the stipulations of Emergency Laws enforced by the increasingly desperate white government in South Africa in the Summer of 1985 prohibited blacks from any public gatherings except for funerals.*

WHAT DO YOU TEACH US  
WHEN WE CAN ONLY GATHER  
TO MOURN THE DEAD?

what do you teach us,

—enemy of the people,  
Botha, Reagan  
racism, apartheid—

when we only gather  
to mourn our dead

when the only speech  
you allow in public assembly  
are the words  
that rise to us  
from our corpses  
that rise to us  
from our vengeful spirits

those your military  
and your police  
cut down, murdered—  
yes  
murdered is the word  
you have taught us

—you who call us rioters—

murdered  
when they spoke of freedom.

Now their words  
have changed  
because their voices  
have clogged  
with blood

now their words have changed:  
where once they said  
give us our freedom  
now as their throats choke  
with the sound  
of the death rattle  
they say

give them death  
who gave us death  
give them death  
who deny us our freedom

You have taught us  
since we can only gather  
to mourn our dead

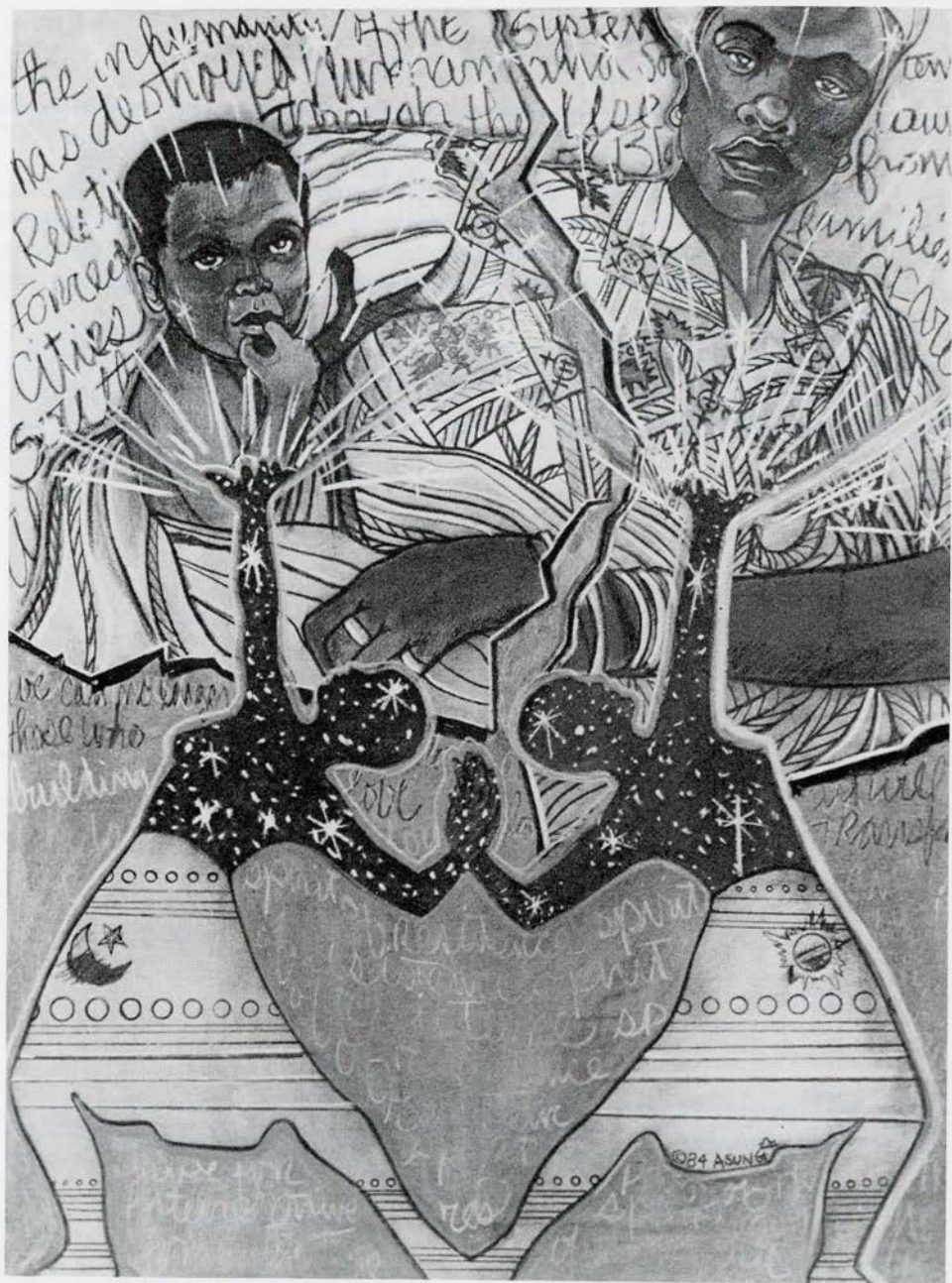
that Amandla, Freedom,  
must be both  
the sound of hope  
and the sound of fear

what is sweet  
to us  
must be bitter  
to you

this is what  
you teach us

—Botha, Reagan—

when we can only gather  
to mourn the dead.



"United We Stand" ASUNGI



## The Next Best Thing to Being There

We have left a concert given to raise funds to fight apartheid in South Africa. It is late. We are tired. Given that it's summer, we try to stay above ground as much as possible and so opt to take a bus uptown rather than the subway.

It's drizzling, but we think we'll be on the bus soon. We walk a good five blocks to the bus stop and the drizzle advances to rain. No matter. We stand under the open shelter and wait. And wait. Buses come. And go. As a matter of fact, there are many buses that are supposed to be travelling our route, but surprisingly, to us, the route is considerably shortened at this hour of the evening. Finally, one driver informs us that buses going the full route are fewer at this time, and so the wait is longer. It seems that the route is divided into "right" and "wrong" sides of the "track."

As the rain falls more heavily and we are chilled in the late night breezes, I attempt to shelter my infant daughter. I feel vulnerable. I know what is going on. Our personal, minimal experience, juxtaposed on our awareness of apartheid, fits so snugly it makes me feel like I'm suffocating.

My friend, Robyn, and I talk about the indignity of the situation as bus after bus, along with minute after minute, passes. We are tired. We are wet. We are cold. We are frustrated. We are angry. We are aware of the law of relativity. Apartheid. We are niggers in the wrong part of town and no one cares about how we are inconvenienced or by what route, mechanism or time we get home. We have "no business" in this part of town at this hour. We can be downtown when they need us during working hours, but we had better beat a speedy retreat uptown after dark. This is a slap in the face . . . or at the very least, a discouragement tactic.

I recall Sandra, a co-worker, telling me about how the residents of the predominantly Black housing project where she lives refer to it as "the reservation" because it was constructed at the end of nowhere in the middle of one of the most dangerously white and racist sections of the city, with minimal access to a way out, and a cemetery across the street. But who's going to balk at "affordable, decent" housing?

In my neck of the South Bronx I watch the development of new housing. It's great to see the area finally being revitalized. And then I make an assessment of how remote everything is . . . no public transportation nearby . . . two to three fare zone making easy access to anyplace but the immediate vicinity virtually impossible . . . especially when it comes to families. No one can afford to leave the neighborhood on too regular a basis. Trapped. Reservation. Bantustan.

By this time it's too late and we're too miserable to do anything but wait because a bus really had to come soon. Right? We dig in our heels. And wait. Eventually a brother in a "Danite" cab cruises by . . . so incongruous as to almost constitute a mirage. We are ecstatic, and scrape together enough money to take this escape



route. Yellow cabs with white drivers are never going our way . . . to what, they consider, the leper colonies and jungles of Harlem, Upper West Side, the Bronx. No matter. We'd rather give our money to one of our own. Anyway.

These small, but real and consistent reminders of our tightrope status between the United States and South Africa make me frightfully sensitive to how little it would take to tip the balance. Yet while confrontation with apartheid is a gruesome daily reality for the people of South Africa, in talking to many people here I've learned that, for some, unless we are "politically involved" apartheid remains an issue that is not addressed on a regular basis in our workplaces, in our classrooms, in our homes. It is critical for those who are conscious of the strange bedfellows Apartheid South Africa and Racism U.S.A. make to illustrate that the experiences of the people in both places are not as far apart as the lands. Apartheid is not remote. It has to be uprooted from the realm of abstractions. Connections must be made . . . connections as tangible as those diamond earrings, that camera, this typewriter, that sewing machine, that home computer some of us can finally afford. It is essential for us all to recognize, at what cost, at whose expense, at whose sacrifice, really, are all these commodities made available. For many, remaining "sane" has been primarily an issue of believing: that we've come a long enough way, that we're free, that we're equal, that we're different, better, can relax, trust, that we'll be "accepted" without discrimination based on race, etc. etc. What does one do with the response that is evoked when we face the possibility, the reality, that a power exists that would just as soon render us powerless enough to be sent back to square one as whistle "Dixie." If we let them.

Racism in America rears its ugly head much more often, much more comfortably and blatantly today than in a long time. Being Black in the U.S.A. today is like being engaged in a cold war. If we don't do something soon, compared to South Africa's system of apartheid, racism in the United States will be the next best thing to being there. The daily panorama of American life is beginning to look more and more like a field studded with mines that detonate in our unsuspecting faces:

A woman is raped and murdered. This is not a rare occurrence. The media, however, raises a furor over this particular case. The woman was young, white, privileged and living in a "good" (i.e. white, expensive) neighborhood. For days we are inundated with information about her. We meet her classmates, become intimate with her family, learn she had "dreams" . . . she was "somebody." She is referred to as "courageous" because of evidence indicating she had fought her assailant. The same night of this young woman's murder there was another rape attempt. The woman was able to resist the rape but was also murdered for her "triumph." The media coverage is, at best, perfunctory. The difference? The woman was Black, middle-aged and living in a poor Black neighborhood in Brooklyn. The assumption is that the assailant was Black, and, historically, Blacks killing Blacks is never much of a news item. We never do find out about her, her family, who she left behind, her "dreams" or if anyone bothered to launch an investigation.

A white artist, whose graffiti of cartoon-type men and dogs is ubiquitous in New York City, is eventually applauded in the Sunday *New York Times*. His cartoons become fashionable prints. His work is displayed in galleries. He makes a name.

Makes money. Gains prestige. A young Black artist, writing on the subway wall, is apprehended by the police. An insignificant amount of graffiti. His writing is not considered "art." It is vandalism . . . defacement of public property. He is beaten to death by the police before he can be brought to "justice."

A white man makes a film. Receives acclaim. Subject matter: a Black man who falls to earth from another planet and is relentlessly pursued by two white male automatons. This filmmaker makes money because he is unable to conceptualize a Black man being free anywhere in the universe! What is just as profound is that he makes this character mute! I suppose that should be a relief . . . after all, what kind of dialogue would this white man have been capable of writing for this man to speak on his condition? The movie says nothing . . . except that the slave's salvation is that he escapes to earth! Where to from here? Is this filmmaker being hailed as a visionary?

A Black collective family is bombed out of its home for offending the neighbors with vulgar language and refusal to dispose of their trash. A dramatic power thrust culminates with many of the inhabitants being killed, including small children, and the entire neighborhood going up in flames.

In these times, as always, we remain separate but not equal. The vulture of American justice sits on the fence assuring what, for "them," is the natural balance. Black people cannot be protected from the vampirism of North American Capital by a cross that burns so easily. While the KKK are steadily on the rise and are known to be increasing their militia and storage of arms, they are left to their own devices because, after all, at least they throw out their garbage.

Addressing the intense and devastating oppression that is levied against our people in South Africa is crucial, but does not eliminate the fundamental requisite of also having to recognize the intimate and supportive relationship between the South African government and the United States government, corporations and ourselves . . . does not eliminate our need to come to grips with the rise of apartheid in our midst.

