

Poetry Series

Sarah Mkhonza
- poems -

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Dr. Sarah Mkhonza is a writer activist from Swaziland. She has a Ph.D from Michigan State University. She has written young adult novels, short stories and poetry both in siSwati and English. She is a multi genre writer and researcher who has presented on platforms around the world. She has a PH.D from Michigan State University.

A Bag Full Of Tools That Dig Deep

My spade is nothing but words
that dig deep when I step on
the thing and let it go into
the fertile ground where I see
the ground break into cavities
like those in the center of my
tooth.

I throw the seed and it
promises a harvest which without
water does grow but looks so
wilted that I rush for the hose.

It comes dragging on the ground,
and asks me where my mind had gone,
when I put the seed down and did
not tell it immediately to stand
up and be counted for without
thoughts the seeds called words
just lay there until somebody
comes to knock on the door and
says, 'hello seed, would you love
to grow?

This seed says, 'even if I would,
the love that would take me there
is not shown by the one who stole
me from my kind and threw me here
where neglect eats my body and
all that is me gets lost in dry
ground.

The field says words cannot be the
tool of a farmer where thoughts go
wild and no focus comes to the
red spot on the forehead to give
honor to a custom old that says
think it, word it and then put
some love into it and voila! A

field evergreen and lovely! . There
we go where we are assured a
bountiful harvest.

For the big book said you shall
ask, seek and knock all words
which come with consequence to
those who dare to do as they are
told for telling is about words
and them as tools shall see us
through, for what else do we have
but language that even the poor
cannot say they have little of.

Sarah Mkhonza

A Belly Of Candles Of Mahogany Wax

For I have come to just put this candle,
here down here in this hole, where bats fly,
where birds sing during the day on these trees,
and as I walk away, the light shines on,
to be blown out when the wick is gone,
and the air no longer blows into these,
my nostrils that suck it daily,
on an in and out basis,
that I learned the day I arrived,
In this grotto so quiet
in this belly of the queens
that surround me with their roundness
which they hold with outstretched hands.

All the candles glow on.
Mine sits and shines,
dripping its bronze wax down,
leaving ants under it,
and sand to tarnish it,
for when I have gone,
I will look back and say,
it was a candle of bronze wax,
that melted and burnt my hands,
and fell through them in dots,
that let it harden on the surface,
where one day someone stands,
having forgotten I once lived,
a sheet of melted mahogany wax,
that was blown out on some fiercely
windy day.

Remold me in your mind,
for I want to remain alive,
and tie knots of love,
with everybody I know,
who is coming to share,
that I once was a queen,
that knew births and deaths,
in small acts of living,

that stung me like syringes,
with poison in their words,
that pushed themselves deep,
and became hard to take out,
only to be laid at the grotto,
in confessions about life
of a candle of mahogany wax;
yes a candle of ebony too,
the sceptre with no gold tip,
to keep it burning forever,
in the ears of ebony wax,
and eyes of ivory and black,
that burn on making holes,
that glare on and on as they melt,
till day break greets us too,
with the handshake of prosperity.

Sarah Mkhonza

A Do It Yourself Manual For Marriage

On the road to matrimony
Take this manual this still
Long written but hidden by
Time for time wanted to
Dampen the fire and never
Give lovers the Tinder's
And the one live coal
To keep blowing with
The bellows of old and
Survive where the world
Puts them on the map of
Love.

Take the hammer and tell
It you ate a hermit a
Blacksmith that shapes the
Bracelets and rings of lovers.
Knock the ring into place
That has no break in its
Roundness for with this
Magic hammer round and
Round we knock two heads
And hearts into place.

Get the scissors as you
Rollbdown the scroll and
Cut the two checks into
Two pieces for now their
Highnesses will use the
State account.

Down the scroll it guarantees
Servants called their hands
That will do the chores in turn
For the hpuse has to be clean.

Now the wheelbarrow for they
Must bend and push their love
To the next destination

One loading with the shove
The other pushing.

And now the dishcloth form
No dish washing machines
Unpack themselves. Finally
The handcuffs on their ankles
For they are prisoners who
Dared to like twins open
The cookie jar. Thus ends
The scroll of life if you
Dare to follow the do it
Yourself manual to make
Yours a marriage that will
Stand the test of time.

Sarah Mkhonza

A History Of Kings In Mountains/ Swaziland

The day comes when a king must bow out.
Skin to skin the body wrapped must go up.
The march beginning at early dawn ends up.
The shouldered dead once shouldered alive.
Is laid down outside a cave to watch out.
The nation must be watched by these rulers, who lived life to prove they were.

The space inside is found. A halo once worn is a halo lost. Things in time mean things in season. Lay him here where the others have made him room.

Left to hyenas and jackals this bundle of kingship watches the rest of us with the royal eye. We live to see how fortunate the watching kings have made us. At the end of one kingly watch.

Hard is the road that leads up there.
Single is the journey that accompanies kings to the resting place of watch kings.
Will you dare to be a king or a queen or a follower?

Sarah Mkhonza

A Nickel Face Up In The Tar Heads Up

Was it tails up, I'D leave it.
This nickel in the tar. One look
the face talks to me. Says I must
admit, it has an ace against me.

Shivering on this cold day in November,
the road calls near the fire place. This
friend this nickel stuck in tar, rejects
my invitation to go and join it's lot in
my purse. Says it all. Purse of a poor man
worse than your head in the tar.

But what about the risk of disappearing
under the wheel of a car? It's better, says the nickel. At least my head will be
crushed to the flat head, and I will live
again the hitch hiker who never got anywhere. My head still heads up.

Months later, I look for the nockel. I
see the circle in the tar, no nickel! She
lies heads up lighting the tar road with
her warrior face. Smiles. 'See, I told you. You should have been a nickel. Nobody
would want you even if they cannot do without you. Here I lie, so take me home.
I am unstuck and so are you. Together we gand we light up the lamp. She sits
laughing forever.

Sarah Mkhonza

A Save Us From The Hour Of Our Death Story

When six slices have to be eaten dry,
was because of the misfortune that befell
a little person.

Standing on the student self-created board, looking at naughty student art,
the drawing pin is pulled out. It is held
by both lips. In serious anticipation
of who could put up a naked woman riding
a horse. This classroom will shock the nuns.

Everything African has happened already.
Their dresses that sweep the floor have been used as the umbrellas on rainy
days.

To save them fromantic this shock, pull out the nude naughty art. What happens
shocks the drawing pin in the mouth.

This laughter as the two fight for
the nude artist of the week continues
has one mouth trying to stifle a laugh
opening. Down a naughty laughing mouth
goes a naughty drawing pin.

The verdict is humiliation plus diagnosis
plus six dry slices of bread eaten dry. Was this fair you ask? You get a frantic
'No, ' from the class and a the frustrates of the godly. Two saintly daughters walk
to the hospital for a Jesus induced healing.

If Jesus likes art, surely he should look at the student art board and heal me for
saving the children from uttering obscenities with their pens on sacred spaces.
This sacrilege got me here. This
savior of the teen world cannot suffer
for the sins of the children of the children. God protects generations of the
I am here to tell the tale.
Make sure you remain to tell your story of crayon drawings and chalk ones on
the pavement.

The

Sarah Mkhonza

A Song For Nandi

I know you were 'mnandi' for I tasted you in history,
in the courts where calabashes sang and horns whistled,
when the king touched you tenderly, and let you go
after drinking of your sweetness.

You were left to sort yourself out, but you sorted them out,
standing with legs of love, raising a prince declared none,
and never to rule. They did not know this belly of yours,
this warmth rare. For it cooked them bold, and turned them
out mean, and threw them on the ground royally furious,
and ready to grab what is theirs.

Some women's bellies are hot to look at, yours was also
hot to touch. It raised the rumors of this 'shaka, '
and had palaces wagging tongues, saying
that you were now in the manner, of women
who have been done, the deed with no name.

For he would kill a lion with bare hands, this tiny baby in you,
Born in rejection, grown in strange lands of stick fights,
where he beat all those his age. With marrow regal,
and bone smooth like his skin, he would call to order
soldiers, and change the manner of fighting. The whole
nation had to listen.

Those who plant in shame, will not reap in shame.
You changed the rules, and came back in power.
Those who would not have you, would soon see
you walking in pride, curbing the cruel hand of him,
who had grown to rule with anger, and grown a nation
furious.

What did I do to the land? You ask a question we ask.
What did you do to the nation of Zulu, by begetting
this furious son of a nation, that rules with blood,
and spills it like water, till even dogs can drink it,
and get no satisfaction and thus cry for more, to
one who is ever willing, to keep it flowing daily.

You cried for grandchildren, to one who would
rip open bellies and want to see dead, anything
that resembled him, for fear of death at the hand
of his own sun. He sapped and tapped blood and
saw his own taken, to graves which made him feel,
'when they lie here I am safe.'

You stepped out strong, and walked into history,
a story to be told, for yours was the history of a woman's
belly, that changed a nation. For now people see life is in
woman made, and grows to live and dies in the sleep of
a people who live to tell the story of a people,
who see the spirit, that hovers over the land,
and talks loud, when things are wrong, like I will
when I have gone.

Speak, mother of the nation, when the Xumas, and
Zumas are corrupt, speak. When the youth are dying,
speak. When they are jobless speak. When they die in
kombis, speak, for the maladies are many. They speak
to the skies and say once we had a mother. She would
speak, till we hear. Speak, speak, mother of the nation speak.

Sarah Mkhonza

A Story Written On Candle Wax

Have you read this story written
On candle wax and felt how slippery
It is? You read it and the last idea
Peeters out with the ink blotting into
Splatters where the smudges cannot be
Read even with a magnifying glass. The
Writing looks at you sturbbonly and you
Look back stating arms akimbo that you
Can never fail to read a story no matter
How the smudges make it illegible.

You claim the right to have read papyrus
Scripts written in hyroglyphics. You have
A reputation of postings read only by you
This defeat gives you fits and in that trance
You decipher the script and ask how many
Times should you die to write one story.

The sage knows that each line is a death
For the depths that bring it into being
Are where lights were long turned off.
Even a hat of a miner with battered lights
Does not light up there. It is a place where
Only words have been for they know how to walk
On spider's webs and leave them intact.

Now that the mystery remains untold how
Will you end the story with a smile? The
Cheating game does it for you can invent
Stories as many as marbles for a game of
Chines Checkers only to find that just o e
Word is all you need. Then you can tell life
It was all setendipity.

Sarah Mkhonza

A Walking Vessel Filled With Hope

I walk on these pathways that lead on,
To the clues that show me new buds,
That shoot up their cropped ends soft,
Tender even to the look of the devil,
Who long lost hope in a world so mean,
That the milk teeth grow up already rooted,
In gums so painful that chewing is hell,
To a toddler that still has to believe mama,
When she offers a nipple from shriveled life.

Girls need to work and answer the call,
The buds have not come out of a fallen tree,
But stand as high like a flower rising up,
And ready to be picked with their very hands,
To end up in the hair of young girl's head.

Sarah Mkhonza

A Woman's Destination

I have been everywhere
Singing and crying
Laughing and dancing
For I love being.

Who can sing like a tourist
That goes to every concert
Listening to the sound of stars
when they pop up in the sky.

I have heard real prayers
People wishing for the unknown
Asking it to kiss their hand
Or else they will die.

Who can know when I go
If I will reach my own north
Where lights never go out
So that my mind can rest.

The south rejected me
They said my words were bad
Their ears had stoppers
Of a tradition we did not want
For time for change had come.

I have sung real songs
Not this bad use of instruments
That you hear in the sounds
Of traffic on the highway.

I have been everywhere
Inside a tea cup with leaves
Stirring them around
Like there was wind in there.

My children wondered

Where their mother was
When I scurried around
After the nest had fallen
After the rough winds
Like that of the weaver bird
And told me I would have died
If I had not chosen to leave.

Sarah Mkhonza

After The Sumptuous Feast Of Lies

Now that we read a lie, twit a lie
We can rest assured we will be there
When the four years if over, but we
Will have had this feast of lies that
We have poured into our ears daily.

We once thought it was the tabloids
Now it is the journal of our lives
That tells it all, for we asked for
It when we said the machine that prints
Can just keep going with these half truths.

When the banners are lifted and it is time
To see the body underneath, we will be shocked
To view ourselves embalmed in a cotton coffin
Full of fluffy lies in it. Hoping we will not
All sneeze and say, it happened in our time,
Especially to the younger generations.

Sarah Mkhonza

After The Tirade Of Insults Ends Spanish Bullfighter

When the parachute lands a new president will touch ground,
The bruises will say it all
When the hand touches the door of the oval office.

Even the key will say hallo head with
a halo.

You the fighter that gave it to the world in a tirade of insults.
Will your reign use better words and build the ones whose vote ushered you in.
We know what you think of those whom you have spoken to in words that make
us put stoppers in our ears.
Here at the corner of trust move to the center and hug us all.
Share some warmth for our hearts ate tired.
Today's world drains us as it drowns in a sea of roughest storms.
Don't leave us here in the eye of the storm for we will forever be blinded by tears
for the wind is too rough.

You said you come to calm storms of hunger and poverty. Were you telling lies.
How can you be fibbing when we are facing the hardest times?
Life is not one big political arena of fibs told by fibbers like you for you you bend
over backwards like a rubber band and sting those who stretched you to the end
of your elasticity where agter hitting the mark you shot out the hope of your own
and cast it in the roughest waves
never to be retrived.
Your messages of the campaign trail will haunt us for we will look till our eyes are
red as the insults uttered on this campaign ask us what we expected.
Do better than you did as you did when you had us listen to a his and hs and
hers where we had to enjoy oue tango with two dear devils without horns.
It has been a fight where we watched all the horns fall
We stand outside the arena watching now the Spanish bullfight is over. Welcome
hero in the most stylish suite.
We bow to you with both respect and awe for you have won the toughest of
bullfights. Even the loser knows that.
Sincerely yours, the tired of the earth.

Sarah Mkhonza

Always Take A Chance

Take a chance to deceive sorrow
And tell it its name is happiness
And then wait for the change in
Your heart for soon you will
Know the game of feeling bad
Is one you can give to the game
Changers and win.

Take a chance to serve a volley
And make it land in the right
Quarter and then you will see
How your opponent will veer with
The speed of the ball only to
Be hit on the head and miss
A return and that is called
Winning a game by chance.

Take a chance to read a few
Words in a library book before
Closing time and recite them
All the way home and watch
Knowledge grow in your head
For that will be the quotation
You will wow your mates with
For they will not know where
It came from and neither will
You. Then you will be called
A wizard for you fight and
Win battles that nobody thought
Could be won. Soon they will'
Wonder where you come from and
You show them with the tip of
Your thumb to take a chance and
Look just next door.

Sarah Mkhonza

Ananse Tell Me When Kings Die.

I never lived to believe,
That a king dies a death,
Like the one of simple men,
I just saw the sunrise,
And thought kings live forever,

Then the word came to me,
That the king had died,
I thought the sun would not rise,
For I did believe it came and went,
With his face printed on it daily,
Like the money we used at the shops,

When I saw the sun rise at dawn,
I woke up and pinched myself,
Then was this another normal day?
Was my misery fake as always?
Was it disappearing in protest
To tell me the king had not died?
That my dream of what he was had gone,
To a place where I could not retrieve it,
But just walk inside my deceived skin.

Why had I lied to myself unknowingly?
Who had lied, me or the people
With whom we basked in a sun not there
Growing up believing in humans
That did not even know our names
Or even care about our sorrows?

Yet the sorrow lingered,
For my mind wanted it to go on,
So I can share with my fellows,
The loss we had walked into unknowingly,
A silence of one who we believed to roar,
Like a lion in the wild boasting,
Of strength and wisdom unknown,
Even to good old Ananse,
Who knew every corner of my mind,

For there he had been since childhood.

Ask Ananse I did with honesty,
And the answer I got was amazing,
To be asked a question never heard,
That asks who created the world of believing,
For it is there I had gone to take a story,
And wear it like a blanket,
For it made me warm to know,
I was also one of the many.

I walked away my face drawn,
In the sadness of my own creations,
Where nobody likes what they know,
Once they see the truth rising,
In the east as usual,
Making them wonder where they were,
The day before when they believed,
What now seems a long held untruth,
For kings too die and go there,
Where we are all going someday.

They may walk the world like giants,
Be made in big ceremonies with us like ants,
Milling around to take a glimpse,
Of the making of the world we live in,
Being shown a spectacle to guide us,
Into futures of life we have not lived,
But they do go and leave behind,
The same people they ruled unsure,
What the next one will be like.
Only hoping for the best,
For they learned to be led,
For leading oneself is sacred,
Untouchable if known to exist,
To those who always follow,
The people they created to lead them.

You should have looked into your eyes
For yesterday's beliefs and known,
That the time you accept a truth,
It is already being weighed up,

On the scale of questions by many,
Just like the dust that gathers,
Where the kings walk daily,
For you are a dusty king,
That needs to be shaken all the time,
And told you will one day not even
Have the blessing of dust gathering
Around the feet you walk on today,
And ignore, yet with your knees they bow,
At every alter with toes upturned,
Begging for the life of you,
To continue the way that of kings,
To keep on trampling the earth,
And crushing ants like you do,
For they do not know their names,
For the termites when angry,
Destroy buildings in silence,
When they have not been treated,
To termite proof smells of old,
That can keep them standing.

For renewal is like a truth,
It lives up there untold,
Unless you bring it down,
And hide it in your heart.
It boasts of silences unknown,
And makes others rich and others poor,
Unless the poor bring it down to bear,
On the lives they live alone in poverty,
It continues to hang up there shining,
Hoping one day they will see it,
And live it forever like you.
That is my advice and I am Ananse,
For nobody told you this truth,
The way I tell you today,
That kings are just like rag dolls,
They are made of the cloth they wear,
And get old in same manner,
To be gone never to come back,
Like the one you had when you were little.
That ended at the edge of the yard,
With ashes all over it,

Its limbs no longer there,
The head blinking its eyes
And the torso lying far away alone.

The same is true of rag queens,
They jump up and down in the march,
They raise their knees on chariots,
Like floats from far away,
To end the day getting off,
At their final destination,
The activities of the day over,
No money to count for none was made,
For too expensive was the float,
That left everybody broke,
While they road away with the money,
Never to return at payback time.
For nobody likes revenge that looks backwards,
And comes on head long like a horse.
That gallops with strong hoofs,
And gets into everybody's stable.
To announce the king is dead.

Golden chariots lie empty,
As do big round dwellings,
As do the bellies of those
Who fed on the truth they created,
And told everybody it had to be,
For who would look at a leader,
Whose belly was flat?
But one who told his people he was just
A simple man like them, the Mahatma,
Who walked and dressed like the poor,
For he found wisdom in poverty of the flesh,
And strength in the abundance of spirit,
Only to be shot and killed while sitting,
In that truth that saved his nation,
And still does so today.

Sarah Mkhonza

As We Launch Our Crazy

You told me to open a page about us,
I told you I did not like the page,
It told you it was full of ideas of others,
You put your finger on the word,
I looked at it and saw it underlined,
I saw your frown and your insistence,
I started to weep for your stubborn face,
It takes me to another craze that is not mine.
When, I ask, will we launch our crazy?
We have something that I cannot define.
You here, me here, the space between us,
Yells that we should be on a mission,
Ours is a walk to the setting sun,
To a place where things begun end,
Where we see two silhouettes kissing,
They intertwine and get closer in the rays,
The space between them gets defined,
By the light of the darkening sky,
The setting sun makes them darker,
The surroundings touch them lightly,
with a breeze so present it smells like us,
You here, me there, yet so us right now,
As we launch our crazy.

Sarah Mkhonza

As Jealous As Scissors

Why should a pair of scissors
be called a pair when one of
each cannot be a scissor?

Why this act of cutting that
leaves everything in shreds?
Cutting, cutting forever?
Cutting jobs, cutting budgets.
When will my scissors stop
this act so destructive it
leaves my mind and heart
severed? Life and scissors
are unstoppable! Help the
fingers stop.

Why does it use all my fingers
When there are two holes that
allow an entry?

Why cut the dress I am going
to wear when I go out with Ben
When Zen does not depend on
going but standing and staring?
I would rather the scissors had
cut the dress I was going to wear
with Dan for he whispered into the
phone and said, he has found another
date. Cut, cut, says the scissors.

When a pair of scissors stops
to dominate my hand and cut into
the future shaping each minute
of my life, I will call on you
Ben, for you are indeed as jealous
as this pair of scissors in my hand.

I wish I could have a perpetual drive
to cut into things and take everything

as it comes like my scissors.
Even now they are itching to cut
some more. They never seem to get full
for they keep eating away at something.
They never store anything for the
future, all the time the two long
blades keep saying 'give me more, '
and make my day, for I am meant for
this.' When my fingers are tired
I throw them down and they go down
with a metallic plonk as is they
are sad that the game is over.

When I ask what I should do,
the scissors tell me to ask
my knife for when it is hungry
it even cuts into my very fingers,
I am just talking because I do
not know what an angry blade
does when it is not handled
with care. These, they call
themselves the master blades
for they are twins that always
work for me and never tire.

Sarah Mkhonza

As Secure As A Scout Knot

I live a life as secure as a scout knot
For I know not even one can break it easily.
I only worry about the time when things
Will be undone for the fingers that will
Undo the knot had better be clean.

I do not care about where it will be
That the first touch that undoes the
Knot will be for I am not one to worry
For they say worry did not kill a fat
Cat the way curiosity did.

I am set to rise with the thing I am
Tied to for only air separates me from
The reality of my next landing.
I seat secure as a scout know for I know
That on the day of the scout fire I will
Not be undone for who wants to tie this
Secure not again and destroy such a piece
Of work.

Only brides know that when they tie the knot
With the person who has offered to do the deed
Remain shivering for they let him do it and
They did not to a preup for when trouble comes
Their knot will be so easily undone and they
Will lose everything worse still the love itself
For it sent them on a foolish trail.

Not me, I say as I go flying in the baggage
Carrier of the plane waiting for it to land
And then I discover what a trip it has been
For I felt the clouds at an altitude of
Three thousand feet and said God loves me
For I was very close to his heaven up there.
That is why I always sing Hallelujahs alone
For I do not want to take any fools along
With me lest their insecurity rubs into
My backbone and gets me undone.

Sarah Mkhonza

As Unto Others As Unto Yourself

Watch your hands washing each other
And so should you.

Watch one foot go into a shoe
And so should you.

Watch your eyes look into the distance
And so should you.

Watch one nostril perform a sneeze
And so does the other.

For each unto himself as unto another
As does one hand, one foot and one eye.
For they know a tango of one is no tango.
I if one lands a hand the otherust
Imagine one of them on a strike
And thy all strike a rock and
Work has to stop.

Sarah Mkhonza

As Was Proclaimed By The Supremes

That you would enter the stage
In platforms was proclaimed by
The supremes. They said you would
Be a woman of action and always
On the move. That you would be the
Leader of the band was determined equally
By the supremes for they could see
Way beyond the now. Learn to live up
To this prophecy for it comes once
And only to those who need it.

Embrace it with both hands
For once you let it go it will
Be hard to get it back.

I know a person who let
It go and lived to regret it.
All his life for had to live
Jumping in and out of a hot
Frying pan held in two hands
Not his own.

Sarah Mkhonza

At The Sacred Pools After Thunder

The rain still falls,
It has a vendetta again
and comes falling against
peace till we accept our responsibility.
It sinks into the pool now unmoved.
It stamps itself into the present as real.
Till we accept the wet moment as real, we will be allowed and stand a real part of
now.

Water is warm at the sacred pools after
thunder. You get goosebumps when you step
out. The rhythm of your jumps is what determines your warmth. To jump or not
to
is the rule.

Sarah Mkhonza

At The Shrine Of Peace

Now we worship and beg
At the shrine of peace.
Prayers of babies born,
Breathing war and spitting
shrapnell. Pellets decorate
walls and pavements where once
they played. Peace like a spirit
gone. They walk in foreign lands
wailing. Women soldiers driving out war,
guns in hand.

If it arrives our hands should be open,
Like a stranger, this long awaited love,
shall find us ready for we have cried
enough. To dust the grit out of eyes red
with crying. The thought of peace brings
hope. Why wait at the place where we can

Sarah Mkhonza

At The Very Least/Climate Change

This partial embalming
Casts doubts on everything
I will take action I tell myself
But the plot to slay thoughts
Is in the way the bullock
Its horns gore into my soul
Making me bleed internally unseen
Like a hidden mummy laid there
Yet unheard, unseen and unknown
By a lukewarm world that pollutes
As if spitting on its face
And heeds no warning from the gods.
At the very least
I could open my eyes
Or shut them by choice
Not with the blindness of ignorance
For such is the wave of today's heat.

It is difficult to see myself
Lying there rusting away
Having lived for just these years
Telling the world there is still life in me
There is still breath in this container
Of life that walks and sniffs the air
My nose breathing it voraciously
Yet feeling like further from my truths
At the very least
I could open my nostrils wide
And walk towards my own sunset
Not shared by all of us
Who are partially entering the tomb slowly
As it yields falling on us.

I find it unbelievable
This partial embalming of me
As I go forward unable one minute
Able the next
Moving like there's a fire in me
Stationary the next like a burnt log

If I will take action
Let it be now I tell myself
At the very least
I could open my clenched fingers
And let the words fall through them
Like stalagmites and stalactites in a cave
That stand to stab into it forever
This world, this space that is me
They stubbornly stick out
To stab the mind of a feeling listener
Who is not watching the death called life
And takes words from the pain
And agrees to speak unspoken truths
That stab my burning self forever
To bring justice for my killing,
For our world is really under attack.

Who said I would not stand in the ring
Watching the fighters at it daily
Their health behind the masks
For polluted air threatens
Like a wave of deadly steam
That deceptively warms the insides of the heart
When it sidles inside unseen
And renders me seemingly well
Yet walking the streets everyday
Like walking to my end
At the very least
I could dig my grave openly
Knowing I will lie in it in time
A person who protested
That at the very least
Companies could clear the air
So I can breathe less dirt.

We all need to sing a song of protest
As the earth warms to soaring heat
Scorching the earthworms that we are
Living on sea shores that rise to heights
Drowning lands where we once lived
A new song of 'not any more, '
For if we raise our voices like the water

Ferocious waves of us protesting
Singing along with the world
At the very least the song will say
You could spare us the trouble.
The cows will join as will gorillas around us
In the farms of lands far and near
With snarls, screams and sneers
Looking for grass where there is none
The world has gone where no animal dares
When we thought it had gone to the dogs
It had gone to the money makers.

Sarah Mkhonza

Barking Up The Wrong Tree

If I could bark at a tree
and find it standing after
a fire, when the bark has
fallen, then I would have
barked up the right tree.

Then I would bring a pack
of dogs to help me to solve
problems for the louder we
bark up the right tree the
more the politicians with
thick skin would finally listen
to our problems for we would
be fuelling the fire.

Then thieves would know that
we are a people with a voice.

Sarah Mkhonza

Basalmic Vinegar Did Not Get Its Taste On The Table

It begins in vineyards of old
With choicest of grapes picked
By grape pickers who sing to
Each grape telling of to go and
Make good wherever it goes and
Like a bride it goes into the
Basket with a mission.

Then comes the process that only
AItalians swear will never be known
To the world for they guard it with
The jealousy of a girlfriend threatened
By the ex. The barrels in cellars
Full sit waiting for refills sure
That all will know they are made of
The finest oak for the smell and
Taste says it all. When the long
Winding road to the tables of the
Rich comes to the end their pallets
Attest to that the finest of vinegars
Surely is here being served. The price
Attests to that which is why to you and
Our pallets we stand the wretched of the
World for to us vinegar is cider vinegar
And the in this shallow end we
Think this vinegar got to the table like
Any other. Like all things special it
Does not tell its story well, but just
Delivers what is promised in silence.

Sarah Mkhonza

Beams So Sharp They Hurt The Eyes

When ideas poke the mind
So sharp their edges
Come at you like beams
So tired of jabbing and
Being unheeded they stay
There and turn where they hurt
The onlookers who will
Not say no, with a voice
So big it causes the furniture
To shake.

What irks us is that the
Jab has always meant respond,
But what do you do when the
Knowledge is out there rolling
On the slopes of cyberspace not
Easy to tame anymore and the tweets
Are coming out like birds bombing
The earth?

It hurts the eyes like sharp
Beams yet they called cyberspace
Social as if it was friendly yet
Its bite is worse than that of
A serpent because it is self
Propelling and moves forward with
An in built ability to hurt like
Beams of light that remain piercing
One spot long after the car has passed.
The poison from the syringe
Remains and spreads way beyond the
Four walls of bright screens into
The four cardinals of the earth.

Sarah Mkhonza

Bees Wax For Sure

When my hair does not lock
I do not use candle wax
I use bees wax for it is
Soft and allows my curls to
Come together and sing in
Sync in the wind.

For those who may not know
The keratin I lock together
Has me also singing a Bob
Marley song when the wind
Blows into my eyes. T'is a
Time to celebrate the no
Cry, and remember the past.

I'm also glad the bees are
Too busy to see the wax stolen
To hold my house of hair by
Taking from them. That is when
I know I am a capitalist for to
Buy the wax taken from another's
House is sure to make me the
Next queen bee and just sit
While the others move around
And want, just the stuff that
Makes me buzz loudest.

Sarah Mkhonza

Behind The Quarrels Of Our Clan

Behind the clashes of our clan
Stands one woman who is as tall
As she is as thin and destructive.
Let us call her Getrude for I guess
That is closest, in names, to how she
Could be named.

So sly is she that she whispers into
Every ear and the lies she tells go
In and leave their prey so cold that
You can see the beginning of a wintry
Wind blowing on the head of the person
She last visited.

So wicked is her heart that it glows
Like the lava falling out of an active
Volcano. Like lava falling into the land
Her talk wiggles itself around each and
Everyone and the clan begins to shake
As if the earthquake she has conjured
Is imminent.

Everybody listens to 'Get rude' for she
Walks on stilts trying to be taller
Than the untruths she tells for she
Wants to hide that inside she is as
Empty as the tomb in which Jesus lay
The morning the women peeked into it.

She bears she news that confound us
Like a radio station in the bush when
There is a guerrilla war and spears every
One she stings with it as if it is poison
Coming out of the black mamba.

Her head rises in the grass like a mamba
For she dwells in a grass hut away from
Everyone so that every visit can be as
Unusual as the spit of the puff adder

For when it strikes you rub your eyes
Unsure where the devil is the snake that
Spat at you like me when I was playing
Hide and seek behind the mealie bags.

The clan stays there in the heat of Africa
Shaking as if it has been treated with an
Inner wind that came out of a stomach bubbling
With wickedness that fermented as she brews the
Next drink of marula it will gather around
At our next family tit-a-tat.

As you can see, I have run out of words to
Tell you how so good a smiling woman can
Bite each person's ear and leave it aching
As she walks away with the brightest smile
At this age of seventy. I always thought
confusion was a thing that lurked around
The brains of younger people for they
Are trying to find themselves. That this
Aunt of mine has arrived is obvious for
She will never leave the grass hut with
Her ears like antennae for she would
Have no news with which to deal the
Blows on the clan that has quarreled
Until it runs out of words to throw
As spears at each other.

I tell you this so that you can know
That if there exists the likes of her
In your own clan know that the DNA
Of such exists all over the world
For Jezebel is not just a biblical
Figure. She has been cloned and walks
Alive in this world.

I have dwelt on description for if
I went into examples you would see
A sack bobbing down the river with
A child in it and know that I
Am talking is because I am past
Madness for the truth as I always

Say sets us free only when we leave
The examples that confound even
The devil himself alone. This I
Have told you was the saying of my
Grandmother who always knew words
Can make us look reality in the eyes.

Sarah Mkhonza

Blow Some Cheese Cake Smooth Smiles At Him

Next time you meet a man you like
Celebrate with cheese cake and blow
Cheese cake smiles in his direction.
This will cast the spell on him and
He will be veered in your direction
And keep searching for the cheese
In the cake for it does not smell
Like real cheese when it is mixed
With your perfume. He will land
Somewhere you can knock some sense
Into him and tell him to look at
You twice the way he does when
He eats his cake which even though
He has found it he cannot eat it.
You give him the telling of a lifetime
And then walk away. They say they
Follow the wind when the smell of
Perfume of a woman is in the air.
Take my word for it. I heard this
One from my mother the princess whose
Bride price was paid by five men
Consecutively. As the situation
Stands I am still not sure whose
Wife she will be in heaven. So
Do not overdose for you might
Multiply him into more than one.

Sarah Mkhonza

Blueberries Are As Blue As Cherries Are Red

I want to tell you what I heard in the grocery
Store of a big department store. I went to the
Fruit section and took raspberries off the shelf.
The packet opened and spilled on the floor. I told
An employee that I had made a mess.

I went back to the shelf and blueberries got
My attention. I picked them up and cherries
Looked at me and told me to take them as well
For what was I going to do when I make the pie
For each fruit has its own power.

When I asked what that power was I was shocked.
The cherries answered first with a sly move
Wiggling themselves into my basket and not
Minding that I had only a couple of dollars.
They said you will not regret for you cannot
Leave here and go into a world with regret
For one pie cannot satisfy your tastes, for
Blueberries are as blue as cherries are red.

I walked away and wished for a place where
The power of choice did not lie with the buyer,
A place where I could ask someone to hand me
Stuff for there I called the shops. My world
Has been taken over by the items themselves
In this world where the goods call the shots.

I rest unsure what I will do now that I shop
On the screen in front of me and every little
Item wiggles itself telling me that buying is
Not for those whose choices are not made prior
To coming into their world. You click this and
Click that and this click-click-world enters
Your purse and wrenches the budget and tears
Your world into tatters of debts. Only the
Devil goes away laughing telling you, I told
You so, temptation is the god that runs your
Life since you hated the word discipline the

Day you were born and threw it out of your life
as a teenager.

I sit on my kitchen table with two pies looking
At me telling the story of the shopper of today.
I face the two with a mouth that waters for both,
But a budget that yells at my purse and tells it
To shut the card section and throw away the keys
For if this game is played like this someone
Will have a heart attack for they will have not
Even a sum to buy a piece of gum to chew for the
Sake of these two that know how to argue even with
The devil himself saying blueberries are as blue
And as tasty as Cherries are as red, especially
on a piece of crust bought at the store.

Sarah Mkhonza

Born Inside A Kangaroo Pouch

I sit inside the warmth of the kangaroo
And look at the world I am going to be
Born into.

I see trees swaying in the wind and winter
Fires igniting and burning huts that I am
To put out.

I hear talk of an independence of Africa
I must be a part of it for the drum is beating
In nearby villages.

I learn the dance and move my tiny hands
Faking a dance choreographed by the movements
Of a kangaroo.

I hear the world calling me to come and be
A part of something great that has no name
So I search for the name in the darkness
That connects my umbilical cord to the nerves.

I come out holding power in two words that
Make me learn a language I can get at the

World of silence I lived in untouched
and call it a mama papa world and then
Begin to tell the world how happy I am to be
In this beautiful place.

I look around me and see toddlers like me
Who tell me stories of incubators human
And I see they cannot jump like me and
I thank God for being born inside the
Kangaroo pouch for these are the cleverest
Mothers on earth for like prophets they
Take ypur story and bag it and take it
Everywhere to the sound of a Maori drum.

Bring Back The Love Letter

My mail box misses the
Love letter in a blue
Envelope. Its contents
Played me a fool, for I
Read with disbelief the
Words written about me.
I was no rose, but in
This letter my petals
Were alive and red.
They jumped off the
Page and together we
Stood inside a vase
Full of water. In
His words I stood
A goddess with a
Magic that caused
Him to forever want
To spend his life with
Me. This letter had pages
That brought the sky up
Above our heads and together
We floated in parachutes
Close to the earth.

Together we walked
Under one umbrella
On rainy days and
Sat on green laws
When there was sun
Enough. All this was
Packed in one letter
With a stamp with
A picture of Charles
And Diana who were
Soon to wed. This
Letter like the
Fairy tale gone
Wrong has been
Stolen at the

Posts office in Cyberspace
And been replaced by
Short emails with a
Two word phrases 'love you'
At the end as if he is
Signing of a check for
Goods he never received.

Bring back the love letter
So I can put it in a picture
Album for it paints
Me into a world of
A Picasso never seen.
So full of love is our
World that we float
Two doves in the air
And build our nest
Under lofty city church
Roofs and watch the world
Go on without us for ours
Is a world not known
To everyday troubles. The
Bats that huddle in church
Roofs are no disturbance
For we drown them with
The squeaks of our laughter.

Write me the eight pages
Of dreamy love with your
Scrawly handwriting
For it hides the heavenly
Coded message you have given
Me to be passed on to
The next generation
Like a scroll of old.

Sarah Mkhonza

Can Justice Be Just, Just

The law hangs around our necks
It makes us pay taxes so the likes
Of us can experience life as citizens.
What do we do when it locks out
Some of us who we were hoping
Would one day join us on this
Road to citizenland? I feel justice
Should not play tricks and just be
What it claims to be, just, just.

For who wants to sleep when they
Know the door is unlocked but people
Cannot come in for one pen has said
With one long squiggle, stand outside
The door for you are a certain hew and
Not supposed to have doors open for
You to come in, no matter what your
Condition?

It is when justice takes the shape
Of one thought and not the shape
Of another that we become wanderers
Who can end up in the mouth of
Those who want us to be no more
Including the weather. These eliminators
Of life have always been stopped when
Justice and fighting together win. I think
We need another ally when justice
Refuses to be a part of the battle.
Not so sure which one, but hope it
Is time to look at the face of hope
And wonder if it will come in and not
Change into a squiggle like the one
We had before.

Sarah Mkhonza

Can Love Stand On One Leg

As if being tested for being drunk
Can love stand on one leg and prove
It can do what it promised to do, to
live and let live for love is just
That.

Can love prove it is without hate
And continue standing and not be
Interrupted by the moment of
questioning?

Love like water flows from one
Point to another and stagnates
And when the valve opens
Spills out to go and do the usual
Water the hearts and make them sing
in unison.

Like oil it lubricates the hardened
And softens them to be pliable and
Then they find the pot in which they
Are being cooked is too small to hold
The legs that have always been outstretched
On a couch called time.

Can love prove that it is the only thing
We seek when we walk with our noses in
The air hoping something that smells like
It will get wafted in our direction only
To realize that we should have gone south
Instead of north and east in stead of
West. The in between does not do it for
It feels like love yet it it is just
What it is a feeling that wants belonging
And acceptance that cannot be done by
Means pliable and changeable.

This elusive love which we search for
And go all over to find is just what it

Is, forever needed and surely something
We never get enough of and always want more of
Mother love and Father love do not
Come into the picture and color it blue
When we search for soulmates for they
Are the best examples of what it is. We
Look in every nook yet it lies all around
Us laughing at us in this hide and seek
Game it has us playing on this here
Earth. Next time catch the feeling the
Way you catch a bug and make sure your
heart has liquid enough to baptize it
And have it say your name night and day.
Like a bug let it fly but not too far,
For you will need it just the moment
It breaks free. Know that freedom is the
Essence of these things. For it is more
About actions of touching, seeing and
Saying than it is about objects.

Sarah Mkhonza

Care For The Runner Without Feathers

It is your last days,
You need yourself not others,
You have to comfort yourself,
And put yourself to sleep.

Give yourself the warmth you need,
Protect yourself in your cupped hands,
See the you that is well and up,
Then throw ill will to the wind.

Remember the songs you sing,
Listen to your voice at its best,
Enjoy the dance inside yourself.
For the best dancer is within you.

Walk this walk with pride,
The whistle has been blown,
Cheer the runner who makes
The finish line hands held high.
For that is the mark of winners
Your stampede is powerful,
It can be heard in far away lands,
Where they know the winner is you.

Who said runners had no feathers,
With which to fly to the future,
And leave the world way down,
So behind that it becomes a dot?

Fly for that is how you care,
For the you that knows its self,
In this flight of the bold
Who are imaging new ways of doing,
And creating a world of objects,
To be used by others like you

Cheer the runner without feathers.
Care for the ideas in you,

Pen them down and see the drawing,
It is so surreal it demands more,
Of the much closer look that you give,
The food of thought you eat daily.

Sarah Mkhonza

Carry This Memory Everywhere You Go

Me disappearing in the distance,
my silhouette full of love for you
have given me the best shot of the
drink we drink out of each other's
water bottles. This ends the yearning
for you know I will emerge again
with a body full of something that
oozes of the juices of the yesterdays
when we held each other close and
smelt only the smells of ourselves,
my breath, your breath.

Sarah Mkhonza

Casting Spells That Work

Don't ever touch me
For if I cast a spell
On you only the gods will
Save you. It is while herding
Cattle that I learned my bag
Of tricks and swear they work.

Walking in the forest
When my father's herd
Has disappeared while
I napped under a tree
Means waking up and
Praying to the God
Of the times that they
Are not in someone's field
For they love the mischief
Of harvesting things green
And causing quarells that run
Through lifetimes in my village.

My heart, racing I tie
Clumps of grass as I go
For I could go in circles
Forever and not see ground
Already covered. My ears are
As sharp a razor as is my wit
For to return home without the
Herd means a little comma in
The freeze of embarrassment
For now the elders have to
March into the forest and
Split in all directions
And like demons they must
Call out skills old while
I await the judgement at the
Court of sleepy heads that nap
At the cost of the lifeblood of
Men of my clan. I swear they were
Born inside the bellies of their

Stock.

Two tricks I must perform
To cast a spell on my father.
One to stop him from shouting
And another to make it hard for
Him to open his mouth and spit
At me venom of an udder. Pick
A pebble and put it under my
Tongue and I can hear him
Stuttering on the first word
And his 'what did I do to
Myself this child! ' I know
Then that he is calling on
The world to answer him for
He dare not lay his hands upon
Me. Thanks to the pebble under
Tongue.

To get his arms not to lift
Up high as they beat me twig
Them I must. As I run looking
For these beasts I put two twigs
Under my armpits and make sure they
Stay there even when I bend
To tie a clump of grass for
That is the only sign that
Tells me my sense of direction
Is right.

Tracks on the ground useless
Will tell you little in tall
Grass, but one thing brings
Hope fresh green
And herbaceous it means hope
That says you are not only on
The right path but near finding
Your father's herd.

The bull then bellows and you
Listen whence that sound came
From for you have prayed the

Name of your leader of the
Herd till he heard you. You
Go in that direction and find
Them sitting chewing the
Cud like angels feasting
On blessed manna on the
Tables of heaven. The only
Difference is in the color
Of the manna. Scold the bull
You do not for he kept them
All together and saved you
From a beating.

You drive them home
All worry gone for
You all pass the drinking
Hole water them and set off towards
The sunset. Rest comes when
They sit and chew the cud in
The krall.

Sarah Mkhonza

Catch The Bug And Run

There is a creative bug
For this creative outbreak
Is on the last round. This bug
Will strike soon in this life at this
So called alter of existence.
It moves at the speed of light
It seeks our nationalities
And urges us to create, create
And create something that
Will bring us together as
The world splits us with these
Heroes of today who trumpet
Truths that trample on us
Making out of us tramps
On letters with no stamps
That are on a destination
That is not known. These
Envelopes red at the end of
The year, green and white
in this month are going out
In droves not knowing where
They will land and the year
Is coming like a train that
Is about to derail asking
Us to catch the bug of creativity
And steer home the lost spirit
Inside ourselves for we hold
The reigns if we have our words.

The creative bug had
Fingers green and supple
It touches the seed
And puts it in the earth
Voila! A sprouting idea
Invades your mind and
Walks you to the paint brush
And there you start making
News of yourself when you
Do not have your words in

The rhyming dictionary
That it gives you and says
Take the ideas to the end
For at the beginning
There is an angel at the
Gate that says you must
Not eat of the tree of
Wisdom for the end you
Are walking towards
Was created a long
Time ago and you
Can Only remember it if
You sit and scream
Out aloud and say you
Want to see back there
Where you were centuries
Before you were born.

Let us say you scream about
Just the year before you
Were born or the decade
When men flew to the moon
And touched the surface.
What were your little
Spiritual hands groping for
In the darkness called
Time, if you may care to
Know?

This question can only be
Answered by the you that
Was there and will be.
As for me, I see a world
Needing me and my words
An Africa going into
Independence wading in
Wearing gloves darkened
By colonialism and goggles
And blurred by apartheid
Full of the mud of ignorance
For my people were wading
Into westernization with a

Culture of taking and not sharing
Leaving behind our values
That would soon be lost at the
Alter of gathering with
The basket of education that
Was always leaking when the
Money to pay for it was not there
So I stand privileged my head
A basket that the florist put
In roses with thorns that I
Am forever picking and counting
Each pricking counted as a blessing
All the same for not being hurt
Would make me live the life of
A sheltered angel that does not
Think of any mischief for there
Are no words to make roses out of.

As I see this cloud cumulo
Nimbus laden with creativity that
Lets rain drops that fall on
The window of my brain I declare
To you all to look out the window
Of yours for out there are the
Drops we are to make new ideas
Out of and walk on our heads if
We have to for nothing normal
Makes the world normal when we
Take the creative animal
In us and make it yell out
To our world that we were
Never anybody's really but
Ours for we were born free
To die free even if people
May throw us into prisons
And capture us in droves
In police cars with metal nets
Like the pregnant girls at
My boarding school who sat
In the little truck their
Belongings in a trunk and
Suitcase going home never to

Return for they had to tell
The story of one impregnated
By flying insects that invaded
Their uterus and created in them
A newness that the world had to
Deal with later as it would be
The citizen of tomorrow.

These outbreaks of creativity
Are here and they tell us to go
To the place where we can receive
And not spit out the healing like
A baby swallowing medicine that is
Bitter for it has to be forced down
And spat out when some of it does
Go in no matter what for mother
Says so. We are not doctors of time
But in time we will be healers of
Minds when we put our heads together
And search deep down for an answer
To the crisis that invades the world
Where people die without knowing
That they will for there is turmoil
Invisible that seeks creativity
Invisible even to us but because
History predicted that we would
Be the solvers of problems
Let us usher in this outbreak
Of creativity the way the viruses
Invaded the world unannounced
And toyed with bodies of mothers
And heads of babies sucking
Brains. Our is a new creative bug
That mends the brain and makes
It work better, sift better
The ideas to use to motivate
The mind to create better and
Not kill but give life
For doing so is free in
Our world where we forever
Give to the world what was given to
Us in a cloud laden with power

Strength, and victory that
Very few see, and yet are forced
To see when we have spoken
For our words come from a world
Where 'it is because I have said so'
Is a taboo. This dictatorship
That invades us is unspoken and
Has to be taken spear in hand
To the ones who lack ideas for
The killing was once an idea
And once forced into heads
At one point the way
You force money into a thief's
Hand in order to say that
Breaking into a bank is not an
Option for it is an unnecessary
Risk because money flows at the
Alter of abundance and only just
Has to be seen with the sun glasses
Of creativity.

The outbreak is on and we need to
Catch the bug and then throw the
Ball to the next person for it we
Do not it will burn our hands and
They will be charred and when people
Ask why the charred hands we will have
To tell a lie for they will not believe
We were once told a message we hid
We will be like false prophets who
Are sent to one place and go to
Another. Poets of the world
Listen to the sounds that will
Come in the laden cloud and make
Sure you decipher the message
With the right code for going
Wrong in putting down the truth
Will cost many their lives.

This responsibility rare is given
Only to a few who know and feel
They have heard the calling

Deep down in their hearts
Or else they would not risk
Being laughed at by the readers
Of the world who are always looking
For something to jeer at.

Sarah Mkhonza

Caught In Our Own Snare

We built this snare poachers
That we are. With wire from
Our fences and stone from the
Land. We made these traps that
Now hold us hostage and have
Us dancing on one foot while
The wire goes deep into the
Flesh as the blood makes the
Leg swell and become livid.

The truth dawns at dawn in the
East as each day begins. That
To set a trap for other living things Comes back with the vengeful force
Of the boomerang to haunt the poacher.

We now look far into the horizon
For rescue only to see a swarm of
Honey bees flying close to our heads
And wonder if our hands can fight
Them off only to find ourselves
Covered with stings and bees on
The ground for they were also
Suffering after their suicidal sting
That punishes them for stinging their
Prey when they knew that they are
Better off pollinating flowers
And gathering honey for this world
Deals cruelty to the cruel.

We try to play victims and tell Stories of sadness that stand
Up and thank us for knowing how
To tell a one sided story that
Ends up entertaining frogs for
They have never been caught in
A trap. The rabbits look at the
Frogs and tell them to wait
Till those who sell frogs' legs
Come like fishermen with nets
To make their final haul in their

Noisy pond where they croak in
Multiple tunes to the annoyance
Of all living rabbits.

The trap still needs to get off
Our leg for it is when we realize
That there is only one leg that
Is trapped in this trap and that
This one legged nation trapped
By its own plague will have to
Bend and undo this trap with all
The hands that lay idle for we do
Not want the UFOs to wonder what happened to us that did not happen to the
frogs in Egypt for in the fight for freedom they multiplied and invaded a
Pharaoh's world a determination of millions.

This trap proves that playing
The game of knowers of all things
Has never worked. There is a time
When learning to talk to bees, ducks
And the likes of such presumed
Unclever species help for one thing
They know is the number one only

Is the most important for they
Fly and swim in one direction or
They would end up in self made traps
And as lost for solutions as we are.

Sarah Mkhonza

Charcoal Sellers Of The Apartheid Era

In tractors they came as dark as ever
Charcoal powder on them and out we went
To get the charcoal for stoves had to
Burn at five o'clock in smoke chimney
Township where smoke filled the air
As if the earth had suddenly decided
To smog the world.

The smell of charcoal filled the air
Somewhat nostalgic this smell so foreign
Yet so comforting for it means food
Shall be on the table for parents went
To work to buy bread and fish.

So old this manyano woman walking
The streets while taxis zoom up and
Down like it is yesterday's street
Wedding when my cousin married her
Groom as dust stirred and hit the sky.

We walked on sideways littered
And did not see much litter for
It had become flowers of the pavement
That told us taxis still drove
With passengers throwing garbage
Out as they got off at the next stop
In our Benoni township of Wattville.

Times have passed and the coal stove
Has become an expensive antique that
Costs tens of thousands when only
Yesterday you could get it for
A hundred or two.

Warmth is scarce in these days
Where even security guards
No longer light up fires and roast
Corn by the wayside while they
Wait for the night to go out and

Let in the day so they can go
Home for when the world wakes
That is when they rest and when
It rests that is when the clock
Strikes seven for these laborers
Of the night.

Charcoal stoves up in the morning
Coughing out fire that glows with
Saucepans on top shiny for steel wool
Knows its work in Africa south. Such
Is the work that kept the morning
Tea in my belly before I woke for
I could taste the butter on the slice
That would see me off to school
Only to see them once again charcoal
Sellers in their garb so black delivering
Coal for a city that needs it.

Dare you laugh at these laborers in
Your uniform black and white
Scholar and your gym dress and belt
Could mix with dirty coal. Dare you laugh
At the bucket toilet pickers who
Might empty the contents on the yard
And dress it with smelly stuff just
To fix you. You better not for this
is a livelihood designed and sealed
In the books in Pretoria and know it
Or not you are bound for the grave in
Some rigid graveyard designed on the
Color of your skin for this is
A mark that says it all about you
For you walked out with it straight
Out of your mother's belly.

.

No sewerage system no electricity
Means people must shuffle and do
The work of the plumber with their
Arms carrying and pouring little

Miniature you when you pile and pour
In the mystery of the small enclosed
Toilets where people can see your feet
From the life this township
Life where everything goes and never
Comes back just as does the money or
Else the ships of the town these so
Called townships would have long glistened
With lights bright.

Sarah Mkhonza

Chasing The World An Hour Behind

Waking up when the world has left you,
Everything leaves you behind,
For the world has marched on,
To a future you will only know,
When you catch up with it.

For futures to catch up,
It is the effort of ants,
Who always know it is coming,
While we dawdle and fidget,
In our daily musings,

Assured life will go on,
We need to accept facts,
And live as if the future is here,
For it is coming here anyway,
And never going anywhere.

I live and try to follow the world,
That left me while I was asleep,
And hate to know I am the last,
For everything went on without me.

I sit on the table of life,
Catch up on leftovers,
Just glad food does taste better,
When warmed up and taken later.

The juices mix in my mouth,
And tell me with the after taste,
That I have driven myself to a halt,
By not setting the alarm.

My excuse of time changes,
Cannot save me now,
That the service has started,
Church is going on without me,
The choir will sing without me,

When I peek in heads turn,
Everybody knows the truth,
I was not aware of time changes,
And thought it was still early,
At the eleventh hour.

They flatter the last worm,
When they tell him he is fine,
For he will not be eaten by birds,
For those early one always,
Catch the worm like them.

This time thing eluded me,
When it came to chasing,
Even girls and boys knew it,
That I fight for no worm,
Hence this end of the game,
Of chasing the world an hour behind.

When will you get to the finish line,
When the others have finished the race,
Before you start, they ask,
I did not hear the gun and get on my marks,
But I promise to make the it to the end,
For it is more important to start,
Then make sure you finish,
For in this world of finishings,
Endings happen because of beginnings.

Sarah Mkhonza

Chauffeur Yourself To The Next Level

It will take guts, yes it will.
You are on the wheel with keys in your hand..
Put them in the hole and hear the buzz.
What are you waiting for?
The fuel tank called your brain,
Ushers in new challenges.
Take yourself to the next level.
The food is in the trunk.
Basketfuls that will rot
While you stand idle lost in thought.
If you do not move they have rear ended you and your car will be totaled.

What will you tell the saints that gave you wings?
That you ran out of wind for windows were open?
Lame excuses don't do it eve in the land of failures.
For everybody knows you never tried.
It shows on the tracks that the car never moved.

Why get into the car if you can't drive?
Why sit on the driver's seat bum that you are?
This is no sofa for the lost to throw themselves on.
The game only takes tough players,
For they run faster to the winning point.
Play to win and chauffeur yourself to the next level!

Sarah Mkhonza

Clay Of Other Clays

This clay that holds me,
This mold, this vase too,
So intriguing when I touch
It with a scratch, wishing to
Caress it and tell it that
Ours is a journey of seeking.

This clay that sought me out,
And covered me with velveteen,
To hide my bareness which like
Vapor was unseen like my intuition
Was known only to me.

Together we've walked the earth for
The clay stuck with me, hoping ours
Would be a journey led by the unseeing
Me, to the alter of goodness and beauty.

Oh clay of other clays, how we tripped
While skipping into ditches and
Dongas! How I led us tied together,
A bundle of curiosity that sought
Truth in other galaxies while not
Seeing where the hole is in our path.

The foot which always wishes it had
A nose so it could smell the moss soft
And avoid the sharp edges of rocks
That have sliced us deep bears the scars.

The hands that got burnt when we touched
The untouchables still has the mark of the
Biggest sign of how lost we were on my ring
Finger and my index finger still points at
The eyes that looked at us with love, pity
And disdain.

When the time for promises comes, clay of
Many clays, I will surely hold my hand up

Bible in hand and say, I will never lead us
Astray the way I did on this journey.

Sarah Mkhonza

Come Here, Go Away, Be Quiet

Two word phrases of meanness
That are heard by children
Always imperatives similar
To those you hear from a boss
From hell never preceded by
the tentativeness of the timid
but blasted as if its thundering
And lightning right on your head

This bullying by mamas who never
Say the word they teach that gets
Everybody moving spelt p-l-e-a-s-e
Means learn to speak out about being
Talked to like that and stand your
Ground for your baby days are over
When your eyes looked at her and wished
After you carried out the command
She would say a word that also has
two phrases, that 'thank you, ' that
even if followed by no wink makes
You feel somebody cares.

The middle phrase 'go away, ' even
When mediated by a word of kindness
Remains a pain for it is one where
There is no return to the distance
Implied for it thunders and goes
Deep inside with meanings that yell
Being unwanted and thrown into
The dumpsters of the question not
Answered which asks, 'Go away where? '
For the mind needs to know
Destinations when journeys are
Implied.

These limitless wrongdoings that
Have accompanied existence always
Need to have us sit down and have
A tete-a-tete with Almighty Trump

For he has said he will build a wall
Because he never said 'come here, '
To the immigrants of these New Knighted
States. President elects also need
To have a lesson in how to kiss the
Hand of a fool before they are led
Into the oval office for who knows
If the fool holds the keys to the
Master bedroom where Lincoln slept
And room only opens with a
combination that says kiss my hand.

Violence of words told to a people
Is bad for it cannot be taken back
After it damages how they walk, talk
And think about themselves and the
Earth on which they walk. They once
said countries are like babies
But now we see that babies are like
Countries and mothers act like presidents
And spill out trumped-up orders
Each time they blow their horn
Using trumpets as instruments of
Justice just to prove they can do it
And get away with it.

Sarah Mkhonza

Come Let Us Walk On Mars

Come let's walk on Mars
On this tray of chocolate
For they say over there
The earth is red and we
Can be the only ones who
Have been lovers where only
Scientists go. As we spread our
Chocolate on this planet and teach
It love for the planet earth has
Lost a taste of the essence of giving
That you feel when chocolate goes
Into the tastebuds for the nerves of
Love as true as landing up there.

I hang on this chocolate kiss and
Suck air in between my teeth trying
To find your bits but they slip into
A me I have never seen.

This essence of being so real
So, silently Moorish on this planet
Strange that you've put me on Isis
Is so like being Mars borne the
Earth has no understanding of the
Steady mist that this chocolate leaves
For it lingers in the space called me
Long after the Earth has claimed us
Back to its confusing bosom.

Tie me to you umbilical cord
To umbilical cord for ours is
A spaceship all our own. For
Flotation of chocolate birds
In their own Sputnik baffles
Those who only get trapped on
The doings in Stat Wars, for our
Are Planet Wars that defy reason
For they are made of entwined
Chocolate love.

Sarah Mkhonza

Come Up The Slope Rider Friend

Keeping my foot on the pedal has to
be done to keep this bike
on the path.

Keeping my foot on the rungs of this
ladder is to make sure my feet don't
get tandra up in the spokes of the bike.

Keeping it going is like working on
till payday and the few days after.
I hear the coins jingle in my purse,
louder as I go downhill and not so loud
when I go uphill. The loudness fuels my
ride.

If I could have the wisdom of a coin,
I would jingle in whisper mode. This
can tell the world I live in the pocket
of jingle-them-more. They would know I
threw a die to get them jingling and won
because my playmates were losers on the
same journey.

Tangled up in the spokes of this bike I ride how can I peep into the future. Say it
like it sounds. You say through the
spokes of the bike.

Did you know I cannot even ride a bike when listening to this bike tale on this
bike trail. You thought I took a break?
Yes, the bike is being pushed uphill. It threatened to ride me and said that had to
be. Why? For the pride of being a bike rider and entering a race without skill
set number one.

Embarrassed on my own behalf, I take lesson number one. Equipped and pride
beaming through my ceiling, I pass riders on the uphill and honk at them and
share
a survival of the fittest story.

Compete Means Complete It

I stood in line shaking enraged
For I knew I was the winner ignored
Until I saw the line get shorter
That it was more important to show
Up with a well finished story
Than to arrive at the finish line
Empty handed.

The other people looked at me
And shook their heads at me
And told me to move over
For only one rule matters
That you never get to this line
With unhemmed frills for judges only
Look at the finished product
For compete means complete it.

Sarah Mkhonza

Confessions To A Priest At Dawn

I want to tell you this story,
For it has become well known to all.
Me and this other one I told you about
Have not seen each other for a month
Nor have we spoken to the God in us,
To tell him how much we have grown apart.

Lest you be surprised by the rumors,
That tell everybody heaven does not allow,
The division of what was indivisible in your eyes,
The heart knows the four ventricles part ways,
When it stops beating in unison.

This truth bothers you and me most,
But not new finds and new brooms
That sweep the streets in a manner not seen before,
As does my spouse's new find from the bar,
Where wine is served in goblets that hang
Down a bosom inflated with wild balloons,
That have seen the touch of many,
Who vowed they are worth possessing.

Now that you know my inner most confession,
I am saying to you go and pray for me alone,
In my absence so you can invoke the powers
That be without fear I will hear you curse,
The very God who had us served mass by you,
To the joy of crowds whose tears of mirth,
Were washed down by wine years ago.

This dawn has come with good news,
For freedom was never a bad word,
When it tells a sparrow that the sky
Is all open when there is no rain,
Pouring down onto its wings to dampen them.

With this confession I implore mothers of the church,
To stop talking about us as two fish in a pond,
Swimming around as if running away from a frog

But know one has fallen out and rotted on the sand,
And has eyes looking out ready for birds of the air,
To peck on it and swallow it into a gizzard where it shall,
Rest with stones that churn pulp out of its flesh.

On this day I walk out of this confession box,
With no tears but assured by this sunrise,
That my fingers will point east when they mean east,
And end up putting on a ring that is made to fit,
Not the one which was hidden when others were being kissed,
For this I know happened or my spouse would be here with me.

Tell me of vows of poverty and I will tell you
That vows of love in this sacred sacrament of two,
Are vows of chastity that land on one knee,
Begging the other to rise so they can both walk
Together to the alter of obliteration
Where all insincerity ends with a bang.

Who said what we do in these churches is real,
When we can break down and splatter it with words,
That have one syllable and throw the rest in there,
Where my finger points right now as this dawn yawns,
Tired of the day I will spend after a sleepless night,
For coming here was something I waited for eagerly,
With not one wink of sleep creeping into my tired eyes.

The Lord bless these goodbyes of two birds,
That fell into a trap at midnight,
Only to separate in these confessions,
On this dawn two days away from the birth,
Of the savior called the happiest of days,
For misery creeps along slowly when it comes,
To break the heart and throw away the contents.

Sarah Mkhonza

Cork-Stopper Your Ears

When everything happens for every reason
Push the corks into your ears and hear no
Wind, no woe for the world is turning round
And round on the same dias.

You may like to open a little as the wind
Settles down and whisper to check if you
Can hear wounds for the world can kill the
Eardrums with the likes of what is talked
About in this changing world.

Don't cork-stopper too long and miss the
Time to hear the bell ring for your last
Mill for it means hunger. Your end of the
Day has come with a bang.

The meanness that flies around in the name
Of the law shows we gave the gavel to the
Wrong judge for his law is more in the mouth
Than in the statutes.

Sarah Mkhonza

Could Be It Was Rose

My friend Rose
Died while I
Her friend was
Away in other
Lands. I seek
Her in my mind
And wish I could
Tell her I had
No passport to
Travel to her end
And lay her to
Rest even though
I had not been there
When she crossed
The deep Jordan
And went to the
Other side.

Could be it was
Rose who said to
Me when we pass on
Make sure there
Are flowers, I mean
Lots of roses on
My grave. You see
Those flowers
I want them all
Over even on the
Floor. I know I
Can trust you
To do that for
Me for you always
Gave me a rose
Every Friday for
You knew no one
Would take me
Out for dinner
On the weekend
Now that I am

Off the shelf.

Could be it was
Rose who said
To me her husband
Had locked her
Out of the house
Making me livid
For I said Rose
When your cruel
Husband whom I
Shared tears before
You married does
This to you
Just come to my
House for you
Know there will
Be a bed for you
Even if it means
Me and you must
Share the corners
Of a blanket and
Pull it this way
And that the way
We did in our youth.

For it was indeed
Rose who shared the
Bed with me and we
Talked for hours
In the night until
Her grandma put out
A candle we had burnt
Out for we were also
Reading a book about
Truths we wanted to
Know in our youth
About men and their
Lives for we were
Trying to bring some
Into ours the way you
Blow them into your

Heart like air going
Into a balloon.

Could be it is me
And Rose so full of
Air in us. Talking
Love with men for
We had read Mills
And Boon and were
Full of love stories
We wanted to live
With a chosen one
From lands afar. Now
We are at the crossroads
Having taken paths
Different into lands
Different and ends
Different for indeed
It is Rose. She has
Walked her path and
Ended her Journey
With me on the tail
Still following the
Same truths watching
Her children marry
The way we thought
We would and even
Almost did.

Ours is a story of
Rose, two girls
Whose story goes
Into blissful ends
Where we see the
Ones once little
Growing into men
And women who must
Journey like us
These generations
That blow their
Air into balloons
And get puffed up

For they do not
Believe we once
Stood on platforms
Wearing the very
Heels that they
Wear today for
Theirs shine in
The path and helps
Them take steps
Where nobody can
Cause them to trip
With us looking
And shining the light
For we are here
To kill a fly that
Lands on them, not
With a swap but surely
With a volley of
Words from our gut!

Sarah Mkhonza

Could Be She Was My Twin Sister

When you grow up knowing there is a
Part of you that left and never returned
You look everywhere for it and always say
Could be she was my twin whenever a stranger
Passes by. She drops of a town in the north
Of the country and you see the birthmark and
You say, she could have had one too. Such was
The heat inside my mother's tummy for I have
One on my back.

When you have lost a child young and not
Seen her grow to what she would have been
You always look at others and say, could be
She would be this tall now. This hang up gets
You nowhere but keeps memory on its wake and
Makes you feel human for loss is just that,
A part of us we drag everywhere.

This could-be-business hangs around you like
A shadow hidden in the glimmer of time and you
Are always reaching for it each time it appears
Knowing you are adding with a paint brush pictures
That never were there for you have to satisfy your
Longing heart whose musings never end worse stil
At night when the ceiling ceases to talk to you
But stubbornly stares at your naked face.

Like when you have been rejected by a man who goes
On to make it big. You count your contributions
In the millions he has made and argue you would
Be going to Honolulu with him when you hear his
Latest find just swam in the warm waters of the
Island far and feel a lump in your choke and throw
A glass of wine at the mirror which shows you less
of a bikini girl you are.

Could be you would have been the twin sister
Lost in thought and never doing the things
She really did for you have not even looked at

Your own islands in the shallow waters of your
Heaven for the longing heart is peering into
The void where the love disappeared always
Hoping one day...one day. It will be me.

Could be you were the Virgin Mary's twin sister
And a virgin birth was brewing inside you like
A storm in the African countryside unfriendly
To any lights and ready to exterminate the world
For they will be thinking you are a saint when
You are plotting murder because of some dude
That left you.

Stop being the wild pony that shags its tail
On plains green and stand and look at the grass
Where you are and be sure you could be the lost
Twin sister for I have been looking for you all
This time and I have now found you so let us dance
For we just won one war. Never to fight over anyone
For love is abundant all around us and we churn it
Out like meet coming out of a mincer and eat it too.

Sarah Mkhonza

Could This Be True Cupid On The Run

Could this be real
That love has awoken
Without Cupid's bow
And stabbed a maiden's
Heart with the arrow
All alone.

They saw him in the
Plains insane with
Love no sandals on
His bare feet on a
Chase unstoppable
Till her chest he
Found. There he fell
Bow in hand and in the
Woman stuck with him
Crying Oh how I love
Jesus because he first
Loved me and you last.
Hence here I die for
We two like Siamese
Twins are bound together
Till he returns. So kiss
Me so that I do not die
For nothing like Him.

Sarah Mkhonza

Coursing Down My Spine

I feel the sweat
Going down my spine
I wonder what it is
That makes me sweat.

Bills keep piling
I am used to them.
They arrive daily
And my happiness
Disappears slowly
For I have tied it
To the belt of money.
When it goes up,
I am happy, but
When it goes down
I feel naked even
At the back where
The labors of my
Life lay.

Hence this sweat
That wets my back
At its center
Telling me I was
Born to work and
Sweat even when I
Am sitting on this
Machine and popping
Words on to the screen
Like popcorn in a maker
Making sounds that
Make me drool for
I am an animal of
Another kind
Having been raised
In Africa South.

I am going into
Tomorrow with

One resolution
To laugh when I
Get a bill and
Make sure it
Is paid on time
For Satan comes
And whispers that
It will be better
To wait and pay it
Later only to find
It gets bigger.

This sweat I wipe
With this new promise
Never to lengthen
What time wants to
Shorten such as the
Days between receiving
A bill and paying it.

For they say if you
Learn to pay the piper
He plays harder for you.
Meaning even in heaven
They will record how
Late I was in paying
Bills and if I ever
Paid at all. Sweat or
No sweat I came to tell
The truth about everything
That bothers the mind
Of this so called human.

If my bills turn into
Billions and these do
Not help, I will curse
Language for making
These two words so similar.
For I have promised
To call my self a
Billionaire without
Bills in the coming

Year. Wait for the
First day and learn
From time what prophecy
Is all about folks.

Sarah Mkhonza

Cyberhacking Blues

I saw tears in the eyes of the youth
who were crying 'Not My President, '
which made me say if we will live to
tell the story, we might as well as
begin with clearing our throats
of these cyber hacking blues
that choke us into a silence strange
for who knew that a mouse would
one day ruin a country, let alone rule
an a way that has us by our long tails?

This little thing once made with the top on a roll on
top is now rolling over us in ways worse than a bulldozer.
Once I lived in a world where we could set traps in real world.
these virtual squeaks and so digital and so powerful left shoppers
shivering in fear of hacks that can leave a household hungry.

Fat cats that we are, to think someone should
have told us of the aliens that
dominate the cyberworld.
Our claws would have held down the mouse harder
instead of giving it the softest touch
that has us glued to screens
that work against us in times of war.

This hacking has the hard swing of
a knower of the gold swing that lands
every golf ball right on the bald spot
of the genius called humanity that leaves
the shiny spot bleeding so that everybody
can see we have lost a big fight. The day
we win hair will grow back not just like
human keratin, but with the sharp edge
of porcupine quills. A weapon is no weapon
when it can get into the enemy's court
and shoot it's master. Thy say we hate
surprises when the gavel is
in the hands of the judge
whose verdict cannot be appealed.

Yes when the color has changed to cyber blue,
the game changes for it is a world too far ahead
of the human hand because it does not change color.
It committed to truth and needed
The mouse to click on the plus sign
only to learn that the word negative
is represented in red that is preceded by a minus.
So we remain empty handed, the bankrupts
that cannot regain their dignity even with a bang
made by a gavel from the heavens.

Sarah Mkhonza

Dear Bird Stop

She pecks on the little rodent,
as if ordered to do so and he stands
helpless in the middle of the road.
So confused as the long beak falls
rhythmically on the top of his skull.
I come to his rescue and take him
near the tree trunk under the tree
to hide him from this bird
To say bird, dear bird, stop!

Sarah Mkhonza

Dear Cookie With Frosted Eyes

Ours is a love supreme
Laid out with a floured
Rolling pin and cutting
Board where you were
Shaped with a cookie
Cutter from a land
Called Never Never
Land for even though
There are many of you
You are the only one
That looks at me with
Frosted eyes and
Make my eyes sparkle
For yours glint with
A mystery of making
That could only have
Come from the blessings
Of the gods.

I laid you out on the
Baking tray of time
And knew the outcome
Would have an impact
That would fan out smells
Into the air and have
The neighbors wondering
What was cooking in our
Kitchen.

Now you look at me with
Rosy cheeks near this
Friendly Santa who laughs
A bearded smile at the
World. For the two of you
Are going to be the
Best presents I give to
The world this Xmas.

Cookie with frosted eyes

Leave our house knowing
There is only one I gave
The power to be a blessing
To the world. For only you
Are my cookie cut out on the
Cutest cutter that leaves no
Clutter. So clean a job did
I do that all the dough
Is gone so that I know you are
Worth the highest bid on
The auction table.

I do not want to let you go
But as life goes what you love
You must let go for years have
Proved that to let you go on
Your way create new worlds where
There can be not one but many
Like you.

I know you will bring joy to
The world for yours is a story
That began in a bag of flour
Grown on the prairies of our
Land where you outshone the
Brightest star for you shot out
With a line that rode beyond
Drawn high up in the sky.

Come back and know the cookie
Jar is always ready to receive
You for it will not be the same
Without you for you are a cookie
Of a kind not know.

Sarah Mkhonza

Declaring The Next Hour The Laughing Hour

When the silent hour ended,
we came out laughing. In this
long joyless hour where life
had us gagged for laughing when
we should have been learning the
rules of life, giggles was all we
could show for it all.

Troubled by our defiance life called
the street police. Close to tears we
were stopped and told our crime was
coming out laughing when we should have
been solemn.

Why cry? Whom punishes people and has
them sit for the silent hour. Surely
the god of giggles knows and welcomes
the giggly, godly, gifted.

Only when you stop laughing you citizens
will you be freed again. The law you broke
is the one that ensures you get another silent hour.

So laugh citizens of the earth. This
judgement passed that has you gagged
has been appealed. Laugh for the hour
of your gagging is still to come. The
hour hates your laughter. The street
police say ter. Defy them
before they ask death to be the judge.
You and I know best what will happen.

Sarah Mkhonza

Diana You Passed Near My Pew

If I could see you Diana
I would walk for you to see
For it was not just your tiara
But what you did just for me
With your girlish walk
And your friendly look
For now you are not here to talk
And also not inside my book
This talk of ours is late
You hung up on me and left
It was decided too soon by fate
Your memories of good I kept
To tell generations who may never know
That you passed near my pew

Sarah Mkhonza

Did You Hear The Leaves Of The Fall

I heard the red leaves yelling,
To orange leaves a tune of the season,
Calling to green leaves to sing along,
For time was not on their side,
Soon they would all join the only song,
That falls to a soft falsetto,
That buries them in the ground.

The leaves listened to the wind,
And danced all night while they could
For the tree was ready to do the twist,
That threw them in the arms of the future.
Where their songs would no longer be hits.
Time overtakes the soft sighs,
With the rumbling of thunder and rain.

Sarah Mkhonza

Did You Know You Are Under Oath

When you lied to me,
did you know you are
under oath.

The ridge of your nose
gave you away, as did
the snorty little laugh.

You are under oath for you
said you do. This lifetime
will pass with your hand on
the bible.

Choose to spit out truth and
make it stand at the doorstep
of heaven to say you tried and
the untruths escaped through the
gap in your truth.

This way you can have a better
agenda at the venue of venues.
Here they say liars will burn
while those lied to will sleep.
They will be making up for all
the lies that gave them sleepless
nights.

They say love will be there as a
witness to surely say this did happen.

No two

Sarah Mkhonza

Do They Still Call It Grounding

Those days when people hid
From the Askaris they called
Going into hiding grounding
These days when we hide from
Time we call it what.

Nobody is looking for you
The way the apartheid regime
Searched for you because
You do not matter to the
Times that we live in
As you did then.

People hid under beds
And hid in the forest
And hid in the backseat
Of beetles man.

They also died inside
Wardrobes in lounges
For life had to be bought
With the price of death
Just so that we can live
And come together a people
Who have cause each other
To suffer for we did not
Want to share fairly and
Still do not really want
To do so.

Get a new life and go on
For the past long sailed
Away from the shore,
And went to the end
Of the era.

Sarah Mkhonza

Does The Number Of Rosaries Owned Make The Mark

If my rosary could talk
It would tell the world
How many 'Hail Marys' I
Prayed to get this guy.
This girl in mission school
With nuns wearing the habit
And blinded by my sheepishness
Got on her knees in the grotto
Of life and life to pray that if
He were a fly I would be milk and
He would fall into the jug and
Teaspoon in hand I would pick
Him and into the garbage can
Of life we would go away from
The eyes of the nuns. Our kisses
All over us like the milk would
Have us wrapped up and rosaries
Prayed would be forgotten in the
Mystery of our love.

