

Poem



and the heart - rending sound of weeping continues

Photo: Cedric Nunn/Afrapix

In her letter

in her letter
keitumetse says that
the umsindusi river
still runs its

serpent - smooth course
through the lush
ever - green edendale valley
on its way to the sea

in her letter
keitumetse says that
fishes however

no longer break
the umsindusi's clear surface
at dawn -

for the throat
of its song
is now choked
with the grim harvest of conflict:

mutilated bodies
stick in its throat
like fishbones

in her letter
keitumetse says that

in the valley and
its surrounding areas
 coffins bearing the remains
 of comrades and inkatha vigilantes
have become as common
as kitchen tables

In her letter
keitumetse says that
the valley's thick mist
 now lies soft and still
 like cotton wool
 over the dark wound
 of its bleeding heart
that is often wrapped
in a shawl of fear
smoke and fire

in her letter
keitumetse says that
comrade rolilahla
has made an impassioned plea
to all those whose hands
are stained red with blood
to throw their weapons
into the sea
 but the monstrous
 metallic roar of guns
 and the heart - rending sound
 of weeping continues

in her letter
keitumetse says that
the search for peace continues
and other than the foregoing
life still goes on however
in the land of rusted ploughshares
 spring is in the air
 the world grows greener
 buds abuzz with bees and birdsong
 are fluttering in the breeze
and she may soon be getting married
if she can overcome her notion
that marriage means being pinned down
like a museum butterfly ...

dikobe ben martins (written while in prison)