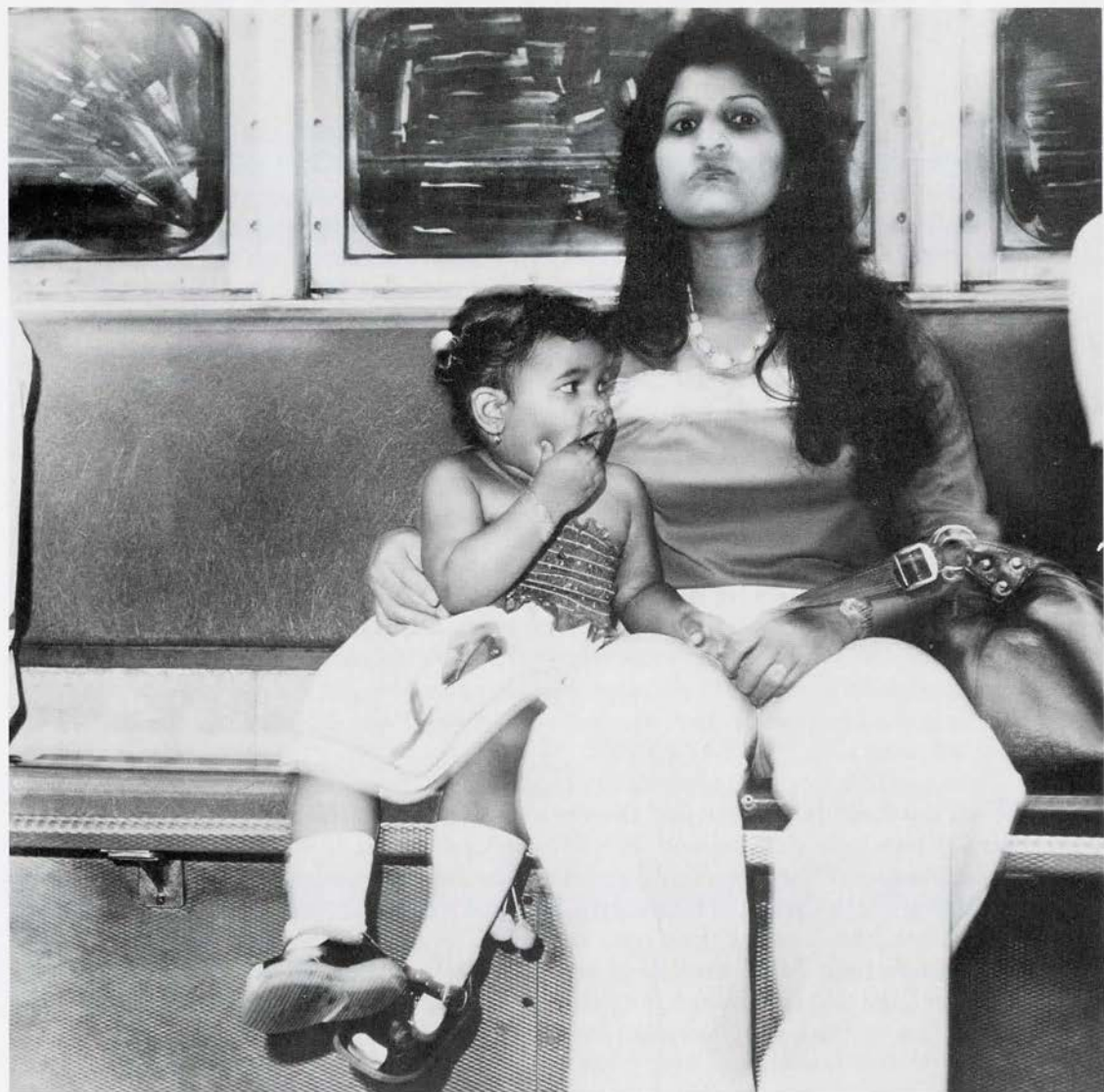
What are our gains beyond fleeting gratification of the senses? What position do we tenaciously espouse in exchange for a panacea of what . . . ? I don't think getting to ride a dirty subway crowded next to the armpit of a white man in a business suit makes me free.





PHOTO: SOPHIE RIVERA





**PHOTO: SOPHIE RIVERA**

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# HETTIE JONES

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## This Time It Was Different at the Airport

This time it was different at the airport. This time I waited with the family of my daughter's friend, the mother a woman who has like me explored ambivalence, a light-skinned Harlem-reared woman with funny stories about being mistaken all her life for what she wasn't. With her was her seventy-year-old mother, an elegant lady from Jamaica hiding sixteen braids in a woolen hat. Although she admired my braids she thought herself too old to wear them, she told me, but her granddaughters had just done her hair and it seemed a shame to take out all that work just to go to the airport. The teenage girls of whom she spoke were also with us, as was the boyfriend of the oldest daughter of this family, whom they were all there to meet. I was meeting my daughter too.

On my other side another family was waiting. I had sat watching them a while before, admiring their ease and geniality, a man and a woman and their two daughters, one early and one late adolescent. I didn't know they were meeting the same plane until we stood together, all of us peering down the tunnel to Gate Twenty. Apparently they had also come for a daughter.

All these daughters were coming home from South America together.

When the plane arrived these other folks, taller, found their daughters easier. I caught sight of mine between some elbows. "There's my mommy!" she shouted, loud enough for everyone in the airport to hear as we barged through the elbow barrier and whirled each other around, and I think I was shouting too, by this time, I think I said: "YAAAYYYYY!"

Then my daughter went to claim her luggage, and I had time to say hello to the others, my daughter's friend and the one that belonged to this other family, this Puerto Rican union official and his wife from Co-op City, to whom I was introduced, along with their younger daughters. The low-ceilinged arrivals section resounded with the shrieks of little sisters, howls of laughter, commands: "Get that big tan box; that's mine!" Everyone seemed to be smiling the same size smile, which made them look curiously alike—as though we were all one family, my daughter later said—and when the union official and I found ourselves suddenly face to face at the luggage carousel we smiled again, even wider. A man and a woman of course, smiling at each other as those combinations do, but because of the event, welcoming home these wonderful twenty-year-old daughters, it felt as if we were smiling with some rare and significant understanding of where life might bring you to if only you grit your teeth and hang on hard enough.

The first time it was different at the airport.

The first time my daughter had gone, all by her shapely little fourteen-year-old self, all the way to Crete to be with friends as a mother's helper. Her sister was also



gone, to visit their father. It was the first time they had both been away at once, my first six weeks alone in fifteen years.

I spent most of my time tearing down a ceiling. Of course as single person head of household I also had to work, forgive the irony. So every evening, after a bath to wash off the ceiling, and a walk with my dogs for a little exercise, I worked at editing a book for children about how to nurse a wild animal back to health if you happen to find one on the road. The book was interesting but poorly written on erasable bond and the words kept coming off on my arms as it was a very hot summer, with day after day over ninety degrees.

So the six weeks passed quickly, with little communication except for a few letters from the daughter in Crete and phone calls from her sister. I can't say I missed either one of them, I was glad of the time to get all this work done. And except for greeting my neighbors when I walked my dogs, I rarely spoke to anyone at all.

In solitude we store up feelings I think, and if you are busy and don't talk much, especially to anyone who might ask "How *are* you?" there's little incentive to assess *how* you are. You just *are*. So when the time came to claim my daughter at the airport I was neither delighted nor dismayed by her imminent arrival. It was merely the day of it. It was raining. I had an umbrella with me.

There was a crowd waiting for this particular airliner; the flight was from Athens, and those waiting were mostly a lot of white folks come to get returning vacationers. I say white folks because this is who I saw; after decades of being mother to black children and responsible for their safety, though I am considered white by the United States Census the sightlines are reconstructed, the angle is bent, the light refracted. Which is mostly to say that the paranoia is extended. I must point out that this is not a hostile position, it is defensive. Despite who I am, it is necessary that I see who I see, and I saw who I saw then.

I leaned on my umbrella and waited with them.

As I said I wasn't excited, maybe because of being there alone, since there was no one to turn to and say "Isn't it late, are you sure it's flight 203? Check the letter!"

So this isolated me even more from the white folks, who were all gabbing, and whose little children swung occasionally on the velvet rope that held us, like the proscenium holds the audience, a seemingly distance from the closed doors to Customs.

Then the plane arrived, and after a while the passengers straggled out one or two at a time, hauling luggage. There was an opening in the rope where a guard stood; at this point the arrivals met their relatives. Loved ones, I might say, but it didn't seem like that to me. No one kissed, aside from a decorous peck on the cheek, there were no loud cries of hello and how are you and how was the trip, no hugs and slaps. Just some proper little kisses, not even on the lips.

Then my daughter came through a door I hadn't been able to see. I had glanced away for a moment, so when I looked back and caught sight of her I saw her all at once, as though she'd been born on that spot in all her precious familiarity, her hair grown to the point it makes when it needs a haircut, her light brown skin burned a deep velvety shade. She was laden, like a little burro—suitcases, packages, olive baskets hung from her, and not in any wild prediction could I have known my response, for it was as though all the love I had ever felt for her came rushing from my heart and impelled me toward her, and I broke the rules, ducked the rope, and ran, yelling her name.



We met in the middle, onstage, as it were. She, my little warm girl, pressed herself close, straining around her burdens to hug me, and I threw my arms around what I could reach of her with such force that the umbrella flew from my hand. And as it clattered across the marble floor of the terminal she whispered, "Oh I've never been so glad to see my mommy in my life."

That was what I heard in one ear. With the other I heard the uneasy sound of an audience that doesn't know whether it should laugh or not. So that when my daughter and I broke apart and I went to get my umbrella, I became less inclined to melodrama and more directed toward the fact that we were the usual public attraction, although this time—my fault entirely—for more than the usual reasons.

I was especially conscious of the color business back then, as who wasn't, and for me there had begun to be a new aspect to it, now that my daughters and I were almost the same size. The nature of the hostility I felt when we went out together was changing. We are fond of one another, and sometimes walk with our arms around each other, but in those years it wasn't yet so common to see women walking embraced in the street, and I had begun to catch shocked (white) or angry (black) glances that meant "What are *those* two chicks doing together?"

This bothered me mostly for their sakes, as adolescence is hard enough without extras. But it's also hard to be denied one's motherlove in the street.

Still, though I was aware of the continued speculative murmur around us and some giggles, I was too overcome with love to care as I clutched my daughter and her bundles and we propelled each other toward the exit. I hardly saw another face, even, until we reached the rubber mat that makes a path to the automatic door, and I noticed coming toward us, as we fumbled a basket, a black man, a porter. As he passed he said, clearly but with a tonal ambivalence: "Well, *somebody* glad to see *somebody*."

I stopped walking then, because everything was falling anyway, and glanced behind me, intending to catch this man's eye. In the entire airport terminal there were two people of color and me, and one I had given birth to, and having had to endure white folks' unease I felt I couldn't also, any longer, endure black folks' disaffection, for if the world was to be divided and I couldn't include myself with them, forever, it seemed to me I would have no stake in my own future.

So I wanted to acknowledge this man, the way understanding people acknowledge each other when there are only three of them in a room, as he had, even so ambivalently, acknowledged us. I am a friendly person, it is easy for me to talk to people. I wanted to smile and say sir, this is my daughter, this is my child, who has come home, from across the sea.

But his back was turned and how was I to call him? Mr. Porter sir, turn around and take a closer look? Watch us when we smile?

But he was gone, that was all he had to say. And how had he really felt? Any way, I guess. Such were the times then and the wars, it seems silly even to speculate about it.

