

1960

MVS-0006-0001-008

nightwatchman...

1. Sans prologue

From Zululand he comes
a lion long tamed,
fed on the soul of
warriors long dead:
Time
uncorrosive
like water on a Hippo's back
seals his fury
from the light of day.
An oak tree
in desert parched and bare,
he sits, conversing
with fire and the dark.
With yawn of mouth
scaled - but firm,
he speaks
of generations
gone
and coming.
Soothed by bible
smeared with blood
he speaks, of voices
crying in the dark.
With aching heart
he smiles on Time
and tells
of children yet unborn.
What manner of Man is this?

'Come
sit with me
and learn
of fire reduced to ashes.
Come
sit with me
and taste
of scalding water
on a parched tongue.
Come
sit with me
and see
night
shivering
in awe
of the on-coming dawn.
Come -
sit with me'.

1
Valley of darkness - speak to me
Speak of death in life incommunicable
of life in summary beautiful
1. post-humous born in infancy,
Darkness -

in light born of Jerusalem's dawn.
Sit with you?
'Tis not the time to sit - but stand
else one dream things vile and mean:
Lose not your life to times unsung,
yours is now - 'er your fathers said -
children born to want die before their birth,
living - is to know life's ends unwrit!
Meet the dawn with other men
before you sit to guard their night.
Loving life, 'tis naught to guard
when all in trust is held for all.
Jama's band with Tshaka's stride
was born to move through Time
to meet with Man in yonder clime -
Alas! They murdered Tshaka.

Mountains echo hoarse symphonic voiced
Valleys groan with guttural moaning:
Dogs bark by moonlit night -
the clutter of cutlery shrieks
through the silent morn:
Man, bereaved, reviles life's persuant love,
History, drawn from inauspicious hours -
Counterfeit of Time -
rents night from unsuspecting day;
suddenly the glare reveals
scars on all molested ~~men~~ men.
Curse of old, yoke of times' deceit,
could with breadth of mind, I embrace
the import of this intrigue?
Within, in torment I am caught
a languid cloud in Space and Time
on potent emptiness to sigh;
indigent, I stand -
passive to life's fulfilment now.
History is not mine to share, but laud
and repent: the joys, here to have
and mine to cherish.
I see you august men
you soothe my heart, but quicken not
the Mind; I gasp from thirst eternal
for balm of this Hour.

of new born babes
and bulbous breasts
of beautiful girls,
we parted at every time
then sleep you as mother
from your side
through years of life lived long.

Valley of dry bones - speak to me
Speak of death in life inexplicable
Of life in cemetery beautiful
a rose-bud worm-worn in infancy,
Darkness *
in light born of Jerusalem's barn.
I weep not for sadness
but joy made sad
by clammy hand of colossi
invincible; a world iron-clanged
in Time immeasurable.
Watchman, I am blind,
either too young
or too old:
too uncommitted
too much wedded to words
too concerned with meaning
to have meaning.
Forlorn, I stand apart
Impotent, I disavow.

11.

Chorus

Baphi oNdaba
Baphi oJama
Baphi oMalandela
Uphi uTshaka?

A myriad faces sparkle
bright with hope - the health
and wealth of youthful clans
gay with song
choralling love in Zululand.
I know these men -
Zarastu's voice
of them has told - pop'ing
fountainhead of justice old;
Stand Up!
See these warriors gird
o'er silenced storm of Self and Circumstance;
of Self and Circumstance;
Thus -
is truth born
with virgin poise.
I know these men -
meeting them yesterday
day-after-tomorrow last year,
mid gurgling laughter
of new born babes
and bulbous breasts
of beautiful maids,
we parted at even-time
when elder men do gather
Encounter told
through years of life lived long.

111.

I know these men -
Zarastu's voice of them has told
Op'ing fountainhead of justice old -
Stand Up! See these warriors gird
O'er silenced storm of Self and Circumstance
Thus - is truth born with virgin poise!
I know these men -
Meeting them yesterday day-after-tomorrow last year
'Mid gurgling laughter of new born babes
And bulbous breasts of beauteous maids,
We parted at even-time - when elder men do gather-
Encounter told through years of life lived long.
I know these men -
Oft' in Ntuli's eyes we met
In craggy hills and knotted trees,
Mahlabatini's sands their imprint bear-
The Black Snake of Zibulus
Crawling bruised 'neath Egypt's blazing Sun!
I know these men -
By night, the forest hush of pines
An aspect white does wear
Distant hills resound with lovers songs
Bemumbing to youthful maidens
Shy beneath the morning Sun.

beginning

We know the Man!
At dusk, the Land
Of Him does speak;
'A fine fellow' - they say
'He knows how' - 'tis said
We agree. Yes, we agree.
Is he dead?
No!
Inject Him they did-
A surgeon's scalpel precise
Operating disease unknown,
'They know how' - 'tis said
We agree, Yes, we agree.
Street sweepers have been here
The place looks clean.

