

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 dry bones - speak to me  
Speak of death in life incommunicable  
of life in summary beautiful  
1. ~~lost~~ ~~but~~ ~~worn~~ ~~worn~~ 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 even-time  
then sleep you as mother  
Ere you sleep  
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.



4

✓

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.

beguiling

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

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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?

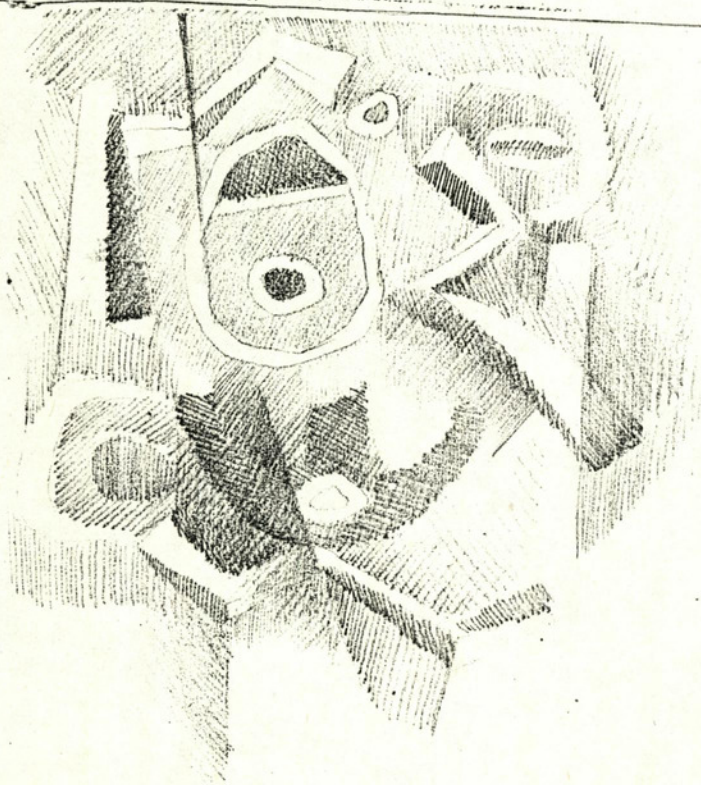
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✓  
IV.

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 clime 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.