Still his tone stayed with me, "Well somebody glad to see somebody," and I thought about him a lot in the following six years. He became for me the missed connection, and the entire scene that assumption, the idea that between black and white there must be only sexual connection, nothing familial, always eros, no

other kind of love. So optimistic that I am, I guess I was looking for him again, this time at the airport. Not that I expected him, not really, I never expect anything except signs to interpret. But as I said I see who I see, and it was his understanding I took in the union man's smile, as if it could forever lay that first time to rest, lay to rest suspicion, and apprehension, so a bygone trouble time can't come again, no matter how hard the new times become.

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**ROBERT BLACKBURN**



**"Arrest" LAURA ELKINS**



# Immigration Law

When I ask the experts  
"how much time do I have?"  
I don't want an answer in years  
or arguments.

I must know if there are hours enough  
to mend this relationship,  
see a book all the way to its birthing,  
stand beside my father  
on his journey.

I want to know how many seasons of chamisa  
will be yellow then grey-green  
and yellow

/light/

again,  
how many red cactus flowers  
will bloom beside my door.

I do not want to follow language  
like a dog with its tail between its legs.

I need time equated with music,  
hours rising in bread,  
years deep from connections.

The present always holds a tremor of the past.

Give me a handful of future  
to rub against my lips.

# The Gloves

*for Rhoda Waller*

Yes we did march around somewhere and yes it was cold,  
we shared our gloves because we had a pair between us  
and a New York city cop also shared his big gloves  
with me—strange,  
he was there to keep our order  
and he could do that  
and I could take that  
back then.

We were marching for the Santa Maria, Rhoda,  
a Portuguese ship whose crew had mutinied.  
They demanded asylum in Goulart's Brazil  
and we marched in support of that demand,  
in winter, in New York City,  
back and forth before the Portuguese Consulate  
Rockefeller Center, 1961.

I gauge the date by my first child  
—Gregory was born late in 1960—as I gauge  
so many dates by the first, the second, the third, the fourth,  
and I feel his body now, again, close to my breast,  
held against cold to our strong steps of dignity.

That was my first public protest, Rhoda,  
strange you should retrieve it now  
in a letter out of this love of ours  
alive these many years.

How many protests since that one, how many  
marches and rallies  
for greater causes, larger wars, deeper wounds  
cleansed or untouched by our rage.

Today a cop would never unbuckle his gloves  
and press them around my blue-red hands.

Today a baby held to breast  
would be a child of my child, a generation removed.  
The world is older and I in it  
am older,

burning, slower, with the same passions.

The passions are older and so I am also younger  
for knowing them more deeply and moving in them  
pregnant with fear and fighting.

The gloves are still there, in the cold,  
passing from hand to hand.

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## MARGARET RANDALL

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# ADRIENNE RICH

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## Poetry: I

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Someone at a table under a brown metal lamp  
is studying the history of poetry.  
Someone in the library at closing-time  
has learned to say *modernism*,  
*trope*, *vatic*, *text*.  
She is listening for shreds of music.  
He is searching for his name  
back in the old country.  
They cannot learn without teachers.  
They are like us what we were  
if you remember.

In a corner of night a voice  
is crying in a kind of whisper:  
*More!*

Can you remember? when we thought  
the poets taught how to live?  
That is not the voice of a critic  
nor a common reader  
it is someone young in anger  
hardly knowing what to ask  
who finds our lines our glosses  
wanting in this world.

---

## Poetry II: Chicago

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Whatever a poet is  
at the point of conception is  
conceived in these projects  
of beige and grey bricks Yes, poets are born  
in wasted tracts like these whatever color, sex  
comes to term in this winter's driving nights  
And the child pushes like a spear  
a cry through cracked cement through zero air  
a spear, a cry of green Yes, poets endure  
these schools of fear balked yet unbroken  
where so much gets broken: trust  
windows pride the mothertongue

Wherever a poet is born enduring  
depends on the frailest of chances:  
Who listened to your murmuring  
over your little rubbish who let you be  
who gave you the books  
who let you know you were not  
alone showed you the twist  
of old strands raffia, hemp or silk  
the beaded threads the fiery lines  
saying: *This belongs to you you have the right  
you belong to the song  
of your mothers and fathers You have a people*

---

## Poetry: III

---

Even if we knew the children were all asleep  
and healthy the ledgers balanced the water running  
clear in the pipes  
and all the prisoners free

Even if every word we wrote by then  
were honest the sheer heft  
of our living behind it  
not these sometimes  
lax, indolent lines  
these litanies

Even if we were told not just by friends  
that this was honest work

Even if each of us didn't wear  
a brass locket with a picture  
of a strangled woman a girlchild sewn through the crotch

Even if someone had told us, young: *This is not a key*  
*nor a peacock feather*  
*not a kite nor a telephone*  
*This is the kitchen sink the grinding-stone*

would we give ourselves  
more calmly over feel less criminal joy  
when the thing comes as it does come  
clarifying grammar  
and the fixed and mutable stars—?



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# Buckets of Music

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*for William Allen*

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## PATRICIA JONES

---

Akhmatova precisely  
conjures winter:  
hard and smooth as a mountain  
of pearls  
or  
a feast of snowflakes  
delicious in barren bellies.

She contemplates the empty well  
searches through the unlimited  
thirst  
for a moon  
a night  
when the winter  
the war  
would be over.

What a poet offers  
is the hard realities  
a drama of the interior  
mutable as real estate

A riot of princes and fools  
each swallowed daintily  
by bemused spirits garbed  
in a manner oddly of  
the Victorians

who allowed Marx a  
certain petty livelihood  
in London  
another chance to see  
how the other half weeps.

And where are we now  
rattling billions of bones  
out for blood  
out for honor  
down for the count.

A poet in Guatemala  
in South Africa  
or perhaps Korea  
wages her lonely battle  
as mother  
in her fierce regard  
for a new day  
"the revolution"  
or  
the remainder of  
misbegotten dreams:  
three meals a day  
a soft bed to lie upon  
a roof that does not leak  
police who do not bang  
loudly  
at two a.m.

Akhmatova dreams of stars  
far flung, cosmic  
not this one endless sun  
perched above the winter's  
horizon  
like the lock on the prison cell  
in which her husband shivers  
tortured, hungry  
lonely  
weeping buckets of music

has anything changed?

---

# from Lesbian Sequence

## CHERYL CLARKE

---

vi. An exile I have loved tells me she's going home.

Smug, I say:

"Back to the city?"

"No. First to Zambia. Then Zimbabwe.

Finally Transvaal. Home," she answers sad.

We sleep and wake to voices of men in the hallway  
asking through doors of faces that are changed  
and names that have not been spoken since.

I hold her to me

and remember the gold in my ears

ask for a way to stay in touch with her

tell her she's got a home long as I got mine.\*

Hold her to me until she must push away

and slip from the room.

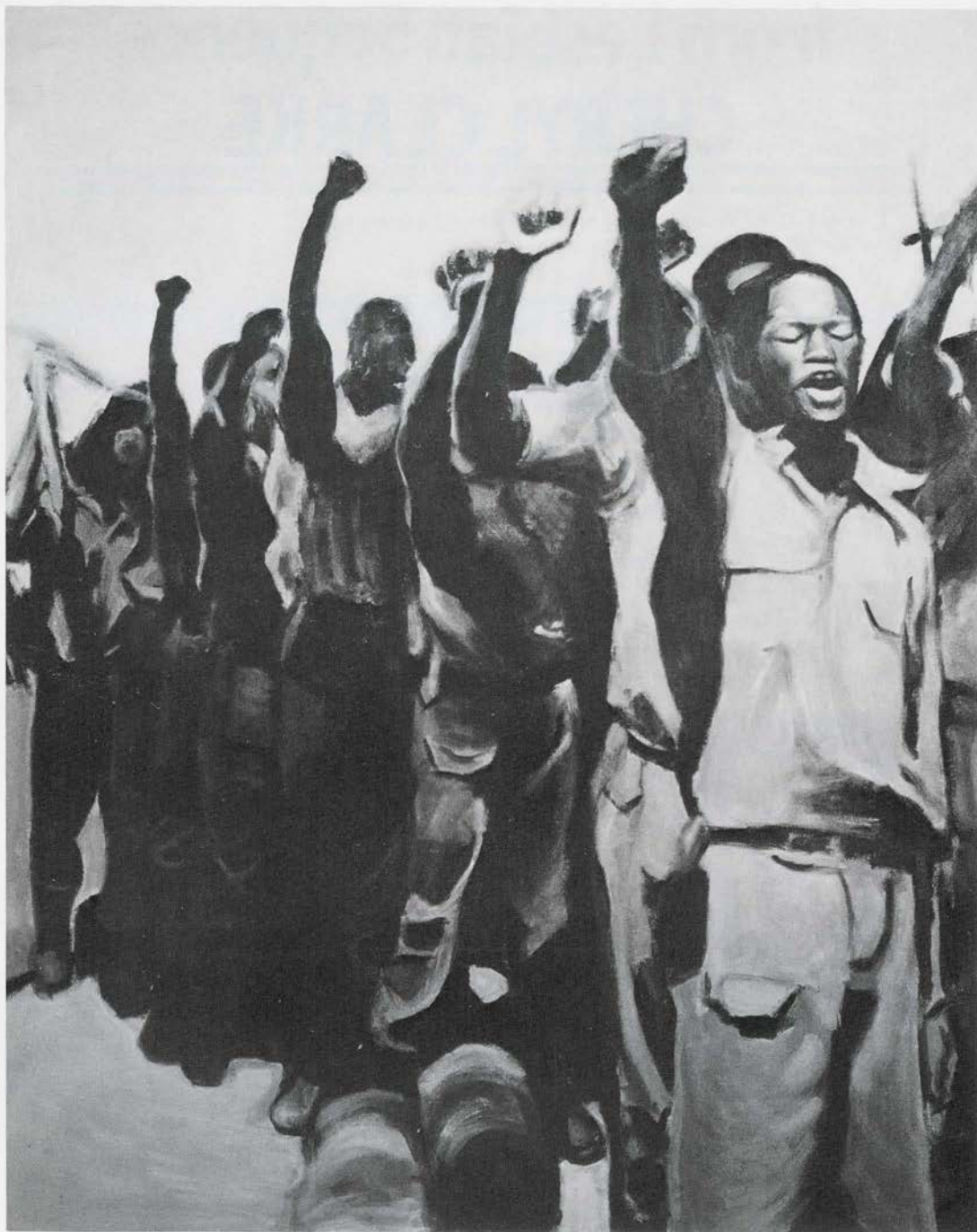
*\*Lines adapted from "I Left My Baby,"*

*a song sung by Jimmy Rushing*

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**"Enraged, Rage, Outrage" VIVIAN BROWNE**