As life would have it the boy never
Even as much as looked my way and
I blame my thin scrawny torso for no
Hips round came to aid my
Scrawny self with a curvaciousness,
The African urn of a figure well
Known to kill all African boys.

Now that I have forgiven time
I stand asking for the passage
To heaven for this sin of love
Only happened in my mind
For the ten rosaries I have owned
Kept me sane enough not to die
Of his love. Having survived I
Ask only to see Mary for I hailed
The one who is full of grace and
Blessed and asked to be with me
In that hour of dying for this

Boy's love. Now immortalized like
A statue I stand rosary in hand and
Ask if I will see her who never
Made it happen for me at my hour
Of greatest teenage need. What will
Tenrosaries owned earn me I ask
If I will not even see my female
Idol. She has to deliver in the
Next world and not make my chest
Burn throughout life for I still
Pine for him in my octagenarian
Years.

Sarah Mkhonza

Do-Gooder Turned No-Gooder

Once you turned in your work
before the teacher told the date.
Now you lag behind and time pushes
ahead with you facing backwards
waiting on the belt called no-gooder.

Once the tablets were taken
as the prescription dictated,
now yo swallow one here and one there
saying you fear no sickness,
for they are just giving you medicine
when they are not sure what is wrong with you.

Once you crossed at the red and green light
now you watch for cars and dash across the road
anywhere, like the stray from the neighborhood
for the earth once unfamiliar, now reads like the sand,
that you see on your doorstep.

They say familiarity breeds contempt.
Is it doing the same to you, making you
give up on humanity and also on yourself
for once you were a do goober, even helping
neighbors with parcels when they walked toward
the house.

What happens when you lose touch,
with the best part of you, like a virgin
failing to cling on to the promise once
kept to the body, that not this boy or that,
but the one who has the touch of love,
and can keep your body warm, with the kisses
longed for, and years of waiting?
Keep the gentleman's touch like Tom,
Open doors for ladies and pay for the
dinner for two. I miss the do-gooder in you,
and hate the no-gooder for I do not know
where that came from.

Don't Ask Me Ask Mandela

They eat together bunny chow,
sharing as before apartheid goes,
it must be going, going gone
for these two it never was a problem,
for one does not change life with a vote,
but with a quarter loaf of bunny chow.

Apartheid is leaving this war,
between friends who shared
things bought, yes food
and even bunny chow
with pennies given
come sunshine, wind, or rain.

Then the day comes and it goes.,
the Black one and the lunny one,
says to his friend with a hand
reaching out, like a smoker to another
'I will have a bite, won't I? '

'Don't ask me, ask Mandela! '
April is round the
vote is ready to be made by both.
The bread loaf has become small.
Bunny chow was meant for bunnies,
for this reason he cannot give, for
giving is yesterday's game. Today
has new rules on how to share.

The one who gave yesterday,
does not know it is not his to ask,
these days when Blackness runs
the show, for it has changed color,
And hunger has also done the same.

Supplies will not come easy like yesterday,
here the sun shone in the wake of life.
It will spell color for some it will rise black.

Now in this street in the sunrise era,
the sunrise error has taken place.
At lunch time, new rules are being made.

Bunny chow may know no color,
in the curried space where the
softness lies plain and yellow.
Where it drips warmly soaking into
the white, with well blended spices.

To the hungry man it seeps into
the breaded white and to the
onlooker appeals like a prostitute
Reaching out with a smell saying
'eat me.'

It has lost its Indian pride
and speaks to everyone who longs for,
and hears appeals made and dressed
in spice, speaking of one who looks
at yellow with their tastebuds.

This taste that taps into the deepest
part and knocks into the heart
of each person out here, and it
can surely split those coupled by
its agreements.

The street dwellers see each other,
but exchanges know when the president,
has come anew he will roll over the field
in ways that revoke the new chapter even for lunies.

We learn anew, that enemies will be about food,
over shares of it we will fight one another.
Yes the poorer will get even poorer,
For one just exchanged a coin for bunny chow.

If you were my friend today, we are no longer
the two who share today like yesterday. Who
makes the rules, you may ask. It is the one who
holds the bunny chow in his hand in the now.

Yet the answer speaks of tomorrow.
for to find the vote and change things
does not change this one rule,
when you hold bunny chow in your hand,
you can ask a question and not give.

When the wheel turns for the partner
lunny or not lunny, the sharing can go on,
for who said it was about bunny chow,
this friendship of ours.

Sarah Mkhonza

Don't Chase Love With A Bell Around Your Neck

Don't chase love with a bell
Around your neck on Valentines
Day, for love is already enveloping you,
Waiting to see if you see it is all yours.

Love hunts you, haunts you and tags
You for it sits in the car called you and winks
At the passerby you are hoping you will hail
And stop from looking out and not in.

For every look you cast asks if you see
The love it goes out with, and comes back
With. It hears the bell you wear around your
Neck as it rings for love knows the tune of all
The rings, just like love knows the tunes of
The songs you love and love is ready to throw
the bouquet when you are ready to catch it.
It is always coming your way

Love is not for lovers, but for dreamers
For lovers are already doing the ins and outs
Of it and the dreamers are still out there
Chasing the wind. When the morning comes
They are sick with the hang over of wishing
They had been loving and not doing what
We call chasing love with a bell around one's neck.

Sarah Mkhonza

Don't Kick An Empty Bucket

Since you will kick it,
don't kick it hard, for
kick it you will. For they
say we never miss this one.
Accurate as the goal you
score in your dreams, they say.

They will hear it far, the noise,
and know what went wrong.
That bucket is noisy,
make sure your bucket is full.

The noise will annoy the
blacksmith, who meant it for
work that is done with
the hands and not the feet.

Fill it with deeds silent,
for they will make less noise.
Respect yourself and those who
will hear the sounds.

The world is confused when faced
by honor, integrity and truth.
Challenging trio this. Go to
this last kick well shod with
boots made of wool. They
will deal with the din of noise.

Close the holes at the bottom.
You have worked hard. Create
a self made gift to take along.
It will tell those on the way,
you were special. While they
remain with the noise, you will
go with the trinket made in this
short football match where the
bucket replaced the soccer ball
even before you were born.

Sarah Mkhonza

Don't Laugh At Life For It Is Liquid

When you drink it,
it flows down your
throat like soup.

When you gurgle with it,
it goes down in bits,
you do not want to take down.

When you drink or sweetened,
it leaves an aftertaste like
a stickiness that refused to
go to oblivion.

When you call it, it does not
answer, for it fears you want
to make friends and be familiar.

When Jonah calls it it answerd,
for it says it can live inside
the tummy of a whale.

Seriously speaking the dead are
our champions, for life was called
to order and it bowed.

For who has seen a beast with no order,
yet calls so many to deliver, all the
contents of their chest.

Liars, thieves and all and ng
their all into the big hole where the liquid called life keeps flowing into.

This one slandered goes, sure he will display his art, do the final stand up,
give all the last life. He opens his
mouth to bellow an insult. He finds his
tongue has been cut.

Life laughs, calling him a simpleton, for
not knowing you cannot make fun of life. Life is liquid. Hey life is so liquid

it sips into crevices and hides, ask
doctors. They look for it and when it
eludes them, they even cry.

Drink life knowing, it is liquid.
Don't take it in large noisy gulps,
It will go down the wrong pipe and
woe unto you.

Don't laugh while you drink of it.
Also do not get drunk, for your
snores are not the hallelujah chorus.

Sarah Mkhonza

Don't Listen To The Chorus Of A Swarm Of Bees

Don't listen to the chorus of bees
For the notes are not as distinct as
Their sting for their pianoforte is
A flapping of wings that foretells
That the spectacle they are as they
Get within earshot is a suicidal feat
For those who do not know that the
Sting is deadly even to the bees
Themselves.

They say when the buzz comes
It does so with a zing above
Your head. You look up at a
A risk of getting stung right
Above the right eye and when
You turn your neck to get away
Another sting gets you on your
walk away swollen your
Eyes swollen and tender like those
Of a doll created with mud that
Has a tint of baking powder that
Was carried as pollen and landed
In the wrong place.

The dance tune you hear above you
Announced the end to this
Army on a flight that leaves
Nothing untouched not even a hand
You can use to rub your eyes for
Bees engulf their prey like a
Mummy and render it ready only for
The embalming chamber where one by
One the stings can be pickef
Out at the end of the life of
The mummy you have become.

They call it getting ready to dance
The dance of fools when you start to
Listen to the music of a disc

Jockey on wings. For you never
Live to dance to the stokvel on
Wings. You may call it fate this
Having an uninvited following
That patronises like the age old
Paparazzi. But others call failure
To heed the wisdom of the elders.

Sarah Mkhonza

Don't Look Into The Neighbor's Dumpster

I have been breaking the rules
My mother gave me to carry me
To the future like tennis balls
Thrown at me by the couch
And me letting them fly away
Untouched by the racket
In my untrainable hand.

Line by line we have combed
Through my deeds supplanting a few.
She kept warning me like an eraser
Going through each sentence in
The hands of a scribe from heaven.

Like a prophet of old she
Went through each one of my
Deeds cutting and pasting
Onto this wall called my brain
Rules and proverbs passed on
Woman to woman as we put together
My trosseau.

Of all the rules my child
This one never forget even
If you forget then all today
Never look into the neighbor's
Dumpster.

They will know by the look
In your eyes if you have broken it
For your eyes will not lie
And your shoulders will slump forward. As did those of
The disappointed night for
On its face remainef a woman
Carrying her load of bad deeds
That darkenef the sky and
Left the neighborhood in the dark.

Don't Ring The Doorbell

When you arrive I will be waiting,
When you arrive I will be sweating.
When you arrive I will be worming,
for loving you is an art I learned
in a dream on waiting.

Don't ring the doorbell for my hand
is always on the doorknob. My thoughts
thoughts wake me up in the breeze and
call you hither lover mine.

Don't push the door for I will fall down
the way I fell for you. The thud will
be heard in the land of love for I will
have fallen that far deep.

My wait has been long for my feet know the
wait was long in school at breaktime. Like
a school child's break for to play with you is to play with you.

Our game has me shaking as I hold you in
my mind. No embarrassment for you are the
thing I want most. Don't ring the doorbell. Just come in for I wait in love.

I

I get

Sarah Mkhonza

Don't Take My Dad

When the cop stopped his father
This little boy cried out, 'Don't
Take my Dad. I will be good, please
He is a good man.'

This five year old cries for he has
Seen and known the end has come
In times where the law is on the rampage
Taking anyone and stirring fear with the
Spoon that once was meant to ring truth
Into little ones that says, 'we are here
To protect you and your own.'

This time the cop laughed, yet
It was not funny, that children have
Learned to fear those who should help,
When things go wrong.

Something is hidden in the mix here.
We have to look at what is going on
For fearlessness is not something
Children will have when guns shoot
Too quickly for the wrong reason at
The wrong time, in the wrong way.

Sarah Mkhonza

Don't Zika Us

In today's world of uncertainty,
Where you wake up with dry eyes
And go to bed your eyes wet from crying
For a loss that you can recover nothing from
Not even a court case to win
And set the events in the past.
Don't zika us

For just these very days
We were afraid of each other
Fearing healing each other
For a patient and a healer were skeptical
Each fearing a disease that travels unseen
From person to person unannounced,
Like a gunman ready to strike
Even inside the ward
Don't zika our nations.

Our young ones are precious
Born with hollowed-out brains
How will they sink deep
Into the depths of a mind not there
For the brain boxes are empty,
Making them to grow into a future
That cannot invent a cure.

I shout on the mountains of Rio De Janeiro
Remembering the time we sang
Of the city with joy. For now we go there unsure
Our eyes wide open with possibility and also
with fear of today and repeat a prayer.
Who wants to run past an insect
And zig-zag past it at high speed as it stings
A zygote inside a self made placenta
That it has made a zoo cage where it
has captured a generation
That will come out with a brain
that spells zero at the place of the zed,
To which I will carry what remains.

Don't zika us.

For mosquitoes fly through
the fingers and sting us without us knowing
Now that they are deadly like needles of death
They sing near my ear a fear, of babies that will not hear
even the sting of the humming insect
that carries death as it moves, spreading
their wings and spitting into us sadness
This current virus silently inhabiting
And infecting the contents of wombs,
The safest place of our source invading.

Yesterday it was malaria
That ruled the streets of our towns and villages
Filling hospital beds with the ailing.
And then this ebola, named after a river
For fear of calling it the name of a town
For who wants to call a town home
When it reminds us of the death

Like a fashion viruses attack us
The the fashion of a designer at a table working
Sitting in a secret world of patterns drawn,
Making them come out one by one
As if there is somewhere they are headed.
Yet it is just to cause us to die
and disappear a people unheard
For we could not cry long enough
For the past and future to hear us.
I pray don't zika us.

When the heroes of tomorrow
Are born with no brain to grow with
Who will be the traveler of this earth
That will visit the moon and come back,
To tell a story from afar, that makes us
dance around the water, defying the very
insects that spread diseases with our deeds
Of power, love and mystery.

The ancestors of zika are waiting

And ours too are searching
They want the disease to die and return
Where it came from like the others
These viruses that speak with a voice
Like ventriloquists and teach each other
That our bodies are their closets
Where they can pile themselves,
as if ready to crush us as they dress us
Like a pathologist cutting in
To mess up our wardrobe as we wear our hearts
and walk about, ourselves the killer bombs that are silent
As we pass on each other this silent deadliness
on the walkway of history
Where mosquitoes fly on a runway
For they have made a fashion parade
Theirs a catwalk of models on a mission of death
one after another parading
As if our bodies were the walkways their stride the
feared catwalk that cannot be doped
As they show off a newness unheard of.
How they fashion themselves in inside animals!
How they sneak into us with a stealthiness unknown!
How we sweat in the labs searching!
And count those who disappear at the other end
Where the fashion parade ends with a silence
Our tears seeping out of our fingers
Where no clapping can happen for we did not chose to
Sit though this event that is no fun
But one of a reckoning that stings the guts
And spills them inside graves.
I cry out and shout loud, 'Don't zika us.'

I'm looking for the stars from the other world,
That can sing the sad song and be heard
It sits on our sad throats as we search
For we cannot clap our hands as we work.
Yet the stars over there can sing a song back
And come down to this death parade with a help
Of healers and winners who never stop
until they have brought to an end
These maladies of the day.

Dreams Of Futures That Happen

Like a strange voyage,
To a foreign land far,
Far even than your present port,
Fresh in your mind and touchable,
Like your little finger itching,
And depending on you to fulfill,
These visions, these longings,
That you have had for years known,
Only to you and nobody else.

Yet if you stay your course,
They get near and you find them,
So near that you fail to see why,
You should be the one to go this route,
Of doing, receiving, painting and writing,
For you have longed for it and never thought,
It could come and now it has,
Yes it will be better tomorrow,
The past said with a small voice,
Encouraging you to continue and not stop.

For tomorrow is assured by the now,
It is coming to stand in this space,
And say I told you it would be,
Like your mates laughing and not seeing,
What you see coming in the runways,
For it is a fashion in drawings,
Not yet achieved yet seen,
That your dreams are being rolled out,
Like the clouds in the sky,
One after another.

What prevented them was your seeing,
Your taking and not giving,
Your sitting in spaces that were not yours,
And listening to sounds that dropped nearby,
Like a marula fruit falling from a tree,
And hitting you on the head,
And breaking with sap on it,

For inside it has a nut that heals,
All the ills and takes away the hunger,
If eaten in time after being cracked.
Yes you have cracked it and now it is here.
Take it and bless it and share it,
You have earned it, it is yours.

Sarah Mkhonza

Drumming To Lost Tunes

Walking on this finalv jog,
Is like trotting on hot coals.
We turn away from unspoken goals
And go to the future empty handed,
Singing arias of songs from afar,
Like lost guitars that have not been tuned,
We drum the song of the lost and
Dance on fractured legs a dance never seen.

We sing out loud in unison
Each voice releasing loudest songs,
Making the world stopper its ears
With alarm at what this is that fills the air
With strangest symphonies straight from hell.
For we have outsung even the devil and his angels.

The drumming becomes louder filling the earth,

With these vibrations that shake buildings,
Built to honor our father's voices,
And leave untouched the very pages,
On which they wrote true songs about us.

The devil laughs at this cowardly display,
Andcshakes his head in wonderment and makes
A sign that captures the moment as he yells,
'Make my day' you strange doers of nothing,
Who fail witout trying for fear of reprisals

Sarah Mkhonza

Dry Bones Of Cows In The Heat

Dead bones with no flesh on them
So dry you could touch the heat
Dead bones of cows that died
More dead than the dry bones
Once spoken to and raised by biblical
prophets that chant the songs of
A heaven unseen and unspoken of.

Bones stripped and strewn asunder
Once they walked in the heat
As cows drinking with rib cages
That breathed and changed under
Skin so thin it could go through
The needle of time and disappear.

Walking bones that disappear
When the milk fails to come out
And the children wonder
For all they know is milk
Why has the sun become so cruel?
Why is the shade gone from us?
That thirsty and dry and hungry
We stand and wonder as the beasts.

When there was rain we sang
With voices so clearly full of mirth
We could be heard beyond the mountains
Like the bulls that bellowed afar
As they walked home to our kraal
We eat soft leaves with them
Fight over them like calves
That have gone without any milk
And died for that is better
Than living in the veld so dry.

This year of the big drought
Is painted on the bones
That the child born this year
Will be named after

For this is a year of pain
Let us name the children drought
and also name them dry bones.

The clouds in the horizon
Do not bring hope anymore
They do not turn black
They do not rise hopefully
They just rest afar
As far as the eye can see.

They do not bring the windy cheer
That made the children dance
And made the whirlwind sing
As the swallows flew in flocks
As they went in the direction of the rain
We once knew when life was in the chain
Of a time that changes with seasons of hope.

Sarah Mkhonza

Dumbbells That Ring At Night Be Quiet

Like a slot machine on the run,
These dumbbells picked up the tune.
Tired from being the neglected duo,
showing their master how it is done
became their mission.

Up, at five with the rise of dawn,
they held each other as up down
they showed their way of working out.

In a make believe, in the next wake,
he will know we were bought for this.
Yesterday found us there, now we climb
the air, all on our own.

Envyng the see saw did not help, for
village children kept up the laughter,
while we lay in this corner abandoned,
like someone had died and left us to
be included in his will.

Now we declare freedom. We cannot face
a morrow green. For we came to help the
grass turn yellow, without a touch of
gentleness. Like the lawn at dawn soaked
in dew, we rise. Such companions that
grace the world remain unmoved le when
the house catches a fire.

Dumbbells bells we are. Without eardrums
we hear. Who lifts us shall live, mule up
and sweat, for the motto is from dull ones, comes the good result of things you
get in twos.

Two dumbbells ring better than one. For you
never ring them once before the other one
asks, 'what about me.' Now you bow
to the pressure of taking what people say
and making it yours. Who cares about a cry of the dumbbell when you can fake a

weight

loss by buying a size smaller and yell 'I dI'd it, ' to the applause of the well while the dumbest dumbbells lay near your gym bag untouched.

Yes they may ring all night. Nag you with truths untold for months. The secret remains. You two are not first cousins no matter how loud they can ring. Bought to play the gambit, girls will see you pump.

in the

wallpapee

Sarah Mkhonza

Emanations Of Light From Light Land

This light you are
Can be seen far away
It shines in the dark
It shines in the snare
Called life for it looms
Bigger than the mountains
Only when you let it.

Shine for me for if you don't
I will light you up with my
Flashlight bright so together
We can be heard in valleys
Deep the way I heard a singer
Playing drums in the night
Under an African night.

She drummed for me and all
The people of the village
Her light reaching into my
Gut and my insides danced
And played the drum into
My mind and I sang all
Night even under the blankets
Until my siblings asked
What dance this was that
Carried the four corners
Of the blanket we shared
To my side always leaving
Them bare and unexcited.

They still wonder at my light
For it glows daily making me
Tell stories new and old for
All the world to hear.

For this light is not about
Having and not having much
But about just being and standing
In it as you are letting it

Grow out of you the flash light
That everybody needs in order
To have hope and love.

They say the south of Africa
Is Light land for there we
See no northern lights but
Reflect our joy to all who
Care for we know this light
Lives and walks inside ourselves
Including you if you care to look.

I give this light to all the
Little ones of the world and
Say take this at the count of
Three and go and stretch and
Share a love with your friend
By making a pact on little
Finger to little finger that
Together we will shine brighter
Than the stars always. On, Two
Three, Go!

Sarah Mkhonza

Emotional Hangups About Independence

I saw white people driving cars
And thought all independence would
Do was rain cars. I saw them drinking
In clubs and thought liquor would rain
From the skies like rain without hail
But equally pouring hard on our heads.

I saw them dancing in clubs and though
Men would dance with me on independence
Day until I drop dead on the floor the
Way I would shop when the man who would
Come with independence takes me to London
To buy at Harrolds with the money from
The banks that we would have after independence
Only to find there was not even one dollar
In the bank.

Now it has dawned on me what independence is
A lack of money, water and electricity that
Is rationed like food for others have to have
It for they were contracted to get it by
ESCOM who controls when I switch off and go
To sleep.

Where is the new toyi toyi so I can take
To the streets and ask what it was that I
Fought for if I cannot get even lights in
My house. The olden days look better in
The distance for like a distant destination
They glimmer out there and at least I am
Walking towards hope and not kneeling on
Bended knee as if to ask a queen to marry
Me and take me into her courts so that we
Can sink in the millions that I see people
up above the neck only for the cars they drive
Are equally soft seated.

Palace like houses in suburbs new where lawns
Wear the latest manicure as the fingers that

They point at me with for I am now the thief
That demands that taxes be lowered with my
Dirty fingers that have been sinking in the
sand at the horticulture gardens of the town.

Where is the mirth that made me sing God bless
Africa with an energy of a horse and bite my
Thick lips when Die Stem was sung for here were
People who wanted to take us back to the olden
Times threatening to take the stirring wheel from
The Madibas of the time.

Tell me to speak not when I am tired of waiting
For a tomorrow written in a constitution that
Never tells when the end of one rule is for
They forge it as they go and leave me here
With the emotional hangups of independence.

Sarah Mkhonza

Enemy Heights Turned Into Survival Heights

We thought we would get debris,
and found our heads on fire. It
is fire sweat that
ran down our faces.

While enemies stood on levels
above, they burnt fiery rocks
dipped in oil.

We saw hell running with a rage
that made cutting the grass inutile.
Soon there was nowhere to stand for
the land had been taken over.

Our leaders told us all to yell surrender
and we cried out a word we had been told
was never to be used. With
feet charred, hair and lashes gone,
we joined to share a life no longer our own.

When it was our turn we invented a land
where platforms could take one up
and down. We made pools around each level,
knowing whether winner or loser, the way up has to serve both.

The

Sarah Mkhonza

Entrusted To Us This Greatness

Have we seen the truth
About this great world
Entrusted to us, full
Of wonders we marvel
At daily when we look
Into the eyes of another
And see them reflected
In there like there is
A mini world that says
Are you a creator or
Creatress?

These hands that can
Hold clay and mix it
With sticks and turn
It into a wonder by
Folding and enfolding
Something in it, and can
Turn a dream into a
Nightmare and back
Again.

For bursting in you is
This fountain that never
Stops spitting holy images
Into a pool that ripples
And ripples still reflecting
Back to you that you are a
Part of this. For you were
Not born on a Sabbath that
People argue should be wasted
And not used to make
More as is the motto
Of our capitalist world.

View the hands and their
Lines as miles you will
Walk without touching a
Stirring wheel for if you

Stir it, it stagnates, but
Just see yourself as an ant
Inside your hand on the
Journey of discovery for
They were made for this
Thing.

Catch it the stigma is
So good even if they said
It back at you that you are
A person on the look out
For images that come into
The chamber called your mind
You would still get the
Crown that you deserve for
The world would be better
For it. So be stigmata and
stigmatize yourself with pride
And call yourself and son
Or daughter of one who
Has seen the greatness
Not just with a glimpse
But a touch for the ant
Told you so when it crawled
On your hand carrying parcels
That it would leave for
posterity.

Sarah Mkhonza

Even Shoes Paired Are Not Identical

We go out looking out for each other.
Me and him wearing similar smiles.
We do the same things as always.
Till the world says it's overdone.
This pairing cannot bring back us.
Something has gone away in this quiet.
Even shoes in a wardrobe are not identical.
To walk away now or lay down new rules.
To play or surrender is the question.

Sarah Mkhonza

Examining This Wall Of Booze Around Us

Nothing said by the two of us,
Just manic giggles, and perplexed eyes,
Looking, glaring at each other,
Wondering why this wall is here,
When we worked on it and let it grow,
Only to stand strong and look at us,
As we both clamber up and get thrown down,
And then wonder about the weir as it lets down,
The water that flows, this booze around us,
That endlessly gushes down with a fury,
And takes our hopes and dashes them in the pit,
Where you piss on our marriage and let it go,
To the end where the promises we spoke,
Just go into the air and smell,
The same smell that confounds us now,
Of this booze that makes us drift away,
The lost two who bob up and down,
In this current that never stops,
This flowing that can be quiet,
For not even fish can survive in it.

If I could fight with water and not drown,
I would fight with this object that looks,
So liquid, so clear, so powerful, so amber,
Like a medicine that heals yet kills,
As you take it faithfully not heeding,
Even my cries as I try to throw myself out,
Of this moving car, this death,
That has come to swallow us and tear,
The very paper you signed when you said,
You could be with me to the end,
Of the river of time like all,
Who stand together in the pairs,
That went into Noah's ark before the flood.
That came to kill a nation with rain.

This distilling of the good and bad,
From droppings in the big drums like sewers,
That separated the pulp and liquid,

In big drains that run on and on in drains,
That make the flow to go on for ever,
Till the rivers flow into the ocean,
Where all water goes saline and useless,
For it is so bitter no one can drink it,
After it gets into the blood stream of those
Who keep keep on swallowing to the end,
Where the last gurgle being heard by me here,
Where I watch your Adams apple move,
And wrest with the truth still unsure,
If ours is a curse raining down,
From the endless rain of heaven,
With the flow of the torrent,
That hits me on the center of my head daily,
And render me the unthinking simpleton,
That chose to lie here and smell,
Dead fish on this very shore,
That take the money, the oceans,
That swirl endlessly for you,
To honor them with your sweat daily.

Not even once did we think,
It would be as easy as crossing a river,
And refusing to get wet in the throat,
For you would hold up your head and not want,
To drown in the swirl of the downstream current,
As you do now with this water,
In this bottle that you hold in your hands,
That shake and cause your eyes to go red,
And your body to die in front of me.
Yes this wall has grown even inside,
Our hearts so hard a hammer would not do anything,
Even when held by Golliath of old,
Who died from the swing of a sling with a stone,
And went and fell with all the clamour of amour,
Bringing shame to Phillistines and angels
The way our togetherness has been washed down
This sea that you drown in everyday,
You walk towards yet another cold one.

This last cold one you swallow now,
That makes my head so mad and hot,

As it burns our money to ashes daily,
And leaves us broken even at the bank,
Where those you broke the rules are broke,
Like me and you now in this emptying,
Of cans, this madness of repeated actions,
Looks at me and says because of you never,
Will there be something after three takings,
Of our only livelihood that you worked for,
And sweated with each month the moon swearing,
That at the end it will give you,
Bread for your children to live on,
And grow to be people who will count rands,
At banks that rank with the same smell,
That ranks of the smell of this liquor,
That has swept us down the current,
As if we were written on paper,
For where the money went so we went,
You swimming in the current to your end.

When the end comes we will speak well,
Of all the things you did well,
We will tell people you were swell,
For you dressed impeccably each day,
And went to the bars and beer halls,
Stokvels and shebeens of this land,
That feed on the pockets of those who choose,
Not to shepherd their purse's contents,
And let them walk away like letters,
Written to those who would not harken,
To the rules of putting away a little,
Drawing out a little like milk from a nipple,
That one day will go dry,
Like a river after the southern African drought,
That we wish could come and dry all the beer,
That drowns this nation of ours,
That nurses on alcohol as if it is milk,
From a poisonous cow that was built of steal,
And made the wicked substitute of mirth,
By those who get the money at the end,
While children look on with hungry eyes.

Eyeball To Eyeball

Let us tell each other truths we fear,
eyeball to eyeball and remember the year
the cobra stood facing us head up and ready to spit into our eyes and say we
both cannot stand being in the same space.
Nobody will rejoice when the spit hits their iris.

We do not need nuclear war to declare winners. At this place where forehead
of each bull hits the other, peace talks
run in us like blood. Let the bullfight
not derail a train so long on a lifesaving
journey. We will not tire for fear of
being those who remain to tell a lifetime
story of being late at the arena.

Eyeball to eyeball we can pull two bulls
by the tail and leave the bullfight
without spectators. Let us refuse to be
called to watch this spectacle of words,
lest it becomes real.

are face to face throwing nuclear words
int

Sarah Mkhonza

Fair Enough People Of My Congregation

We have entered the door of this church
Day in and out and prayed till the sky
Yielded seeing our tears wiped with tissues
That when wet left pieces of paper on our
faces. Till you know that the offering
Will go around the world and reach the
Poorest of us, we might as well give up.

Fair enough people of my congregation
We have sung hymns old and now my voice
Is horse for how many times my breath
Went out toward the alter where the candle
Remained lit and went out when I left
Till we take the man who sleeps on
The bench outside and help him find a
Place to live we might as well go home.

Fair enough people of my congregation
We have worn beautiful clothes and come
To sing for the Lord and thank him for
He loves sinners like us for we know
Ourselves and know how to present our
Emptiness before the angels. Till we
Go to the sick and touch them with love
We have another thought coming.

Fair enough people of my congregation
We have turned the pages of the bible
Until they got worn out in Psalm
Twenty three. Till we shepherd others
The way the book tells us we are by
The Lord we haven't started yet.

Fair enough people of my congregation
We have told the story of the widow's
Mite a thousand times and thrown our
Hands in the air lamenting how she laid
It down when it was the last when we
Were counting pennies to take to the

Alter for we had much more than her.
Till we feed the widows and stop
Making the coins sound loud when we put
Them in the offering plate we have not
Started to practice charity for they
Say it begins at home.

Fair enough people of My Congregation
We have stood at the entrance of the
Church and looked at our high heels
And walked in dressed to kill when
The clothes in the closet are so many
It cannot close. Till we share the
Loot we gather after each payment and
Show gratitude for our jobs we are just
Plain good old sinners who still need
More grace from above.

Sarah Mkhonza

Fairy Tales Are Never Fair

Tell a fairy the stuff and she
can tell you it did happen in a
dream in another life.

Tell her you long to be one who
sparkles from the laugh to the
spit you see on the pavement that
is yours.

You will learn that fairies do not
look down and see odd things on the
ground on which they walk. Once a
fairy always a fairy.

They are never hairy and they do
not know anything about tails on
cows for their species was born
with a sparkle in a girl they do
not know's mind.

Tell them you are that girl and
their mouths will gape for you
still do not know they do not have
a mouth.

Your learn from the mirror that you
are there and in front of you is a
story you refuse to change for you
want to walk the last mile in the land
of fairies and be hugged with feathery
arms.

Sarah Mkhonza

Feel The Petals Of The Black Orchid

Feel the softness from afar
And smell the unusual scent
For here comes the truth held
In the hands of a flower rare
Coming at you while you twist
And turn for you are at the
Mercy of your truth for it
Wants to add to your love
Of life for all for one day
It will save us all.

In the eyes of the world,
Orchids purple orchids yellow
And all colors of the rainbow.
And then steps in the phiri
Named for the woman who saw it.
Like the ruins of Great Zimbabwe.
It did not have the wings of the
Zim bird to fly into the face of
The worlds dollar the way the bird
Perched itself on a nation's paper
Money with birdlike majesty, but
Remained in the forest to be
Put into history by one Phiri who
Fought the war of liberation
And felt what freedom felt like.

The time for the flower with velvet
Petals black that history had not seen.
It takes a fighter to see
What history has left out
And tell when there is something
Missing in the mix of things.

This victory of the black orchid
To be seen by all who dare to know
For it sits in the pages of books
Telling the world that wrote things
On the fauna of the world precious

It can still rewrite history the way
Phiri has done as she gave the world
This flower with the double root.

*The orchid Virginia Phiri discovered in Zimbabwe
is called *Polystachya Phirii*

Sarah Mkhonza

Fighting Battles That Won't Die

This battle that has us neck to neck
Claw to claw, and spear in hand
Is one of the cheetah and the leopard
Fighting the biggest cat fight ever seen
Based on looks for each one sees itself
As the most beautiful.

The tiger comes in as a judge
And asks how they want to end the fight
He asks who should win for he looks
And thinks better than the two
For his stripes are longer
Making his coat more beautiful.

The lion fights on the side of
The albino for he claims he is
The one who has no melanin
So his is the one who knows
Everything about the things
That changed the all the cats
On the table of evolution.

When the battle goes over
To the moon and extra terrestrial
Hear about the cats they laugh
And say how can animals with
Such small ears and small heads
Fight when they have not even
Evolved to be hairless on their bodies
Like the dinosaurs of old who walked
The world with the wisdom of survival.

Fighting battles that do not die
And have a soul of their own
That keeps them growling at
Each other endlessly looking
For another cat fight surprises
All for they wait in vain for
A ceasefire that will never come.

The lion refuses to join the cat fight
And walks away from endless
bickering called war.

Sarah Mkhonza

Fighting For My Place In Life

I hear a muffled curse,
It comes from behind my ears,
As if someone is looking,
Through the lobes of my ears and sneering,
For fighting for my place in life,
Is not something that they want,
Me to keep doing as I go,
Back and forth on this swing,
This see-saw this trial,
That throws me up and down,
Forever breathing and unsure,
If my guts will be inside me,
When the next push forward comes,
Leaving me at a level high up,
Holding on with one hand hanging in,
Then letting go and flying to a fall,
That makes me keep this going,
For I was born fighting for my place in life.
Even as I pick and dust myself up.

The sniffing after struggles,
Stifling all my muffled cries,
As I fumble and tumble,
And end up on my feet,
Against bodies of lovers,
Who have left me wondering,
If they wanted me to get into,
This fight for my place in life,
Or just claim we were together,
When the fight got tougher,
For that is what it is right now.

Do you hear the words that were said,
Let me tell you what I heard,
They were caresses and cuddles
Followed by curses and callings,

Sometimes banging of doors with muffled sounds,
That cannot be heard even by this,
So called object on which we speak,
As I tell the past for what it was
When I did this which I now call
Fighting for my place in life.

There were doors I woke up to open
With questions inside my head,
Where is the key to this door, I asked,
My sword has been locked in with its scabbard,
Like a warrior of old I swerved,
Against winds that hit me in the face,
And drew water out of my nose, eyes and mouth,
Leaving my ears hearing sounds I dreamt of,
In the sleep walking of the time,
Near imaginary shores of sandy and gritty hate
Whose pebbles I crushed when I ran,
As took a step and reached for the door
On this wicked deed that had to be done
In this that I now call a big fight for my place in life.

I hear a clashing of swords as I lift,
As I swing into step with another,
My right hand arm lifting and pointing,
To the one who is nearest in this battle,
For I want to win the war yes I do,
For I did not come to love only, but to live and work,
And fight for this place I sit on,
For if I do not someone will take it,
Like they took a heart I had my all vested in.

I know what it is like to go incognito,
To come to a road with an end that walks in,
And speaks that it is shut just to me,
When the hinges were squeaking just now,
When my hand was reaching out to open,
That very heart that beat to my name,
And jumped about as if it would soon,
Pop out and seat in my hand.

Fighting for my place in this life,
Is not new to me for no one said welcome,
When I arrived and sat on a lap so muscular,
And touched a face so bearded with the back of my hand,
And was held so close life sang out of me,
In peals of laughter that could wake a sleeping cat,
And make it purr just next to us.

Nobody says goodbyes are easy,
When you have fought and lost the battle,
And then realized you were deluded,
To be fighting a non existent scuffle,
That was created with teasing,
And laughing and chatting,
Yet ended in a real outbreak,
Of words that go out like a disease,
So contagious you just need to touch,
The source and hurt forever.

Keep up the fight if you want,
Fight for time does not wait,
These voices keep telling me these rules,
They call them rules of the game,
That we must follow or lose,
Whenever we enter this place of giving,
Where only takers survive in their game,
When we all fight for our own place,
In this thing called living.

I have vowed to keep struggling with words,
Trying to call it what it is,
For if I stop I will regret,
Not trying is not winning,
And losing before you start,
Was never a way to do things,
Just know it was a battle you entered,
And not let go or hang on loosely,
For like a swing that you do not hold,
With both hands you get flung,
Way out there where no movements call you back,
To swing you back with peals of laughter,
From the pusher who now waits on another,

Swing with another fighter for their life,
Who did a better job than you.

Sarah Mkhonza

Fighting This Window Banging Wind

The storm brews up above us
As governments change in ways
Which make us feel the sky is
Falling. The fear of being around
Stirring waves that pile up
High so that we are swimming
In an out wave asks if we
are looking out for ourselves
For we should surely know
We need to have lifeguards
For this coast is rough.

The milling around we do
At the bottom of the hill
Of our world is soon to stir
Up a hurricane so that we
Find ourselves in the eye
Of the latest storm where
There is no left and no right.
Like dirt in the vacuum cleaner
Each party sucks us in the
Way our paper votes go and after
The melange of the devil
We find ourselves in a world
Where only swimmers with a
World record will survive.

This time to mourn and cry
Foul calls us to sit,
Stop and find a way forward
For tomorrow is the day we
Leave to the dogs who will
Tear it into shreds not recognizable
While the ants still carry
Little bits they are shifting around
On the plates on the floor
Of the earth on which power
Walks.

Life is a bad joke they say
For we cannot say can't for
This word is proving that
Truth is made as the wind
Turns and turns making this
bang that forces my window
Open and refusing that I
Shut my eyes for one day
I will have to answer to
Those who fought for this
Right to vote.

Sarah Mkhonza

Fire Burns Odd Hopefuls

When you remember words of hate,
They feel like the sound of a volcano,
That is erupting at the summit,
The very top of the crater,
And pouring ash all over you,
Saying you are not the open lily,
That white lily in the water.

It sinks in the real to suck the pollen,
The little one does and goes away,
Sits on the lily that you are,
And then voila the pink flower.
No more hardened ash it is,
This odd giver that takes away,
The big sores created by the lava,
When you wished it would be lavae,
Of the worm to turn into you,
The butterfly that flies far.

Let what came out of the crater,
Cool and then shake it off,
For these words do not know,
That you have sworn to smell sweet,
No matter what the fire does,
This pain in the volcano,
That was poured all over you.

You owe yourself the new way,
This new beginning that grows all,
Whose seed comes and sits on your turf,
For you are fertile because of it,
This fiery fury this spilling out,
That took place and filled the abode,
Of hope that you carry with you,
Everywhere you go for all to see.

Turn this burning into farrows,
Grow love where yesterday's hate,
Sat smiling with a sneer,

Telling you butterflies grow not,
Where there is something that looks like you.

Who knew your wings would grow?
And fly you to the future that you see,
With wings with powdery lava that sticks,
To your back, front and beyond,
For yesterday was hot and furious,
To turn into the now that looks at you,
This odd hopeful from odd beginnings.

Know fire burns odd hopefuls,
Fries the blessings in their hand,
Chars them, wrings them and strikes,
Like lightening that flashes down,
Count it an adventure of this game,
For life without it is life closed,
To the hardship that burns us all,
This life that we came to turn on,
This torch that lights up and burns,
One day like glue, one day like goo.

Sarah Mkhonza

Flying High Up With The Ravens

Undertaking this feat of flying with the ravens
Is going against the grain and doing what is unlike
A person who sings in the shower and bathes in the rain
For they fly up high and perch themselves on branches
That hang on cliff tops where I remain looking down
Wondering what would happen if I lost my grip
And tumbled down like a rag doll that has lost its path.

I stand wondering whether it is envy or jealousy
That had me trying to stand out as the doer of all
That humans dare not do if they must protect
The little of what remains of their dignity after
The birds have proved smarter by crowing so far
From the ears of the everyday corvid.

These black ravens so wise and so adept at changing
Wherever they go cannot have me following like a saint
That has lost his calling for they will not give back
To me for all the loyalty I have shown in joining
Them on this battle that for me is a sure sign of daring.

Next time I take on a new task I will know better
Than to go after the strongest trying to prove that
I too can do it. For it leaves me wondering when
The mouse that woke me up last night will return
And gnaw on the door of my room leaving me awake
And ready to leave and go up with the ravens who
Now fail to appreciate my dilemma.

These wings glued on me are now tearing off
And so is the tiredness that had be breathing
Hard just yesterday wearing me down when I vowed
I would go on no matter what which now I see
As a vow lost on the word for to keep such
A vow was only said to wow the world.

There is truth in this saying, don't fly with
The ravens for they do not know your ability
To reach the heights where lies the nest egg

You are trying to get at. They also do not want
you up there annoying them by taking down what
Is theirs and going to tell everyone you did it
To prove you can. Such vanity and audacity is
Not known in the world of reason. This just
says return home for you are not a black raven.

Sarah Mkhonza

Follow The Poem

When it speaks, truth only rings,
When it winds, the path only winds,
When it rhymes, the words only do,
When it jumps, the legs only go,
Do just that, speak the poem,
Where ever you go walk the poem,
You will never be lost.

Even if you followed the poet,
And looked straight ahead of you,
Her eyes are lost in the deed,
Of making it happen.

Make the right bid,
On what you really need,
When the poem has gone,
It will leave you no stone.

Its long tail goes,
As your own thought does,
Making your teeth grind,
The truth in it to find,

Follow the poem,
With hands that never held
What happens in the night,
For it is still in you.

The poem ever faithful,
And you ever full of need,
The two can give and take,
In times when your head you rake.

Sarah Mkhonza

For The Wives Of The Lion Of Gaza!

The lion turned prisoner,
in a small island far away,
sings the songs of his land,
all to himself and Zixaxa.

Their wives on colonial land,
far from the lowing cattle
and bulls and calfs in kraals,
they chose to remain in Lisbon,
and not go to the place unknown.

These wives said not this time,
on their own ship arrived
at the root of wisdom and let the men,
for once go where they would not return.

Standing for a truth they knew, was
swearing allegiance to their land.
Not to follow the men like shadows,
even after years of being ruled by
these, they chose to remain, and remain
they did.

Sing lion of Gaza. Sing Zixaxa is listening.
The women hear you in the distance,
that separates the love you had, and
give it to the Portuguese, who listened
when they said, no further will they go.

Miles away from home, the women stood,
for a truth deep in them, that the island
was worse than the mainland. They would
not go.

Like Ndzinga, these women, their strength
in their voices, not afraid of foreign voices,
they added to the past, a voice we uncover,
for it says, the word no, is the beginning of talk.

Mothers of the nation, who have raised it,
still stand. They will not be swallowed, on
the shores of the Azores' Terceira Island.

Speak women, speak! Speak for the nation
torn apart. Speak about the fear of going,
when you have not chosen to get on a ship,
and be taken away from children, who are
the future and life of the nation.

Speak for the kings. Tell the truth,
for you will not go, and you will not do,
what the nation would not do, for
the power had been taken.

Exile is pain, exile is a taking,
a not seeing the usual, but looking
at the distance and waiting for a day,
when home at last one can go.

We are amazed at the audacity of life,
in lands foreign, for when force and power,
push lives to a corner, there lies something,
which will not give. This I see in your eyes,
all eight of you.

We salute your, 'No, ' which resounds in ears,
of women around the world. Violence, emotional,
violence physical, violence social, to these
in one word, we say, 'No! '

Where royalty is not royal. Where
the familiar is unfamiliar, and the
docility demanded is like a bridle,
Let all women join in one word, 'No! '

Two men and their followers went,
uncushioned by the warmth of these
who would not venture into the seas,
that rage and take away, the last shred
of dignity.

Sing to him, people of the land. Sing
for your king sang. Ngungunyane sang
daily, about the land of warriors, the land
he had ruled, till he was captured and separated
from a people he loved.

Widows of conscience, these prisoners of the same,
look in the direction and point, as the ship disappears, .
They came, they saw, they refused, and they remained
standing till today. Their eyes squint like mine, when I
look at the story of their loss.

This loss of country, loss of loved ones,
can be celebrated by togetherness that
passed between these. There is little that
separates people, like the distance between
Lisbon and the Azures. There is a chasm
deep, that tears apart hearts, when those
we love are taken, no matter where to.

That far we should not go, after going
a step in the direction of the one who
cares not about the nation for it
threatens the future of the nation,
which must be powerless.

The history ends with the songs,
the singing, holds souls together,
for in song, memory comes back,
and sits in the center of the heart.

We salute the goodbyes,
the last handshakes, and nods,
for who can dare say there were none,
when the story is not told by the ones,
whose love was torn asunder.

The nations like an old blanket,
after a dirty wash, remained on the
trees, waiting to be picked up,
and taken into the hut.

We know such could not happen,
for the lion would roar no more.
The end had come, for what are
people without their kings, has
been the lament of the kingdoms
of the south.

Still we hear the talk of strength,
and see the likes of 'amakhosikazi.'
We know when you touch them,
you are touching the grinding stone,
even if the sayings are said in far
away lands.

After years the Lion of Gaza,
lies in the his lands, after years,
this Napoleon of Africa, is back,
once king, now remains of the king.
was blown in the air

Sarah Mkhonza

For The Girl You Are

I started off with short hair,
Curly, cut and cute like you,
I ended up with a long wig,
Tangled and tied at the back,
Only to find it wasn't me.

I walked in high heels like you,
Wore the shortest and longest skirts,
Then found that fashion changes always,
Only one thing remained the same,
The color of my hue and all that is me.

When the young man saw me then,
He liked just the me he saw,
I never changed that much,
In bell bottoms I looked the same,
In the last fashion so did I look,
Then I learned the lesson,
It was not about the outside,
But about the inside that I am.

To change the outside was all I knew,
My life wanted what I did not have,
While getting rid of what I had,
For it would always be faithful to me,
Never moving even in the roughest wind,
For it was born of strange doings like you,
To stay the cause for the girl you are.

Sarah Mkhonza

For The Love Of A Pumpkin Frond

Each season comes with a new love.
This love is old, this love is new
For my grandmother picks these ones
Long and tender they are for the
Idiom states the child has to be
The long pumpkin frond that will
Go all over and achieve the birthing
Of the largest of these. See them in
F flower and you know they must be picked
So that they can flower a meal
And make us know it is indeed
Summer. See them after the flowers
Are gone and there goes the beauty
As the idiom says it no pumpkin
Fronds to pick any more for the
Big leaves of the squash are rough
Going brown and then out of sight.
Then you know the fall has come
For the one plant will disappear
Till next season if you have
Planted the winter one.

Makes me want pumpkin confetti
This talking about plants
That nestle on the ground
And grow on and on taking
Space and feeding the world
Where people make Jack Lantern
Smile and me wonder how come
This pumpkin smiles everywhere
When my smile is failing to
Fill my wide face. My friend tells
Me a story of culture that the
Pumpkin sheltered a candle
And allowed a man to walk even
On an empty stomach. I have
Protested the waste of food
The way I protested the banana
Slip where people swam in a ripe

banana liquid and made me wonder
Where the fun was in being slippery
for I believe in a A world where
The hungry eat than stories
Of Jack-O'-Lantern Who was Stingy
For this is indeed being stingy
For all these pumpkins could
Feed the world. This lit up
Pumpkin though glowing all night
And making everybody a fete
Surely did not make me laugh
As wide a smile as I saw.

Pumpkin pumpkin my love
Now that I will send you
Off like the creeper you are
Tell me if you love me too
For you are my pumpkin frond
Whether you like it or not
For daughters and sons
Will know they were honey
Bunches when you mix all
The ingredients of love
And let the flower of the
Squash and pumpkin dress
The plate of t the next meal.

Sarah Mkhonza

For The Wives Of Sondelani

'We the wives of Sondelani,
declare we will wear mourning
clothes, ' they say on a rented
page in classifications that
put them out to be speakers.

The black clothes of mourning
cannot surely be the cover
of these women who sit here.
Solemn they are about the death
of Sondelani.

As his name calls to all of us,
to come and hear the story of
the widows of the man whose
passing has them sitting here.

They have to sit and be respectful,
to the one who has left them in this
space, where they march in single file,
as the wives of Sondelani.

Sondelani once owned a bus,
Once his name was out there.
If big, it was bigger than the clouds,
for his purse was also full.

'We the wives of Sondelani,
declare in mourning clothes
black, we will mourn him for
the clan says we must.'

These widows in the dark of death,
and the dark of black clothes,
have sworn allegiance, to follow
Sondelani, as his and stand as his.

This loyalty to the dead, speaks volumes,
that roar in rivers and rivulets.

'I was his, as these black clothes state.'
'Me, too, I was his, ' says the second wife.
Who does not say words like this in sorrow,
When women mourn a man.

I look again at the paper. Where were they
when they took the picture, that puts them
here in the face of everybody? This wisdom
to speak out, tells a long story.

I long to know what it is about.
I long to know stories of widows,
who walk the land in black,
and live to tell what happened
after they were so clothed.

Maybe some cried, till they almost
fell into the grave. Some cried for
sure, remembering the tree
they climbed the day they married
him, these wives of Sondelani.

I love their faces, but wonder if
they have done the rest of the things,
that are about getting what you have to,
and then show your face as a wife.

These claims are many. The land teems
with widows. Some much younger than these.
For the death that walks around, biting
everybody like a silent mamba, strikes
at dawn, and also at night, like the
biblical thief.

As people line up to bury each other,
the widows sit at the end of the journey,
of a loved one reliving the story,
of what brought them here.

Wives of Sondelani, you call us to come,
close and hear, what your husband
said when he asked you to follow his name,

and come close to his mystery.

Death has told you to come here,
Death has no voice, but the power
of actions. For it forces women to
dress up and speak in papers.

Death writes the obituary,
where six women line up,
and declare to have been
the wives of Sondelani.

The nation now knows,
what they have declared.
The nation has seen the
cries on the face of the paper,
Now we go and end the story,
of this bus owner with respect.
As the wives call us, to come
and see what they will say,
these days where we mourn
in the classifieds.

Sarah Mkhonza

Forever Wishing Never To Be Caught Aavesdropping

I do wish I had been eavesdropping
When the guy I liked was talking
About girls so I could know what he
Was all about. Life since has taught
Me never to be caught eavesdropping
For you hear what you are not meant
To hear.

Never be caught eavesdropping by life
For you will start acting on things
That are not meant for you and get into
Deep trouble. I did this as a teenager
And found myself wishing I was older
When it was not yet time.

It is like being caught with your pants
Down and makes you feel very bad that you
Did not trust that things were going right
For you felt excluded when you were included.

Imagine the devil catching you eavesdropping
On the plan he has of misleading you and you
Start acting against the plan when all he wanted was
For you to be lost the direction you were not to
Take and then hear him say, Got Ya!

So what is it that we should be doing if we are
Not on the look out for ourselves with our ears
Like antennae reaching out to the world? Should
We be sulking under the sun and looking at its
Rays and asking them to strike us in between
The eyes without any goggles and then saying
We cannot see the future?

The future is not written in space in red ink
Like the marks on your spelling book, but it is
In the things dragged by you. When you go into
The next alley do not say we did not tell you
You listened for the wrong message. If you could

Listen to your surroundings and eavesdrop on your own
Breath and watch ants crawling life seems to say there
Is a mountain to climb where what is said has
Already been spoken About you, if you are alive
and ready for your plan to take off.

Sarah Mkhonza

Four Tires On A Journey

Let us do this,
We were meant for this,
To go on journeys forever,
For not to do so means death,
For you are cast away where flames
May find you and melt you down.

Let us work not like strangers,
Us four brothers whose anger
Causes us to burn on the asphalt,
And smoke on our way far away,
Thinking only of the destination,
Where we will get to rest,
When the journey is over.

Don't squeal so loud as we roll,
For if you need oil say so,
If its a fever that sickens you,
Know you will be alright and me too,
We will find our bearings,
And keep going on the right track.

We are grinding sand right now,
I have a hiccup, let me breathe,
It makes me weak at the knees
I sink deeper and deeper,
We are stuck aren't we?

Pull, let us pull up y'all,
Push and pull out with power, y'all,
For we are now reeling,
In our old feelings,
That take us all over,
Where we were not meant to go.

Heave up, and out

Fight up and out for here we go,
Lean this way and move,
If you lean that way we sink,
Not this way, you are killing me,
For I am the rear tire that pulls,
Harder than all of you.

Don't yank so fast for we spin,
Turning in the same place and going deeper, ,
For we are tightened with bolts
You will break the metal,
It will loosen at the hinges,
And everything will be lost.

See that hill out there,
We are near for we can see it,
Though we go uphill with our eyes,
That have seen the downhill we come from.

Your rubber is wearing out,
Your lines are fading,
You are losing traction,
But you, you are out of bearings,
I swear if we listen to you,
We will not make it to the end.

Roll up your sleeves y'all,
It is a dance we have to win,
With this clink clink of the spanner,
That turns round as it is worked,
And fixes us and makes us go on,
For we were meant for this journey,
Black and white rubber and all,
Our reams shining to the end.

Sarah Mkhonza

Funny Gods Of Yesteryear

They had me praying a hole
In the ground my hands on my
Back facing heaven ready
To receive from them the gifts
Of life for I knew life had
Not been fair in giving me no
Father who had the latest car
For when other dads brought my
Class mates to the boarding house
I looked on hiding in a corner
Envious like the moon envies the
Sun for shining brighter.

Now I see I needed to know lack
For it makes my day to stretch
A hand to others the way my friends
Did in earlier days. Now we laugh
At how we were daughters of the
Widow whose mite got lost for we
Did find it in the offering
She made and gave it back. Now
We thank the funny gods of yesteryear.

Sarah Mkhonza

Garbage Is Always On A One Way Street

Garbage and clutter are always
Going on a one way street for
Once they turn back everything goes
Into a tangle that nobody can
Untangle even with scissors in
Their hands. It goes into a truck
And goes to the pit and then the
Dump never to return where it came
From.

The expense of keeping it going to
Its final place lies on all the shoulders
Of the world from where it came from
And the stops it gives itself and then
The final ride to the burial place.

The story is the same for all that lurks
In places which are temporary and sad
For the human baggage you carry on you
That should have long left yet lingers
In stops that have you tripping as you
Walk for the truth about shedding it
Remains a mystery you alone can solve.

Sarah Mkhonza

Genders Galore That's What Life Is

Have you heard the latest on these
Multiple genders asked the truth vendor
I asked what that is, curious what this
Unknowing person was going to say about me.
For as a woman I had been cast in the
jelly mold that always had me shaking,
Before I set, especially when a man asks
Me a question at sunset.

Have you heard of pan-gender the truth
Vendor asked. Is that one a gender we
Fry in a pan? I just bought one of those
Non stick pans you bake in. When will we
bake that one? Oh!

You surely have heard of trans-gender?
I have and know we transplant just
About everything we want to grow.
I honestly answered as my ignorance got
The better part of me. Oh!

Have you heard of a-gendered-third sex?
Wait a minute, I am still dealing with
The gendered-second sex being a woman
For I learned that I had to speak up
And fight for womanhood lest the men
Get high salaries and my children starve.

You are too gender fluid, the truth vendor
Told me as he gave up on me and told me
To read sociology and know that these
Are the truths that are not being
Made up but written in our veins by the
Masters of truth for not to know them
Is to violate the rights of humans
For for they live under them.

He advised me to go and train to become
A gender lawyer so that I can get to

be hired by these folks who are still
Being written into the constitution
For their rights are just as important.

I was saddened because I had just
Gone over a study of copyright law
Hoping to catch anyone who does
Not acknowledge I am a gendered
Species that does not like hackers.

To add another kind of law was
Not a mother of two could do lest
I live my life on a court bench forever
Defending the naming of life,
Both public and private.

Sarah Mkhonza

Get Off The Bus You Are On

Ever heard of passengers in a bus
To nowhere talking and laughing
When they finish they find they
Have been kidnapped by the time
Thief called sloth.

I rode the bus and then had to ask
Where I was going and the driver
Asked me why I was asking on the
Way when I should have asked before
Embarking on the journey.

I told him some journeys are finished
Before they are started and this was one
Of them. He said I should join the
People at the back for I am causing
Unnecessary fracas that can cause him
To lose focus and get an accident.

Accidents unplanned happen when we are
On the ride to nowhere for you are too
Relaxed to see if your foot is pushing
Hard on the gas and before long you
Are in a mess you never knew.

Time comes when the bus gets to a
Stop and all you must do is get out
And breathe and then take a step and
Look around you for you will notice
Life moving at a pace that allows you
To join for the bus called sloth
Has hit a cul-de-sac with you
On it.

There are no stripes that mark this
Bus nor is it written a word that
Makes people recognize it, but it
Surely moves daily in the minds of
Our folk asking them to get on and

Be the also ran.

Bus conductors who announce where
A bus is going shun doing so on
This one for they would be colluding
In a game that time long decided
She had won. Next time you get on
The bus know that the clock will
Not tell how much time you have
Spent on it and just get off
All the same.

Sarah Mkhonza

Going Out With A Kiss And Tell

You never know when you meet the partner,
that there is a hole in his chest that seeks to brag,
about what you did when you were together.

Caught off guard you let down your own,
you miss a beat and he records it for the future.
Like a machine he mumbles this and mumbles that,
you speak in earnest and he whispers into the rhythms
of your bodies.

Then you see it by accident, the event for two,
laid out for the public in a sheet of mail or storying
that is now public and see yourself lied about,
but you know some of it is true.

You wish you could go back and withdraw
the hour with this fool, that has not chest,
for the cat is now out of the bag,
never to go back again, even if it had
nine lives, your one life is out there,
singing hallelujahs for the devil.

If I could kiss and tell, you threaten
this fallen duke that has a shaking
aerial that reads the news of the town
and spread the tabloid page on which
is written, the story of my integrity,
is fit for one place only. Jail.

Never again you say, will I go out with this,
for now you label and spread vernon
over everything in your path, for to be hurt
once is to be hurt twice. I wish I did not care
who knew this and that about me, but when
the signs its true are there, I hurt and hurt and hurt
only to hurt again. I do not know about you.

Who in their right mind, the sage asks,
would go out with a kiss and tell,

for he is doing it to you, for he has
done it before? I look at the eyes of wisdom,
and say, you know you are right. I am wrong.

This kiss and tell nonsense has to stop.
At the alter of obedience it must just stop,
before I open the door and let out all the stories
I carry in my gut out of respect for all those
I could betray. You know what I mean.
Vengeance is a malady I have lived with
for too long. I cannot die of it, or shake
an axe to kill with it. So leave me alone.
For all the world to see, now that you
have crucified me at the alter called 'goddess
of the field called love.'

Sarah Mkhonza

Good Bye Ponytail

I have heard of trains crushing youth,
Whose blood mixed with metal rails,
Sipping under noisy metal wheels,
With noises that call us to stand up,

For we know a life has stopped on its tracks
Right there where the rail tracks wait,
Calling us to go and conjure spirits that wail,
Asking if we have seen the poor in spirit,
Begging on a railway line with their guts,
Waiting, the passenger that goes to nobody's hope.

Those in the train wonder at the stops,
As they fear derailing trains with tops,
That tell them that our lives have an ending,
That bleeds on the tracks and goes into the mail,
Where the post does not cost a penny,
For death itself has become the
Doing that cannot be stopped,
That leaves a parent bleeding
As she looks at an empty chair
Where once a supper sizzled.

See the faded picture in the paper
It is of one who died crying out,
For to be loved is not easy,
To be missed is easier to dismiss,
When the paper is deep in the rails,
It is after the winter rains,
Faded with the face of a life,
Blowing in the wind that touches our sadness,
Refusing to leave us people who care,
Asking us to kiss the ponytail,
Of the youth that has laid it down.

If I could hold this ponytail,
While still hanging down on a life,
And say do not say goodbye to us,
Tomorrow there will be a boy cut,

That will make you look better,
And not speak to you of ending it,
But take a brighter place in the sun,
For you are just on a brunch,
Like a bird flying on to another,
Never to be trapped under this train,
That has its wheels ready for you,
Like the teeth of a big whale,
Here in this sea of life.

You belong far away ponytail,
Where tattoos were created,
Where no train can reach your soul,
And crush your guts to pulp,
Living the stain of blood,
That remains in our souls,
As we look at these rails,
Where this train that ate you,
And moved fast taking you
For it could never be like you,
For with no brain it hoots and howls,
Like a wicked darkness you want,
For you are looking down,
And not seeing the you up there.
Don't do it! Bird!
For we will miss your tattoos,
For the drawings that you were,
Now remain wasted on the rail tracks.

Give us a song not a lament,
One we can sing forever,
Till everything bows down to amen,
For your life will have ended,
With hopes we built high,
Our skyscrapers looming up,
Higher than any bird could get,
For we dreamt and still do dream,
Of the you who was a wonder,
Who remains with us a marvel,
To be talked about always.

.

Sarah Mkhonza

Graduation Blues

If you stand in line
You've got to be fine
When you are not there,
even on the face of the earth,
your name will sign you out,
with one word, posthumously.

Break it down to these time delays
cost us some dignity for they come
when we have gone.

This car, rickety and old reads,
'Mama's baby, not married but
still looking.' It drives around
looking for you. You meet by accident,
then labels follow you. Posthumously.

On roads far away are your dreams.
Everybody Knows You Left IN this,
'not married but still looking,
now you really are the baby.

Sarah Mkhonza

Grandpa's Hands On Cactus Pears.

These days I miss grandpa's hands
handing me the soft, seedy, sweet
and reddish contents of the cactus
pear.

He splits the fruit and I see red.
Follow with my eyes his surgery on
the cactus pear. Opened my saliva
already tastes the bite to vomit.
Taste buds singing in my mouth I wait.

When the moment comes, I seize it and
let it stop. My mouth
rolls the sweetness in and sparks
Of joy fill my heart. I will stand
in this moment forever.

The shot is made. Grandpa stands smiling
everywhere I go. His knife on one hand,
my piece on the other. He smiles
at me from the world.

This smile seals a deal we made
that I would not forget.
That I would receive always
this gift of the cactus pair.

Our lone tree gone, I still
gift as I look at
his life hardened thumbrella
lines running down the hardened
nail. I take my cactus pair.

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The

Sarah Mkhonza

Guilty As The Guillotine

A woman stole a poem
And had it out
There as written
By her and when
The world read it
It kept reading
As two words that
Said one thing
Guilty guillotine.
When she took the
Guillotine and tried
To cut the poem out
Four words appeared
Guilty as the guillotine
They said. She looked around
To see where the words
Came from and saw no one
But the gavel dangling in
Front of her.

For if you defy
The statutes and
Run around with
Stolen goods I will
Warn you once in surreal
Dreams and then make sure
You end up where
The likes of you belong.

You may accuse because the
Devil is the accuser
But the truth runs the
World. Mark my words, said the poem.

You can ask the shredder
If I have not done this before
And it will tell you a
Story of cutting up and
Throwing in jail you have

Never heard.

The woman walked
Away in clothes
Tattered and torn
Speaking the words
Guilty as a guillotine
Like a new madness
Had attacked her. Some
Called her a witch for
They thought she was
Casting a spell on them
And went to the priest
To confess that they do
Not not know how their sins
Could be so much that they
Confuse even the devil himself
For he has turned into
A loner that points them out in
The streets. The priest
Told them not to worry
For the cross is meant for
That and asked them to pray
That they sin no more.

Next time you read a poem
Remember the sage and know
What goes round comes round.
For the world is getting smaller
As it gets hotter and more polluted
For we are all guilty as the guillotine
As we go into this world
Of global warming where we
Stand accused by a poem that
Walks this warm world. They say
The children have gone to court
To sue the rulers whom they accuse
Of negligence. We know the verdict
For we saw the gavel hanging in the
Air saying guilty as the guillotine.
They say the government argued with the gavel
Only to be told to go and hang for the

Gavel is never wrong.

Sarah Mkhonza

Guns Must Be Silent Naked Protest

When the ground is powdered with bodies
from the salt and pepper shaker of death,
and all around us the smell of blood
mixed with the tears of ants that walk
with hands on the head like me and you
I take of my clothes off in protest.
The strongest truth that speaks
enough is enough with my navel linked to
the next victim's navel in birth
I cry enough is enough!
Guns must be silent.

Why should my shriveled breasts
be babbling biblical truths out here,
telling with the nakedness of an African woman,
angered by a society that kills
itself and walks about clothed,
when bodies lie scattered
on the conscience of the earth
scribbling a tale with no end.

I say guns must be silent now as my hand goes up
to conduct the last salute to tell the world
this is not to be repeated to a people
who cry after each incident when my children have paved
the walkways in death in a silence I could not awaken
to give me back their dream,
which was also an American dream
that folded up when they fell
Like jewel thrown into the deep
Of the forest of time.

The arguments say let us spit death into
each other's faces and hold out guns to
greet each other as if we are furious
at each other always when we live and wake
a nation of endless bickering that will
lead to another blast that drown the ears.

Guns must be silent when you look at these
my sunken eyes which once shone with love
when I heard the first cry
that landed in my ears piercing them forcefully
and grabbing my shriveled C 44 breasts
to suckle there making them so flat
I could lay them on the pavement
a mat for the dead child from Ferguson
because if society says I am mad,
society is also mad and walking about naked and blinded
at gunpoint pulling hair in a madness in the dark
that does not say guns must be silent.

I do not look at history with teary eyes when
the baby pops out from in between these thighs.
I do not go to rallies when I wrap my arms in love
To talk about weapons of hate and stories of death
And argue guns will help us even when pointed at a newborn.
Giving birth in one push is not like taking away life in one shot.
These actions have become cousins at two ends of the rope,
that we have linked together to sit in a raping with wrappings
and sing a chorus of ants that go deep into the earth
to taste the supper we left when the bullet hit.

Guns must be silent for the naked woman has spoken
for working in silence will not drown
another blast that drowns the ears
for the birth of all of you
is a form of naked protest
that is done by two bodies
that stops every action
even that of the shooter looking him in the eye,
saying guns must be silent.

Remember shooter how you gasped for air
How your small head popped out
Held by all of you
Who now stand and suffocate
your own first wail by not voting
that guns must be silent
as on the day you were dropped into my hand
when I first saw your little face,

and you first saw my touch in the love of my eyes.

I stand inside my naked torso
My head not there for in madness
I have thrown it to the scuttling ants
That say to protect ourselves
Guns need to be here.
All my work was nothing
My stomach a dreamless roundness,
To be deflated by one gunshot
that landed its contents on the walkways
Like the spit of a beggar
after eating a spoonful and sensing a fly
that went down the throat by mistake
leaving a taste lingering all over,
the humming of an endless
aria of a society that would do nothing
to protect itself while claiming death can
protect it when it swallows it daily.

This is not the bark of a strange dog
Fighting for space in your ear
but the anger of my mammary glands
That murmur to themselves missing a baby
whose foot danced when feeding from them,
in years past. Yes guns must be silent!

Sarah Mkhonza

Hair Raising Looks From Where

I make the mistakes
That tell me there
Goes! These actions
That I get myself into
And entangle my spirit
Are the same ones my
Mama said should not be
Done by the hands
Of a child of hers so
Now I come the child
Worse than Squeler the one
You clean and she goes
Back to the mud just glad
That people will always
Miss the smell of bacon and
Make a dirty muddy one welcome
For everybody knows no pig
No bacon.

Yours faithfully still knows
The rules that keep us
Close such as eating chitlings
For ours is a tradition
Written on the backs of
The humble of the earth
Who could make life out
Of nothing. So cleanse the
Slate with the eraser of
Forgiveness for truly
This is no disrespect
Meant to you members
Of the clan of oneness.

Sarah Mkhonza

Hallo Beautiful The Mirror Says

You look at the back and the front,
The mirror smiles and you are serious,
Your thoughts are thinking of those who will look,
And disapprove of what you are,
But you do not affirm this glow,
That the mirror smiles back at you with
Even as you put on the light.

Hallow beautiful the mirror says,
You go and change and not answer,
For this dress and this coat and tie,
Do not look good to you.

The mirror is not talking to the tie,
It is not talking to the colors of clothes,
It is not worried if they match,
It just loves the thing unseen,
That it is greeting while you turn,
Trying to impress it with trivialities,
That you bought at the thrift store,
And will never take beyond the grave.

Listen to the mirror with the shadow,
Of the unseen things that talks,
And tells you to stop and think deep,
For in you is a lover of love,
And a hater of hate,
That turns in front of mirrors,
Having forgotten all its truths.

Next time let the guts churn it out,
Let the cherub play the chess game,
It is written on the mirrors around,
Where you look at yourself all alone,
The way you do in your own bed room,
And let alone what you do in bathrooms,
For it is here that the soul sings to you.

Even if we can tell lies on these pages,

And talk to the world for it loves to hear,
Talk of love and nothing else,
For all cowards run away like me and you, ,
And end up tired for they never listened,
To all this talk that was yelled out in images,
Of a you and me that never tires,
Of looking at ourselves no matter where we are,
And then rejecting the truths we search,
For we do not know what they look like,
When the mirror greets us with greetings,
Like, 'Hallow Beautiful.'

I have never heard a mirror say,
Hallow tie, what color you are,
Or say with disdain the name of the one,
Who stands before it searching alone,
What it is they are taking to the world,
That gives back to us with no shame,
When it looks as us like the mirror,
Whose blessed sighs we ignore always.

Sarah Mkhonza

Hallo; Young Lady

A beggar's summery smile salutes my mercy
with hands outstretched. Yesterday she was
here doing repeated acts. Greeting the workers
from downtown. The train pours them out timely.

My mercy seat is waiting and looking,
Will I give my last dollar freely,
or feel defrauded with my eyes looking,
at the same woman who got my dollar
for the same words yesterday?

Let us change seats with her. I come to
greet people for pay daily. No shame in
poverty. No smile in shame. No bluff
in hunger. But sharing the look and what
jingles in a purse pocket. Who will give
up doing what they have to do.
Me or the beggar?

Tricky places outside the Boston train
Beggars whose children are hungry,
Not looked after at begging time.
Fliers claiming "hungry with two
children";

Inside the train the saga of yore.
The drug pusher comes in with his.
The bus to New Hampshire has left him.
His dad is a dying man. He needs just
a twenty to get to him.

Flash back, this could be anyone.
Trying to lie their way to something.
This money crowd rides tired. Look
at each actor with half disdain.

The Nigerian pastor preaches loud.
Tired workers look bored and curious.
Will he get to heaven with a few,

who heard him on this Boston train?

The woman is on my mind still,
His greeting is not on my paycheck.
Nor are the taxes going to make up,
The difference between the beggar
and the worker. Both look so alike
I shake to think of it. "Hallow,
brave lady, " I say and walk home.
Taking comfort in yesterday's dollar,
for in her hands it did land. I land
on the mercy seat with my tired bum.

Sarah Mkhonza

Hands Dangling With My Vote In Them

Where I come from is marked by mountains,
Of a past that is green with trees that bloom,
Whose summers light up skies with blue and red,
That look at the world as it changes,
Jumping on everybody's unshaven head,
With a face that faces the beginning,
And the end of our time here.

I look back and see the games I played,
Letting time slip through my fingers,
Which caught it and shook it off,
Grabbing this and grabbing that,
Only to find themselves empty,
And all of them inside my mouth,
Dripping with my own memory of a supper,
That once silenced my wailing,
Telling me I am crying for nought.
For to go back cannot bring back,
The losses that have left me like,
The purse of a MaBenzy who lost it all,
When gambling in Monte Carlo,
And returned home to Lagos,
With nothing in her hidden belt,
But an empty stomach that flips
And flops as she treads on up the road,
In her last tired walk.

What is money when it hits us in the face,
And leaves us with tears of what we lost,
When we were gambling with bills,
That were to pay for the poor,
Whose bills remain unpaid,
Yet they voted in the long lines,
For they owe nobody and everybody,
Who held the purse and signed the papers,
That feed countries in exchange rates,
That cannot be used to feed a mouse,
That wants the seed in the vault,
That is kept in the big powerful silos,
That reach the sky with their parapets,

Like medieval churches of old,
Yet squeeze the poor like worms,
That must fry in the unsalted heat,
And revile everyone who sees them,
Crawling on the pot holed roadsides,
Where they sit and beg hands outstretched,
Saying even if you spit into my hands,
That will be precious rain to me,
For the drought has brought me here,
To see if anyone can see the drought
That has me peeling the sores you see,
Which are the only proof I live,
For you spoke to me like a person,
I went and voted for the likes of you.

Sarah Mkhonza

Hanging Between The Hands Of The Clock

It is between the hands of time you next to the long hand your feet walk to your next errand. Touching the world with a soft kick minute by minute.

Next to the shot hand is your head, sitting on the stool of time, quiet and guilty. All your life like a puppet you hang on the guillotine of time. Wondering if the hanging is real. Seconds become minutes. Hours, weeks and then years.

Your fear of the master called time is real. As your stomach rumbles you see one truth. You did this to yourself. Made the rope and stood in position for what?

soul sits on the doorstep
of time g you will repent of this blindness. Your walk can sing to the sound of the Ling hand. Your dance is a choice. It began on the first hour, you yelled and time heard you had your journey be a tribute to yourself or time, your master?

Sarah Mkhonza

Happy Birthday Nelson Mandela (Posthumously)

We never have enough,
Of the wisdom of leaders,
Whose voices ring true,
Even to an angry nation,
Where the truth was hatred,
Told and touched in its coldness,
To be smashed at the end of time
And be told not to try,
To engage the people of the land,
In useless words that kill,
For all souls are special,
Ready to make a new nation,
That can stand on its own,
And be the envy of the world.

We never get tired,
Of thinking about your words
Well said Nelson
For you taught us to talk
To hold hands and sing
For we are one inside
As we walk the land you led
To a place of oneness
That few could imagine
After years of fueling hate
In a system of me not you.

Well thought out and executed,
This creation of truth,
This nation in rags,
That was dressed in red blood,
For people died in prisons,
Both on land and on islands,
To buy today's freedom,
Which we use like the soap and suds,
Of the rivers of yesterday,
Which let their water flow even now,
In their perennial beds,
That are today as dry,

As the deserts in the west,
That stand with the high dunes,
Of sand that roll on and on.

Nelson well said
A life is a life
A man is a man
He builds and then goes
Does his house fall after he goes?
The words remain his words.

Never to be imitated
Never to spoken in like manner
In this land of the south
Where people live and sing
About truths you told.

To miss a life is all we do
To repeat the words also
When the gifts were shared
By a nation in despair
That was taught to be one.

We miss the advice
Let bygones be bygones
We do not want to let you go
For bygones cannot be bygones
When we need you as 'Tata.'
For fathers are not easy to find,
For there are no leaders like you,
Who keep the principles we know,
Standing even when they are attacked,
And apply them when the rough gets tough.

It is easy to make a baby
To raise it is another task
The challenges face us
The mind you shared with us
Leads us even in the dark
For we cannot bring you back
But follow you in time
Such are men of honor

For where you went
is where all heroes
Of our struggle have gone.

There are days I sing
And walk in your energy
And ask how you could forgive
For the act is hard
When I have looked at the enemy
Whose dogs sniffed my food
Looking for weapons at the border
Where fires were lit on roads
And a gun was pointed at me

I am thankful for the example
To know it can be done
My nerves tell me to become
A Madiba inside and stand
Like a Tembu chief would
As the elders taught you
For this is what you taught
That love frees the slave
That has an enemy in its
Neighbor the fellow man.