111.

children of my fathers
walk not the path I tread;
never was battle fought
'twixt spear and saracen tank -
but Honour is defended
when men on men do feed.
Go home,
leave me here
to talk and drink with men
who fought and died
at Weenenspruit
when time and men
were indiscreet.
I seek not to justify,
but to see;
seeing,
perhaps to understand
and thus to live
respond and create
of Africa's being
in new semblance seen;
to fly
with the north bird
south
when the west wind
takes an eastward turn.

Patriche old -
searching - to exist
Self Without
yet Within residing,
Imprisoned Destiny
in shifting time revealed,
In Others bound
We to Ours are lost.
Most secret visage
Life in Time abounding
change
changing not
nor error will amend,
but potent hour present
incisive of the time!
deride not
my groping mind
with peasant heaviness
weighed down.

the Nightwatchman from Zululand

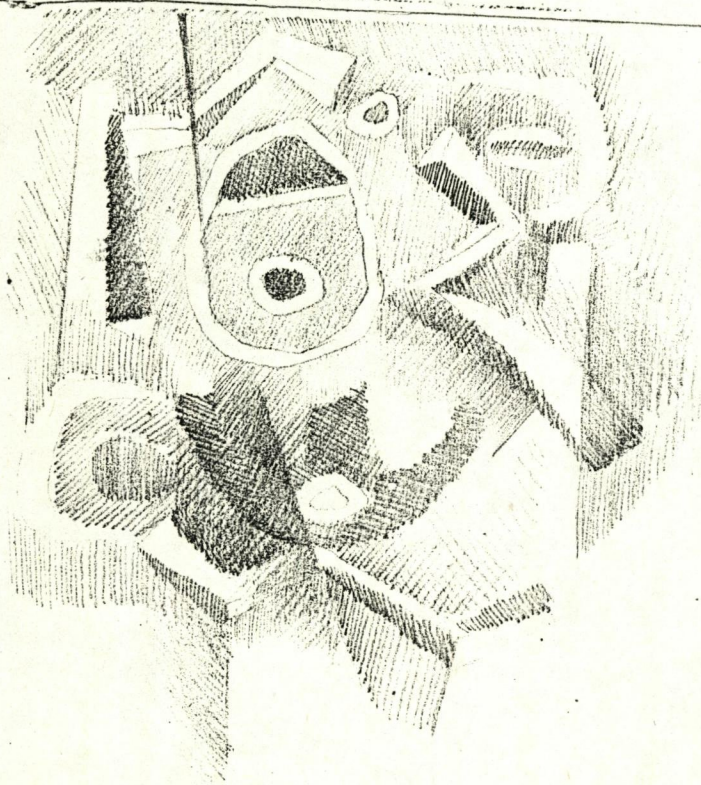
prologue

what hunchback is this -
mutely guarding a Notre Dame
it does not know?
what monster is this -
with the heart of lambs?
what Adam is this -
lord in garden of steel?

of a of '57 & '63

✓ 1V.

Oblivion sprawls unseemly o'er the city's brim
Sterile ornament, a mock on wretched Men
Flouts Reason, Love and Honour.
Children of my fathers, walk not the path I tread
Never was battle fought 'twixt spear and saracen tank-
But Honour is defended when men on men do feed.
Go home! Leave me here to talk and drink with men
Who fought and died at Weenanspruit
When Time and men were indiscreet.
Patriarchs old, searching - to exist,
Self Without - yet Within residing,
Imprisoned Destiny - in shifting Time revealed,
In Others bound, We to Ours are lost.
Most secret visage, Life in Time abounding,
Change, changing not - nor error will amend,
But potent Hour present - incisive of the Time!
Deride not my groping Mind
With peasant heaviness weighed down.
Would that I could with Milton's violence
Short-circuit this current of triviality
With David's lyre touch the Solomon of today.
Oh Distant Time, strange in love
Of warriors bold and valleys wide
Charge Us! This Watchman Old and I,
To rise with men and fight
For Self Without in Others wrought
Man in myriad clime to meet
In living, thus to find Life's secret Love.
In aspect pure, my love then would stand
This woman - all women, this child - all youth
Loving, guarding and building
Before and After Their Form.
Thus - in Honour, we Honour could uphold
And forward move with Truth of This Hour!



To those who would ask:
What does your art mean?
To them I say
It means that I am an African
What that means
I do not know
But what that is
I know
because
I am.

EW Kobi Tama kloe

Distant time
strange in love
of warriors bold
and valleys wide,
Charge Us!
this Watchman old and I
to rise with men and fight
for Self
without the individual wrought,
Justice Truth and Beauty seek
Man in milliard oline to meet
in Living
thus to find life's secret love.

Would that I could
with Milton's violence
short circuit
the current of triviality;
with David's lyre
touch the Solomon of the day.
In aspect pure
my love then would stand,
this woman-all women
this child - all youth
loving guarding building
before and after
their form.
In purpose,
by gods ordained,
We -
honour could uphold;
Space and Time embrace -
forward move
with Truth of This Hour.

epilogue

the children of Our Land
charged of me to tell:
I told them - I did not know
they asked me why!
I told them - I was not to know
they asked me what for!
I told them - I am not to know

Watchman stand!
the Sun has risen in the east.