**"Swapo I" KATHY DEACON**



# For the Brave Young Students in Soweto

**JAYNE  
CORTEZ**

Soweto  
when i hear your name  
I think about you  
like the fifth ward in Houston Texas  
one roof of crushed oil drums on the other  
two black hunters in buckets of blood  
walking into the fire of Sharpeville  
into the sweat and stink of gold mines  
into your children's eyes suffering from malnutrition  
while pellets of uranium are loaded onto boats  
headed for France for Israel for Japan  
away from the river so full of skulls  
and Robben Island so swollen with warriors  
and the townships that used to overflow  
with such apathy and dreams  
and i think about the old Mau Mau  
grieving in beer halls  
and the corrupt black leaders  
singing into police whistles  
and i think about the assembly line of dead  
"Hottentots"  
and the jugular veins of Allende  
and once again how the coffin is divided into dry ink  
how the factory moves like a white cane  
like a volley of bullets in the head of Lumumba  
and death is a death-life held together by shacks  
by widows who cry with their nipples pulled out  
by men who shake with electrodes on the tongue  
and Soweto  
when i hear your name and look at you on the  
reservation  
a Xhosa  
in the humid wrinkles of Shreveport Louisiana  
walking down fannin street  
into the bottom hole in the wall of endurance  
i smell the odor of our lives together made of tar  
paper  
the memories opening like stomachs in saw mills  
the faces growing old in cigarette burns  
and i think about the sacrifices made in Capetown  
the sisters being mauled by police dogs  
while the minister of justice rides  
the tall ship of torture  
down the hudson river in New York  
while vigilantes under Zulu masks  
strike through the heartland like robots  
in military boots with hatchets made of apartheid lips  
and Soweto  
when i look at this ugliness  
and see once again how we're divided and  
forced into fighting each other  
over a funky job in the sewers of Johannesburg  
divided into labor camps

fighting over damaged meat and stale bread in  
Harlem  
divided into factions fighting to keep from fighting  
the ferocious men who are shooting  
into the heads of our small children  
When i look at this ugliness  
and think about the Native Americans pushed  
into the famine of tribal reserves  
think about the concentration camps full of sad  
Palestinians  
and the slave quarters still existing in Miami  
the diamond factories still operating in Amsterdam in  
Belgium  
the gold market still functioning on wall street  
and the scar tissues around our necks  
swelling with tumors of dead leaves  
our bodies exploding like whiskey bottles  
as the land shrinks into the bones of ancestor  
"Bushmen"  
and i tell you Soweto  
when i see you stand up in the middle of all this  
stand up to the exotic white racists  
in their armored churches  
stand up to these landstealers, infant killers, rapists  
and rats  
to see you stand among the pangas the stones  
the war clubs the armadillos dying along this roadside  
to see you stand with the ocean the desert  
the birthright of red cliffs  
to see you stand with your brave young warriors  
courageous and strong hearted  
looking so confident in battle marks coated  
in grief and gunmetal tears  
to see you stand up to this epidemic of expansion  
and flame passbooks into ashes  
fling stones into the mouths of computers  
to see you stand on the national bank of america  
like monumental sculpture made of stained bullets  
to see you stand empty handed  
your shoulders open to the world  
each day young blood falling on the earth  
to see you stand in the armed struggle  
next to Mozambique, Angola, Namibia, Zimbabwe  
Soweto i tell you Soweto  
when i see you standing up like this  
i think about all the forces in the world  
confronted by the terrifying rhythms of young  
students  
by their sacrifices  
and the revelation that it won't be long now  
before everything  
in this world changes

---

# from "THE LAST RIVER"

## GALWAY KINNELL

---

Through the crisscross  
of bars at the tiny window  
I could see the swallows  
that were darting in the last light,  
late-flying creatures that surpass us in plain view . . .  
bits of blurred flesh . . .  
wavy lines . . .

Nothing's there now but a few stars  
brightening  
under the ice-winds of the emptiness . . .

Isn't it strange  
that all love, all granting of respect,  
has no face for its passing expressions but yours,  
Death?

\* \* \*

I hear now  
the saddest of songs, the humming  
the dew makes  
as it dries from the garlic leaf.

A new night  
and the dew will come back again,  
for so many men  
the chance to live as men  
does not ever come.

\* \* \*

I remember  
the ancient ex-convict  
who teaches voter-registration  
in his shanty under the levee, standing  
in the sun on the dirt road . . .  
a crepe myrtle tree,  
a passion flower,  
a butterfly . . .

In the green, blistered sewer,  
beer cans, weeds, plastic flowers . . .

The dust on the road  
swirls up into little wing-shapes, that blow off,  
the road made of dust goes down . . .

He smiles,  
the air brightens as though ashes  
of lightning bolts had been scattered through it.

What is it that makes the human face,  
bit of secret,  
lighted flesh, open up the earth?



# CHILE YOUR WATERS...

---

## BERNICE JOHNSON REAGON

Chile your waters run red through Soweto  
If you heard about Chile  
    then you heard about Soweto  
There the blood of oppression  
    runs deep as the mines

Chile your waters run red through Soweto

The hands that choked the spirit  
    of Allende  
Pulled the trigger on the children  
    in a muddy Soweto street

Chile your waters run red through Soweto

The hands that turned the key  
    in 10 Wilmington jail cells  
Put young Steve Mitchell  
    in a dusty hill grave

Chile your waters run red through Soweto

The hands of oppression  
    are the hands of hunger  
The waters of Chile  
    fill the banks of Cape Fear

Chile your waters run red through Soweto  
The same hands—Same waters

"I started singing the chorus of this song after the June 16th, 1976 Soweto uprising. When Sweet Honey did the September, 1976 memorial to Allende, the urgency to write the song was strengthened. It was not until I was working on the music for the film, *U.S.A., Wilmington 10,000*, with Haile Gerima and Positive Productions that I was able to write the full text—the missing link was the struggle against oppression here at home, in this case, the Wilmington 10 case, which was of the same struggle as South Africa and Chile's oppression."



A POLICEMAN MAY AT ANY TIME CALL UPON ANY AFRICAN WHO IS SIXTEEN OR OLDER TO PRODUCE HIS REFERENCE BOOK. IF THE AFRICAN FAILS TO PRODUCE IT, OR IF HIS PAPERS ARE NOT IN ORDER, HE IS COMMITTING A CRIMINAL OFFENSE AND IS LIABLE TO A FINE OR IMPRISONMENT.

THE GOVERNMENT CAN CANCEL THE EMPLOYMENT OF ANY AFRICAN FOR WHATEVER REASON REGARDLESS OF HOW LONG HE HAS BEEN SO EMPLOYED AND EVEN IF HIS EMPLOYER OPPOSES THE CANCELLATION.

ANY AFRICAN CAN BE SUMMARILY REMOVED FROM THE TOWN WHERE HE LIVES, SHOULD THE GOVERNMENT DECIDE HE REPRESENTS A DANGER TO THE STATE.

THE AFRICAN WORKER MAY NOT STRIKE. MAXIMUM PENALTY: THREE YEARS IN PRISON.

THE GOVERNMENT MAY EMPOWER POLICE CONSTABLES TO IMPRISON A MAN WITHOUT A TRIAL.

A PRISONER CAN BE DETAINED FOR UP TO 14 DAYS WITHOUT CHARGES.

ANYONE OPENLY CRITICAL OF GOVERNMENT POLICIES CAN BE SENT TO A REMOTE CAMP OR BE CONFINED INDEFINITELY TO HIS HOME. PAPERS CAN BE FORBIDDEN TO QUOTE SUCH A PERSON ON ANY SUBJECT.

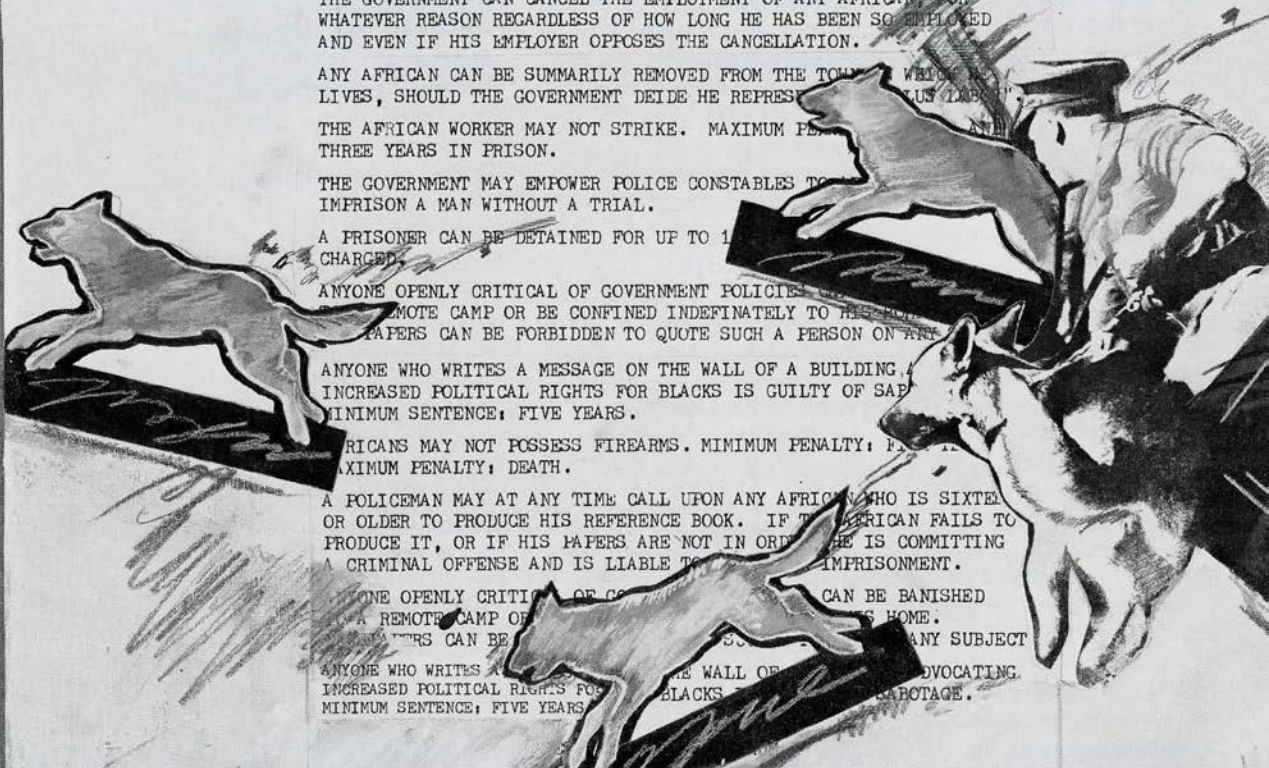
ANYONE WHO WRITES A MESSAGE ON THE WALL OF A BUILDING ADVOCATING INCREASED POLITICAL RIGHTS FOR BLACKS IS GUILTY OF SEDITION. MINIMUM SENTENCE: FIVE YEARS.

AFRICANS MAY NOT POSSESS FIREARMS. MINIMUM PENALTY: FIVE YEARS. MAXIMUM PENALTY: DEATH.

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## The Bath: August 6, 1945

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Bathing the summer night  
off my arms and breasts  
I heard a plane  
overhead I heard  
the front door rattle  
froze  
then relaxed  
in the cool water  
one more moment  
one private moment  
before waking the children  
and mother-in-law,  
before the heat  
before the midday heat  
drenched my spirits again.  
I had wanted  
to also relax  
in thoughts of my husband—  
how we were children  
when he was drafted  
imprisoned — but didn't dare  
and rose from the tub,  
dried off lightly  
and slipped on cotton work pants.  
Caution drew me to the window  
and there  
an enormous blossom of fire  
a hand changed my life  
and made the world shiver—  
a light that tore flesh  
so it slipped off limbs,  
swelled so  
no one could recognize  
a mother or child  
a hand that tore the door open

*pushed me on the floor  
ripped me up —  
I will never have children again*  
so even today  
my hair has not grown back  
my teeth still shards  
and one eye blind  
and it would be easy,  
satisfying somehow  
to write it off as history  
those men are there  
each time I close  
my one good eye  
each time or lay blame  
on men or militarists  
the children cry out  
in my sleep  
where they still live  
for the sake of a night's rest.  
But it is not air raids  
simply  
that we survive  
but diamonds worth their value  
in blood the coal,  
oil, uranium we mine  
and drill  
yet cannot call our own.  
And it would be gratifying  
to be called a survivor  
I am a survivor  
since I live if I didn't wonder  
about survival today—  
at 55, widowed at 18 —

if I didn't feel  
the same oppressive August heat  
auto parts in South Africa  
Mexico Alabama  
and shiver not from memory  
or terror  
but anger that this wounded body  
must stand take a stand  
and cry out  
as only a new born baby can cry—  
I live, I will live  
I will to live  
in spite of history  
to make history  
in my vision of peace—  
that morning in the bath  
so calm  
so much my right  
though I cannot return to that moment  
I bring these words to you  
hoping to hold you  
to hold you  
and to take hold.