Sarah Mkhonza

Happy New Poetry Year Folks.

The old year stands on a mountain
And waves at you like a golden sunset
That gleams half hidden in the darkness
That creeps in slowly ready to throw
Itself on the couch of time and sleep
Never to awake. It will not snore
Loud unless you want it to
So make sure you pull out
The stoppers in your ears
Lest you miss the song I
Will sing from up on top
Of the mountain my silhouette
Standing against the setting
Year.

We will never step into it
Once it steps out so on this
Day let us walk with loud steps
Stepping on it harder for it
Is better to say goodbye to
This year that gave much more
Than we expected.

The year says that we will
Return and spell out the
Minutes in story if we did
Not write a few words to
Remind ourselves that life
Was just another starry sky
That we walked through
Without catching anything
Not even a fly that buzzes
Into the house of our time
Asking us to swat it and get
On for when it has fallen it
Will be evidence we were here
Like a deer hunter carrying home
His poached burden and not wanting

To be found out.

The new year rises in the east
The sunrise that is crowned
By the rays that greet you
And makes you say the day has
Come for at the hour of midnight
There will be new cries as
Newborns come to this world
Like the year we greet in two days
Which has come to ask you
A question you need to answer
Because if you do not you will
Return to regret not doing so.
What do you see your self
Doing in five years after
You yawn your first yawn
On the first day of each
New year including this
Very one you are going to
Stand in and make a prophecy
About nothing?

The blessing is to step
My foot into the whole
Thing clean and take what
My shoe has created prints on
In this muddy world where
I turn mud to build another
Year without a broken window
So please do not trouble
Me by sneaking into my stories
For I am not royalty
And deserve the quiet
For I do not live on your
Taxes and claim I can make
You what you are. I just give
For God gave to me.
I love you with the love
Of the mud that made you and
To which you will return
At the strike of twelve.

Happy New Poetry Year folks
From your Princess of Poetry.

Sarah Mkhonza

Have You Seen The Foolish Five

Surely you know of the foolish five,
with their lamps ready, mates and all.

Yet when called for the action that closes
the deal they scuttle around.

On their lips is the latest lie.'We saw him. He kissed her and did a few things.

The reason we run around is to stop others
marrying him. He has five already. Isn't it?

We heard the wedding announced. It got nearer to the hour. We ran looking for
you.

Oil, oil wet our lamp so we can see what
he will do with the five. Clever is it not?

To look before you leap. We are only being careful. If the groom has five, what if
we walk into a stable where the bridle is on
the foolish five who came last to a case
that already had its queens?

Better to go looking for oil and
tell the true crowd.

The clever five can handle the load.
We are the maidens with atiti

Better never to go near hell with your
eyes open. There are fires everywhere.

Better to start your own with tinder
from your own yard than those from afar.

The groom is arriving. Let him come in
the daylight. We fear midnight stunts.

Breaking news, midnight mews. The screen is rolling. Things are under control.

Who heads the harem? Zinita. Who tails
the head and talk game. Anita.

The harem now swings on a hammock. Who is
in the kingly suite. Nobody.

See? We told you five girls one groom no
bride in a veil says run, run, run.

Smells like the marriage of the gazillion
we know who marry like the moonies.

The

Sarah Mkhonza

Have You Seen The King?

Given this life to lead,
With Nothing but hope,
Dropped into your hand,
In years past by life,
Have you seen the king you are?

To be given to go ahead,
Into a future of fantasy,
Makes you a prince,
Who can find a Cinderella,
where the cinders are.

Did you look in the right place?
Did you throw away the ash,
That remained after the cinders,
Without seeing your picture,
In there with a crown,
On this very head of yours.

How can you be a king,
Given a destiny to lead,
And then not know,
That you will be nothing,
If the king in you is asleep?
For kings like big beds,
And rule with scepters that write,
The very poem they live themselves.

Your majesty I call on you,
To walk the tightrope with pride,
For people want to follow you,
But they cannot follow a turtle,
Whose head goes in at the slightest sound.

Rise with leopard skin pride,
Take the strides of a cheetah,
Overtake time with your gusto,
And land with a double fold,
On the other side and stand,

For your kingdom needs this stirring,
That awakens even the dead,
Who attest long after it is done,
A real king was here,
For you can see the royal trail,
With all the followers' foot prints,
Imprinted on the sand.

Once you asked with need,
If I could be king of my own,
This kingdom this fief,
Then you were given the heart,
It told you you were king,
Then you asked it to knock,
With the sound of the scepter,
And it did just that,
Then you gave up and walked away,
Arguing you were a subject.

Whose subject are you Oh King?
Subject of others you say,
Nobody claims a citizen,
That is not a patriot,
For that begins in your heart,
For power is a choice you make,
People do not follow one who abdicates.

Sarah Mkhonza

Have You Seen Twenty Four Inches

She walks the streets of Mbabane
All legs with a skin smoother than
Butter and smiles the sunny smile
That makes you see two stary eyes that
Hide behind ringed glasses. This
Beauty has a figure that is the
Envy of Mbabane girls who in turn
Gave her the name of the inches
Around her walks down
Allister Miller a virgin spited
And her instep tells you that she
Has won the contest for if you
Live in this little town all fights
Take place on Allster Miller. Handbags
Swing on shoulders as determined
As the outstep of the maiden they
Call Twenty Four Inches. In this
Vanity world of the thin ones
You live and hear the drama from
The People's Theatre where the
Ticket is your eyes. The seat
Number is written on the pavement.
The snack is ready for you on
The same pavement. Everybody
Turns to watch her on the runway
For they have been waiting and
Now they whisper for here comes
The girl handbag in hand wearing
The latest on her body with a
Figure like a wasp.

She does not wear rouge
For rule of the streets
Is no enhancements for
It is African fair to
Come as you ate. Her
Hair is short. Confidence
Calls you to dare say a word.
You stand and watch for next

Week you have to pass the gossip
Test for all the news will be
About this movie that goes on
Reel by reel a life unfolding
In front of a nations audience
That walks and does not chase
Its prey, but sits a paparazzi
Of the streets that chases its
Prey with the eye.

*Mbabane is a town in Swaziland, southern Africa.

Sarah Mkhonza

Have Yourselves A Merry Southern African Christmas

A Christmas of blasts of music
And cars going up and down
Tells you are in Kimberly
The town where diamonds are twenty
A scoop, in the biggest hole
In the ground ever made in the
History of man. Living in
A township called Homestead
You have to know that there is truth
In that Jesus was born to merrymaking
And laughter as well as the
Slaughter of sheep that hang
In the fig tree outside.

My Aunt sits in her sunken lounge
In the house she loves for it is
A semblance of how far the
Clan has come in getting ahead
In the things of life. The township
Buzz that brings us all together
Is on as we watch the lively television
That we just bought two miles away
In downtown Kimberly.

Small box it may be it does carry
A few pictures of bearded Father
Christmas for merchants will always
Invade our fun with each period
Of merry making. The kitchen is abuzz
With cooking on this Christmas eve
For Jesus surely knows he has to come
Out of Mary at midnight or else
There will have to be a Cesarean section
This once in the life of history.
For when the story came south he
Was not born in a manger but on our
Streets where the cars visit the
Bottle stores down the street
For there surely was a lot of

Thirst in hot Bethlehem.

No Boerewors, no fun for this
Sausage long colonized the tastes
Of the clan. Sizzling on some
Outdoor fire its wafts into the
Air with a smell you can touch for
It lingers in township air like
We live on Sausage Street. How can
This be that nobody thinks of a
Woman in labor for no labor pains
And no midwives are talked about
In a history of the birth of the
Son of Man. The story is felt as
Children jump higher outside for
Even the goat pans and grazing
Lands will have fewer sheep so
So there will be leg room for
The beasts and a space to lay
A bed when all the beasts are
Out there waiting for slaughter.

The smell of mutton is in the air
For the rams tied to trees speak
The full story. Wake up this Christmas
Eve as my Aunt shoves the celebratory
Mutton sandwich into my face and I jolt
Up and join the party around the fire.
On the strike of midnight up goes the
Street abuzz with cars honking loud
As women throw nigger balls through
The windows so when the kids wake up
They will surely know Father Christmas
Did not forget a soul. Morning dawns
With children running up and down
Their mouths 'licoriced' showing teeth
As darkened as the night for they
Have picked all the balls of licorice
That were thrown in the night. Soon
They will walk house to house to ask
For Christmas and get a meal, a present
Or drink. They will all eat themselves

To death for as they say in Kimberly
Christmas comes once a year.

Aunt Rose dressed to kill in her
Small heaven beret perched on top
Of her head makes her entrance
Umbrella in the air and handbag on
Her arm. She sweats her way into our
Yard dressed in the latest of
Johannesburg fashions for she works
In the kitchens far away, and this
You can see from the ear rings of
Green, red and green plastic that
Show Made in China in a tiny glow
Of gold seen only when she sits near
You and invades the air around you
With Country Club, the sweetest of
Our local perfumes.

A Young man tsotsi-walks his way
In pants that are held by a belt
At the base of his bottom and comes
To tell uncle Bob, "I ask for
Christmas', man Uncle Bob.' Between
A request and a demand you know
This day of generosity might as well
Be a day of young and old. Together
They drink shots of whiskey and
The young man goes on his way.
The clan trickles in until it
is time for the main meal where
All the prayers will tell us to
Watch out for Christmas can be
A dangerous time and then the feast
Begins. Boys in the garage blast
music and my mom and her sisters-in-law
Retire to the sunken lounge for
These sisters of the clan
Have seen generations come and go
On this day of our Lord's birth
And so deserve to rest while

We all have our fun. With gifts
Galore one says Merry Christmas
A-la-clan of Isaac Steinkamp,
Good people.

* Nigger balls are marble like balls of candy
made with a coating of black licorice. No
disrespect meant I had to use the word as it
Was used then.

Sarah Mkhonza

He Pulled The Ivy Out

This man, this landlord has
pulled out the ivy. I grew
this ivy from my bouquet
so precious I could not throw
it to the girls.

So precious was this ivy I let
it grow in front of the house.
In a trough it grew as the marriage
grew.

Then this landlord came. He uprooted
the ivy and said it causes a fungus
to creep on the wall. Next
thing he danced on the rough like a cowife. Said he was tearing out more
ivy to let in the son.

Crazy man, he I fell from the roof
and now walks with a limp. Look what
the landlord, my only husband has done
to our marriage!

I came to share the rent and now
I get a cripple. Should have surely
let the girls catch this fire of a
bouquet, that made the ivy, that broke
the leg, that left me with a crippled land lord, my husband here, and bills to pay.

my

,

The

Sarah Mkhonza

Hello She Woman Of Iron

Hallowed she woman of iron
Like a statue you stand
Your hand behind your head
Looking at the future long
In front of you spread. For
Grass likes to claim it knows
Where we are all going for it
Alone refuses to change color
And stay the same.

Hello iron lady for you see
The same bit of grass year in
And year out and know if this
Is true that a tuft of grass
Should fade and then renew itself
When people have no power to
Even clump and form themselves
Into a tuft and line up the lawns
Going to get what is theirs by right.

They call it government when they
Bundle people into usable hands
That pour out power together
And get things moving in all
Directions some good and some
Bad, but because you have never
Cast a vote, but voted to stand
Here a statue that read the statutes
And knew all statistics sent in
That cement our being tell me what
We should do to stop being led
In directions unsought by those
Who have us bound together in
Bundles as nations?

Once there was an iron lady
Who tried to pull the strings
The way you have your hair and
The world called her point blank

Without respect an iron lady yet
She was flesh and blood and sang
With her voice in parliament only
To hear it ringing back after years
As hard and horse as water coming
Out of a horse pipe. But one thing
Consoles me now that we see you
Standing here, she did what no
Woman in her country had done
Like you for you have stood for the
Likes of us and like it or not
Nobody will move you and remain
untouched for you touched my soul
Even though with an iron touch.

Sarah Mkhonza

Here Begins Your Journey On The Sledge.

It is a bumpy journey,
When you are led by two,
Four, six or so animals,
That pull together only
When the ground is flat,

It is a lonely journey,
When you have not packed,
A few friends to journey with,
On the same route that you have chosen,
For to choose to go, is to choose to,
Journey all the same.

You cannot run forever,
From the cold that hits you,
And penetrates into the depth,
Of the soul you are taking far,
The sun shines and dims yet again,
As you go on to unknown horizons.

The friends who cheer you now,
Will not be there tomorrow,
For their thoughts wonder,
About the space so blurred,
And want to see what you keep
Showing them in the yonder,
Where you go foot sore.

Keep your eyes open at night,
The stars are looking at you,
Opening up and shutting down,
As they dash in your skies,
Wondering if you see the way,
The way they see it.

Your call is further than this,
It takes you to worlds far away,
As far as the world of your dreams,
Where you see demons green and furious,

Leaning towards you as they surface,
Out of the leafy forest floors,
To scare you if your heart is faint.

The journey continues to be bumpy,
Your sledge hits a stone and you hurt,
As you get thrown up and down in jumps,
That cause hiccups and yelling,
That tells the world you are alive,
For such is life on this journey,
Where prisoners of life tell you,
That is the way it goes here.

You listen to mockery displeased,
And swear never to mock someone,
Who undertakes a pilgrimage,
To a Mecca they do not know,
Except only in books of old,
Only to be told the journey ends here.

Believe for you started out,
And hope for you had faith,
And strength to try alone,
With the friends who abandon,
A cause so lofty that it is undertaken
By those whose eyes have holes in them,
That gleam the future forever,
And say the journey continues,
Until the breath says, 'No you anymore'.
Give us the sledge and we will walk away,
With your animals and leave you here,
Where your dream ends
The trail continues,
For we know it better
Having lived it for years,
And seen more like you.

Sarah Mkhonza

Here Is A Gertrude Sneeze Number 10

'See how many times I have broken
This wooden spoon on a person's
Head? ' My Aunt Gertrude's tongue
is at it again. If speaks and goes
Out of her mouth in a false licking
That circles her whole mouth with gile
Goes back in and her eyes look at the
Wooden spoon that Uncle Bob made when
It was my cousins wedding for every
Man contributes a traditional utensil
When there is a wedding among the
Members of the clan. Strong long handled
And as big as my aunt's foot the wooden
Spoon she holds looms higher then her
Head scarf right now that it has become
A weapon much better than the stick
My brother gave my mother at the last
Battle of the titans. I stand amazed
As usual as I look at these arch rivals
Whose eyes look at the hoisted spoon. 'Two
And you will be the third and know this, they
Were male including your husband.

I had heard the story many times when my father
Was talking to my mother about my aunt and
Her experiments at disciplining them as younger
Siblings. I had laughed as he told us how
Our grandmother had stood between them telling
My aunt to stop what she was doing and stir
The stew and stop stirring chaos and pouring
It on the boys. My father told us how she had
broken the spoon on Uncle Thomas also for
His refusal to grind millet on the grinding
Stone and then tipping a piece of wood and
Spilling all the contents of her hard work
On the ground.

Now I stood looking at this spoon she held.

Once it had stirred the meat in the big
Pots that lay turned upside down in our
Big kitchen. Now that my aunt has gone
In and told the ancestors it shall be
A weapon wiggled by women at each other
I start to wonder why wars were always said
To be fought by men. For the ones of the
Daughters of the clan cause as much laughter
As those of the sons of the clan, if not
more so.

'Hey you, who said you must come and rais
A wooden spoon here. Look, I held a spear in
This home and it told me that you would go
To other homes and hold that weapon there.
Now that you have chosen to stir stews in
The air amidst a broadcast of ancestral nonsense
From the radio station whose antennae is your
Crooked head blast on, but be sure I do
not get near you. I am ready to do what
An in-law-has never done in this home. I
Am no longer a new comer but a woman seasoned
With the savory sauces that you mix daily
In your daily songs of wrath that you have
Poured on my head. In short, I mean I am
As ready for you as you are and also very
Much so even though I have no weapon on my hands.

The force that my mother uses in pushing her
Words out of her mouth is enough to blow the wind
And force it to have my aunt receding one step
At a time. She trips on a wheelbarrow that lays
In the yard and almost falls and then turns
And walks away.

Always I feel the relief as the queens of wrath
Make distance between each other and the other
One decided the words are enough for today.
There is no love lost between these two and now
That she is gone my mother starts telling
The food she is stirring that my aunt had
Better bring back that spoon because it is

A symbol of luck shared by one generation
With another and this wiggling of it by her
Honorable is a sure sign to cause bad luck
To the marriage of the couple that it was
Made for.

I know next time, if ever I marry I want to
Hide all the symbolic gifts if my aunt is still
Going on with these fights that take place
Between the two women I love so much.

I am torn as always for my aunt it my
God mother because of the position she
Holds as the first born who must bless
Every action I take. My mother is also
My love for she is the best things that
Ever happened to our family. No mother no
Family for my father is a very level headed
Man.

Cry with me when the wars come and rest on
The top of my head and I cannot do anything.
I always pray for fear to get a hold of one
Of these and then hope time will save the situation
Till they come face to face again.

I am praying that they grow up and find out
That all this acting up does not make life
Better. It saps energy and then fuels us
Up with confusion and anxiety and then we
Go back to normal wondering what is next.

I go to sleep today with my mind trying
To live a live where the two have their
Hands intertwine in love even if it is
In my dreams. I always wonder when I fall
Asleep what would have happened if they
Were co-wives and fought over legitimate
Inequalities that are done by a husband
Between wives. My grandmother saved us
By getting the family to live knowing that
Hail Marys said with rosaries go before

Anything else a young person can do with
A young man. For this we thank her and wish
She had worked more sense into the minds of
The clan before she left for the other world.

F

Mother ceremonial piece of property

Sarah Mkhonza

Here Is A Gertrude Sneeze Number Eleven? ?

Now that you have gone
To discuss the bride price
Of Alexine, everything concerning
Her life from now on will
Be on your shoulders.
Her sickness, death,
Jail sentences, fines and
Pregnancies are all yours,
You hear me, last born of Isaac?
My aunt said as always from
Her shrine of the Black Madonna
Where her authority oozes
Copiously, the day my in-laws
Came to ask for the girth, for
This is how you speak with the
Kingdom of the people of Ngwane
About marrying their daughter.
You ask for the girth of her whom
You have come to request to keep
The fires on the hearth of your
Home warm. My father, knowing
Her sister had not told my aunt,
For fear of the scene she would
Make in front of people who 'do
Not know us.' Like a queen of wizardry
She accused him of loosening the
Knot around the family that Isaac
Had left tighter than one around
A victim of a suicide by hanging.
'For you have trodden on the snake
That guides our safety, ' my mother
Mocked after she had finished.

You, said my aunt to her, 'When I
Am spited, I spit fire and very
Soon you will know what kind of
In-laws we are for you speak to me
As if I am a rotten fig that dropped
On your head from that fig tree, ' she

Said pointing at the fig tree near our
House. I thought the fig tree would
Shrivel when I looked at her finger
And remember Jesus and the fig tree
That would not bear any figs. 'I was
Not born first so that I can arrive
At family gatherings last. I hold
An invisible scepter that can stir
Things around day in and day out for
I guided you all out of my mother's
Womb into this world. No marriage begins
And ends without me, unless you want it
To end before it begins. If you want this
To be a marriage, let us right now pretend
What you did, did not happen for I swear with
The tears of my mother at birth when birthing
Me for they were the first tears of her sweat
That she remembers clearest. If you want to
Create your own ruled go and live in
The land where people do as they wish
For the spirits that made this crest that I carry
Are shocked as I stand here naked for
What you have done has removed the only
Sign of blessing I bring to all our occasions.

As she speaks, I see her tears glistening
Down her face attesting to her crest-fallen
Ego and for once my father is calmer than
Cucumber as he listens to this tale that he
Has heard repeatedly. How she has repeated
The importance of her birth to the world has
Thoroughly bored my father for he does not
Even move to show that her tears are powerful
When they pour in torrents and land on her
Bony chest.

She who reigns from the shrine of disorder's strength,
Is etching out. I can cracks in her long and stable
Ruling of the house that has borne the disorder she
Wields with quiet poise. It is now splitting into
Fiefs that make me wonder what we will do now that
This story with no end is coming to an end, especially

For me who is trying to leave and go as far from here
As I can. They say a story that has no end
Is no story for every beginning foretells and end.

That my father would be the one that would start
The rocks rolling down the mountain of this kingdom
Renders me mute. They say surprise chokes its victim
for it leaves the fiercest fighters and their armies
In disarray. The house of Isaac has finally decided
That nakedness does not hurt a clan when they have to
Undress the queen bee for someone has to remove the
Knickers from the bee so that it can sting and die. The
Risk is in work whose results we are already enjoying
Because nobody needs to answer the questions that have
The same preamble, 'if these imbecilles will call me to
Our home...., ' Isaac no longer threatens to turn in his
Grave for he is as dead as a nail. His silence down there
Creates a new truth that leave tentions between family
Members reminiscing in an air that is free of the billows
Of anger that drown every voice and sink every heart.
Fighters only do so when there is an audience. My father
And his actions have rendered the air quiet so that anyone
Who dances in front of our family in outbursts expecting
Explosions hears the 'woosh, ' as the balloon flattens
because of the affairs aforementioned. Now I know me,
Alexine will marry in peace and say goodbye to chaos unending.
The girth has been set at a herd of ten, to be paid slowly.

Sarah Mkhonza

Here Is A Gertrude Sneeze Number Five

The fees of my uncle Mark, son
Of Gertrude have not been paid.
Guess who is knocking on the door
To fight about this.

She tells us that if my mother
Wants to stay at our homestead,
She had better make sure that
The fees are paid for no grand
child of Isaac will have to leave
School because of money. For money
Was never an issue in the house of
Her father. The only problem is
that 'rats and mince' have come to
Live on the money and are now causing
Members of the clan to walk about naked.

the struggle to control the money
And distribute it fairly lies heavily
On the back of my dad, for he does
Not like the bickering because he knows
The cause is that my aunt does not like
My mother.

My father always lives a life of wondering
When the next request will appear on his
Window for now the papers are no longer
Shoved under the door.

My aunt now collects these from all the
Members of the clan so that my dad can
Be sure to treat all of the people equally.
All by herself she speaks and shouts
Amounts in the air which is also
Going beserk for it wonders what on earth
Happened to these people whose sums of
Money need to be heard by the whole world,
Which will soon turn into a Japanese berserk.

Here Is A Gertrude Sneeze Number Four

As the inferno goes higher
My mother has taken her in-law
To court for she was haunting
My father, asking for money
Every weekend and crying on
On the window outside our house
For the money is not ours,
But her father Isaac's.

She prayed to the God of Abraham,
Isaac, and Jacob for they knew
That she is the eldest and should
Be listened to when she is in need.

'I made you the financial heir
And if you listen to these young
Girls whom you dated one week and
Married the next you will surely
Receive the wrath of our Holy God.
I tell you, for the truth sits
On the lips of turtles for they
Grow to be centenarians.'

My father ought to listen to my aunt,
For she has said she is not a surrogate
Mother of his to be coming to him to
Ask for money that belongs to all of
Isaac's children, but his sister
Who carried them all on her back
And could run a mile for that
Is how young they are and uninformed
About ruling the family.

A man who has a wife is not to be
Reminded of his baby hood if he
Does his duties. But men like my father
Are a problem for they never grow up.
Her ranting annoys us, but it makes
Our life now that we have grown up

To know that it is what she lives for.

My mother has asked her to stop
Coming to our house and she says
No police order will stop her from
Coming to the home of Isaac for it
Was built with the one cow her husband
Paid as the bride price. There was no
Court, she argues when those agreements
Were made. She speaks rules from the
Shrine of the clan and nobody can do
Anything about that, without seeing
Isaac 'emanate' from the bush like
The cyclone that drowned all our cattle
When they refused to slaughter a cow
On her sixtieth birthday.

I have seen that the bag of tricks
Is Running out for my aunt has said
My uncle should be in charge of the
Family finances and not my father.
Now it is going into divide, rule
And confuse. Ha! Ha!

Sarah Mkhonza

Here Is A Gertrude Sneeze Number Ten

'See how many times I have broken
This wooden spoon on a person's
Head? ' My Aunt Gertrude's tongue
is at it again. If speaks and goes
Out of her mouth in a false licking
That circles her whole mouth with gile
Goes back in and her eyes look at the
Wooden spoon that Uncle Bob made when
It was my cousins wedding for every
Man contributes a traditional utensil
When there is a wedding among the
Members of the clan. Strong long handled
And as big as my aunt's foot the wooden
Spoon she holds looms higher then her
Head scarf right now that it has become
A weapon much better than the stick
My brother gave my mother at the last
Battle of the titans. I stand amazed
As usual as I look at these arch rivals
Whose eyes look at the hoisted spoon. 'Two
And you will be the third and know this, they
Were male including your husband.

I had heard the story many times when my father
Was talking to my mother about my aunt and
Her experiments at disciplining them as younger
Siblings. I had laughed as he told us how
Our grandmother had stood between them telling
My aunt to stop what she was doing and stir
The stew and stop stirring chaos and pouring
It on the boys. My father told us how she had
broken the spoon on Uncle Thomas also for
His refusal to grind millet on the grinding
Stone and then tipping a piece of wood and
Spilling all the contents of her hard work
On the ground.

Now I stood looking at this spoon she held.

Once it had stirred the meat in the big
Pots that lay turned upside down in our
Big kitchen. Now that my aunt has gone
In and told the ancestors it shall be
A weapon wiggled by women at each other
I start to wonder why wars were always said
To be fought by men. For the ones of the
Daughters of the clan cause as much laughter
As those of the sons of the clan, if not
more so.

'Hey you, who said you must come and rais
A wooden spoon here. Look, I held a spear in
This home and it told me that you would go
To other homes and hold that weapon there.
Now that you have chosen to stir stews in
The air amidst a broadcast of ancestral nonsense
From the radio station whose antennae is your
Crooked head blast on, but be sure I do
not get near you. I am ready to do what
An in-law-has never done in this home. I
Am no longer a new comer but a woman seasoned
With the savory sauces that you mix daily
In your daily songs of wrath that you have
Poured on my head. In short, I mean I am
As ready for you as you are and also very
Much so even though I have no weapon on my hands.

The force that my mother uses in pushing her
Words out of her mouth is enough to blow the wind
And force it to have my aunt receding one step
At a time. She trips on a wheelbarrow that lays
In the yard and almost falls and then turns
And walks away.

Always I feel the relief as the queens of wrath
Make distance between each other and the other
One decided the words are enough for today.
There is no love lost between these two and now
That she is gone my mother starts telling
The food she is stirring that my aunt had
Better bring back that spoon because it is

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With another and this wiggling of it by her
Honorable is a sure sign to cause bad luck
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Hide all the symbolic gifts if my aunt is still
Going on with these fights that take place
Between the two women I love so much.

I am torn as always for my aunt it my
God mother because of the position she
Holds as the first born who must bless
Every action I take. My mother is also
My love for she is the best things that
Ever happened to our family. No mother no
Family for my father is a very level headed
Man.

Cry with me when the wars come and rest on
The top of my head and I cannot do anything.
I always pray for fear to get a hold of one
Of these and then hope time will save the situation
Till they come face to face again.

I am praying that they grow up and find out
That all this acting up does not make life
Better. It saps energy and then fuels us
Up with confusion and anxiety and then we
Go back to normal wondering what is next.

I go to sleep today with my mind trying
To live a live where the two have their
Hands intertwine in love even if it is
In my dreams. I always wonder when I fall
Asleep what would have happened if they
Were co-wives and fought over legitimate
Inequalities that are done by a husband
Between wives. My grandmother saved us
By getting the family to live knowing that
Hail Marys said with rosaries go before

Anything else a young person can do with
A young man. For this we thank her and wish
She had worked more sense into the minds of
The clan before she left for the other world.

F

Mother ceremonial piece of property

Sarah Mkhonza

Here Is A Gertrude Sneeze Number Two

Finally she has stepped on the
Tail of a puff adder and it spat
Into the air and all my uncles are
Sniffing and rubbing their eyes
As she wiggles her waist and goes
Back to her grass hut like the snake
In the garden of Eden.

My uncles are sitting there looking
At each other daggers for they can
See the fools they are I hope. For
They fought like tigers in the wild
And even messed up the stones on Isaac's
Grave for he had to be burried on the
Family property and guess at whose orders
None other than the one and only Aunt Gee
Worse! .

She really got them this time for she insisted
That two portions of the farm be hers and they
Divide the smaller bit between them.

As keeper of the law and Madam of disorder
She called the whole family and told us we
Will pay for Isaac will rise from the desecrated
Grave and cause us to walk on our heads for this
Is what has happened to our brains. She said we
All like imbeciles have lost our heads and fall
Short of the glory of God. And that a curse will
Run through the family if she does not do the libation.

I wondered how my aunt would begin to do a libation
And got the answer as she told us that her spirit is
The wisest for she was born first and taking a bottle
Of vodka from her handbag she went to the center and
Asked that the ancestors should greet with joy
My grandfather and let those who fight until they
Shift stones on the graves of the dead see much
Come to them for their kind is a disgrace to the

House of William, my great grandfather.

When she said that she has was pouring drops of vodka
Intermittently on the floor while making sure if the sinning
Eleven were listening. She took the final swig and
Passed on the bottle to my father, who followed suite
Until they had all shared the remains of what she left.

Now that we have poured the ligation you have
To propitiate the ancestors and slaughter the g
Goat of the departed whose grave you messed up.
Like prisoners my uncles went to the goat pen
And did the rituals whose details are gory.

The household of Isaac felt the relief
When she walked away for the keeper of
The law had finally walked away with her
Grey wig like that of the judge of the
Highest court. I am glad she does not have
A gavel for I always feel she would pound
It on people's heads.

I fear the power my aunt has over her
Brothers for she gets it through pitting
Them against one another.

When they change she will be a sad
Lonely woman since she has no children
Of her own. The ones she is bullying she
Neither gave birth to nor suckled on her
Breasts for she would feel the misery she
causes with her hen- pecking.

Sarah Mkhonza

Here Is A Gertrude Sneezes Number Nine

I am waiting for the day
You will die sister-in-law
For you I will dance and sing
For you hated me and did not
Hide it. I live and walk
Counting the days when my father's
Money will be left to my brother
Without you poking your nose
Into a put you did not put
On the hearth.

My mother sits and looks the
Other way for the distant
Look in her eyes says it all.
Only when my God says I must
die and not according to your
Will will it happen.

My aunt walks away empty
Handed for my mother had
Nothing for her besides the
Usual cup of tea and she did
Say openly in her usual way
'So today it is only hot
Water to scald the insides.'

The battle of money goes on
And now my aunt has said it
Out that she alone has a grass
Hut in this house of Isaac.

She is demanding that the clan
Build for her a house for Isaac
Left money enough for all his
Children to not live in houses
That the cyclone will live lying
One one side.

'Over my dead body, will a man

Build you a house. You chased away
A good man and now you make demands
To our husbands.' My mother now talks
And the scorn in her voice has me
Wondering if all the strife has not
Just dumped itself on her.

'You do not belong here and you
Have no say in the affairs of the
House of my father. You came here
To follow the rules not to lead
And now you shout at me like a
Wild animal without even covering
Your hair. Which people told you
That you talk back to your female
Father-in-law.

You are nothing here. Even this
Table has a right to be here
Not you. If you do not shut
Your mouth I will fix it with
Glue from that acacia tree. I hope
You see it in the sap of these
Marula trees too.'

The quarrel is broken by my brother
Who tells my mother to get out of
The house and follow my aunt. He
Gives my mother a long bamboo stick
That lays on the ground and says
She must follow her. My aunt walks
Away fast as if she has not been
Yelling and heads for her hut.

Soon we see smoke coming out of
The sides of the hut and know
She is going to be warm and cozy
In her bed and peace will settle
On the land.

Sarah Mkhonza

Here Is A Getrude Sneeze Number One

My Aunt Getrude as we have decided to call her
Greeted my brother's friend and asked him if he
Was with his 'mother.' The air around us became
So embarrassed that one could feel it come out
And envelope us in shame as we hid our eyes.

The guy answered shyly and told her that the
Woman she was with was his wife. For the first
Time my aunt beat her chest and shouted at herself
'Getrude Miles! ' her hands landing hard above
Her breasts.

It was the first time for us to see her repentant
On a mistake she makes if we may call her faux pas
Mistakes for that is failure to use words. Hers we
Will call sneezes for they are as frequent as when
Someone has a cold.

My aunt wiggled her thin waist and walked away
Her head high with pride as she told all of us
That she does not have to be shunned for this
Deed for it is not as if she has not killed
All the children of Isaac, my grandfather.

It has become hard to understand how one as loud
And outspoken about life as my aunt is could have
Actually been born in the same family as my uncles
For all eleven of them let her get away with it.

She pokes her nose into everybody's business
As if it hers is the red nose of a clown and
Needs to be seen everywhere by everyone for
She sees the world as her stage on which to
Perform her little acts of speak-before-you
Are-spoken-to.

I have come to wonder when my uncles will take her
To task for she disappears into her hut and comes
Out when she has something to say while they simmer

in her stew waiting for I do not know what. It is then
That she appears like a dark cloud and walks
On the plains of our homestead in the direction
Of her next prey.

My mother knows when it is her turn and she decides
To wear a thick skin for 'the big performer has come
To run my house, ' she says as she winks at us and
Offers her tea. My Aunt's usual preamble of 'As you
May already know, ' she says as she sips the tea
Looking above the brim of the cup at my mother.
'Sam has done it again.'

My mother will always look first at me then at her
And say in her usual, 'What has he done this time? '
My aunt will continue and tell her how this last
Born of Isaac is doing this thing that shames the
Clan and clap her hands in surprise for she knows
'He does not know what that will do to his people.'

My Aunt believes everybody should live life according
To the rules she makes and says were made by William,
My grandmother and swears that all the males who are not
Circumcised should do so for it is as it should be in
The big book or they will get the diseases of the land.

Today she ended by telling my mother to remember that
It is time to deal with my grandfather's will for it
has been three months since he was laid to rest. She
Made it clear she knows who is the one to tell all
The clan what goes to whom and then disappeared and
Went to Uncle Piet's house.

My mother told us that this is going to be quite an
Act and said our Aunt has to know once and for all
That she does not wear the pants in our house. I
Laughed for I have heard her say this time and again
Only to find the pants hanging lose around my Aunt
Getrude's thin frame once again.

Sarah Mkhonza

Here Is A Getrude Sneeze Number Three

My Aunt has done it again for if you say
Our clan is under petticoat government
You have not started speaking about the
Clan for she runs it like a choir as if
She is the conductor.

If you would think of the disciples you would
Not be wrong in guessing she is the twelfth
For her eleven brothers have to listen to
The final part of how the money my grandfather
Left will be distributed.

She has to get the lion's share of course
And the eleven disciples of Judas who has now
Become the Lord himself have to listen to how
The home will be run. The money has to be
Controlled by my father for he is educated and
Will 'not be confused by numbers the way Uncle
Mark the fisherman will.'

Poor Mark, I saw him wink and turn grey with anger
For his dark complexion gave him away as his his aversion
With being debased at the money tit-tat gave him away.
He wiggled his way out of being put on the spot
By begging to go to the small room in order to avoid
Another shouting match.

When he returned Aunt Getrude was looking at his chair
And nodding that the truth will set him and her as free
As birds for they will just have to do with a tenth of
What my grandfather left and leave the rest to the one who
Went to school for they ran away at recess time and should
Just do with a little.

My mother, for the first time, asked what happened to the
Will and Aunt Getrude told them it went the way of her
Marriage certificate which she tore in front of the judge
On entry into the court room after telling everyone present
That her marriage to Joseph was over.

Everybody laughed for they remembered very well the incident
On how her divorce ended for she said she could swear that
If it was about having children Joseph had to tell the
Clan that they had brought him to our house because
One, as she said her little finger crossed with he
Forefinger, the marriage had not yielded anything for
Her bride price was little. Two, on a cross on her ring
Finger, she swears she should have sued Joseph for depriving
Her of her conjugal rights for there was no consumation of the
marriage.

Poor Joseph, like the biblical figure and Potifar's wife
Could not answer for himself for the loud speaker that
Is my aunt was on, throwing everything in the air, when
We all know that there was no way she could leave the
Clan and marry a living human being unless a saint came
Down from heaven and did the deed.

My brothers looked at him and told him that the marriage was
As over as the day when the clock strikes twelve for there
Is no way it can be brought back to where it once was for
'We all know this firebrand, ' said my eldest uncle looking at
My Aunt's in-laws.

They were brave to face us knowing that my aunt who
Shoots off the heap would tell them off in whatever
Way for when her father-in-law spoke she told him
To mind his words for this is not speech about the
Maize that he grows on his farm on the Bulunga
Mountains. This is talk with the children of Isaac.

The two were at each other with words and I saw Joseph
Look down and then wave at his father to cut it out for
It was time to go. My uncle summed it up and thanked the
Clan for opening their doors and told Joseph's people
That the relationship had not grown in the hearts of
The two but died for fires that are not kindled die. This
Was a truth they had to live with and before they said
Goodbye my aunt was on her way to her hut. We knew
That the real reason was she would never marry and leave
The eleven disciples of Judas alone, for that is what the

clan has become now that my grandmother and father are gone
Now that she has had her say in the money we live to see how the saga will
continue.

Sarah Mkhonza

Here Take The Key And Half A Key

The key dropped into a hand,
at a certain age looks like
doors will open. Clockwise
turned it raises a question
only a key can answer.

Hands hold the hardness and
rougher and and tougher. The
smoothness colder. What are you
to do with empty freedom.

The key breaks into two. You
have the story of a key and
half a key. Resemblance of a
sibling and half a sibling. Put
together they forge a story of
looking into peep holes.

A hut is lighter on the inside.
The light is on and nakedness is
dancing the latest jingle. These crazy
seventies. For siblings to laugh
before a door key turns, is to lose
the key and half a key.

You danced before they played the tune.
Your sibling was right to laugh. You
thought your key was about zippers
going down in the heat of the moment.
Years later as you hand the key to
your offspring, you see the hole
leading you further into the peephole.
You curse for the sake of a moment of
knowing. The two halves are about a key
and half a key. It is an anti clocks
turn. It's no longer your wish, but your
turn. You've come of age. Says the white
hair on your head.

Hey Leaf On Another Tree

Listen you! Leaf on another tree!
For the reason that here on our tree
Squirrels spit on us and wag their tails
Tell me what it is like over there.
I am sick of them eating acorns and
Messing up above me. I am planning
A revolt if this does not stop. The fellows
Out here have no fire in them.
They take this lying down. What do you say?

Hey you over there! Do you know what
Happened in a garden long ago when
A snake like you started a revolution?
It started a fire that is coming this way
Because the wind would not stop
Blowing. You talk that out and not start
A fire for one carelessly thrown cigarette
Falling out of the mouth of
One drunk burnt a large forest in the
Tundra.

You are chicken, what does that
have to do with these squirrels?
I am planning to help this poison ivy
To grow and twine on this branch near me.
Want some?

Only if you will let the birds bring it.
I have no qualms with squirrels for
They are as clever as their bushy
Tails. I can just enjoy having a
Laugh when that poison ivy gets them to
Scratch and dance in a frenzied madness.

Oh! So you like to dance? When the
Wind blows dance a jig for us. We
All would love to see that. Just make
Sure it is not raining for we will all
Be getting drunk and not see when

The lightening strikes. How sad that would be.

You always look on the negative side of
Things. Why not think of fairies coming
To woo us so that ours becomes a palace
And you onlookers become our servants?

Don't start! We will be princes and use
You as ferns that keep the heat away.
That is how this inequality thing started.
One human decided he was a king and
Others started bowing. We cannot
Have that here. We are Americans!

Sarah Mkhonza

Hey Shish Kebob In The Skewer

To speak for you is to
Turn you so that you do
Not burn on one side and
Get charred for then you
Would lose your worth.

They strung you up with these.
Shish kebob on the skewer
For they knew you would bring
Flavor to a world attacked by
Lack of flavor.

Now that I lean you on this side
The honors is on you to tell me
When you ate ready to go on to the
Table for a hungry world awaits you
Like this poem, ready to devour every
Bit of you.

The fire you ate in also wants these
Bits of you, you part with
Grudgingly as you sizzle in t

Sarah Mkhonza

Hiding From The King's Waterparty

These men muscular and tall,
arrive unannounced and fall
upon our home now.

All I see is monkey skin that
goes all over their heads. This
fear I feel is animalistic for it
sends me into the me aloe fiels.

With everything that breathes we go.
This hiding place confirms
as we look above me a lie plants.

The invasion has taken place this noon.
The power of monkeys ons surrounds our
home. No playing can go on. One rule only
must be followed. Give them food.

They go from hut to hut as we hide. Peeping through stalks an deceive. When
those from afar have gone we get out.
All containers are empty as are pots.
These are the deeds of those from afar.

The

Sarah Mkhonza

Hitching Rides In The Seventies

You stood by the roadside and thumbed
Your way to the ends of the world in
The years gone by with a duffle bag
on your shoulders.

You stopped any car and hopped into
The back of vans like loaded cargo.
Nobody cared for the age of serial
Killers and rapists was not the thing
To think about. For it was a time
Of hippies and everybody loved the
Peace sign and wore it on their shirt.

The heels were also high making walking
Difficult for platforms were worn by
Men who had leather necklaces that hung
Around their necks with one cowrie bead
That told the world who they wear.

Bell bottoms and long hair told the driver
That one who leaves on less is standing
Near the road and if they want to share
A blessing they could let you be their
Angel for the day.

When you got off you offered them gas money
Which they normally refused as they buzzed
Down the road in their cars for Toyotas
Were just coming in.

Who says not that my thumb is useless
We cannot do the same for we saved the
World from pollution and shared what we
Had in the days when Uber had not come
To get every penny we have.

Some said hitch-hikers were adventurous
And some said they wanted others to carry
Them around as they lived near rivers and

Did no work avoiding to pay taxes. I thought
We got to meet the world for when we stepped
Out we were open to surprises.

Today rides do not fall from the sky
When you ask for one you risk your life
for Untold Mysteries has told us how
One picked up from near the road Ended
Up in a ditch near a river miles away
From home. This world has taken what it
Did not give in the freedom to ride
The thumb.

Sarah Mkhonza

Holding Up My Own Oscar

Holding my own Oscar award
On the platforms of the world
Is no longer a dream
It is Lupita possible
I repeat Nyong'o doable.

You made me feel just right
Short hair no chemicals fight
For your smile acted it into
The me who was afraid of life.

Like other young people
You were told not you
Why you to be this not just that
You fought words and moulds
For nobody would mold success
And put it in front of me.

Can my hands hold your Oscar
I get close in my mind
My Oscar is in my poetry
You made me a poet laureate
I hold an Oscar right now
For you made me learn to see worlds
That betrayed and owned up not
You made me learn that acting it
Is close to touching it.

Which young person did not see it
The young woman in themselves
Reaching for the roof tops like you
Shaking tree tops in long gowns
Acting roles from the pain of the past
And saying never by succeeding
In the days when Barak was President.

We saw the past in roughness
Troubles that bled of hate
Beatings that began in antiquity

And ended on the back of a woman
Still we saw the upside
We who overcame the odds
Now stand in the light and read
Watching it played by you for us to take
And eat the chitlins of the past
Of blood seeping out off a back
And swallow the textures thereof.

I will lift up my own Oscar high
It may not be now that we share
It may be an Oscar in the night
When nobody sees me working
On a future to come like yours
For it is in the making
Whenever my acts lift things up not down.

Sarah Mkhonza

Horse Ridden Only By The Wind

This horse with a bridle,
surely has a nice saddle.

This horse flies in the air
and then comes to the lair.

Who said things would be fair,
When two make a strange pair.

They get hands on each other's throats
and one is about to utter a loud croak.

The horse ridden by the air
now jumps to it's rhythms.

It neigh with a tune strange,
It awakens every neighbor.

The banging of doors weigh the riders,
Whose fists make holes on doors.

The game is up for life has declared,
a horse can never be a camel.

Who said things would be fair,

Cushioned between soul and air,

Easy the saddle that sits on it

You see it and jump to its rhythms

If you sit on the saddle,

This horse neigh loud

It's neigh in discord

This horse neighs loud

Visitors wonder why it stubbornly

Unkn

Yo

and then stands in r he

And

and comes back and lays lair

Sarah Mkhonza

How To Get Out Of A Snare

All around you is air,
What shackles you is
words. The movements
small and big are yours.
Take liberty with them.
The story is also yours.

If you came to triumph
the actions are small..
They create a future far,
yet they also begin far away.

Projected now, they cannot be seen.
Read them in another story, then
you will be on the road to getting
out of a snare.

Yours is the calling of a mahatma.
The path charts itself with controversy
Drops pebbles everywhere. Pick none if
they do not spell your name.

A snare catches those who walk into it.
Those who jump over it miss the challenge.
Getting in is like milking a cow after
midnight. You never win without trying.

Trying does not mean frying.
The actions that follow words
when looked at can tell which
One is which.

When you are too ensnared,
Ask the other trappers what
happened to the deer. Follow
their trail. You'll find
your kind. They have broken
antlers.

How You Catch A Rat

I told cats a story
And asked them what
I had just said to them
They told me to repeat
What I had said to them
For I had not told them
To stop searching for rats
And open their ears to my
Tattles for they knew best
To rather die trying to
Fend for themselves than
Die of something they
Were long told to STOP
Doing for curiosity
Is something they know
To be the most dangerous
For it killed the fattest
Of their species.

When I told them this never happened
They asked me how I could know
As I have never been a cat
And seen how they spent hours
In the wild their eyes on traps
Hoping a silly rat would dare
Stick its head in it and get
To learn to mind his own
Business for curiosity
Did not just kill a cat
But did worse to the rat
For it did not see the net
As it closed down on it.

How do you get the news
Now that you will not
Wet your paws in the rain?
We wait for the rat to come
In soaked and then know
That you survive by letting

Those lacking in wisdom
Go where you dare not go
For we are too clever to go
Into dangerous holes when
Someone can do it for us.

That I think is very mean
And makes me sad for I
Thought very highly of you.
For we came here to serve.

Who said life was a thing
You lived in kindness?
The curious of the earth
Shall not rule with an
Iron hand while we live
For WD will make sure
WD keep our eyes on the prize.
For that is how you catch a rat.
Tell us if that is not wisdom.

Sarah Mkhonza

Humming Anthems Not Our Own

With a world changing rapidly,
I hum yesterdays anthem in,
Tomorrow's notes
For I wonder when we will be one,
After trekking as today's homeless.

The song is new as is the language,
Which I learn on this third border,
Where the future is as out of tune as
The sounds on a rusty piano.

The conductor holds a gun in hand
That threatens to shut me up now,
When will the composer hear tunes,
Sung with death on our shoulders?
For the song is getting sadder,
When we thought new anthems,
Would welcome us with the sound
Of the trumpets of the dreams
That woke us up on the night we left,
The land of old anthems.

We dreamt of flags and marched on,
With them in hand only to learn
That music of immigrants is deadly
For it deafens the ears of citizens.

Sarah Mkhonza

Hunger On The Face With Sunken Eyes

Hunger when written on faces
Shows sunken sockets and snarls
It makes the stomach of one
Sing songs of emptiness that
Growl in there like an animal.
The limbs look long and taugt
For it has eaten the muscle
That should hold the person up.

Hunger eats those who do not have
And takes away the hope of the now
And throws it in the space far from
The limbs and eyes of the mind. The
Body can no longer walk to the place
Where it used to. It only is a body
Because it fills a space.

Questions asked in hunger are loud
But hollow and answers do not ring
Back. People take what is available
And put it in the mouth, be it mud
Grass shoots or bugs.

Questions asked become when we will
Eat the things that can crawl into
Our blood and make us walk again?
What can we do, to get the what we
Need for now, to go and grow the
What we do not have?

Hunger kills slowly for this is how
Hunger walks. It does not make noisy
Strides like me and you, but stealthy
Ones unseen yet felt deep down.

If we could kill hunger on the face
Of the earth, and wipe it out like

The lions we are, we would have defeated
An enemy that some of us least know
About yet it is the substance that eats
The brain and energy of the earth.

Those who know least of this enemy
Have no idea what a little bit they
Have can do in telling them that it
Is a brother who starves, an aunt,
A sister and the love of your life
For you could have been that person
Had luck dropped you on the wrong
Lap that is walking across deserts,
Oceans and frozen abodes with an
Empty stomach trying to read places
Of safety that into which one cannot
Be allowed.

We share a world that some of us live
In on an everlasting fast that yields
Nothing for people are not thinking
Anything anymore. Flies love such faces
And go there to check if the mouth ever
Closed to hide what they also want. When
We share a world, we share suffering and
Struggles that are sometimes far from what
The eye can see.

Sarah Mkhonza

I Am About To Go Into Reverse Gear On This Wake

I always dreaded using the reverse gear
For technophobes are born not created.
I sit now comfortable watching the years
Go and want to go into reverse gear in
The way I count both time and experience.
When I was young I wanted to fast forward
And drive the car at four, for those were
The only gears available in it. Now I drive
At gear number five and cruise, but what!
I have seen that I am rushing to where I
Should not. I should reverse and go back
For when I get to nineteen, I will look
Around and see how many people drove faster
Than me for if they are still alive, they
Surely did. The ones who drove the slowest
Had to remove their cars from the fast lane
For this thing called life is scandalous.

You buy your vehicle brand new as a TESLA
And end up with a heap of scrap that has
No name. I want out of this game botox
Or no botox. It is a game that dogs are
So clever about that they never try to
Drive on the fast lane. They just run
As fast as an event allows and then slow
Down. They even know how to breathe in
And out visibly so why should I not do
Better than the canines. Give me a break
Or I will slam down the breaks and we
Will all nod that what I am saying is
The truth for you chose a driver straight
Out of driving school.

Sarah Mkhonza

I Know Nothing About No Crossroads

After climbing up this far,
I can tell you one truth,
It has never been as I expected.
They told me I would get way up
And get to the crossroad of love
Then turn into the highway to heaven.

I have walked myself tired,
Cried myself to sleep daily.
When I asked him how far it was
Till we get to the crossing,
I got one lame answer
'I know nothing about no crossroads.'

He said that, turned and fell into a deep sleep.
What was I to do on this lonely lane.
I'm still crying for the emptiness,
Left me feeling I was so close.
If only he had tried harder.
I would also sleep on a wad of notes,
And not feel cheated out of a jackpot, when I could smell the wealth, for I could
almost touch it.
What was my loss left an aftertaste
For they say you hit a jackpot once.

If selfishness could be banned,
I would be first to pass the law
That bans it from relationships
And sink it in the furthest ocean.

In the afterlife I will return
With a vengeance fully
Equipped to join
The winning party.
I will call the shots and throw the shot put, for I am tired of being a push over.

Sarah Mkhonza

I Look For Stairs And See None

No stairs visible on this level, why?
Should I go back to lower levels
Or look around the corner where I saw
A child that would not talk to me for I was a stranger?
Should I jump and yell my name on to new levels
Or get bamboo poles and jump on them on the way up?

I need to get to the top to the last level,
For it is at the very top of the gum tree,
For on its crown is a promise made long ago,
That some hidden treasure awaits me if I do climb,
So royal, so intense it causes the tree to shake,
And fall letting all the water it traps,
Fill the ground making everything green.

This will make the world shake under my feet.
With what is called dancing life in to existence,
With my pen inscribing my dreams way up there,
On the face of the sky, for I will have climbed,
Stayed, and reached the up of this life.

Yesterday I climbed false escalators with my hands,
Holding the support at the side with hallelujahs,
I rolled back and grace put my grip back on the support,
Or I would have fallen backwards on the moving metal,
And broken my spine, the escalator that leads all of me,
And holds together my being, reasoning and doing.

These levels look very high right now that I am here,
They come on stronger than the subtlest of temptations,
Rendering me helpless for my arms are weary of holding on,
Yet since we are assured of steps in this life,
I must hold on and know the stairs were built to be there,
Or else this intrigue would not have had so many levels.

Those who aim low dream less and sleep more,
The first level wrings all the juice out of them,
And they dry up into husks that ants and termites eat,
For they reside in levels low never to go to the next.

These insects that devour the spirit of the weary,
Yet they emulate the hard work of the diligent.

The light through the window deceived me,
It shone in levels up and led me on,
And made me think the climb would be easy,
As each step would lead me down corners,
Where I would find a long line of climbers like me,
Only to find the darkness looking at just my face,
For I am one hell of a climber, see on me these
Wings of angels that flap all the time,
For if they did not you would not be on the same page
Glaring at this picture together with me.

Sarah Mkhonza

I Thrive On Casting Spells That Work

Don't ever touch me
For if I cast a spell
On you only the gods will
Save you. It is while herding
Cattle that I learned my bag
Of tricks and swear they work.

Walking in the forest
When my father's herd
Has disappeared while
I napped under a tree
Means waking up and
Praying to the God
Of the times that they
Are not in someone's field
For they love the mischief
Of harvesting things green
And causing quarells that run
Through lifetimes in my village.

My heart, racing I tie
Clumps of grass as I go
For I could go in circles
Forever and not see ground
Already covered. My ears are
As sharp a razor as is my wit
For to return home without the
Herd means a little comma in
The freeze of embarrassment
For now the elders have to
March into the forest and
Split in all directions
And like demons they must
Call out skills old while
I await the judgement at the
Court of sleepy heads that nap
At the cost of the lifeblood of
Men of my clan. I swear they were
Born inside the bellies of their

Stock.

Two tricks I must perform
To Cast a spell on my father.
One to stop him from shouting
And another to make it hard for
Him to open his mouth and spit
At me venom of an udder. Pick
A pebble and put it under my
Tongue and I can hear him
Stuttering on the first word
And his 'what did I do to
Myself this child! ' I know
Then that he is calling on
The world to answer him for
He dare not lay his hands upon
Me. Thanks to the pebble under
Tongue.

To get his arms not to lift
Up high as they beat me twig
Them I must. As I run looking
For these beasts I put two twigs
Under my armpits and make sure they
Stay there even when I bend
To tie a clump of grass for
That is the only sign that
Tells me my sense of direction
Is right.

Tracks on the ground useless
Will tell you little in tall
Grass, but one thing brings
Hope fresh green
And herbaceous it means hope
That says you are not only on
The right path but near finding
Your father's herd.

The bull then bellows and you
Listen whence that sound came
From for you have prayed the

Name of your leader of the
Herd till he heard you. You
Go in that direction and find
Them sitting chewing the
Cud like angels feasting
On blessedmanna on the
Tables of heaven. The only
Difference is in the color
Of thevmanna. Scold the bull
You do not for he kept them
All together and saved you
From a beating.

You drive themvhome
All worry gonecfor
You all pass the drinking
Hole water them and set off towards
The sunset. Rest comes when
They sit and chew the cud in
The krall.

Sarah Mkhonza

I Told My Wife About You

I told my wife about you
Said a man who had a wife
For every letter of the
Alphabet and ran all of
Them like cars in a garage
Fueling them and emptying them
Of their money the way cars
Run out of fuel on the highway
Their tanks full of lies they
Left satisfied as they set
Off crying for more.

This cheap cheat that
Steals a glance at women
And they cling to him
As if he has love glue on him
For they never leave
Tells me he has told a wife
About me with a devil's wink
And I wonder which one
Of the many. For I know
They are as many as the
Demons that possessed
Legion and went into the
Pigs and sent them into
A sea of confusion and drowned
As do these women who are
So drunk with love they
Leave in a similar sea of
Confusion and you wonder
When and where they drown
drunk as they are with lies
They call love.

Now that the women form a
String of beads around his
Muscular neck I tell him
'I'm out.' As I say that

The next bead joins in
Before the hook closes
And says, 'I'm in.'
When will these beads
Loosen and fall off this
Thick giant's neck and
Get a hold of themselves
and run away from this man
For they have lost their
Minds, me included?

Tell me before I go out
And tell the Shark Tank
About this business of
Creating a small icon
That can tell women the
Word love has two consonants
And two vowels and none
of these begins which anything
That is like the word cheat
or cheap. For only the
Sharks can tell them that
They are playing the losing
Game before they lose in this
Business called Love them all.

Now tell me he told his wife
About me and I tell you
He told nobody and just walked
The same walk and talked the
Same talk and thought that
Dealing with me would be
Like going on a downward
Slope and I am telling you
This because the slope is
So steep that he needs all
The fingers to hold, and not
Just the one whom he has
Had every woman put a finger
on, calling it his ring finger.
Who told him my motto is get
them from whatever street it is

And get bamboozled by their
Tall bamboo tricks and get high
As the clouds with definitions
Of yourself as being in love when
You are being cheated and cheapened.
My mom said don't blame the man
But blame yourself and thought I
Knew what she was saying until I
Met the likes of this. I declared to
The world I was clever and in love
And then found myself in this and
Now the best thing is to tell the
World to judge how clever I can be.

Sarah Mkhonza

I Wish To Return To The Land Of My Dreams

In this land is the real wealth I see,
It has objects of fantasy like me,
I look out into the sand and dig,
For objects old and objects new,
Buried in the sand that is shallow,
In which I stand with my hands in my pockets.

My pile I make of objects lovely,
Green like jade and yellow like the sunset,
This map on the wall I want right there,
In this house my dream has left me in,
Winking and dreaming, breathing and sighing.

Who said love began in the crux of my arm,
And walked into me through sinful breaths?
For I hold it now in this myth that is mine,
As alone I stand in my glorious solitude.

Love walks only when the feet are truly grounded,
In the soul that has no fear of tomorrow,
That challenges the times with its grabbing,
Taking one wink and throwing it right in there,
Into this eye that my desire has called home.

Who said wickedness only drew laughter from saints,
For they know how hard they tried to avoid it?
This dream takes me to the gilded chambers,
Where popes drink out of goblets of gold,
With me looking and swallowing like them,
Yet I am a sinner that has no shame about life.
For I came to live it no matter what,
And not just dream of the objects I pick.
Into a pile that the approaching man takes.

Daughter of poverty he calls me once again,
Tells me I cannot have the likes of these.
For in my pocket there is one quarter,
That can only go into a washing machine,
And bring out dirt after the wash,

Of what I wore when I worked the world,
And not the ball gowns needed here.

So I wake and wish I could go back,
To this land where I was for now I pray,
Please gods do not take away from me,
This life so good it shows my tomorrows
So wild, so rustic I fly with new wings,
Of butterflies from this land from afar,
For I was ready to meet life's end,
For it ended on a very good note.

Sarah Mkhonza

If I Could Hop And Laugh Like Angels

If I could laugh the laughter of angels,
My laugh ringing far beyond my beak,
To a place nobody's naked eye has seen,
Tearing into the air of new neutrinos,
Making it shiver with the hope of destiny
Blowing my breath into an emptiness,
And hearing it echo back with a long sound,
Like the gulls of the south that sing,
In Oohs and Aahs flapping their wings,
With the youth wondering about places,
That hear this laugh and call all to come,
To hear my laugh and not just stand,
And enter the shuffle that stifles the walk,
Of hearing rules that call with sounds,
Of school bells that ring every hour
And tell me my journey has a destiny,
In horizons far that yell my name.
And tell me there is coming a day,
When the hole I am in, me, this Joseph,
My coat of many colors on my arm,
This kaleidoscope in my hands, my soul,
Still denying these messages I laugh about
For they have heard of the coming day,
When I will laugh like an angel
And shun forever these nervous giggles.

The story teller tells me she wonders always,
If I will have the pith and core,
That sings yes when the hymn of heaven opens,
With a word I heard in the past,
Walking me into futures beyond this era,
This time of endless musings,
Where anything could happen to anybody,
Who happens to stand and hear the song,
That made me cry so sorrowfully when I heard,
That people had died in numbers somewhere,
And laughed because angels still laugh,
When life assures them of tomorrow,
For they will be there this they know,

For they learned on the day they became,
In a world no different from my own,
To assure me I will laugh loudest,
When the hour comes to laugh longest,
For I will be last dancer in the ring,
Having been called to wipe my tears away,
For the world always changes to the bright,
Hope that we nurse in our soft greetings,
That we whisper into the wind everyday,
Saying hallo to yet another day,
With the hope that's in the jump,
As I hop and laugh aloud,
Like children hopping in their game,
Where each one takes their own turn,
To leap and throw the person in then
Because of the change that we hold in us,
Of the angel we will have become,
When we utter the laugh of the angels like them
For their laughter is endless even when they lose,
In this game they play always in streets,
With their lines drawn with the sky looking,
In lines that tell of their innocence,
For their destinies are just like ours.

Sarah Mkhonza

If I Could Slap Thunder

If I could slap thunder,
I would rise up high and yell,
And ask what sound this is,
That booms in my ears,
Like the guns that shoot our youth,
And leave them on roadsides lifeless,

If I could slap thunder,
I would bring the dark clouds,
Down here where the darkness,
Threatens us with death,
That we inflict on each other,
And stop the madness there and there.

If I could slap thunder,
I would hold the front of the guns,
And push back the bullets,
With hands that are stronger,
That can hold back fire,
And bring the thunderous metal,
To its knees in my bare hands.

If I could slap thunder,
I would render all guns mute,
And lay them at the bottom of the ocean,
For they are no treasures lost,
These loose cannons that fire,
When their namesakes blink,
And tell another one its over,
And send them to the boom,
That we hear continuously,
As it sends loved ones to their end.

If I could slap thunder,
And clap it with my cold clap,
Electrify it to oblivion,
And stop it from falling,
In flashes of lightening,
That strikes down in anger,

And causes all to hide,
Like my aunt in the passage,
Watching the flashes from outside,
For we were dreaming of a future,
Where we have conquered by hiding,
Instead of boldly going out,
To yell our defiance,
And return with the thunder of applause,
That has been taken from us each time,
We hear that guns have thundered on souls,
That were not heeding the moment,
That the time of reckoning has come,
Where once more we face our sorrow,
And tell it we are helpless,
For we cannot clap thunder,
With a slap from the eternity
That has swallowed those we love.

Sarah Mkhonza

If I May Be Of Any Use To You

I come a poet empty handed
As a jug without a handle
Now that I have washed our
Dirty linnen in public. I
Come no Cinderella with a
Golden shoe, but a poet who
Can make rhyme out of the
Bark of tree until the dogs
Of the city begin to bark in
The rhythm of the same song.

If I may be of any use to a
Nation in tatters after the
Likes of the offspring of
Not Abrah and Jacob but Isaac
have done dancing to one tune
Will you join me in a dance
Choreographed by yours sincerely.

For in Africa we dance at parties
Dance at weddings and dance as we
Bury people in the ground. Our dance
Will be made of steps and turns
That can heal a nation and break
The bars of those incarcerated and
Have the join us on one table with
Their offspring on Thanksgiving.

Turkeys will not lie belly up and
Legless thighs in the air in ovens
Glowing but dance in shoes of Ballerinas for one tune composed
By the best musicians the birds
Themselves.

Their beaks will sing wearing Lipstick from heaven rolled of
From the lips of Mary the mother
Of our Lord. I tell you my Credentials before you ask for
If you may find me of any use
Because even though I have crowned

Myself Queen of the tabloids I have
Not seen the advert for a poet.

Don't fear my sharp words for they
Bite only when it is necessary and
Do so in the open, not like today's
Mosquitoes that sting us with the
Usual while they hide the unusual
Like the backstabbers I have seen
In my life with people of the south.

If I may be of any use I write
Free verse that makes freedom so
Free it gets written on any hand
That is held out to receive and
Leaves every heart yearning for
A world to call its home. If you may find me useful hire me before you
Accuse me of blowing my own horn
Like the insane unicorn for she
Is known for having charmed the
World blowing the horn on his head
By bending it and blowing it till
The world was forced to wake up
For he had given himself the job
Of the rooster.

Now that I know that the letter
Is in the mail I will rest my
Case and wait. If it does not
Get into my mailbox in time
Know one thing, you are the
Loser for the final dance will
Begin without you. Guess who
Will join the applause, you
For I told you this poet is
One hell of a choreographer.

Sarah Mkhonza

If This Was Your Heyday

If this was your heyday
Would you wear platforms
and go to a disco and dance
all night.

Would you make out with a guy
in the front seat of the car,
till the horn touched by mistake
wakes everybody to alert them of
nifty doings.

Would you go to the waterfall
and dance to the latest tunes in your webbed shoes?

Would you laugh at profesort and
hide from them and call it learning
by osmosis.

Would you go up the mountains
in the dark to watch the traffic
trickle down there like a gold thread.

Would you cross the Mbabane River
in the dark to the cooing of Donner
Summer.

Would you walk on powder from fire
extinguishers and think the dorm
was burning when a crazy one turned
them on for the hell of it.

Would you go on strike and refuse
to go to class for you know the
cycle. They strike, they go home,
They are recalled and classes go on.

If you had known what life really asked of you,
would you dance to a hit song about Vietnam

all night.

would you turn back the clock.

Sarah Mkhonza

Impressions Made In A Box

Being boxed for this that was once love,
I raise my hand and swear it was not what
the world thought it was.

It is not me who married him, but you,
a lawyer says, trying to give me courage.
Speak up and answer for he says you changed
after you got a higher qualification than him.

This argument made on a paper and read to me
says I made a bad choice that does not need
dissecting. The judge looks at me, he says
'counsel, ' must explain.

Here is a man, who was doing his abcs as
if he was not married, and a woman who was
doing her abcs as if she had not read that
marriage in community of property is that.

I stand amazed, like in a song, for I never
knew that standing in a box swearing was a
part of the deal. Breezing into this like
a wind, I had wondered if the sun did set
at all. The dreams I had lengthened the days
which seemed so short in the hands of love.

Now I wished seconds were milliseconds, so
I could get out of this box and end it all,
for it had not worked out. The box I stood
in then was not made of wood, but of flakes
of dreams flying all over the place.

Could it be that there were people who
knew the future? Those signs that signaled
loud and had nobody listening to their bangs.
Now I see better with these impressions made
with my hand swearing that I am who I am and
do solemnly swear that truth resides in me.

Now I am this self that can say it without
'ifs, ' but just stare and let my eyes paint
what a cold, place this box is and that the
authority it gives me to make a decision is
well received, for this is a story that ends
itself.

Sarah Mkhonza

In A Certain Room Some Men Have Hair

In a certain room
Some men have hair
Some men have no hair
Began the math problem
That required us to draw
A vann diagram.

The problem arose when
The men who had hair
Went to the barber to
Shave half their hair
For they argued all rich
Men are bald. The barber
Agreed for he wanted customers.

The vann diagram lost shape
As the men god balder and
Balder. Soon the whole world
Was running the risk of having
Only bald men. Not only the barber
But the bankers also joined in
The bald world's lament.

Only sailors wondered why
The world was behaving ad
If it was going to witness
Its end. Bankers argued there
Would be no money for bald men
Like to withdraw money to feed
Their lifestyle. The barber
Argued that his is a dead business
For they don't need even as
Much as a shave

In another room also called
A certain room for certainly
Certain women had no hair. They
Joined the men with no hair
And argued that paired with them

They could tango.

The priest agreed if only they
Could have one mass and one big
Wedding for once heaven would join
Two bald heads in a ceremony of
The bald of the earth.

All the men and women who attended
The wedding ceremony of the bold
Who were bald sat on the pews and
Watched the mass wedding of the
Hairless wondering how these people
Could flout their hairlessness
And get away with it.

Where were the tabloids for they
Always come to the rescue of
Humble humanity when the powers
That begin the march with the
Left foot.

The tabloids carried one picture
Which made one couple famous
And by the end of the day every
Paper was sold out. The city lived
As the land of hairless men and women
Who begot hairless children which
Solved the math problem as society
Wallowed in a world where people
Scratched their hairless heads.

Sarah Mkhonza

In Heaven With One Foot And On Earth With Another

I walk on one leg on this earth
For the other is somewhere else.
Only one shoe gets worn out and
Ends up with holes in it. I walk
On for I have one pair of feet.
Ask me not to take this shoe to
The village cobbler for he always
Claims he cannot just fix one shoe
He needs both for he must balance
The heels.

I tell him go stop kidding me
For I know that he just wants
Money. He says I must not talk
As if I am the son of the one
Legged god. For in his world
Like him all his people have
One leg. His saints have one
One leg and they hop around
On it when they serve mass.

The spills that happen mean nothing
For to serve perpetual sinners is
Worse than standing before God
Pleading for serial sinners who
Will be back the following week asking for more of the same. It is like you never
walked away.

That your one foot should be on earth
While another is in heaven is to stop
The door of heaven from closing for
If angels had to open it each time The priest knocked nobody would get There.
For God would get tired of the Repentant he forgives always and Simply close the
door once and for All. What a miserable world it would Be for our sins would hang
on us like Spanish moss does on a tree. They
Would sway in the wind and plague us with a hopelessness that would please the
devil.

So thank me and the priest for having one

Foot here and the other there. Thank us
For we will never stand at attention and
Do it for us for one good turn deserves
Another.

Sarah Mkhonza

In Praise Of Somnjalose

Son of mine! Son of Mine
The nation bleeds when spears
Are blood red and drip with dread
For we all see that this is the blood
Of the nation. Don't forget I am
Also speaking for the sons of others for
They are just like you to me.
These warriors of tomorrow who
Hold the shield that is spotted
Red and white look at me and
Wonder, what mother I am when
All of them fall and I say nothing.

When you kill and not think I also
Die for the nation dies. The women
Are me, my blood, and wear the same
Skirt that I wear. It is made of
Leather, but it tears into tatters
When you treat your people like
They do not belong and need to
Be taken to the world where they
Cannot fight anymore.

I am trying to hold your hand
And stop you before it lands
On the body of the nation you
Rule. It will burn to ashes that
Will never be lit with the tinder
Of yesterday's wood that lies
Blackened into charcoal useless
Even to beer brewers who work
Harder than girls who get water
From our rivers.

The land is dry as people die,
For your hand is hard and comes
Down in blows that leave the nation
Sinking in blood. This nation swims
In death for you are throwing wisdom

Away into the furnace of death. You
Cut down the tree that will make the
Shade you can rest under tomorrow.

Son of mine, listen to me, and build
Each person on a stool of knowledge
From the past. Build and not destroy,
That which will bear the fruit that
Will make you live tomorrow.

In tomorrow's world where those who
Reign with the toughest fist look
At what they have done, they will feel
The fist hit them and they will fall
Down never to rise again.

You have seen power used to cut down
The very tree that is your hedge for
It hides what you have that you treasure.
In a nation where respect is not the guide
Where those who rule see only themselves
And only a shadow in those they rule,
There is no kingdom.

A king is a king because of his people.
The people are the pride they sing about,
They are proud of the songs of yesterday.
When the mountains see this blood, they
Know that they are in the land of one
Who one day will wipe out everything that
Is his, because he does not put value in
Souls of the sons and daughters of the
Nation.

When we stand as citizens that have done
A lot together, these shields will speak
That truth to us. When the warriors are
Dead, we will have to run from our own
Shadows for the Zulus are a force like
No other. We cannot even hide in the
Mountains for nobody will carry the
Food in there. Cold will melt our bodies

For there will be nobody to make the fire
And remind us of sunsets in a land where
People sang and raised shields in unison
Build for tomorrow, and learn to value
The words of your mother.

I take this seat here near you. From now
Oh nation! See me as a mother who can guide
For only with me around, can this son of mine
Do that which you want and keep the future
Looking at us instead of walking away from us.

Sarah Mkhonza

In The Days Of Boko Haram/ A Message For An Abductee

In the Days of Boko Haram
In the classroom,
What were girls?
Were they wives?
Were they shells?

When in school,
Were they free?
Were they in uniform?
Did they feel safe?

When men preyed on them,
Were they seeing and feeling?
Were they abductees?
Just because you and I saw them
The way we wanted to.
When speaking these truths
That need to be posted
In the minds of readers
Girl to girl I can say
Let us talk in loud whispers
That will never be heard
Even when we bang on doors
Trying to set ourselves free
From this new darkness of two words
That sound like a breaking log.

What Boko Haram takes away
You take back
Just by breathing
The fight goes on
Born in silence
You live to fight
And fight to live
Under the breath
Of a stifled self.

The power is yours
It will never be taken
From your stubborn fists
The love is not there
You twist and turn
When you face the wall
It sleeps when you sleep
It whispers louder than shouts
Of a soldier you do not like
Whose breath stifles you.

The one who abducts
Has no within in you
Your core is yours
Use it to fight
Block it with the thoughts
Boko Haram is an idea
Its twisted arm can be broken
In your mind and in your soul
For the thing called belief
Keeps us all fighting for you.

Tears fall at times
In the absence of parents
In the times of haters
Whose orders beat up
The very core of you

You survive one
You survive another
You look at the face
Of the one who inflicts pain
You know they are pain
For they can never give
What they do not have.

Hope sits in you
It walks on your feet.
Open your eyes and feel
See and walk in the dream
Life is a long dream
That all of us will be

Where we want to be
For we walk inside
Even when shackled by the form
That takes you to forests
Living your mother crying
For an Africa never to be safe.
Where schools are invaded
And people taken to death.

Think not of the past
And its days that ended freedom
Cast the gaze up into the realm
The light around you
Says yes, you will
Be the light that you
Were born to be.
Boko Haram no more!
It is a loud end
Are you able to see it?

The greatness in you
Sees all of it
Bring in thoughts of home
When you take a breath
Future of the nations.

People are looking for you
Gazing at the sunset
Seeing you coming home
On the empty horizons
Of forested paths

You run home in their minds
Eager to fall into their arms
Which are outstretched till eternity
For how can they not embrace the air
When they know one day it will carry you
To the familiar faces you left sad.

Sarah Mkhonza

In The Museum Lies A Truth

In every museum lied
A truth waiting to be
Discovered for it
A truth about you. Don't
Pass a chance to go
In and look at what awaits
You there for it came from
The past which you are walking
Away from. It wants you to
Discover and add it to your
Basket of truth. It speaks of
Times far in the past they
Are receding from it and it is
Getting smaller
As if to fade
Into living memory. This memory
Precious wants to jump
Out and be counted for it
Tells how your
Own people conquered the world.
As

Sarah Mkhonza

In Their Cozy Citadels

The queens and kings sit,
with crowns, diadems and tiaras,
telling a story as old as not
closing the door behind oneself
so that the next person cannot enter.

Yet we enter as eyes widen
at the splendour of seeing
things from within.

Starvation for knowing more of the queenly
life disappears with a death.

We cry like they knew us. It
is a history of man. Piling
one space with semblance of
many makes a mystery to be
talked about as if it is real.
They sit knowing power, though
borrowed is to be guarded. One
is lucky, only to be buried in
the hour at a papal state. A quiet
somber day comes to sober out
the love of story one, in a
kingly rulership.

Sarah Mkhonza

In This World Of Maladies Of The Mind

When we wake up and our mind is gone,
To a land that plays around in screens,
Telling us that something needs to change,
If not our mind, our bank accounts.

I hear musings of the notes I sweat for,
Telling my mind they want to stay with me,
Locked up in the little vault called a purse,
And wait for a rainy day that is coming soon.

I hit myself on the side to check if I'm awake,
And find that I am really soundly so awake,
That I can feel it when a Zika mosquito stings,
Its dangerous venom in a woman miles and miles away,

When I awake they are measuring the skulls of babies,
Saying the brain is gone because of a sting,
I rub my eyes and find that the head on the screen
Is the head I carry all over boasting I am well.

