

# **Ntsikana kaGabha<sup>5</sup>**

## **Ntsikana's Bell**

**Sele! Sele!**

**Ahom, ahom, ahom!**

**Sele! Sele! Come, hear the Word of the Lord.**

**Ahom, ahom, ahom, ahom, ahom.**

[call to worship]

[bell sound by striking a rock]

**Respond! Respond! You are called to heaven.**

**Come, all you multitudes! Come, all you children!**

**Ahom, ahom, ahom, ahom, ahom.**

**It has been fenced in and surrounded, this land of your fathers.**

**He who responds to the call will be blessed.**

**Ahom, ahom, ahom, ahom, ahom.**

**Sele! Sele!**

**Ahom, ahom ahom!**

**Respond! Respond! You are called to heaven.**

**Ahom, ahom, ahom, ahom, ahom.**

**(tr. isiXhosa J.K. Bokwe)**

## Andrew Geddes Bain

### The British Settler

Tune – 'Oh what a row'; or, 'The humours of a Steam-boat'

Oh! what a gay, what a *rambling* life a Settler's leading!  
Spooring cattle, doing battle, quite jocose;  
Winning, losing; Whigs abusing; shopping now, then mutton breeding;  
Never fearing, persevering, on he goes!

When to the Cape I first came out, in days of Charlie Somerset,  
My lands were neatly measured off, and reg'larly my number set;  
I strutted round on my own ground, lord of a hundred acres, sir,  
And said I'd plough, I'd buy a cow, the butchers cut and bakers, sir.  
Oh! what a gay, &c.

On Kowie's banks I built a house, and made a snug location there;  
I fenc'd my lands with my own hands to keep all tight;  
The river rose, and fore my nose made awful desolation there;  
The Kafirs stole my only cow away that night!  
I made a trip to Kafirland, in hopes to find my cow again,  
And tried to act the dentist then, which no one can do now again;  
I drew the Kafir's ivory teeth, at risk of hempen collar, sir.  
Which at Graham's Town on the market brought me full 300 dollars, sir!  
Oh! what a gay, &c

My second go was but so so, although the trade was brisk enough;  
The patrols nearly boned me in a secret maze;  
I hid my load out of the road, and, faith, I just had risk enough,  
For this trade was hanging matter in those good old days!  
My stock-in-trade on pack-ox laid, I tried my luck at *smouching* then,  
But found the Boers were wide awake as Yorkshiremen at chousing them;  
They swapt me some rock chrystals – gems, they swore, of purest water, sir,  
And for *breeding* stock, a scurvy lot of *hamels* and *kapaters*, sir!  
Oh! what a gay, &c

Of fortune's frowns, smiles, ups, and downs, I had a great variety;  
I *smoothing* drop. I open shop, then buy a farm;  
Doing charming with my farming, blest with friends' society,  
When all at once the Amakose break the charn!  
Asseging, yelling, crying — murder! fire! and revelry!  
Sealing cattle, bloody battle, wives and children rustling in!  
Helter-skelter, seeking shelter, tender friends are justling in!  
Husbands wounded, — lost, confounded, friends are justling in!  
Oh! what a gay, &c

Hopes are blasted, pale and fasted, now reduced to beggary;  
Burnt locations, public rations all we've left;  
Names abused, of crimes accused by agents vile of whiggery,  
Any sympathy withheld, when of our all bereft.  
Compensation for spoliation, after such representation,  
Seemed so futile and inutile, that 'twas scouted by the nation!  
And that we've still a dollar left, our thanks be to no stingy-man,  
Whose name's a charn our souls to warm, — THE GOOD, THE BRAVE  
SIR BENJAMINI!  
Oh! what a gay, &c

Kafirs lauded and rewarded for their savage, fierce irruption,  
By the folks of Downing-street and Ex'ter hall!  
Then no checking Boers from *wreking*, fleeing, seeing such corruption;  
Hottentots and Fingoes, saucy vagrants all!  
Such delusion and confusion seldom are exhibited,  
When for convenience of the blacks the whites are stabbed and gibbeted!  
Yet, persevering through those ills, the storm again I've weathered, sir!  
My children married happy, and my nest again well feathered sir!  
Oh! what a gay &c.

'Tis four and twenty years, my friends, since first on Afric's shore we landed!  
And retrospections crowd my mind of that great day;  
Fear and doubt shut hope all out, for on a desert we seemed stranded,  
And dreary was our prospect then in Algoa Bay!  
View contrasted, while they lasted, times of which I'm now relating,  
And our happy meeting here, this great event commemorating!  
Then may our hearts be grateful still, that Heaven has so guarded us  
Through all our toilsome pilgrimage, and now so well rewarded us!  
Oh! what a gay, what a *wimbling* life, a *Settler's* leading!  
Spooing cattle, doing battle, quite jocosely;  
Winning, losing; Whigs abusing; shopping now, then cattle breeding;  
Never fearing, persevering, on he goes!