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*Written on the occasion of the special U.N. Session for  
Disarmament for the hibakusha.*

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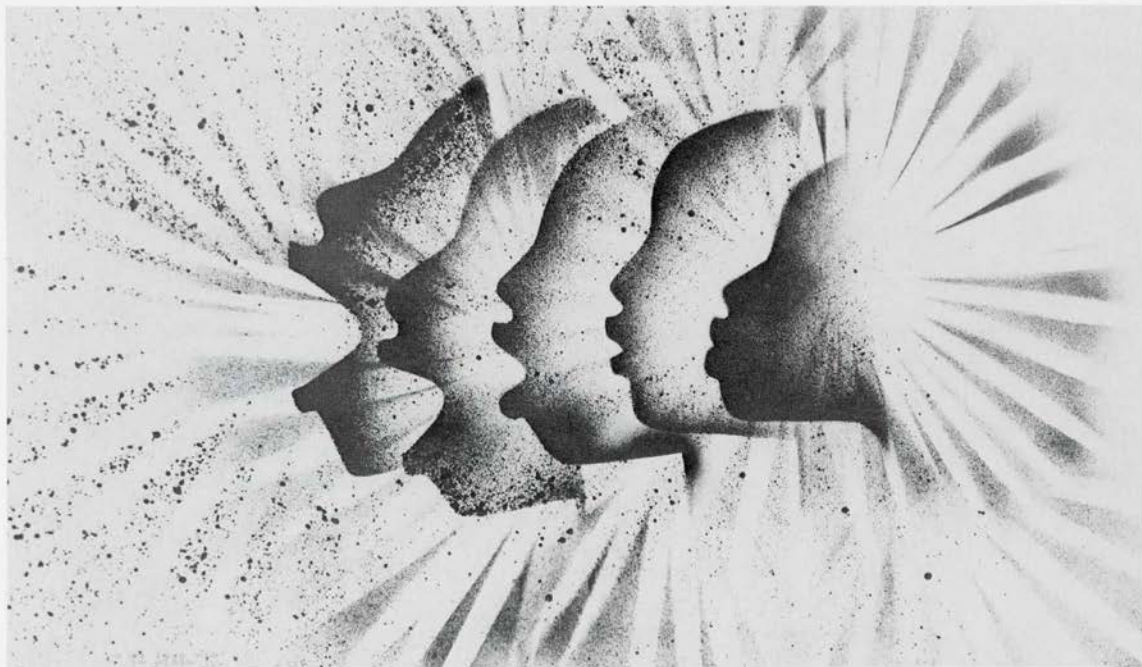
# **Towards Strength** *for E.E.M.*

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Tell me also that the lawns will be covered  
with snow even as the flowers  
break through.  
We think they are delicate  
but know their fragrance penetrates the ice.  
Or it may be our imagination:  
little signals that we'll bear up under hard times  
together always.

*Kimiko Hahn*

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**"Apartheid No" VALERIE MAYNARD**

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# Brief Chronicle by Candle Light

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## MEENA ALEXANDER

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Children torn by the winds  
married women burnt in their own homes  
I thought I had seen it all that night  
as I lit a candle at my door.

In the brief chronicle of candle light  
I cried out as a child might  
to all the night creatures I know:  
jackal, cobra, the thousand eyed owl.

I thought the wind howled in the badam tree.  
In a forest of bamboo once bent to a storm  
I heard hundreds of whispering feet.  
Countless women, their hours lent

to pounding grain  
massaging the ankles of strangers,  
their necks spent with bearing bricks  
sticks, straw for fires that could one day consume them

would they perish at the muddy centre  
of all our gathered lives?

I tell you I watched them that night.

Very simply they set their feet  
to the waiting trees and climbed them.  
They wandered in the night sky  
telling the stars in wonder

wrapping us, for we were cold that night  
in a true story  
a benediction that called up the cobra  
from its hole under the stones:  
it danced on its tail  
in a future light

the jackal pranced by the ancient stones  
delighting the sleepy children,  
like a raw creature the owl cried out  
"tweet-t-woot" and all its thousand eyes  
could not drink up the moving women.

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# Hotel Alexandria

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Corner of Broadway and 103rd. Street. I stand in the cold staring at Alexandria Hotel, a hospice the city kept its poor in. They're dismantling it now, tearing out pipes, bricks, even the tiles that lined the dingy basement. Two men carry out a sofa; it has black and blue stripes on the arms. Next a mirror with the gilt impossibly intact; a pitcher with a broken lip no one will ever wash from. The sidewalk bristles with roaches.

There's barely room for the old woman who approaches, three plastic bags bound to her thighs, a man's jacket slung over her breasts, a woolen blanket someone threw out years ago covering her head so that only a tangle of hair shows. Hair acrid as salt. Newspapers are tucked in under her jacket. I see their rims, wasted with cold, fluttering.

She kneels on the icy ground and rocks back and forth. A weird rocking creature. The blanket sags over the ground. Where did she come from? Grown jittery, the men yell at her then turn back to their job. Back and forth, back and forth she rocks. The men return with a pile of pipes, bent, tips soiled with smoke. I see a skirt now, under the plastic bags, a cotton skirt printed with half moons. At least her flesh is covered. The rusty pin on the jacket holds. The rocking creature has no gloves. She does not moan.

"Whose house is this?" I dare not cry, for a Chinese couple pass me by, their bedding rolled up in canvas. They have crossed the red lights with great care, looking right and left, left and right. They notice me, standing there, my soles leaking black water. I am two weeks old in this city. I have come here by subway. Memory drew me here, the danger of the unlit passage.

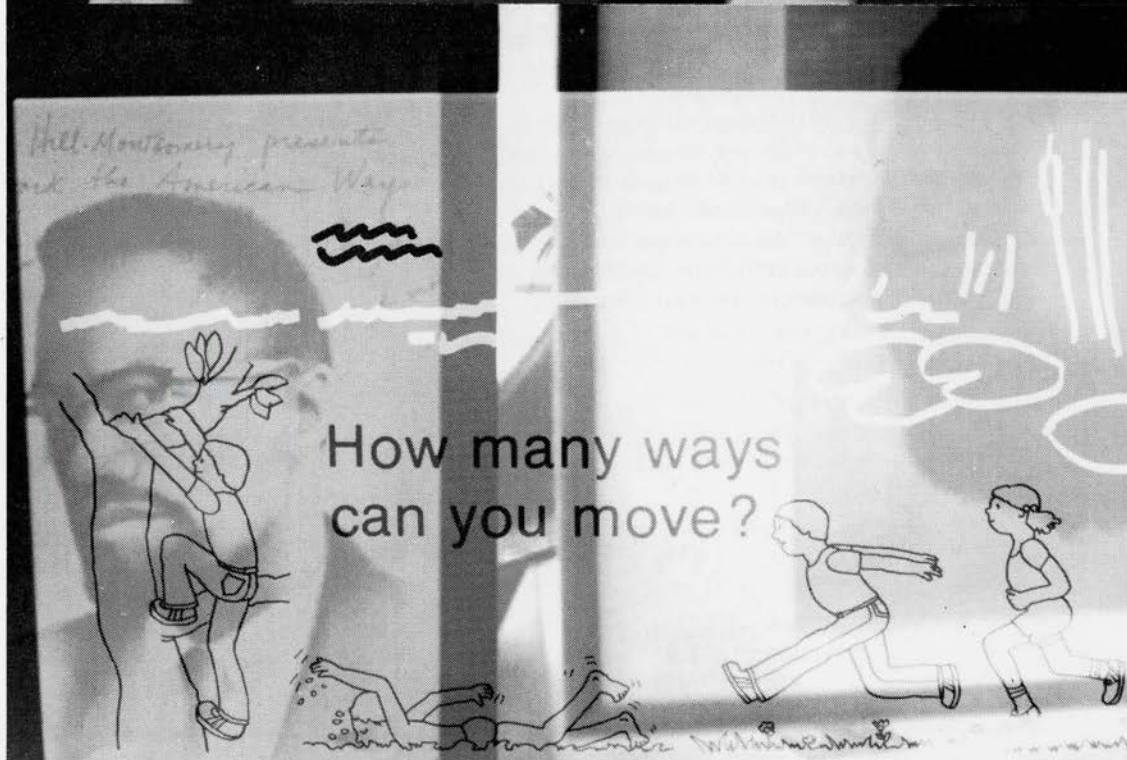
I knew that the white gulls that crowd the broken walls of the Alexandria Hotel would not cry to me, yet I had come as if drawn to the ground of my making, a house dismantled, the poor shed to the streets of Manhattan.

Alexandria, city of my childhood where seagulls wheeled over the burning waters and I thought them angels. Where old couples, Muslim and Copt, carried out their bedding and laid it to sun. Where children cracked sesame seed in their teeth and laughed at the gulls that hovered over Farouk's abandoned palace.

Alexandria, where tongues of water rose and kissed my face: let me speak now in this cold air, of the blisters of birth: my voice imprecise, my ignorance that of a perpetual immigrant, a woman with nowhere to lay her head.

Meena Alexander





# LUCY R. LIPPARD

## Not So Far From South Africa: Visual Art Against Apartheid

*The first section, "The Dope on Dupes," is a partially revised and cut version of a piece published in The Village Voice, August 28, 1984, under the Voice's title: "Art in Solidarity." "Not So Far From South Africa" was reprinted from The Village Voice, Nov. 13, 1984.*

When Art Against Apartheid gets under way in the fall, it will mark the second large campaign initiated by visual artists on a political issue in the past year. The first—Artist Call Against U.S. Intervention in Central America—mounted an unprecedented series of exhibitions, performances, poetry, film, video, and mass public theater during its first phase (January through March). Together, Art Against Apartheid and Artists Call mark the high point of artists' solidarity in 14 years, since the Art Strike of 1970. At the same time, predictably enough, backlash is being whipped up against Artists Call which could discourage artists from joining the antiapartheid project and future actions on other issues. That's why I'm writing this.

Artists' solidarity? Something not even most artists want or know they want. One of my dictionary's definitions of solidarity is "complete unity," so maybe artists' solidarity is also a contradiction in terms. Yet even among these mythically rugged individualists, there has been a visible "agreement, as of opinion, purpose, interest, feeling." And it's important for those of us working in cultural fields to feel, for once, a *part of* instead *apart from* what's happening around us.

Solidarity on political issues, especially those concerning the Third World, is not so easy to come by in the art world. When it works, it does so on several levels, none of which applies to all participants. To begin with, it can offer political satisfactions and aesthetic challenges, providing a way for artists across the political spectrum to express themselves responsibly as citizens and as creative people. It can bring together artists from different, often unfamiliar sectors of the art community, then bring them together with professionals informed about the issues, so that the organizing process doubles as an educational process. (A lawyer advising Artists Call said after one steering committee meeting that he felt like he "was talking to a bunch of lawyers, not artists.") Projects like this also bring together local artists and artists exiled from their own countries—an intramural exchange program. Finally, there is the real and deeply felt support for the threatened cultures themselves.

A number of factors are responsible for the immediacy and extent of the response to Artists Call and Art Against Apartheid. Among them are the relative acceptance in the mainstream of vaguely politicized art at the moment, and the approaching election. But more significant in this context is the fact that the



potential power of culture is being far more broadly acknowledged outside the art world than at any other time I can remember.

Ironically, this sense of cultural power is more perceptible outside the art world than inside. In an article called "Dumb Artists and Smart Marxists" (*American Book Review*, May–June 1984), art critic Corinne Robins began two book reviews with an attack on Artists Call, described as "the Marxist or 'left' sector of the art world" (which would have surprised several members of the original steering committee). According to Robins, this evil empire worked for a year just to enable "the professional left to look down on the liberal establishment of the artists and art galleries as foolish dupes."