Mind boggling they say it is these days,
When you wake up from dream to dream,
And find that it is certainly a world,
Where dreams get shattered in the very,
Bodies of the women who carry us.

Who said humans were not invincible,
If a mere insect could invade internally,
Without them seeing that the brain is in danger,
Of being gone totally swallowed to nothing.

This world of maladies of the mind,
Is a world that calls us to a duel,
Where we are to take out the sword,
And stab the mosquito as it flies,
And land on the other side victorious.

We may not wake up to see the movies,
Of us in armor and scabbard wielding,

But we sure will get that nasty one,
Who flies into our midst and strikes,
With the stealthiness of the devil.

I once thought this would be solved,
By one scientist in a lab alone,
Now I see that nations have to gather,
And go out and solve it with a duel,
Sword to sword one stab after another,
While mosquitoes buzz around confused.

Sarah Mkhonza

Indebted To The Team' S Center Player

This woman has an extra finger
For her thumb splits into two
On each one of her hands.
She also has six toes on each
Foot for her fifth toe splits
Into two. If her fingers and
Toes decided on a soccer match
She can make the two teams that
We watch in this game caed life.

Since life is another thing this
Female giant that stands six foot
Is a center player in the netba
Of life. She catches the ball at
The sound of the whistle and the
Team goes into action.

My fascination is not about her
Throws and catches but about
Twelve fingers on the ball when
Everybody has ten when both
Hands lock up in a catch.

I feel for the other team for
Their center player is up against
Life at its zenith. If it is about
A kick she gets a six toe burst
That makes her feel that some
People have the gods on their side
Long before they make it into
A netball team.

My spirits are high for I look
At the score and know that the
Opposition will remember every
Game of the sixties as challenging
The skies unsure what amphibians
Lay out there in the noisy after
Frog song for frogs can win against

A choir of sixty with the baritone
Of one bull frog. So noisy are the
After rain sounds of southern Africa.
Since people there sing in choirs
Big one still has to see a competition
As strange as this netball match forms
In the land of giants and their music
One wonders what this center player
Would do. The game ends with me crying
Tears of joy. Thanks to the center player
That passes and moves with the feet
That if they were webbed they would
Be the pride of the water hole dweller.

Sarah Mkhonza

Inside Hotel 22

If numbers could rhyme,
So would the two I know
For one that parks white is 22
And the one that parks blue is 522
Now it is time to go to San Jose
She comes in with her load
Sits in the handicapper section
Her cans are all over in bags.
Get these out the driver yells.

He comes in with his head covered
Is it dirt or other unmentioned things
The driver brings his head to his nose
Smells him and tells him to get out
And calls the police.

He plays music from his cellphone
This one is merry for sure
He looks back and yells.
Not in here sir this noise.

This theater in the bus
Of a drunk that holds us up
He does not want to get off
He stands at the door forever.

I move up to show my rage
I cannot stand here forever
The homeless look at me.
And see I am new here
For this is how it goes
Inside Hotel 22.

This hotel is mobile and long
The poor get in with all belongings
That fit into a suitcase or two
Add two big black garbage bags
A woman and a man in their dirty jeans
Who pay a dollar for they cannot afford

After arguing with the driver
Is a Palo Alto experience to remember.

The big train starts early around six
The homeless pick up their wares
Hotel 22 has come in white and black
To start the endless journey for the day.

San Jose is the name of a saint
Palo Alto is the name of a tree
Between his holiness and her royal green leaves
We are on a swing from one stop to the other
In our merry go round of the poor.

Last stop the driver announces,
After Page Mill only four,
The sleeping commuter should have counted,
But he is snoring head bent down.
The driver should last stop again,
The sleeping poor with their bags,
Get off and line the transit area,
And make beds for the night has come.

Someone brings food and throws it
In the cemented islands at the transit area
You think of the pigeons that will come,
Someone picks it up before they sleep
In the open that is their home.

The call of nature comes
Someone relieves themselves in the silence
The commuters had better be wary
For they will step on a mess
From the left overs of this event.

A millionaire is among them
She worked and earned a lot
Lives and mingles without shame
Why not it is Palo Alto
Where the middle class struggles
To do even the minimal.

Where people sleep in cars
Where legs swell like bloody poles
That must stand up and work
As if everything is right
To get a paycheck from the master
Whose company brings in billions.

And still in goes Hotels 22
Clean spotless and a giant
Only people with destinations
Dare go in here where people do not joke,
But say it like it is,
And live it like it is
And walk it like it is,
And sleeps it like it is.

Sarah Mkhonza

ISIS Questions Render Me Bankrupt

ISIS questions can be like a roach in my ear,
I ask them and draw a blank knowing a bank of
questions has drawn another blank check,
when I thought I would have something there
is nothing. Blank slate, blank page, blank
me, blank mind, blank talk where are the filers?

If I were inside a body ready to kill and
be killed would I be full of the hate of
those who will scream and twist and turn
on the ground when the thing I have
done has gone up in the flames I light
with a matchless stick that is a power
tool of a darkness and end I chose for all?

Would I be bold and walk the last minutes
of life knowing it will be done this roast
that cannot be eaten by the tears that will
pour out into questions breathed into the air?

Would I know leaders will speak and curse and
say, 'this scourge has to be contained, ' and
go into the death chamber of my own choosing
blown into smithereens of time a hero
Just because I also hurt those I could get?

Would I be full of war or full of anger?
Would I stand for the last time at the edge
of the cliff and know I am going where there
is no coming back because of the promises of
virgins and a good life forever?

Would I chose to be the name all
mention and hate wishing I had never been born,
including those who sired me?

Would I do it if I had no country and felt
others had taken my humanity for granted and
broken everything that lay in a shambles and be

the hero that tried.

Would I see the devil in nameless beings
in the spaces where I am about to do the
deed stopping me and rush to do it anyway
before I am stopped.

Would I think there is only one time to
be a hero in this earth and where you do
it does not matter?

Would I wish I had chosen a better way to
speak than to kill because the death of us all
silences the cause and then Stop! Questions?

Would I start to think again as I hesitate
to do this which labels me the worst back
stabber that is so much about doing that
I chose to disappear in the carnage
chosen for all before its time?

I respect questions because
they help me to shape things
and agree to start again.

Shaping ISIS questions stops when my mind
rewinds and brings back flashes that silence
me and sink my soul into a depth where neither
the dead nor the living have been. The account
is still below zero. The red entries still blink
at me. I am a woman rich at the question bank,
but poor as they show me the ledger.

Is, is, s the only letter that is,
That is not near a z, yet brings
lives of many to their zed.

Sarah Mkhonza

It Is Dark Outside And Violence Is Awake

I sit there in the lowveld fire
I watch the flames eat at the wood
The stories around me are repeated
One very comment gets me
The woman whose voice I hear
Rises in a cry so usual
So neglected it makes me wonder
Why nobody helps her
Laughter around me tells me
Who cares about a wife beater
When there are better things to do

Her voice rises in the night
The woman nobody helps
She cries out loud
The hand of heaven does not hear her
The murder of the innocent continues
Unhelped, unending, and heard only by me

I want to help her, but I am little
My hands are little and so are my years
My thoughts go out to the darkness
The night gets dark as I look at the fire
The voice tears into the dark night
Scratching as she lies on the ground
Where a leather strap called the strop
Lands on her back endlessly

The years multiplied as did the whacks
They spread far and I did hear the words
A woman who knows you naked
Can never respect you
Beat her and she will know who you are

A young boy repeats a saying familiar
Me, I can just beat a woman
He looks at me and I look at him
The sun shines on his disheveled face

His disheveled mind speaks and so does mine
Just yesterday he was languishing in her
The woman's womb that made him whole
Gave him the fists he has learned are good
When you land them on a female body
And fold them to knock her down
When your own turn comes to be a boss
Of the flesh that is female under you
And you turn against your own in anger
And betray your own weak truth on loving

Makes me think of the lashes in the dark
Coming down like lightning like in the field
Where life's surprises happen
Striking a whole team of soccer players
Who end up laying dead on the ground
Uncontrollable fallings that happen daily
All over this violent word of ours.
In this game in which we get together
To live the things called loving.

Sarah Mkhonza

It Was Proclaimed By The Supremes

That you would enter the stage
In platforms was proclaimed by
The supremes. They said you would
Be a woman of action and always
On the move. That you would be the
Leader of band was determined equally
By the supremes for they could see
Way beyond the now. Learn to live up to this prophecy for it comes once
And Only to those who need it.

Embrace it with both hands
For once you let it go it will
Be hard to get it back.

I know a person who let
It go and lived to regret it.

Sarah Mkhonza

It's All On Your Shoulders Now

This thing called life,
Has finally trekked to this corner,
It sits on my shoulders
Making me half child, half man,
Like a mermaid at the edge of the sea of time,
Hoping to one day enter the place,
Where only wizards can light a candle,
Inside the ocean as they swim the last mile.

I promised time I would not age,
But become wise as a sage,
And then tell the world
I have earned the title of an elder,
And respect and honor are written on my forehead,
The tablet of Egyptian papyrus!

I know I was duped for nobody sides with me.
For they know that when time dives into the deep,
For it is not like jelly fish even though it weighs the same,
On the scale of the wizard of this world.
Not even at sunset does it show up again

Sarah Mkhonza

Jerry In His Right Mind

The agreement between Jerry and Terry was to touch more and talk less. Terry did never to keep a score. Love flowed in a river of actions of touch.

Jerry saw chopped actions like chips of wood and thought the soup would be one of word chops instead of pork chops.

First he took a bell. Its ring went with each act of touch. 'What! Jerry surely you can let this thing called love go on without your dumb bells.'

I'm recording how hard my kisses landed on your forehead. The world has to know the time and hour of day for this bell can feel it when I knock a cold kiss hard on your forehead.

Jerry, listen, hon, the world knows you care. Terry, I was loving women this way long before your romance thing. The world knows not how hard to kiss a woman on the forehead is.

Thanks, they say, for being a failure for you proved us right. Woman plus kiss, tells a story of no love. Woman plus effort with a metal object seals deals we may as well keep a wicked score of. Some counts will absolve us for they will reach in the hundreds.

Ask me more questions, and hon me later. This work, is kissing work I never thought would be on the conveyor belt that landed us here.

Master Jerry, when will this counting stop? When I run out of kisses and you stores them in the same cupboard. Hence my invention of a bell kissing ringer, is about to make a new break. Let alone the kisser on whose neck will hang this bell of mine.

Talent, they say comes out of curiosity. Wonder who will sign up to be first,

Terty? This husband of yours, lest they
claim the idea, patent and all.

I heard the swallows were swallowing hard and swearing as they wiggle their
black tails.

Jerry, why are you scared I will divorce you? Terry, this bell I ring told me one
day it will not ring. It said it was warning me. Nothing lasts r
enjoy it while it is there.

Looe took the bellscale and

The

Sarah Mkhonza

Jerry 'tis Supper Time

Where are you?
I'm nibbling on my toe.

Everyone knows my foe
that keeps me being this doe,
that is at the well of yore.

Till it dries my thirst
says I'll be here.

Terry, as my wife, you
know this poetic truth
taught to me by this Zoe
who sings at the bar.

Come home I'm making sushi.
Be it gushi or pushy, it does
not rhyme with Zoe, let alone
sound like her tunes.

Jerry, this Zoe doe is your lif
gone amuck. Your mid life crisis.
Jesu Kristos knows you are sick

That keeps looking doe

Sarah Mkhonza

Jesus Said Oh Really

Jesus knows he said love your enemies
But the earth says, love them hard and
Not sue them when they publish your
Work without your copyright.

He who said turn the other cheek
Knows you have other cheeks too.
Earth says let them slap those too.

Why do you think we slave till we retire?
Can't you see the Lord put us in this fix?
To work. work, work, till earth and the
Ants laugh for we have become
Complaining copy cats. Instead of
Copying the chameleon and his fast
Tongue and slow stagger, we failed to
Change color and be boss one day,
Master another and never a worker. All
It takes is having no hands. Would
Jesus have said when they want both
Of your hands and legs at work,
Chop off one, for it is better to live
With one leg and one hand than to enter into
Heaven dead tired with both?

Sarah Mkhonza

Jobs Of The Revolution

Who said we would work,
for work was meant for those
who slave in the dark corners
of the firm?

In this revolution workers are
united against not knowing
what goes on in the pit
of the stomach of the firm.

Wake up knowing when to
revolt against the biggest
enemy of man. This thing
that bugs us most, this
ignorance.

It is worse than the poverty,
that bites inside, making the
stomach churn with hunger,
for when the mind is hungry,
it is a famine unheard of.

The job is there, for it lines
up spade and shovel and says
eat the fruits of ignorance
for you failed to open the book
on the right page.

You turn the page and the open
mind asks you, how much you
know about the shepherd who
herds the rich.

He is your shepherd too, for you
are in the fold, as we see your
breath leaving your nostrils
and going to stink in the vaults
of the earth where the rich,
blow their noses with dollar notes.

Your handkerchief with holes in it,
is meant to wipe your face dry,
when your sweat starts to get
powdered with the dust of poverty.

The choice is yours, in this nugget
of gold called time. The choices we
make follow us, wherever we go.
If you choose to lie in the mud,
know you made it your bed.

The birds will fly, one day drop
a morsel. For again they fly,
and look in your direction and
wonder, who lies there wiping
sweat off his brow waisting this
dusty gold called time.

The mine is open and every miner
goes in knowing what his job is,
for these jobs of the revolution
are dished out by a state that gives,
only if you take and use.

The time is coming when the mine
will have none of you. It will tell you
to get out of its depth, for you failed
to dig in the depths and follow the
furrow with the traces of gold.

You wore a helmet with a light,
lied to everybody and said you,
the miner turned forty niner,
would go down and work,
now you do a did with no name
for such is your confusion.

Take the job in this revolution,
that will turn happenstance into
what it was meant to be. Digger
with the helmet that shines and

calls to order, the whole mine to
give up what was put in it.

It is also yours to get for you are
down here working in a revolution
that will come to pass. Perestroika
will come and your hands will be
as empty as anybody who expects
the food stamps to rain from
the stamp collection of the gods.

Pick the stamps with the Harriet
Tubman's head on it, for the honor
comes late to those who worked
in the underground railway. This
revolution continues like all
struggles.

Sarah Mkhonza

Joy Just Jive For Me

Joy can you just jive for me?
I went to the party and stood against
The wall. Frustrated, I danced by myself
And ended up vowing if I stalk you the
Only dancer called joy, I will end up in jail. I hear stalkers
Get arrested. Can you joy just jive for a jailbird-to-be
Only because of you? I am now sending this SOS
That not even paramedics want to hear for the
Say joy seekers belong in asylums as foes. As for this
Assylee a stranger to become a loser I bow to you
Open handedly asking. Help is just a four letter word that is
Not forbidden even in the land of the blessed.
Joy, let me not be arrested for desiring what
No person can live without. Just jive and ask
Me to dance with you and stop hiding. This game
Nevertheless has to continue as long as it can be
While you bury your head I'm the sand

Sarah Mkhonza

Joy Says Come To Me And Lets Go Dancing

I heard a song that led me down the alley.
When I got there there was a rivulet and
A pool of water that had little black
Insects jetting this way and that and
They said joy called me here so that we
Can dance.

I did not know how to dance and they said
They would whistle and I would have to
Join them and make a sound and together
We would play in this water like we did
When I was young.

I cherish the days of such joy for it just
Came without the pressures that have come
To scoop away joy out of my hands that remain
Cupped as if to receive a substance unknown
To me.

When I am reminded how to jump and climb a tree
That is out there in the yard or dash along
This rivulet where we scooped out clay and made
Cows with real horns with the mud that we did
Not pay for I feel a tear roll down for it tells
Me that is where I left joy and decided not to
Dance when the sun goes down.

I pick up the tune from the whistle of these
Dashing little insects and go into the ripple
They cause as they dash along and find deep in
Me a fountain similar to this one and then start
To sing along and dance once more. So small is
The voice of joy when it calls me to dance. It
Is almost as inaudible as now.

Sarah Mkhonza

Just A Grain Inside The Hourglass

I stand one grand of sand
Rushing up and down with others
As we are poured up and down
By the hour that ends one after
Another in these intervals of time.

The world's time goes with me turning
As the glass turns to seat on its base
And I flow with the others as we slide
Past the glass neck, flurting with gravity
Telling the truth to a people that life
Is a force that nobody can stop.
For we have wished for years to be set free
Even if it is by a hurricane that would bury
The house we are in and stop the turns from
Turning it upside down by the hour.

For we do not want people to see
The underbelly of so cute a jar
And flowless yet it roughs us up and down
In ways that make us say 'Shame on you woman
In whose belly we are for not getting old
And letting us rest.

For who can stop an hour glass from doing
Its vocation for life in lifetimes of others
When it is given a task to turn and make
The flow out and flow in, in these bloodless
Daily goings on of the smallest grains of sand.

This hold this thing called time has on us
Is so intangible yet tangible that we fail
To stop the process of us falling for we
Are not falling in love but out while we
Think of a game that goes on and on like
Lovers who are lost in their own game.

Give a break, I cry for I have done this for
Too long for even the word boredom does not

Exist anymore for this work is work only if
It continues and not when you stop and think
For such is not allowed in robotic worlds.

Leave the space between us with air then so
We can breath and let in some moisture that
Can help us cluster and begin to fight this
Thing called being used for why should other
Use us in their illumination of life for we
Are nothing but just dull grains of sand in
An hour glass.

I have to speak for my kind for time is too
Powerful to entertain the thoughts of a part
That is needed to keep it running like the car
Is too powerful to think of a bolt in a tire
Until it revolts by just getting unscrewed and
Cause a huge collapse. Such is not possible for
Nothing holds me to another as yet. This thing
Called power is as elusive to people who are used
To flowing in one direction like water in a river.
Such is the dilemma of being just a grain of sand
Inside this hourglass.

Sarah Mkhonza

Just A Little Good Up Top

I look up on top and wonder,
What is required of me and you,
You look up and ask me a question
What do you want to know right now?
I answer the same, the good up on top
What is it about?
I do know it is about us getting out,
We need, we cry for it, we walk and search
For what is required up on top.
My mother told me of saints,
She prayed to big people with grey hair,
I thought it was because it was hers,
To wonder into the night praying,
Oh how she wept and sniffed as she prayed!
How I listened and counted words as she did,
What is wanted up top?
I ask now as I did then?
What are the words we heard about?
now that they haunt me so,
For I long to know right now,
If I am doing what was, is, and will,
Be wanted up top.
I pray I make the cut,
Just a little bit of it,
Just a little good up top.
To crown my head with a crown
of existence.

Sarah Mkhonza

Just Do This For Me And You

Just the just of what life is about,
Read from the bible of the queens of
Thunder should tell us to turn the page.

There's a picture of you, you have never
seen. It is you coming into yourself o
and out of yourself. The king you are
may decide not to read the bible of Queens
and call it the tabloid.

I tell you, I tell you, to swim with the
fish, you must have fins. Gills alone will
not do it. Call me the queen of the Jezebels, for I beg no king when I stand on
this truth of the Madonna.

They say C leopard died in Alexandria, but
I want to swear I have not come to claim her. I speak just the hist of what is
your truth.

Hidden way inside this rock hard belly of
mine is a story hard to tell. You messed up when you failed to close the door
after
your exit. The scene ended. The crown was
on my head. You started to walk and put a halo on your little head.

It grew like a melon, all soft and sweet.
When it became full if the remnants from
the sweat of life, I cannot tell. Now you
scratch the earth and call for equality,
when did it leave your little hands.

Were you not the free little person who
walked on rocky isles and laughed on
escalators with me?

Son of thunder, rumble for me. I know the
voice and can tell the growl of the lion.
You were born when the newborns to rule the pack were called forth.

I heard the shaking of the earth. It rocked my insides. I gave you up when I wanted to hold on to you. Kings should never be born in a hurry for they will mess up the earth.

Tell me you have not done as I see.

Tell me we had no agreements. What happened. I will have to answer for your prison record.

This story cannot be rewritten for the eraser melted with the stew called life.

Up and out the truth went. It was in tatters like this. I did my duty. I prayed and the marks and underlining are there in the bible of queens. The book left me out because they did not mark my resting place with a cross. Do that for me. Look after the truth. It will look after you and search for you like I do.

as

Sarah Mkhonza

Ladders On A Woman's Legs

The meal I lay before you
Is baked in the pit of my stomach
Which is empty right now
For I poured out my strength,
Trying to save those of you
Who give life the strongest kick,
And jump to the other side
Where poverty was long imprisoned,
With no right to parole.

If you get there do not set him free,
Even if he should blackmail you,
Or bribe you with bars of gold,
If he makes a lousy deal with liquor,
Raise the bail even higher,
So it is not one man can pay,
For the problem will be yours,
For I will say I told you so.

This zeal you have of life,
Has never gone hungry,
Of things that trouble me,
In all the years I've seen,
Of people living their teens.

When I say jump higher
I mean scale the heights,
Your world has laid out hurdles,
That my world has never seen,
For we tripped on lower levels,
For ours were broken ladders,
All worn on a poor woman's legs.

Sarah Mkhonza

Laughter Had Me Opening My Mouth

When I was in mission school
Laughter was my best friend.
I laughed at nuns who tried
To pretend there was no love
And wondered why they should
Do such.

I laughed at teachers not sure
That my life would lead me in
That direction. Now I laugh at
Myself. I open my mouth and
Laugh and think about the things
That were not supposed to be done
Which I did anyway, like dancing
In mission school.

Laughter had me dancing facing
Away from the nun at the door who
Was looking at the other girls
On their bunks who were surprised
What an unsaved person like me
Was doing in this land where the
Body never dances, but sings
Hallelujahs.

I dived into my bed when I found out
That I was the actress on a stage
Doing the heathenous dance of the
Year. Little did I know I could
Enter the books of the nun as the
Most unsaved, lost, irredeemable
Of the earth. As life would have
It I recovered and became a better
Sheep hence I am still searching
And hoping God will find me worthy
For he never writes his own sheep off.

I stand still opening my mouth
Laughing as this friend of mine

Imitates the bell at one o'clock
With her mouth closed because
Nobody will know where the sound
Came from.

My laughter ends as the nun decides
Never to open her mouth in our class
For we are so God forsaken she has decided
To mum it until the boy decides to sing
Percy Sledges's Come Softly Darling, When
The song calls the lover to, come to me,
The nun asks who the great musician is
And this boy stands up and is told to
Go down the two-storied building and
Sing till we hear him upstairs. We go
To the window to watch him under the poplar
Tree singing and then realize he has
Ended the stale mate for we have learned
The lesson that it is wrong to make a
Teacher angry. Quite a lesson, was it not?

Sadly, we left the school still wet behind
The ears and went to the world unequipped
For the maladies out there where we were
Urged to be the salt of the earth and also
Its ever flickering light. You read today
What I do to try and keep the fires burning
For I was told to go out there and throw
Ideas in the air like rain on a stormy
Day. Yet the storm in me starts to be a
Drizzle when you fail to take heed and start
Coming home so we can light one warm fire
Together before the storms of life get in
Through the kitchen door.

Sarah Mkhonza

Learn From The Biggest Gem Ever Found

Learn from the gem.
It shines on the finger.
Under water it sparkles.
In the jewellery box that sings and dances,
It also dances round and round.

They got it the biggest ruby
all the way from a distant India
on the state crown they put it.
No Indian had a head to wear it on then.
For it was fit only for a queen
whose power had to be proved by taking it.

Selling itself short never happened.
It knows the waiting game.
Patience never wears out,
as it shines like a starlet
and wiggles its way to the top.

The one who buys it goes to the auction,
stands the highest bidder of the day,
whose purse is open and ready
To spill its contents on the floor
And wear it with pride the gem most sought after
By all the princely ones of the earth

Moments come to rest the crown.
Safe guarded in a stand it sits
untouched the only emblem
of something bought at a price of
give it to me for I am the biggest
and should wear such things of glory alone
That shine and show my power oozing
out of the front on the place
where the power knocks me cold
Confessing greatness is worn as gems.

India wants back that gem from days of old.
Mother country wordiness on vessels gone.

They know it is time to pay the Caesars of India
what is theirs now that it is time.
Yet it listens and just shines
Hidden smiles all over its face.
Takers and givers are friends at last.
Who will wear me next it asks.
Will I go with sisters and cousins
now that mother country milk has dried
and the raw humor of yesterday gone?

Sarah Mkhonza

Learning The Rules Of The Game

You work and nobody tells you,
That the lines were drawn long
Before you stepped on the door
Of this new work place.

You find the words coming hurled,
They discourage your best efforts,
For praise does not do it here,
Where cliques do the railing uphill.

You sit and wonder what now,
Not knowing sitting is not it,
You need to figure out the rules,
For you cannot stand hate behind
The eyes of those who run this world.

You look at groups with suspicion,
Yet you came to be a part of this,
You are no prince with a land here,
You have to know the system kills,
And throws away those who fail to tango,
For bosses are judges not dancers.

Who told you work was for wimps?
Who laugh and joke and do little,
Then expect pay at the end of the day.
Grow up it is about mingling,
And rubbing shoulders with Joe,
For he holds the baton.

Don't complain that you are hated,
Knowing the rules is the real game,
Learning to play polka is just that,
You cannot gamble on your life here,
For your purse will be forever empty.

Every place has rules of life.
You either know them or you don't,
Don't kid yourself by sucking your thumb,

And hoping that it will turn into a pen
And write the paper you did not submit,
It is called not understanding your job,
When your name is called and you are empty handed.

Sarah Mkhonza

Leaves Never Fall With A Bang

Slowly, smoothly and with a stealth
That fills the whole lawn in a morning,
The leaves of the trees keep falling
And just as quietly they lie down to
Rest.

The leaf blower rushes in with noisy
Hurried sound and pulls them in and
Gracefully and silently they go. But
Branches break with a squeak and fall
With a bang that even dents the car
Parked on the pavement letting us know
That one day the tree itself will
One day come down with a heavy
Thud.

Once trees shed the leaves they
Let them go like an unwanted blanket
And throw them away for they no
Longer need to cover their crown
In the seasons dry for such is a
Stingy world, it causes us to throw
Away the immigrant who helped us
Just yesterday at noon.

So ungrateful these tall figures
Whose wombs will fill up again and
Like crazy seed the leaves will return
Budding out with childish joy and gladness
Crowning them once again with shiny beauty
Only to once again go the way of the
Soiled diaper that is discarded never to be
Looked at in these days where we cannot
Have ourselves sweating in the sun
While washing it with our precious
Hands, ungrateful trees that we have
become.

I chose to go the way of the leaf

A going smooth and quiet leaving a bit
Of color in the memory of the world
For like the leaf once green my
Immature thoughts may have done this
Deed of gracing the trees of the world.
For even when ejected by the leaf
Blowers of the world I will go
With a song marching to the end,
Just like the leaf.

Sarah Mkhonza

Let Us Gather Our Wild Honey

We came to walk in the forest
and gather wild honey. To listen
to the birds that have seen the hive
and run with containers empty,
and fill them to the brim.

Working night and day, we gather,
finger-kicking-good it is. Out
heads swollen from stings we
go on gathering. Till the beehive
is all that is in our heads.

Stings and all we walk on. Life
continues with honeyed seasons.
Their sweetness makes for sugar
sweet days. For the further you
are from the hive, the more
the bitterness in you. Go find your
hive. Till you find the door of
your hive. Hoping the bees will
not have moved.

Sarah Mkhonza

Let Us Praise The Poise Of Eve

Allow me to praise a woman who can mislead a man
A woman who listens to a snake and not run for her life
Deserves the praise we give her for being the victim of tempters.
She relates stories heard like a real gossip in the garden tabloids.
And feeds her family all that she eats even if it is venom,
She ate first like I would have tasted the soup in the pot,
Before feeding it to the nation I lead into paths hidden.

Let us watch the story of Eve happening in the pages,
For she stood and did not run, as she does in my mind now.
For she knew when it was time to innovate and design a dress,
Not for being wrong do I praise her, but for trying,
Initiative they call it when you take the first step,
Even if you get burnt and no body says sorry.

She lives in this story undefeated, though wrong,
Created in the bosom of time the story tells us things,
That designers do not have to be no Calvin Klein,
But when necessity calls man and wife make something.
Do not let the world be shocked by your bare bottoms,
Rather a pair of pants with a patch than bums in the air.

Let me say the story is no story, when it leaves me and you,
Unchanged and still doing the same old thing called laziness,
Where we think on our bottoms and then sit on our heads,
For life never carries those who wring confusion out of time,
And then drink it and call it the sap of life,
For it burns the throat like real coal with coke in it,
Right there in the furnace, where the stories say we will end up.

Let me praise the work of Eve, for begetting me and you,
And letting us wobble one step at a time reaching for life,
Our hands outstretched and ready for touching the table,
Only to be told to swallow what she has put on the spoon,
That she has pointed at our mouths where our lips drip
For the very stew life cooked in Eden.

Who said Eve was no cordon bleu chef when my own mother was?
She had a real oven where she cooked me ripe and ready,

For this furnace called the earth where debts burn
Real holes into my pockets and leave me sighing.
She had real taps that poured out life that raised
me into the blossom that was kissed by the first rains
that I became for my eyes still have the raindrops.
She had oven lights that shone in the night and made
Her see when the cake was ready and cracking on top.

Let us praise the poise of Eve, for she walked away
From a garden guarded by sword-wielding angels,
And never returned from the place where she would
Sin no more for the snake was now on its stomach,
Huffing and puffing ready to do damage to her heels,
I know it never found her for me and you are here,
And honest Adam can swear this story is true.

Sarah Mkhonza

Let's Have Our Conversations In Neutral Territory

Let us have these conversations
In neutral territory,
Neither in my heart nor yours,
Lest you tell others what it is,
That has us yelling obscenities
At each other, washing our dirty
linen in the streets.

Let us have this talk in this space,
Neither in my car nor yours,
Lest you turn the key and move,
Without looking at how far mine is.

Let us talk endlessly on neutral ground,
Till you are blue in the face,
For you have always hidden the truth,
Making me pinch it out of the hardest rock.

Let us speak these truths
In neutral territory
Lest my heart jumps out
And skips a bit with this pacemaker,
For it has been newly installed,
Causing me to insist that less talk is more.

Let us speak these hopes in the space
between the pews,
Neither on my bench nor yours,
Neither on my side of the church nor yours,
Lest the congregation hears how bad,
Loud and animated I become when angry.

Let us have these conversations
On no man's land,
Neither on your side of the road or mine,
Lest you think of yourself as the owner,
Of the space in between the islands,
When the sirens force us each time,
To move our cars to the side,

To let the ambulance pass,
For you will be glad it was not
Making its final journey with you,
But me whose life has seen a show stopper,
And called him to order in this duel.

Who said we would fight about spaces,
Once Siamese twins joined at the head.
Neither you nor me having a space,
Where the other did not go?
They say things change,
For we two have become disjointed twins,
Me having my head and you yours,
Now Wishing we had been joined at the waist.

Sarah Mkhonza

Like The Sound Of Khoisan Clicks

There is a time when culture refuses that
You should talk back to your elders for to
answer back would do one in and make you lose
The dignity pf the pack called the clan.

There is also this feeling that gets you when
The things being said are so irrelevant that
You need the stamp of Miss Brown, my science
Teacher for it taught us that the word irrelevant
Exists and must be used both in talk and in writing.

I am trying to eliminate words now that I know
That the lost of the earth are on the march
Like Buffalo soldiers all the way from Scotland
Marching on the road below our village after
A Big Bend Sugar Mill Strike.

When the lost of the earth are on the march their
Boots hit the ground and they march on in single
File and you wonder why the road goes in one
Direction for a whole pack in our house.

Like the sound of Khoisan clicks the insults
Fall out one after another and you know someone
Has ignited a fire in the oven of a mouth that
Eat all the meals with. The words come out with
Expletives and splutter out calling sand and stone
To grind and get the machine going for we are all
Under attack.

My elder sister who always wanted to take control
Of things for her style was to be boss begins talking
And starts her usual stint of pushing everyone of
Us around like rag dolls as she tells us how things
Will be done.

I dared to speak to all with dignity and ignored
The insults as I told them that being a first-born
Did not come with any privilege and love for us

And our mother should not be treated as if we found
Ourselves inside a bag of lucky packets.

I told them that our love is special and should
Be treated as such for the time we have together
Is not waiting as we thrown words around. it will
Disappear and we will look for it and it will be
No more like our mother whom we cannot go and buy
Like a pack of Simba chips now that she is gone.

For now that I stand alone speaking these truths
And feel the insults like that come out like Khoisan
Clans are dying down I know I did right to speak up
For even if my talk is crowned by insults that rang
out the clicks are no longer ringing as strong for
There are things one can not change about the truth.
Sometimes it hurts but it should be spoken to no
Matter who the opponent is. Like a bitter medicine
It can be forced down and it does heal.

Sarah Mkhonza

Listen To What Is Not Being Said

When they pronounce the sentence,
Listen to what is not being said.
If they say guilty, hear the question
That is not asked.

When they read the score on the board,
Read in between the numbers and learn,
It is much better than it looks here,
For there is a hidden number nobody sees.

When they tell you someone had died,
Hear the truth that many people are still alive,
Their names are not mentioned for they do not,
Belong to the land where this one is going.

Hear the unpronounceable truths always,
They lurk in the silence like Spanish moss,
Swaying on trees quietly as the wind blows,
Waiting to fall only if it has to,
For nobody knows who hung it up there.

Hear the words unspoken in this prayer request,
For someone is ashamed to spell out what happened,
For fear of being laughed at by a people
Who judge those they do not know.

Hear the words not spelled out,
When the invitation is written,
For the dress code is known,
You are the only one who sees,
Just a blank page with nothing on it,
The rest heard it in the grapevine.

When they call others bastards,
Hear the truth that they were fathered,
By a great spirit unknown to anyone,
For to make known one has sired a child,
Is to tell the word you love to sleep around.

Listen to the unspoken rules,
For your fate depends on them,
They run the place even more so,
For they are a silent gong that goes on,
Timelessly to the mark of the secret army

Read the bible with the fine print,
For the enlarged letters when seen,
From a distance tell another story,
For the story lies in the spaces,
Which have been enlarged to hide,
The very truth you seek.

Sarah Mkhonza

Listen To The Hummingbird

Listen only to the bird that chirps
With the knowledge of where the honey is
It knows the sweet smelling flower too
For its beak only dips into the deepest
Of the plants as it takes breaks to look up
If these earthly beauties bear more
Of the craved for juices lurking in there.

Listen to the hummingbird utter its sounds
Let it awaken the wisdom inside you
For the path is long, the journey has
Just begun.

They say only people who know where to hum
The songs of the singing birds will be
Allowed into the palaces of the kings
For such is the kingdom of this earth.

Listen to the humming bird for the days
Are numbered when your fate will be
Pronounced out there by one twit
From one device in which lives
Are talked about in fewer words.
For the bird wants you to leave
Some honey for it or next time
It will lead you go your enemy
And that will be the end of you.

Sarah Mkhonza

Listening To The Voices Of Heaven

My round impish face leans
Its left ear on the walls
That stopped me from hearing
The voice that says 'forgive, '
And listens harder trying to
Hear a messenger with some news
That falls down the wall like
Water seeping out of the top of
The rock and coming down like
Tears falling down my cheeks when
I have had one failure that needs
To be mended into a success in
The years when getting it right
Was always important.

I listen and hear the leaves
Falling quietly seen only by
My soul for it is tired of
Screens and wants nature to
Speak to it of heaven for it
Is a place I hear about and
Want to go to, for the rapture
Is real as it has me running
All the way from the genesis
Of things all the way to the
Apocalypse where I hear swords
Clashing. I hear thuds of fruit
Falling from the very tree of
Life I started the journey under
as mangoes and monkey apples
Fall down and say the angel has
Left the gate and now I can go
In and eat and live and be ready
For the next step.

No summers here, says the tree
As it lets all the fruit down
And sways in the wind that lets
Them go down as if gravity was

Now my friend and not stopping
Me from going to its top on wings
Invisible. Now I know why I had
To eavesdrop on nature and its
Subtle sounds.

Sarah Mkhonza

Live This Comedy Of Your Life

Let yourself laugh
At the comedy of your
Funny moments. It is
The only freeing act
For you trespass on your
Own territory. The script
Writes itself and you have
Acted it already. Like me
In a girlfight where I am
Defeated and my silk petticoat
Is tattered and torn. For fear
Of explaining to my mom, I hide
It way down in the boxes where
I know she will never look and
There it lies till I outgrow
Both the tatters of stories of
Girl fights. I stand in front of the chimera
Holding This poem, hoping you will not throw
Straw at me and watch how the fork is
Gonna turn the shish kabob I will become
When hell finally rains fire on me.

Sarah Mkhonza

Living In The Corner With The Dead

I have lived in this corner
fearing the dead near
sound of the fear I carried
went further than the clouds.

It rose higher than buildings,
and sank lower than my feet.
Reflections in the air sent
shivers to my toes.

Till I stood up to look
and see freedom written
across my corpse, I would
still lay in their bed
creating fraternity with
my friends dead.

Now I run and gulp in air,
showing I follow the trail.
To live for me, is to show
I come from a world, where
you take off the shackles
and run for the life in you.

It is silent in the corner
of the dead. They walk about
and cast their shadows. This aura
touched half closes the eyes
and ties the limbs from inside.

You walk in your zombie world,
and smile the zombie life. To
yesterday's world we
throw the ash of shackles to
tell to the world, a story
bold like the boulders of
the land where fear ruled
with no boundaries.

in the

wallpapee

Sarah Mkhonza

Living The Untold Story

Have you ever followed the news
Only to find that it is news about
Someone you know? The joy of being
Connected to the ones who use money
To blow their noses blows your mind
And has you wishing they were closer
Especially if they just won the lotto.

You walk the world hoping to
Meet them and look in all familiar
Places only to be told
That person is standing inside
You. You say hey show me the
Money. The tabloids tell you it
Is standing inside you. For the
Sage comes to ask you how much
You have earned since you were
Born. You say well I spent it all.

She says count it in hours and
Then price it at one dollar an hour.
You simply walk away in tears knowing
You have but spent all you
Could have saved.

He calls you back and says there is
Still more where that came from.
If I give you ten years at one dollar
Per second what will you do with it?

You say I will go and live the untold
Story and repeat what you told me for
Now I know I almost blew it for I was
Born to write the story of the millionaire in whose body I live
Before I am evicted for, for years I
Have lived a tenant with the wrong
Name, wrong passport and wrong
Destination. Now I will go and
Walk on millionaire lane and live

In an abode meant for the likes of me.

Sarah Mkhonza

Long Term Implants

When I was twelve,
I wanted this bosom,
That is full of me,
To be fuller and fuller,
A bosom that speaks all
That is very mammary and bold,
That challenges the world,
Whose air I walk into.

I was looking for these pointers,
Long term implants that pierce,
Ones from a world I did not know,
That would invade my chest,
And make me the number one,
For I would then be woman,
And challenge life itself,
With a boldness of girlhood,
That says I have arrived.

They were to be round always,
As round as the world of my dreams,
And as soft and without lumps,
These lumps that today's scan,
Has announced to be foreigners,
In a land of milk and honey,
That I thought would never,
Be taken over by these invaders,
Who stepped into my world at night,
When I was not looking,
And settled on my alter,
Of giving when I nurse the world.

Lumps are said to have crept in,
Into my inner chambers of perfection,
to leave me in a panic,
Wondering why my long term implants,
Have gone the way of disease-filled goblets,
that cannot carry the blood down stream,
To the lifeline that takes the ration,

From what I can give naturally,
As it was meant to be.

Do hear me as I tell you,
That these here diseased goblets,
Were once my pride,
They were pointing at the world,
They were my own Reed Dance bust,
Bursting into the world with vigor,
And busting everything into tit bits,
Me saying, 'Here I come the virgin,
Of the proud clan of the mountains,
That you will only see if you dare,
To ask for my hand in marriage,
And speak with pride to my father,
In an eye to eye where no weakling,
Can cope with his head unbowed,
For I am the daughter of an elder,
And so are you, son of an elder.

The pictures of me young in dancing gear
Attest to a chest full and proud,
Going out there to invade the world,
Handling them with the care they needed,
Thought of disease as far as the world knows,
And if it got near it should know,
The rules of my most prized possession,
Which was no touch no look for they are mine,
The second daughter that will not play,
Second fiddle to anyone,
Even in a marriage with seven virgins,
Who would testify to the truth,
That I am the number one,
For these here diseased goblets are mine,
The one and only daughter of love.
And not silicone implants from the store.

Now this disease has stolen,
The story of a people I would nurse,
And take to the future with advice,
That they should carry themselves with pride,
And not drag these symbols of the future,

Of a lifeline that will drink on them,
But keep them safely tucked into their bosom,
For not to do so is to risk,
The dangers of being killed,
By such as have taken mine over,
And no more be these long term implants,
Of nature given and accepted and taken to
Futures unknown and untold.

Sarah Mkhonza

Look At The Shimmer Of My Dress Says The Night

Look at the shimmer of my dress
As I enter the palace of the mind
Of men and dress everyone in the
Glimmer of the dark beauty that I
Am. Every body lives the streets
And goes to watch movies called dreams
That I unwind on the screens I give
Them that are like visits to eternal
Drive ins they cannot escape. The night
World I have designed has a glow that
Angels envy for it transcends time
Everlasting. I sit in this shimmer and
King sky brings me closer at midnight
While you wait and listen to the sounds
Of our tender touches. The world of love
Wakes up to swim and play in my shimmer
For people love things like nightly dreams.
Only the bat and owl swoop down and disturb
The calm I bring.

Look at what! Wait, wait, wait! Says the day.
I come so clear, So full of life Everything
Wakes up and wears the silk worm dress I spread
Out and like an ocean of elegance flowers wake
Up and kiss my world with smells that perfume
My entrance and let me tell you girl, it is
Me whp tours the world with him and not ypu.
I reign in his kingdom in quiet bethroted to
Him not you who steals in with a stealthyb
Wizardry smoothness that makes the sick
Worse that even roosters cannot wait to
Chase you away and sing the anthem that
Announces my entrance.

What! how can you say that? You who is a money
Grabber that has people sweating for you are
An insatiable taker that leaves everone tired
At your wake only to be consolef by me for I
Tuck them in and let me tell you one final pne,

The King sky sleeps on these. I mean my lolos.
And with that, case closed.

When the battle is on in King Sky's harem
Only the gods can stop the diatribe with a
Dance accompanied by drums from afar. The
Two queens who wrap us in their love day after
Day want us to speak night after night. Those
Who love comparison enter this reasoning of
Ducks and argue until they are breathless while
Sky listens and tells the rest of the planet
World never go marry gwl wives called Day and
Night for every day is a xag of war for the
Love of the same 'you.' The harmony they bring
Is as the insanity they bring for such is love.

Sarah Mkhonza

Looking At Life Through The Beaded Fringe

My day has come and finally I am a wife
I arrived today as my people called out how
I have served in my own home and should
Serve here where my bed will soon be
For I have carried all the bedding
Floor mats and all on this day of being
Where I am to be joined to this man
Who from now on will be respected by
My people and called the son-in-law
Of the people of the south.

They are wearing leopard skins on
Their loins and they dance knee
High with knobkerries raised in the
Air as they mention the good deeds
I am known for among my people.
I am the leader of girls and cannot
Leave my area unannounced for the day
I met him, this son of an elder,
I had to cease to be the leader and
Be a follower so I had to tell all
The girls that he has chosen me and
Wishes to have me be the maiden
To sweep their floor and make fires
On the hearth of his people.

I accepted for he was a man who
Could keep a maiden up for many
Nights. His look kills you and
You go diving into the deep with
A confusion only known to girls
In love. I sank down in this thing
Called falling in love and wished
I had risen in love. It kept taking
Me under this feeling and now
Here I stand defending myself to
Future accusations by having
My people tell what type of person
Has come here to this place of

Reckoning where our songs tell me
It is not easy to be wedded to
The sons of our land.

They will smear me with red ochre
When the sun goes down and this
Sign signals that I can never leave
This home that is near the mountains.
I have had my people walk up here
To see me dance the dance that allows
Me to ask for his hand in marriage
At the knees of his mother. She gave
Me more beads and I have shown them
To their people for they named the
Cows and danced showing how their
Horns which are twisted look against
The sunset. The dance was a joy
To watch for they have won the
First test of whether they are
People who know our ways or not.
To say they dance a storm is what
The leader of the girls will have
To tell my people when they return
Home for they will leave me here
To prove they were right.

The sun is setting and the cattle
Are coming home at this new home
That I do not really know. They
Are led by a bull that has two
Humps like a camel. So wide are
Its horns that I fear it will
Not make it into the kraal. On
This day I miss the bulls of the
Land where I come from for they
Bellow in the wild and my stomach
Rumbles when it is time for them
To come home. Let the power of
These people set in my space
As I retire towards the river
To receive the red ochre baptism
On my face that wears the beaded

Fringe for it will soon go and I
Will become a wife in this land
Of my people.

My mother told me that this is
A journey without an end. She
Said life really begins and ends
Here but the truth about this never
Ends. What happens to one is never
Repeated to another for the places
Of being are as different as the
Hearths on which one cooks. I look
At the far away lands and see myself
Growing in the sandy lands of my
People and wonder if I will ever
Return for here begins the life
I have been waiting for.

Sarah Mkhonza

Making A Rare Move Up On This Mountaintop

In a rare move I am standing in a cave
Up on the mountains of my little country.
I see the river valleys and the forests
All green and the river turns like a brown
Thread way out there towards the confluence
Of another one. Homesteads like little
Mushrooms sit down there in the valley
As if painted on the earth by a hand
Bigger than the paint brush of an artist.

They look at the sky and it looks down
On them. In a rare glance I see the road
Also brown but climbing up in directions
Not of the river for it traces its way
On altitudes lower that go down. A bus blue
And striped weaves its way up along
The road loaded and moving like a large
Toy in child's play way down there.

It is a rare move to look down on life
And feel you can handle it in your hand
For the mountains give you a view only
The ones who dare to take a rare step
Up on their mountaintops of everyday
Challenges get to see.

To wake up and go on the same path to the
Same well to get water in the same container
Kills the love of existence in a poor soul
For you see the same stone and the same
Clump of grass and start to believe the
World is standing still yet it moving in
Those rare moves we do not feel and only
Know through the change of the seasons.

Make a rare move in your world and talk
To the seasons and tell them to turn the
Sky bluer for you for your everyday blue
Fails to help you make your rare moves

On this chess board of black and white
Which for you has failed to change.

Only the champions rare will have a story
To tell about the world if we all shuffle
And just push the king and queen in any
Direction for wins are made by that one rare
Move up on the mountaintop on this chess board.

For it is here that you see all the cans
And cants of life, for life lies lower
Than you and you emerge a doer who can
Choose to see and make something of the views
Or just stand and make no rare move as
You walk down dejectedly to the bottom
For they do say we are all equal at the
Bottom of the hill.

Don't fear the fall for if you look down
You will get dizzy and lose sight of the
Scenes as the acts roll on and the action
Moves on for these moves rare were meant
To be made at levels higher than normal
For it is here that the eagle perches its
Nest.

Sarah Mkhonza

Making Friends With Your Revolution

Peace asks you why you wait,
for it never waits in times of war.
While death smashes others,
and knocks them down with hatred,
you are called to be friends with your
own revolution.

Change knocks on your door with
furious fists. For the usual tastes
slimy even to the tastebuds in your
brain asking where your revolution is,
for it is called upon to declare war.

In you is a dormant war of peace,
the weapon that brings war to an end,
the weapon which always call on order,
to come into any situation, no matter
how hostile.

Struggle is a word that muddles the puddles,
calling on your thoughts to rise to the war cry,
in this dawn of new things. They are sung with
a tenor from the puddles, that says if it rained
hate, hail and grail, it can rain a rain of contrast,
one called upon by you.

New things stand in your hand, these swords
invisible, that can kill war and doom it to where
it belongs, for we do not fight like soldiers of
old. We are soldiers of the revolution of peace.

Stand you must, even if alone, for peace does
not lean on anything. It is as brave as it is silent.
It refuses to walk in the muddy shoes of killers.
For it was given to me and you, in the stillness
of spirit.

Change is hard in a world where killing is done,
without thinking clearly for anger is a soldier,

as is peace. One wears dirty clothes, the other none, and so gets more invisible, when people are down on a bloody pavement, and being carried out by ambulances.

Soldier of the revolution, stand undefeated, stand on legs of steal, for revolution boils in you, making you hot and making you cold, when your hands sweat for action. It is time to declare the peace in you, and live it till it spills over.

You know you are full of it, when violence fill the earth. Your thoughts sing songs with one tune. It searches everywhere, tunes that ask, where is peace? Where is love, for we swore to make the world better.

We swore with our forefingers crossed, with saliva drooping on them, that we would be one for we are walking into the oneness of revolution, in a world where to kill will be death of a soul, to those who stab and mow others down.

We can win this war. Soldier of the revolution, we have won this war. We walked into it blindfolded. We have won it by declaring that our is a war that was won for it the end, every slate will be clean.

As swords walk in the air, sharp edges up, and slings are outstretched, war is not Goliath, it is just a machine, used by those in power, to create more war, while innocent people die. With my silver tongued self, shiny sword os the revolution, heath, smooth as always, I tear strife and bloody war, and throw it to the dogs.

I make friends with my revolution, and declare that I will fight, till all my muscles, cluster into knots, for the earth is ours to take, not to give away. How will they know, there once lived people like me and you, if we let it go to the dogs, that tear each other in the name of defending truths hidden in their own bosoms. Tell me

soldiers of the revolution, that life is about
other truths, so we can write a new truth and
leave the old one in tatters. Yes, it is already
bloody, sick, and worn out. Every liar takes to war,
even if it means stabbing the air, for an accusation
like why it is blowing. Tell me new things soldier,
of the revolution, that tell me peace is around,
waiting and watching, when we will declare it
as the war we hold, see and take, to the tomorrow
I can die for. I hate this killing!

Sarah Mkhonza

Making Rainbows

Holding love in my hands, this water,
these droplets needed by each plant,
spread into the air, my own fountain.
I fern out a life giving half a sphere
all my own. For it is the angles at which
I hold the hose and pour out into the air,
that come together in a row long and endless
to give expression to colors that call
into being this spherical stretch of color
all my own. It makes me laugh for I have
come to make a covenant with life that
I am a goddess that can make her own rainbows.

Strewn from a source called my own hose,
held in my a hand named rainbow maker
I sprinkle droplets that make my reign in
this world tell for a short while who and what
I am made of.

The grass goes on telling that it lays under
the sprinkle of a joyful telling that says whenever
I touch, whatever, wherever, it changes into
this lovely rainbow in the flow of things that
know how the kiss of this ecstasy that I bring
is a kiss of stubborn love. This love grows rainbows
that mock the birds that chatter and claim a beauty
all their own for they can fly but the rainbow does not
need wings just as it does not need a beak to squeak
and tell the world that there is beauty in song, silence and in
a breath that is made by no beak with nostrils that a perched
on it.

My rainbow stands there smiling silently as if asking me if I
see the love, endless and stretching across the sky waiting
for me to reach out and touch it and own it forever in my memory.
It tells me, 'I have given you this mark of love, hate at your own risk
for you have spoken once and told the thunderstorm not to blast
furiously and disrupt and fill with the fire of war the same sky on
which we can lay down and sleep and not wake up to the sound of

guns for they can be silent once and for all, never to blast again.
The day will come when we can all make our own rainbows and
watch them rise at an angle all ours and see the beginning stretch
out in words that make rainbows with droplets all our own.
That day the NRA will have a runny nose and sniff into the rainbows.

Ra

Sarah Mkhonza

Marching Into The Year

This year is a dance
I step into on high
Heals and hope to head
For the hill where all
Is Happening now that
I hear of the million

Woman march.

Sarah Mkhonza

Marriage And Your Razor-Sharp Edges

It is not that I got cut that I tell o
f marriage as razor-sharp edged,
I saw two, by two trying to sew it
together when it was in tatters.

They patched with red patches here,
and doctored the edges together,
One tear there was revealing their
guts to the world.

The one razor-sharp edge was searing,
tear by tear in a mad rush that would
never stop after the words, 'I do.' I
swear the razor-sharp edge meant it
was doing the sequestration of love.

Razor-edges, made to slide into objects can break a heart when sharperlyrics
pushed into the soul;
, for tender is the spot where they land.

The sure thing we end up with is unmendable rags good only for
the trash can. If only the two
had kept the edges blunt and handled
the words I do with the center bringing
the sharp edges together. Too late, sang
a bird as it flew away still wearing a bib
with a ring on its finger. Razors can't hurt me. I'lluny be back on the rebound.
of a shark are nit easy

Sarah Mkhonza

Missing: Peace Kilimanjaro

Miss peace Kilimanjaro she says,
I will come on the mountain so,
tall this woman birthing up here,
quiet after storms waiting, knowing.
Now grey for wishing and loving,
hoping and pining for quiet. I stand
Miss Peace on this mountain peak,
speaking peace quietly to the world.
When the rain shows up here quiet,
down there quiet, all can see the truth.

I speak truth for it is raining peace up here,
No war down there, no show of cruelty in breath.
Breath full of war runs out up here.
'T is real peace we can touch this peace Kilimanjaro.
We can leave peace for future generations
For Kilimanjaro stands regal, waiting for all.

No fighting up here, but Kilimanjaro rising, regal
going up in an endless search to win the contest
of life. To have people come to the summit and touch,
the flag they leave here written, 'Peace Mt Kilimanjaro,
Peace in a world of strife we need.

Love knows no summits for nobody calls summit after
summit. The love conference blown by the flag up here,
invites all to see themselves in the other. Egos speak
and claim nuclear bombs built in lands and spoken in peaks,
and summits and this mountain stands silently, challenging
all. This question is one she speaks. Can a world as still
and peaceful as Mt. Kilimanjaro.

The combat is on and one by one they fall yet one by one
we are called. Come mountains of the world join in the
silent speech and call the world to your summits for summit
after summit they discuss this peace and keep on talking.
To sit on the top and talk may be the chance to take the
crown in endless meetings and do the real thing of putting
enemies in one bed by speaking one talker to take a crown

and put it on the other and declare peace between warring factions on the top of Mt. Kilimanjaro.

Stands to reason, one day. To get two warring factions to hike and get up there will require getting a crocodile, with the hardest skin to call them to order. Mt Kilimanjaro, missing quiet, create a way for two hard skinned enemies, to come up and breath where the breath runs out. For we have run out of tricks to do the work of words. They climb on top of each other, like worms chowing a rotten deer by the roadside. After the smell, the fight nothing remains.

Sarah Mkhonza

Money Madness

They call it money madness
When you have disquiet
About the feeling of not
Having any. I think it is
For lack of a better word
For it is not insanity that
Gets you, but listlessness
Followed by hopelessness
And their cousins shame
And failure.

Such a madness is not real
For you walk and fear that
The next person at the bank
Is a thief for they are using
The interest you should have
Earned when you had money
That contributed and made them
Able to come to this place where
The ATM has said, go home.
You have no need to be here.

It is a feeling that leaves you
So alone that you feel even the
Air knows your story. You walk
And hold your head up and hope
The landlord will know that
It is time to forgive just once.
Only to find the lock changed
On your door. Then you know
The landlord has money madness,
For how can all the money you
Threw into the rent hole not
Fill up his greed? God bless
Those whose spaces are ones
They can lock at will.

Sarah Mkhonza

Money With Heads Of People On It

When Caesar put his head on a coin
He made silver a tablet rare for
On it he wanted to see his image
Rare. He would look at it and know
When it faced the sun people saw
His smile for so vast was his empire.

Today we are stuck with the heads of
Pundits rare who stare at us in states
Of desperation galore for such is the
Minting of life. It minces us into a pulp
And pours us down the mould of countries
Poor that spend all trying to put one
Whose head is chosen to impoverish the
Many who scramble for the coin with
His head on it.

These pieces of silverware rare send us
Out of our houses each morning to go and
Collect our dignity for not doing so leaves
Our labor unsold to get the coin that makes
Us see our selves like the face of the one
On it.

To choose so humble a position and be followers
Of money is wisdom of the near want wits we became
The day we sang the national anthem instead of
A worldwide anthem.

For now in unison we rise to a note at the
Command of ones who died and left us chasing
Coins with their images which write a history
Of a people hungry.

Once we believed the coins with people's heads
On them would send us to tables on which lay a feast of
The gods like theirs. Now we learn it is about
Power and not about empty stomachs.

They say angels sing about a moneyless and papersless
World but never a silverless world where work
Will not be known but only plenty rolling itself
From table to table. Such a land I still have to
See for they say it exists in Lietchenstein.

Sarah Mkhonza

Musings Of An Abused Woman's Child

Her voice rises in the night
The woman nobody helps
She cries out loud
The hand of heaven does not hear her
The murder of the innocent continues
Unheeded, unending, and heard only by me

I want to help her, but I am little
My hands are little and so are my years
My thoughts go out to the darkness
The night gets dark as I look at the fire
The voice tears into the dark night
Scratching as she lies on the ground
Where a leather strap called the strop
Lands on her back endlessly

The years multiplied as did the whacks
They spread far and I did hear the words
A woman who knows you naked
Can never respect you
Beat her and she will know who you are

The nation sings about the wife who is alone
The one whose concubines are hidden
That her husband will beat her
Until the she has scabs instead of skin

A young boy sings the song
Me, I can just beat a woman
He looks at me and I look at him
The sun shines on his disheveled face.
His disheveled mind speaks
Just yesterday he was languishing in her
The woman's womb that made him whole
Gave him the fists he has learned are good
When you land them on a female body
And fold them to knock her down
When your own turn comes to be a boss
Of the flesh that is female under you

Makes me think of the lashes in the dark
Coming down like lightning
Striking a whole team of soccer players
Who end up lying dead on the ground
All over our this violent word of ours.

Sarah Mkhonza

My Ford Pinto

Brown paint almost peeling off,
I drive it down the street windows down.
I see the world, but I also see the bottom
of the world. My Pinto has holes in the
bottom. When I travel, I know the city
down and under.

No truth about what it cost,
Just a heap of car the owner
dumped on me. 'Take it, ' she said
'for any price.' I know I did not
spend much, but the love it
brought me was like the day
I had just nothing wrong,
and called a man to fix it.

He looked at me and thought
I was crazy, to ask him to just
put it down, this whatever was wrong
for the Pinto was ready to go.

Next time you buy a stick shift,
don't lose yourself in the shift.
The stick still waits for you,
to change gears like I did.
As I roared on Highway 69.

I had to go to the movies.
I had bought the best car
in the world ever made. To me
it was heaven, so small so short.
I wished there would be an antique
car club, that would take it and go
and keep it for posterity.

If you ever loved a car,
one similar and small,
you feel what I touched,
and laughed inside for years

and then moved on, like
a guy leaving a lady,
whose thoughts will always
come back for he wishes
he had married her and not
ride her like my pinto.

Oh how miss it so, now that cars
are about glowing paints,
and not the love of cruising
in the fossil of a car you love.
When I loaned it to someone,
they surely heard from me,
before the day was over.

For a car is not a thing to lend
around like a pair of glasses.
It is a thing that when people
look at, they say here she comes,
meaning both you and the car.

Regret can never help
when years pass and
down the road, I keep
imagining it is coming
this little buzzard, this pinto
ever so mine to be always mine
even when I do not know which
scrap yard it is. which is blest
to be the resting place of
the love I shared with the road,
that carried us both.

When faithfulness depends on me,
I do keep the faith and expect you,
to do like wise. I feel the Pinto feels
that when it came to it, I broke a vow
that was never made on the bible,
and therefore went with time.

When friends came to borrow her,

I should have known that deep down,
I should tell them the truth, that we
never really share such things, because
our hands on the stirring wheel are not soft,
for the car knows this. Tell it what you are,
it tells you what it is. Now that it is lost,
only my hands remember very well,
what was said between the two of us,
for the touch is stronger than the throw,
when it is the last throw for you remain,
holding on to air.

Sarah Mkhonza

My Little Finger In The Snare

So powerful this little figure
It refused to wear the ring
And said it would pass and have
My second figure take it.

When asked to help hold
A fork into my mouth it
Totally refused and chose
To dangle loosely declaring
Its own independence.

When asked to point out
A thief it said it has
No eyes so how could he
Have seen the thief for
All things human feel
The same when you only
But dangle down their
Empty hand.

When asked to handle
A one hundred dollar
Bill, it sighed and
Said finally I get
The message and moved
Closer to the others
And said 'united we stand'
And even offered to join in
When they sign a check for
A million dollars and then
Went off to play in the sand
Arguing that the sand is a good
Friend for it does not know any
Racism even on white sandy bitches
It is allowed to play even in this
Era of racist shootings that have
Police shoot on hands up
Don't shoot. It says it is in this
Snare for lack of leg room.

Sarah Mkhonza

My Love Search Has Ended

I thought of love as faces close to each other,
No expression but intense exchanges of looks,
No words but sounds of two people's bodies clinging,
In endless mumbling, sighing and minting of smells
not yet known.

I heard the word in my wicked youth,
of wanting to know by experiencing it,
this kissing and pushing of things unknown,
the squirming and turning in cavernous places,
of limbs of muscle sliding into each other.

I discovered a truth kept from me,
that I would forever wonder about,
As long as I live in search of love,
For the pictures I had bought from childhood,
Had been bought at the store of endless questions,
Where answers were even more expensive if found.

What is it like to love I ask?
It is like two teenagers kissing,
Smirks of laughter in my grandmother's answer.
I just did that with Mfana from next door.
Did you see the sparks you set up?
No, but just a little awkward shaking of us.
Of those images in my childhood sessions,
There we stand and that's all there is,
For love never becomes
You are the one who becomes.

Sarah Mkhonza

My Lower Lip Hangs Open

This act surprises my jaded self
For when I toddled into life
I looked forward to a table set
With golden fork and knives
Only to be told to eat dinner with
Rusty spears.
I swallowed hate
And spat out blood
For such is the world
We live in.

Sarah Mkhonza

My Nose Pressed Against The Window Of Our Times

I see and hear blasts
Loud and clear with casts
On legs yelling cries last
Spoken of in a year going out.

Its tutelage telling us our
Ties are loose for they are
Easily broken to where
We wonder if they ever were.

Our evenings seen on this
Window open us up to cries
In far away lands that make
Us ask why the sun settled
For tomorrow will still be
Another morrow of war.

I see my breath steam this
Window of the new year with
Sighs for the panacea we call
Prayer and well wishing drips
With bloody helplessness when
Put on flesh that is being torn
By blasts that shake the earth
And cause it to rumble like an
African thunderstorm for it leaves
The lights blown out.

My nose feels the hardness
Of our hearts and seeks the
Creations of our words.
Our words have seized the moment
And torn it into a time of
Let us destroy what we did not
Build and die fighting in the
Rubble for all our talk ends
In ceasefires that keep on
Being revoked.

Why did we make weapons
That now oppress us with
Ceaseless war? This slavery
Of a fear of each other
Is going to the future
With us. When will we
Lay down weapons and greet
Life with the promise of
Creating and not destroying
For this is the real question
We need to ask soul to soul?

I move away from this window
Into the darkness and feel
The ground under me shaking
Telling me the world is moving
Towards celestial healing
Where all will one day laugh
At fissures we created while
The earth was planning a real
Earthquake.

Sarah Mkhonza

My Roots Request The Roughness Of The Diamond

When I look at these tweets you sent,
when love between us was smooth,
like the diamond you gave me, so rough,
as it graced my finger, I see the roughness
of the diamond, and see it was cut from a bigger
stone.

I see my roots in the stone, the bigger stone,
for love is big and limitless in my mind. You
got me and loved me in the morning of my
one day life. By evening, you were done,
and gone back to the sky.

Oh hear me out, as I speak our truths,
for once this stone shiny on a band
with depressions, that have darkened
with the days, says, your roots of love,
were equally shallow.

I say my roots are not here, on this smooth,
kissing gone, you hissing my name, snaky you
calling on love, like you were on a see-saw,
waiting for my side to go down and yours to go
up with my skirts in the air, with wind blowing
my laughs of hope to the wind.

My roots repeat the roughness of the diamond,
before it was cut to make me a part of you.
You said you were sealing a deal of love,
when you put this diamond in here.

Look how callous my hands have become,
this love eased my finger and thrust life
into my area of responsibility. I counted two,
had two for that is where the ring was.

Now I remain the one handled, who would
not handle another with equal roughness,
for the diamond was cut, at edges wrong,

to tie me and you together when we were
sons and daughters of different gods.

I long to speak at the court of the world,
that this happened at the diamond cutter's table.
They blame me and say I know how to pass blame,
onto the merchants of love, for they never know
what the buyer will do, with the diamond they cut.

You said you were going to love someone, and said
it even in stone, when you were lying to the world,
like the best bachelor in the world, that had us watching
the biggest sham in history.

I am no keeper of secrets, this you know from being here.
I also search spaces, this you know because if I tell the world,
what I discovered when we two were one, you will say, I sure
am a kiss and tell.

Why do you all claim to be good lovers, when you are takers?
Why say you can go a mile, when you cannot even take one step?
I long to hear from you lovers of the world, for I have come
to love stories of love, baked anew, on alters in oven hot
churches, for this we know is a story of man.

Keep on marching with the truth. For love is certain,
to speak for itself, if I misrepresent it with my knowing,
what I heard between two pillows, tired of supporting
heads that loved one minute and fought the next, only
to love again and then love no more.

If pillows could talk, they would not tell a soft story.
yes not one as soft as feathers, for they have heard a lot.
The stories would be as hard as the diamond here.
It is sick and tired of my finger, for these days I do not
even take the ring off when I wash dishes,
for what is the point.

Let us celebrate knowing, for it leads to making anew.
Renewing vows made with this diamond, could happen
if you first answer my questions. What happens to the
truth, , with which the diamond that seals the deal, is said

to cement? Does it harden in the cementing and end up
a mystery only the gods can solve or a mystery that only
the two people can solve? These are hard questions, you say.
They will be answered when we open pillows, unseal cemented
lies, and live the truth we sign and seal, like this diamond
on my ring finger.

Sarah Mkhonza

No Pattern No Do Said One Bird To Another

Have you ever wondered why
Migratory birds up in the air
Fly in a v-pattern I ask for we
Are going on a long journey so
We may as well as speak some
Truth one to another? These
Here ducks swimming in this river
On the banks of which we stand
Concur that this is to be
Done by me and you if we must
Live the life of migratory
Birds with no wings who have
A sense of direction.

The ducks whispered that
Wrong vision, wrong way,
Wrong everything and flapped
Their wings splashing me
With water and telling me
To go and ask the birds.
Feeling rejected for not
Getting a hug from these
Winged friends, but this
Wet chastisement of this
Splash I buzz off my eyes
Looking sky high for winged
Friends to tell me more for
I live assured that these
Rude ducks are unusual for
Politeness is rife in the
Bird world.

The birds tell me crooked
Ways don't do it and their
Suggestions tell me To
Get into the vortex of truth
As it spins in the air
And follow them for if I

Do not have a clear way
Ahead, I will be one of kind
And lose my way alone
While they constantly
Follow the v-pattern
For no v-pattern no do
Says one bird to another

For me and you we live unsure
Where our ways are going to
Cross for if they do so we
Will confuse each other
If I lead the v-pattern
Get the message, find your
Wind and join in the flight
For we are going far and
Going in circles will not
Do it. Winged friends or
No winged friends to follow
We have to reach the ends of
The earth in season.

Sarah Mkhonza

No Head No Tail This Jelly Fish

This substance nebulous
Itchy like the story of
My divorce which jaf me
Scratching my head on the
Way to the highest court
In the land like going into
An ocean insecure uncobered
This story of my entering
Into deep waters alone with
A shadow that drowns itself
In this alcohol that stings
With no head no tail this
Jelly fish.

I step out of the water so
Glad I can reach for the spray
And point it on my leg that
Spot reddening fast for I am
Scratching this itchy patch
As if to confess I was as ignorant
As zero for that empty was my mind
When I got stung. I thought love
Was an ocean and you bathed in it
And drowned and came out dazed with
Bliss a happiness indiscribable
Now tell me where is the head of this
Jellyfish that ended the game with
A sad tangled mess sneaking in on my
Blessed eye closed dive and had me
Sitting here on the beach of life in
Pain.

I am watching the sunset
Creep in shyly as I ask
Why happiness is so selective
For these surfers don't seem
To be even aware of jellyfish.
They come out surfing boards
Under their arms oblivious

Of the dilemma that has me dry
Sandy and itchy my legs stretched
Sandy and drying up in misery.

Sarah Mkhonza

No Power No Do, For You Asked For It.

I sit here at this job,
Feeling lost and unsure,
My thoughts got to the end,
Of this string that ties me,
To this place where I empty,
All my strength daily.

No power no do, I hear the words,
My work has got me here,
Where only words can save me,
For I have worked with nothing but words,

The wind mill goes on and on,
Churning water to levels higher,
Sipping into dams bigger than me,
What have I done while it worked?

No power no do it answers me,
It looks at the sky drawing circles,
That take my gave even higher,
As it repeats no power, no do.

What have I done with the notes,
I put into banks that chewed my guts,
Telling people about higher figures,
Wanting to accumulate money that sings back,
No power no do?

What shall the sun say when it rises,
Looking at my hands that have dried up,
While I work on peeling scaleless potatoes,
That fall into endless pots,
With no soup for the children,
For yesterday I worked all day,
Today I cry all day singing one son,
No money, no do/

This is the story the till tells when I pay,
Wanting everything to walk to my house,

On the back of my backpack.
For I do not want this hunchback I have become,
To go home homeless, moneyless and lifeless,
For life the ruthless taker that it is,
Has left me with the same, no power, no do.

Did the bosses in the big office,
Tell you when you arrived,
It would be like this,
Asks the sun as it sets?

I walk away from this place,
A person whose strength is sapped,
By the days that demand from me,
And never feel the back pack I have become,
That only fills up with the same money they want,
And yet they say no power, no do.

Songs are evil, the wind mill says,
That is why I turn and sing no more,
Never knew how to sing, my friend,
But just to turn and keep alive,
For people need water from me,
And not the piss that comes out of you,
Daily showing you your struggles,
That keep telling you life goes on,
Piss or no piss, for no power no do,
So stop this pissing and work,
Before you will smell like death,
When they drive you away,
With no money but a smell that says
You were also there,
For you asked for it.

Sarah Mkhonza

Nobody Listens To The Noisy Mower

The mower told the grass not to grow
In the loudest of noises and the grass
Stubbornly grew as if nobody had just
Beaten it on the head and mowed it down
Into tufts. The mower returned as
Always and did the job the same way
Knowing this time it would win,
But the rain came to the aid of
The grass and with an ally like it
The battle waged on between the grass
And the mower. The mower got older
And its sound got louder until it
Realized it was fighting a losing
Battle for the rain told it never
To fight a battle it cannot win
Finally it died and was sold to a scrap
Merchant who asked it why it was so
Old and angry. It said the grass still
Grows and mocks it each rainy season
With shoots so new it had to quit
In tears and hide away with embarrassment
At how so weak an enemy could defeat
So strong a power for its motor
Was made in Germany by the best
Of engineers. The scrap merchant
Simply threw the mower in the heap
And off he went to be remade into
Steel for a railroad and only
Then would the grass stop growing
For the trains never allowed
So stubborn a species to defeat
it. The arms of a man who held
The mower joined in applause for
Finally his mower could rest.

Sarah Mkhonza

Non-Stop Confrontations With Grace

I sit in the dark looking into space
Counting the days on this journey
To the panorama that is out in space
And then wonder why I have the privilege
To count these confrontations with grace
Which are meant to be encounters in time.

For when I was supposed to do one thing
I did another with audacity of a seahorse
That jumps up and down and goes deeper
And deeper in the corals where it thinks
It is the most beautiful of all.

I sit in temperatures of grace that tell
Of my being incognito for I have not joined
Life on the center stage so that the spotlight
Is right on me on this first act of love
Where every source of the feeling that hits me
Tells me I have a pride that I need to bend
And twist on this parade of my ignorance.

I ask why this attack on a spirit weak and gaunt
And then I get agitated for I do not get an answer
Knowing that I have been told that man is weak
Ever since I began hearing sounds of roosters
And print them into memory for my grandmother
Prayed at three in the morning always
Calling for grace from a god she called
In Zulu words that begin in So.

I feel my feet walking on the gravel roads
Early in the morning with her shadow following
The moonlight in the west telling me it is time
For this grace that got us walking is the same
As the one that keeps us breathing.

I know I have had confrontations with grace
For the spirit yelled asking questions hidden
Inside my person for I had come to know

That is in confrontations that the anger
Is spilled out into the open and heard by grace
And then brought back calmly in an answer like
A whisper of someone far away, asking me what it
Is I am saying for the answers are clear.

I have seen a movie of my life played out
In a screen unseen as each elder who gave me
Counsel I despised stood on a spotlight
And said words that answer each and every one
Of these confrontation with grace, for they
Were unforgettable encounters that bore the
Truth of yesterday's thoughts.

Sarah Mkhonza

Not Just Giant Walking Puppets

messing with democratic systems
is indeed what it is this unseen
covering up tracks in the snow
depressions looking into the
eyes of the sky saying someone
called Big Foot was visiting the
dark corners in cyberspace like a
cockroach in the dark and surely
did cut the pound of
is why there is all this hemorrhaging.
tomorrow's inauguration tells you
to come and put me on the scale
to check if the weight plus blood
was just a pound. weigh also the
country just to be sure how much
it will have bled when they are done
done with it. as for. me bury me with
my hands outside the pile of earth
so I can write a telling poem to let
you know what it is like where I will
be so that you do not get caught
with your pants. down, the way it
happened to me. I was gutted and
they wanted to taste my brain arguing
that it was included in the pound of
flesh, these giant walking puppets.

Sarah Mkhonza

Now I Charge Him Of Vehicle Embezzlement

The judges believe the young man took that
Car because I was in love with him. I ask
The judge how a woman three score years can
Be in love with a young man of seventeen who
Is her next door neighbor. He says I left the
Keys in the car and had had him drive it before
I argue that I was sick and had nobody to drive
Me for in these years when my varicose veins
Have me limping I cannot trust my leg on the
Gas pedal. Therefore this charge of vehicle
Embezzlement that has the world against me.

His mother swears I have kissed him before.
I deny and say I would rather go to jail
Than do an act so improper for the child
Is underage. I never knew that cars could
Be embezzled and now I know that you can
Embezzle a cat and also a jacket. For when
Something is not yours, it is not yours.

I grew up with the law, written on my hand
For my father did not pay child support.
I did not know that he was embezzling that
Money which was supposed to have made me
Into a better person than what I am. If
He had owned up, I would be Miss Universe
For I would have not bought the food I
Ate and gotten so big for lack of a
Proper Meal. When you embezzle food note
That it may be in this world where you
Are putting the money in the cheaper stuff
And hence will pay for the weight will show
You were taking where you should have not.

This bait is in every trap where you might
Put your hand in the cookie-jar. Take it
as kleptomania this deed of stealing what
Is not yours. As we say in the south of
Africa, what is not yours hands off.

Do cut your hand off before you get charged
With all kinds of embezzlement for if we
Can embezzle cars, I do not know where
The buck stops.