**St J. Page Yako<sup>21</sup>**

**The Contraction and Enclosure of the Land**

Thus spake the heirs of the land  
Although it is no longer ours.  
This land will be folded like a blanket  
till it is like the palm of a hand.  
The racing ox will become entangled in the wire,  
Too weak to dance free, it will be worn  
Out by the dance of the yoke and the plough.  
They will crowd us together like tadpoles  
In a calabash ladle. Our girls  
Will have their lobola paid with paper,  
Coins that come and go, come and go.  
Blood should not be spilled, so they say  
Nowadays, to unite the different peoples;  
Until we no longer care for each other,  
As a cow licks her calf, when love  
And nature urges her to do so.  
Can money bring people together?  
Yes, a man may have words with his son's wife,  
His son need no longer respect her mother.

Yes, we fold up our knees  
It's impossible to stretch out,  
Because the land has been hedged in.

(tr. isiXhosa Robert Kavanagh and Z.S. Qangule)

## **Johannesburg**

Along the Rand in eighty-five  
Fortunes were founded overnight,  
And mansions rose among the rocks  
To blaze with girls and light;

In champagne baths men sluiced their skins  
Grimy with auriferous dust,  
Then oiled and scented, fought to enjoy  
What young men must;

Took opportunities to cheat,  
Or meet the most expensive whore,  
And conjured up with cards and dice,  
New orgies from new veins of ore;

Greybeards who now look back  
To the old days  
Find little in their past to blame  
And much to praise —

Riding bareback under stars  
As lordly anarchs of the veld,  
Venison feasts and tribal wars  
Free cruelty and a cartridge belt;

Pioneers, O pioneers  
Grey pillars of a Christian State,  
Respectability has turned  
Swashbuckler prim and scamp sedate;

Prospecting in the brain's recesses  
Seek now the nuggets of your prime,  
And sift the gold dust of your dreams  
From drifted sands of time.

**New Leaves**

## **City Johannesburg**

This way I salute you:

My hand pulses to my back trousers pocket

Or into my inner jacket pocket

For my pass, my life,

Jo'burg City.

My hand like a starved snake rears my pockets

For my thin, ever lean wallet,

While my stomach groans a friendly smile to hunger,

Jo'burg City.

My stomach also devours coppers and papers

Don't you know?

Jo'burg City, I salute you;

When I run out, or roar in a bus to you,

I leave behind me, my love,

My comic houses and people, my dongas and my ever  
whirling dust,

My death

That's so related to me as a wink to the eye.

Jo'burg City

I travel on your black and white and roboted roads

Through your thick iron breath that you inhale

At six in the morning and exhale from five noon.

Jo'burg City

That is the time when I come to you,

When your neon flowers flaunt from your electrical wind,

That is the time when I leave you,

When your neon flowers flaunt their way through the

*falling darkness*

*On your cement trees.*

*And as I go back, to my love,*

*My dongas, my dust, my people, my death,*

*Where death lurks in the dark like a blade in the flesh,*

*I can feel your roots, anchoring your might, my feebleness*

*In my flesh, in my mind, in my blood,*

*And everything about you says it,*

*That, that is all you need of me.*

*Jo'burg City, Johannesburg,*

*Listen when I tell you,*

*There is no fun, nothing, in it,*

*When you leave the women and men with such frozen*

*expressions,*

*Expressions that have tears like furrows of soil erosion,*

*Jo'burg City, you are dry like death,*

*Jo'burg City, Johannesburg, Jo'burg City.*



## Witwatersrand

What fragile thing can happen in this hard  
prospect of flashing shard  
and not be marred?

If only day adjourn, the night in store  
be dimmer than before,  
wind blow, rain pour!

All winter long I'll nibble at the bare  
and bitter rind of air –  
then leap back like a hare!

(author)

## Nightfall

I watch the darkness falling  
And hills withdraw their shadows:  
The sun, like ochre, reddens.

The swallows are at rest,  
The sea-wind still and silent;  
Above me fly the bats.

Now, as the streets are lit,  
I fear the lurking thieves  
Who seek their prey like hunters.

Here, there is no grass,  
But dust from off the mine-dumps  
Like smoke is drifting skyward.

Here there is no river  
To shelter lurking frogs  
And harbour water-fowl.

Here are only people  
Jostling home from labour,  
Herded by dusk, together.