And in the May issue of *Arts Magazine*, Dan Cameron put in his two cents worth, fashionably entitled "Mary Boone and the Sandanistas" [sic]: "I'm afraid I must remain entirely cynical regarding the political efficacy of Artists Call. Some money was raised which went directly to the right causes, but the final effect had a built-in nebulosity that could have been avoided if the organizers had aimed for something more concrete than artists' solidarity." He concluded that the whole campaign was no more than "an opportunistic excuse for a lot of artists to jump on an ideological bandwagon and satisfy their social consciences as well." When irresponsible critics call responsible artists irresponsible, who's a dupe and who's an opportunist? . . .

Meanwhile, the connections are being made between apartheid and intervention; for instance, in 1981 Alexander Haig called for the legalization of covert aid to South African-backed *contras* in Angola, paving the way for legitimizing covert aid to the U.S.-backed *contras* in Nicaragua. The power of culture is still potential rather than realized. Artists *alone* will change nothing. But if every professional community from iron workers and small businesspeople to teachers and physicians were to mobilize against US Intervention in Central America and Apartheid in South Africa, the cynical dupe message would be seen for the sour and red-baiting line it is.\*

## Not So Far From South Africa

The figures are familiar, almost opaque: 21 million black people living on 13 percent of the land in virtual slavery to four million white invaders living on 87 percent of the land. No political, economic, or cultural rights. Poverty, misery, murder. Somehow, the spirit survives. The litany of injustices brings emotional overload and South Africa is far away. But the artist's job is to conceive, to move us closer. Art Against Apartheid (AAA)—over 300 artists in 24 benefit exhibitions plus many other events here and across the country, sponsored by the Foundation for the Community of Artists, supported by the UN Committee Against Apartheid—raises yet again the painful and hopeful dilemma of artists who care, who want to do more, and who are constantly told they can do nothing. It also raises some specific issues about art and racism.

In two important ways, unique to its subject and object, AAA differed from last January's Artists Call Against U.S. Intervention in Central America, to which this campaign is bound to be compared. First, the organizers requested that the artists' work relate directly to apartheid. Second, the exhibitions were held in



what artworld denizens would consider “out of the way” places—i.e., in places very close to home for New York’s Black communities—Harlem, Jamaica, the Bronx, and Newark, as well as on the Lower East Side and, marginally, in Soho. It has therefore reached audiences untouched by other such art events.

Lindiwe Mabuza’s statement about what culture can do for South Africa is no less applicable to New York’s “minorities”: “A coherent culture gives people a sense of being, belonging, identity, integrity, and a frame of reference that can help them withstand the ravages of exploitation.” Despite, or because of, a preponderance of lesser and unknown names, the general level of the AAA shows is high, underlined by their grassroots contexts, from the prestigious Schomburg Center for Black Culture, City College, and the Abyssinian Baptist Church, to the Henry Street Settlement House, the Basement Workshop, and ABC No Rio. However, even much of the good work indicates just how difficult it is to be sufficiently informed, to get past the superficial horrors to the horrible depths of something like apartheid.

Broad-based, interdisciplinary campaigns like this one, Artists Call, and PADD’s State of Mind/State of the Union, are assembling a pool of artists who, rather than limiting themselves to once-a-year guilt pieces on political issues, are confronting socio-aesthetic issues as part of their lifework. They are learning to *envision* more effectively, in more developed ways. While the barbed wire, raised fists, mournful victims are still in evidence, they are sometimes used imaginatively.

The preponderance of violence in these shows reflects both anger and impotence. Much of the work is also tender and compassionate, such as Sue Coe’s atypically serene mother and child that eschews sentimentality for a Kollwitz-like emotional force. Marina Gutierrez’s painted construction, *Net Blankes* (Whites Only), offers a spatial metaphor for “apart-hate” that reaches me where I live. And Margaretta Johnson’s sewn, quiltlike construction, Giza Daniels Endesha’s rousing *Ain’t Jemima*, Jorge Tacla’s gory *El Cosquillozo* (and an awful lot of others, but I’m not going to succumb to lists) successfully go for the gut too.

The coalition of Black and white artists working together on AAA was personified in the performance, “Shades of Love,” presented at the Abyssinian Baptist Church opening. Five Black and two white artists (painters, musicians, performers) exuded the multiracial optimism of the whole project by interweaving pertinent autobiographical episodes and South African facts: Black men speaking the stories of white women, white women speaking the stories of Black women, stories about bombings and the Bible, stories about anti-Semitism and apartheid, about ambivalent friendships, love, and loss in Birmingham/Soho/Soweto, backed by strange, original music.

After reading about Art Against Apartheid and Artists Call in *Cultural Democracy* last summer, Arlene Goldbard wrote the editors asking for “some analysis of why there is so little to engage US artists at home” and for “more clear relationships to be drawn between this support work, work in other countries, and domestic cultural work.” My initial response was to insist that these issues *are* domestic, in that the U.S. government is actively (and economically) responsible for both situations. But apartheid is “domestic” in another sense as well. It is the last word in racism, and even if our local variety seems to pale in comparison to South Africa’s proud and public dedication to white supremacy, it offers a rallying point from which to confront day-to-day racism here.

Then again, cultural and geographical distance may make racism easier for white artists to handle. I am reminded that social specificity is virtually nonexistent in contemporary art. When did you last see a painting of a woman doing the dishes, a plumber crawling around under a sink, a secretary talking back to her boss? Work—ordinary work, not the drama of strikes and accidents—is invisible, not only in art. So the stylistic options often seem limited to heroically anonymous “workers,” idealized and/or patronized, standing in for the guy next door who’s out of work. Sometimes it seems that South Africa is in danger of becoming a symbol, a fantasy rather than a reality, because of our distance from our own realities. For many of us it’s easier to make work about Soweto than about welfare mothers. While it may be possible to gain a perspective on our own personal racism by transposing it to a fantasized South Africa, much “tele-vision” may also allow us to ignore, escape from, underplay our own domestic problems. This may account for the number of straightforward portraits of Black people in the AAA shows—expressive, but unspecific.

Human dignity is a cultural product and resistance is often preceded by a burst of cultural energy. In a country where school books for Black children emphasize the students’ inferiority, calling them “primitive and barbaric,” affirmative culture becomes a necessity. Since AAA will continue, I’d like to see a show of South African art, apparently a strong underground current. There is some African art showing by coincidence, hung with five paintings at the Afro Arts Cultural Center in Harlem, where director Simon Bly offers proud and gracious tours of his collection, including some striking Benin bronzes and the whimsical, miniature tincan furniture of Mrs. Ruby Oowoh.

Leaning on a desk in this tiny, crowded homemade museum of Black history is a large oil—*The Collector*, by David Hatchett. A spiky expressionism (not neo) is played against the more realistic head of a man eyeing covetously a small wooden, maybe Yoruba, figure. The painting reverberates all the way downtown to the Museum of Modern Art’s blockbuster “Primitivism in 20th Century Art” exhibition. The MOMA show includes some of the most striking traditional art I’ve seen in one place, which has the curious effect of making the modern classics it was planned to illuminate look somewhat anemic. Much of the show’s premise depends on the concept of “affinities” (as opposed to “influences”) between tribal and modern art. But in fact the spirit of the AAA shows is closer to that of primal art than Picasso, Derain, Ernst, et al. ever got. (Brancusi came closer, perhaps because of his own roots in an authentic folk culture.) The “affinities” are merely visual resemblances; the cultures, and the role of art in them, are much too far apart to feel the same, and the context helps the “primitives” to appear more sophisticated than the cosmopolitans.

Yet there is only one work by an Afro-American artist in the historical part of the MOMA show (a modest collage by Romare Bearden), and none by contemporary Native Americans (or Melanesians, Easter Islanders, etc., for that matter). A similar Eurocentric disrespect for the continuing tradition was grotesquely exhibited by “*Art Contre/Against Apartheid*,” an international exhibition organized in Paris last year with the intention of establishing a museum collection for a future South Africa. The otherwise impressive show was indelibly flawed by the inclusion of only four Blacks (three from Africa, one from the U.S.) and two women, out of 96 participants.



As Faith Ringgold said at the AAA press conference, held on Park Avenue in front of the South African embassy, "I'd like to let out a scream that would be heard around the world." She also repeated the line used in her assemblage at the Henry Street show—a line that always gives me the chills: "Now you have touched the women. You have struck a rock, you have dislodged a boulder, you will be crushed."

The process by which this will happen is the subject of an extraordinary book by Julie Frederikse. *None but Ourselves: Masses Vs. Media in the Making of Zimbabwe* (Penguin, 1984) is full of field notes, photos, ads, comics, and firsthand accounts from both sides. It is a fascinating and accessible analysis of a revolution, designed to record "a history that might have been lost had it not been told now," but also intended as an effective educational tool for those still struggling under apartheid. As Frederikse and photographer Biddy Partridge traveled Zimbabwe with camera and tape recorder in mid-1980, they "began to learn how Blacks and whites, in the villages and cities, had formed radically different perceptions of a supposedly shared reality. And then we began to ask the most difficult and most important question: what influences had shaped the perceptions that created such very different realities?"

The document of this "war of words and ideas, through the words and ideas of the people who fought this media war" contains a lot of information and insights for communicators far from South Africa. If we are going to make the connections to our own domestic experiences, as well as fight "constructive engagement" in South Africa by our government, information is crucial. A schoolteacher in Chibi is quoted: "The history books say that Livingston discovered the Victoria Falls. Stupid idea! Livingston didn't discover; he was informed."

## Post-Script

The exhibition I organized at PS 1 for Art Against Apartheid was called "ID." The participants were Third-World women photographers: Josely Carvalho, Thulani Davis, Nyzda Bajandas, Pena Bonita, Candace Hill-Montgomery, Nina Kuo, Li-Lan, Howardena Pindell, Jolene Rickard, Sophie Rivera, Naomi Simonetti, Coreen Simpson, and Clarissa Sligh. These Afro-American, Asian-American, Native-American, and Latin-American artists worked with photography in many different ways—"straight" in color and black and white, painting over their prints, photo-silkscreening on diaphonous cloth, "constructing" photos as prints, and creating a full installation.

"ID" was about racial identity and diversity—official and unofficial, local and global, public and subversive. Self and social identification were used as metaphors for the pass laws that require South African Blacks to carry ID cards in order to eat, work, walk from one place to another—in short, in order to exist. The artists shared a resistance to being homogenized into the All-American melting pot. Their art, reflecting their cultures, is their ID.



MEENA ALEXANDER, born in India in 1951 and educated there, in North Africa and later England, currently lives in New York City. Her most recent volume of poetry is *Stone Roots* (New Delhi: Arnold-Heinemann, 1980).

BERNADINE: Born of labor/ I live of struggle/ With a family of millions who do the same/ And from whom I have learned.

CAROLE BOVOSO is a writer whose book *Foremothers: The Story of Four Generations of Women* is forthcoming from Summit Books.

BETH BRANT: I am 44 years old, a Bay of Quinte Mohawk, a lesbian mother, a high school drop-out, a writer, editor of *A Gathering of Spirit*, (Sinister Wisdom Books, 1983) devoted to the writing and art of North American Indian women and the author of *Mohawk Trail* (Firebrand Books, 1985).

LINDAJEAN BROWN, a fiction writer, editor, publisher, and diarist, and member of the *Azalea* collective which publishes a magazine by Third World lesbians, is Editor-in-chief and founder of Iridian Press and member of the NYC Women of Color Coalition, a grass-roots coalition working for political and social change thru networking.

DENNIS BRUTUS has been in exile since the late 1960's. He has taught in the English Department of Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, for the last ten years and has recently won permission from the Chicago immigration authorities to remain in the United States.