Sarah Mkhonza

Now That I Have Failed The Test

Mom now that I brought home the F
Who am I. You are my daughter who
Will try again for like the leaves
On the tree it will be green again
For we know it is by trying just
One more time that we win.

But my friends laugh at me. Leave
Them alone for they have never been
The leaf that makes the trees green
And when on the ground knows to bounce
Back is more important than not bouncing
Let alone not bouncing back.

What about now that they won't
Lend me their erasers? Tell them
You have a rubber tree at home and
It rains erasers and your family
Owns a rubber tree farm in India.

Sarah Mkhonza

On A Nie Blankes Durban Beach

Rocks on this beach mean
This is all the beach you
can get you tainted ones.
White sands on the Blankes
beach. This one for Blacks
they call Umgababa.

No hotels, no flashy northern
lights for the non fans
They can have Black swim.
But not on white sands in
this Durban turf, never to
be a home turf even when here

Sarah Mkhonza

On Human Rights Day

Let's suppress this mutineers
Against the world where people
Run around no people for their
Rights are wronged I governments
Where everything right is wrong.
Where freedom is in chains, where
Words of others are lile cries os
A stray cat. Let the world open
Its doors to those who walk the
World a people abandoned and scattered in the world at the
Threshing floor of life.

Here the winnowing folk of fate Sifts the husks from the
Grain and sets on the road to the edge of the world where they await their fate
to be thrown over the edge of the precipice.

Here they stand the wind blowing
Tears off their cheeks and carring
Them into the air we breathe. When
The air is saturated with tears who
Are we? When our own have no shelter
And food what have we done?

Let us not fold our hands and carry
Them on our heads for we have the
Power to rewrite this story of
Deprivation. A right is a right just
As it says let us make it happen
In our time this giving of the
World on human rights day.

Sarah Mkhonza

On My Last Gasp

I want my last gasp
To be a poet's gasp
That salutes the world
Announcing my bowing out
With words read loud,
Pronouncing with respectful
Commas that curtesy with
The grace of heavenly nymphs.

I want to look behind and see
Seed popping moist with my
Watering, fruit ripening
And ready for the picking

I want to smell lavender
That takes me under and
Lays my head in heavenly
Smells that fill the downstairs
Where my nostrils yield in
The final place of surrender
For I will have perfumed the
World we live in with wonder.

I want to bow out to a gun salute
Fired with pens held by writers
At a poetic angle that asks what
They will do now that one of
Their own has fallen.

I want to trouble minds so that
The poets cough out answers
With a poetry that will feed
On the love of an art we have
Grown to love that our hearts
Burst from the love of it.

I do not want to go out with
Mourners quoting my last twit
And then have a sudden lasting fit

When a god forsaken hecker threatens
To take it away so I have nothing
To attest I was here, forcing
My friends to pad my orbituay
With lies and quotations from
The King James version of the
Only book that accompanies saints
And gets read outside the hole
Declaring the obvious truths.

Sarah Mkhonza

On The Wings Of A Blessed Dove

For those of you people of the south who want to know
I received the news on the wings of a blessed dove.
Hearing it was like tasting honey on the beak of
A vulture for I looked at the dove and knew the past
Of woe and looked at the birds that never carry
Any good news to anyone with suspicion.

Why should I not have been surprised seeing rain
That falls on top a desert date tree making it
Sway this way and that in the wind with joy?
For never in the history of my life had I been
Chosen to lead the majorettes with the mace in
My hand.

They have chosen me the riders of horses that
Live in cyberspace and trot to the sound of
Visitors from everywhere who come to the kingdom
Of the one-eared king saying I am the queen
Of a kingdom that is about to be built.

I agree to serve with my all for I have seen this
King with a hat for a crown for there are no diamonds
There to be used to fashion a crown, let alone a tiara
But, birds with feathers of velvet that when worn
Render all the 'citoyen' to sing louder than the loudest
Of birds.

This message on the wings of a blessed dove is
Fitting for the likes of me for I dance the dances
Of the people on cyberspace and let the world
Know that to marry a king with a hat for a crown
Is something that blesses those who come from
The mountain where horses are as many as dogs.

Next time you hear I am the queen of Bongo
Know that I was Bongo bound even before I
Saw the king for my dreams have always been
About kings, queens and palaces.

On This Park Bench

Here on this park bench sits
A memory as old as the bench
For it is here that my mother
Met my father and entered into
The life that begot me.

Little did they know they had
Started a chain reaction of love
For now generation after generation
We have married women we meet on
Park benches without sitting with
Them on family pews in church
For this thing called love defies
Even the rules of Pope Sir Francis
The most radical of them all.

What wood made this bench that has us
Tied to its own radical history?
Go ask the priest how much he paid
For the cassock he wears and you
Will know the answer. For my mother
Will tell me where she first kissed
My father if not on this park bench.

For I like the story of lovers making
Me on a park bench. It is a wild story
Of flowers and gardens my children would
Love and then carry on the tradition
Of citizens who voted yes to life
On this park bench

Sarah Mkhonza

Once Do-Gooder Turned No-Gooder

Once you turned in your work
before the teacher told the date.
Now you lag behind and time pushes
ahead with you facing backwards
waiting on the belt called no-gooder.

Once the tablets were taken
as the prescription dictated,
now yo swallow one here and one there
saying you fear no sickness,
for they are just giving you medicine
when they are not sure what is wrong with you.

Once you crossed at the red and green light
now you watch for cars and dash across the road
anywhere, like the stray from the neighborhood
for the earth once unfamiliar, now reads like the sand,
that you see on your doorstep.

They say familiarity breeds contempt.
Is it doing the same to you, making you
give up on humanity and also on yourself
for once you were a do goober, even helping
neighbors with parcels when they walked toward
the house.

What happens when you lose touch,
with the best part of you, like a virgin
failing to cling on to the promise once
kept to the body, that not this boy or that,
but the one who has the touch of love,
and can keep your body warm, with the kisses
longed for, and years of waiting.

Keep the gentleman's touch like Tom,
Open doors for ladies and pay for the
dinner for two. I miss the do-gooder in you,
and hate the no-gooder for I do not know
where that came from.

Sarah Mkhonza

One Flash In The Dark

If it's lightning in a rainy storm,
you wish for no repeat. In your flashlight
you hope the battery is not dead. You wait
on prayer mode for the answer. Luck
comes and then more thunder. The storm
is in control.

The slithering snake held by your flash
means your foot is safe. We crave and need
with ought thinking for we hold our own
invisible flashlight. To switch it on when
is the question, storm, snake or thunder.
The dance in the storm is in control.

Sarah Mkhonza

One Joke One Giggle At A Time

If looks can kill I am
Dead already for yours
Tear a woman's heart
Into two.

If love is a mystery write
My story in faint ink so you
Can go over the writing over
And over for your touch writes
On me a story fit to be told
To the few who have tasted the
Honey etched onto me by the
Movements of your dance moves.

I know my jokes crack you up
And as your looks do likewise
Let us die one joke, one giggle
At a time. The world waits to
Know where this will end one day
At a time, son of an elder.

* Title borrowed from Obama's 'one
joke, one dance at a time.

Sarah Mkhonza

One Migratory Bird To Another 'no V Pattern No Do'

Have you ever wondered why birds
Fly in a v-pattern I ask for we
Are going on a long journey so
We may as well as speak some
Truth one to another? These
Here ducks swimming in this river
On the banks of which we stand
Concur that this is to be
Done by me and you if we must
Live the life of migratory
Birds with no wings who have
A sense of direction.

The ducks whispered that
Wrong vision, wrong way,
Wrong everything and flapped
Their wings splashing me
With water and telling me
To go and ask the birds.
Feeling rejected for not
Getting a hug from these
Winged friends, but this
Wet chastisement of this
Splash I buzz off my eyes
Looking sky high for winged
Friends to tell me more for
I live assured that these
Rude ducks are unusual for
Politeness is rife in the
Bird world.

The birds tell me crooked
Ways don't do it and their
Suggestions tell me To
Get into the vortex of truth
As it spins in the air
And follow them for if I
Do not have a clear way

Ahead, I will be one of kind
And lose my way alone
While they constantly
Follow the v-pattern
For no v-pattern no do
Says one bird to another

For me and you we live unsure
Where our ways are going to
Cross for if they do so we
Will confuse each other
If I lead the v-pattern
Get the message, find your
Wind and join in the flight
For we are going far and
Going in circles will not
Do it. Winged friends or
No winged friends to follow
We have to reach the ends of
The earth in season.

Sarah Mkhonza

One Stitch After Another Woman To

Woman to woman
We make my bridal dress
Of home made lace.

She shows me niddle in hand,
How the hook goes in and out
Tying knots that make me ask
If the camel will go through
The eye of this neeedle
When the question about riches
Is asked of me and him.

I try on the bridal dress as mother
Puts the finishing touches to it
Mother, I ask, how did you do
On the question on riches?

Don't get cold feet.
The camel has two humps
If you keep both pairs of hands
On its back it ceases to
Be rocky and you go through
Expect the rough ride for
Desert sand goes into your
Eyes even before you get there
Where you have to walk your
Camel through that trying place.
Just make sure it is not loaded.

Can I take my jewelery box which
Sings and has the angelic ballerina?
She is the magic charm from my Black heritage.
Don't ask me, I took mine, which is
Why you have it.
You have to take water, for sure,
For a camel does not share its supply

Now do some stitching while I look,
I push the niddle through and work

To the end of the last row happily
As stitch by stitch we finish being
Two women sharing before my final exit. This last scene ends here.
For I can now see him getting on the
Camel that was lying down, for this ride I greet with nervous giggles.

Sarah Mkhonza

Open The Fear With Forgiveness

Push into the darkness of the deed,
Push harder than a hammer would do,
Get in there and laugh as aloud do,
There will be an echo that you hear,
It will be doing a new thing to anger,
Creating a space between you two,
That no one can close after you do.

Walk in there with eyes of forgiveness,
Everybody will be quiet as you move,
Take the darkness between you out,
And shake every hand of kind and cruel,
The darkness will be starved and go,
For your laughter is an eraser.

Never move with closed doors of unforgiveness,
They will multiply and haunt your future,
They will reopen and crowd you out
And return you to places,
Where you were dwarfed by rejection,
And mutilated by insults,
And killed by beatings.

Forgiveness is a tool,
It is an invisible machine,
It minces the pieces in there,
and greases the rough rust,
And then creates a new flow,
A you that can hold blue light.
The you that has a pseudonym

Love's namesake this forgiveness,
They walk together and hold hands,
And kiss each other like lovers,
When you marry them at the alter,
For the rings are ready in your heart.
Take the plunge and get wet in the eyes,
Life keeps pushing you the other way,
Turn the other cheek at it and wave,

For the distance to forgiveness is long,
For there love also rests nearby longing,
For the two of you to merge.

Sarah Mkhonza

Opening The Treasure Coves Deep Down

Hidden beyond the place
The eye can see are treasure
Coves waiting for you to
Open them and take your
Share of what is yours.

You came with the mind, the
Spade in your hand. Break the
Surface and see little by
Little what only you can uncover
For if you sit blinded by the
Luminous sun called the now the
Treasure will be found by another.

Don't sell your treasure to the
Thief called time. It will rob
You and say it will pay you
Tomorrow. Remember if you stand
And dig in the now, the treasure
Will pile up and stand with you
Tomorrow for that time is coming
To stand with you in the now.
Plan an ongoing now and then call it tomorrow for if you call a spade
A spade, the digging gets better. That is the wisdom the ant lives
wise, so small, so busy,
Copy her and rest when tired.

Sarah Mkhonza

Orchids In The Tea Room

I thought of orchids pink
And yellow and tea sipped
With two straws that pull
It into my mouth at once
For the cup and saucer I
Held in my hand had a handle
Of gold for it had been passed
down in the family.

The thought of orchids still
lingers in my mind for they
Brought to me a happiness
That made my love with my
Cup of tea a celebration
Of my the time I have lived
For I am advancing in years.

These orchids planted by mama
In this room remind me of her
Legs stretched in front of her
As she said I should get her
More milk.

I always forgot to check if
The milkman had come and she
Said to the clink clink I made
In our kitchen, 'just to look
Near the door would not kill you,
Now give me the condensed milk.'

Mama's tea went down better with
Fresh milk with cream for she loved
To see it floating at the top
And draw it in and leave a bit
Hanging on her lip to be cherished
With the next sip on her white cup
With the roses on it.

Mama had a collection of teapots

Some of which had special knitted
warmers that they wore to keep her
Precious tea hot till daddy came home.
Then the two would sit and drink
Their tea over stories of growing
Up poor during the depression and
Laugh at how we children have never
Tasted dry bread.

The Blue Delpht set was only used
When Pastor came to visit for
Everyone knew it had come
All the way from Holland and
Had to be used for dinners and tea times
Of those who speak for God.

The orchids in my house attest
To this for they have heard
And seen the past written by
The two with me erasing truths
As I told about the milkman
Whose duties I seemed to overlook
Knowing that one day I would
Forget to tell this story of tea.

When you see an orchid yellow
Remember those do not smell
But their look is so alive
That it touched the heart of
A couple and made them produce
A child like me over a look
That that began over a cup of
Two in an tea room built by two
Full of flowers both in vases
And on cups and saucers.

I saw it proven that love
Goes down deeper and sweeter
When taken down with a cup
Of tea by two lovers whose
Habit of sharing goes beyond
The knowledge of the children

Whom they born over the years.

Sarah Mkhonza

Our History In Tatters

I see lives pulled asunder,
words biting, piercing what
we worked out to a lay out
that aimed to shield us all.

Now we speak with arms
raising placards that say
Wa-wa-wa- - WAIT! You did
not mean what you said, that
some people must not come
into a land that let you and yours
into its belly where you made a
bedchamber and now you lie
in it and kick the door closed.
when the very chamber is named
after their seas.

This deed leaves mine and your
history in tatters, for we write
it everyday with the ink of the blood
of those who weed the fields, pick
the red peppers and pick the grapes
yet have never tasted a single bottle
of the wine you sell at a price of
a week's wages. Wait! This Mayflower
cannot land on this shore with you
on it. Next! Green Card, you semi immigrant!

Sarah Mkhonza

Our Sing Along Game Is Over

There were the times you would lead
And I would follow for yours was a tenor
That could open the heavens and get the
Rain pouring down on the whole of southern
Africa if we needed it.

For you started every song and I followed
For the melody in your voice was sweet
Meaningful and easy to follow. Now that you
have run away with the choir soloist in blue
I still look back at the space you occupied
And hope my Pavaroti will come back and do
It just once more.

They told me you have gone to the next church
For you hop around churches like real bed hoppers
And I was embarrassed for I knew you to be an ideal
Person that I could follow. Now that the truth
Is out, how can we look at the word.

You have cheated us of the love of your back up
And our sing along is out of tune for it lacks
The likes of singers like you. We have to get
Back and create what we had just for the sake
Of the people who are your fans. I know I am
speaking for the angels as well for they heard
You singing hymns, ballads and all.

How can our game be over before it started?
Just because you loved a girl? This love thing
Is not on the contract you signed when you had
Us stand up and sing for the people. Tell you
Mother you are sorry for she looked up and went
To the alter to pray and everyone knew it was
Because of you. For when you sang she knew she
Had done the world a lot of good for peace came
Down and settled on the battle field we call
A house of worship instead of calling it a 'warship.'

Page By Page We Plod On

To finish what we started, we must plod on. This ticking when marking this pile of essays has to go on.

In plodding we expect a surprise, this good essay we can read to everybody. It tells the story is beginning.

This plodding must go on for something is brewing. Yesterday's yeast is working. There will be shoots green.

The seasons are the real seasoning for we see changes that come from the ashes that we blew into with pouted mouths. They tell us love is no silent deed.

Sarah Mkhonza

Painstakingly Simple Is The Answer

When that one spoonful you are not supposed
To put into your mouth gets lifted, just say
No and put it down.

When that one order on the checkout list gets
Where the budget does not say you should go, get
The right picture of what happens. You are going
Beyond the beyond into debt territory, the big hole
Where it will be hard to turn back.

When that smoochy feeling that is not wisely guided
Comes and caresses your soul, you know it is wrong
Just say, the one two letter word that howls in the
Wind and is mostly unheeded.

When the result will be chickens coming home to roost
It is better to stop them from leaving and cut out the
Beaks and strip them of wings for the shame one will see
When they are done roosting.

We learn to be told that to do is simply to do
But to do wisely, at the right time, in the right way
Is left an untold story that slips through the fingers and
Each one of us has to figure it out for themselves, in
This world where the word discipline became complicated
A long time ago.

It is painstakingly complicated, this living of life
In simple ways, where we indulge ourselves of all that
Is called experience and not choose the things important
And potent with future blessings from portions of a size
Of mouth bites and speeches of grace that shape
So painstakingly simple truths elude us is a mystery
That is always revealed at the bottom of the hole we dig
Daily and fall into with our eyes open.

Sarah Mkhonza

Palm Tree, Swing And Sway For Me

It stands tall its leaves reaching for the sky,
T his palm tree that gave me life,
Its sap made my people drink,
After tapping its endless tap,
And sapping its endless sap.

This same palm whose nut I ate,
This coconut from which I drank
While smearing its butter on my skin.
Its aged leaves now bowing down,
Refusing to look up and give to you,
Letting go of the stem that holds,
Like rich notes of money peeling,
From a bundle that the merchant peels
When he goes to banks you send him.

What will I do when you lie down forever,
Your sap like milk all dried up,
With shriveled fruit with no milk for me,
No nipples sweet where yesterday we drank,
Licking our hands and mouth greedily,
Without thinking one day you will go,
Never to sing and rand give us sap no more?

Palm tree, palm tree sing to me,
When the wind blows, let your leaves move,
Let the leaves that look down share,
In this life that you have given,
Palm tree wise, palm tree tall,
With my hands I reach out to you,
And touch your sap around me,
For it dripped into our hut,
And gave us life when we were poor.

Where will we go when you are gone?
Where will the warmth of your smells go?
What can I do to make you stay
And feed me with your butter, sap and all? .
For I have eaten fruit that falls,

Your leaves swaying writing my life,
Which I would read in years to come,
For you came to bless with all you have,
Endless spirit of endless giving.

Sarah Mkhonza

Peace Be Unto Aleppo

I am not Aleppo bound
But after seeing Omram
I feel the need to say
I feel for the world
When children die under
So much rubble caused
By bombs of people old
Who cannot talk and agree
To end this war.

I sit and grieve and see
People fleeing in all
Directions where the world
Is standing looking on and
Doing the least it can and
Know I am the world too
And equally an onlooker.

This destruction of things
Build by hands cannot destroy
The depth of life but it does
Have Omram rubbing his eyes
For he came out of this rubble.

I feel the orphan holding
A hand under the rubble
His mother gone. Her hand
is cold and yet the little
One holds and comes out
With no limbs to walk
Even when found.

Could life talk back
And tell the world
What is to be done
Where people die
And never know what
Life is like when
Breathed under skies

Where bombs don't
Rumble and throw up
Rubble that makes hands
Fumble listening to voices
Mumble in the darkness of the
Tumble that has them
Gamble if they will live or die
For life has been tossed up
Like a die to land on
The number four which means
You win and then get out
Alive.

We say peace be unto Aleppo
For what else is there to do
Than pray to the powers of our
World to stop fueling this fight
That has never stopped for I
Was born and knew of Beirut
And now of Aleppo and thus
Wonder why there is never peace
In this part of the world where
We all fumble, tumble, into rubble
And gamble with the lives of others.

Sarah Mkhonza

Peace Says We Must Mend The Net

Fishing in the deepest end,
we catch others and others
escape. We keep at it for
peace is a meal we all need.

We throw the net where the
most fish are and find that
the tear is bigger there.

Hearts are hurting and souls
are burning. The mending of
this net, this peace so elusive
is like catching the fish while
looking how big the hole in the
net is.

The hole is agape, spitting hurts,
and hurling them at us, the way this
wind splashes angry salty water at
everybody who tries to close the net.

Peace we love, hurt we throw back in
the water, only to find the world is
still ridden with what we thought we
were working at ending.

The fishermen know you never give up.
The next catch can surprise you.
You can win even after failing for years.
for peace gets made in the mending of
the net.

Sarah Mkhonza

Pear Tree Of Afrikaanerdome

This resemblance, it's resurrection.
is a pear tree of Afrikaanerdome.

You wake up eating pears, laughing here,
having jumped the fence into this farmyard.

Dutch houses speak volumes. Their faces do. Cracks agape, yes so agape
you can stick your finger in them and
cause an apocalypse.

They say it is coming. These chimneys have
been looking at heaven for the Afrikaner
did say, there was a secret he guards as he lays in his grave of hidden Kruger
rands.

The tree is ours now. It is loyal to our
mouths, and not the Land Act.

This pear tree can swear we know how to
climb for its branches have seen our
undergarments. We have run away many
a time from the ghost of the farmer in the
grave.

Passing here in our pastimes we wonder
who lies abandoned to sleep in a Dutch house forever.

I hear the farmer sing
and swear aloud, while snoring
'the days are gone, so hear me out
with your eyes for see, I labored
for you and died of old age on the
wrong side of the color bar. This fence
guards me from perpetual trespassers like you young braves of the law written
so this land is mine.'

Yet we still eat the pears, till the tree
stands without one. For have to fulfill our mission.

Who can separate us from the love of pears, neither fence, nor time, nor dead farmer. For we have been deafened and hardened by time under this pear tree of Afrikaanderdom.

Bathtubs, old abandoned lie full of grass.
Like chimneys, they look up the sky as if
to get even.

Fruits of the little free state, a rare
plant, like wattles and gum trees.

Childhood visit, mark out the pear tree,
as children wish they could grow on their
doorstep.

having borrowed

Sarah Mkhonza

Penning Down My Own Blues In A Birdlike Manner

When life changed from blue to red
Everything became magenta for they
Say this bloody color came out of war.
This war I have with the spirit in me
Takes over and the battle of my soul
Enters another level.

I pray to poetry to save the few who
Undergo the battle of their soul and
Turn to the world to type a poem of
Things unsound such as an attack and
A rejection.

I please a few and hurt a few when I
Spew out words like a hose watering
The plants hoping a few will live in
These days when we have a famine for
Love was plenty so they say in the
Seventies for we loved freely and
Let live.

The rules of the game changed and
We had to learn that to love is to
Selfishly do so or you remain alone
One the bridge to nowhere for people
Take things not held close to the
Chest by those who are not keepers
Of their loves.

I learned to cry until I tell myself
To quiet down for the tears are a sign
Of an emotion in the air that will leave
Me to my solace all alone at the end of
Time.

I have learned to ask for company on
The journey in the chase for happiness
For it has eluded many for I swear it
Is hidden in the belly of God

For us to find in the next.

For those of you who walk the tight rope
Of life with hands outstretched in the
Dark don't fall off for it is far down
There where you will be smashed incognito
By this thing that irks us all.

Have a good day each day and count the
Seconds you are unhappy on the count
Down of five and then look back and
Count the day as a day of happiness
For you spent it burying the beast
Each time it raised its head.

I remain a speaker on the alter of
The Miserable few who have decided
To equate their happiness to not
Doing for to do so is to die while
You still live. Give when you are
Happy and when you are sad even if
It is to pen a few words about your
Own blues.

Who said the birds sing always
For we know when men shoot a few
They die a death like us, but the
Flock flies on and sings some more
For not to do so is to be no bird.

Sarah Mkhonza

Please Join Me In The Party

I'm looking for joy
That I can pour into a cup,
And drink myself to sleep,
And snore like a real drunk,
And wake up with a hangover,
That I can carry everywhere,
Till others join me in the party

Sarah Mkhonza

Poem Stitching With A Dull Needle

Tasked with the impossible
on the day of the occasion,
I need a new inventor to create
a thing for sharpening poen needles.
Stitching and running, I employ
the hemming stitch. I back stitch
to finish a task with these three
I get on with the task to sew the
back and front only to find I have
the dullest of niddles. Don't blame
me or the poem for the niddles did it.

Sarah Mkhonza

Poison Ivy In My Thoughts

If I could touch my thoughts
I could remove this poison
ivy that touched them long
ago. It itches and now and
then I keep scratching the
same place. I pull on the skin
and it turns reddish and then
I stop only to start again.
I look for an antidote to stop
me scratching and wish my
thoughts were in my hand
so I could deep it in water
and pray for the itch to stop.

Even when people say I must
not go there, where the itch
is, I cannot help but do that,
because the pull to go there
is out of my control.

There have been times I have
thought of scratching the itchy
parts with a fragrance and softness
of a rose's petals, but even then
it really itched again.

What stops this itch, I ask
the sage. Nothing. What is
nothing. It is a thing that is
not there. Is that to mean
my scratching is like life,
it goes on and on endlessly.

Life had an end. It comes boom,
so the poison ivy in the heard
came boom, but the boom was
not live because you would have
heard it and moved out of the way.
These stealthy move come with

the manner in which the first thoughts come. They do not volunteer, so they cannot stop when they want to. That is why you scratch. It is like trying to stop an ever ringing bell. It will always ring. When you learn to block your ears, you will have done yourself some good.

Will I not touch there? Even when you do, the stopper that you have used is yours to pull out. Thanks, I say to the sage and continue to look for the right type of stopper to use to stop the scratching. Like thimbles, my fingers start to fit themselves with something that gives me hope.

Sarah Mkhonza

Puddle Puddle Whose Are You

Puddle wise, puddle warm,
tell me. Whose are you?

Your fluffy hair makes me jealous.
Your eyes so soft make me wonder
If I will have eyes like that.
Why do you ask?

Sarah Mkhonza

Put Fire They Said.

Put fire says a slogan old by men as
They work on the railway tracks.
They work the metal breaks of trains
Their little carrier on the rail
They push daily and look into each
And every wheel to make sure
That the goods get as far as needed.

I walk on the rails to give them tea,
Huge red and white flask with lines
Running down with a lid closed to
Keep the warmth of the tea in there
And then sit and wait for my being
There means the break has to begin.

My father orders a stop for he must
Join me in my wait and make it short
For a girl on the tracks is just another
Trip to the world of men where I jump
On railway slippers with legs long
The girl who can work in tomorrow's world
For I can make tea.

I sit and look at trains crossing lines
And spitting their steam into the air
For these are the days of the steam
Engine that runs on fire all the way
Taking ore to the ships that send it
As far as Japan. Toyotas begin to
Trickle into our world and we do not
Know that our ore will one day lose
Worth for the grade is going down
To a place where all this has to stop.

The railway workers move to other towns
For the trains cannot run all the way
When the ore is lower graded far away
For life changes when the buyer cannot
Gain what the seller wants to give

Even at a low price to keep people
At work.

So we spread our wings as our livelihood
Shrinks to nothing for now only those
Who seek wisdom in books can sell their
Labor while the railway workers get
Retrenched for life has come to an End.

Gone are the days of Portuguese workers
Who knew no English but just one phrase
'Put fire' for welding brakes onto the
Wheels of the trains needed just that
One. Put fire they did until no wheels
Were there in which the fire could go.
Such is the job that is done by a worker
Taught the skill that keeps the railway
Running.

Sarah Mkhonza

Puzzle Pieces Missing

When you have put together the pieces
You will feel so proud for the picture
Will not have those missing spaces that
Tell us the journey is still very long.

My father's hand picks a piece and lays
It on the blue light and I see the light
The star is brighter and my mom also
Picks a piece and I see the ears of the
Angel and they shine.

These hands also pick the color red and I
See the dress is not my type of dress but
One I could wear to a prom one day and then
I look at the shoes black like the center
Of my eye and I see this puzzle is going
To take us long to complete but the warmth
Of our being is what keeps us playing the
Game called life.

Now that I see our house I can tell that the
Missing piece is the one my brother will come
And put in and little sister has a share in
This game called making our place here on the
Table where the incomplete puzzle lays. You
Pull the table cloth and all goes into disarray
And this is also our house already starting to
Fall on the floor piece by piece. The gathering
Of these will still be the work we came to do.

Sarah Mkhonza

Questions Only A Dove Can Answer

Why build a nest at all? So you can lay a nest egg.

Why coo so loud? Because nobody cares about the decibels of sweet sounds.

Why fly in twos. Why not. To confuse those who want to kill. When they aim we all fly away at once.

Why mess up outside the buildings. So the world can know our numbers are getting fewer. Man is going to have to be friendlierto dwindling populations.

Why flap two wings? Flapping one does not rhyme with reason. Hence the threat of going into prison, for that would be treason.

Sarah Mkhonza

Questions With No Question Mark.

What would it be like
To hear her voice call you
With cruelty ringing aloud
Yelling to intimidate you
Amidst crowds that look at you.

What would it be like to wake
To beatings and hear her calling
You names and giving you looks
That kill and be acknowledged
For nothing at the age of five.

What would it be like to work
And not be paid, be seen and
Not heard, and lie down finally
At the end of the day crying,
Only to be shouted at and told
To not cry>

What would it be like to hear your
Own mother in the distance crying
Being beaten by a sick man and hear
All those around you laughing as
If they were watching a movie that
Is ongoing daily in their minds
And just be unable to do anything
But watch the flames of a fire
And sob quietly for you do not
Want those who are laughing to
Know the pain you feel as it
Moves from the woman's body
Into your psyche in the space
In between the two homesteads
The way life moves today on
Cyberspace.

Sarah Mkhonza

Reading The Bible Upside Down

They read the bible daily,
and also read it inside out,
and even read it in the moonlight,
having borrowed the eyes of the owl,
when they realized that the bat had none.
This first reading turned their lives
into the 'no saints' they would be.

They called their neighbors to
come and read the big book
that had fallen from the sky.
Together they consumed
the rare dinner, calling it the
last supper.

Strangers came and asked
for a share as small as a morsel,
from this book turned food.
They joined for the book was
open, to a psalm 21 where
together they found a shepherd
all their own, leading them to pastures
green, Together they sang of an almighty, inside
a synagogue, called a guegonasy,
for every syllable was read backwards.

Together they built a national synagogue,
now reading guegonasy, only to find they
were getting more inside their head, for the
building was now upside down. The roof
was at the bottom and the foundation
was looking at the sun, wondering,
if the joke would end, for it was not
liking this. Cracking, and needing help
it could not take anymore.

Sandy and foolish up there, the foundation,
started blowing sand into the eyes of onlookers.
The neighbors were looking

at the upside down church, now a problem
in the whole neighborhood.

When the bats returned, at night, they got
a shock of their lives in their small bodies.
'Is this what they did in our absence? Let us
ask the church mouse, for he always stays
here. 'Church mouse, how could you allow
these holy rollers to do so foolish a thing
as to render us homeless for the church
now stands upside down? "

The church mouse, in all his poverty
for words, wondered how the bats
could ask him. Surely they could
see he had no skills to do such,
much as he would have loved to
see the upside down purses and
wallets flying as things got to this
extent. Emptying the purses of these
want wits would have changed his
name, the only person with a name
and surname in this building.

'See, how mean you are? You separated
yourselves from the rest of these, built
a community of one color, pooped on the
benches in the 'guegonasy, ' and I had to
make my way around all this mess made
by you. What did you think the Lord would
do? Capsize the whole thing! He does not
joke with the likes of you. Now you ask me
what happened? As if I was there. Go and ask
the termites. When you exclude the few from
the meal, thy use their power and together
they call on the heavenliness and. Voila!
A guegonasy ready to turn into rubble.

This is not Noah's ark you fools.
It is not floating in no unnamed sea.
This game of exclusion that left me
the poorest in the building of the Lord,

always ends like this.

One more hint on your dilemma,
when church was going on, you were making
squeaky noises up there, trying to squeeze
under the rafters of the rooftops so you
could see into the book, so you all read
the bible upside down.

What, may I ask, did you get in the end?
An upside down church, now eat of this
pineapple upside down cake like church.
Don't try to pick out the cherries, for you
will not see them. Go you foolish ones of
the earth, who live up there. Remember
the termites are coming. They do not need
a ladder. They will finish off this dinner.

Together we will have second helpings and I
will enjoy the left overs, for I will empty the
purses, get richer than the billionaires, for I
will always survive the verbal earthquake,
even if limping and lopsided, for the tremors
that will happen cannot hurt me and my friend
the cockroach.

In reading the bible upside down, people
of my congregation, ours is a story that will
end when finally we reach heaven'

having borrowed

Sarah Mkhonza

Real Change Lies Next To You

I asked what to do
I saw my fix real
It was looking at me
It was lying next to me
I turned and there it was
Looked at the wall
Looked at the ceiling.
Then I saw myself entangled.

How can I really get out?
How did I readily get in?
The door was out there
Its handle towards me
Yet I was so shut in
I could not see the way out.

The small voice tapped on my brow
What are you really looking for?
A way out and out for real
What are you getting out of?
The thing that chokes me now
What is it called?
A relationship with the wasp
How hard has it stung you?
As many times as it has flown.
And then what?

The more I was stung
The more swollen I got
The swelling was internal
Nobody but me could see it.
I sit here with hidden bumps
I tried and the world knows
To do as friends and foe do
The thing called life.
I just did not end up
The way of the others.

Mine is a special way

When my own sways lead
I move with the sun
At the end the road leads home.
Welcome home the journey has been long.

Sarah Mkhonza

Relationships! Relationships! Relationships!

Reeling in dispute yet still relationships,
Of my older siblings and me in the same ship,
Turning and tossing as we get thrown overboard,
One day one leg is in one day it is out,
Yet we are tied by this bond that calls us,
It tells us the road to success is not easy,
We walk it today tomorrow and whenever.
For we are in the thing that relates to itself,
And in time calls itself a relationship.

I know that it is as real as the word itself,
For I tried and and still try it now,
To idealize a mate is what it called me to do,
Call him my knight in golden armor in my heart,
Where no gold had melted but his alone,
While made of triumphs of our making,
We walked into a relationship called closeness.
And ended up on the other side of the river,
But still seeing each other as he went downstream,
For I was steering everything in me upstream.

This thing led us into a future uncertain,
That is when I realized it had no eyes,
It was me who had lost the power to be wise,
For I had seen a future with my eyes,
When they were closed to the things that we were,
And wanted me to see the things that were not,
In this place called my wisdom and his,
For it speaks and makes and then unmakes,
For it is very good at creating the unknown,
And make us walk boldly to any place it leaves us.
Relationships! Relationships! Relationships.

A touching, feeling, and finding of what is not there,
A building of a knot tied and untied for it is strong,
Only when we pull together to strengthen it,
This rope between us biting into our hands,
Leaving us with scars that show we also love,
For we are willing to work at it day and night,

And wake up the sleeping baby inside us seeking,
This quiet of the knot that cannot be undone,
Even when the wail in the night tells us to rise,
And walk into the nursery of our feelings,
For it is here that we can see ourselves,
These diapers speaking and smelling like us,
Relationships! Relationships! Relationships.

We can die for them like the soldier who fought,
And won a medal called a ring in her hand,
At the alter of existence, he laid his sword,
All shining, pointed and silent from use,
Here at the end of his fight against life,
Where he is ready to sit with the dead,
And say life was a battle that I won,
By just being there for there was no contest,
Only to turn up and take the yoke together,
With another walker who wanted to claim me,
As her own the traveler on a journey,
To the end of the fire where it is warm,
And not too close to this end that has called us.

A life is a life when lived and not shelved,
In forgotten stories of love and fights,
But stories of breathing into the space,
Where we talk, cook and boil at each other,
Calling ourselves names under our breaths,
For we did it to the world by agreeing,
That we would do this part well and swore,
That we were the type that succeeds always,
When all was needed was the hope to try,
And get into the giving and taking we do,
When we do for another a deed that builds,
And plants and guards what is ours selfishly,
For tomorrow it must be there to testify,
That we were faithful to the cause of life,
For the proof is not in the tasting of the living,
But in the dish we put on the table for all of life,
To taste as our offshoots give and take,
To a world that gave us the breath we give.

Is it still relating what we do to each other?

Tearing down and uprooting and overthrowing,
Leaving the upside down of the very agreements,
That we made when the eyes so the gold in us
Me saying you are the one I will brush the back of,
With this loofah in my hand this sponge I use,
The way our faithful dog brushes against us on this bed,
Laid by us for us and him to lie in,
And breath together always for it is true,
That a grain of love is all we need to lie here,
And enjoy, the joyous jive of this wagging tail,
That keeps brushing against me as you move closer right now,
To bring out the love of wagging tails,
For all dogs love the sight of their owner
The way they hate the sight of another,
For they growl angrily when they see life,
Taken from them, the bone of meat,
The way we fight over our trifles,
And refuse to share when we agreed
That we would divide every morsel of time,
The deed we were given to handle with care
As we share with each other like now.

Sarah Mkhonza

Remember That You'll Be Ousted In Turn

Remember you will be ousted in turn
If not by a sibling certainly by a
New worker who will succeed you for
It is like getting the best seat on
A bus and when your stop comes you
Cannot even look back to claim that
You belong to a dynasty in motion
And can be a son and daughter of
Privilege where all should see
The dandy of a princess that you
Are and admire your glorious throne.

Remember you'll be ousted in turn
And make haste while the hay still
Shines for it is better to buy an
Earthquake kit when you live in the
Seismic belt of the earth for you
Are always prepared when the push
Button of the earth down there is
Pressed and the forces unknown
Eject you out of your little shrine
Whose mortgage still hangs around
Your neck like a noose.

Remember you will be ousted in turn
And always be ready for exits and live
And love intensely without wasting
Moments of bliss for when love dwindles
It seeps out as if there was a hole
You did not see at the bottom of the
barrel where you where you poured
In bucketfuls year in and year out
With the least anticipation of finding
This emptiness that comes at the end.

Remember you'll be ousted in time
And be as reliable as a rooster.
Take care of the noose with which
You hang onto her heart and massage

It around the neck knowing that if
Your thumb is in it the fall won't
Be so bad and you who survived the
Kamikaze surely will make it to the
end of this struggle that never really
Ends until your eyes close and say
Good bye with the final beat of your heart.

Sarah Mkhonza

Requests We Want To Send To The Moon

We want a new leader down here
For the one we have has done it again,
He has built himself a hacienda
With every cent of the poor
That he was supposed to lead.

Tell the moon this place remains,
In the hands of the lawless,
For they are not givers of love,
For all they do is walk on golden pathways,
And drive around in gilded carriages.

We want the moon to look down,
And see the earth down here,
Turning saddled with a people,
Whose leader has no understanding,
Of what the morning light brings,
To the people he leads.

This person called to be an angel
With no virtues from heaven
Or values from the pools of wisdom
Has never dipped in them his finger,
To taste the stuff he must dish out.

He who drinks like a fish has a chance,
Only if he will empty the contents of the can,
And run to the healer next door,
And ask for a herb that will make him,
Want the drink no more.

This ruler who is lawless here,
Sits in the center at the well,
Drinks and passes it on to another,
Till day break while his people starve.

Now he is supposed to speak for the voiceless,

How will he when his voice is hoarse,
From the parties that shut up his brain,
Draining this abscess that remains
That was once a brain now full of pulp,
For the drink has powdered the contents.

Tell the moon to come down and rule,
For earth is just another place,
Where people suffer and look up,
And have hope when the moon rises,
Thinking it is coming to their aid.

They once lived with hope,
And saw the sunset come,
And waited in the darkness,
And now they speak to the moon,
For it was faithful and always came back,
With a promise to hear them monthly.

Sarah Mkhonza

Returning Home After The Hurricane

We need to write new songs,
For those still to come to our land
Songs of a truth we heard told
Whispered in the wind on lonely paths
Leading us to a future on the road home
Where girls and boys swam undressed,
In the fashions of the unheard of world,
We have come to know.

Who said we would go to sleep unsure,
If tomorrow would yield a harvest to feed us all
After stifling up storms that sink whole towns under,
Where torrents fall when hurricanes hurl houses in the air?

We need to sing songs that tell of the loss
Of the past in which we danced on porches dry,
Eating barbecues of venison from our forests
Caught in traps where poachers were not hated,
As we do now in this quiet sneaking in.

The songs we sing will be borne on wings of birds,
That once sang on our trees where spanish moss
Hangs down in a sadness that tells our story,
Whispering to tell us everything is gone,
Leaving our treasures only in our minds.

The tired walk to a home washed away by whooshing winds
Looks deserted even to the deer which danced in our absence,
For we are walking home like tired saints on a lonely march
For if we had had stayed we were to end up washed away,
Like the lone piece of the roof we see near the road,
For it got here after the rains subsided,
No longer swimming in the mud, in which it now lay.

Sarah Mkhonza

Rich Deep Down There

When the money people called me poor.
they bankrupted my mind.
I went to the source
and stood at the door.

I knocked there once.
I was let in by a small voice.
I told you all the money in the world is mine
I stood amazed my hands in the air

That whisper opened a window
to the tellers of the world.
Cedis, rands, dollars, rupees and euros crisp as new,
going into vaults at the end of the money day
That rustles with their newness.

I received a call
Twenty nine million euros is not a good sum
Nodding my head, I held out my hand
and reached for abundance

I built a Monte Carlo
on the hills of my mind,
in the hearts of my people
for we knew it was possible
to do anything we wanted
for money is not the issue,
but the space in between
can be touched by anyone of us
if we reach deep down there
where we are at our richest.

Sarah Mkhonza

Roadblock Ahead

Be warned
Roadblock ahead
When it finds you
Your hands must
Be clean for life
Makes us carry
Things unwanted
Yet we bear a
Sign wanted
Dead or alive.

This price tag
On every life
Follows us written
And blows in the
Wind marking us
Telling the world
Who we are like
The sign 'just
Married' on the
Car of newly weds.

When the roadblock
Finds you there's
Only one test that
Life demands you pass
To stand on one leg
For this becomes one
Fit that tells the word
Whether you imbibe
Or not.

If you can pass
This one the record
Will tell hell master
To set another road
Block fifty miles from
Here for this one is
Manned by the red army

Of the sky. Only those
Who pray a hole in the
Ground make it.

You will make out of your
Jalopy with the pride
Of a car owner only to
Be told to get your
Heap of scrap out of
The way. On this
Road at this hour only
The cavalcade of the
Prince is allowed. They
Drive on streets by
Invitation these days.

Be warned and throw
The dope out of the
Window. Life has
No mercy on those
Who dope till
Their minds wave
To the road police
Saying help me
Arrest him. He
Just broke the
Speed limit for
He is surely on
Speed. The speedometer
Will lock up above
The speed limit and you
Will swear your own
Vehicle has turned
Against you when they
Say you are a road hazard
A real assassin of the
Road on the loose.

Surely you will take the advice
Of a poet offered free for
They know the fate of man

For they read it on a scroll
That came from above.

Sarah Mkhonza

Rock-Hewn Flowers From Heaven

I am speaking to the rock-hewn flowers of heaven;
I have a message that is about staying solid
And never breaking down even if the heat gets you.
Even when the fires of life are lit right under the feet
These flowers do not break even if though they expand.

They open every morning and speak the word true
For they know they are the mouthpiece of heaven
Their message does not change with the weather
For such is the tincture of their colors.

I speak of rock-hewn flowers from another place
That do the usual in unusual ways that shape things
And cast them strong and hard for they are molded
By these hard performers of a kind that appeals
To the ears of others like it is the first time
For them to hear such words as the ones they speak.

So rare are these flowers that everybody wants them
For owning them is bringing a bit of heaven right
To the doorstep of your house with a series of scoops
Like the ones we repeat when we get to taste our
Choice of ice cream on a hot summer day.

We fall into despair when one of them falls and breaks
For to get another one, one has to travel to the end
Of the world only to be told there is none like another.
Returning back to a reality of losing a gem is never
Something people can deal with easily. yet to keep
safe what they have and admire it by turning it
Round and round is taken for granted for boredom
Is the sin that the god of time left the world with
When he escaped to the land of the northern lights.

They do not feign status these rock-hewn flowers
For they came with it wired into their being
For the world knows what it needs and can call for it
In one way or another to the disappointment of saints,
For they think they are the only ones who came from

The land that called heaven with a message like
no other.

When normal roses boast about the beauty of their petals
These flowers look on with love for they can take
Competition from a look alike that fakes pride
When the ego is singing the tune of self esteem
That is weaker than the chamomile tea without honey.
They tell the rose to mind their step for it is
Embarrassing to trip and lose one's balance in front
of a self-made enemy

They carry their heads high for to see one is to
See another yet the inbuilt beauty of each shines
Brighter for everyone to see even in the dark.
They lighten places and cause things to sparkle
Till the dogs wonder why the world is becoming
A never never land for they fear there will be
No room for a dog house, let alone the dog itself.

The assurance of the magic wand of making dog houses
By the minute assures these lonesome creatures who
Fear being separated from their owners ends the whines
And gets everybody knowing that dog and man equal
Love always for when the rock-hewn rose buys a leash
It makes it so long that it can reach the heavens.

Sarah Mkhonza

Rock-Hewn Flowers Of Heaven

I am speaking to the rock-hewn flowers of heaven;
I have a message that is about staying solid
And never breaking down even if the heat gets you.
Even when the fires of life are lit right under the feet
These flowers do not break even when they expand.

They open every morning and speak the word true
For they know they are the mouthpiece of heaven
Their message does not change with the weather
For so strong is the tincture of their colors.

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That do the usual in unusual ways that shape things
And cast them strong and hard for they are molded
By these hard performers of a kind that appeal
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Safe what they have and admire it by turning it
Round and round, is taken for granted for boredom
Is the sin that the god of time left the world with
When he escaped to the land of the northern lights.

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For they came with it wired into their being
For the world knows what it needs and can call for it,
In one way or another to the disappointment of saints,
For they think they are the only ones who came from

The land that is called heaven with a message that
Leaves the world shaking on its knees.

When normal roses boast about the beauty of their petals
These flowers look on with love for they can take
Competition from a look alike that fakes pride
When the ego is singing the tune of self esteem
That is weaker than the chamomile tea without honey.
They tell the roses to mind their step for it is
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By the minute assures these lonesome creatures who
Fear being separated from their owners, and ends the whines.
They gets everybody knowing that dog and man equal
Love always for when the rock-hewn rose buys a leash
It makes it so long that is can reach the heavens.

Sarah Mkhonza

Roll Up The Sleeves Of Time

It is time to roll up the sleeves of time and get to work for time does Not have a revered gear. Nor does it
Have a neutral and parking one that
Allows you to rest on your laurels.

Inventing slumberland did not help Alice in Wonderland for the rules of The two were different. Sons and Daughters of wonder lost on the
Streets in the land of sons and daughters of slumber for when they
Woke up the bus to Wonderland had
Left them behind.

Who said people do not sleep in Wonderland? Those who slumber and
Not roll up the sleeves of time
Will always invent stories about
A land they do not know for it is
On tasting its delights that
It lets you into the mysteries it holds for you all
The sons and daughters of time.

It does not come easy to the

Citizens of the land to know
That rules or no rules,
Road signs or no road signs
Time march is on for its sleeves
Are always on the AIFA roll.

Sarah Mkhonza

Rolling Up The Sleeves Of Time

It is time to roll up the sleeves of time and get to work for time does not
Have a reverse gear. Nor does it have a neutral and parking one that allows
You to rest on your laurels.

Inventing slumberland did not help Alice in Wonderland for the rules of the two
were different. Sons and daughters of wonder lost on the
Streets in the land of sons and daughters of slumber for when they
Woke up and the bus to Wonderland had
Left them behind.

Who said people do not sleep in Wonderland? Those who slumber and
Not roll up the sleeves of time
Will always invent stories about
A land they do not know for it is
On engaging in its delight that
It lets you into the mysteries it holds force
The sons and daughters of time.

It does not come easy to the
Citizens of the land to know
That rules or no rules,
Road signs or no road signs
Time marches on for its sleeves
Are on the master sleeve roll
And never on the AIFA roll.

Sarah Mkhonza

Rules From The Book Of Ifs

We follow the path of masters,
we welcome deeds shunned by many.
This road to fame is not for the
feeble minded.

If you must do the unusual, don't
copy another person. That is the
way to steal another's luck that
lands you in the muck.

If you paint a scene, make it look,
like the brush wanted to sing a song
of lovers you long to hear. Tease
the mind with the mystery of love.
Remember everybody claims it, yet they
still have to touch it. Preserve the
story in the mystery.

If you must preach, don't repeat the
fury the world rolls in. Utter some
truths that psyche a few and leave
them wondering if they read the same
Holy Bible.

Remember the stories were chosen for
impact and seal the pact that the
church trusted the zealot in you
would always utter with zeal.

If you must steal, consult the
looters who did a clean job and ended
up in heaven for they found life
a real steal.

If you must sing a song don't choose
a Pavarotti just because you have a
beard. People hate a fake. Let your
voice roll in the lowlands and climb
it's own highlands.

If you must fall in love refuse to go
headlong on the way down, people will
think you were an alley cat doing
the usual mouse grabbing.

I'd fall in love after laying out the
velvet cushion so people would think
I knew how hard it is to fall onto
the hard floor with not even a glass
of red wine to do the making out with.

Sarah Mkhonza

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I'd fall in love after laying out the
velvet cushion so people would think
I knew how hard it is to fall onto
the hard floor with not even a glass
of red wine to do the making out with.

Sarah Mkhonza

Rules Written Just For You

If I was an artist,
I would paint the rules
with the softest touch
all over your brain.

I would deposit them into you
with a platinum card, and seal
the account closed, where withdrawals
are forbidden.

I would swallow the scrolls,
and wrap around you when you
leave the warm the called my womb.

This rumbling and shaking of the world,
as we part, means you will never re-enter
the door I had to open to let you in.

You have grown big and learned words
that make you talk to the world.

The key to this door of wisdom
reopens when you open up and ask, why
you are here.

Answers come on a skewer and you
pull them out. This feast assorted
tells how hard you have searched for wisdom
while encircling the nipple
with your gums.

No milk flows for no reason,
even for an orphan found in a garbage can.

Someone who breathed and pushed will find you
the way I did, child of the earth.

Read the rules I painted before they fade.
This life has chosen you for you answered,

the call of the few.

Sarah Mkhonza

Sad But True That The World Silences Children

Ever seen an adult afraid
To ask his mother who and
Where his father is? Then
You do not know a woman who
Thrives iting the
Ignorance of those she has
Begotten.

I live on an island surrounded
By strangers who do not know
Where they came from for they
Live the life of those girls
Abductees of Book Haram. Only
They are males taught to appease
And not fight to know who sired
Them.

The right to a name does create
A world where knowing who you are
When taught to children makes a better world for they get to walk
With dignity built into them by
Knowing they came to this world not
On a chariot that was chased from behind by the empty slate they carry
In the head.

It raises questions when one needs
To connect with persons
In space and time only to
Find darkness where there should be
A name even if it is one like
That of the warring clan of Isaac
Which spins in the harsh winds
Blown by the aunt I call Gertrude.

Her royal Highness sits and tells
History from her own oral record
Which cannot be questioned but still
Builds our clan as one that came and
Is going somewhere.

Erase the name of Isaac in the biographies oral written by my
Aunt who embellishes with poisonous
Mushrooming tales that grow on
African antheaps what would we have
If we had no past no matter how
Distorted.

Give the children wisdom by telling
Them truth no matter how poor the
Past they came from is. It is not
About what a father is or has but
About connecting truthfully with the
Past for everyone is conceived in
Love even when the struggles go into
That last minute where the seed pops
Up at the door of the egg and says
Receive this gift for that is all
Life has for you at this moment
Of reckoning. Where you may be compromised by the giver live the
Space open for the truth to enter
When it knocks at the door. For to
Shut it out does violate and victimise the innocent leaving you
Also at risk of being accused and
Being called a perpetrator by the
Soul on need.

For their mother

Sarah Mkhonza

Scissors And The Iron At Work All Night

My mom made tablemats,
cutting sisal to make
mats for people to put
plates of food when we
had non. Braiding grass
and sisal, the rope grows
longer and longer. Then
scissors come in to make
neat.

I woke up to the click of
scissors and slept to their
lullaby. The sound of the
iron on a dress to be worn
tomorrow in Sunday school
leaves me warm where it
renders me full for the love
she gave.

Pouring one's soul into the
depth of us children she did.
The testimony stands fiercely
unafraid to say it happened.

When I have done my giving, will
it remain standing, with scissors
and an iron at the altar of love?

Will the testimony sing love and
bite the ears of others lovingly
and say this is how it is done?
Tough questions these that I lay
at the altar of time.

Sarah Mkhonza

Seeing A Small Part Of Sky

In this darkness of meandering paths,
A maze created for me, by me,
The darkness thickens when the thoughts take corners,
I fail to catch up with them,
Then seeing a patch of sky up above,
I backtrack and jump over the traps,
And set my foot on the space of rest,
The light that lingers starts seeping in,
I scratch my head in the minute minute,
Of a me that has recovered its presence,
I who was, were and will be is nothing but just thoughts,
Of the hours I have smashed outside on the rough rock of time,
There they remain and keep on creeping into the silo like Weavels trying to
weave themselves into the heart of a seed,
That corn kernel in which to forever stay,
There a menace that thrives on scraping
its source,
I hear the voice from it saying that is all you are,
Just a small part of sky looked at from above and below.

Sarah Mkhonza

Seeing My Houselelujah

It is up on the hill
overlooking the valley,
they call the valley of heaven.
This is where, for me, the sword
was cut by the gods.
Yes it is real, yes and for next to nothing,
making me believe I was born
for nothing but this dwelling,
that stands tall among dwellings.

Something is intriguing
in the way it helps me to
eavesdrop on the elders
who have gone up there
since time immemorial.

Its windows are not just hallelujah,
they are windows from a song
that rises in the valley
and they sing houselelujah.

On the walls hang pictures,
of family when once happily,
we lived as one. Now I dream
from afar, and see this new house
on the wall on which hang pictures
in cedar frames.

If I could tell you how many years
I called the angel with no name
hoping this one word would bring him home,
I know you would think I am crazy.

I did believe I could have a houselelujah,
I sang about it on my knees and when I walked
all the way downhill in that valley, for I
saw the party at the hill, but the question
was discerned was not asked, even in my dream.

The houselelujah was not there yet.
In this dream all the lovely objects,
stand tall on the tables and all of them glass.
Why not me and then this one?
I prayed for the houselelujah?

Now the land is there, and the house
is in my dream, with the outside ready
for me to walk into the dream,
for it is my blessing done and finished
and I will live it be.

Can you be a guest at the party,
when the dream house is finished,
for you have read about it,
and can prove me wrong,
if it is not a houselelujah.

I have dreamt of other houselelujahs,
One came through and the one that
never showed up at the gate,
was the one I long to return to,
for it was in a land full of all
the objects in my dream,

Cast iron this and glass this;
map of Africa this, and yoke on
my gilded horse that. There, all
things spell success and comfort,
but they are all under ground. Silt,
sand and the vagaries of this world,
tell me I only have a quarter.
Take me to the land of my dreams!
It is about vision and less about money.

Sarah Mkhonza

Seeing The Rainbow Through Tinted Glasses

This tint in your glasses
came with you from the land
of your birth. Remove this
cataract because a bird will
snatch it from your eye. It
thinks you cannot run. You
will run and not win.

Sarah Mkhonza

Seeking The Revenge Of The Toughest Gods

What will we do now that we have crowned them with glory
These who have plotted to rule us day and night,
And not rest till our strength is poured outside,
And our blood warms the spears of legends old,
With us just pleading for the avenger of the weak,
Who is the toughest of all the gods who hears,
Our plea as we repeat it night after night

Help us for we repeat a refrain in pain,
Those who had teeth sharper than fangs,
Who filled our bodies till they sang,
Then they beat on us with the loudest bang,
And told us in our faces that we would hang.
On the walls of the roughest of prisons.
Help us as we spell out their crime
That our sons sit in a jail they built,
To fill with a quarter of innocent souls.

They have not spared us from decree after decree,
Sending the bearer of bad news to our steps,
Saying we should walk in single file,
Into the prisons which send them in one song,
Singing to the bank to fatten their accounts,

We know they will be raging and fuming,
When the final decree is sent out,
Saying a nation cannot send all its son,
To prisons which enrich the rich only,
While sapping the strength of the nation,
By sending to jail a boy who sniffed a joint.

Help us for we repeat a refrain in pain,
Those who had teeth sharper than fangs,
Who filled our bodies till they sang,
Then they beat on us with the loudest bang,
And told us in our faces that we would hang.
On the wall of the roughest of prisons.
Help us as we spell out their crime,

While our sons sit in a jail they built,
To keep full with half innocent souls.

When you hear us oh gods know one thing,
That they hate us is clear as the day,
For what can we do on this earth where we live
Without our fathers who bore us,
Who sit in goal looking at the sky,
Wondering when you will answer their call.

Sarah Mkhonza

Seen With Eyes From Another Planet

I am joined by these others
who claim to see my future and
also claim to have been where
I am bent on going. Through words
from there, they tell me to buckle up.

The ride they say is rougher than
a climb on the highest tide. I declare
I know no such having lived in the desert.

They say I will see water rising. I wait. Was I given a choice. Went we going to
perish. Were we not dying from drinking
poison daily?

When those who journeyed into the land
said theirs was the earth I thought
the truth had never tasted so bitter in the mouth of one who has just entered
these carvens.

Then I gathered courage. I asked for food
as soft as manna. They told me
it will be better tomorrow when the sun has a halo of black. So now the wait
has begun.

w

The

Sarah Mkhonza

Selling Dreams

Since I dream of black birds
Everything sings my song always
Like the noise of birds above my homestead
Lifting their wings way up
In a manner never heard of
Not even once looking back
Going into a future freer
Sounds of their leaving
High up above me they pull me
Over there they flap their wings
There where I cast my gaze
Searching for my future

Who took the future from me?
And walked about with it into where?
I still ask and hear voices,
Telling me if I do not go,
And find it in the sand outside,
It will be gone forever,
Washed away by the rivers,
For all this happens every minute,
I stand and ask about the future,
I am selling to the questions,
And not buying with my deeds,
That should be writing it outside,
On the very side of the river
On which you and I abide.

We can sell the dreams to the vendors,
For our minds have done the display,
Of all we could be doing,
If our lives would call it to order,
And not take us to the fiery edge,
Where we fear fires that are glowing,
Only in the pith of the earth,
Where the fluids are invisible,
And said to burn daily,
Thus charring our dreams,
That never get to the market,

Where they can be laid down for sale,
And ready to be bought by passers by,
Who admire the look and hue of our thinking,
That we have hidden in shame for too long.

Sarah Mkhonza

Send Me Pigs On A Postcard

Fortune tellers have no fortune
If they did they would be fortunate.
Healers have no wounds
If they did they would have scars
To make us see where they come from
To create a reputation
Of pride about years of training.

For a well never dries up
When it is dug up deep into the depths
In the aquifer of this time.

I cannot be a guinea pig
Because they do not send postcards
With pictures of pigs
But those of rare birds
When Guinea is full of pigs.

The fortune teller says
He knows women are liars.
They say they are sick
When they do not want to be touched.
Like alcoholics who drink
who lie to their boss the Monday morning after
When the hangover hits them.

He tells the man who goes to Guinea to enjoy
Go as far and have a break
And send cards of things unseen here.
To get money into his pockets

I receive my cards with rarities
And know I am being deceived
My mind being bought
So it cannot demand the truth
By asking for pictures of pigs
Wearing lingerie not seen
For he has abandoned me.

Sarah Mkhonza

She Beams A Smile At Me

The smile she beams at me,
Has a gap in between the teeth,
It comes at me at night,
And when I walk along the path,

The lips are familiar,
As are the eyes of her,
They are of someone I know,
This woman, this carrier,
Of me when I was the invalid,
That was born and could not,
Either walk or talk or hold,
But just lie in the shadowed
Cloud of the warmth of her hands,

She walked away one day and came back,
Across the fords I see her walking away,
Then see her emerging above the river,
Only to leave me crying again as she leaves,
Then came the day when she ascended,
To a there beyond the fords of rivers,
Familiar fords of river sand and rocks,
To a land shadowed by the clouds,
Never to return and be touched by me,

Yet still I see her smile,
It has a gap in between the teeth,
Even my five years can see it,
For she taught me how to tie shoe laces,
To count the holes of the shoe,
And tie a knot that would see
me walk through each day of life,
Till I return and take them off
To rest and wait for another.

I see her lips speaking the words,
That arrest my ears when I start deeds,
Against the big book of life that she read,
Each day while I watched her smile,

With the gap in between the teeth,
Which she beams back at me like a float,
From another place where the carnival
has stated,
Whose dance I will remember carried on her back,
For she is no horse, yet she saddled me,
No mule, yet she pulled me forward,
No joke, yet she had me laughing
With deeds that touch my heart,
Like the fire she kindles in me,
And make me leap in a dance of years,
That brings together our pasts,
And weave our smiles with this togetherness
Whose warmth has a lingering effect,
That is drawn from our intertwined lives,
Like a tree and its saplings,
That yearn to see the sun above,
For the warmth came to me alive,
And etched the smile she flashes back
As she turns her neck to see for real
That live this life like no other,
Doing the deeds she smiled about.

Sarah Mkhonza

She Wore Green Zulu Beads

Her dress was all green
as green as her beads
which were woven in
the land of the Zulu.

She wore them red,
She wore them green
She wore them black
And also the white
We see in the land
Down below.

She cast a spell on the world
and then went to heaven
for that was whence she came
This tall grand swimmer of ours,
for she had swum against the cold
And heat of the Benguela.

Nobody knew her trick,
For she could win a man
By circling his neck
With these very beads
and say choice made,
man mine.

Sarah Mkhonza

Shearing A Dead Sheep

She moves not on this last shdaring.
There were many before. Her ewes know
she is gone. No more this scissors
snapping that leads to a nakedness
in these days where dogs wear woolen
scarves. They chased her for the last.
The shepherd whistling behind them.

The end is near for the jersey are sold.
Cry not injustice for your coat will grow.
Now that truth is gone with the last breath.
The shears have but lost one squeaky day. The
world owespecially you a day long memorial.
For bells will still ring this Christmas. Your
blatant will be gone.

Sarah Mkhonza

Sheltered In This Sandy Life

When life is gritty, I spit out
the sand. When life is windy, I
shield my eyes. Some days it feels
like in a mud hut. Some days I tremble
with each handful of sand thrown at me.
I feel the Sandy beach and throw back a
few Sandy words. Friends throw a few back.
We laugh as in childhood. Till the next Sandy storm. Laughter turned to tears
says, 'don't forget children. This is a Sandy life. You'll need the shelter of your
mother's or father's back. This time without a sling.

Sarah Mkhonza

Shepherding The Rules Of Your Truth

Building the future of your truth,
In this enclosure, this silo,
Where you will return with a lock,
To retrieve it in thought,
Has been done with caring by you,
For you shepherded your choices in,
At the moment of making with actions,
Shooing away some birds and trapping others,
Into the center where you stand surrounded,
By your truths protected in the center of your hand.

You lie to yourself when now,
You look at others and hope,
That their sayings will grown wings,
And come into the enclosure, this soul,
That seeks truth from you like a baby,
Wants to suckle at the lap of its mother,
And nestle in the security of the lullaby,
Yet the time of songs and myths is gone,
And has been replaced by your own shepherding,
Of your own rules of truth,
And not the dos and donts of others,
Which will leave you in the ice cold shower,
Wishing your mother was with you,
At this time of reckoning with choices,
That you made when others cheered.

The calling to guard the enclosure of the truth
And not let the wolves come into its boundaries,
These thoughts that sap your blood your lifeline,
And then stand in there howling about the past,
You will not get far for defying your ramblings,
Doubt stands outside another hyena,
Fear, another jackal that lurks around,
Like barking dogs of life ever yapping,
Tearing to shreds every long founded truth,
Waiting for you to reach your hand outside,
And turn the lock of your thinking with your hand,
To let anxiety the bigger beast,

That will make you change more from weakness not strength,
For the rain comes and wets everything,
When the enclosure is not built to the need,
Of what lives inside to keep warm.

Once heard the cry that goes on forever,
Bringing the predators to your doors,
To dismantle the shepherding of your truth,
You end up holding on to the nothing,
That remains when you let go,
For you were built to lock up your being,
And guide it to the rules of truth,
Wherever you are and with whomever,
You have chosen touch shoulders with,
On your journeys through this maze,
That turns into every corner leaving you,
Knowing only the past and not the future,
Which stands in the blindfold that covers,
The soul of the eyes of your mind,
Leaving you only with hope that all will be well
Because the shepherd, the one you know best,
That there is only one way to build trust,
Which is turning in the lock and key,
To ensure that no truth, or rule gets out,
Without a reason which is about,
Going out there to feed and be fed,
And then return richer than before.

Sarah Mkhonza

Shining Light Into This Dark Teen Cave

You look into the cave and see a corner
With teens huddled in the same fear
That had you running years ago
Only to find that is was as unreal
As the word itself.

You write a short poem to shine a beam
Into the corner and ask a few to come
And read together the truth about life
For it is hard to be a teen assured
Of the truth you have been denying all along.

Your friends are the only 'knowers' around
The poets are far away if not dead like this one
They write musings from another world
Where people are green to the core
And red like the sand on the surface of Mars.

Who can tell a teen what they have seen
When their eyes were goggled by mascara
And lashes as long as those of a ghost
For they see through such things and know
How fake the thing called beauty has become.

I sing and dance songs with the teens
And ask them to show me how it is done
They laugh and say I learned the jive
Of good old township music played on
A disc that was only a thirty three
When they know only forty fives.

I tell them it is not about numbers
But about the act and the feeling it brings
This gyration of our bodies to false pop songs
That we do on this plane where we write the script
That will be used for the movie of a teens life.

They say they know that these days adults talk
And then go and vote for people who predate on

The brains of women and the youth they call
Millenials for they know only the year
When the century turned older than them
And ended up face down on the plateau of time
For stalagmites and stalactites do not joke
When they hit the back of the head of a crazy teen.

Sarah Mkhonza

Shoaling And Schooling

Fish are not alone in this ocean
Scores of them, swimming and
Swinging on swings invisible
It is enviable this unity of those
That glisten in the water as if
One day they can give this togetherness
To us. Until a fishing hook drops
Into the water, separately they
Go now one mouth open not knowing
This will be a lynching that will
Send them up and end them in the
Frying pan and inside a rumbling
Stomach that rejoices they exist.

Life catches us in ones and reminds
Us it is power to move like a school
Of fish, even if you may never have
Enjoyed school for when you go into
Adulthood the hook awaits you alone
Ready to take you to the table where
You will be displayed sometimes before
The pathologist as that fish that did
Not make it and needs to be diagnosed
For in the world are many hooks.

I tend to love the sounds of the fish
When they move in shoals and also when
They are a school for they are deep and
Resonant even when one has been swallowed
By a shark, for the wide mouth can make
A whole school disappear these days when
Even people swim in the seas trying to
Get to places of refuge only to find
Themselves deep in there where the fish
Feed on the mercilessness of life to man.

Who is schooling and shoaling when we are
In the water these days where the land is
Being blown up where houses send out people

Like a school of fish chased by a reef shark
Whose teeth are so sharp they have to run
For the rubble tells them the dust doming
On them in the likes of a tsunami means run
And keep running and when you go out of breath
Sit and think, what is next for nobody knows
What the future is going to be like, rich or
Poor.

The assurance of tomorrow rests on our feet
Touching some earth and moving, even under
Piles of rubble, allowing us to escape, no matter
Where we are. Life has become this fragile,
And it has rendered us as small as selfless as
These we envy for we wish we had scales to
Scale the world and run on for the cold
Would not matter to those who breathe in there
Where the world looks bigger than them all around.

Sarah Mkhonza

Show Me The Respect I Deserve

Having faith under a thatched roof,
Listening to the sounds of hooves,
Rain tapping on the grass I hear,
This my dress in tatters I wear,
For me is written a new life,
For I never vowed to be a wife,
And stay waiting for a miner,
Who went to be with the sinner,
Their sad lives held in their inner,
Worlds unknown to the soil digger.

I live to eat mopane worms alone,
While I walk on paths of stone,
Wearing nothing but just a wrap,
Which the baby used yesterday to nap,
On my back when I sang the lullaby,
For I wish he had said goodbye,
For that would have been respect.

I ask what it is I deserve what I get they say
What I should get when I serve,
Baby on my open back saddled,
With a cloth that I made,
When I sewed clothes to wed,
This life that has nobody,
But just me who carry this baby,
And get to know it from the nappy,
That I washed with soapy leaves,
That grew near the river where I live.

Breakfast for me was mopane worms,
For they swell when they are worm,
In the pot where I put the salt,
To break them down into a gift,
That I would serve for this I deserve,
Yes to live the earth gives me that.

They say tell the woman a story,

For if you don't you will be sorry,
She loves to laugh even when sad,
And when you know she is mad,
These stories they have made,
Make me wonder if they know,
That even a pig is called a sow,
When it is being given respect,
For this is all she can get
When tables are laid by those who eat,
The strips of her that they share.

The story when told ends our life,
Takes it far and throws it alive,
Into the distance where it is flung,
For you do not have the same lungs,
Full of breath that was just for me.

The miner lungs that have shrunk,
Are like the love that has sunk,
For our was just a new funk,
That mingled love, sadness and hope.
Thinking we once thought we would elope,
And go far to the end of life,
For ours was a togetherness,
That when shared would say nope,
To the parting of our ways.

This hut no longer sings,
When it rains it sinks,
Into my heart yes it goes,
When you came I told you it does,
For the logs no longer hold,
For termites have always said,
It is time we are to build,
For ourselves a new abode.

Sarah Mkhonza

Showcasing My Dos And Dont's

When I have no advice,
I showcase my dos and don'ts.
Listen to yours and come and join
the show of brave souls.

Last night I dreamt
Your fear was walking
All around me searching.
What did it find? I fear the
very same words you were
failing to listen to. Especially
because the don'ts were as loud
as a gong.

I was snoring, you thought.
I was afraid to hear that the
duo we are will make loud
the words we fail to hear.

Next time do not come in the
night. Come during dinner
there is more to share in
the act of eating, for it shouts
these two words we hate. Yet
we take the fork and pretend
it does not have two ears, yet
it has four prongs and can be
used to make a tune that we can
listen to and then follow our
own dos and don'ts.

Sarah Mkhonza

Silky Is The Thread That Connects Us

These faith in the story
Of us living beings once
Zygotes. This breath of
Many inhalations and exhalations
Seeks to keep at it knowing
For us is a world that needs
To breathe, rest and start up
Again, if we are to see tomorrow.

Sarah Mkhonza

Singing Queen Of Poetry

When you sing songs of a nation
And weep the tears of a nation
And cry the lament of a nation
And dance the dances of a nation
Who will tell you that you are on
An everlasting sing song which
Lands you on your own see-saw
Going up and down as the nation
Breathes in its ways unusual?

It is by laughing the laughter
Of a nation and joking the jokes
Of the nation that we can have
A joker, a queen and a king
All ruled by the queen of poetry
That reigns in your heart which
Says yours is a king without
A crown for kings and queens
Of poetry only exist on paper.
Write more and rule more for
Yours is a kingdom where success
Is measured by the words you
Cause to rhyme the way nature
Does for is saunters along daily
Leaving us weaving the next skirt
To wear to the next dance of the
Queens of poetry.

Sarah Mkhonza

Singing Songs Of A Revolution (South Africa)

I danced the toyi toyi
And thought it was joy
To dance in streets and
Jump up and kick up sand
And point at the oppressor
With the finger of a professor
For mine was a land
Oppressed in the hand
Of a system we called
This name apartheid
For different we were
And similar we were
In dance, in joy and
Song and for in this and
Yesterdays truth we stand
And see today as a day
Where we must find a way
In this country that says
We will always share and stay
Being one in every way.

Sarah Mkhonza

Sinking The Unsinkable

They push you down daily,
In deep and shallow waters,
Only to find that it cannot be done,
For to sink the unsinkable
Will never be easy,
For it was made never to go,
In the direction called under.
For it is always floating,
On a sea of ideas.

Your floating is not based,
On a borrowed float like theirs,
That was made in the night,
When they sneaked in quickly,
When nobody was looking,
But one built in open daylight,
At the alter of integrity,
Where nobody can go with company,
And tell lies for ears are shut,
By the flapping of the wings,
That angels are assigned to do daily.

To sink the unsinkable,
Is to throw their bones,
Far away in the ocean,
Where they will get lost,
When they go to retrieve them,
For they will still walk,
On the same beach like you,
After having tried to trap you,
In this endless waste of effort,
Of pulling down one who never falls.

Sarah Mkhonza

Sit Pretty Baby Here I Come

I once thought I was so beautiful
I would marry a man who would say
Sit pretty baby here I come and loads
Of love and money would sit on my lap.

I woke up and found that all men had
Neither jobs nor the ability to get
One at the snap of a finger while
I sat on a couch waiting with hands
Outstretched.

I learned that my brother was laughed
At for he was told he had married a
Consumer for his wife did not work.
I fought for the mother I was and
Cried out on behalf of the working
Woman for there was no fun in leaving
My kids so I could chase money.

I worked myself sick with milk
dripping onto my clothes for there
Were no breast pumps in my country.
The love poured out of my chest
Causing me to feel embarrassed for
The leaking married woman I was
Who had taken to work as if I had
Taken to the streets running away
From my infants.

I stand assured that when the milk
Stirs in us we want to go back to
The days when men could say sit
Pretty baby here I come, but we have
Seen that going to the place of work
Creates a new you that makes the old
You call on you and say, we have taken
A step further in being baby. The two
Of you start to doubt if you really
Liked the first you for the ignorance

Of the past always haunts the knowledgeable
You the world has made.

Resting on our laurels was never our
Idea, but leaving our children was also
Never a good idea. Somewhere in the midst
Between the second where midnight
Turns into day lies the answer for
We live assured that the reward will
Never come from others but from those
Whose hands were outstretched for their
Mouths needed the sip from the nipple
Just as we once did for we are the
Babies that have become mothers. It is
Not the love of coins in the purse but
The push of the midnight hour breaking
into two that pulls the string and
Closes the little duffle bag like purse.
That is why sit pretty baby has decided
It is time to go hitch hiking, lest the
Man finds her scrubbing the floor. She
Has faked illness and seen that the best
Way out is to go out with the girls.

Sarah Mkhonza

Sitting On A Fake Rock

Thought I was solid on my jog,
turned into Jupiter Street. Dead tired.
Rested my busted back. On a fake
rock. What? Me, the essence
of things real. Never, or never. A fake rock.

No denial. The truth was here staring me
in the eyes. Asking what is true about
a fake rock. Hollow inside. Darling and gloomy, yet also a rock by name.

What is this rock doing here. Thoughts invaded by question after question, I
move on for one who seats on the mercy seat. To answer the question is to be
more
than a fake rock. For, honestly, It knows
a better answer. It has been fake always. Me and you cannot claim anything.
Always fakes.

Sarah Mkhonza

So Clever Was The Hawk Next Door

So clever was the hawk next door
She laid her eggs on a nest she built
On the highest rock way up there
And came down in one fell swoop
To snatch a poo out of the nest
Of the hen built in the thicket small

So clever was the hawk next door
She kept her eye on a goat's little one
And saw the time to strike and
And flew up with the ewe dangling
On her claws as she flew up into the sky
Leaving the world perplexed.

So clever was the hawk next door
She called the hen a tourist
For she quacked alone and pecked o bits
Leaving her chicks unprotected.