(Malcolm, Friedman)

**To Whom It May Concern**

**Bearer**  
**Bare of everything but particulars**  
**Is a Bantu**  
**The language of a people in southern Africa**  
**He seeks to proceed from here to there**  
**Please pass him on**  
**Subject to these particulars**  
**He lives**  
**Subject to the provisions**  
**Of the Urban Natives Act of 1925**  
**Amended often**  
**To update it to his sophistication**  
**Subject to the provisions of the said Act**  
**He may roam freely within a prescribed area**  
**Free only from the anxiety of conscription**  
**In terms of the Abolition of Passes Act**  
**A latter-day amendment**  
**In keeping with moon-age naming**  
**Bearer's designation is Reference number 417181**  
**And (he) acquires a niche in the said area**  
**As a temporary sojourner**  
**To which he must betake himself**  
**At all times**  
**When his services are dispensed with for the day**  
**As a permanent measure of law and order**  
**Please note**  
**The remains of R/N 417181**  
**Will be laid to rest in peace**  
**On a plot**  
**Set aside for Methodist Xhosas**  
**A measure also adopted**  
**At the express request of the Bantu**  
**In anticipation of any faction fight**  
**Before the Day of Judgement.**

# Dennis Brutus<sup>28</sup>

## Letter to Martha, 4

Particularly in a single cell,  
but even in the sections  
the religious sense asserts itself;

perhaps a childhood habit of nightly prayers  
the accessibility of Bibles,  
or awareness of the proximity of death:

and, of course, it is a currency –  
pietistic expressions can purchase favours  
and it is a way of suggesting reformation  
(which can procure promotion);

and the resort of the weak  
is to invoke divine revenge  
against a rampaging injustice;

but in the grey silence of the empty afternoons  
it is not uncommon  
to find oneself talking to God.  
[Robben Island, 1966]

by son-

**Motho ke Motho ka Batho Babang**  
(A person is a person because of other people)

By holding my mirror out of the window I see  
Clear to the end of the passage.  
There's a person down there.  
A prisoner polishing a doorhandle.  
In the mirror I see him see  
My face in the mirror,  
I see the fingertips of his free hand  
Bunch together, as if to make  
An object the size of a badge  
Which travels up to his forehead  
The place of an imaginary cap.

(This means: *A warder.*)

Two fingers are extended in a vee  
And wiggle like two antennae.

(He's being watched.)

A finger of his free hand makes a watch-hand's arc  
On the wrist of his polishing arm without  
Disrupting the slow-slow rhythm of his work.

(*Later. Maybe, later we can speak.*)

*Hey! Wat maak jy daar?*

— a voice from around the corner.

*No. Just polishing baas.*

He turns his back to me, now watch  
His free hand, the talkative one,  
Slips quietly behind

— *Strength brother, it says,*

In my mirror,

A black fist.

**Waiting**

The isolation of exile is a gutted  
warehouse at the back of pleasure streets:  
the waterfront of limbo stretches panoramically --  
night the beautifier lets the lights  
dance across the wharf.  
I peer through the skull's black windows  
wondering what can credibly save me.  
The poem trails across the ruined wall  
a solitary snail, or phosphorescently  
swims into vision like a fish  
through a hole in the mind's foundation, acute  
as a glittering nerve.

Origins trouble the voyager much, those roots  
that have sipped the waters of another continent.  
Africa is gigantic, one cannot begin  
to know even the strange behaviour furthest  
south in my xenophobic department.  
Come back, come back maybe  
cried the breakers of stone and cried the crowds  
cried Mr Kumalo before the withering fire  
maybe Afrika!

Now there is the loneliness of lost  
beauties at Cabo de Esperancia, Table Mountain:  
all the dead poets who sang of spring's  
miraculous recrudescence in the sandscapes of Karoo  
sang of thoughts that pierced like arrows, spoke  
through the strangled throat of multi-humanity  
bruised like a python in the maggot-fattening sun.

You with your face of pain, your touch of gaiety,  
with eyes that could distil me any instant  
have passed into some diary, some dead journal  
now that the computer, the mechanical notion  
obliterates sincerities.

The amplitude of sentiment has brought me no nearer  
to anything affectionate,  
new magnitude of thought has but betrayed  
the lustre of your eyes.

You yourself have vacated the violent arena  
for a northern life of semi-snow  
under the Distant Early Warning System:  
I suffer the radiation burns of silence.  
It is not cosmic immensity or catastrophe  
that terrifies me:  
it is solitude that mutilates,  
the night bulb that reveals ash on my sleeve.



## Pregnancy

I am expecting  
to feel I don't know what,  
as now and then you knock, softly,  
like a student entering the presence of authority,  
until grown with the weeks insistent you butt in more  
and still more and more confident.

Nok knock!

Who's there?

A good question that, unanswered  
in the mirror's muteness, and the held hands' bolstering.  
To what can I refer for the knowledge that I seek? Doctors? Books? Other  
women?

Nothing, except to each week's waiting which throws me back upon my  
body.

