

Africa, my land

by *Manyaola Mothibeli**

Africa my land when will thou awake?
Thine tall trees, thine short trees,
Are dinner for capitalist machines producing paper.
Thine green carpets feed the conquerors' livestock.
My goats, my cattle, my land have all been taken by the gun.

The morning sun, the evening moon
have added deep sorrow in my heart
as I see the healthy waters of thine rivers
being diverted to feed the aggressors' needs.
Africa, my land, come back.

I stand hopeless, I stand hopeful,
under the shadow of a large gum tree looking at the
beautiful landscapes that have been expropriated from me.
I have prayed, I have dreamt of the day when I will be
master of my house.
Africa, my land, thou art a pillar of my strength.

Enemy tractors, repeatedly scold thine soil for produce
for capitalist markets.
Convict labour has fallen prey to mercenary farming.
I labour from morning to sunset,
but my wage is another hell.
Nkosi sikeleli IAFRIKA!

The coffee, the tea, the cocoa that I labour to produce
under healthy conditions,
is not for my consumption
but for the slave-master's 11 o'clock tea!
Africa have mercy on thine suffering children.

The cotton fields of America have been fertilised with
the blood of thine sons and daughters taken as slaves.
Nongqongqo, Robben Island, universities of our heroes
have been tamed.
Sharpeville, Soweto, Kinross, St Helena, present a
happier moment in our history.

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Africa, my land, come back.

When I look back into the cold,
I see shadows of my chiefs who died in conquest.
Spears in hand, they command me to advance the struggle
from where they left.
Wild nights come, wild nights go.
Sensational American films have failed to water down my
quest for liberation, where all shall sing, "free at last!"
Africa, Africa, come back.

The poison that I am given in the classroom,
is planned to make me an uncompromising yes sir.
The religious instruction I am taught,
is tailored to make me accept the naked plunder of my land
as an act of God.
The truth about my history has been deliberately laid to rest.
Africa, Africa, mother of holy cities.

Africa, my land, look at the painful operation of
thine geological gardens.
Gold, coal, diamonds all going into Oppenheimer's pocket.
Workers we are, but the machines and produce are not Africa's.
The man-made mountains on thine soil
tell an "interesting" story about life underground.
My heart yearns for the day when all the peoples of Africa
shall together sing, "free at last"
after completely dwarfing the enemy.

Africa my land,
Look at the cruel plunder of thine fish and thine oil
which abound in thine oceans, by angels of exploitation.
Look at the naked legalised theft of thine alluvial diamonds,
discharged by thine oceans.
Thine holy oceans, which wardeth off foreign intervention
are playgrounds of capitalist weaponry.
Thine skies are springboards for the enemy's destabilising air
attacks.
Viva heroes' square! Aluta Continua!

Chimurenga in the thick forests of Africa,
where snake and lion abound,
hosted Cabral, Lumumba and Mondlane.
Smith and Salazar were toasted with AK47 and left for drunk,
Africa, theatre of revolutionary change, awake!

But alas! Thine real tiger that burnt thine forests in the night
hath been caged and paper-tigered in capitalist
"spaza* ivory towers",
iced into English speaking, Portuguese speaking, French speaking
and Arab speaking.
The enemy's thwart of Pan Africanism grounded Lumumba and Nkurumah.
Heroes come, heroes go.
Africa, Africa, mother of raw materials. ☆

* Spaza refers to something that is "not real".