So clever was the hawk next door
She offered to be a surrogate
For the chicks of others
While she stole and stashed them as
food
And went and nested with them high
To eat the endless manna.

So clever was the hawk next door
She stood out high and flapped her wings
And the dogs started to bark everywhere
And begged to fly on broken wings

So clever was the hawk next door
She built a nest on a metal pole
That opened the iron gate used by all
And sat up there and told all
She had the key to the iron gates
That kept them locked up in their
High end prison with its polluted air

And then looked down and said look
How foolish you are for you did it
To yourseves now live with it.

Sarah Mkhonza

So Long Ago It Was

I sit at the end of the yard
I see the true end of the string
Long, winding it goes
Leading my thoughts through the needle
Sewing a spectacle called my life
In a home meant to be mine forever
Yet taken from me by time.

I see the trees green and solid
Painted in the space that shows
We lived, loved and laughed there
For we knew not that we were
The thread that was held
In the hands of the sewer turned time
We walked into the mud puddles
After the rains bare footed
And felt the cold earth underneath.

We heard the sounds after the rain
Saw the sun creep into the valley
Like it was afraid of the rainbow
It stood high against the mountains
Another day we would live to think of
The day we wish to return to
It is gone and only the mind
Can take us there to see you
Beautiful country of mine.

Who said we would walk in exile?
Who said we weren't in exile
Our land bleeding with death
People shrouded by power
Which filled the streets
And walked to the villages
And spoke and poked the nerves?

Yes I miss you land of mine

I wish to see you and hug you
Because of the truth of love
For it never lies to me
You are beautiful to look at
You leave my mind full of this
The love of you I can touch
Even when I am miles away from you.

The world continues to unfold
Like the years I spent there
The yard unfolds in front of me
I sit and look on daily
Walk into the future step by step
As if I am walking right where I came from
For you who is exiled will know
We want to touch tomorrow in yesterday
And claim it for ourselves as well
In lands far away from our own.

Sarah Mkhonza

Soldiers Of Poetry

Our march is on
We march with words
Pour them in the soul
And ask everybody
To go for a cleansing
With the tourniquet
We tie the sores
And then say you either
Get healed or choose
To die a death where
No words can awake you
For your ears have stoppers
That nobody can take out.

We just pushed them in
And tried to touch the
Eardrum because we thought
You still wanted to hear
For your heart is open
When you turn the key
With this kind handshake
That has all the pepper
Words can sprinkle
Into our stew so well
Cooked that is shines
On the face of the plate
Called you son and daughter
Of an elder whose teeth
Have gaps that remind me of
The smile on the face of the
Man who sired the grandfather
Of my children.

Let us soldier on
Our is a burden of
The mind that wants
To spill all that there
Is so that others can
Pick it and hide it

So that tomorrow
They can reopen their
Bags and know we gave
Them bombs to throw
At the enemy they
Did not see who will
Be snarling on their
Door when the clock
Strikes ten and the
Wink is closing on
The eyes and the body
Says do lay me down
For I have had enough
Of this brooding and
Can do with more than
A wink.

Sarah Mkhonza

Somebody Stole My Glasses

On the final day of judgment.
I stand to answer for why I
did not read my bible. 'Dear
Lord, you will not believe it,
somebody stole my glasses.

Shivering in my unpolished
brush was stolen.

Go back and make sure to
buy one key and half a key,
no screws missing, for you
have a screw missing in the
in the door here.

Arriving here like a rejected parcel
makes good news. Hence this telling.

See why I am clean shaven? There are
no thieves who still razors anymore.
They all went to the hereafter to
face a judgment like me.

They all blamed it on the scissors
murder for he demonstrated everything
was a weapon and needed for protection.

Excuses will not make it up there.
They are coming back here. Let me
and you be found having done it all.
So not to be called the nogooders.

Excuses don't make it up there. They'Re

Exc

See

Arriving like a rejected parcel,

door here.

and make sure the door has all
the

shoes, I argue that the brush

Standing there in my unpolished
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Sarah Mkhonza

Song Of The Lone Worker.

We swept the yard with grass brooms,
Stirring up dust that choked our throats,
Rendered us coughing and sniffing and sneezing,
Then we piled dirt by the roadside,
In piles so big and smelly all day,
Only to find it there the next day.
The garden boy had no garden,
Nor the kitchen girl the only kitchen,
Where once they toiled and looked at shovels,
Like over sized spoons that scoop the earth,
And throw it on heads that are empty,
Only to cry and call out with songs,
That said they were still hungry like yesterday.

What could we have done with laws of old,
That made us crack heads we scratched hard,
And combed hurriedly with thorny hands that itched,
For the money that would never be ours,
For life escaped the kind with hair like ours,
And went away to the vaults far away,
Leaving just banana peels on the road,
On which we slipped and fell headlong,
Into the streets we had swept so well,
Calling it paying the price of freedom,
For they did say freedom was like a breeze,
That blows in new waves like a current,
To leave behind dead fish from oceans,
So far away no ship can get there.

When the thing called life turns blue
We see the rain hoping it will rain money,
Only to find the holes on the roof,
Looking at us and round like coins
That fall on us for we let it in,
In a greeting that sounds like a song,
We heard when playing with the drum
It fell into with double sounds,
Only to find it falls on our heads.
When will we have a mine like theirs,

That lets money rain from below,
And shoot up like a fountain,
To build roofs that reach the sky,
And move around in rivers of traffic,
That flicker lights in the darkest night,
And shine afar like our bosses,
Who see further than the moon,
For their packages were long made,
The take home that never ends,
Even when their backs are bent double.

Sarah Mkhonza

Sound Of The Lowveld Sentinel

I lived in a valley,
Where sounds hit back,
Against the hills across,
And echo back at me,
Where one boy would shout,
Aloud and announce the arrival,
Of us school children who came,
For we were late and needed telling,
That there exists our own,
Self made lowveld sentinel,
In the echo that hits back,
To tell us we are part of a world,
That is bigger than what we see.

For here big rocks and trees,
Drenched wet and glistening,
Monkeys, snakes and frogs,
Announce the rains happily
Joining sentinels that called,
Messages of life assured,
Like hyenas of the night,
Amidst howling that rang out,
And splintered my soul,
And left it in tatters,
Of nervous laughter that rang back,
At me down in that valley.

Sounds going into me,
Shouting in that hot lowveld air,
That would catch me and throw me,
Down on the ground in bouts of laughter,
Sometimes in search of gulps of air,
That could help me yell back at the sky,
For I had to get my chance too,
To change the song of the sentinel.

It was the sentinel of barking dogs,

Coming from nearby and far,
Chasing bellowing bulls away,
From people's fields full of corn,
The whip that explodes after the span,
Of oxen that plow the rows,
Neatly letting out its noise,
To the rhythms of a life,
Announcing its existence so sure,
Like the smoke that comes out of the sides,
Of the huts on rainy days,
Announcing that it is time for fires to cook,
The only meal of the day,
And lie down and forget,
About all the sounds that invade the night,
Far away in the distant mountains.

Walking in that valley's sandy roads,
On wet rainy days amidst thunder,
Left me thinking the lightning,
Had struck me right in the head,
As I walked drenched listening to the lid,
Of the sky that had opened and poured itself,
All over my childhood self wetting,
Even the inside of the soul of me,
For I was a lowveld girl,
That would join the sentinel,
And cry back in words forever.

I walked pathways to these rhythms,
And went homewards to mushroom like huts,
That promised warmth and food inside,
Their warm round heaths with cast-iron pots,
Where I would open the door and smell,
The smell of home that announced,
That the golden sunlight had come,
Into the hut to bid us goodbye,
Followed by the night that often fell,
Behind the mountains telling me I was home,
And could watch this sundown for I am here,
Where rest tells my body it has come.

For family will gather soon,
And we will lie down to hear the sentinel,
The wolf that howls in the distance,
Telling us that ours is the world.
To be shared with the likes of them,
As they also get out to hunt for food.
Like we had done on this day.

Sarah Mkhonza

Sounds Of The Rent Rising And Me Afraid

Sh! Listen to the sound
Outside getting closer,
Even louder than thuds
Pounding on the door.
This thunder with
Two hands that bang
With the loudest bang
Of the judges hammer
That declares
Silence in court.

For I am awaiting the debt collectors
Of heaven now that satan has done it
Again this raising of
The money for the rent.
This eviction was not reported
To the landlord of heaven
Where the promise of mansions
In glory remains true.

The rent collectors are here
In this space where bees
Sting us harder than wasps.
The landlord's pest ridden
Abode has me running up and down,
Hoping for justice to be done with
The raising of the gavel.
Now that their pounding feet
Are outside the steps
God save me from collapsing,
And falling into the rent hole
Which has me running from
One money machine to the other.

Me! Who thought eviction a disease
Of the homeless
I'm finally stepping out coins in hand.
Not even able to buy a submarine
To sink my hunger to the pits

That will submerge me under
And allow me to wage a serious rent war,
Where my espionage will torpedo the landlord and his ships and send them
Reeling into the depths of the bay,
Where it will be sink, swim or die
For this is war, this eviction of
The San Francisco middle class and the poor.

Sarah Mkhonza

Speaking For Daughters Of The Rainbow

Once I knew how difficult it was
I was ashamed of my self
I tried to change but it was too late
The gears did not work like the day before
The path was uphill now not downhill
I sidetracked and looked back
My path had taken another direction
I wished for the past but it was gone
I was happy to have tried and not run

Once I new how funny it had been
I laughed at myself for what I did
For I had waded into the ocean of love
Thinking it would save me and make me
Without a surfing board and bare footed
I was sure to end up at the place of wonder
For the path keeps winding as I wander
It does not get more prepared to save me
Instead it unmade me each day I tried
I found a human being I did not know
In each action I took in the cruel waters
Where I landed with my beloved
The jelly fish bit me
The sting was just too bad.

Once I knew we were not meant to be
I had a strange sorrow inside me
I wanted to know why and self blamed
Until the small voice rescued me
It asked me where I stood when I saw love
I did answer 'at the shoreline for sure',
'And now where do you stand? '
'In the middle of the waves for sure'
'What must 'we' do now?
'Swim on and even surf sometimes? '

Then I knew I was not sure
I did not want to talk anymore
I wanted to do and undo the knots

They were too tight now
They had 'knotlets' too
That did not see the big knot
What was I going to do now that I knew
The shoreline was far away?
To go forward was a trial
To go backwards was inviting
But the crowd at the shoreline
Looked on with open eyes
I was scared, yes I was scarred
I still stand undecided
Tossed this way and that
By the big knots I tied alone
For we were not meant to be.

Some days it felt like a chain
Some days it felt like the end of a storm
Some days I saw the rainbow in the sky
Then I knew I was the daughter of the rainbow
For one day would start again
And I would see it in all its colors
I just hope it will not be too late
To jump when the wave comes
And come out on the other side
And pull my hand over my head with a sigh
As I usually do after a storm.

Sarah Mkhonza

Speaking Of This Nosiness That Faulters

There are noses sniffing the air,
And dumping the findings in our ears,
They sniff all stuff and haul it in,
Then we inhale and wait forever,
Not knowing when we will exhale.

We sit in our houses waiting,
Waiting for the remote to switch on,
Wondering how far the praying mantis went,
Now that it comes home ready with big eyes,
Looking at us to see what we need to hear.

This nosiness takes us far away,
Into corners of this air clean,
Where the clouds are fluffy as they float,
Then bring us what we hear and say Oh!
Oh! my God, really, surely that is not true,
And then keep wishing it wasn't it,
Until the stories of carnage end,
In one pile of flowers thrown in my mourners.

y
This nosiness that puts us together,
Pulling us crying into one world,
Where we cannot even say it is enough,
Our lives cannot take any more sadness,

Give us good news of this world too,
Help us fantasize in our daily search,
For they heal us always,
Or else stop dipping your nose,
Into the sadness out there,
And drop into us this black box,
Never to be retrieved the pictures,
That haunt us daily.

Who said news had to be new,
When they bring old sadness in daily,
And leave new happiness outside,
For us to find for ourselves.

Because tomorrow always says,
Oh! What a beautiful day!
The black cloud has passed,
Then our laugh reminds us that
We are sons and daughters of hope.

Sarah Mkhonza

Standing At The Wrong Cattle Show

I strut about, and look around.
To be seen is my art now.
Yet nobody pays attention to the
efforts composed by my ingenious
mind.
I get on the scale and it squeaks.
Surely confessions of deafness are
what keeps me from being bought.
Now I moo, for I have to be bought.
I am the thoroughbred and proud.
Yet even a bullock with broken horns
will not look at me.

I go to the river where fish swim,
seeing my shadow above the water they dive deeper.
I go to the forest, surely the cows
owned by the farmer know a way to get me
out of this foolish mess that has me bound.
I tell them my mosley bit and they laugh.
You live for hope, patience and endurance.
Still confused, I ask what is wrong with mme. Then I see, I have been standing
on
the wrong table at the wrong cattle show.
Time to find the show where mirrors
sing aloud, shouting one name, d
have read the signs.
And

I

I get

Sarah Mkhonza

Standing Far From The Basket

Some will say why shoot
When you are too far from
The basket. Stand and aim
And put your focus on a ball
Getting in that basket for it
Is in throwing it in that you
Will know the basket is not there
To measure how good people think
You are, but to tell you what it
Is you know about the game of focus.

You get the ball and hold on to it.
Let it go after you aim for this chance
Will not be lost. Once lost it never bounces
Back for it is not made of rubber like
The ball. Like the chance it is, it goes
Disappears into the sunset like the sun.

If you try mother earth will tell gravity
To stop for it is the chance of the son
Of love to defy the force it is and tell
The world he missed being Michael Jordan
Because he was born at midnight when God
Was in a hurry and human flesh was no
Longer wet enough to make anything other
Than the midget that stands so far from
The basket that the basket stands as tall
Higher than the gum trees of Tamarind.

Sarah Mkhonza

Standing In A Valley Of A Thousand Poems

This valley known to history speaks,
shakes like the seismic saga and sinks
knowing Noone will believe me when I say
I stand in the valley of a thousand poems.

One ant heap here reads the termites that
dance in my head and says it wants to be
a mountain. This also you will not believe.

This one here rises like the moon, a woman
trying to carry a load on her haed. Tough
luck, her bundle says. No biceps no do.

This one hoots like the owl. Someone is in danger of going where all owls go.
This place where bats also make sure they do not go to alone.

This dance in this valley gets warmer when
the chimneys caught fire. Knowing they do so noiseless means cancer finds us in
a dead sleep.

The poets blow the trumps and all these poems stand and sing the click song.
Dreds
that are locked up kick doors and state
What kind each poem is.

I answer for you blank verse, and all the
clapping happens. The valley says it fears the species for to eat poetry would be
to eat their own kind. Every animal does not eat it's droppings.

So clean is the valley because of this truth. We sit together in agreement for
we are chewing the cud together hoping
no flood will come into the valley, for
climate change is real.

having borrowed

Sarah Mkhonza

Standing In Our Truths Hands Of Ours

Just thinking about the past and its deeds,
I find myself standing right there in it,
Anytime I am standing in it, it speaks
out with a soft voice calling me back to it,
Come it says, come and just stand in me,
Then we will be two twins in our time,
My time, your time in the day time,
When our past is just being in the two of us.

Speak right there the message I have from you,
Right there where you open your hand,
Rubbing my palm with ticklish touching,
As the blood rushes back,
Taking back the truth to revealing endings.
Like the lines under my eyes which smile back,
With lines around my mouth agreeing with a shiver,
For I see in your eyes the quiet looking out of them,
Looking on and telling the truth of our wonderings
Saying search deep in me and go beyond the lines.
They have been seeping into them the sun,
Making my look as real as the sculpture,
Out near the road to the big forever ahead,
Which gapes at our looking with its openness,
For so real and so deep are our truths, hands of ours.

Sarah Mkhonza

Standing In The Grotto And Confessing

Now I know a lie has a long lifespan
Words that came out years ago
Haunt me here in the grotto.
They sit with stares so hollowed by time
These candles look dim
As they melt and burn my hands
When I pick them up to look
How pure my soul will become
When next I come to confession.

When I heard the lie repeated
A decade later on new doorsteps
the lie had traveled far in time
To cement itself in the mind, the anger
My mother fuming at the heavenlies
For not bringing down fire on her
The one I had lied about.

My skin is hidden in shivers
Etched in the caverns of my mind
Is the big story I told
That lies between the three of us
Untouched and half know by some.

It way my mind which fabricates truths
The way I want them twisted to blame
I stand in this grotto in a girlish fight
Of silky petticoats torn in jagged tears
That I hid at the bottom of the box
And a huge scar on my face.

I argued with the truth then
I cannot argue with the lies now
For I used to survive questioning
Not knowing the coming grotto
Which will deal with twisted stories
And dish out words like art
Painting episodes to be told
About the grace I have now

To stop me crashing into the fire
As my ashes get swallowed by cries
Of a penitence too late
So here and now I say it,
It was not her, it was not her.

Sarah Mkhonza

Standing In The Plains Into Which I Was Born

Am I what the world was waiting for,
looking at my trail right now.

It zig-zags and disappears behind me leaving me to go on for I am looking for
the zenith of my life.

If I lived a life of gear,
the results are written on
the faces that received it.

If I was filled with hope, it
equally shook the earth.

The wind swept above my head,
my hair told the story of woe.

Out in this valley of windy storms
There is one national anthem.

Prepare for the next storm it runs,
Before you are caught wit your pants down.

The altos rings the melody swaying trees,
blowing tree tops to one side.

Puddles form and water as runoff escapes
into holes. The ground teaches it the
game called sip away.

The drought comes and we ask where it's
cousins arid and candid are.

The answer we are told, lies in the
coming winter that will come drier than
ever.

If I was born of wetness, I must answer
why the sun burns this hat less valley.

I was told the answer is known only to
bald men, for they constantly
ask why the sun burns their hairless spot.

In this valley into which I was born,
stands no princess with no pot of water,
on the head. The storm blew the pots into
a pile of debris.

When it is over, what remains is work and nothing but work. Let us work on.

Sarah Mkhonza

Standing On Shark Island

I stand here ready to go down in shreds
and leave the land of my birth to the reich.
He has chosen me today. I will go for going
is like coming. Now that you see me, all
of me, sinew by sinew. I am ready to go
where the sharks will put my skull on the
shrine of remembrance, where only those
who know how to fight go.

Once a man went inside a whale, they say,
and then he came our unharmed.
I will be no more when I go, only if you
forget to go and call my name on Shark Island.
Swakopmund is not far, when you mean
to go there for me. I mean something to
someone. Walk for me on Shark Island.
Call me by any Griqua name. Call my Nama
name. I will answer in the waves. They
tasted my blood.

One day someone will care, that I suffered
like the many, who were swallowed by
the sharks. When others say go and die,
they say so with bloody hands that have
power. We leave our land to you. You will
hear of us from our children. You will see
them with hidden tears in their eyes.
They will not forget those who left
to go and be eaten alive.

We built this land of ours, that today
we must leave to these who kill,
and get forgiven because nobody
asks questions on our behalf.

We have no shoah. When you see
others in the cities, know that the
death was the same. We were made
to throw ourselves one after another

at the sound of the whip.

Is it because we have no images
of how we looked inside the mouth
of a shark, that the world forgets
us and live us a story of life taken
and forgotten?

These people whose lives only matter
when they have killed others and then
bury their heads in the sand have to
answer like they do for all these deeds.
The law which chooses is not a law
for all.

Where is the law that remembers us?
Is it in the mouth of other sharks?
These that equally say jump in and be eaten.
For it is nice to watch history in the
making, when some are green and yellow.

I have seen the Hage. I have stood there
listening to judgements of some while
I wait in these shadows of Shark Island
for a lawyer that is brave. It does not
take a crowd, but just one who can speak
the truth that people have put a silence on
that is like a rock. They rock it this
way and that. They want it to stay put
on this truth that I speak so freely.

It is nice to be free, they say.
They come out with hands
clean, when they buried us in the stomachs
of sharks. Go your way and jump.
We cannot eat your truth. Eat yours.
We did not eat, but were eaten.
When you eat your dinners
today, remember you made us the dinner of sharks.
Your silence claps for those who were behind us.
Together with a world that is silent you say
Jump in and be eaten. Silence is good

because it speaks louder than words.

Sarah Mkhonza

Standing On The Wincrowing Floor

I stand on the wincrowing flow with
A bowl of grain held high for I know
Which way the wind is blowing at this
grain will fall right here
And some will stray, but I will find
It if it falls under the husks.

To wincrow these words into poetry is
To find the few that can make a meal
We can eat and not fall sick. The rest is good for the wevels for I
Will throw all in the compost heap
And come rain it will rot and go back
Home for they say we all came from
The ground where as husks unwanted
We will return.

Dream your dreams for the wincrowing
Fork is coming. It is ready to do
Its work that you do know
As well as I. I wish I were not like
You but like one of its prongs for
I could have the power to point you out and have you dangling on the fork
And look at you and say it's a pity
You ended the way of a husk. Unfortunately I stand on this wincrowing
floor as vulnerable and as ignorant is
Things that await me and you. Therefore I wish to beg my lot to join
Me and watch the direction of the
Wind for that is all we can do.

Sarah Mkhonza

Standing With The Dart In Your Hand

If this throw you want to make
Is final it must hit the bull's
Eye for you do not have another
Chance for with a real bull
Two horns you aim your hands on
As two eyes you see. In this game
Called life you aim once. You
Miss the mark then you have to
Await the next turn in the next
Life and who said King Life
Rewards those who throw their
Chances away?

Throw the dart and wink an eye for
This is the magic that does it.
Don't ask me what to do when
You have no eye to wink for
Everybody knows the answer to
That question. Make one then
Ypu will ask me how and as I have
Said before ask the rag doll. If
It can dance with no feet why
Can't you aim woth no eye. Your
Questions redundant are a sure
Sign of never trying for when
The scriptvruns out we all know
That padding works. In this land
Of reality we apply the rules
Of the wedding at Cana and change
Water into wine for the game is
For the movie to run till the
Credits roll pn the screen and
You see the name you love most
Crawling upwards and you wish
It would not disappear for it
Assures you that you aimed and
Let the dart go and made the
Bulls eye son and daughter of
An elder.

Sarah Mkhonza

Star With The Brightest Gleam

Star with the brightest gleam I see you,
Brightening even the darkest nights,
Brighter than moons and half moons,
You who beat the sun to the race,
And won a place for yourself alone,
Where you shine and make them wonder,
Where it is you got your stary mane,
Which glows and growls truths feared,
And teeth that glow like jewels.

Shine on in the yonder where you are,
Star with the brightest gleam,
Glowworm who excels at everything,
Touch souls of beast and pebbles
Yes even pigs and piglets,
Clean them up and let them dance,
Clean them as they grunt and wiggle,
For their tails are too short to swat,
That even a fly can sit on their back,
And not fear even one touch.

Shine on and peel off the log,
For their eyes are blinded,
They see, but what is theirs,
And rub it on to others.
Shine star with the brightest gleam,
Gleam on and dash across the sky,
The night is short, the day comes
soon, to fade the gleam in you.

Suns from other lands will come,
To take over the space where you frolic,
The wide sky where you sparkle,
And go on into ends unknown,
Your light will be dim then,
As pigs go to the butcher,
To grunt no more, but bacon be,
And babble and sizzle in flames,

When set on the tables of the rich,
Being eaten, never to dance again,
In the mud where they swam and slept,
While the glow worm did its best.

Sarah Mkhonza

Stay Alive The Water Lily

So flat yet floating to oblivion,
No worries for you are fed by the sky,
So beautiful you bloom for everyone,
So solid, so there no one can wade in,
And touch who you are without knowing you,
From getting the shock that lights up,
For only you knows how to live,
The way of stars without paying,
Even a dime for the air you breathe.

This bird sits on your leaves,
Drinks from the pond looking around,
Sticks its beak and strikes at this,
This fish that it swallows,
Its beak going up then down,
In steps of the gobbling you watch,
As it swallows on and on.
You looking at this life,
And blooming white like the clouds,
That cast a shadow as they float
Up above as if searching for a way,
To help you on your journey,
Of waiting for the pollen to be taken,
To grow another one like you.

Life is not easy water lily,
For your leaves know this for sure,
Yesterday stood a bird of prey,
That prayed for a fish to eat,
Then tore the leaf as it fought,
To get its dinner for the day,
And fly away leaving behind,
Its droppings for it to carry,
Till the rain comes and washes away,
These so rare that need to sink,
To the bottom to make you feed.

When will your new leaves come up?
When will your new flowers show life,

Alive you are the water lily,
That everyone waits for day by day,
For it is rare this you know,
For you bloom for just a few,
So rare a find, so beautiful,
Stay alive new water lily,
When you die no one will see,
That in this pond there lived one like you.

Sarah Mkhonza

Step Out And Feel The Breeze

Slowly reach for the next bar,
One arm first then another,
Heave yourself up with oomph,
Kick the chair under you and

Voila you are seeing new heights.

Who said you were not made for greatness, daughter of wonder?

Sarah Mkhonza

Still A Blessed Untouchable

This problem that bothers many,
This poverty and hunger others
live with daily, renders me to
proclaim that I am a blessed
untouchable.

I could grope around in the darn,
without as much as a candle to
light up where to lay my head.
The faggots from yesterday are
in my hand for a light. I let
go of them. I confess having been
there, I am a blessed untouchable.

I saw one little piece of soap,
Shared for months by more than five.
Till it thinned and disappeared in
one bath. This does render me to
proclaim this life of the blessed
untouchable.

Those who touched me touched my
poverty, which evaporated, a
vapor pulverized. It left inside
me, this blessed untouchable.

Having seen and heard poverty,
churning inside some stomach of
a kid, I sit here on the stool
of my memory. I cry for many the
tears that are the waterfall nobody
hears.

If we could put them together on a
slope, we would hear the sound of
the falling water on the cheeks
turned rocks by hunger. We see
the cheeks of ours in the mirror.
We know we have seen the blessed

untouchables.

Give a Mother Theresa wet wipe.
I could not wipe the cheeks dry.
I have joined the lament of many.
Can poverty stand inside many and
speak inside many and ask what we
blessed untouchables remember.

We sit on seat of our memory.
This throne thrown at us by
time with her luck bearing left
hand that reached me and you,
calls us to act. We know the rule.
Share and share like the ants do.

Seen the colony of ants sharing?
They get into your kitchen. They
create the load and launch in on
their backs. No pulling and hiding
stuff from others. We all labor
night and day. We share the load
we are going to hide from the house
owner.

He does not like ants anyone. Who
liked the untouchables of India like
me and you. Who knew us when we were
poor and had tears like a waterfall
when put together. We call it hard
work, and say it got us here. We
turn heads at the group like us when
we were untouchable. Yet now we laugh
when someone declares us the blessed
untouchables.

I have loved the touch of others. It
is warm and so are the smiles. I join
the world in its desire to help and
stop the waterfall of tears and the
din of noise put together when hunger
causes the stomach to sing the song,

whose tune says, I will be hungry and
hungry everyday till the drought ceases.

They have talked of climate change.
Me and you, we listened and hoped.
They have stolen clean air even.
The poor who gave us the second rung,
on which we stand feel it. The land in
the Pacific Islands has disappeared.
We live still on the second step,
me and you, these blessed untouchables.

Seems like we are next, for we being
on the second rung on this shaky
ladder of ours, will soon fall with
the water rising and threatening to
swallow the poor, hungry and lost.
Pray we make it to another step.
I hear they are raising the bar,
in a place called Silicon Valley.
Shall we remain the blessed, lovely
untouchables that society made happen.

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Sarah Mkhonza

Stop Knocking On People's Doors

Like a blind guide you go to places
You knock so hard that the people
Think you are deaf. For so loud
is your voice you leave them worried
If a want wit has come to this place.

I said you know three times as so said
A song of old and then go in for they
Know me and you are now two people
On a mission. I said I told them
You are to be let in even when you
Have not knocked. No more this
Calling attention upon yourself
For it makes me mad when everyone
Talks about you disturbing our
house. Next time you come knock
Just once and I will be at the door.
That means do not come when I am
Not there. That means call me and
Alert me that you are coming.
When the doors are ours you can
Overstep boundaries and jump
Over fences and even come in
Through windows. I am not bullying
You but I am only trying to be
A law abiding citizen. As long
As I live in this house, I have
To speak the truth about the rules
Of love or it ceases to be what it
Is for rules of love begin and stop
When you stop knocking on open doors
And try hard to be a stranger that
Was brought up with knowledge in
A home everybody wonders about.

Sarah Mkhonza

Stories From The Windscreen Of My Car

The world comes to me at the speed
I go into it. It brings buildings
And trees of Palo Alto with shining
Leaves into my view at the speed of
My car. I ask my car to slow down
With my foot which I take off the
Pedal and the speedometer tells me
The story of things inanimate that
I can have the controls, but I do
Not push the pistons of life up and
Down. That is still the work of
The engine.

I listen thinking I am wise for
I alone can see the world for the
Windscreen is the one that brings
The stories on the road to me.
This cyclist that wears a T-shirt
That has spiders on it looks at
Me daggers as I pass near him
Almost bumping him for this is
The problem of being small and
Riding around people who look
At the world through the windscreen
Of their car. The world comes to them
Smaller than that of a cyclist
Whose head is cast on the ground
In front of him as he works his
Way up the climb.

I pass stories of joggers in twos
And one in particular who jogs on
Both streets by looping his way
From one street to the other for
I know as I catch up with him on
the other side that my car has
Come to be as slow as a jogger
Who loops his way through streets.
This life of driving on and on

At speeds of humans has long
Been telling me to get a new
One, but I am so in love with
The stories I have come to see
Through the windscreen of my car
That I do not want another for
The tint I will get will not be
The same. They say people do not
Like change, but I do not like
Windscreens to be taken for granted
For they shape the world in
Front of us like the brain they
Force to focus on the narrow in
Front of them. My world is small
But as long as it is as small
As the windscreen of the world
I will still stay myself for
I will have seen only what
Providence allowed through
The windscreen of my brain,
Should I decide to get rid
Of my heap of scrap with whom
We have become second cousins.

Sarah Mkhonza

Street Wise House Foolish Worldy Wise Cyber Foolish

Where do we go when all the
Word we tread on is taken?
I knew how to scrub floors
And could polish them shiny
Till I went out and saw the
Pavements dirty and broom
In hand a person sweeping
Them then I knew how street
Foolish I was for I thought
They swept themselves.

I learned some wisdom as I
Stood and noticed a man with
A sharp object piercing litter
And there I saw an invention
On the street which told me
Plainly that I was not just
House foolish I could not
Make it even in the streets
Unless I learn to be streetwise
And invent an object that can
Help me to sweep dirt and wash
Dishes standing for when I do
It any other way I am using
Somebody's energy and stealing
Ideas when even a street sweeper
Called it plagiarism.

Unless I use this tool and tell
It is the idea of another say
Steve Jobs or Bill Gates
Or some other person out there
Who donated MSDOS to the world,
I cannot even claim I am wiser
For I borrow every idea I use
From gurus of wisdom like these.

If I can walk in cyberspace
And not pick up the litter

That is all over this world
Of the internet with a sharp
Object but stand here a victim
Of hackers and all I am indeed
not only street foolish but
Also cyberfoolish. A time will
Come when my invention in hand
I will stand at corners and like
A Pharisee tell you all that I
Am not like the tax collector
That cheats uncle Sam like you
For see a woman with her own tricks
That render the whole world not
Only Cyberfoolish, but worldfoolish,
For someone out there is worldly
Wise like these computer people
Who have left us tied to their ideas
Like coins on the loins of an old
Woman whose money need not be stolen
By naughty township boys for they
Would have to kill her before they
Get into her undergarments for this
is not the place where streetwise
Tsotsis look.

This day is coming for I am each
Day taking a leaf off the wisdom
Tree for I want to win the battle.
They say there is no revenge that is
Better than success for every loser
Knows that. Call me a loser now, but
Talk to me when all the leaves of the
Said tree have been swallowed by me,
For voila! Streetwise I will never
To be caught unprepared by time.
For at the moment the riches are
Passing over my head at the speed
Of light and soon my spell is about
To be cast on them for the leaf
I am taking in my food daily does
Not joke when it wrenches things
from afar and puts them in front

Of me.

Sarah Mkhonza

Stripping Down The Lamp You Are

The lamp shade goes first.
Is it made of the finest silk?

Then comes the base. Is it made
of the hottest brass?

And now the light bulb. Does it
bring out the warmth that makes
one to wonder where they make such.

The whole thing bunfled up, is it thrift store trash that has to go back where it
came from or land
in the dump?

There's no room for despair when what
we want is the tatoo. It is either there
or not. If not, it is not a collectable.
You wasted your time and money in this
purchase. Someone has the original, in some collection close by. Fix the fixable.
A lamp is still a auction of the
century is coming into town. Don't sell.

boots

denims change color with each droplet..

Sarah Mkhonza

Swimming In Our Own Divided Pool Up To Our Necks

With bare hearts openly divided,
we walk in our own divided mud.
This mud in our pool calls you
red and me blue. We walk in our
own fences blinded by words that
make us know ideas are stronger
than shackles.

This redness is in a Red Sea blue,
has the aftertaste of water from
the Dead Sea. What do the dead say
when we somersault in division. Our
tongues cover the walls of the world
wallpaper of division.

When the division was knee dip,
we saw where we were going. The
mud has got murine and the rest has got hidden in the dumpsters where we threw
the truth away
N

in the

wallpaper

Sarah Mkhonza

Swinging Poe Fireballs

I saw a man playing with fire,
Dancing around like like to tires,
Spinning he moves and keeps going,
Swinging his hands turning strings,
With fire dancing at the end,
To a sound that went on and on,
Only to stop when the flame is gone,

This poe fireball, lights like fire,
Dances like fire but not on its feet,
Dances on arms but not its own
Like flying on wings not our own,
Just the man turning once again,
To give a world warmth it had never seen,
Even in the dreams of little stars,
That danced brightly in the sky.

Would I fear to try a poe fireball lit,
Tied to my feet like a toe,
And dance around fire in hand,
Waving a wand that has magic,
I throw in the air to cast spells,
On everyone to make them happy,
The way the poe fire man does?

Would there was a fairy,
To throw fire and burn my heart,
And make me swing round and round,
Me turning, with arms swinging,
My own poe fireball in the hand lighting,
The very one deep in me,
To keep it dancing with joy like him,
This poe fireball man who dances always,
To the sound of fire in hand.

Sarah Mkhonza

Tail Or No Tail Means Wings Or No Wings

The the horse swats a fly off
Her back with the most beautiful of
Tails and the pig shakes its coiled joke
of a tail and the flies laugh until their
Stomachs are painful for they have never
Seen the likes of a pig's tail get at them.

The cow shows off its beautiful tail that
Is the numerous colors of a beautiful dawn.
I the pig swears that this joke has to come
To an end and climbs on the cow and tells
The flies to dare come up for it will
Show them what it is made of. It somersaults
On the back of the cow and takes its tail
Swats the flies off so hard they buzz off
Never to take the pig for granted for
They have learned that pigs can do it
In borrowed robes tail or no tail even
If they boast of wings pigs can do it
without those too. For the tale has
to end with a pig victorious.

For one day it will also give the flies all they
Need if it is about milk humans can drink,
For this is about knowing how to get
What you want.

Sarah Mkhonza

Take Back Your Laughter

No matter how dark and sad,
Remember the sound of your laughter,
It's ring calls you to the future
With the sound of yesterday,
When you shrieked and rolled on the ground,
Writhing and squirming,
For your stomach was sore,
You swore you had never laughed like this,
Now know that was not true,
For you had and will laugh again.

Playing dumb to the now,
Is playing numb to the feeling,
That takes away possibilities,
You can create tomorrow,
For you were born to do,
That which no one can do.
See yourself with tomorrow's eyes,
And borrow tomorrow's truth,
Hear it ringing in your laughter,
For you were born to laugh again,
Yes you were born to love again,
For love repeats itself,
Just as your laugh repeats it's ting.

What if you let your laughter go

And someone kidnapped it for aransom,
A gold digger making you pay huge sums
For what you had and did not use,
Would you feel the loss for this
Treasure that sits in your hove
Unused for you refuse to be love,
Of the you who will laugh again
For they did day you would love again

Sarah Mkhonza

Take Me On Your Search For The Fountain Of Youth

We swam, bathed and then emerged
From the pool our feet standing
Back there wishing we would not
Leave and always live walking
Backwards with mirrors agreeing
That we have to do all we can to
Claim our heritage for we came
From the fountain of youth.

Mirrors do not lie for they
Remind us of faces as smooth
As the face of a porcelain jar
And cheeks round and rosy with
The touch of love. Our hand
Once folded small fists learned
To clap loud and slap each other
To laughter for they did not
Have the mark on their ring
Finger that speaks of failed
Marriages.

We looked at each day as a
Wedding day in the making
And heard the air we breathe
Saying marry me so we can go
On this walk sworn never to
Let go of each other for I
Will never let you down. I
Blow in all directions
So we will never lose our
Bearings and get lost in this forest Called life. I have the power
To cause the waves to rise
Into a storm and bury alive
Any enemy we encounter. If someone tries to get between us I have
The power to capsize their boat
So you can I can journey back to
The fountain of youth at the
Center of the earth for it is
From there that we came and seek to return.

Ask the mirror if I have ever had
As much as a wrinkle then you will
Know I have the directions and can
Take us on the calmest surf to the
Shores of the fountain of youth
From whence you came for I was born
The Son of King Wisdom.

Take me for together we hold the
Ace against humanity for you have
Heard that everything that lives
Is on a wild goose chase and is
Forever chasing the wind. So marry
Me marry me and be the envy of the
World for humans will not believe
Good things happen to the likes
Of me and you for these truths I
Speak are ones you left at the
Fountain of her we will
Go facing east on our daily walk
To the place where youthfulness never
Ends, where spines never bend and
The clays of the pools glimmer with
The glint of the magic we seek.
Be

Sarah Mkhonza

Talk To The Girl You Are

Nobody knows the inside of you,
Nobody speaks to the girl you are,
You are the person given the task,
For you best know the girl you are.

Speak to yourself the truths you need,
Ask yourself the questions you have,
For it is you who walks up and down,
Knowing, touching and feeling all around you.
For you are the one top of this thing.

If you silence yourself with fear,
You will die to yourself unsure,
What you would have said to all,
Who wanted to hear the words you have,
For they were given only to you.

The land you live and walk on,
Knows your strides as you walk daily,
It gives to you all the power,
That lifts your torso into the air,
Propelling you to futures afar.
On roads of dirt and tar.

Talk to me and also to you,
For we want to hear your life,
Speaking in a dance, this laughter in you,
This song in your voice that is horse,
For it will never break like that of a boy,
To blast harder on the earth if you let it,
For it was made for such words as you have,
To release into the world right now,
For we cannot be sure when silence comes,
To turn off the walkie talkie that you are.

On this last jog that we are on,
I hope to hear you as I stride on,
Looking into the future with you,
Telling me in laughter song and dance,

For they are the LSD of life,
As I heard it said so long ago.

Sarah Mkhonza

Talking To The Lilly That Grows Outside My Window

Hey beautiful lilly that
Grows outside my window.
Let us talk so I may tell
You how far I went to get
You. I know you do not know
How far I went to get you.

I travelled far out north
To get you. Wondering if
The sapling you came from
Would grow I planted it
Outside my window where
I would not forget to water
It.

As my bad memory would serve
Me as usual the sapling went
Out of my mind. Then one day
Vouila! Like the love of God
There you were looking at me
All the bell shape of you
Hanging down a three foot plant
Like the bells of Saint Petersburg.

That you did not ring like the
Bells did not matter to me. I looked At you and remembered bending
Down in a forest not sure you would
Grow into the beautiful lily you are.

You looked all pink and shaded
And I knew that you would live for
Love had come to my window
And would never leave. I watered
You and ate of your beauty with
My eyes that would not get enough.
You remain in my memory the only
Thing that reminds me of that
Trip to the north.

Tell Me Ananse Why Royals Demand Front Seats

Now that I am queen of the climb
For my thumb peels off dollars from
A pile I should answer these questions
But sheer modestly says it is better
To ask a question than to answer it
In the conversations of the world.

Why do royals demand front seats?
I asked my mother for she was a
Princess of Magedu, a small village
Not known and she said never to answer
A question when you sit on a queenly
Stool. So advised I ask why it is
That royals demand front seats.

Is it because it is easier to get to the
Front than it is to get to the back because
The steps are many on the upward climb
And fewer as you go down?

Is it because when the wedding
Cake is cut they must get the first
Piece because they are closer to it
And leave the last pieces for us for
That is what we deserve?

Is it because when the pianist plays
They will hear the distinct note yet us
At the back we hear the rhythm and start
To dance for what else can we do for
We also need to be seen and known for
What we can do best?

Is it because their necks are so
Labored with power that they are
Too heavy to stretch at the back
Lest they twist them and lose all
The power they carry?

Is it because we do not want to
To see their foreheads but just
The bald spots that are seen in
Half from the back for they shine
Like the money trays they eat out
Of?

Is it because power corrupts and
Puts others in front and others
At the back where come push or shove
There is nothing they can do?

Is it because we want to hide at
The back lest they see we are just
A bunch of birdies flying in the
Dark like bats and still wet behind
The ears?

Is it because life is unfair and gets
Us out of any womb at anytime throwing
Us onto any lap that rocks us into
Our invisible thrones where
We are kings in the making in our
Own way?

Is it because they hope to live lives
Like us and face the danger that presidents
Face when the altercations of life fire
At us all and block them from us all
For they always do so from the front?

Tell me Ananse for you are the knower
And chose to sit at the front of every
Issue on my mind like a real queen of
The climb

Sarah Mkhonza

Tell Your Story Lowveld Girl

I heard sounds in the valley,
Sounds of whips cracking on beasts,
The pushing and plowing nearby,
Living lines of dirt turned up,
And seeds looking at the sun and rain.

The farmer, that worked hardest,
Ripped what he sowed I saw,
And thought like me when I plow,
I would reap as much as he.

Then I went to the place of work,
Worked harder than the hardest I saw,
Cracking whips on my back endlessly,
Telling me to work harder than ever.

This I did thinking I had to please,
In order to get a ticket of peace,
That would lay food on the table like them,
Only to find the bread was smaller on mine,
Than the half a loaf I had bought at the store.

I asked the seller why my bread was small,
He looked at me as if I was crazy,
He put my bread on the same scale,
When it tipped he said to me,
Your breast and torso make it tip against,
Everything you put on it.

This I thought was the lowveld in me,
Telling me the girl of the city got better,
I walked to town so sure I was it,
The thing to get the corner office there,
Only to find a desk at the entrance,
For all I was, the receptionist also was.

Then I climbed the ladders of learning,
I chose a gum tree for it is tallest,
Green and smelly eucalyptus oil and all,

Only to be told I was not of the myrtle family.

Then I went back to the lowveld whence I came,
Ready to rub sand into my hair like all,
The girls I saw who had sand in their hair,
And shake it off to leave some small shiny curls.

This was what I needed to do with me,
For I had never learned the ways of the wise,
That a widow shared with me in all black,
That it is life to be a woman after the life,
That a girl has lived walking this earth.

Sarah Mkhonza

Tempt Me Not On Tree Tops

Tempt me not on tree tops
For I will break my legs
When the branches gives up.
For branch and bramble
Break the legs of a want
Wit and climber to destinations
Of love unheard of.

Tempt me not at the bottom
Of the lake either for I
Here they drown those who
Cannot swimming like frogs.

But tempt me on the banks
Of a river for I will look
At your shadow in the water
And change into a pebble
And you pick me up and throw
Me on the other side where
I can watch your strong arms
Fight the downstream current
And get you where I stand.
This victory so fiercly fought
For tells the two of us we are
Two fighters who won against
All oddd. For it is the how and where
And notThe why That speaks wisdom
Btween me and you from now on.

Sarah Mkhonza

Tepid News Of Independence

So young and hollow,
Like someone had sapped,
All sense out of us,
Wanting nothing to do with rules,
For freedom had just knocked
On the door of our hearts,
To be let in by us on our terms,
Not those of the old daredevils,
For we owed them nothing which we,
Could not give back to history,
On our backs come push or shove.

We, the progenies of the age,
Had seen man land on the moon,
And been there when the moonbeams,
Bowed to the rays called sunbeams.

We had seen life at its take off,
And watched it blow up in the sky,
As bandits looted the pieces that fell off,
To show off at the
next exhibition of the richest,
ones from the poorest country,
We were sick of it.

These indiscretions of youth,
Have followed us like the moon
All the way to our north pole,
Where white lights and their glare,
Keep nagging telling us to remember,
The little wicked creatures we were.

Sarah Mkhonza

The Birth In The Bus

The birth in the bus
was a birth in no manger.
Just with this cloth on her back
and the baby that threatens
to tap its little feet on the floor
of life like any other baby.

The women come to her.
They surround her as if to hide her
from a public that fears to see
the birth of a young one just there.

The bus is full of us onlookers,
our eyes widen with the angst,
that fills the bus with bursts
of talk about what to do.

Put a stone on her back,
and then we can get to
the hospital. Why this burden
on a hidden burden I ask. Pigg's peak
is surely not about pigs,
nor is it about this one birth,
or what now could be a death.

All fear to see a life come or go,
with them all in one space and helpless,
for this time men will surely know the
urgency that makes women ask for
something, and want it right then.
Get this kitchen painted, honey, please
and it takes years and years and years.

This birth is not begging to come in.
It is on the birth canal and majestically there
as if it is the only person in the bus,
who should be talked about with wide
eyes, that look on with expectation,
for something surely must happen.

She is giving birth now let us be ready,
A life is raining from the sky of our talk.
I am anxious, but also curious,
surely baby once zygote should you,
get us all mixed up instead of saying to you,
with have been there before,
and then go on with our business as usual.

Who has not been there in the birth canal,
with mother, father, nurse or doctor?
Only you stranger that makes us these,
expectant passengers for surely we will
tell all people we saw a birth in a bus.

There's a birth in this bus you guys,
Even in the future we will point them back,
to a time of surprise and wanting to see,
and yet hoping not to see this birth
for the bus could do us one favor
And arrive at the hospital in town

Time stands still when there's an emergency,
as if it wants to wipe the plate clean like you
when you eat a meal where you have been invited,
to go yet you did not really want to,
like this baby that is being expelled,
out of the warmth of the mother's body.

Maybe it felt the warmth was woolen warm,
now we want the cold to get into its nostrils.
So unsure this human to be. Always turning
and rolling in the belly. Why pain your mother
all the time you little one, by deciding on a time
alone?

Surely the woman got in here,
sure she would reach the place,
where birthing people is normal,
and getting a hold of them for the
first time is the norm.

She has got to the bus stop!
Everyone is so relieved to see,
that this baby is the most obedient
citizen we have and will ever have,
for without a fuss she lay there,
when the whole world was in shock,
for right there was about to happen,
a deed that happened to us all,
in a privacy we carry in our little bodies,
and want to give to each other.

This battle was won by time,
or should we say time was defeated,
for it stood still and let happen,
what man wanted most.

Time is never defeated when we win,
for it is a servant of the moment,
where we stand with fingers crossed,
and say surely he will come not,
in the rush of this bus ride
for that would have been hard.

Swazi men never witness a birth,
they are exempt from seeing,
what they did to their women
who have to go to the birth place
and do the work of taking out babies alone.

Thy would surely have been sad,
sorry for the child and the mother,
sorry about the inconvenience of the hour,
where they worried about both,
knowing they rest and wait to see,
the little bundle in swathed blankets.
Now they have it all for she has left,
this place once tortured by the moment,
nobody wanted to be the way it threatened
to be, of making land a human on this runway,
which is mobile and endless, for such was
my journey, in sunny and dry walks of life,
I see passing in my mind even now.

Suppose the baby had been born,
could we have named it Busride Dlamini or
Landings. I surely do not know
but Swaziland surprises are many,
for they land on your lap like all surprises,
and this was one of them.

to

Sarah Mkhonza

The Brexit Ended The Tango

When the two took the floor,
They flowed into the platform,
An elegance unknown in their step,
To the admiration of many,
Who knew there would be winners,
If this couple held out to the end,
While some couple wished they would win,
And leave the winning to their perfection,
They were not thinking of the impossible,
For nobody plans to lose,
Except those who walk away.

The dance continued into the night,
Cheerers rising and sitting anxiously,
Clapping of hands, the applause went on,
The judges rising in their seats,
Wondering if the German dancer, French dancer
Belgian Dancer or Greek dancer tangos
To the music of the sixties or the eighties,
Or just lost in a national roundabout
Where the milkman dances alone under a cow,
And the windmill turns round and round,
In circles night and day in the wind
In a Holland all its own.

Then there was an invasion of the floor,
By strangers dressed in tattered clothes,
Ones from the street, the poor striding in,
Their shoes upturned and coats floating,
With shoulder pads flying whose lining floated,
Flailing and falling into the eyes,
Of these two lovers of the tango from everywhere,
This cantata so beautiful this song,
Has been taken over by the wind,
That howls and shews everybody away,
For the floor no longer smells the same,
Having been perfumed by all the perfume,
That cannot be outsmelt by all of the Paris,
perfumes that a la mode.

The judges allowed all the dancers,
And argued all flowers smell good,
When crushed into perfume from Arabia,
Where the knights of England once lived,
For they were sons of heroes who had lived,
On all the corners of the world,
And therefore gathered the roses,
From the rose shows of distant lands,
And should love the perfume from there,
For they had sold it for years and years,
For now the sham of reviling smells,
Was so false the upturned nose,
That smelt the truth like it was not,
Was not going to ruin the dance half way,
Into such a well planned nocturnal event,
That was a red carpet of Arabia event for sure.

More poor came in from the streets,
Spitting into the judges tables,
Trampling the score sheets to bits,
The papers flying in the wind,
Like a new snow storm on the internet,
That invades and takes over the brain.
The judges flew out through the door,
They called security guards in black
Helmets, batons and guns and flowers,
A mingled mess masseuse of masses on the floor,
Thrown on the back of every judges table,
the feet stomping on the front row,
Where the upturned tables lay broken,
For the files are empty as is the score sheet,
The invasion of a Europe's got talen show,
Cannot be stopped by breaking down,
And crying foul when all goes out,
Into the open for everybody to see.

Brexit may be an exit,
For some it is a running,
For others a ruining,
To end all is to sing God save the Queen,

From the north pole and south pole,
Of far away shoes when standing,
Hands on the chest and forever,
Looking on the problems of a continent,
That was learning to tango,
At a pace faster than the two,
Who started the tango on the floor,
Him pushing, her pulling,
For the world cared that much,
And looked at it for what it was.

Who will live to tell of the dreams,
Once flaunted in the hope of doing,
As the dancers began the dance,
And hit the floor with solid steps,
Assured with the rhythm of the Beatles song?
For it was the taking of a stage once empty,
And turning heads towards the dancers,
And showing the world how it is done,
To come together even after wars,
That tore and fried a continent in fire,
Seven times two decades having gone,
No leaders to write and show the way,
For Churchill went the way of all,
For those were people who saw it all
While others saw what it was,
That tomorrow would be written about.

Would the habib on a queen's head,
Have taught the few who rename the truth,
That the world is sizzling again,
In a fire that is smouldering,
Where arms are flying to places,
And people suffer like Omram,
Who wipes the dust of the rubble,
That he was removed from dusty as dirt,
Looking for a mother he cannot find,
With the familiarity of reaching for the breast,
That he knew when his years taught him,
That we live to reach out and hold,
The familiar and put it in our mouths,
Even when Brexit has come and gone,

To live these flying about in a nearby,
That could have been stronger and able,
To put the child to sleep just one day,
Than go begging a refugee,
That will drown on a boat far away,
And never know what home was like,
For we all refused to let this tango,
Go on into the finish.

Sarah Mkhonza

The Chase Of The Gazelle From Tamarind

Have you seen a gazelle grazing on
The plains her head sniffing the air
She is making sure no beast will prey
On her. Then all of a sudden she
Takes a leap and starts off in a
Gallop and speeds off.

This Gazelle from Tamarind hears
Dogs barking and sees a poacher
With his pack of dogs coming after
Her. She runs in the direction of
Other gazelles from Tamarind and
Only feels safe when she is with
Her own. She joins the others and
They run off now a crowd the safety
Of which is the crowd.

They come to a river and throw themselves in and the hunters
Let the dogs do the chase while
They find a shallow place to
Cross and on goes the chase.

Forever she runs looking this
Way and that and finally they
Disappear into a rocky alley
And the dogs give up the chase.

The Gazelle looks back and
Utters a sigh of relief that
Says that was close. Next time
They will get me and I will be
Dead meat. Let me celebrate by
Eating while I can for grass is Sweeter after a close call.

She eats grass with a ravenous zeal
Reminiscing with the others as
Their mother repeats the rules
Of survival and tells them to
Always stay close to each other

For today we almost lost the
Fairest daughter of Tamarind.
Look we would have lost two
For right there the gazelle g
Goes into labour and a new born
Joins the pack. Those dogs almo
Had a royal feast of
And we almost lost a future king
For look he has the kingly birhmark
Behind the ears that only comes three
Times in hundred years.

Sarah Mkhonza

The Crockpot Without A Lid

this here crokpot has no lid.
it does not cook but soaks
the stew till dawn. what shall
we do to stop it from spilling
uncooked bits into the twitter
bird? we could cut the mouth
of the twitter bird while we look
for the lid, and then sit on top and
secure the top with a pillow and
sit still and make sure the beak
of the bird never opens till the
stew is ready and the crestfallen
bird is ready to twit no more. just
make sure your bottom does not
get cooked into a wasted stew for
that would be really funny for bird
plus bottom would mean we are equal
at the bottom of the hill.

Sarah Mkhonza

The Future Calls Answer It Not The Past,

The past calls and weighs you down,
It hangs around your neck,
This past of voyages in the dark,
For you did not fail, you dreamt,
Dreams that were trodden down in places,
Where people called you names,
Where insults came one after another,
Now the words from there call you,
Haunting you in the darkness of loneliness,
Just look forward and not back there,
For it calls you to an end,
That does not have a trail,
That leads to any future.

You walked it like a tightrope,
Your sweated and wiggled your waist,
Undoing the tangles that tied you to it,
Now you have left it do not look back,
For it is in your mind to do so,
For it is all you know,
Seek the future even in the dark,
Create a life like no other,
One with dreams as high as the mountains,
And walk into it with the boldness of a kudu,
That jumps with each leap and keeps on,
Jumping into the next,
Oblivious of the snares of poachers.
For they long to stall the jumps,
That you make so boldly.

You alone can know it the way it came to you,
You alone can do it right,
Share it and not hide it,
And work to the finish,
For it is there that rest will come,
And greet you with the courage,
Of a final act of victory.

The past is yelling all the time,
Telling you of cliffs and dongas,
Creating darkness all around you,
Making you see woe and not will,
Yet they bang against each other all the time,
One a winner, the other a loser.
For it attacks with ideas of itself,
And makes you think it is when it is not.
When the past calls you, do not listen.
Shut your ears and go to the future.
For there is only tomorrow,
To plan for and the past to regret,
For it is the time we spent blankly,
Looking in front of us and not doing.

Keep on jumping into the air,
When the past holds you at the waist,
Kick it for it will kick back,
And find yours a stronger kick,
One to reckon with always,
For you were born to win,
The battles of the future,
Not those of the past,
That yells and always says no.

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Sarah Mkhonza

The Future Of Gambits Is More Gambits

This talk of being outmanoeuvred,
Of the preempted outcomes these that
Speak to doings that help support
Future talk will leave us in need
Of ways of creating side doors
In case there is an earthquake.

This talk of rigging that has
Happened before we see the bull
And take it by its horns will
Leave us in the arena when the
Bullfight is already in progress.

This bullfight is rigged by the
Bull itself. It goes bellowing
All over, when it knows the truth.
That is how you lose a bet at the
Races ask the bull. It has done this
In all the betting houses of the world

Can we trust our hands when our bull
Has them tied and is dancing around
With the rope as if to ask us why
We let it go? Can we trust our truths
When they are bellowed in any way
When the constitution has become a
Book that is banned in the world of
Those in power?

This world is reeling on the edge
Of the next dive and we are not even
Wearing our scuba diving suits.
I fear the silk that is blown in
The wind will tear down there and
The fish will wonder how flimsy
Our minds have become now that the
Bodies we seek to hide lie vulnerable
To every shark. We've been had.

The Hide And Seek Game I Play With The Scale

Clever as I may be and garrulous
One object has me running as if
I am being chased by the wind.
The only thing is I run and
Never touch ground. I shy away
From this numbered judge
With eyes invisible and limbs hidden
Inside the bathroom they call a
Scale. It takes my breath away
Each time I am called by the morning
To get on it. I stand and think
Twice after saying two Hail Marys
And then get on and them zip
My mouth for the sigh of relief
On what I see says I must not
Talk for people will hear how
Things sugary have gone to the
Heavens with my dear soul calling
Me to sing songs religious
Each time a plate of food
Lands outside the door on
My landing.

This game of hide and seek
That I play with my scale
Has had us call each other
Me the cat and the scale
The dog for we have this love
Hate thing going that forces
us to get together and what
I hate is always the scale is
The plaintiff and I am the
Defendant. Why should this
Piece of invention invade
My life when it cannot move.
Next time you will hear there
was an arrest for throwing
Things at the wall. Know it
Will be this accuser who never

Seizes to have statistics to
Back up the arguments that always
Have me go away the loser.

Sarah Mkhonza

The Horn Tooted By Tutu

The horn tooted by Tutu
Is not a broken horn as some do say,
For they refuse to even listen,
When a country goes to doom.

Listen to the man Tutu,
For he is not tooting his horn,
But telling our story,
When he says, 'I am warning you, '
People of the south.

Who are no more sure,
Facing trials everywhere,
Let the Tutu Bishop toot the horn,
For it is not his but ours,
Listen as never before,
To the wisdom of an elder.

He speaks the truth without fear,
Foretelling what is to come as always,
Dragging us into the future,
With bullhorns of an elder,
Hoping we will not go,
Into the gutter of history,
A people who lost their pride,
Not knowing when we once stood,
A nations of haters,
Spewing garbage at each other,
With words of selfishness always,

Have we returned to where we once were,
Have we sunk deep into the dirt,
From where we came,
Truth telling and unashamed,
Only to be warned,
That one day,
We will regret what we are doing,
For we are lazy to use the vote,
To create a future where the man,

Tutu will not toot his horn endlessly,
But give us a real walking up call.
And tell us we are getting lost,
If we will not mend our ways.

Sarah Mkhonza

The Judge And His Wig

I am going into that god damned
Court without this piece of hair
For these are the things that show
The law is weak even with props
That hide bold heads that carry
Our people to the deep where
The old crocs swim in shallow
Water. It begins with this said
The judge as he tossed his wig
Into the air.

Sarah Mkhonza

The Lament Of A Pin Cushion

Ouch! I say when the first pin goes in
Oh! I repeat and add an expletive and
Then I seize to say anything for I see
These pins are like acacia thorns which
Got into the bottom of my feet when I
Still had no shoes.

Someone should have told me that these
Things that hurt were going to make
A pin cushion out of my little heart.
I would have learned to harden and
Be more like a watermelon for the shape
And the pulp would do the crying. Clever
Fruit that you are for you knew the shape
And the color and the stripes that go with
Life not pushing sharp objects small and
Piercing, but forced everyone to use a blade
Or just dig in with their hungry mouths.

I see the love that goes into you watermelon
When they drool for your sap and wish I was
Also just made of substance rather than this
Cloth that anyone can poke into and not even
Care to wash or dust for all I am is a mere
Pin cushion, red all round and green at the top.

Even invisible stingers like death do me down
When you just disappear and nobody sees how
You die, for who cares about the process when
All they know is a deed done in the darkness
Called the soul.

I have never heard of a blight attacking
But in this mere tomato world we live in
The tomato chose to be cloth thinking there
Would be no blight but dust discovered a
Way to do it to us even in this lifeless
So called existence where the sewing
Machine neighbors keep going on and on,

While we wait for an end at the factory
Of love and the woebegone pushing of the
Pins like syringes into a bum that is
Forever diseased.

If I was as big as a sofa cushion
I would get a chance to sting a few
When they lay their bottoms on me.
As small as I am nobody can mistake
Me for anything, but a thing to push
Around, into, and pull pins out of, for
With no feet, I cannot even walk away

Sarah Mkhonza

The Last Time I Saw Her

She was all spirit, walking wobbly,
Getting into bed was a journey,
That took minutes which were days,
For she had lost all the history,
With which she had walked me into this earth.

She was ailing, yet still calling,
To those gone and to us remaining,
In the whispers from her soul,
Telling us to keep the truths laid down,
When she sang, and danced like a clown,
In this thing that life gave us to do.

The last time I looked she was walking away,
Her body limp and leaning on doors,
Then I called out her name like always,
Only to find she was no longer here,
Only the shell lay in this that I saw.

I waved to her and knew the time has come,
For the call was waving her away,
With the hand she had used to say,
I want you to come here to me.

The songs she sang came back to mind,
Long prayers of dreams she wished for me,
With many names of God I did not know,
Counting one by one as she went,
All the way into the daybreak light,
To be disturbed by roosters crowing,
Telling us it was yet another day.

She remains a person who called to mind,
Things I know and have kept hidden,
Under my armpits where they tickle me,
And cause me to laugh for she forgot our names,
And called us all when she meant just me.

With itchy ears I hear her voice,
Surprised by us and our naughtiness,
Which she said confused even the devil,
For she could not count even like himself,
And then laughed and sang like a dove,
Cooing away in a village with thorn bush,
That covered our fields with hope,
Sprouting yellow flowers, these balls of pollen,
Whose powdery tops were picked by me and my own,
And stuck in our hair for this was love.

She lies alone at the end of life,
With me wearing her thoughts on me,
Going to the future where they unfold,
And get shared just as now we look,
For this is life to you and me,
For it calls us to do just like her.

Sarah Mkhonza

The Missing Chapter

after telling you about
the day and reading the
obituary you wrote about
me, I see that there is
more to the story of our
lives and governments. the
chapter tells us to check
the box marked miscellaneous
when the time for who you
are to the giant walking puppets
want to cut the pound of flesh.
Do not do what I did and classify
yourself. the holocoast can repeat
itself. do not enter into a door
opened by another

Sarah Mkhonza

The Numbers Of Us Lament /World Population Who Wonders

The numbers of us grow
The wail of a newborn
Fills the air right now
Yet still we wonder why
Some of the people hungry
Some of the people exiled
Some of the many rejected
In this world we call our own.

You see the moon and ask
How many moons have I seen?
You are on a flimsy boat
Mediterranean waters licking it
It tilts dangerously and you ask
Is this the time when I will perish
Life is counted in the fingers of the hand.

The waves rise and kiss the side
They climb in and splash you once
You know the next one will do it
You count them as they get closer
This is not like the thunder of the bomb
You survived that and now this
This turning, splashing and being thrown.

When the boat tilts all are thrown asunder
The baby is lost first just as the one year old
The man stays afloat for some time.
The woman wails, 'my baby' and disappears
Only her scarf can be seen
Her flailing limbs will not carry her far
Everything disappears and then the stillness
The ocean has eaten them all.

The bombs were thrown at others
Some were worn on bodies with anger

They blasted airports and dance halls
In big towns and small.
Was this to prove we can be destructive?
Was it to echo back life at itself?

Our numbers mill around the world scarred
By the news of the limbs that flew away
Never to be recovered for they were pulp.
The news is chewing us inside
We are looking to the one love
The word that stands alone and quiet
Asking where it was when it all started.

We will heal our world of wars
The very world we love and live in
What are we when our rulers are gone?
Ask people who land in exiled lands
There is a voting day next door.
Why are you here when we have no jobs?
Ask residents of countries afar
They give you a look that is a story
You wonder how far back we can go
If we can claim the earth for ourselves
And move around with no borders as it was
Before people knew to box themselves up
And not give a hand to a stranger
Without thinking they will take all.

We have grown in numbers
We have taken over the wind
Polluted it and sniffed it out.
We have changed the waters in the oceans
By crossing them and dumping in them
We live a people with a trail
We have to survive on this planet
There is a new baby in your tummy
Welcome to our world little one
One more baby lands in you world of ours.
The numbers never stop growing
Welcome World Population Day

The Place Of The Umbilical Truth

When you are born you come out
the umbilical cord coiled
Then it dries up and falls
and then it is taken
to the place of truth.

They bury it in the source,
Where the clan is from.
Where is the one that fell off
When you were born?

You have to ask the bearer
of good news where yours is.
I am not going to tell you
because I do not know.

Questions are not about the money,
That cannot buy the truth
When it can pay for the lie
That keeps stretching out its hand
And asks you to pay it
For things it did not do.

When money sees beggars stretch their hands
It makes the loud noise of coins
Or rustles in your purse all the time.
For the time to give has come
To separate beggars from thieves
By asking the question, what for?

This questions is yours,
You answer it when you walk about.
You answer it when you sleep,
And even when you share with thieves
And beggars in disguise
Who come to your door hands outstretched
For it is a question of life
In this Swaziland that I know.

The Rebel Returns Home Finally

I hear words from my past spoken,
And see them forming in mouths,
Sometimes frothing and foaming
At the sides with fingers wagging,
Thrown at me from everywhere,
Speakers serious with backs tired,
Hurling them at me these objects,
Me a rock looking on,
Where did all the words go?
I ask a question here right now,
Where the search for the real me,
I set out to find has ended in truth,
That can only be unspoken right here,
Where I stand with open hands,
Wishing for a pair to receive me,
Who never begged as I walked on,
To this surprise called my life.

I search around me as I look,
My grandmother pouring words,
Ringing praises into the air,
Saying the future is brighter.

The priest sweating hands up,
His coat on his back dancing,
This way and that the madman,
Telling me life is not a joke.

My mother speaking stomping, yes
Up and down the kitchen floor,
Breaking one high heel in her anger,
And falling on the floral sofa in her rage,
Banging the door shut this I do,
Throwing myself into the wind
That receives me with a howl.

Now as mother I look once more,
I retrieve the slate of old so black,
No white words for it was erased,

This tape recorder in my head,
Seems to have heard only one word,
No!

Yet I lived and blocked it out,
And walked into the torrents outside,
My coat ready to get wet like my throat,
Which was drenched in liquids hot and cold,
For to live was all I wanted,
Living one word only I knew,
Yes!

Now I stand on this pavement unsure,
My sneakers wrongly laced up like my years,
One hole missing where they were ten,
Not knowing how all this happened,
This tangling that made me fall,
For they smell like the garbage can,
I refused to take and empty at my home,
How will I enter where I left its smells,
Floundering in the air like me?
This world that I tossed into my mother's lap,
With the pride of the knower I was,
Only to find the door locked and the key,
Not under the mat like yesterday.

Like the wounds that scar the hound,
That barks for the whole neighborhood to hear
I stand voiceless with a hoarse voice,
As the puppy I once owned,
That walked away and thought it knew,
Every stranger that it saw,
And barked loud wagging its tail,
Only to return with scars all over.
Its head bowed in obedient quiet.

I walk home for home is home,
Never to leave in like manner,
As I did when the pellets were there,
Waiting for me to take them in,
And gain strength when they are thrown,
At me one by one like the words,

I flung back at my mom in rudeness,
Thinking I was and always would be.
As if scratched each time she spoke,
I stand here leaking them away,
Unsure when they will heal,
If I go back to the house,
Built for me outside her heart,
For I will knock and scratch the door softly,
And return home new smells and all.

Sarah Mkhonza

The Sepulcher Speaks

now that you have my heart
leave my hands to tell the
story with no end. it starts
with the princes of the dream.
they were able to dream and do.
they have now gathered on the
hill and they are going to
deliver to us the people whose
dream did not happen.

I am not sure how the selective
mind allows some people to show
up at the right time and gather
after the cockroaches have done
their night work. when the leese
in the pot is down there and
doing the work of the remaining
essence that the ants have not
devoured and carried away into
the hole the white cloth
remains in the sepulcher saying
here lay a prince whose dream
happened all over the world, listen
to him.

he is also one who can make it
happen for you, just wait and
see for this health bill that
is going to be shredded is not
doing it for you. you need to
follow the ants and go and share
what is yours for we are aware
you are a suffering twenty two
million.

when we are done recreating the
dream, you will buy real stuff
and go down in history as the
dream that made it happen only

for those who now seat on the
summit of the hill and dream
more.

princes of the world, you have
nothing to lose but your businesses,
for I tell you a one better than
karl marx is on the way to
deliver a bill that will cure all
the sickness in our land.

live and let live and then allow
others to allow a bill to pass
and then in this sepulcher the
trusted ants will dig deep and
break down the last of what will
remain. next time you see them
they will be carrying the falsified
loot on their heads thinking it
is a bill that will save them
from all the misery of today.

I say this for I have seen the
remains lying in here, come and
disappear as each prince whose
dream happened lays them down
with the stroke of a pen.

first they tried to fill prisons
then they saw the ants were not
equipped with wrists that could
be shackled for they had cut them
on the lynching tree. now it is
the hour to share the loot on
the hill with bright lights and
the man who is called after his
own house on the hill remains
the one who will laugh loudest
for he chose to laugh last.

that is why I am telling the
story as it is so you are not

for it all ends here within
these four halls. if you
can listen to a tell it all
this is one for I am a true
witness.

Sarah Mkhonza

The Show That Had To Be

They say the month of May,
is the month of the aloe,
for aloes begin to flower,
in the land of my birth.

Aloes all around I come,
Fisted, in two these little
hands of mine. The aloe
is as silent, as soldiers
in the night, ready to invade.

They don't even whisper
that the show is going
to be fisted, fostered
and bitter, for I have come
to the land where only
the thorny can sap the
water with succulent leaves
where they claim for themselves
bodies like camels and
march in the dry sand
where the drought roars,
in sandy waves in the ocean,
these shark soldiers in the deep
sandy sea.

Here I stand on the deep end
yet the aloe stands with heads
of leaves, looking at the sky,
Crazy hair, like the dreads
of the Black Madonna, in the
night they stand.

To this day I shiver when the
name death is mentioned,
and they just prick the air
with thorns. Stubborn,
worse in the darkness,
Green in the daytime, these

flowers that grow on stems
so long, they could swath
a fly.

Am I defeated in this show
that had to be? Ask the aloe,
for it was there when I landed,
to be there when I exit. Still
standing on the hills of the
land of my birth.

Did I prick the world with leaves
green and prick it with leaves dry?
Did I stand and do nothing but stand?
Did I march on hilltops with the hair
of the Black Madonna, laughing in
the dry days when there was no rain?
Ask the aloe, for the show still goes on
Like it had to.

Sarah Mkhonza

The Squirrel Knows Better

The squirrel on the telephone pole saw me
My wig blown away by the wind as the
truck passed by me on its way far away
We are connected on the survival line
It laughed and stayed up where it was
Never got down to walk where I was
For it knew what to do to be safe
The other one carried the bread away
It came back to my window to knock
Mine was not the right one
I never offer squirrels something.
Because they know how not to die
And cause a driver to go and hang.

Sarah Mkhonza

The Story Of Two Oars

These two oars, rowing this boat
came from the same branch. Now they
tell the story of the search for rhythm.
In the hands of man, the search continues.
Peace, peace they go.

The water
line. In this game of winning, the oars
learn they must be held by winners to
make to the finish line.

This story of peace can be told in the
rowing. Yesterday the tide came in. Peace,

The

Sarah Mkhonza

The Time I Never Lived

It was raining blows.
It was mincing words.
It was bouncing on me.
It was grinding me.
It was bashing me.
It was painting me.
The whip of her words
Turning me this way and that,
Pushing me away always.

Now I am gone to the place.
I squat there like a life.
I speak in mumbles.
The darkness answers me.
Yes keep breathing
You will be free,
For you were born free
To jump and laugh loud
And tell the stories of people
Whose minds were messed up
Like yours, scrambled up
And poured on the frying pan of time.

Tomorrow comes to kiss your forehead
The sunlight comes to massage you
With the hand of so smooth,
So warm, so right handed
Its handling is a holy caress,
For the angels are listening,
To every groan in your heart,
Their messages to you are real.
It will be better tomorrow.

You will not believe the healing.
It is real like reels of cotton
Inside a bobbin of a machine,
That winds itself on as the wheel turns
This pain that walks as tall
As the spoken word of yore

That still hammers on your temples,
And stop you from not forgiving,
And tell you to stretch your hand,
For giving is all you can do,
To takers who always reach out,
And swallow the air in gulps,
Not knowing it never gets finished,
It was there, to be there into forever,
Until they go to the place of reckoning,
Where they sleep soundly and noisily,
Not knowing what they did with words
Working for a mean master who hired them
Never to pay them anything at all.

For the harshness of their hands
That bewitched the world with hurt,
The smacking and spanking resounds
As they worked for hours in the field
Where they planted the seed of hate
Of the innocents who became abusers
Unknowingly having seen only blows,
Come down in torrents like fire,
Pouring out of a volcano,
To turn into a tar of psychosis,
That envelopes the world,
And brings sadness to everybody,
Who happens to come across it,
On this path, this adventure,
Of eyes staring at another pair,
Not blinking but yelling,
The history of their seeing,
In the bodies of the abused.

Sarah Mkhonza

The Tune Time Plays

Luck laughs at the sons and daughters
Of time and tells the second was Created so that we can tap on the Floor of the
earth and know what life is
For we can hear it in the dulcet sounds made by the clock.

Hours luck says are like
heavy boots on a child's
Feet who knows there is a
Race to win but only if the
Boots were running shoes.

Luck says to get on the journey
Boots or no boots and no those
Who win do so even on bare feet
For it is not the dance they'll
Judge you for but haring the tunes
Played by time..

Sarah Mkhonza

The Unauthorized Biography Of Satan

I, born in the never never
Of the skies an angel tossed
Out for I am now the enticer
Called by others a tempter
For like bees they come buzzing
Around the honeycomb I sit in
And ask me to invade their
Mind and make it home
Even when they are poor, rich, or not so
For my voice is so soft
It is almost silent for I walk
On invisible feet and cause even
Kings to trip.

They say I am motherless
For nobody wants to own up
To giving birth to the most
Hated of all beings even though an
Angel invisible I am and powerful
Too. For those in jail call
My name while those in asylums
Call on Jesus.

They take narcotics and invent
A story that says I walked into a bag
And took a powder and injected it
Into a lame arm that wanted joy
For I had taken it away. This
Fiction that is told is indeed
Strange for it does not hold
Water, for sure, when everybody
Knows that even vampires suck blood
Of their own volition.

Who is my brother this Jesus
The only son born of a virgin
Who like me is fatherless
Having left the father for
He wanted to be king alone and left

Us demigods voiceless and invisible
And only to him recognizable
For he alone can say who will
Follow me to be forever lost
To the kingdom.

Let us look at you now
Following me reluctantly
Looking for me in gambling
Houses, brothels and everything
In this Las Vegas you call life
Where you search for one like me
On whom to lay the blame. For this
Game goes on while I look at you
Through the corner of my eye
Without blinking knowing you may
Turn back if you do not see my wink
Which says it is alright to create
A scapegoat out of motherless me
For one day you will also be one.