JAMES CASON & MICHAEL FLESHMAN are freelance writers living in New York who contribute regularly to *Africa News* and *The Guardian*.

FAYE CHIANG, poet and visual artist has worked since 1971 at the Basement Workshop with other Asian American artists developing Asian American culture. She was awarded a CAPS grant in 1982 and has recently completed a play, *Laundryman* and a half hour screenplay, *Mia Vita* to be produced by Third World Newsreel.

CHERYL CLARKE, a Black, lesbian and feminist poet, editor, reviewer, author of *Narratives: poems in the tradition of Black women* (Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, 1983) is a member of the *Conditions Magazine Editorial Collective*. Her poetry *Living as a Lesbian*, (Firebrand Press) will be published in 1986.

MICHELLE CLIFF is a Jamaican. Author of *Abeng* (Crossing Press) and *The Land of Look Behind* (Firebrand Books), she has recently completed a new novel entitled, *No Telephone to Heaven*.

JAYNE CORTEZ's poetry has been published in many journals, magazines, and anthologies including *New Black Voices*, *Giant Talk*, *Free Spirits*, *Presence Africaine*, *Mundus Artium* and the *Unesco Courier*. Her most recent book is *Coagulations: New and Selected Poems* and her most recent recording, *There It Is*.

JEREMY CRONIN: Born in 1949, he was the son of an officer in the South African Navy. He taught in the philosophy and politics departments in Capetown from 1974 to 1976 when he was arrested and charged under the Terrorism Act of having carried out ANC underground work. He was sentenced to seven years imprisonment which included three years in amongst death row prisoners in the notorious Pretoria Maximum jail.

DAVINE is Associate Editor of IKON. "I attempt to shatter myths, expose 'personal' tragedies that are political in basis. . . . As a Black person, and as a woman, I refuse to be silenced by my 'condition'."

THULANI DAVIS, a poet and journalist, is the author of *Playing the Changes* (Wesleyan University Press), *All the Renegade Ghosts Rise* (Anemone Press), the libretto for the opera *X*, based on the life of Malcolm X, was a Senior Editor at *Village Voice*, and has also written for *Mother Jones*, *Essence*, and *The Nation*.

TOI DERRICOTE has published two books of poems, *The Empress of the Death House*, (Lotus Press, 1978) and *Natural Birth* (Crossing Press, 1983). She was a recipient of an NEA Creative Writing Fellowship, 1985.

ALEXIS DE VEAUX, a poet, playwright, novelist, freelance journalist, performance artist and the co-founder of *Flamboyant Ladies Theatre Company* is also an Editor-At-Large for *Essence Magazine*, and is currently at work on a children's book, a collection of short fiction and a forthcoming book of poems.

JIMMIE DURHAM is a poet and sculptor and a Wolf Clan Cherokee who was born in 1940 in Arkansas. He now lives in New York City and is a member of A.I.M.

KATE ELLIS teaches creative writing and women's literature at Rutgers University. Her poems have appeared in *MS*, *Chrysalis*, *Sunbury*, *13th Moon*, and *Feminist Studies*.

KATHY ENGEL is Executive Director of MADRE, a national Friendship Association between women in the United States, in Central America and the Caribbean. Her poems have appeared in *Poetry East*, *Pequod*, *Response*, *City* among other publications.

SANDRA MARÍA ESTEVES, literary, graphic and performing artist published *Yerba Buena* with Greenfield Review in 1980 and *Tropical Rains: A Bi-Lingual Downpour* with African Caribbean Poetry Theatre in 1984. Poetry fellowships include CAPS, 1980, and The New York Foundation for the Arts, 1985.

PAULA FINN was born in 1960 in Providence, Rhode Island. She is a poet who lives in Brooklyn. She works with Art Against Apartheid and teaches English as a Second Language.

GLENDA FRANK, a CAPS winning poet and small press drama critic teaches creative writing in New York and is a Ph.D. candidate in theatre.

CHARLES FREDERICK's work has recently appeared in *Cultural Correspondence*, *Upfront*, and *World War III Illustrated*. His current theater work has been to compose political street demonstrations as public performances. He is a member of the board of The Alliance for Cultural Democracy.

AUDRE GRICE, Black woman poet, writer, mother and teacher, is currently pursuing doctoral studies at Columbia University. She was born, raised, and currently lives and works in Harlem and is a member of the Metamorphosis Writers Collective.

JESSICA HAGEDORN, writer and performer, is the author of the award-winning *PET FOOD & TROPICAL APPARITIONS* and *DANGEROUS MUSIC*, both published by Momo's Press. Her most recent theater piece was "The Art of War" presented at Dance Theatre Workshop in 1984.

KIMIKO HAHN has been published in such journals as *Ikon*, *Bomb*, *Lips*, as well as *Breaking Silence: Anthology of Contemporary Asian American Poets*. She lives in New York City and is poetry editor at *Bridge: Asian American Perspectives*.

MICHAEL S. HARPER won the Poetry Society of America's Melville Cane Award for *Images of Kin*. His other books have also earned him two National Book Award nominations, as well as awards given by the National Institute of Arts and Letters and the Black Academy of Arts and Letters.

ESSEX HEMPILL's latest collection published by Be Bop Books is entitled *Earth Life*. His poetry has appeared in *Obsidian*, *Painted Bride Quarterly*, *Callaloo*, *Mouth of the Dragon*, *Blackheart 2*, *Blacklight*, *Black Scholar*, and will appear in *In the Life*, an anthology of literature and essays by Black gay men, edited by Joseph Beam.

SAFIYA HENDERSON-HOLMES, recipient of a 1983 CAPS award for poetry, published in numerous anthologies, is a writer, poet, mommy, health worker, cultural activist, living & learning in New York City, who wants to thank all involved in the presence and beauty of this book and dedicates it to her mother and father.

AKUA LEZLI HOPE Third generation New Yorker/Amurkin, firstborn, three degree'd in ivy leagues, breathes in Brooklyn. Her manuscript, *The Prize is the Journey*, was a finalist in the 1983 Walt Whitman contest. She is editing and publishing *New Heat*, a soon-to-be-seen Black literary magazine.

GALE JACKSON is a writer and librarian who lives in Brooklyn. She is co-director of Art Against Apartheid.

GEOFFREY JACQUES has been writing and publishing poetry for the last fifteen years. He has worked as a clerk, driver, journalist and union organizer. He is the author of *To Save the Soul of Black America: Black Leadership in the U.S. Peace Movement*, a monograph published in 1984 by the U.S. Peace Council.

HETTIE JONES, the author of numerous books for children and young adults, including *Big Star Fallin' Mama*, *Five Women In Black Music* (Viking) also publishes poetry and stories for grown folks; *Having Been Her* (Number Press) is her latest collection. She and her children would not be allowed to live together under Apartheid.



MATTHEW "MATT" JONES, Freedom Fighter, composer and singer for twenty-six years, has written freedom songs sung around the world. "You express your fight for freedom through the seeking of freedom for all oppressed people. I fight for freedom because I am African, Irish, Palestinian, American Indian all rolled into one. WE ALL ARE."

PATRICIA JONES, a poet, arts reviewer and performance artist, has published in *Essence*, *Conditions*, *Obsidian*, and *Home Girls*, an anthology. Her book *Mythologizing Always* is now out of print. Currently Program Coordinator of the Poetry Project in New York City, she knows that apartheid will end in her lifetime.

JUNE JORDAN's new volume of poetry, her sixth, entitled *Living Room*, has just been published by Thunder's Mouth Press, P.O. Box 780, New York, New York 10025.

TERU KANAZAWA is a third-generation Japanese American and presently English Editor of *The New York Nichibei* who has been published in several anthologies and gives poetry readings in the New York area.

MAURICE KENNY has authored numerous collections of poems, including *Blackrobe* (1982) which was nominated for the Pulitzer and was recipient of a National Public Radio Award for Broadcasting, and *The Mama Poems* which received the prestigious American Book Award in 1984.

GALWAY KINNELL has taught writing at N.Y.U. since 1981. His awards include the Poetry Society of America's Shelley Memorial (1973), Award of Merit Medal for Poetry (1975), the Pulitzer Prize and the American Book Award (1982) and a MacArthur Foundation Award (1984).

KURT LAMKIN's poems have appeared in *Long Journey Home*, *New City Voices*, *Black American Literature Forum*, *New Rain* and other journals. He is a member of The Metamorphosis Writers Collective and has recently completed *King of the Real World*, and *Fly*, poetry and novel respectively.

LUCY R. LIPPARD is national coordinator of *Artists Call Against U.S. Intervention in Central America* and author of thirteen books, the most recent of which is *Getting Message?: A Decade of Art for Social Change* (E. P. Dutton, 1984).

AUDRE LORDE is a Black, lesbian, feminist poet whose *The Cancer Journals* (Spinsters Ink) received a 1981 Book Award from the American Library Association Gay Caucus. Her poetry volume, *From a Land Where Other People Live* (Broadside Press) was nominated for the National Book Award in 1974.

SARA MILES is the author of *Native Dancer* (poems; Curbstone Press, May 1985) and co-translator of Leonel Rugama's *The Earth Is A Satellite of the Moon* (Curbstone Press, 1985). She lives in Brooklyn and works as an organizer for international brigades to Nicaragua.

MUTABARUKA is a native of Jamaica, W.I. dedicated to Rastafarianism. A major voice in dub poetry/music, he has written a book titled, *The First Poems*. He has released two record albums. "Any Means Nessasery" is from the album, *Outcry*. Irie ltes is credited with obtaining this song.

MICHELLE PARKERSON: Author of *Waiting Rooms* (Common Ground Press, 1983). "GOTTA MAKE THIS JOURNEY: Sweet Honey in the Rock," her video documentary on the radical Black women's a cappella ensemble, won a Blue Ribbon in the 1984 American Film Festival.

MARGARET RANDALL: Currently fighting the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service to be able to stay in the U.S. With a group of prominent writers and PEN's American Center, she is challenging the ideological exclusion clause of the infamous McCarran-Walter Act. A writer and photographer, Margaret teaches Women's and American Studies at the University of New Mexico.

BERNICE JOHNSON REAGON: Ph.D., is a singer and composer, a culture historian specializing in Black American oral history, performing arts tradition, American protest culture, and African diaspora studies. She is a founding member of "Sweet Honey in the Rock." The documentary recordings, "Words of the Civil Rights Movement," (1955-65) which she developed for the Smithsonian's collection rank as the most important collection of movement song.

ADRIENNE RICH is a Lesbian Feminist writer and teacher. Her thirteenth book of poems, *Your Native Land, Your Life*, will be published in Spring, 1986 by W. W. Norton. She lives in California and teaches at San Jose State University. She is a member of the Advisory Board of New Jewish Agenda.



SONIA SANCHEZ is the author of 12 books including *Homegirls and Handgrenades*, for which she won the 1985 American Book Award. Sanchez has traveled extensively, reading her poetry in Cuba, England, the West Indies, People's Republic of China and Norway. She's a professor of English at Temple University.

SUSAN SHERMAN, a poet, is the editor of IKON Magazine. She was awarded a CAPS poetry fellowship 1976/77 and received a CCLM editor's grant and an editor's grant from NYSCA in 1985. She has published three books of poetry, a translation of a Cuban play, *Shango de Ima* (Doubleday) and has just completed a new manuscript of poetry, *The Color of the Heart*.

SEKOU SUNDIATA makes polyphonic poetry the best way he can. He's currently recording and performing with his band, "The Cou."

ADRIENNE TORF's keyboard performances appear on 9 albums to date. Her first solo album is in the works. Adrienne Torf and June Jordan have been writing and performing collaboratively since 1983. Their works include "Bang Bang Uber Alles," a full-length musical, slated for 1986 production in Atlanta.