Finally like Karl Marx I say reminding
Unwilling you, 'Sinners of the world! Unite!
You have nothing to lose but your ignorance
For everybody loves vanity and knows it is
bought at a lofty price when it is as cheap
As air, polluted or not at the alter of
Freedom where you kneel unwillingly.' See!
Karl Marx could be your Jesus and save you
On the day of trial when you stand
Accounting for making me your tempter and
More powerful than I really am. I'm only
Saying this to be fair, for they say
People get lost when the vision is blurred
By invisible marijuana and pot. You are invited
By me to sink or swim and just know you
Do so at your own risk.

Sarah Mkhonza

The Wind Does Not Know My Name

I sit in these windy verandas fail
Watching the sky with questions,
That are mind boggling and sad,
I wanted to be famous when a girl,
Now the wind was speaking one truth,
It did not know my name.

I wonder what to do now that I know
That it takes more than madness to be
This piece of fame that graces the red carpets that carry one's name afar,
For all the trying and acting in
Dramas big and small, I remain,
The mystery hidden inside my person,
Unknown even to myself.

I do believe in the tabloids,
For they tear to pieces a life,
Shred it into strips and toss it out,
For the wind to smell and broadcast,
Its seed going into sods that turn
Pages smelling like stolen fragrances
That make readers sneeze into the air,
Where the wind catches a name and run with it,
With readers glad they had no fame for they wood be in tatters,
Thankful that the wind does knot know their name.

Who wants to live a life of running from the wind I ask.
Who wants to be known only for eating,
Remembered only in receipts from the village mall?
For it publishes the mundane record that says I was broke, to die broke and
infamous.

The wind says I have to walk the tight rope with a walking stick,
For nobody will forget that deed,
Especially if I take my dog up there with me.
For people always remember the bark of dogs.
For they tell the story of man.
For hearing their bark in the wind says 'we have arrived.
This is the porch where our patents lived and loved.

Where kisses never stopped being released into the air, for we are proof that happened.

It needs no wind to assure us it did.

Sarah Mkhonza

These Unique Chains That Bind Us

From today and yesterday
Monday to Friday year in
And year out there have
Been these unique chains
That bind us so close that
We can hear the sound
As our feet take steps
To far away lands where
Our thoughts lead as if
We are on an invisible leash
For they pull and push inside
And finally let us wander
On beaches white and sandy
Not known to many but a few.

It is connections rare
We find when we walk near
Rivers and see grass grow
On the edge and know that
A picture of us is reflecting
On the water saying there
Is a person inside who cannot
Talk but sees and knows that
Life is more experienced than
Seen, touched and felt like
Icing on a knife when you spread
It over a cake. You lick it
Once and know who eats it will
know the genius that made it and
Be bound to love for such is life.

For to see oneself in another
Shape and form on ripples in
The water with curves formed
By substances rare is to know
That the self cannot be contained
And talked about in two words
We call a name and a surname
For they are just what they

Are, words.

We feel a presence rare that
Wants to climb on steps unseen
And go up and down the wild
Stair case the way we climbed
Trees as children and talked
To our friends through the
Leaves. For life gives us
A gift rare that allows us to
Ask what we are when we are on
The tree when we cannot fly
Like a bird, for one slip
And down we go and where we
Fall broken bones may result.

This life which we carry in us
This gift rare that binds us
Like chains also frees us when
We are doing things we love like
Meeting others on shores rare
Where no jelly fish stings as
The one of the beaches of our
lands.

We bathe together in waters warm
And wonder about planes that
disappear never to be heard from
With passengers whose voices are muffled
When we see one up in the sky as
We float for we feel we are in
An ocean which hides many truths
In its vastness. This vastness that
We wear like a vest on our bodies
Wet and shielded in swim suits that
Are clinging leaving the water to
Draw on us and create out of us
Pictures we cannot see for we leave
Them behind when we go out and walk
On the sand like the foot prints
That tell everyone we have been there
For they will always follow and not

Lead for they are just that, footprints.

This unique life of spirit that binds
That the fish who swim will never know
The way we know it even when two can
Be broken and feed thousands. These
Miraculous shapes that swim endlessly
Without tiring they rush under the
oceans the way we dwell in these lower
Parts of the atmosphere. Till the devil
Comes to these altitudes rare we are bound
With these unique chains that have
Us sing, laugh and dance in what we
Call freedom for it is so freeing
That chains that really binds us are
Those we choose.

Sarah Mkhonza

They Called Us Juveniles

When we were teenagers wild
They called us juveniles
For wild were our dreams and
Crazy our actions. We did the
Normal and ended up being
Thought abnormal. Day in and
Day out we wondered what the
Adult world was like that saw in
Us as small people from crazyland
Who wore the high heels and
Danced till dawn. My grandmother
Liked to show us how naughtily
We stood close to the boys
In slow dances that said 'we
Will meet in the evening' with
Her walking stick tapping the
Ground to knock on it wishing
That the wisdom of the earth
Could be tapped into our ears
That listened to music loud
And never heard a single piece
Of advice.

I grew up and watched my daughter
On her heels and knew I had to
Speak nothing of the past for
She would not believe I had gone
On those on my first ride on
The escalator of life and almost
Fallen with my bags tumbling
Down. Thanks God for the mercy
Of the motion that is steady
That keeps escalators rolling
Without stopping and not running
To match the anxiety of riders
Whose balance hangs in the air
Which high heels have them ride.
Now my daughter does not see how
We could wear bell bottoms wide

And platform heels high and not
Cause a wonderful circus of oldies
On the run to a land where only them
Claim to have lived, 'those days mom.'

They called us juveniles when we
Read James Hadley Chase and got
Chased all around by ideas of one
Man as we passed one book from
Person to person in the light
Of boarding school hostels where
Books unbiblical were called
Godforsaken for they changed the
Mind and set it wondering to the
Erotic world of stars in films
We had not seen. We sang along
With Elvis and when he sang
'I just can't help believing'
We would not believe for more
Than just a day that there was
A place called heaven besides the
One in this song for his voice
Touched a spot in the future we
Were walking into juveniles or
Not.

Sarah Mkhonza

They Said Sherry Would Make Me Merry

I went with the girls to the party,
Where we drank all kinds of drink,
Anything liquid went down slowly,
With an arrogance of youth,
For they said sherry makes us merry.

I learned a thing or two in that flurry,
Where drinks passed from hand to hand in a furry,
And got gobbled down like the very berry,
Out of which they were made.

I drank myself drunk with laughter,
When even walking was very blurry,
With girls' legs crisscrossing in a hurry,
Flip flopping down the passage
For we wanted to be the knowers.

The questions came back like a purr,
Of a cat that lost its path,
And came begging on all fours,
For two legs could no longer do it.

I supported a friend or two,
When we walked to the dorm,
Unable to bring to mind,
The happenings of the day.

We lay in our beds like cats,
The snores coming out in purrs,
The clothes lying all over,
Exposing naked youth and lack of knowing,
In youth who explore all things,
By pouring them and sniffing them,
Inserting them and gluing them,
Only to lie abandoned alone,
Outside the gates of heaven.

Our hair was speaking volumes,
Our shoes making us taller than giraffes,

Our pants flying in bell bottoms,
That rang very far from heaven,
Telling angels to be careful,
For the ones who were now knocking,
Did not even know their very names.

We were the youth who lived and lov,
And proved our youth was ours,
Through the fashions of the times,
And the dances of the current era.

They said sherry would make us merry,
Yet it did make me worry,
If we would survive till tomorrow,
To tell my mother not to worry,
For I was no longer sure,
If I was still the me who left home,
To return untouched by threats,
That had been said to exist in life,
When the yoke of youth lies heavy,
On the back of my friends and me.

Who baked this cake with marijuana,
And made it smell like vanilla,
Which we ate and then threw up,
Three times before morning came?
Who made these rules that are like this,
That leave us wanting if it was us,
Who lay soaked and drunk like the sponges,
That smell of beer not made of malt.

I swore on the bible I would never,
Again go to a party with friends,
And return wet as a river,
That fish cannot swim in,
For they know it is not safe,
For even dogs know even better,
For it drowns even the brain,
Which is lowered into its bottom.

Sarah Mkhonza

Thinking Of This Head Of The Hammerkop

He turns and looks at the ripples,
where his long head seems longer.
He thinks he has the antlers too.

He makes the biggest, ugliest nest
in all of nestland. He works hardest
carrying sticks in his nest. Only
to find he is just the boss because
of his size. Nobody will lie to please
him. He is just plain dumb

Who could work so hard building the
ugliest abode? Who could spend so much
time turning this way and that in front
of a mirror that is lying down. Only
me and you, oh hammerkop.

Your tone does not come in all colors like
a sparrows. No song sweet out of your voice. Even tweeter would not have you.
For followers follow the tweet made now
and followed by billions.

So why bother being near these beings
blessed. Stay up in there and look down.
Get the shock of being known by a few.
For caring is the rare quality of a few.
Of this me and you know we are the blessed
few. By keeping at it we will cause a few
to smile while laughing at our noble heads will nod in the ugliest but most
sincere nod.

The

Sarah Mkhonza

Thirsty Sounds For A Nation's Drought

When the news crawls down the
Mountain on the stony village
Staircase where news is rare
Our grapevine comes to life.
The village huts look skyward
Letting out smoke at the top
Like mushrooms with chimneys.

The news gets down the slope
From the mountains and the people
Crawl out of the huts like ants
Coming out of grass topped
Ant heaps.

The village runner has news
We want to hear and that is
There is a donation of food
That has come from abroad in
Some country over there where
It never ceases to rain like
Here where we never get snow
Followed by another season
Of rain.

The women go and get ways to
Get the bits to be given out
And talk about this the whole
Week until the truck comes
For we have indeed become a
People in need.

Days were when women would
Go out and get seed in bags
From far away neighbors and
Days where when the storage
In the ground was full food
Lay hidden so deep that in
Times of war the enemy would
Not know where the storage

Was and even if the enemy set
Fire to the land, it would not
Burn. People lived on and life
Was not in the hands of fate.

Now the whistle is not blown
To dance steps of maidens in
The arena. It is blown to call
The village to line up for the
Ration from abroad has come and
Food to last a few months must
Be taken to huts where it will
Disappear in a week or two.

This announcement rare gives
Hope that never lasts and takes
The same story back to the stomach
Which will retort in grumbles
Frequently heard and ignored.
This starvation that hits the land
With a drought leaves us with
Mouths agape to ever be agape.

We seek a page to write a story
That returns people to the days
Of plenty in these days when the
Heat seers every plant to shreds
Leaving it shaking in the wind
To die a fruitless death with
No harvest to talk about. A solar
Story to hit the solar plexus
Of a nation and help people
Regain their pride for deep
Down water can gush out if
We only but try.

Sarah Mkhonza

This Boy Girl Thing Has Us Damned

This water cupped in my hand,
As I lift it to my mouth,
This fountain that lets it out,
Knew it would end up here,
Dripping through my fingers,
Like the love we drink now,
Me and you swallowing hard,
As our taps let it in and out,
As go the rules of this pouring,
That allows rain to fill us up,
Just as our mouths allow it to.

You lap my person with your thirst,
You sap my strength and I swell up,
Then I shrink into your curve,
Go up and down as the hands that hold,
Like a game, the skipping rope,
That you throw up and jump up,
Only to land like a rubber ball,
For the tangling tells us to be,
In like manner this life we live.

Love me you say you do now,
Drink me, as you did then,
Your fingers wet with touching,
Me twitching with the joy of you I knew,
As I scratched untouched parts of you.

Live me in that position I was,
Sway me not to places that far away,
For I know when love is given freely,
And when it is taken ever so openly,
And then swallowed very smoothly,
By two people who are learning to be,
For they have read about it in books,
And seen it flashing on the screens,
That scream and say it is how it looks.

We never knew how deep to go,
Or how far the well we were jumping into,
Which had frog tunes as loud as the promise,
To sell frog legs to the buyer,
Only to find only one bull frog,
Made the loudest nose in the pond,
Where only four legs could be sold
In the pond that we had built,
Outside this leaking house of ours.

Leave me not when the bus comes,
Down the street full of girls,
In school clothes just like me,
Promising to open a world much bigger,
Than what we have for me and you,
Promised each other that this was to be,
Our divine tango with the doves,
That came to announce that we were a pair,
And flew away and left us looking,
At the flapping of wings such as we had,
That taught us to say the one curse word,
That we could utter under our breath,
And say damn, if only we were there.

Sarah Mkhonza

This Burnt Letterhead

At the very top of the letter,
is the letterhead. It is burnt.
Address and all clearer to the reader
than the writer. You are fired! As if
you were working at the gates of
heaven and had just been told to
go down with a number jump.

Fear-seized the ashes you are making
with this letter are going to lay
in your heart. Your life has come
to naught.

You tap your foot as the flames
help you read each word. This is
your love letter from life asking
you what next?

You swear with all the optimism
in the center of your navel there's
is no next. The numbers of the jobless
turn inside the silo called your mind.

Who would want me when I have
been retrenched. Which recycling
center takes rejected
answer is loud. 'All.'

You wonder as the hope rises
where that all comes from. Then
you apply a storm and declare a hurricane
of letters to descend on every desk.

The storm ceases to make the wind
howl when the gas tank is empty
and there is red everywhere, as if
the bank is also in collusion.

The letterhead reads itself back

relating those words you that say,
you've been there before. Walked
the streets and saw it all. It is
summed in one in one word, 'regret.'

How can all these people know the
same word as if they went to dumb
school. Precious words exist out there
that can heal a heart when
the rejection letter is sincere.

Who can regret when they've never
burnt such letters in the millions
you have? Only the king of lies.
Your mind pictures the writer as you
burn the letterhead.

Some folk out there are reading
the skies and writing more. They
have numbed themselves to your
letters with the burnt letterhead.

They went to the school of the
numb one called dumb school, but
they need one janitor. Take the
job. At least you will lock them
in on a stormy day and save them
from writing the next letter with
the burnt letterhead. Then life will
go into recess.

,

The

Sarah Mkhonza

This Craving To Disappear

Help me get rid of this craving to disappear
For the feeling of joy eludes me
When I look at the rainbow
And envy it its beauty
For my idea of the beautiful
Is not sky high.

It still sits on its laurels
And calls out to make up to
Cover my weak points
So the man who lusts for me
Can drool in the mouth

My idea of beauty renders me
Loved the way I want for I still
Believe lovers walk on the sand
And make angels with wings lying down.

This facing the world with false
Love leaves me wanting to touch
The rainbow and ask it how it did it
To hang up in the sky with a beauty
That leaves men drooling while
I look up with my mouth agape
With neither youth no long legs and
A hair style that can get these god
Forsaken beings to look my way.

They say beauty is the eye of the beholder.
Where is this beholder who keeps all the beauty in his eyes?
For I am beholden only to such a one
And seek him in every internet bar
Where the socialites of the world
Have as a follower only meaningful

As a number to brag about. Hence this craving to disappear
For I am already invisible.

This Hobby Of Bird Watching

This hobby of bird watching
Is like bed hopping in heaven
For you want to feel the velvet
Feathers of every bird the way
You want to feel the velvet softness
Of every bed before God says 'next.'

Your eyes look at the beauty as it
Hops here and there and you wonder
How these privileged so and sos can
Sing songs in the air that land into
Your ear when they see you wishing
You could use God's bounty and float
The way they do from vitrine to vitrine
As if you belonged inside the eye of
The one who is looking into your soul.

So rare, so fluffy these miniature yous
Yet so smart and so loving, they remember
Your bird bath and come to make you laugh
Making the parrot in you sing the same song
As you make the same wish knowing you along
Can bring it into being. So trapped are we
In this loving of the birds that it has become
A real mockery to be so close to seeing one in
The other, yet still we cannot fly and leave
Our troubles behind, the way they do.

Sarah Mkhonza

This Is Your Work

Strong, powerful and celestial
Like you it lays on your lap like
Someone dropped it there
Celebrate what you see before
You for it is a theme of life.
You did it just by trying and trusting
Doing for it gives birth to itself
In the shaping you give it for you
Believed in trying.

Sarah Mkhonza

This Last Kick Of Hope Must Not Miss You

This kick of hope that is going round
Has been announced by the wind with a
Loud howl and I swear it said only a
Fool refuses to get the kick when hope
Knocks at the door of their house for
The keys cannot be lost at such a moment
For hope knocks only once at Christmas
Time.

When hope knocks on your cellar where
All the words are hidden open the door
And go on a visit with the words for they
Are sauntering on plains you have never seen

The knock of hope is said to be loud enough
Just for you to hear and only you can tell
People how it was. Open the door and allow
In this friend who never leaves unless you
Do not say hello and stretch your hand in
A greeting for she only loves those who
Love her.

Never leave the door locked for you never
Know where and when this visitor who
Comes announced only by you will arrive
And find you so empty that even the bowls
To hold her will be on the counters upside
Down.

Allow the visitor who is warm and whose
Laughter never ends for it is with her
That the two of you can embark on journeys
That others have never been to.

This last kick of hope only comes and stays
And never leaves if you allow it to keep
Kicking you sideways on this endless walk
Where your sneakers both will get worn out
And leave the two of you walking even though

Bare footed on the snow.

Do not fall away like a leaf and leave the
Bus ride before you get to the stop where
Both of you planned you were going because
Of people who tell you, you have reached the
Destination when there are still miles to go.

Life is a mystery for it never tells us one
Person invisible is in us and waiting all the
Time to take us to the next level, but now that
You have heard it is the last kick do
Not miss this one in case it never
Happens again. No regrets will get us to
The place they tell us of called heaven.

Though colorless odorless and shapeless
She stands the most important ingredient
In this mix for I have heard those who
Will miss her last kick will only have
Themselves to blame says the queen of life
Called fate.

I do not care if this kick is so hard it
Leaves me maimed as long as it leaves me
Talking to others that it has happened and the
Evidence is one sunken dimple on my chick
And not a cavity in my tooth that pains me
For I will have an argument to keep me going
with all those who ask what happened to me.

Sarah Mkhonza

This Molehill Has A Mouth

This molehill has eyes,
ears and a mouth. It talks
back, with the growl of a lion.

This molehill towers over trees,
for it claims to have grown under
the roots of trees.

This molehill towers over you.
This molehill has speakers so loud,

your bed shakes from its vibrations.

having borrowed

Sarah Mkhonza

This Skirt Has A Grace About It

So you say they will not accept me as leader,
They will not listen when I give out the orders,
Tell them they have another thought coming,
For this skirt has the grace of queens.

I wear this joy in my heart not on my clothes,
I rule with power not with one shot here and one there,
My guns are not fired from under a bed, but on it.
For I fear no wizard and wait for no witch,

My incantations are as old as mercy itself,
I say them over and over like a broken record,
Turning to the tune of the first gramophone,
Invented at a time when music was born.

Tell the team I put the record in there,
And everybody dances for the tune is wild,
I rule with the shoulders of a swimmer,
That has done the backstroke on her shoulders,
To the amazement of the world.

For this reason I will see the work through,
And land on the other side a winner,
Of all the hearts that have doubt,
For they have never known this truth,
this skirt has a grace about it,
That defeats all doubt and creates the joy,
Of a team tied to its hem by fate.

Sarah Mkhonza

Thistles In My Feet In This Walk

In my walk in life
Thistles pierce my feet.
As I walk deeper and deeper
They go. I walk on my toes
Limping like a deer
With a broken leg
And wonder if I will
Make it home before
Dark for these keep
Me from keeping apace
With life.

This journey began thistle
Free. Smiles and hugs this
Fox trot was lovely.
I jumped and leaped in the
Air and somersaulted too.
To walk was a thing of love
All feet on the ground.
It was heady to join the
Walk with my head in the
Clouds. Only to awaken
When my heels were
Hurting real bad with
These niddles from the
Wild that had nestled
Deeper than my hand could
Reach. So small yet so
Painful these dark spots
Down there sting like pins
Were stuck in me by a wicked
Witch.

I wish I could hang my
Feet up and not walk on
Them now that I must
Crawl on all fours like
A beast. Biblical
Nebuchardnezzar I have

Become, only of my own
Making.

When I should have bought
Strength, I sold it for
Favours. Gave out money
Like water gushing out of
A newly dug well in a desert.

Now the briers have me bend
So poverty can climb on my back.
What an easy ride! On a downhill drive in a car that is in neutral
Gear.

It hits a road sign and turns
Before going into the ditch
It stops. Hands on my chest
I get out and limp on for I am
Now on the doorstep, yes I got
Home with my hurting feet. Now
I must work them out one thistle
At a time on this path called
Recovery where neither the time
Or the loss of dignity is recoverable

Sarah Mkhonza

Those Days With Nimbilasha

We read poems and she wrote
I miss you touching me.
For through her words
The search for what was lost
Was bold in her writing.

We read lines from Nimbilasha
I miss you kissing me
For such was the emptiness
That poured out of lines.

We listened as she went on
I miss you touching me
She said looking at her poem
When I read mine which I called
The Longest Poem in South Bend.

For it was here where we were
Women together loving our words.
We explored our past and continued
To feel in the space around us
Looking for where we had been

People read and searched for we
Just as we were had a past
One we wanted to wrap in words
And carry in print to others
Who would know we were a people
Whose destiny was written
Even before we were born
And left for us to find.

Nobody sent us to wander in
The world and search with words
What had been, but it was in
Doing that we found we were
Women and could tell stories
New and rare and sip the juices
Of the world that made us be

On our pieces of paper.

It was a world past where tears
And laughter had mingled on faces
And fallen down in drops from
Men and women who had gone on to
Be grey and not care for such was
Life. Discovering their freedom
Left us free to dream on for here
In our hands we had a book to prove
That we read poems with Nimbilasha.

Sarah Mkhonza

Those Who Did Not Elect God

Those who did not nominate God
Did not elect him
They did not vote for him
Now they have to live with him
So sky high is he
And so lofty are the elections of heaven
That they threaten the very
Law that brought them I to being
For the maket of things has to run
The world as always
No messing about here
Years or no tears
For the bell has rung
And the work must begin.

When the problems knock
On the door they will
Not knock on doors of
Those who elected God
They will knock on each
And everydoor that has
An opening.
We better make sure we have
The one and only key
But not this endless bickering.
Pain or no pain life goes on.

Sarah Mkhonza

Through Reflections In A Puddle Of Water

I walk minding my own business on
This pavement, looking at lavender
Flowers swaying in the wind. My walk
Is interrupted by this puddle on
The cement pavement that forces
Me to look at it, so flat, so shiny,
So beautiful and so creative
That I start to wonder what the
World looks like when seen from
Down here where my feet could
Jump and take me further on my
Walk or stop me on my tracks to let me
Enjoy the adventure of a world
Not seen by many.

I am told by this waters mystery
To look at the world through its
Eyes and know life is as good as
You make it for flat chested or
Not, you sleep as long a sleep
As the sun allows.

I am told in subtle ways wise
To admire the world through
The eyes of this puddle of water
For wisdom lays just where you
Walk. I look around and wonder
Who is telling my silence to
Listen to the beauty that hangs
in the air above this mirror.

The wisdom that has come to me
Warns me to wait for the marvel
Unfolding in a pool of water
And listen to the untold truth
It tells my heart in silent
Tunes. It shapes the world above
It into its own boat-shaped world
That it paints as it brings

The sky above it to me, a painting
From an artist unknown.

It sleeps in the middle of a
Cement pavement looking at the
Sky and the trees above it look
Down and cast themselves on the
Surface of a mirror that casts
Them back telling me that this
Is my beautiful gift for the day
For I have waited long not sure
What form it would take this
Day in the month of November.

Twigs thin and unsteady have
Fallen into it as if they want
To enjoy the last swim in this
Shot lived watery patch that
Is forever threatened
To disappear for the sun
Has to win for that is the
Fate of the puddles of the
World after the rain.

Sarah Mkhonza

Throwing Away Good Chunks Of Life

If life was meat,
Would we throw it away
In large huge chunks,
For anyone to catch,
The way we throw the minutes
And hours away?

If it was left over meat,
Would we stretch our hands,
And grab at the chunks,
We kept in the freezer,
To consume on a rainy day,
In the dead of night

The dogs would scramble,
At the chunks and run,
With us following, shouting,
Their names and cursing,
For they have stung us a part,
Of last nights dinner,
With its delicious juicy parts.

Would we let the seconds,
Fly away like maggots,
Going out of the window,
When you spray your house,
Never to be seen again?

For without these,
There would be no day,
Without a second,
Its grain of sand feeling,
Into the hourglass of life,
Where no week would be,
No day to slice away,
And peel off this roast,
That we bake in this oven.

I heard it said,
That time was money,
I went to the back,
And stood in line,
For one second more,
For they had plenty of it,
In their vaults,
Yet could not pay a dime,
To the poor beggar,
Who came with hope,
Not even one second,
I thought as I left,
This place where they say,
They keep the likes of time.

Sarah Mkhonza

Time To Add A Twist To Our Tango

We have had our funny ways of doing
Where you pull and I pull and now
We have to add a twist to our tango
For I may just as well call it quits
For I got in thinking we would make
The swell steps and my dress would fly
Away from my thighs and everybody would
Say wow!

Now I see this was just us on a stage
With no audience yet daily I waited for
An applause that would not come. First
Your mother who did not think I was much
To write home about and said it outright.

Then your sister who wanted a nurse to
Marry your doctor's certificate for you
Two would work in the same practice
Built by her for the couple in her mind.

Now the kids came along and we danced
A tango of four, for they had learned
From us a step or two and felt like
This was how it is done. This talking
Things loud and doing them half way
So that the house looks like we are on
The move daily.

The tango took a faster step and the
Bank accounts got depleted for college
Fees also called on our wisdom of
Planning the future of our offspring
Who had hoped theirs was a life planned
In heaven for such was our tango.

Now I twist your arm and you twist mine
And people see love in the air when yours
Is a hard pinch on my arm reminding me
I am still being watched especially when

Your mother comes to visit us.

The children love you and I, pinch or no
Pinch for they never were loud these pinches
Of ours for they were meant to remind me
That it is time to take a fast turn around
And wow the audience unknown to our weak
Points. Now that the results are being
Announced I want out for I cannot dance
With the same loser in this competition
That is always won by Russians far away
And not me and you.

You ask me what we will tell our children?
Why not tell them to start their own
Dance for our is over and the stage is
Open to the next couple from the next
Generation of millennials like them for
They read and learn everything on social
Media where they would get an audience
Endless in this day where we wash all
Dirty Linen in public like I am doing
Now.

Sarah Mkhonza

Time To Sing And Dance Chan Chan

It is time to silence the fan
And go out and get a real tan
Where they make them better
For it is here that we go
Chan Chan to the sound of noisy cars.
Someone has to teach us how
You mourn a hero that others
Find not so great for they
See in him a taker not a giver.
Could the world join in one
Song when the tunes are as
Different as they are in
This cacophony of noises
That have taken over an
Island in tears?

It is truth that I hear voices
Sad and voices noisy for
I decided to join neither
For it is time to sing and
Invite the world to join
In this lament that causes
Others to dance in the streets
Of Miami. They say those who
Are razor sharp and controversial
Remain the same in the minds
Of societies like them for
What they touch they leave
In there a hole so deep it calls
You from afar. Wherever you
Are join in as the story
Which has no end begins.

Let us go down the streets
Of Havana wiping tears off
The faces of those who mourn
For the death of a leader
Is never an easy thing to
Bear. But cry forever we must

Not for we will lose the time
When we have to dance to
Chan Chan the way penguins
Lost their ability to fly.
For even to lay a mere egg
They have to face the deadly
Cold and go on a march to the
Ends of the earth. Not to
Dance right now is to go into
A cold that will never go away
For you will have failed to be
A connoisseur and succumbed
To the level of the mediocre.

If you do not smoke and never
Have, you surely did inhale
If you did put the joint in your
Mouth in the dictionary of fools
It is smoking and that is
A crime you have to pay for
By dancing Chan Chan for if
You do not how will you tell
Segundo you did not inhale
When he sees the joint in
Your mouth. Better say you
inhaled but did not swallow.
As for you who look and
Smell like a shebeen you need
Not make angels out of yourselves
For everyone knows you to be
More drunk than the composer
Of Chan Chan for you will not
Need to take a breathalyzer
Test for the world to know you
Were at a party tonight sinner
That you are. Someone has to get
Us all together for we have to
Pay our dues for not to do so
Is to fail to give Fidel what is
Fidel's and Caesar what is Caesars.

Who said that Afro Cuban sounds

Were for those who stay on an
Island blockaded in the slate
Of time to suffer and dance
To these sounds all alone?
Let us get drunk with joy and
Celebrate blockade or no blockade
For if we laugh, sing and dance
They will know we have taken
The LSD of life. Fidel is gone
For to some he gave and to some
He took. It is time to Chan Chan
And take a piece of the island and
Hide it in your heart. Life is known
To stretch its hand out once. You
Miss it, and there goes the blessing
For they say when the priest
Says now take, eat and drink
For this is my baptism of you in a
History not mine but yours. If you
Fail to dance to the tune tell the
Stars that you know it is time to
Bow to time and honor it for even
For you the day of reckoning cometh
Like a wagon of old whose hinges are
Making their sounds as of comes down
The road that leads up to the house
At the bottom of the valley of life.

Lay Fidel not in a hole for he insisted
His ashes should be carried in an urn
And spread over the blue waters of
His beloved Cuba. While they float
There let us honor history for
Here was a man who did something
I need to tell you in a whisper.
I went to my country in the south
Of Africa and found doctors young
And they had come from nowhere
But the country of Fidel. Tell
Me not to sing and dance to
Chan Chan and I will tell the
Gods you are jealous of this bond

That he had with Africa. The AFro
Cuban sounds will swear as they
Blast in the hot air of an island
That you surely are.

* Chan Chan is a song by Compay Segundo
Of Cuba.

Sarah Mkhonza

To Borrow The Wisdom Of The Praying Mantis

I speak and wish standing on two
Legs with no wings. My message
Moves from person to person
Slower than gossip. I spice
My stories with juicy bits
From queens of the courts
But still lack the wisdom
To make my self seen and
Heard for people would
Long have heard of me
And called me the praying poet.

What did the mantis do to get
The verb I so desire to precede
The likes of me? For if people
Knew I was a praying poet they
Would read my words and live
Even before I tell them to
Read my lips.

Imagine a world where I would
Have the power of the rabbi
And have everybody confessing
Their sins into the air in which
I would fly on the wings of the
Praying mantis. It is not envy
To desire the slim torso with
The hour glass of a figure that
Never changes. Imagine me with
Hands in prayer kneeling at the
Alter of time with no obituary
To write but the honor to be
Called a praying poet when I
Am just wearing an honorary
Title that hangs loose around
My name for I have never prayed
For nobody, but just uttered
A few expletives that tell

Everybody I am a praying poet.

How can the world honor mediocre
Actions when here are ones that
Are so clean and sincere they
Can only be described in superlatives?

I am still waiting at the shrine
Of the Black Madonna pressing
My hair and hoping this tittle
Will come with the ease with which
I run the comb through my hair
And acquire the wisdom of the
Praying mantis. What can a
Poet do to be known around
The world as the woman of
Prayer when the likes of
Insects green and brown
Have taken the only word
I crave and claimed it
When they have never done
Even as much as utter one word?

Next time you see the insect
With the credentials I crave tell it
It would do better with
Just one visit to the confession
Window for that would mean
It has the humility to seek
Penance for dressing itself
In borrowed robes for if I
See it first I will invite it
To a duel and fight tooth and
Nail with my bladed pen for it
Is the sword I am sharpening
For this encounter that will
Come in the foreseeable future
For I am keeping my fingers crossed.

Sarah Mkhonza

To Love Like A Pro

When I love again
I will do so like a pro
I will do it with skill
I will breathe into it
Fall into it and sniff into it
For the chance comes once.

Once the challenge came
I feared even to move
I was trying to be proper
I was outside myself
I missed out on it
While trying to act it.

I dare not regret
Put pick the air in my hand
Tell it this truth
It dare not escape
For I will grab it
I will talk to it
I will make it special
Now that I know
It walks away and never comes back.

Missed opportunities are not lost
They have gone to a place
Where the eyes cannot see
For they were always blind
And knew how to fake
This thing called seeing love.

When I plan to love
I write the steps
I order them one after another
For this recipe changes
With the fickleness
That surrounds us all
As we lose the only opportunity
To put who we are into practice

And keep grabbing the air
Trying to find tomorrow
Not knowing it pushes us away
And says, " you should have loved
For yesterday was all you lived in
Tomorrow laughs at you
Because it knows your ignorance
It lives and walks away with i.

Only if you fight back
Only if you see the thing called time
Floating in front of you
Like chimes in the air
Waving hello and good bye
For that is just what it is.

Catch your chimes in one hand
Let them go in another
If you cannot chop them off
And let them fall on the floor
So that they will never leave you
And go where you will never go.
Unless if you decide to fight back
When love was walking near you.

Sarah Mkhonza

To Sing Along With The World

I cannot jingle bells,
But I can jingle words

I cannot be an angel
But I can be a shovel
And carry words all over
The world.

I cannot be a tree
All green and shiny
With decorations gleaming
But I can call you
To come shine on our side
For it has always been dark
While on yours it is light.

I cannot be the electric lights
That caress a tree and light it
Up with hugs, but I can hug you
And say Merry, warm, hugs with
Both of my arms which lay heavy
With wanting to just shake and
Do nothing but hug the whole world
With the light in them. Merry Xmas
Folks! The world is still turning
With us suspended in it by
Our stories of this holiday that
Comes in less than ten days
Before the New Year.

Sing along with the world,
Buy a little not too much
For the song is not about
Spending but rather about
Visiting the world not
Thought about where stories
Tell us a young year and
Supple is about to be born
In this story turned the

Story of money gleaming
And jingling in your pockets
Wanting to come out and
Throw itself in the counters
Of the world where the
Tellers are waiting for
You to say Merry Xmas
And Happy new year with
A handshake that powders
The counters with gold,
Leaving you poorer in
The New Year.

Sarah Mkhonza

To The Skewer In The Fire

On you are bits that
Are to go into the
Fire outside. Peppers
Green, yellow, red and
All colors interspersed
With bits galore, all juicy
With the marinade of the
Season, all from the world's
Best chef you have become
Here where life gave you
A chance to display your best.
Will you serve the best bits
With this shish kabob or will
You have burnt every one of your
Savory pieces unrecognizable?

Sarah Mkhonza

To Update You On My Life

To update you on my life,
While sitting here on this bench,
Where you left me in the past,
And would not want to hear from me.
I am now a living free soul of the world,
I have grown to be the tall gum tree,
With the crown I saw through the window,
That beckoned me on to a future of hope.

My leaves are green and shiny in the rain,
As they did when you saw me years ago,
When you asked me to join you in a dance,
When the car hooted to our rhythms
For your knees had touched the stirring wheel
Making us laugh the laughter of lovers,
Who make out in cars not theirs,
In times that let their voices
Ring out into the sky above,
Making us know we were none,
Of the nuns and priests we saw,
And learned from at our school.

I look back and see you young,
Eager to love and follow me everywhere,
For it was young love, so pure,
So ready to fulfill itself,
That it fell full flat on the ground,
Never to be picked up even by the birds.
That would fly and put it on the trees,
For the world to look at and nod,
That it has happened even to us.

To update you on my life,
I have become a lover of life itself,
Not of humans as such for that is real,
The feeling has dried and truths have come,
To look at me in the eye,
And say now the time has come,
To go down the winding road to the trees,

For this is where it all started,
Your fumbling with zippers that was endless,
Letting me wish you were wiser,
And knew what to do at the right time.

Where I stood I now walk on proudly,
Talking to the world with a louder voice,
More like yours when it broke,
For your baritone was my pride,
For I longed to hear it always.

I have grown to know this about life,
That it is not how it sounds or looks,
Not how it feels and smells,
But how it goes into truth,
Even with the blindest eye,
Of those who carry it in their hearts.

To update you on my today,
I go back to our past long ago,
And search for your words of truth,
And find them intact not loose.
For that would break my heart.
To know you were not really there with me.
For mine is a continuing dream,
That heals me with its truth.

Sarah Mkhonza

To Whom A Lot Was Given

I walk down the street and there lies a watch,
I pick up this Louis Vitton strap on which it hangs,
Clear from its band, brown and lettered,
It is one of those the rich really own,
Now it is mine to take and keep.

I walk to the place where I shop,
This black bag is now lying there,
Now who left such a treasure as this?
I think the fool did not even know,
The price of life when he loses a jewel,
For me to find and take home once again.

When all these finds are counted by me,
I see a coat with fur hanging there,
Left in the street for me to pick,
Then I know I must give back,
For a lot was given to me who takes,
Just like a lot will be required one day.

Next time you see me the beggar,
Remember I gave even with the hand I took,
For us to take, is also to give,
For who would be blessed if they only took,
When there are no beggars in the street?

Don't shy away from giving alms,
To those whose hands are forever stretched,
For they do have the power to do so,
Which one day will be gone forever,
Just like it will to you and me.
This thing called life that walks away,
And leaves us looking in the distance,
Where it disappears never to return.

Sarah Mkhonza

Tombstones Are Greedy

I didn't know that
tombstones are greedy.
I came to talk to you
and they all looked at me
and waved unseen hands
of named ones in the air
that said, this one too.

I thought they fought with ants
over their contents the bodies
of souls mingled with dirt
but found they fight for me
to look at them and wonder
who lay in there so silent.

I thought I was alone
and yet there was a contest
fighting for my gaze
to turn in the direction
to which my eyes wander
thinking of the loved one
whose message is so clear.

Who lies in here was beautiful.
who lies in here was never sick.
Who lies in here was strong,
princess of lonely spaces she
If you do not say 'hallo.'
you will miss a message
from beyond the now.

I said a loud 'Hallo! '
It echoed in the loneliness
arrested my own thinking
and walked all the way home with me
for someone told me
they died unfulfilled.

Tortifrogs

Two races mixed and produced one tribe.
They called themselves tortifrogs, for
They resembled mother frog and father tortoise.
The frog could sing loud, the tortoise could not.
The babies started the song.
The frogs told them they were too young to sing a
funeral croaked and croaked,
jumping up and down and nobody liked their tune.
They invaded every pond and could
deafen heaven with their noise. Nobody could dance
for their song was strange. Then they sang even louder,
till all people went mad. The big shut up came
from the soldiers. So sick was the nation of them.

So the battle went on, tortoises even
borrowing guitars from the village boys,
only to find the frogs louder in their usual.
Asking the tortifrogs to sing loud, the
tortoises loaned them the guitars. The
village boys watched in amusement.
They were looking for a winner.

Sing tortifrogs sing. It is your world, too,
the elders said. 'We are trying and cannot
be louder, for the throats we have were
transformed by the new genes.
We have learned the tune but the older generation
cannot be silenced. They call it culture
this singing of tunes that make the hair
stand on edge. The voices loud even make their
throats hoarse. When they say we must join,
we squeak and the ducks laugh.
They tell us we could be better off quacking.
Now the song has gone into a low key that no one can sing.
That is what we get for following a conductor who cannot sing.
He quacks and tells us he has come to
make the best of a bad situation, and will make the marshes great again.
Yes tortoise still has his head right inside his shell.
He says he is waiting for the next vote, so

he can play the trumpet in the band and bring
a lot of rain to these marshes inhabit. God
help us and put a stopper in our ears for
when he sings every note turns into a strange
tune never heard, and also a string of profanities'.

People will still rather live among the ducks
and watch the battle in the land of the tortifrogs,
where mouths open and nothing
comes out, for the frog turned tortoise
says sound or no sound let us blame it on
nature.

The frogs go on shamelessly arguing. They
say inside their white frothy house, a sound,
is a sound. We all have to listen, to what they sing
for that is called politics. They say we are all immigrants
so we are at their mercy for they created the tune.
If we want to sing, we must return to the land of our birth.

Sarah Mkhonza

Trails Of Native Lands That We Walked On

Tell me of the Indian trail
And I will show you a Khoisan trail
For nomads walk on the sand bare footed
And the Chicana row the boats on lakes
Bigger than the Okavango where water lilies
Sing in the night and hide the snouts of
Creeping crocodiles bigger than a whale.

For I left a land supreme with rules
Of life intact that molded in me a person
Not perfect but almost for I was to seek
A new home where I had to learn to eat
And cook without putting any food on
The flames that glow above the coals.

They say it is adventure when you jump
From tree to tree like Tarzan wearing
A loin skin as Black and as invisible as
The one I have on even though I do not
Know how to swing on twines and land
On the opposite side of the river.

I have listened to sounds animals make aired
Out of multiple channels some insolent some
Holy for I am listening on a borrowed pair
Of ears my pair having stoppers from afar
That still ring of music from the sounds
Of the clicks of the Khoisan.

They say our people know how to place
A leaf and get water from the dew that
The night has left and dig so deep that
Water giving roots come out and quench
The thirst of a whole people.

And here where the land now bleeds
The native people look on and cry
For they see that the life we live
Has come to take and not leave any

Trace that there was once a life of
Giving and sharing what the land gave.
The land itself cries for it has given
Until it can give no more for the way
It has been treated has been so rough
That only death emanates from the ground
Once kind.

Sarah Mkhonza

Treasure Box In The Ceiling Come Down

They said there is a treasure box
In the ceiling. All they told me
To do was to look up and my mind
Would show me what it was that was
Hidden in the box.

I looked up and my mind told me to
Pen down ideas as they came and ask
What it is I want to see. I saw good
Luck walking towards the east on the
Back of a camel. I also saw cousins
Singing and dancing on their knees.
I asked them why this unusual dance.
They told me to get to know the truth
About things you have to go through
Suffering so that the giver who has
It seed that you want badly and do
The hardest things.

They said they would not give up the
Prayer until they had been given what
They wanted. When asked what it was
They said they wanted to become the
Rulers of their countries for they
Had suffered enough and did not want
Their children to suffer like them.

I told them they were daughters of
Dust and therefore would not get
Their request for only those born
In the month of May when the aloe
Is in bloom can ask and get things
From the giver. For those are the
People who know where the treasure
Box that sits in the ceiling of the
World is and only them have seen
Its contents.

I was told to go away for I was

Causing them to have no hope. They
Told me they would get down the
Box in the ceiling with their
Belief for they had seen the box
Starting to turn up there and hope
Was all they needed. They could
Hear presents making noise in the
Box. Presence of mind was all that
Would have them bring down the box.

I walked away for I was not one to
Wait for things so lofty. I had no
Patience nor did I have the company
That could help me sustain so noble
A cause. Tired I was and hunger had
Scooped out my eyes. Box or no box
With no eyes but holes in in my face
I could not bring the box in the ceiling
I decided to bring it down in words
And here it is. Now I can only dare
To tell the box to come down with
The best voice I have.

Sarah Mkhonza

Tried At The Court Of Injustice

Resolving matters with clansmen
And clanswomen without head gear
Tells a story of imposters who
Give out rulings that are from
Over eager minds that do not
Read the books of the law
Written in their minds.

These jurors wear wigs like
The fungus on rotten food.
Mice squeak into their ears as they give
Them the judgments they read out.

We reopen the case and get a repeat
For who wants to fight a rotten legal
System where ignorance flies on the
Wings of gulls that utter a defiant cry.

We have been brought to this court
Of injustice for our case was thrown out
Because of false witnesses who argued
That nasty women wanted to sit in
The oval office and rule the earth.
Speaking of rotten systems.

Sarah Mkhonza

Turning Over A New Leaf Was Never Easy

The page turns then you realize
it long turned.

It is made from the old papyrus.
It is heavier carried in your minf.

It is like opening a door made of lead.
or rolling the rock off the door of a tomb.

You have heard the previous page read
and spelled out.

You could not be reading ahead, the
words tell you so.

Futures are yesterday's reborn. Read
today they ask you one question.

Why are you still standing here. Were
you not called forth.

Where is forth for I still here the same.
To turn a new leaf ask yesterday.

It will tell you that you stand in it,
with it, and for it.

Please turn the page. The reading goes on.
We hope you will still go on.

Sarah Mkhonza

Two Days To Christmas Day

I battled crowds everywhere
Laboring through heat so high
Each step punctuated by pain
On my virgin groin which was
In intermittent bites of pinches
That told the story of old that
To me would soon be born a son

No manger in the town of Manzini
But taxis going up and down. No
Dubais too in the day, bu buses
With Albion engines that sounded
Their baritones loud.

Amidst this hustle and bustle I
Walked tunnel visioned by the moves
Of a new life ready to be born for
It was as if it knew the story of
One birn in Bethlehem and wanted to
Race into the world and say I got
In before he landed in the manger
Where he lay. Christ forgive me for
Beating you to the race and bouncing
Into the world on a census year in Bethlehem. Let me be counted among
Those who answered the call and
Celebrate with you the greatness you
Brought the world.

In a ward he cane like a bomb exploded
Into the world all his own to grow
Up and bless us. The joy we feel saysc

In a ward far away
I

Sarah Mkhonza

Two Women On The Dromedaris

They sailed on blue seas to lands far away.
They saw it all, this landing that shook the
ship and had it wrecked on a strange land.
Two women on the Dromedaris, where
fourteen men went on a spicy search.

This Van Riebeeck ship landed on shores
blue, called the Cape of Good hope,
also the Cape of Storms soon to
become the cape of misery.

This cape was no cape, this new name
was heard also by the two women. One
was a priest's wife. One was the gardener's
wife. They would meet and stay where too
currents meet. Sister Benguela and sister Agulhas
for people think about gardeners and priests
on journeys where life could take a new turn,
as it did here.

That day they prayed, and also ate,
for the two people and their wives,
had made the Dromedaris home.
A home now wrecked on the shores
of the land called the cape.

We do not know their names, for they
were not the captain. The people around
having never seen a big ship wreck like this,
Surely knew their souls had also been wrecked.

Women on the ship tell us, what sounds you
heard that day. Were they like silence, or like
whips cracking on the backs of people, like
waves shattering themselves on the rocks?
All we know about Boers, is that days of
whips cracking on backs of people and slaves
pouring in had begun. So had wars over
cattle. Did you see it all?

I ask for the retelling leaves you out.
Nobody except the books of the
latter saints tell of you. I ask for a
society that speaks the words of people
like you, for you can also attest to what
happened when the Dromedaris landed.

It became news with consequence,
this fit of the landing of a Dutch ship.
Nobody wanted the spices anymore.
Nobody could progress anymore for
the trip to Indonesia was now ended
on a new Dutch East India Company morning.

Years of history tell us you two,
could not sustain a population of
these fourteen men. Who were the
new brides? Was it Sarah Baartman,
or some Sarah Baartmans whose names
are lost in history like yours?

I ask and tell for in questions are answers,
and in telling words, for people need them,
Even if to create a false history that says
history began the day Van Riebeeck landed..
Someone out there is asking the same
questions as these. For these are the days
of knowing, where a mouse cannot squeak
and not rock a house and bring it to its feet.

Here lies the Dromedaris, in these pages of history,
with Jan Van Fiebeeck bigger than all the people
once on the ship, the day it landed. His name can
blow the wind, that covers the names whose souls
wrote with footprints in the sand, for only the sand
could tell us, who stepped out of the ship and walked
on it that day.

People of this world, I have read and will tell, that
there were two women in that ship; one priest's wife,
the other the gardener's wife. If women's names would

be recorded, like the names of men, we would know their names.

Life captains, the way the sea likes them,
history likes men, the way it loves Van Riebeeck.
I chose to ask that we find out more, now that the
cat is out of the bag, it cannot come back into
the bag empty handed.

When we read next about Van Riebeeck, let us not
forget, he was not with men alone. He was with two
women, this I proclaim. They already belonged to
someone. Yes, Van Riebeeck is not said to have had
a wife. He had sailed year in and out on the high seas,
where a woman to a captain would have been a distraction.

Captains too sleep on pillows softer than a woman's, I declare.
I have seen life to question it with the micro phone in my eye
and my brain. When you ask questions loud, you get answers
loud. For they say it is culture. For now we learn of how it was
for lives lived daily, on the Dromedaris. Don't ask me, ask history.

We said one day, we will rewrite the story of this ship,
and not say the history of the people of the land,
begins with Jan Van Riebeeck. When we do so, let us also
rewrite the missing chapter, that tells of women on this ship.

It may not rewrite it and give the honor due to Sarah Baartman,
for Saratjie, who lived to see lands far away, this freak of the world,
whose genitals were on icons, whose behind was the spectacle,
that mine and yours refuses to be is now dead. She who wore no corset,
when those around her of her shape did, is dead. She rests now in our
bosom, for our soil has taken her from France to its bosom, where she belongs.

This story of women and the Cape, rings hollow to me,
when it is told from the chapters in the books of male professors,
who glean the archives and eat and forget that food can only
be present if a woman who gives birth is present. Her story is
the story of the land. Let us tell it.

We may not know where they died, but surely they arrived.
We may not know who they gave birth to, if surely they did.

One thing we know about women, they are our mothers,
No matter what shape, colorant height they come in.
They they mother us, and so they should be given a voice.
Even if the voice is distorted like mine. Hear me out,
there were two women on the Dromedaris.
That is my sermon for today. Say Amen!
Then read this new chapter of the bible at home, with your
finger on the name of the first woman called Eve. Make
this bookmark, on behalf of the two, for names are important,
for they give us a way, to know things and name them, for that
is what knowing is, in this land of we, we men.

Sarah Mkhonza

Undeniable Wizard Tricks Of Others

Betrayal of insults that make you shrink,
Coming from cowards you knew yesterday,
Trap you on the road to new islands,
Where the water is blue all the time,
Why did you shake hands with devils,
And wave to cruelty that sang your name,

Kick this habit of listening to topics,
Whose themes are laid on the rungs of a ladder,
That goes nowhere but under,
You are sinking in the muddy springs,
Of yesterday's storm with its grassy
meanderings that take you nowhere,
Just wizard tricks of failures,
These moorings that keep you down.

You could turn into a wizard yourself,
Drink a concoction you mixed alone,
That cures the insides of your internals,
And renders you bristling new with nettles,
That pierce a witch and kill a wizard.

Sarah Mkhonza

Unique Perennials Of Love

These new perennials sweet scented
Have come from our honorary gods
To flatter us with a love never seen

The love flip flops all over us wives
We join in the dance for we know the guarded gates that lead to the roots
Of all this fast moving sweepings of
A love that we know will disappear.

When the gods say while the hay still shines
Listen for they know the human heart that changes
As many times as you hear the tick-tock of a clock
Make haste for they will say they told you so.

These fast growing perennials of love are fuelled
Not by feelings that rest deep down but by yearning
For what is new and the mystery that follows it.

For mystery loves stories new and untold like you're
For they tickle the world in their ordinariness
For they make humanity cleverer when everybody asks
What was she thinking? She should have known the curse
Lurks on the walls of the house of the vampires
For their polished handsomeness keeps every girl guessing.

Sarah Mkhonza

Unlocking The Place Of My Darkness

There is this place where love eludes me,
Where my faith faults itself into nothing,
And my hope jumps into a lake of darkness,
While calling me to retrieve it with one click.

I utter a Xhosa click and yell an English verb,
And find myself deeper in the crisis of words,
That return me to the dream I shelved years ago,
That says my life will swing in the outswing,
My brother pushing me into the sky of a tire,
That is chained with my bottom and hands holding,
As I am thrown into the air and landing in the light,
Laughing yet scared as hell as he continues to throw me,
This demigod who hands my life in the air right now.

How will I survive this daily throwing of time,
That teaches me to have faith in those controls,
Which I hold with my little hands that pick,
My yelling and fold it into one happening,
That unlocks the place of my darkness.

If I had loved with the faith that put me,
On the see-saw where I trusted my brother,
To swing up and let me go down one minute,
And then swing down and allow me to go on,
With one swing and another a faith that laughs,
Saying if we keep this tango we will go on,
for life is as much a gamble as this,
As long as we stay and play house after this,
With the awareness that minutes pass as we do,
This worldly play called going into oblivion,
With those who love you pushing you into the air.
Where the fear is nothing for truth is assured,
And it is the only thing that will unlock,
This darkness and the hurts that will bruise,
Us on this long path called life.
So swing on birds the darkness will go as will
The light of our daily living.
Remember to get on the swing and see-saw for,

This never ends.

Sarah Mkhonza

Vanishing Traces Of Gold

My heart is losing its gold linings
And starting to worship at this tower
That sometimes vanishes into the night
Then I feel my knees shaking in the cold
For the juices that kept me supple
Are starting to harden for here at the
Alter of time there is nothing I can
Change, but just bow down for it is
Easier to give way than to plaster walls
When the mud is falling gradually.

I had knees of gold that knelt
On mats of gold when confessing
That the day was hard and bones
That stood and let me bow before
I tell the angels to convey my
Message to the day and tell it
It was beautiful.

Life gets harder as the coast
Gets nearer. The wind sails blow
Softly and at half mast for the
Shipmate is losing the grip on
The oars so the rowing team gets
Weaker for the hands on the oars
Are fewer and the boat loses the
Position hoped for, and nobody gets
To the end a winner, but an also ran.

These vanishing traces of gold
That lined every strata of rock
Are now way down in the depths
Where they have sunk forcing
The miners to go down never to
Be retrieved in the amounts that
Were hoped for.

To get up from here where I kneel
And recover a few traces of gold

I need to dig deeper into the pool
Where the water has gathered as it
Fell from the sweat in my forehead.
For my lamp is also adding to the
Heat for in this mine it is very
Hot. The work we do in the pits
Of the earth earns us just a penny
When you sell your labor and dig
Never to pocket the bars of gold
That go into the vault in London
In the names of the big guns whose
Names appear in the skyline of the
Towers that grace our world with
Shiny windows and walls that have
Taken most of the gold we worked
For to build.

We cannot take back what we gave
For a few pennies, but we can keep
Our words for they will be money one
Day when the big guns start to read
What a sacrifice we made at temperatures
So hot while they fanned themselves
With peering through windows lining the walls
When trying to shield ourselves from
The rain when the wind forces us to
After it has violently broken our
Umbrellas.

Dripping wet we stand and watch the
Smoothest cars gleaming with fancy
Tires going into parking spaces deep
In the earth where only a few go for
Their spaces are marked with the word
Reserved for they came with them from
The previous world and will go with them
To the next where me and you will shed
Our sinewy arms and wear ones of light
And once again show some of our traces
Of gold. Theirs will be gold rotting in
The vaults of this world and who really
Will have the last laugh. I am not so sure

So said a miner's child hungry in the streets
Of Johannesburg South Africa.

Sarah Mkhonza

Vanity Never Said Take Off Your Clothes

In the hot sun when bathing in the best swimsuit,
vanity did say, show it to all around and swing
a little so all can look at you. Lover of life on
a sunny day at the beach. Vanity should have spoken
to the quiet in you and told you to wear the sun tanner
at a high level of the rays that would later land you
in hospital with melanoma, for it loves those who roast
themselves bare.

Vanity said look for the show and find it and then told
melanoma the same, but in a whisper so that you would not
hear. Next time you go into the sun, know how you will shield
yourself from bites that are invisible and taste as nice as
sunbathing, for a beast lurks under the rays that tickle your
skin the way your lover does and if you can cover up, if not
with just the oils from the torrid places. There are no 'if onlys'
in the land of melanoma. Melanin queens only survive.

Sarah Mkhonza

Verily Verily I Swear Unto You

My children and children of my ex-husband,
Verily, verily, I swear unto you,
Like your father said before we split,
We will be bound by a bond that was made in heaven.

Verily, verily he swore unto me,
We were not made for each other,
For it had become clear that his inheritance,
Was for all of us when he passes.

This expression I will swear when the will is read,
For I am pouring out my heart to you now,
Knowing you may choose not to believe me,
For the truth I tell you now,
Was churned out by cherubs,
That brought us together,
The day I met him near our church.

We sat with our legs held out,
Our hands hidden and drew the will,
For which we now fight,
For it was a piece of paper,
That would foretell what is to come,
When he no longer breathes and sings,
This last aria, written in his blood.

Verily, verily, I swear unto you,
I have not altered a word,
For my hands were always tied,
Behind my back,
When it comes to such matters,
For money was not my best friend,
Only your father had sworn on a bible,
That he would remain the real and only one.

Now that you know that this was not to be,
For he left with another younger and richer,
He never needed the wealth we amassed,
For all the money owned by his goddess,

Was his to launch himself into mars with.

This accident that makes us stand here,
Was looked at from afar by the cherubs,
Who saw us write our will and sign our names,
In our blood that said we will die one ball,
Knitted together like as it rolls away,
From some widows thighs whose knitting allows,
It to roll our this will.

So bear with me as I tell you this truth,
Verily, verily, he swore unto me,
That he trusted me to call you all,
And read these squiggles he made alone,
When he was changing the words in the darkness,
Making another to replace with lies, ,
The one we wrote, for the DNA test,
Can prove it was indeed, the blood of us two,
That wrote the only original that exists.

I want to go to a future with the speaker,
Of the words I distort for they are truth,
Just like what I say even to you now,
Who may hate to see my face,
Since the money that stands between us,
Separates us like the cut of the knife,
That his lover slew him with,
For she did not have time to spend with the likes,
That tell lies like him. Get it from me.

Sarah Mkhonza

Very Shallow This Deep End

Your last swim does break your neck,
This shallow end of deceit so new,
It shines bottoms that look far,
Because of the moonlight you jump in,
Now you sit with a broken neck,
Very shallow this deep end.

Glistening afar this mirage,
Takes your pencils on a page,
Whose leaves glisten in the dark,
Helping you chart with dots and commas,
Till the story is now gone
To the end of the book,
Turning over no more space,
Very shallow this deep end.

Live this breath with its mysteries,
Breathing deeper and going deeper,
Till your head hits the bottom,
And your eyes open and look,
At the rough surface below,
Very shallow this deep end.

Don't say you were blind folded by time,
For time sang no song like the O'Jays,
And pulled you under, touching you under,
Moving you closer into the curve,
Of the one whose arm you held so tenderly,
To the music at the disco,
Very shallow this deep end.

Who said they would woo you in the woods,
Call your name in the dark of night,
Whispering words that make you cry,
For they were sweeter than the nectar,
In the flower to the flying bee,
Only to land there with the beetle,
That takes the pollen even further,
Very shallow this deep end.

So cry sweet tears on soft cheeks,
And wipe them with the back of hands with rings,
That were worn till they lost their shine,
For this is life girlfriend you know,
That we hoped, sang and danced to dreams,
With songs we leaned in customs old,
Only to land with a broken horn,
Like the cow that tore the rope,
And ran away from the bullfight,
Claiming it was no to be dance around,
In a ring like a Spanish bull,
But just a beast of burden like others,
Very shallow this deep end.

They argued the tits were full,
And ready for milking under the moonshine,
Feeding foals that it did not know,
For the bull had also lain here,
Near this cow before the big fight,
That ends in a dance of a crazy two,
Who disown even their own,
Leaving the crowds disappointed,
Very shallow this deep end.

Sarah Mkhonza

Voom Goes The Zoom

Smile life says to me,
And I let my lips go,
Only to see an image strange,
So old and sad looling at me.
The shutter clicks and the ducklings go
Their line forming the letter v,
As they swim off with a quack
With borrowed beaks still pink in color
I feel left out of the first take,
The recluse that did not see,
When zoom go with a voom
As life went to the next planet.

Sarah Mkhonza

Waiting On The Winning Line

They told me history repeats itself
And I bought a lottery
Ticket so sure that this
History which always repeats
Itself would prove itself
To me. I waited in prayer for
They argued as long as I did
Not love money this was a sure
Case. Then I met an elder from
Our village and she asked me if
I was sane. When had I seen the
Sun rise twice from the sane east
On the same day?

I looked at her and she walked on
And shouted back that
For me to win that money
I have to journey to the
End of the world twice to
Learn that words are cleverer
Than people. People speak words
Do. And luck is a word that
Does not glow in the darkest
Of forests.

Sarah Mkhonza

Walking In My Own Kalahari

Words small, big rough, round,
I am the desert spreading far.
Today started when I saw the light
It will end as I lay in the dark,
With stars looking at me
And sand dunes like sheets hugging me.

Feet kicking the air in from of me
Missing it, yet riding on in plods
As if angry inside my tired shoes
With grits of sand inside my socks,
As I trudge in this Kalahari.
Of sand dunes sky high
Like those of the Namib yonder.

My little toe is shy
It suffers hiding at the side
Like the days I would not read
When the teacher pointed at me.

My boldness is new
Like the big toe it sticks out
And stands out there unafraid
Who is this so loud with a pen?
When yesterday I was silent.

Once I was like my middle toes
With no song but a mime
Doing everything I was told
Just around the age of one
Now everybody knows I can walk
Talk too, ladies of the Sahara

Sands and dunes have heard me
As they piled in waves silently
Filling a dry imaginary trough
As I walk in this my Kalahari
My feet sinking and not kicking
Because the drought has set in

To write my own Sahara
Singing its song of excess heat.

Sarah Mkhonza

Walking Into A Screen Of Raindrops

Making sure the dollar umbrella is open,
I walk into the world protecting my
head, ears and coiffure. The rest of me
throws my body in denims blue, that
change with each droplet.

Thoughts racing, I walk to my domicile.
sure that life is a wet affair today.
When the coffers were dry, I cried torrents, what will I cry in this
wet affair, where my denim shoes are
muddied up. Shut up and watch this in
my bed, I whisper to my wet denim wra
pped body. Next time, wear a raincoat and
for life is a storm. Watch what remains after it is gone. Disgruntled twigs
separated from their source, wishing they
could have put up a better fight. Don't
let it happen to you, this big rip you will get a shower you did not ask for.

To be showered walking on the road is not
for the feeble hearted. They are schooled in being prepared,ask their heart. For
me, I now hear raindrops from afar. I get under cover. I will not have a repeat.
While the screen is blue, I will be prepared.

boots

denims change color with each droplet..

Sarah Mkhonza

Walking On The Railway Tracks Of Life

We walk on the slippers one by one
All on a way day by day for like
Trains we run endlessly and only
Rest when the darkness creeps in
On this long journey that ends
When the train reaches the edge of
The water for the Pacific is far
From the Atlantic just as the India
Ocean is Far from the Atlantic
Even though they touch and pour
Water into and away from each
Other.

Still the railway tracks call for
You see one stanza marked by each
Slipper that is laid and walk not
Knowing what lies round the corner
For you are heading onward on a train
That never goes backwards the way it
Came.

I have tried to live life walking
backwards the way I felt when I first
Rode in someones car and saw all
Trees going backwards and thought
I had a story to tell my friends
Who just looked at naive me and wished
I would take my countryside ignorance
Away from their place. I walked
Backwards and tripped on a small
Clump of grass and felt lucky that
These clumps though everywhere
Only chose to make me fall where
There was no stone. For this I
Salute life for it chooses what to
Feed me for if I was fed clods of dirt
Everyone knows I would choke on
This walk which I have taken with
My eyes closed so I can see only

The lines on my hands for I have
Chosen selective thinking for I
Am afraid of the world and its
Scandalous happenings.

The journey continues for I did
Not choose when to start and cannot
Choose when it ends so like a hoe
Working on weeds in the hands of
A hard worker this farmer who knows
No time we plod along in the heat and
Rain unstoppable energy pushing so
I can keep at it whether I like it
Or not like a poet pouring words on
The ears of the deaf for she will stop
The day you say enough is enough for
We will hear no more for everything
is alright every crease has been ironed
On these rail tracks that go at gradients
Known only to the maker of railways flat
Even on hillsides dangerous. Plod along
For all we must on this train till it
Stops to get a refill on a stomach that
Will take no more for it will have been
Undone by time.

Sarah Mkhonza

Walking This Royal Maze Begins Here

Quite a task this dismantling of fairgrounds,
Hastily shifting from rotundas that chip away,
Every summer comes with its own rain and bowing,
For when you courtesy you are breaking the rule,
For the courts once spoken of as loving have hardened
Older moths that were reluctant have eaten all,
That did not offer the royal touch that is soft.

Emperors have walked here have said it all,
That love here is like the chattering you hear,
Of subjects, about subjects and subjects about rulers,
For it is true for you and them there is no rain,
But frozen grounds that reek of frozen hate,
Staled out by time in its rancidness.

When the show falls very silent in the fall,
Of the veil that covered you the cathedral train,
You remember the coming of summer you waited for,
For your story roused jealousy even in the grounds,
Where the animals with loveliest fur hide in wait.

Nearly twenty years you have been here,
Has it been that long really, you ask,
You ask for time seems to have stood still,
Stone faced as the gates of this place do,
That only say, 'as you should know,
Only in death do you walk out of here, '
For it is a jail you chose knowing,
That the bang closes it once and for all.

Even if you spit giggling white love,
Wrestling with time is a challenge like love,
Step by step you go on charter after charter,
That calls on you to put up a face,
Who
Of the delighted royal whose handshakes,
Quench the thirst of souls built to dream,
That one day they can also be near,
Enough for you to to touch them personally.

Were it not for their mood forever singing,
Even in standing looking for this being,
This saint that comes out and reaches out to them,
The subjects who returned from reading the headlines,
About you and your problems like theirs,
This faithfulness you have developed would shake,
While kings sit and look at their thrones,
Demanding that you go on and make no mistake,
For kinging it is not like living it,
Till death do us apart.

This contract is not written in stone,
But in unsung songs that are still to come
Where the commoner can only excell,
In the things of the world you once knew,
That were hidden to those who show off crown,
And wager the biggest some at the betting house.
For we live to eat together one day,
When all this facade is no more.

Sarah Mkhonza

War To Add To An O

When you need three letters
to an 'o, ' do not think of gone,
for everybody is here

Do not think of bone for is not
time to debone a poem.
Nor is it time to think
of tone, for your voice
needs no toning down.

Just think of zone for you
are entering the love zone
love for we do not need a rose
to prop our words for we are in
a love zone gone bony with our
little love poem that will touch
a new 'o'. Welcome to Joburg, where
guys are called 'o.' Hey O? Don't
ask the poem. Ask the pole for on it
hangs the flag, the only semblance of truth.

Where you can now thint of

Sarah Mkhonza

Watch The Lone Walker On The Lone Beach Walk.

Walking on this sand, kicking it, sinking
my bare fit into each footwork of sand,
my feet tire of this work.

In this walk on sand white and seawater
blue, I hear of sharks and whales. I see
my destination like I see this sea sand.

This walk started by a walkline new,
Will end with a sin hot on the head.
Gives solace to the lone walker alone.

The toes are blessed for they have siblings they take everywhere. Not this
lone walker whose companions are seals.

Seals have noses unlike the walker's
They lift them outside the surface at
will. Not the walker whose nose is burried in the sand

For to wall on a see onr'destination
far away brings hope as long as the
rope of time we hang on.

Time is a lynch man. Don't say to the
walker it is not. For time goes forward
When it takes the walker to its bosom where
two thin milk less beasts dangle and play a staccato long in a darkness long.

The

Sarah Mkhonza

Watch This Laden Cloud

This misty cloud full of rain
Cannot deliver it's point in pain
Unless you watch it, for in it stirs
a new born.

Nefarious clouds like sad news come suddenky. This laden cloud could bring
some. Seen way up it gets near. Like
a silence all its own it less droplets
fall on your nose.

One drop, two drops and then the outpouring that mixes rain with
salty tears. Today you are learning
that freedom is about sweat and tears.

Yesterday in your bushes you fought
your own guerilla war till sunset.
You, bazooka in hand, you danced and
fought for the future. Now you stand
in the memory of past storms.

This cloud, This reminder carries a story
of your wars, your muscle, your doing
and undoing. In it you dance cross legged,
the freest nightmare they still have to see. Watch it.

If the eye fails you, the heart will not.
Hard as it is, it is leading you to the
center. In this place lies the truth about
shackled hands that need you to free them.
Yours is a guerilla fight with no end.

Shackled hands cannot line up the soldier line. Shackled minds too. Workers are
needed. Free the free and shackle the storm, for the free stand in their delusion.
Take a stand. Watch this cloud.
It is already sundown.

Sarah Mkhonza

Watching The Aloes In The Light

We watched in the dark
Where silently we stood
Watching under dark skies
A car in the distance
Whose light kept coming
Getting closer to where we were

It's light danced as it amazed
It showed on the wall
Making the aloes dance
For they stood between us
Watching us
As if we were the ones in the space
Making the light dance
In the midnight sky.

We knew it was coming
We could feel it in us
The thing we did not know
And walked into uncertain
For courage is not seen
But lived in the things we do
That we do not call by that name
For lack of understanding.

We see it better now
Like the aloes we do
Surrounded by grandchildren
Who laugh and think life is real
Who in their joy they see themselves
And in it grow taller than trees
As the future comes to them daily

Hold my hand we say
Shake it harder and harder
I may not see you again
For the light gets closer
Like the car in the distance
That shines its light against the wall

Making the shadows of aloes real
For they also stand erect
When they stand on a mountain
And make the lowveld real
Like soldiers in hats
Who march quietly and watch
As the march continues in the light
Where the stars cannot be brighter
Having been defeated by the night.

The aloes remain standing
They are stronger on their feet
They wait for the seasons
They shed their leaves in turn
We are stronger for having stood
Shedding no leaves but scales
In a skin that is so brown
For we have lived to tell the story
That we stood near the aloes
And marched to the tune of time.

Sarah Mkhonza

Waves Of Rubble That Throw Things All Over.

I look through the hole in my eye,
And see waves of anger rising high,
They curve in and turn everything upside down,
Leaving young and old strewn all over in a pile of rubble and glass,
Dusty they rise and the wave comes back and knocks them down,
It throws them into boats that throw them in deeper oceans,
Where they become living proof that the hole in my eyes sees visions,
That hush the world into a silence that is as violent as the silent waves,
This irony of a violence that silences like the silence of poison.

What is this daily acceptance of a spinning world that will throw us off,
the rails as we think with the wails of those whose lives are hidden in fumes that
rise so high they darken our vision,
And get us lost in thickets of smoke on this way to our uncertain future,
Those who have met the death chamber are sleeping wondering
why theirs is a history that was written in blood,
Only to be read in blood again,
For no one wanted to give them a passport to a better world,
Where they would breathe the sigh of arriving,
Even though they do not have the treasured feather in their heads?
Joy is hidden somewhere in the future of the corner of my blind eye,
It sneaks into conversations of refugees running in the narrowest paths,
They speak laughter and anxiety to the friends on the path,
For them reality is in the bundle of clothes they carry,
For they are evidence they come from life,
And have agreed to take the plunge into the night,
Where every flashlight goes dim, when the hand stretches to it in a foreign
country,
They wish always to be mosquitoes for they know they have one freedom,
To fly everywhere with no boundaries, even in the days of ZIKA.
For their constitution came from a place where words have one meaning,
Which they heard and keep repeating as they fly,
Citizen of no nation.

to the future with our heads spinning,
Only to be gillotined at the alter of the graveyard.

Sarah Mkhonza

Waving Away Questions Full Of Good Byes

Have you ever lived in the shadow of a dream,
And watched it float away from you,
With the wave of the blessed right hand,
That curses in the same manner it gives?

Have you ever seen a car drive away,
Its rear end with lights all in place,
Only to see it one roll of metal,
All dismantled with loved one gone?

Have you ever wished you had been there,
When it all happened for you would have done,
One did that could stop the red light
From turning green in order to save,
The life of the loved one who filled your heart,
With this story that lingers in you?

Have you ever stood among a crowd,
And watched pall bearers at work,
A flagged coffin carrying one,
Whom you loved even to the end?

Have you ever wished for life to go on,
Only to find that it had stopped,
With the waving of a good bye,
That was done in a park far away,
When nobody knew the wave was the last,
For this good bye remained unspoken?

Have you ever walked out of your house,
Only to be told that she whose children you love,
Has gone to the place where dreams go,
Leaving those who remain still shaking,
For it was not just yesterday you thought,
As you watched the unfolding of this mystery?

Have you ever seen a loved one thin,
So full of life and laughter yet falling,
Saying I will not let this thing win,

For it is choking me once again,
Before my children grow to be left,
To rule the world all alone?

Have you ever heard a woman asking
Saying let us sing together,
For this song will lead me,
Past this misery I see,
For the end is near?

Sarah Mkhonza

Welcome To The Club

You came to Palo Alto thinking
It is the paradise of Silicon
Valley and now you know how
The rent stings and the money
Goes, we all say welcome to the club.

You now have to sleep in the bus
Like some of the people who sleep
In their cars which they call
Castles, we say welcome to mars.

You thought you would find
Millionaires at every corner
And rub shoulders with the rich?
What a good joke for they stay
In haciendas and walk out for a
Speedy jog. Only the likes of
Me see them for I hit the road
Any hour.

Welcome to the club of the Valley
Of Silicon where computer companies
Grow like fruit on a fruit farm.
Here we plant one company at noon
And reap another before the harvest
Of Uncle Sam's taxes scares it away.

You came to work as a writer here
In Silicon Valley? I am not short
Of words, but short of breath for
Here we keep our breath in an
In breath for the out breath
Signals that it is time to
Welcome all of you for now
You are wiser. welcome to the
Club which you joined not knowing
That the Bay can be as cold
And as turbulent when you
Are not wearing a thermal

suit. These Palo Alto blues
Are all we can welcome you
With. Join in and chant with
Us for we have become skilled
At survival and so will you.

Sarah Mkhonza

Welcome To The Round Beehive Hut Casino

If you thought there would be the roulette,
or the slot machines, the gamble is over.

Here we toss numbers in the air and grab
them as words. We win if we milk the air.

It pours out according to where the beast
called the what-you-call stands facing.

The tiger in you has to wiggle its tail,
look at other beasts in the face.

The jackpot is hidden under a grinding
stone. Ask the maize farmer.

The wife who hurt her fingers while grinding talked with her knees and arms.

She said it is because of love of family
that we try so hard.

The jackpot lies in the beehive hut,
simple tons of the world.

Why go to the palace of the Caesars
when Caesar died because of a conspiracy.

Why provoke poverty when it lies down
like a defeated bulldog.

You like to dress up and be led by neon
lights. You then come back miserable.

The Good Lord said it a long time ago that
Caesar had his head not yours on the coin.

In my gambling there is no bride price for we gamble with the naked truth.

You either have it or you don't for I cheat not. Empty handed you come and play.

The more truthful you, the more the tokens. Who said you cannot win.

Come into my casino and weigh your heart,
Only the lightness of the light counts.

Go dear gambler and lose your last penny.
Just make sure I told you this truth.

My impart at ions were yelled at me inside a hut where my grandmother told by
truth.

Listening to this one will have you walking on the ridges at the top.

All will wonder why the coup on
Caesar. The jackpot will not be shared.

Sarah Mkhonza

Welcome To Widow's Paradise/Swaziland Widows

No longer missing the spouse,
He has gone on ahead. Now you
can join me and we sing the song
that is sung in Widow's Paradise.

Loud we sing on, saying we have
arrived at a cross roads of us
women and not the men, for they
get to be widowers, as if they were
made to be that by us.

Inequality stands tall in words,
hence this composition of the song,
to be sung in widow's paradise,
the world of cynics holy.

Luck does not do it, for we could
have manufactured the next generation
of widowers out of men. This corpse
beat us to the race, and rushed itself
down before we could.

Come with a candle and light up the path.
We are going where they've gone. Greet
John, I will, for he left a baby I did
not know. Now I am to be a forgiver,
for how can I begrudge a corpse.

The story unfolds like one of another,
not one about the man you lived with.
Debts tie you down like a real widow,
who needs to come to widow's paradise.

We live on manna here, for the estate
is still being wound up. It got tangled
at every corner. It will get a couple
of dollars in your hand. Stand here
with me, and think of widow's paradise.

Laugh at the past, for you were colluding
against yourself and your offspring,
in getting pennies crawling out of the house,
when the babies were in nappies.

Now that you sit in the back pew,
wearing a black three piece with
the skimpy thing on the back, and
hear people in the front, and ask,
what did put me here.

John did. Yes, you also did, for you
walked back there and not up there.
Protesting, like she does not know the
rules. She cannot even wear that at work.

John did this to you. At work they treat
you like you have leprosy. Claiming the legs
of a widow are bad luck. Now you cover them
with hose, for you believe the death of John
made them unlucky.

Come to the dance of widows of Swaziland.
Here in Widows' Paradise. We sing and
dance and throw the black clothes away.
One day they will come for them. They
will buy you new ones. The maker of
the invisible law. It makes you like
a diseased person this law. Yet you
comply for you must.

One honor remains. You get the best sit,
when the coffin is lowered you put in the
flowers first. Your black veil covers
your face. Beautiful you on that day in
black. End of business sister mine.

Now to the High Court you go, to claim
the titbits before the family fights over
them. Ride the bus you must. Stares, hard
and quizzical. Now the drama begins.

Widows at the entrance. Lots of them come.
Claiming John owned this and that. Only to
find all the property gone. To whom, you ask?
Family, they say. A but of dishonesty,
that stings everybody. His sisters are also
there. Their claim being that you were immoral,
if they have not stolen and torn your what
certifies you married him.

Let us dance in Widow's Paradise.
Just once dance this last dance.
It heals like a real drug, makes
you high and gives you time, to go
on with the tangled up mess
you have entered in through those
double doors of the court.

When we get to the end and see John,
he will get to hear what happened from
the mouth of the horse. It knows the way
home as it goes into this court of
the biggest injustice death committed,
when it took John from us.

Sarah Mkhonza

Welded Together By Untruths

Brought together by fate, these twuo,
once a duo bundled they unravel
as the glue thins. The world happens to
them. They hide the truth of mishapen
acts. Now that the fire from within gets
hotter, we see how they put untruths in the fire and started to wax their story
away.

The truth now burns low as the ashes pile.
For theirs has become the story welded Together by hard untruths. Lessons are
everywhere. All we do is throw away the ashes. The story bends with welding,
but
not the ashes.

Who loves a story of ashes, that is ashen white? Who knows the story where the
amber glow and the flame lights up lovers eyes?
Me and you.

Sarah Mkhonza

What Are They Saying Upstairs

What are they saying about our costumes?
Are they saying my halloween wig is gross?
Are they saying I will scare the bogeyman,
And have him come charging into their bedroom
With us children cheering him with giggles?

Will they let us go tree atreeting outside
And bring candy in bucketfuls to the house,
And feed on it till the cat gets sick of it
And go upstairs and vomit in their bed
Leaving us so sick the doctor's bill,
Shoots sky high making them scream louder
Than the devil and his wife?

Ig this Halloween could bring us together,
Then let it forvI am tired of ourvden
So dull it needs the dance of ghosts
To wake up these spiders with cobwebs
That bring tarantulas to our door.

Will we go out and watch Moses ready
To cross the Red Sea chariots and all
While the Egyptian chariots break down
In the biggest Halloween float ever?

Sarah Mkhonza

What Happened To The World

This shrinking of the world
That makes me touch the hearts
I longed to bless and did not
How to reach even when I asked
Migratory birds to walk for me
In the march of the penguins
Has suddenly popped up on my
Doorstep. I breathe and people
Far away hear my helpless sighs.
Thank God the bad ones are not
On my doorstep to ask if I stole
A boyfriend on cyberspace for that
Would be pretty bad.

Stories go round of people unhappy
But I am still in awe for I feel
So close to those who come to see
Me in the small window where we play
Throw and catch in the space where
Every word we write can speak volumes
To those who listen. Our eyes are
Glued to screens and together like
Deer we graze and walk on the same
Prairie lands.

What has brought you and me
To look at each other eye ball
To eye ball and not wink even
Once? For now I know our destinies were
Meant to collide and cause the earth
To cry for our words know pain. How
Lucky we are to be able to break it
Before it breaks us up. For those
Who are jealous do exist on these
Prairie plains we have discovered

Let us graze and chew the cud
Lying down in our kraal where
The manure rich will bring out

Green and more for us to eat
For this journey never ends
In this cycle of grass we eat
As we lie down with our horns
In the air waiting to hear the
Next news we can write about. For
now we are the voice nerves of our
World. Those with a falsetto must
get into the chorus for my soprano
Long lost the smoothness of a voice
For when mine broke I developed
A false one just far from the
Baritone of Luciano Pavarotii

Sarah Mkhonza

What Has Happened To The World

What happened to the world go
this energy on the loose,
running wild on its own,
gives me nothing but awe for I see
this shrinking of the lands
that fit into a square bright
that makes me touch the hearts
I longed to bless and did not know
how to reach even when I asked
migratory birds to walk for me
in the march of the penguins? Here
they are for I can feel them for
suddenly they have popped up on my
doorstep. I breathe and people
far away hear my helpless sighs.
Thank God the bad ones are not
on my doorstep to ask if I stole
a boyfriend on cyberspace for that
would be pretty bad.

Stories go round of people unhappy
react to the screen and sweat in the
palm of their hands which are clicking
the keys that now walk the whole world
as they tell all with no stopping.
But I am still in awe for I feel
so close to those who come to see
me in the small window where we play
throw and catch in the space where
every word we write can speak volumes
to those who listen. Our eyes are
glued to screens and together like
deer we graze and walk on the same
prairie plains. What has brought you
and I to look at each other eye ball
to eye ball and not wink even once?
For now I know our destinies were
meant to collide and cause the earth
to cry for our words know pain. How

lucky we are to be able to break i and
speak before our world breaks us up. Let
us brush up the teeth of the deer so that
they can chew more and live more and lie
in these pastures knowing it is not about
words quiet hitting the keys, but sharing
truths that can help us live.

Before it breaks us up
For our relationship is enviable
To the home wreckers that have
Not what we have.

Sarah Mkhonza

What Terry Said To Jerry

Terry, I didn't know you are this bad.
Just yesterday you swore you would obey.

Jerry, you sound so biblical! It's as if
you're a page I tore out of the Torah.

Gosh, where do they make them these days?
These husbands that wear white shirts.

They are like you, you know. No creases
on the shirt and trousers, but the heart!
You can hide four concubines in it,
for the fifth one would yell to the foolish
maidens and say she does not want to go
all the way. Yah, she'd tell them about other
five.

Jerry said' 'I told you to count your words. See!

Sarah Mkhonza

What To Add To An O

When you need to add three letters
to an 'o, ' do not think of gone,
for everybody is here

Do not think of bone for is not
time to debone a poem.
Nor is it time to think
of tone, for your voice
needs no toning down.

Just think of zone for you
are entering the love zone
love for we do not need a rose
to prop our words for we are in
a love zone gone bony with our
little love poem that will touch
a new 'o'. Welcome to Joburg, where
guys are called 'o.' Hey O? Don't
ask the poem. Ask the pole for on it
hangs the flag, the only semblance of truth.

Where you can now thint of

Sarah Mkhonza

What Was It Like In The Belly Of The Whale

Have you ever been sent to a destination
And ended up in another and then had
To face the only question; What was it
Like in the belly of the whale?

No biblical story is as funny as landing
Inside a big whale that has swallowed
fish, frog and crab and minced them
Into a stew and you inhaling the after
Dinner smells inside the whale and asking
How you landed there.

There is a good picture of the unforgettable
That lands you there in your mind for all
Things happen in stages. You walk the walk
Of a lost prophet and end up with people
Who cast lots and ask where you come from.

You stammer excuses that say it is not you
But the wind that blew you in that direction
And everybody can tell you are a fibber who
Is skilled in the art of mendacity.

You sit among the group and look like a lost
Soul for you do not fit in no matter what they
Can give you to wear or eat for it turns in
Your stomach and you burp and they ask,
Hey guy, from whence did you come?

You finally beg to be let out into the
Raging storms for you know the parachute
Has not come and then get out there
Hoping the sea will not do you in and
Then the splash that can fill the lake
Near your village! You get out and
Right there is the sign. This direction
It says and you go there and find the
police car that has them catching you
And shackling you for they ask you how

You ended up in Liechtenstein when you
Had been sent to Africa.

You sit there and say let life take its
Course for I can only answer one question
Not many. What was it like in the belly
Of the whale, they ask and you give them
The only answer you know. Bad enough for
Me to want out. They laugh for they have
Seen the likes of you so sure of themselves
When they begin something and so unsure when
They end it. The only consolation is that
The inside of a jail is far better than
The inside of the belly of the whale for
Prisoners welcome you with curiosity
Wondering what crime you have committed
And when you tell them that the only
crime you committed was that you lost
Your sense of direction, they give you
A thumbs p and welcome you to the club.

Sarah Mkhonza

When Candles Burn Upside Down

Candles churning out cheese like wax
Filling candle holders upside down
Making a mess no knife can scrape
Yet the light at urn only filters
Through. Don't ask me why this is
For the answer lies in a phrase
Coined long ago. Nothing is impossible
Where possibility is the word for let
It happen.

All colors of candles crying with wax
Dripping while they are upside down.
Then one emerges and rares its head
Says enough is enough for change is
The name of what we have to do for
Nobody will do it for us.

Everybody looks at the reincarnation
Of Imbecility trying to rise up on
Stick legs and throwing a hearty laugh
Into the air says friend we are made of
Wax and follow the mold.

Frustration with the sons of Ignorance
The god whose hand is wrapped around
People's minds you continue to lie on
One side and squirm into the vertical
Position and when the wick looks out
Into air the flame gets bigger while
Your fellows stay with mouths gagged
By wax that leaves them burnt out of
Shape. You tell them to get out of this
For being misshapen is not the destiny of
A candle. It was born the destiny of wax.
They look at you and wonder how you got
To know this truth. You tell them that
You had to feel what burning upside down
Is before you could feel the compelling
Need to try something new for it takes

Going into prison once to know that
Things have to change. You watch the
Eyes get bigger and you see that the
Truth is finally sinking in and candles
Burning bright begin to line the horizon
With a beauty that surpasses the light
Of dawn.

Sarah Mkhonza

When I Am Tired Of Wishing

When I am tired of wishing,
I will hold your picture,
up in my mind.

I will remember when you were well,
and you called to me from afar,
And beckoned me to come to you.

I will wish you out of this bed,
walking like before you fell sick.

I will go back to places where we walked,
and remember you yelling on escalators
.

I will tell the world you were for me,
the person who could never die.

For your passing would leave me nowhere.
I fear it now and know I am tired of wishing.

You do not move your limbs for me,
yet you wink when I call you.

I know you hear me, now I say these words,
for you to know I am not tired of wishing.

Sarah Mkhonza

When Kind Guests Bring Trouble

When kind guests arrive and sit here,
They bring smiles in inaudible quotations,
And put them on your lap with heads bowed.
Oh what a good day it is just real practice,
Said over and over over the fence now its in,
On your turf and you have to smile back,
Good neighbor that you are to the end of time,
With every sinew stretched in smiles,
The wrinkles on your forehead frowning,
You listen and bow your head to musings,
That will one day ask you why you listened,
And did not say out right then that it was not that,
That you were about other things not this,
Counting of days and filling the hours with talk,
But going nowhere really with actions,
For we belong to clubs and meet at houses,
Host strangers in our heart of heart with talk,
Then fail to know where exactly we are bound,
In this superficial talk that we chew ourselves with,
For guns are speaking the hate and depression of others,
Who act on their misery by blasting into the future of others,
Like spies who have been searching and wondering when and how,
They would finally do the act of strangers,
Who are received by you as kind guests.

What does it mean to love your neighbor,
For you need to also love yourself and vow,
That you are here to listen and do things,
That change your three foot radius into you,
Who is the core of this existence that cries out,
Saying some of us have gone silent so you must speak,
And end this carnage that blasts into horizons far,
And send citizens of countries to ends not drawn,
In the plans that are laid on this table in front of you'll
Who simply seat and entertain neighbors like yesterday,
When time asks you how you will serve the stranger,
In this time where the next person may be a walking bomb,
That can explode and stretch the radius to horizons,
Where thoughts can never begin to touch the lines,

That mark with numbers you know these neutrinos,
That have brought all of us to this place,
Where we wonder and love and hate and cry aloud,
Saying enough of this killing of us too,
For we remain dead when one of us dies alone,
Tying us with a burden of sadness that hangs us,
On a noose that we did not put around our necks,
This lynching of nations all in a noose that circles,
The whole world under one tree in tangles,
That cannot be unwound easily with numbers,
For armies have stopped to be the tool,
With which we can win a war of the mind,
That thinks death must be the judge of me,
Who chooses to enter into this endless battle,
That started with strangers who came and smiled,
And then shook hands with a bomb unseen,
And hidden in the lines that are written,
In the inside of the hands that stretched out,
To receive unwritten truths that changed,
To the tellers of stories that lay there,
Coupled with the bodies that went down,
These unsung heroes we loved that yell,
Saying we should act and change the world,
For they did not die in vain.

If me and you sit here burdened with tasks,
Of spirits that haunt us and teach us to laugh,
And walk into the future like yesterday not bothered,
We have not done the duties of the busy bee,
That flies from flower to flower in service,
Feeding a queen bee that sits forever,
These soldiers of an endless cause,
That we were sent to work on endlessly,
Saying in our buzz that as long as we live,
Our wings will fly on the flowers and write,
With new pollen the trail that leads to the new,
Beehives where a new queen bee lays endlessly,
A honey so new so ours so old and full of smells,
One can say that we traveled far for it,
For it has to be sought in the new holes,
Where we will build new hives that are fatter,
Juicier, and more well combed,

Than the ones that we created yesterday,
When we ran our hands through uncombed hair,
Receiving each other and not seeing,
We are bees from different hives,
That linger under the same skies where we get lynched,
With this noose that we are removing from our necks,
For we came from horizons further than this,
With this answer that will prove,
That bees are not cleverer than us.

Sarah Mkhonza

When Lizo Said He Was Going Away

Each time Lizo said he was going away,
I wondered how far he was really going,
For I had not been even to the town nearest,
Our village.

When Lizo said he was going away,
He polished his shoes so shiny
And tied his shoe laces so tight,
that I wondered what happened in the big world,
That made him want his shoes so secure.

When Lizo said he was now returning,
He had a suitcase full of clothes,
I only had a dress and a petticoat,
That I wore to our Sunday service,
And took off when we returned.
What place was it where people wore,
Clothes that filled a whole suitcase?

When I went away I got to know,
The place far away from parents ours,
Where the children wore designer clothes,
Shoes with a brand names from far away,
That I had to tell them my family was rich,
Rather than say we were just orphans,
Raised in the orphanage called the village.

I saw lights that shone above me,
And saw girls who loved nail paint,
For such I had never wished for once,
For it was way above the life,
That Lizo had said happened far away.

If I had known how boys behave,
When their feet hit the city,
I would have known I did not have,
To polish my shoes and tie my laces,
But just buy a pair that did need any of those.

When Lizo asked what I had done,
When I took the first trip to the city,
I told him I had seen children in shoes,
That did not need these things we have,
Pointing at the laces on our shoes.

When Lizo heard me speak disdain,
Of the laced shoes that had been faithful,
To our feet all these years,
Causing us corns on little toes,
That made people think we were rich,
For our feet certainly looked,
Better than the feet of the villagers,
Who worked unshod and swept the yard,
With deep cuts in their heels,
You could secure a penny in,
And steal it without anyone seeing,
He walked away angrily.

Sarah Mkhonza

When Love Sinks It Sinks Real Deep

When love sinks it sinks so deep
This quick sand takes your down
You end up battling for breath
With just your neck above the ground.

When love rises it rises high
You walk on airs and trees look
For shorter than you and love itself
For it is the power that envelopes
Its prey and takes it where it wants.

Don't get stolen by love but steal
Love and get it to do what you want.
Remember that it is a powerful tool
That has its own power gang that wears
Red and white on Valentines Day.

For love to have its own day like you
Have a birthday is a sure sign you
Are dealing with one hell of a clever
Mystery that is always waiting to be
Solved by you and a few others. Stay
Cool on this road to love for it has
Many stops some of which have no signs.

Look outside yourself and stay inside
As well for neither of the two sides
Are to be neglected for the inside is
The part you will open for the stranger
At the next stop sign.

Remember to keep your head high
For the neck starts to bend when
It is overladen and the shoulders
Begin to show when the sinking
Begins. Remember love is a feeling
Not a thing that can sit on the
Shoulders like a parrot does on
Your hand.

Remember it does have wings to fly
And let lose the parrot for they say
To hold on is not to love genuinely
If I may speak for the experts.

Sarah Mkhonza

When My Stilettos Wouldn't Do

I had prayed to rule the earth
In my stilettos walking arm in
Arm with the one I love
Only to find it was sneakers
That could get me there.

The voice of reason murmured that
I should jump up and get on the pews
And stride down and jump onto
The alter and kneel on the priest's cassock.

The strides I took shook the foundation of the church

For I landed near the offering plate
And scattered its contents as heaven
Opened and granted me what I wanted
most.

Why this feat you may ask?
I had to defy the rules of
Heaven and earth to get the
Dollar bill with the one eye
That was the only one out there
Before the bride got to it and
Used it to buy a ring of gold and
Shout 'I do' with a hoarse voice
Like that of one who was drinking
In the early hours of the previous
night.

Ask me if it was worth it,
Look who wears the golden ring
In this battle of words to the heart
Now I do not dream of speaking
From on top of the double decker bus
When I wake up and see it turn the
Corner without me.

When Nobody Wants You To Stand

The eyes look at you as a piece of something,
To be removed, stabbed and taken to nowhere,
Yet you journey in the all that is for all,
You step on everybody's earth and look at
Everybody's blue sky and see all of you and
Others breathing hot air before a storm,
You know the cold air lingers out there,
Looking, peeping, wanting to know when
Its turn to blow into someone's eyes will come,
It jets in a plane from afar and the eyes wonder,
Will she survive this one which comes from the
Leeward side of life where no winds blow,
Or go to the windward side where all air sings,
Where the grass sways and opens your eyes,
To a future out there at the ends of the
Tips of your outstretched fingers.
Some know you will get there no matter what,
For you came from where people did not want
You to live the life you see in this air.

You were trained to make happen what does not
Want to be and walk on this table on which you stand,
For it has four corners that jab into your side,
Making you utter words with feeling as you touch,
The side which hurts now, knowing it will hurt,
No more for pain is a part of the universe that,
Imposes itself whenever and however to whomever,
Even on those who do not want you to live here
For they have failed to see themselves in you,
Your pain being their pain as we share the sorrow,
which is our sorrow, like that of the victims
Of today's hunger and poverty which rocked the country,
Killing hundreds who are being buried today,
In a state funeral to be watched by all on this table,
Where others do not want others to live,
For they fear the success of those they oppose,
Yet this life is never in opposition to itself,
As we walk and talk and shake its hands daily,
Looking into eyes sad and merry, red and blue,

Like varicose veins on the leg of one who,
Stands forever working for all of us,
Ready to burst and say no more standing, please.

You stand for it is in you to not move,
To not shake when the earth quakes and faults,
Living you sinking in a quicksand of hope
That shines in horizons far away,
Still saying you shall stand for standing,
Is standing for all who do not have feet,
That have five toes that balance a foot,
With the bones broken, stepped on in this
horse race where we yawn and watch looking
To see which horse will win, so we can get
The windfall that is promised when we cast
the vote that they so desire and tell lies
To get in the name of a better life for all,
Minorities, refugees, immigrants whom nobody
Loves when they take food from the table,
Being better of as Lazarus who sits under
The table and looked on at the smoke,
And glared at the future that is long and
Unchanging even after a vote of the many,
Who declare life is for all who stand,
On this table which shakes with the
Stampede of the powerful who head for,
The offices of power to say, we were there,
In centuries making a history that did
Not change any life but ours who got in.
We stood even when nobody got anything,
For that is what you were told,
To stand when nobody wants you to stand
For life is only for those who do.

Sarah Mkhonza

When The Bet Is Placed By You

Can we win when the bet is placed
By you with me just following behind?
You said luck sat on a woman's palm
And she licked her up just yesterday.

Now you won't let me place the bet so
I tell you we will lose and you
Stubborn once again will say one
word, 'Well..'

You bought the winning ticket I hope
I talk for to have a mouth is to be
Burdened with the ability to say you
Were there even when the actions show
Yours was not the action that did things
In this union of two.

I hold your hand each day so that I can
Sturdy myself for the wind blows between
Us asking one question how closely glued
We are when one word can send you betting
Without my input.

You walk near me and the world knows
My bet is your bet but you never let
The bet be my bet and then you follow
As this happens with me.

Love the horses love the racing but
Love me too just by letting me do
It once and show what a winner we
Are for the world does not know
That I brought two souls to the world
And once, only once we won the bet.

I know a thing a two like where the
Dust is behind the bookshelf and you
Just know when you bet on our behalf
Even though the end is the same.

You will say I have a mouth for always
All I do is talk talk when you never
Let me bet, for that is what I want
To do repetitively like you have and
Make the talk, talk be a bet, bet.

Who misses out when luck came when I
spat on my hand and rubbed in the thought
That I itch to come home with the winnings
Written on my face for our kids would see
When I open the door it is a different
Day for ours will have been the winning
Family of four?

Sarah Mkhonza

When The Gods Gaze Into Your Eyes

When one god gazes into your eyes
Will she see something good or bad
Will she see the nose you have never
Seen and ask why you did not sneeze
And have you answering you did only
To be asked, but where is the evidence.

You will take out your handkerchief
And spread it out and she will call
Another god to help her see what is
In front of her. Look he says he sneezed
All the snuff of heaven that was in
His head and this is what he has to
Show for it.

Where are the golden nuggets that
Were in your brain? We looked into
Your eyes and they were as empty as
A house after an eviction. What did
You do with your master's gold.

I knew that you look for gold where
You did not put it and like an ostrich
I buried my head in the sand. Go look
There for there is evidence in the sand.
The particles in the sand will produce
A dusty golden glow that will force you
To pick them up and put them in the
Hands of the gods.

The gods will holding you by the neck and
Tell you that it would have been better
To be a thief for you would have stem
Away with something than to be one who
Shirks his duties and messes with the
Gold in their head.

Then you will walk away and go
And worship them with doing as

You were told and when you sneeze
The golden nuggets will pen a poem
That will be read in the land of
The gods for so good will it be
That the world will know you as
One hell of a poet for you write
Them with a pen that has a golden
Tip.

Sarah Mkhonza

When The Golden Arrow Lands On My Forehead

I who lives in this rich valley of gold,
Where you scoop out money with the hands,
Watch the valley go to sleep daily,
Hoping that the arrow out there,
In the hands of the hunter whose bow,
Is bend into two ready to shoot out,
Would land on my forehead.

I wish my forehead was narrow,
So the arrow would shake the head,
And get stuck in there forever,
For this would make me stand out,
So that all the goodness of the bay,
Would go into me like poison,
And spread with the power of venom
Giving me the power and drive,
That makes me tremble with wealth
Like those who flower this valley.

The likes of them live big,
While the poor of them live small,
Jogging on pathways where I do,
Breathing this air we share,
But none of their luck and genius,
Rubbing into me like ointment,
That can be smelt afar in my hair.

I wish the arrow of wealth,
Unending like the jar of oil,
Biblical incantation it is,
That was poured on the feet,
And wiped with hair like mine,
Would linger in its actions,
Foretelling a lasting blessing.

They say I am a dreamer,
Daughter of the spirit gone,
That came from the caves long ago,
To keep looking at the earth,

With nothing in my hand,
But praying for the cavernous deeds,
That can change me into the princess,
Not forgotten by the kings.

You will know when I step out,
For I will have the mark of wonder,
This bindi dot on my forehead,
This Hindu attestation to greatness
For I will have joined the ones,
We call the noble of the earth,
Never to back up and open the gates,
For I will have become the gate keeper,
A job I envied throughout life.

Why this violent act mysterious,
You ask for you do not know,
How filling wheel barrows of sand,
Leaves the hands calloused and hard,
With the owner unable to work,
Or rub the two hands together,
Without feeling hardness her heart.

If you thought I would open gates,
You should have seen all politicians,
Praying to be elected and going,
Into the shiny offices and opening,
The gates of hell that haunt us daily,
With us wishing they would close the gates,
If not hire us as gatekeepers,
For we can keep misery off the face
Of this earth that is in ever flowing tears,
That can fill the Nile a thousand times.

Sarah Mkhonza

When The Math Fails To Add Up Just Multiply

I tried to divide and the math did not work out,
For they told me God said we must multiply.

And then do what, this tall order I asked.
And fill the earth, they replied.

Still impossible to do it alone,
For I need a plan to get me there.

Then I tried to subtract thinking I could, then they stopped me,
God instructed us to add for subtracting takes away.

Then I decided to leave the math for I was no whizz kid,
Just knew words for I was born and raised on them by mama.

Then the teacher said I was not clever if I could not count,
Then I tried and found that I got one plus one made four.

Then they asked me how this could happen in the math world,
I told them that I had never walked on that world.

All I had done was multiply and add and end up with four.
For I loved a number that sits as if it is cross legged.

Like me when I am trying to be smart when I am with him,
I mean this boy that is talking to me of love lately.

They do not know he is not very smart like me,
But knows how to do the high, low and side jump.

He has been to the olympics of the math world,
And failed to get even a medal for being last.

Yet in the world of sports he got four,
For he can do the thing called athletics.

For he counts the holes on the jump pole backwards,
And cheats counting four when it is two jumps.

His is not the athletics of the math world,
where his pen and mine dry up with ink on the nib.

How then will I know I need a reverse mortgage,
When the time comes to pay for the present one.

I cannot add or balance the check book that heaven gave me,
With these words that drop pennies into my purse.

I decided to ask the boy for he jumps and counts backwards,
Always reversing and surely ready for the reverse mortgage.

I think one thing I can ask of you reader,
Let us hire my friend for you too if you cannot count.

For only with him counting our tuppence on earth,
So we can laugh math, sing math all the way into the ark.

For Noah could only count up to the number two.
That is why God told him to build the ark.

Me and you, we will survive in this world,
While those who can count waste time spending timeless hours Counting beyond
the number two, like this third line here.

Sarah Mkhonza

When The Moon Looks Down On You

You must be visible from up there
because you have a bank account
down here. The moon only shines
on those who have separated themselves
from the coin jinglers. They that
swear by their power to stay
penny foolish are not admissible.

You may look like the fake next
door, but just because they make
a collection at the church does
not mean you will be spared.

They say poverty's knuckles are
worn out for knocking on people'
doors. They are always open and
the key dangles on the door. Big
enough to be seen on the moon.

Yet they still walking to share a
life with cousin church mouse even
though he squeals louder than their
empty stomachs. Lock the church and
throw the key away. They run in threw
the peep holes to their destiny. Their
faces are not visible from the moon.

This clan shines from the moon with
faces with a destiny. Their spatter
is derived from the rivers up there.
Riches is not the jingling of foolish
angry coins, but the smooth stashing
of soft, newly released notes, hot from
the press.

Which clan do you choose? Wake up from this slumber and join your lot. Silent
warmth of riches awaits your
wisdom. There's a coin waiting for you
to show up on the moon. You promised the

faceless coin.

Th

They

Sarah Mkhonza

When The Route Goes Further Than The North Pole

What you have been chasing
While precious is more dangerous
Than the poisonous mushroom
Outside. It is as soft and as
Tasty for it is equally rare.

If it is the white lights that
Lead you on, ask them how far
You have to go for if it is further
Than the north pole they have
Been there.

They will tell you that to be
Seduced by the sun is futile
For it shines in all colors
Gold and bronze and tells you
Its soul and yours will be one
All a hoax for chasing this love
Is as good as chasing the white
Lights that look at you as they
Speak.

The victory you seek is hidden
Beyond the poles for its fame
Has made it so dear it lacks a
Name. Love is a name we use for
The force it is, is more precious
Than gold. The danger lied in
Being lured to the ends of the
World where hunger and cold devour
Their prey by preserving it in
The icy cold forest and no directions
Exist on where and how to guide one
On the love sick path.

Sarah Mkhonza

When The Royal House Sneezes

With a mom born a princess
I always listen to a sneeze
That wakes us up at seven
My village says there goes.

She sneezes long and loud
She has scooped the earth
All night in the river with
Her hands and there goes the
Night of yesterday.

The village runner wakes me up.
He says she has sneezed her last.
I look at the door it is dawn
Today no sneeze and never will
Be one at seven for she is gone.

She who sneezes loud is gone
Yet people still come to mourn
For like the clock she woke them
Up and they believed in life
That when you sneeze, you are alive
Like a person sneezing in the mortuary
You are alive for one day you will
Not sneeze anymore. Value the sneeze
For it is a big uttering of what is you.
It tells the world breath and
Stuff is too much with you,
It wants to get out and do
With a pen or a kerchief
This throwing and wiping
We do with the poem.

This is my sneeze for I
Learned from this woman
To sneeze loud and wake
The universe up to take
Arms of the spirit and fight
For the likes of rulers

Who tear us apart, who
Say this that and the other
When they are sneezing poison
Into the air full of pollution
That the dreamers who make money
Have made out of this earth.

To sneeze or not to sneeze
Has become the motto of life.
For when you do you let out
What should be out there
And hope an idea will heal
When it is spilled into the
Air and tell others to watch
Out for poison came out of
The ones with no seven o'clock
Wake up call, but lies and facts
That are brewed in minutes and
Sent out for everybody's mind
To sleep some more.

Rise and sleep no more says the
Woman whose sneezed loudest after
Working in the rubble in Aleppo.
People are dying rise and sleep
No more for the princes royal
Now lie in the rubble. How then
Is the world going to rescue those
Whose buildings pile on top of them
When they leave on the Mayflower to
Nowhere for the time says go away
As does the rumbling earth around them.

There is nothing royal about death
As there is nothing royal about life
It is a use of words we sneeze when we
Want to protect the wealth and give it
To a few who are born with keys to the vaults
Of gold hidden under the earth they
Walk on. These sneezes cannot reach
Them, but when a small sneeze is heard
In Aleppo hope creeps into our arms

And we rescue an Omrum. Rise and sleep
No more, says the sneeze not royal.

Sarah Mkhonza

When The World Cries Foul

When the ants cry foul
We will have blisters
Large sores from the curse
For they will be asking
Telling us to stop at once
For we've been stepping
On them for too long.

When the rocks cry foul
They will explode
Into the air like bayonets
Saying we've overheated earth
And they cannot take it anymore.

When the air cries foul
We will choke from smog
And wear masks everywhere
For it will be telling us
We've been pouring dirt
Into it for too long.

When the frogs cry foul
They will utter the bull frog croak
Asking how they will jump
For we've been feasting
On frog's legs on our buffets.

When the inner city cries foul
There will be a burgeoning wave
Of ignorance and poverty
That asks how long this nightmare
Called life can go on
While the suburbs these inner chambers of kings and queens
Romance the money on beds of gold.

When the youth cries foul
They will be asking nations
What they have done to leave
The world a place where future cohorts
Do not live and cry for jobs
Looking at the sky till their
Eyes go blind from hopelessness.

When Americans cry foul
They will pour out into
The streets asking how
Gun totting cops and
Insolent adults can wield
The power of the gavel.

When the oceans cry foul
They will be protesting
The melting of glaciers
That fill them up
And drown the islands
Leaving whole nations landless.

Sarah Mkhonza

When Two Zippers Went Down

When two zippers went down,
They did hope to go up,
For who made the rules we follow,
Of pulling things up to close,
When we pulled them down to open them?
Who said zippers should stay in place,
Only the nuns at our school know,
That we were meant to know the rules,
And keep our insides shut in right there,
Only to peep out in private places,
Where only one stands alone,
This secrecy that is heaven bound,
I have not head written about in heaven,
Where we all say we are going.

When two zippers are pulled down,
Only new things happen to lovers,
Who have been waiting for these moments,
Not heeding the rules of nuns,
For they know they wear no zippers,
And so have none to pull down.

The zippers went with a sound,
Like metals that ate into each other,
The opening and closing that went on,
Was like a grinding metal to metal,
For you know a zipper when you see it,
Pinching your hand for it is too close,
Saying don't touch or you will be hurt,
For a bite worse than a snake.

Then the devil walked in on them,
Up they went the zippers that went down,
Falling on the legs of pants pulled on,
The two work up a frenzied zipping,
Not concerned about the pinching,
Of stealing moments that are gone,
Only to be discovered in acts with rules,
That were made long ago.

Rewrite the rules and make new zippers,
That close sideways and backwards,
For you will not follow a single rule,
And learn to make everything new,
Only don't burn if you do not know,
The rules of the game that we play.

This game that is played only in two,
Always ends only with one,
Standing at cross roads wishing and wanting,
Wishing the pulling and pushing that happens,
Had not landed them in the knowing,
That they hold against all people,
Who said there was love in this pulling down,
That had to be found in this known way.

Sarah Mkhonza

When Will It Rain Poetry

I am waiting here looking at the sky
It is raining cats and dogs. I
Ask the sky when will it rain poetry
For then love would pour out
And wet the pavements and on every
Segment of cement a poem would stand
Up and tell the cats and dogs to stop
Hating each other for it is a time to
Love.

Imagine words falling from the sky and
You picking them up and telling the world
It is the season to smell citrus fresh.

No poem does that like one you write on a long
Citrus peel that you cut into one long
Spiral and then write the poem word by word
Knowing even if there is no crown on your
Head you have nailed the poetry slam for people
Will not need their eyes to read the poem, but
To read your lips. For your lips have been where
The poem has been just as a knife has been on the
Peel of a citrus fruit. Even if cats and dogs can
Deny they rained from the sky for who knows what
Happens in the world of felines but the poet that
You are.

Sarah Mkhonza

When Women Are Priests That Serve Mass

The ruling is out once again,
No woman serving mass here,
But heaven seems not to say,
Only men serving mass here.
Whose is the right to say,
One gender is better than another,
Can we sit and be served mass,
In a world where men are man
And women are we-men.

I like the seeing of this world,
For anything different separates,
And makes one thing to be called,
By a name that is fitting,
Only to be told it is not 'it'

These women who are not to serve,
Are told to be served only,
Who said being served and serving,
Were two different things,
For the server and the served.

The acts of giving out bread,
And sharing the cup of wine,
Are done in the biblical sense,
And yes in an earthly sense,
For in heaven they neither marry,
For gender is a thing of this world.

When priest and popes pop into heaven,
There will be a loud pop sound,
Like that of pop corn burning,
For they refused to serve the corn,
To a whole tribe of people,
When everyone knows that corn,
Is of Mexican heritage.

How can women be denied a task,
By the very corn they popped,

Into this world amidst tears,
Of birthing, planting and weeding
Then harvesting the last crop of the year
After the longest of droughts,
With dads sipping a beer at the bar.

These priestesses no princesses,
Have borne a halo of grace yearly,
Waiting their hands outstretched,
For the serving gowns so male,
They fail to go around their heaps.

Can the God of grace grin just once,
For he has failed to grant the grace,
Of his presence in the minds of man,
In their meetings where nothing but truth,
Ends up shoveled in spoonfuls,
Into the stomachs of a few men,
Who run the richest state in the world.

Sarah Mkhonza

When You Have Forgotten Your Dancing Shoes

When you have forgotten your dancing shoes
Just dance anyway for it is not the shoes
But the body that needs to know the moves.
It wants to learn to balance on one leg
And swing the heap up and stretch the
Other in the way of some ballerina for
It once tap danced and the staccato
It made annoyed everyone for they could
Hear the beats on the floor and knew a
Mediocre is a mediocre no matter how
They fast they tap. Wear no shoes and
Nobody hears Your moves but your muscles
Swing and turn the same way yesterday's
Class deemed you do. The dance teacher
Will know from your weight if excuses of
Dancing shoes are genuine for you will
Be weighed on the scale and you will
Not make the mark. They say they dance
Better who dance always for the dance
Moves get etched on their bodies
You will learn that it is the number
Of attempts that perfect the game
And not the garb.

Sarah Mkhonza

When You Put Heavy Weights On Your Arms

I have been asked to speak on a subject rare
By the poem sitting inside you. It says you
Stop it from coming out for you bar it in with
Heavy weights on your arms that are tied on for
The scale lied and said put on the irons invisible
That tell you, you cannot write. The poem is angry
For you stifle it with doubt from the weights that
Stop you from picking up a weightless pen and scrawl
It into life. It says the day you die it will be the
Last day for it to hope you can free it. It will go
Down in history having told you all it wanted was not
For you to dance a weird dance but just to try for it
Is there on the open page as clean as a baby's new tooth
And as novel and exiting that you fall from the top of
The ladder into the lowest rungs leaving a stanza at every
Rung. No poet has not fallen at every rung and with wounded
Ego risen and dusted off the hands and felt the bump on
The head and said that's the way it goes at rung number one.
Your poem seeks to be in the anthology of witness poetry
For that is where it can tell the world the rare story of
How the irons that weighed your arms down and lied that
Poets are born were removed. The irons that weigh you down
Get less heavy when you listen to their plea for they want
To go back to the museum of the invisibility they came from
Called the land of the null and void. They say in this land
Is found a list of those who never tried for they hated to
Learn from their errors and stood with an eraser rubbing out
Of their mind every word that threatened to become a
King of the land invited poets to submit a poem that praises
Him for his bravery. When the poets thought of a line it would innediately show
on the king's screen. He sat and watched one poem he liked penned down by a
poet who had heavy irons on his arms and the biggest eraser. He wrote great
lines and erased them and annoyed the king hired a scribe to write every line
this poet wrote. When the contest was over the poet submitted nothing for he
had erased all his work. All poems were collected and none qualified but lines
written by the scribe from a man who erased the best lines of the praise poem of
the king. The poet was made the king's praise poet and told never to erase his
words before they were seen by the king's scribe
Poetry accused the man of murder for he had killed a lot of them and told him

never to stifle his thoughts for they
Like medicine could heal a nation.

Sarah Mkhonza

When You Said I Do

The tune I hear is loud as the fear,
That sips through my bones in the rear,
That yesterday was just a tear

When
you said I do.

Sarah Mkhonza

When You've Made The Mistake All Dread

When you have said 'oui' where
'non, ' should have been the word,
the bravery of apology is not
suffering through, but in facing
outcomes and taking the proceeds
to the place where sits the judge
of times, deal with you.

Next timers are full timers for
their way points forward to the
next deed. Yesterday cries the tears
of its world. Grieve the grief of
of the present and make it short.

Learn a lesson in a saying.
They say life heals those who
heal s fall
on those who pout their lips.

in the

wallpapee

Sarah Mkhonza

Where There's been A Fire

Coals once red and fiery, map
the fire which burned like fireworks
from a devilish land. They lie dead cold
to fool you.

Don't put your foot in without shoes
emboldened with a the mom eternal that
can read a century of degrees.

Hot are the remains and bitter is
their ash. Look back with a wink
that says' I know how plastic burns
when rolled into a cigar. It drips
onto flesh. It sticks and wiping it
off is a job even a fool would't take.

Don't remember the size of the flame
and height of the pils of smoke.
Walk away with eyes that can smolder
a smile and burn your image in for
you know what it's like to be so hot
you could melt the inside of a freezer.

Sarah Mkhonza

Where There's Been A Fire

Coals once red and fiery, map
the fire which burned like fireworks
from a devilish land. They lie dead cold
to fool you.

Don't put your foot in without shoes
emboldened with a the mom eternal that
can read a century of degrees.

Hot are the remains and bitter is
their ash. Look back with a wink
that says' I know how plastic burns
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a smile and burn your image in for
you know what it's like to be so hot
you could melt the inside of a freezer.

Sarah Mkhonza

Who Gets More Cards Than The Queen

I do want you to ask a question
That is not to be asked by me and you.
For we know the answer,
To who gets more cards than the queen.

If it is not us, then who?
The Pope or the King of Greece,
I still wonder if there is one,
For people are sold on power.

Guess what, this is no competition,
But a puzzle that needs to be sold,
Even though we will not get a penny,
For this precious knowledge we will gather,
For we being the blessed of the earth,
Always wondering about royalty,
When we should be royalty ourselves.

Our dreams have grown with the years,
To the point where they reach the roofs,
Of the very doors of palaces in our minds,
For if I am not queen of my palace,
What shall become of it?

Start sending cards to me,
And fill my space with these pieces of paper,
So I can be the answer to a question,
You have been asking about me for years,
For you fear asking it about you.

If you were king what would you get,
Cards, gifts, chocolate or just plain nothing.
Would you dye your hair, pierce your ears,
Or ride horses without a saddle,
Just to prove you are the one,
Who gets more cards than the Queen?

I will ask questions to you for you are not,
Doing the job of answering them even when I do

Force your brain to stop looking into the coffee cup,
And go out there and answer questions in the air,
For that is why it is blowing,
So you can breathe it and enjoy it,
As you ponder questions unanswerable.

The poor answered this question,
For they got the left overs from there,
Where people pour unwanted gifts,
Me and you were sitting on a bench,
Near the pavement of life,
Sniffing the air with disdain,
For we felt even less important,
For we did not get one card.

Sarah Mkhonza

Who Sits On The Mercy Seat Right Now

They said if you were condemned to Die, run to the mercy seat, yet now
The seat is occupied by those
Whose accusations are hunger and poverty. They were condemned by
The state of affairs unbiblical to
Burn at the furnace of powerlessness.
I. have seen their all in trollies
We use in the supermarkets far from
Where we buy food and clothing.

Sarah Mkhonza

Whose And Where Are They From

I should have asked you your name
I should have talked to you of the past
For then you were mean, now you are smiling
Looking for food at the edge of my yard
I should have known you would come
For you knew not how to live
For the insults said it all
That in you was just a shell.

I should have known you would pack
Your children and throw them on my door
Leave them there for me to nurse
When I do not know where you got them
Or even with whom you nestled them.
For your breasts still stood firm
Like thorns of the acacia tree.

I should have known you would starve
For you worked and never saved
Spending all the time laughing
Around the yard at your home
As if to grow and be old there
When you would shrivel to nothing
And walk towards the sunset empty handed.

I should have known you would not love
For hatred was always in your words
What you wanted you insulted
For you were jealous of all
Who tried to do something with themselves.

I should have known you would call me a tourist
When you have packed away my boxes
And jumped up to a chair not yours
Pretending to be me without wings
For you flew everywhere like a bird
On borrowed wings a wild sahara.

I should have known you would hunt

Anything with my name rename
Create yourself as me in wings glued
To your back like a false doll the cob
Wearing arms as sticks that stick out
The girl in you playing the game.

Now you wonder feisty as powerful
Telling everyone you are a hard worker
When your children lie untended
In a veld with backs uncovered
Your mother being gone for good
You go there to get money
As if from a bank teller
When you ran away from spending
Even a cent when they were young.

Your children need their father
You shut them up like thugs
When they ask a genuine question
Whose and where are we from
You look at the with fear
Which you turn into fire
To frighten them forever
Yet their questions will remain
Whose and where are they from.

Sarah Mkhonza

Why I Was Never Brain Dead At That Hour

This I thought was a misdiagnosis
I should be sharing a brain alive
story. The world never spoke of one.
Yet it singled out my brain.

Why not tell the story of
exclusion that leaves out
the state I'm in now so
the world can know, I was
once brain alive. Lest you
forget, I was once brain alive
and forge into the future of
diagnoses. I, in my sound mind,

AWh

I choose to speak for all. To tell
the

Why

Sarah Mkhonza

Why Pain Never Sings The Aria

Pain never sings the aria
Yet it goes up and down
Voiceless as always in
One silent drone yet still
Doing its work in making
Us feel and know we are
The humans on whose necks
It hangs like a noose for
When it is tied and the
Stool on which we stand is
Pushed down we go never to return
To feel once again this long wait
On the guillotine that life becomes
When this endless silence that
Bites deep has come to stay in
A house it never built.

For when in pain we wish
Our dog could pain for us
For it is wiser with handling
A feeling. One whine and it
Is back doing what we said
Should not be done.

Not to say I can overburden
A dog, but I see how it connects
So easily when in pain for I
Feel it too and then relent from
What I am doing for I know it
Too like pain does not sing the
Aria but barks with the same
Voice that only changes in a
Growl and also in a whine.

If pain could sing an aria,
I would tell it to go down
When I want it out and tell
It to go up and fly through

The window when it is on
My tooth for my wisdom is
Written on my wisdom tooth
Which knows how to kill me
When it feels like for someone
Told it it is wiser. My dog
is cleverer for it has never
Suffered from tooth ache.
It just knew to be laid down
With the same set, hence I
Have never heard of a canine
Dentist for I would run for my
Life if such a one existed for
Fear of what might happen in
Case he pulls my tooth.

Change into anything and I would
Be the friend of man for I see a
World where food is just bought
From the store in packets and poured
Out with water at the side. No stew
But if this is what a feast for princes
Is I will buy myself a chef like the
One my dog has. For I saw a prince
And princess and kids fed by a chef
Similar in size and clothes like me.
So too was he middle class just as
is My dogs chef. So never ask the
Questions for pain is cleverer than
you for it never sings an aria,
But just goes on and on, the same
Stanza, same tone, same piano, same
Everything till sleep decides me and
My dog must rest for we are sick of
Being sick.

Sarah Mkhonza

Why Roosters Sing Hallelujahs

I turned on my side at an early hour,
And found that my breath was sour,
Wishing for the early morning meal,
Feeling empty and worried sick,
By this crowing of the rooster.

He had a tail that spread out
Backwards in all morning colors.
His cook-a-doodle-doo was loud,
My listening to him brings back,
The memories of early morning sounds,
Made by my empty stomach.

This act of waking sleeping dudes up,
Does not sit well in the 'veins of my blood, '
And make me want to wake up from my sleep,
But makes me think of things to do.
Like the doo in cook-a-doodle-doo
All because I have to work before I eat,
And the rooster does not do that,
He just walks around and shouts loud,
Singing his hallelujahs into the air,
Then pecks his beak on the ground,
And gets full from that.

Next time you see a rooster up a tree,
Know that it may seem easy to look up,
And call him down with a loud vote,
And then crash under the tree,
For his crowing will ring the bell,
And get you out the door, never to return.

Birds like him are too loud,
When it is time to work,
For they watch the clock,
And call the shots,
For me and you.

The gizzard of a rooster,

Tells the story best,
For he eats and grinds,
With little stones and sand,
For they are always free,
And waiting to be pecked on.

Roosters shout hallelujahs loud,
Like preachers on a pulpit,
Always seeing the heavens up there.
While me and you walk on tip toe,
And char our fingers and toes,
Like the rest of the brood he leads,
That scrape the earth for a living,
Following him as he dances,
Wanting another cuddle,
For that is what hens are for.

Roosters won the battle far away,
In the lofty heavens up there,
For they were hired for a job,
They did not apply for,
But were found to know it best,
Hence never fired, but by death,
For it fires even kings.
By rendering them silent forever.

Don't join the pity party,
For you can be a rooster,
It takes climbing a pole,
And announcing hallelujahs,
In the early morning hours,
For you will do no dirty work,
And never watch the washing,
As it gets clean in the wash.

Sarah Mkhonza

Why You Were Not Invited To The Last Supper

If you know the rules, you will
not gatecrash the last supper.
Sit knowing you were not one of
the twelve. You did not have what
it takes.

Simple. Go home and stop the lament.
Last suppers are for a few. Their duty
is to call the many. Crowning a king
is done by the chosen. They sing
a song you do not know. They lift a heavy
crown to do so.

None of this is known to you. Losing traditions is not done by kingdoms. Yours
was a name not mentioned, in the phrase, 'thy kingdom come.'

Your 'thy kingdom' suffered a coup when
the crown fell and broke into the beats
that use your skin as its envelope. You sent them to a palace with no address
only
known to you and me. Therefore, being your
only subject, I salute you only when you get on the dias.

The

Sarah Mkhonza

Will We Make It To The Bluest Skies?

When I open my eyes and there you are,
I know we are together for it is
Your body that I see right here,
In the space in front of me,
And wonder what it is all about,
That we have done to two bodies,
That do things silently,
And move on silent as two stones,
That can rub against each other,
And leave no visible scars,
But deep gashes in the soul.

I look back at our words,
I see lines written in stone,
For we did things that opened us to each other,
Both of us lining up words one by one,
As two people on a journey.
Yet now I see this was no way,
To any place that we can get to,
For our words fly into the air,
And disappear like bees,
That searched for honey and found none,
And then moved on to another hive.

I thought we talked just yesterday,
Yet we struggle to put together,
Those decisions we crafted,
Rubbing against our stony selves,
And thought we were reaching into a deep,
Where we could build the truth and secure it,
My mind opening and yours locking in,
I open my eyes and there you are,
The lock is open and the words are gone.
The promises flew out of our vault,
Where all was fully laid out and ready to happen.

You said things would change,
You said I would no longer look into the distance,

Wondering if you would walk into my view,
When it is time for us to be together,
For you would be always nearby,
Touching my person and locking in,
To the life we have made for each other,
While our hands were looking,
And scratching each other lightly.

Was it just words we spouted,
Or your somersault that kicked us
Out of our handshake of yesterday
From which you now jump up in protest?
Were you walking in a false stride
For now you will not allow,
What we said would hold us,
In our tomorrow world like gum,
Sticking to a shoe and closing up,
The holes that walking far has made?

For now I see and hear the truth,
Of you going back to your antics,
For I am tired of thinking,
That we were made for each other
Ribbed together with a knitting,
For now I see the truth so clear,
That the knitting has holes,
For that womb that carried you,
Surely did not carry me.

Your kicks in that place were not mine,
For I hear the difference today,
Yes I see it and touch it,
Right here in your ever fickle self,
That rejects to fulfill what we make,
And tell each other is a friendship,
Which as shipmates we can sail,
With oars that move back and forth,
And create the needed rhythm,
That can get us to that side,
Of the riverbed where we slept,
And looked at each other like love birds,

That have a long way to fly on windy days,
With the air pushing us further
Into the furthest of bluest skies.

Sarah Mkhonza

Will You Pass Your Own Pencil Test

They used to test for kinkiness,
In the skin nines of days gone bye.
Now you do your own pencil test,
And get yourself in and out, in this
Maze that has us hungover from the
lifederal of the money seeking that
Rubs it's behind against us like
prostitutes with their sensuousness.

You touch a button to declare the
kinkiness of your brain and the
pencil fails to go through.
It declares you are kinky, yes,
more kinky than your hair.

By the wisdom standards of heaven,
you are duped to forever sit on a
slot machine hoping for a jackpot.
Your brain is now frying in this.

You hear the sound of money,
this flutter of angels wings.
It says you are next and you
dance in this casino of madness.

You have seen a tomorrow, which
glimmers. This mirage, this thing
knocks on your rib cage, seeking
to open your heart, says
go and take the test. Yours is a
kinkiness that cannot be combed out.

having borrowed

Sarah Mkhonza

With A New Maori Haka

You who know the haka,
The game has ended.
The team has not won.
It was surprised by adversity
Coming at it in a flush
That blinded the eyes,
Like never seen before.

The fans have gone home.
Their hopes shattered,
Their eyes blinking in the shame,
For the trophy did not come home,
Once again like before.

The team is unbridled,
The players walk heads bowed,
Still breathless but alive,
Their fists clenched hard,
Ready to punch the air.

No shouts and steps of mirth,
No dancing with faces alive,
Whose talk it loud and calling
For their souls are drenched,
For to win is all they live for,
For every chance was a victory brought home,
To bring joy even to mama smiles.

No sport has no falls,
No game has no fails,
No fame has no end,
The wounds heal quickly
The songs return,
To be sung once again,
With a new vigor and hope,
For one day we stand to rise,
And win like before.

The captain looks tired,

Yes speaks of a future,
Carrying hope on his shoulders,
For they are broad and alive,
No matter what fate brings,
To the future unbridled,
Loosened to gallop,
And win the race again,
And make losing history,
For they beat up defeat
By defeating it at its game,
With a new, New Zealand haka,
For there never was seen a fury,
As that a Maori warrior,
Whose stance is in the haka.

Sarah Mkhonza

With A Zero Balance In The Bank Of Life

I walked up and down looking for
The bank of life where all the
Rare species are found and people
Showed me buildings with neon
Lights. I told them not those
For they house money that belongs
To the rich and poor who run the
Risk of having accounts that
Read zero balance for life is
A big game changer that makes
The sleepless at night..

I went down the street and asked
An old woman the question she said
She can swear by the wrinkles on
Her face that the millions lie
Inside the big brain that is carried
By my beautiful head. She asked me
Why I had not asked my hair the Question for their numbers are
Sure sign they are closest to this
Wealth for it lied near my hair
Roots.

I walked away richer in my mind
And went to the bankers of worldly
Money and told them I had come to
Bank my brain. They asked how much
For they could not put a price to
So rare a commodity that it had no spare for only one exists in the world. I
walked away convinced
The old woman was right and I have
Never had a zero balance again

For those who live on the brink
Of bankruptcy know it is not about
That bank account for that figure
Changes. It is about invisible
Unchanging truths that say you

Were born with I the wealth you
Need in your hands. Shake b
Hands with the spirit of Plentiousness and you will
Feel the magic go up both arms.
Spread the news for that alone
Erases the zero balance.

Sarah Mkhonza

With Angels Walking In The Spaces Between Us

I thought we were being made in a jail,
When every day we went to school,
For the rules were tough and loaded on us,
Like going in to deep ourselves in poison,
That would kill the teaks on our skin,
We lingered as teachers sprayed our brains.

Now I see that we were chosen by one gambler,
Who took the best bet of his life on us,
For rebellion was cemented in us on the wall,
Of the belly that carried us into the world.

We twitched and turned in chairs daily,
Looking out through windows searching,
For a future written on four walls,
That would blossom in us in time.

Now we see the future and touch it,
And feel we should have known it then,
For it was surely wired in us daily,
As angels walked in between the spaces,
Of our daily walk punctuated with commas,
Of the bells that rang hour after hour.

Some of them invisible as they were,
Now sit in our memory saying, 'Yes, so and so.'
That is not the road to the future,
As they looked and listened to each and every one,
Of the answers we gave daily as we were being made.

Now I hear the angels for they had patience,
Repeated the same message the broken record,
While we sat, laughed and whispered aloud,
How funny they looked thinking we were made of gold.

Now that their work walks and serves the earth,
We pray daily for the thing that kept us alive,
When the message on virtues was the bore with lived on,

For it never changed but did rub some of its oil,
Into us which is why I share this story.

For who heard the 'holy, holy holy,
Sung by the likes of me in a dorm,
My legs on the wall while I ask,
Who was the shortest little man,
Or the man who came to Jesus at night.

The answers which rang were uttered,
Mischief ridden yes they were,
For in my language there was no word,
That spelt Nicodemus, but Logodima,
and Zaccheus but Zakewu's, as one kid,
Would answer as laughter rang into the air.

Who heard of a lesson on the plagues,
That had us view a land full of more frogs,
Than the ones on our roads in summer,
That stink after a car has hit them,
And give flies a feast of years,

Yet she did speak those truths old,
About darkness you can feel,
Not the one in our brains at that time,
But a biblical darkness we had to see,
As she searched spreading her hands everywhere.

You would think we would become found,
And finished out in the lost widow's mite,
As they showed us how it was brought gone,
And how happy heaven us,
For such was mission school,
With its stories biblical,
For now I see the penny shines a face,
On this page with a laugh.

Sarah Mkhonza

With Bits Of Grass In Their Beaks

I've seen birds prepared,
ready to build a future. UP
in the air they rose, with
grass in their beaks.

Weaver birds they were, working
on the overhanging branch, with
water reflecting the hut
round enough to warm young
ones with the smile of a touch
that brings life home.

I've seen life break out of
an egg cracked with a beak that
once carried a piece of grass.

The sound of cries for food poured
out of mouths with yellow mascara.
Each young one receiving a ration
stuffed in by an elder.

No cravings for choice was a word
foreign. When served receive for
they honor hard labor.

The first flight, this first day
in the school above comes for survival
is a word not preached but practiced.
Rules as rules require all to share.

Wisdom is not questioned for it is wise.
Here in the land of overhangs it beats
the snake at its own game.

Weight is not controlled for it resides
with a control button that is inbuilt.
It is manufactured in the darkness called
life.

Grandmother's are taken care of by no
doctors, for such is the land where
age is a cherished novelty.

To borrow a broom is to shame the air.
It is a self cleaning world for feathers
sheared never haunt their master like
employees when pay is low.

Now I see why the citizens of this land
are the real immigrants, for they built
a country with next to nothing, yet they
have to run from the sling with a stone
from the devine.

The

Sarah Mkhonza

With Bougainvillea Clippings In My Hand

I walk with two clippings in my hand
One of yellow another of red bougainvillea
These tell me my world is in balance
For the thin twigs with thorns on them
Tell me the world makes you what you are
Neither red nor yellow but ready for these
Sharp thorns to prick your sides daily
And then look at you with rosy eyes,
Like the flowers on these clippings.

They lie here ready for the dump
Where they will wither and not remember
That I once held them dear just before
One of the greatest storms in my life.
Where thorns came with hail and sent me
Reeling to the dump like these twigs.

They say gorillas would eat these raw,
And swallow everything beauty or none
And then forget they have eaten them too early
Before the twigs became fully grown
Hence my worry that I have trimmed too much
And not left some for a rainy day.

The gardener in me does not know
When to cut off trimmings on the bud
For it is this that carries life on
If one is to trust these clippings I hold
To remake the dump into a fresh piece of ground.

Never trust yourself when doing such a task
It is only the experts who know how to clip
That should walk to the dumpster with wheel barrows
Full of what is pruned with the shears of life.

The rest of us are just following along
Doing tasks we saw done by our parents,
With shears as big as the ones in there,
Where my father hung them on the garage wall,

There they rest till today because of size,
For they were always too heavy for me to use
Thus I walk with only two clippings in my hand,
Till the end of time.

They say bougainvillea never dies,
It resuscitates even the older ones,
And breathes life at the dump
Waking dumpsters and telling them
It is time to dance with roses
And crown the earth with beauty
For such is the task of these
Who grow with thorns that prick us daily.

Sarah Mkhonza

With Nigger Balls In Our Mouths

When the N-word came to me,
I was so little that
it's sounds did not sit
badly in my mind.

This man's car fatherly
black it was. As fatherly
bold his head showed out
through his lowered
window.

Balls black, licorice sweet,
black like hail dyed black
in yonder skies fell all over
the ground. Jar in hand he
rained the black niggles balls.

Scattering all over, lowering,
scampering, like real chickens
of heaven, we ate the black sweets.

With no dime, no nickel either,
we filled our mouths. Hands black,
teeth black we smiled at each other.

When later I learned to be black was
nigger, we laughed for friends white
and black, had eaten these fruits of
what made us children.

What are they called again Eloise?
She is telling me when my pockets
are as full as is my mind of their
sweetness. We laugh at the world,
lost in the sweetness of our stomachs,
the way the mother laughs, for in this
is hidden the sweetness of the origin
of humanity.

With our nigger balls in our hands every
day is sweet, for licorice never tasted
this sweet. So come to my lovely, sweet
nigger ball world. As for this, call it what you will, i live in my factory of joy.

For who knows this licorice sweet better
than me when I speak with a mouth that is full of these so called nigger balls, for
when the licorice goes, they whiten while my teeth change slowly, for I have just
been to the world of the sweet boogy girl.

We fear liars in this world, where boogy girls play with and eat plenty of nigger
balls. Where Eloise asks me if we will let out black wind after these, i say yah!
Why not for it is our world, this nigger ball world.

Ask the world what sweetened us, nobody
can tell you. I want to swear it was acts
so kind they fell on us like this black sweet hail from heaven. Bless a soul when
you're eating blackness from God for it is
sweeter than that of the world.

having borrowed

Sarah Mkhonza

With Pliers, Saw, Tongs And A Hammer

It's not like I am going to straighten
A molten piece of metal like this bangle
I wear on my arm. It is truth that I am
Going to knock sense into this poem
With pliers, saw, tongs and a hammer.

It has given me a headache that is known
For it refused first to get thought up.
I had to use the pliers to get in on the page
For I had to break a fence and twist wire
This way and that till I could reach it.

As for the saw, I used it to level the
Tree trunk so that I could reach the leaves
Of the poem and cut it to size with the
Jagged edge of my saw whose teeth sank
In and even broke in the process.

The tongs came handy when I had thrown
It into the fire to mold the molten mess
And shape it for it was so hot my bare
Hands could not have done the job.

Now I have hammered it together and
As you see it has come out in the shape
Of my own piece of art that reveals the
Innermost parts of my being and also
The thoughts of the jeweler in me.

Next time you read a poem don't
Even begin to think it was easy to get
It on paper for the medium is deceiving.
It takes pliers, and a hammer and all
To get to produce a masterpiece.

For poetry is harder than a rock,
Softer than metal in the mold
Harder than the pith of a tree
And as solid as the iron hoofs

Of a horse shoe.

Sarah Mkhonza

With The Same Inner Control

She let her words out one after another,
with the same inner control. She let her
mouth spit out the truth as if it did not
hurt. She was not leaving anything to the
children for they had abandoned her when
she was ill.

She reached for the crotchet dress and
gave it to Cindi, my mother said the
youngest of you should keep it. It is
the only heirloom this family has. It
has been in the family for a hundred
years. Then she let her breath get out
of her, with the same inner control.
She shut her eyes for the last time.

Sarah Mkhonza

With Theinvisible Helicopter Above My Head

Seemed as if I was dreaming.
A helicopter over my head.
Ready to take off in the now.
This fan over this bed mine
took me to the bridal scene.
Where the bride wore brown.
I wore white and was a ring
bearer. Found them at the
photo shoot. I wished I wax
dreaming. I was not late for
in this dream, the photo shoot
was first in the events of the day.
The helicopter had not left me when they
went dead. Still time to stage my own
take off.

Sarah Mkhonza

With These Humps Of Mine

With these these feet of mine
I have walked to the ends of the
Earth and heard a camel and the
Rider take the oath feared by many.

With these humps of mine, said the beast
I thee wed and vow to walk the earth
With you, Mon Segnor, on my back,
In between these two humps, drought
Or no drought, with you riding all over me,
Till death us do part.

I swear it was the camel again speaking the vows.
With these hooves. of mine I will thee serve
On desert sand and oasis green, I will thee
Carry and lay down to chew the cud when
You have drunk of my milk. With each sunset
We will walk this desert only if you accept that
I am more honest than pretty, and as useful.
You may put the ring on my finger and you
May kiss the bride. And off they went
Newlyweds with a just married trailing
On desert sand.

Mon Segnor, I am tired, what about the love?
Did you hear anyone talk about love? I am a
Bedouin. We ride as we do. Mon Segnor I am
Hungry. You swore not about hunger but about
Carrying and not caring, do you see food in this
Desert? Chew the cud, beast. Remember
I ride you because I inherited you from my father.
The camel sat down exhausted and the journey
Had to wait for the calvary out in the horizon.
The rider lay on his back waiting wondering
What kind of beasts camels were. They had
Less milk than goats, more meat only when dead.
But who had the guts to kill a camel for such was
Unheard of? Next time around, a goat for sure but
Who will carry the load between two humps me

Included? A Bedouin must keep his camel, I swear
For this is the way of our people.

Sarah Mkhonza

With Uncontrollable Sneezes And Snuffles

Even when we talk till we foam in the mouth,
The world goes on to lay down even more,
In places where war goes on like a wheel,
That has its own unwarranted will,
We have to look for more things to say,
That will quell the struggles that go on,
Where we are helpless with this power,
Of the sneeze that is imminent,
For we will let it out and live again.

You and these lines written in your hand,
Are heading for the place where we will land,
For we have chosen to walk the path of angels,
Who will meet us when they hear us sneeze,
For ours will be the loudest sneeze,
For we smoked ground tobacco of the mind,
And sniffed it into our depths.

When you look at your hands always remember,
In them is written this story of life,
That is waiting for you to tell the earth,
For you raised the hands to smell fragrances,
Rubbed into them by the times from which we came,
Which carried us unknowingly to this now,
Where one minute we laugh and another cry,
For these smells of what our ears hear here.
Forces us to keep up these loud snuffles,
We cannot hold down for one day longer,
For we cannot stop their causes.

We can cry for the losses we see daily,
Of these dear lives we with were here
That have been made to pass to tomorrow,
And wish we were not feeling this friction
That goes on in life all of our days here,
Where we rub the hands in our frustration,
Holding no weapons we wish were not firing,
But look at the air which blows into our eyes,
This endless smell of friction in the air.

This lone walk we choose to go on,
Is one where we can meet the ruler,
And ask how to measure the story of misery
That he can quell by uttering this sneeze,
For sneezing together can end this agenda
Where the guns send out words with a gong,
Changing fragrances into bloody smells
For we cannot stand it anymore,
Even with all the salutes of soldiers,
Whose hands honor the fighting not the smells
Of the flowers whose fragrances filled the air,
Just after the rains that grew in our meadows,
Where buildings now lie ripped into rubble,
That will be thrown into lasting heaps,
That will tell this story of war.

Sarah Mkhonza

Woo! Wow! There Goes A Pedigree

This bloodline that flows in you, so you,
Came from rare combinations pure.
This personal strain you carry daily,
Whose lineage long has brought you
Here to read about yourself and what
You stand for is the whisper of someone
In your family tree. They are telling you
That you come from a special place where
Descent and descend do not mean one thing.
You ascended into this space you call a world
In a time of extraction from a bloodline rare,
So rare that it has no double, for nobody
Who stands on two legs has your gifts.

Your extraction was like rare coffee from
Saint Helena, so rare that it is not available
Even on the island where it is grown. Yours
Is a long story, filled with obstacles and trials,
For a rare thing is hard to grow, ask the
Coffee growers of the most expensive
Coffee in the world. Your background
Has no back to look back at, for you
Face forward always and look at the
End of this life of yours and say, what
A life! What a love! What a Pedigree!
You are so special, words fail even
Poets who try to tell you to get up and
Keep running, for with your eyes on
The finish line, people will know and
See the end of the last strides of the
Special, done deal you came here to
Be. It is still time to run against the wind,
Pure breed, real and rare for in you
Is a person special.

If you doubt what I say, try to answer this
One question: how many special people
Are in your lineage from way back who
Passed on the flow of blood that runs in

You now? If you lose count when answering
This question, I win so take the truth
And use it for what it does. They say
It came to set us free, so that we can use
The freedom to breathe and do the best
unhindered by the traps that lay in our way.
Get rid of the traps, by telling them one
phrase, 'I am a Pedigree, I breath Pedigree
Walk and talk Pedigree. I will get to the finish
Line Pedigree. Unleash your good strain,
It lies dormant for you had not heard these
Words, let alone this time when you can
say them to yourself daily.

Sarah Mkhonza

Words Just Sit On My Lips

When I looked at her coming up to the place,
My words would just sit on my lips,
For wanting to speak them was so much,
I pursed my lips harder as I looked,
Legs approaching in steps taken,
What was I going to say,
Words sitting on my lips,
Not jumping up and down,
To do the thing of speaking,
That they were meant for.

Sarah Mkhonza

Words Of Praise From Another World

These handlebars of a bicycle
That goes down the road on its own,
The cyclist with hands in the air.
You who has a beehive hairdo
So round it is that of a Zulu woman,
Whose red lips are like the beak
Of the smallest bird on the tree,
That sucked nectar out of every flower,
And spread it as far as the eye can see,
Leaving pollen powdering the air.

This daughter of ours that bathes in milk,
Whose ears shine in the sun,
That appears and draws out laughter,
Even out of the saddest person.

She who rules with the tail of a horse,
Swatting fungus out of the air,
Making life more of what it is,
This spirit of the people of the land.

The tallest shrub that graces the land,
This orchid so yellow it raises things,
Up skyward when they are lying down,
This sinless, sinful member of ours,
That the clan of those who came from afar,
Gave us.

This handle of the walking stick
Cut out from herbal trees that are bitter sweet,
That came from across the blue oceans long ago,
And rubbed into us its bitterness
When we did not know that in bitterness,
Lies the power of the herbs that heal the land.

Sarah Mkhonza

Working The Silence Of The Earth Lost.

When I sit and work the silence,
It opens up avdoor of the ruins,
And takes me into every corner,
In a world once full of light,
And now left with the lease,
From yesterday's brew so bitter,
It has left us all drunk.

We drank the liquor of the mind,
We got near drunk and talked to each other,
In languages only the group knew,
We continued to imbibe our silence,
Till it poured out of our ears,
Without pinching the flesh,
To ask if it could still take anymore,

Sponge drunk we stagger on,
Wondering if the tunnel of silence,
Will lead to a brighter place,
For we have to get somewhere,
With these shuffles of feet tied,
With the ropes of money lost,
That got tangled into our legs,
Tying even the toes.

This silence that pays the piper,
For the noise he makes in space,
These itunes from heaven like drops,
Keep dripping into it constantly,
Making us wonder why so slowly,
This dropping of dulcet sounds,
So silently this money peeps in,
When the notes are so green and so blue,
As the sky looks at itself in wonder.

Questing come into this darkness,
Licking into it like pure milk,
Wanting to know why so silent,
When the fury of work is so loud.

Whoever said the sky would never rain money,
Whoever said we lived in a silence of holes,
Like termites working the ant heap,
That ever hardens yet it has holes,
This porous rock that sees deep into us.
Here where we live and work the silence,
Walking on tip toe afraid to wake up angels,
Wanting answers that will ring our names,
And make us look like the princes of the earth,
When we go to the ATMS of this blessed world,
Where everything is a figment that melts into nothing,
And leave behind silence, time and money,
For they never grow old like the body of humans,
Who drain their blood into vessels with no veins,
No heart pumping out anything for them to live on.

Sarah Mkhonza

Write My Story On The Trees

Write my story on the trees,
Dig it out from down there,
Where it lies with me in the grave,
Spread the red ochre on the trees,
Power them till they turn red,
And Write on every leaf,
I want to rustle in the wind
My welts like veins on a leaf
Written on all the mountains,
For I no longer live contained,
Plant me on every meadow,
Like grass I want to to sway,
Cast me on the rivers,
My leaves floating on the river,
Going into all corners on the bank,
Like logs that float undirected,
After these stormy floods we saw,
For they cluster on the banks,
Like confused thoughts in a brawl,
That ends these disturbed sad stories.

Knowing the teller of the story,
Is the daily killer of their story,
Wash my tears off me with the floods,
For I died too young to do it myself,
But went and left the very world,
That buries my story down here,
In this silence away from all,
That will tell my story to the wind,
When they see storied trees singing,
About what once grew on the branch,
That we call our own piece of earth,
That beat me and left me scarred,
Then left me bleeding on the ground,
Till to death off I went silent,
Only to be revived in the words of the dead.
Who are speaking in the trees.
Make up what went down a story,
That will be told by all daily

For you made my face and head on the crown,
Of the tallest trees and shortest ones,
Which will tell of my muffled cries
With the dignity that nature gives our life,
And leave an unmoving silence to be revived
By the few who write like you.

Sarah Mkhonza

Written On Tablets Of Gold Hidden In My Heart

This poem unfolds on a church bench,
Where the tablets of gold lay. Open
On my side and when I look I see only,
A word God has sworn is about me also,
For I had been let loose to try my hand
On opening the book to the chapter where
Love is written about on tablets of gold.

I open the pages of my heart and let in
The warmest rays of gold cast a rich halo
Making mine a tiara richer than that of royals
For it is written in hidden mine walls where only
The bravest of souls care to dig.

My joy rings out larger than the jealousy of lasses
Who also want this love sworn to be mine in front of
The servants of the gods who brought the light that
Opened my doors and left them ajar on the day man reached
The planet where we were to live all by ourselves.

How I long for the hand that dug into mine and
left me touching this word in this chapter on love.
Believing in the sun has had me sweating while I
Cry inside for the dear one to write the story of
Love for me the golden tablets in his heart.

Sarah Mkhonza

You Are Not The Target But The Nugget

You are not the target but the nugget
for targets of what is thrown around that is bad
don't look like you.

Why do you look at it and not let it fly over
your head? It is not you for you speak what
is needed. Those who do not love and hear
you need not satisfy themselves as having
done it to you, for when you flinch and not
become what you came to be, you give them
fuel.

Drainers are holding the hose and using it
to fuel hate and drain the good in you and
fill you with hate. Their words make you see
other things besides the love that is in plenty,
and ready for you to take it and build a future
for all. Cast out the bad and use the sift called
the mind to bundle up a thought vault for you
that nobody opens but you and let spill out
of you the respect you store there which cannot
be tainted for it is tightly woven. It just
bubbles and sings for anyone who cares
to look. Chew the endless gum of love and
keep its flavor floating around you like the
perfume you bought at the store that had
everyone asking, what that is. You are
never a target of what it going round but
a beautiful nugget that if touched changes
hearts into people who are fired to do the
impossible.

Sarah Mkhonza

You Deserve Better

Like a pebble that lies by the wayside,
Hidden in the deep peering with one eye,
Everyone passes, thinking you are sand,
For looks deceive even the wisest.
Hidden in you is the essence of being,
Hidden above the earth where we live,
Where the blind never see even at noonday.

You embody nuggets that are you, figments of truth,
Never told of for they are rare,
For in you is the dazzle that frazzles,
Even the wisest from the rear.

Watch them coming one by one
Those who will dare to drink of you,
This cooling drink and let it run,
Down thirsty throats that sing your name,
With rough voices from the future
And leave you down and without song.

Those who will yell obscenities within,
Earshot of the grace you are
And live you fallen and then stand inside,
Were not meant, to go to the end,
Hand in hand down the road with you,
For the future calls for kings only.

They are wealth these kings for you,
They are dew that sparkles on grass,
Out on the lawns on which you walked,
Eyes closed by the beauty of green.

Look harder for they have one eye,
Cast on you, not at all sure,
If they are really seeing right,
This princess that threatens them,
With a crown made of truth.
For love you are and power too.

Your Mushrooms On An Anthheap

So rare so sure
These huge buttons
Like saucers and plates
Abandoned by the God
Who brought the rain
That made them pop up
On this ant heap.

My friend the tortoise
Has seen them too and
Raced to eat this feast
That has been dished out
To any who will get there
First. I appear and he hides
His head and watches me as
I make my pick as if to say
Leave some for me for they
Only grow once these gifts
From God. Pick them and
Know they will not be
Here when you return.
Cattle herders are hungry
Boys who take everything
Home that has a smell fresh.

Sarah Mkhonza

Zebra Stripes Never Cross

Cross the stripes of a zebra
You get a skin with shapes
Geometrical and the eyes we
Fear may be cross eyed and
As for the legs they may end
Up crossed on the couches of
The earth.

The question comes why we would
Want to change so beautiful a
Coat when it serves us and them
Well being all stripe, one
Stripe here and another alongside
It. For zebras are never cross for
Their stripes help them to tell
Their moms, dads, uncles aunts
And cousins when the sun shines
That even though far away the striped
Breed is here and sound and waiting.

They wear the stripes long and
lined for it is better to live
The way they came from the land
Unknown. Life continues in the
Plains and none complain of the
Gift they have so never will you
See a zebra wear a dress white
and dress red of crossing lines
For one dress does it
And one hue fits all.

The time will come when we will
Learn that to survive and know
Our whereabouts we do not need
The new covers even for our cars
But messages written in our hearts
That tell us where one is for
If species wild Can do it
So can we.

Sarah Mkhonza