QUINCY TROUPE's 3 volumes of poetry include *Snake-Back Solos*, 1979 (winner of the 1980 American Book Award for Poetry). He edited *Giant Talk: An Anthology of Third World Writing*, is co-editor of *River Styx*, a journal of contemporary literature and art, and is presently completing a novel, *The Footmans*.

MFUNDI VUNDLA, born in Johannesburg, South Africa, is the author of two plays: "Windows" (performed at Woodie King's New Federal Theater in 1982) and "Visitor to the Veldt," which will be produced in March 1986, and is currently working on a script titled "Color of Beauty" on South Africa for Lorimar, to be a TV Movie of the Week.

ALICE WALKER's *The Color Purple* won an American Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize. She has published two collections of short stories, four volumes of poetry—the latest *Horses Make a Landscape Look More Beautiful*, two novels and a volume of essays as well as a biography of Langston Hughes as well as editing a Zora Neale Hurston reader. She is also publisher of *Wild Trees Press*.

NELLIE WONG's book of poems, *Dreams in Harrison Railroad Park*, was published by Kelsey Street Press. A long-time secretary, Wong will be visiting professor in Women's Studies at the University of Minnesota in the spring of 1985. She is active in Radical Women, a socialist feminist organization.

DONALD WOODS resides in Brooklyn where he is pursuing his dream of merging his lives as an artist, cultural worker and administrator. He has published in *Art & Artist*, *Blackheart!!!* and other publications and is currently preparing a workbook to aid in teaching male responsibility in teenage pregnancy.

ZENZILE: I am an exiled South African from Capetown. I have read my poetry in Africa, Australia, and in many cities across the United States. I am an organizer in the U.S. I am a national organizer for the *U.S. Out of Southern Africa Network* of the All People's Congress. I am a member of Art Against Apartheid.

PHUMZILE ZULU was born in South Africa. She left in 1978 and is a student in exile at N.Y.U. She is the 1st recipient of the Bishop Tutu Scholarship Fund.

## CONTRIBUTORS: VISUAL ARTISTS

CATHERINE ALLPORT is an artist/photographer whose work is dedicated to a future of peace & justice.

JEANNE MOUTOUSSAMY-ASHE's most recent show was at the Chicago Public Library Cultural Center. She has been awarded a CEBA Award of Distinction and her work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *Sports Illustrated*, and has been used by the Associated Press.

TOMIE ARAI is a graphic artist who lives in N.Y. with her husband and two children. Her work has appeared in *Heresies*, *Bridge Magazine*, *East Wind*, and other Asian-American publications.

CANDIDA ALVAREZ, born in Brooklyn, numbers among her awards Artist-in-Residence 1984-85 at The Studio Museum in Harlem, and the Bocour Award for painting and Full Scholarship at The Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Maine. She has exhibited in numerous galleries and museums.

ASUNGI: M.F.A. University of Chicago lives in Los Angeles. "... as a ritualist, spiritual Africanist, womanist, I am determined to create 'art against apartheid' in a united voice for freedom which exemplifies my concerns for my sisters and their children in their daily struggles, as ritualized prayers for empowerment ..."

EMMA AMOS: "Listen, I'm from Atlanta and lived Black schools, colored sections in stores and white water. The system was vile. Apartheid is death."

SCOTT A. BARTON has been involved with *Art Against Apartheid* since 1984. He usually works with metal & fiber. His most recent production has been the creation of this book. He also cooks.

DAWOUD BEY was awarded a CAPS grant, 1983, and NYSCA grant, 1984, an Artists Space Grant, 1983, and a Light Work Residency, 1985.

OLIVIA BEENS "has shown many socio-political/autobiographical performance and installation works characterizing archetypal and mythical concerns of an individual on this planet."

WILLIE BIRCH, a visual artist and teacher who grew up in the South, accepts the reality that freedom is something you must fight to attain.

ROBERT BLACKBURN: artist, teacher. "Have we come this far in human development to still believe in separating people by color of skin? Neither Gods nor nature ever separate by color. Could it be that apartheid as a policy is unnatural, inhuman, and ungodly? History is proving these attitudes obsolete and untenable."

FRANK DEXTER BROWN and JEANNE M. WOODS, under the sponsorship of the UN Council for Namibia, were in Southern Africa in the summer of 1985 to report on the South Africa regime's destabilization of the frontline states. Brown and Woods are members of the National Anti-Imperialist Movement in Solidarity With African Liberation.

VIVIAN BROWN is a painter living in NYC. A Hunter alumna, she teaches at Rutgers University.

CAROLE BYARD: Visual artist presently completing a series, "RENT drawings," which celebrates overcoming obstacles and self determination. Instructor, lecturer, widely exhibited, recipient of 1986 NEA fellowship.

JOSELY CARVALHO: a Brazilian artist living in New York, has been shown in many galleries internationally including the Museum of Modern Art in Bahia, Brazil, the Potter House Gallery in Washington, D.C., and the Yvonne Seguy Gallery in New York City and has received grants from NYSCA and the NEA.

SUE COE: Born 1951. 1970 attended the Royal College of Art, London, England. Works as an editorial artist for the *New York Times* and the *London Sunday Times*.

EVA COCKCROFT: "The beauty of the human spirit lies in its innate sense of justice, its ability to love in spite of adversity, and its refusal to accept oppression indefinitely. It is this which I try to embody in my faces of common people in struggle."

KATHLEEN DEACON was born in Philadelphia. She has studied in Philadelphia and at the Art Students League in N.Y.C. Kathleen has exhibited in Brooklyn and Philadelphia. In addition to her painting, she writes.



LAURA ELKINS received an architecture degree from the University of Virginia where she also studied drawing and painting. She studied at the school for environmental studies at the Polytechnic Central London and is a member of the architectural society.

TOM FEELINGS is a renowned artist and award winning illustrator of children's books whose *Jambo Means Hello: Swahili Alphabet Book* was named a Caldecott Honor Book for 1975 and *Something on My Mind* earned him the 1978 Coretta Scott King award. His new book on slavery is entitled, *The Middle Passage*.

LEON GOLUB is a painter and a professor at Rutgers University. His most recent exhibit was at the Barbara Gladstone gallery, New York City.

CANDACE HILL: "To the Superior Inferior can we understand the environment unless we're students in it. Can we test the busts of fate before it's too late to stone. Can we engrave our collective name South Africa on our tombs. Can we be grey blue if we want to."

TIM HILLIS, born 1951, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Maryland Institute College of Art, 1969-72. BFA American University 1980. Graduate study Queens College 1980-81. Now lives in New York.

BENDEL HYDES was born in the Cayman Islands, in the British West Indies. He has exhibited in national and international exhibitions in the United States, Europe, and the Caribbean. He lives in N.Y.C.

NOAH JEMISON: "Art concerns itself with life. First of all, life's experiences are translated into pigment and form on the artist's canvas, hence the necessity for the artist to participate in life."

CLIFF JOSEPH is a painter and registered art psychotherapist who is serving concurrently as art therapist and clinical supervisor on the partial hospital unit of the Dept. of Psychiatry at Elizabeth General Medical Center in New Jersey, Chairman of the Westbeth Arts Committee and Director of Westbeth Gallery 1.

JANET KOENIG, a NYC artist and graphic designer, has made proposals for commemorative stamps and is currently investigating history and myth presented in public monuments.

NINA KUO has exhibited at the Brooklyn Museum, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Basement Workshop and Loisaide and curated with the China News Service, Beijing, China, "China Today" at the Floating Foundation of Photography.

PETER MAGUBANE: a South African international freelance photographer. He covered the Soweto riots for the *Rand Daily Mail* and was assaulted by the police on several occasions. From 1970-1975 he was placed under a banning order and in 1972 served six months for violation of the ban. His work has been exhibited in the Schomburg Center and his books include *Black Child* (Alfred A. Knopf) and *Soweto Speaks* (Ad Donker Publication, Johannesburg).

VALERIE MAYNARD: "I am committed to knowing, caring and recognizing that I am not free as long as any one of us anywhere is not free, that I am not fed as long as one of us goes hungry, and know now for as long as I breathe, I am fully committed to doing our work for our survival."

VIRGINIA MAKSYMOWICZ is a sculptor who makes art about social issues. She is director of an artists' cooperative gallery in NYC and was recently awarded an NEA artist fellowship. Besides Art Against Apartheid she has worked with PAD/D, The Catholic Worker and the Bay Ridge Coalition for Peace.

ROBIN MICHALS is a muralist, illustrator, painter, graphic artist and activist who lives and works in New York City.

VIVIAN REYNOLDS McDUFFY: "The apartheid system in South Africa should remind us how fragile our own freedoms are in the United States. Afro-Americans are waging a similar struggle against an equally ferocious enemy—institutional racism. We have won a partial victory, but the people of South Africa will win a total victory."

COLLEEN McKAY's portraits have appeared in books published by Houghton Mifflin, W. W. Norton and Crossing Press and her magazine and newspaper publications include *The Women's Studies Quarterly*, *Off Our Back*, *Womanews*, *The New York Times Book Review*, the *L.A. Weekly* and *Adafi*.



SUSAN ORTEGA is a visual artist and activist who has several murals in the New York City area. She is co-director of *Art Against Apartheid*.

EMILY T. PHILLIPS' work draws heavily upon the figure as subject matter in different settings, always viewed from different vantage points. "We're all interested in bringing home—drawing parallels with, if you will—the issue of racism, how it is practiced in the United States as well as South Africa."

SOPHIE RIVERA was guest curator at Museo del Barrio, New York City "Latin Times." She won the Portfolio Photography Magazine Competition, and has had numerous exhibitions including "Latino Portraits," a traveling exhibit and teaches at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility and En Foco (a Community Visual Arts Agency).

MEL ROSENTHAL is known for his particular concern in the relationship between changing social conditions and their influence on individuals. He teaches photography at Empire State College.

FAITH RINGGOLD: I have created a series of aquatints on the subject of the death of apartheid. The only way I can deal with this great human suffering is to think about the death of it as if it were a 'blistering,' 'slobbering,' 'sickly infectious' person. The death of one to save the many.

JUAN SANCHEZ: BSA, 1977, Cooper Union. MFA, Rutgers, 1980. 1983 CAPS and NEA grant for painting. Exhibited USA, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Nicaragua and Spain. He has curated many shows with political themes.

ILSE SCHREIBER is a graphic artist and graduate of SUNY Purchase. She is concerned with the achievement of peace and social justice. Her work expresses the suffering inflicted upon the individual.

GEORGE SMITH: "I believe that as a Black man who is an artist, I have the same responsibility and purpose as those of my forefathers who were artists before me. That is, of being the keeper of the culture, a visionary, a medium, an agitator, and a functioning member of the community."

VINCENT D. SMITH is in many private and public collections including those at the Museum of Modern Art, the Brooklyn Museum and the Newark Museum. He illustrated the children's book, "Stories from Africa," and was an art instructor for the Whitney Museum Art Resources Center for nine years.

NANCY SPERO is a feminist artist who will be showing in March at the Josh Baer gallery, NYC, and having a retrospective exhibit at the Institute for Contemporary Arts (ICA) in London. This show will be traveling in Europe.

MAY STEVENS' paintings fuse inner and outer voices. Earlier she painted images of George Jackson for the *Attica Book* edited by Benny Andrews and Rudolf Baranik. Today she paints Rosa Luxemburg as symbol of possibility for socialism and for women.

SETH TOBOCMAN is the editor of *World War III Illustrated*.

BLAISE TOBIA: an artist/photographer whose goal is the pursuit of art which is convincing as art yet effectively communicates social criticism. Active with Art Against Apartheid and other art/political organizations, he has shown in NYC and around the country, and recently began teaching at Drexel University.

ELLEN TURNER is a freelance designer who has done work for major magazines and supplements for *The New York Times*. She is also a political artist whose shows include: "Eat the Rich!," a multi-media exhibit.