Knock nok.

But I know nothing about the knowledge that you seek –  
Life, or some quest equally as large –  
though each week my body bellies its figurehead more fully,  
breasting a cargo through erratic waves.

Of course I am said to bloom, my dear, and blossom.

But I have never been a flower, and do not now intend to pistil into  
motherhood.

And always my power is limited as I try to hold but refuse your shape:  
cutting the elastic of familiar clothes;  
determinedly craving nothing out of the ordinary;  
pleasuring my body – *my body* – as I will.

You will not lie still but I belie your presence,  
and think of customs where mothers bind their daughters' feet,  
and fathers celebrate the birth of boys in bars.

Just wait, people say ironically.  
(Well what else can I do, with this intimate living that happens all despite  
me?)

Your time will come;  
we cannot wait to see you, as the Bible puts it, big with child.

So I refuse but hold your shape,  
slathering the jut of ourselves with salve;  
waking nightly to the darkness;  
flushing the bladder yet another time.

And always another knock  
a kick  
a funny flick  
a shiver  
and a finny glide

Suddenly  
that slides  
across the flesh.

Past the bellybulge you wait,  
taking things slowly,  
circling the date declared to make you present.

Lying low beneath a swell  
you show your shape in moments:  
my elation and sadness,  
your peaks and dents,  
movements that irreverently decline your future.

Lo Lull

1

i am a dirty little room  
with spiders in the corner of my skull  
my mouth a dark pit  
into which human droppings disappear  
the speck of rust in my heart worries me

many people breathe in and out of me  
i am at ease with the world  
only the speck of rust worries me

2

they stripped me naked  
now they let me prowl  
but they don't laugh  
i feel no shame, no cold

why are they starting  
they wanted me naked

i toss my head off  
i cry with agony  
to make them laugh  
but they only stare

i show them my bunn  
they still stare  
i tell them a joke  
they stare

i get it —  
i must be their judge

3

i look at myself sleeping  
i look at myself going  
i look at myself coming for a piss  
i look at myself having a nightmare  
i look at myself getting up

i look at myself shaving  
i look at myself going off to work  
i keep looking at myself  
not knowing that i am being watched

4

first paint my head in all detail  
then pluck the eyes out  
then cut the ears off  
then strip off the lips  
then smash the teeth out  
then burn the hair off  
then peel off the skin  
then the nose, the tongue  
first paint my skull in all detail

**For All Voices, For All Victims**  
[in response to stories at the TRC]

because of you  
this country no longer lies  
between us but within  
it breathes becalmed  
after being wounded  
in its wondrous throat

in the cradle of my skull  
it sings, it ignites  
my tongue, my inner ear, the cavity of heart  
shudders towards the outline new in soft intimate clicks and gutturals

of my soul the retina learns to expand  
daily because by a thousand stories  
I was scorched

a new skin

I am changed for ever. I want to say:

forgive me

forgive me

forgive me

You whom I have wronged, please  
take me

with you.

(author)

**Heather Robertson<sup>44</sup>**

**Under the Sun**

under the sun  
i am daughter,  
    comrade,  
    lover,  
        friend

i do to please  
and please to do  
they are me  
and i am them  
but,  
under the stars  
under sirius and the three sisters  
the southern cross and orion's belt  
i am

wonderfully  
less than  
    vapour

## Voices of the Xhosa, 1880 –<sup>11</sup>

### Praises of Matanzima, Son of Sandile\*

He's the hero with ivory armrings,  
the great aloe that stops children sucking.  
The overthrower, he drops the grey stone,  
the cannon that thundered in the Mathole,  
so the cowards fled into this land,  
so the cowards fled in headlong.  
He's the dark one fit to stay in the Xhiba house,  
and not be removed to Mxhamli's at Mnzwini.  
He casts at a wagon and its ribs fall apart,  
the tent falls apart leaving the buck seat.  
The piercing lightning, the strong sky-wagon,  
which dropped a millstone and flattened forests,  
so officers lay flat on their backs.  
The wild beast that roared below Ncememe,  
so the yellow-wood was uprooted.  
The raging bull of Rharhabe:  
don't you slaughter this beast for its age?  
The red-shouldered parrot of Myeki's daughter,  
which arrived with Mangcotywa.  
One black-nailed from digging for the nation,  
who entered the court of Victoria.  
He has a sharp-pointed tool like a pick:  
he dug up the yellowwood below Gcolo,  
and hurled it down below Gqontshi.  
The long-haired one of Bholo,  
who never paid tax all his life.

(tr. isiXhosa Jeff Opland and D.L.P. Yali-Manisi)

\* Matanzima anticipated a skirmish against the British in the ninth and last frontier war (1878). [ed.]

S.E.K. Mqhayi<sup>14</sup>

*After the Battle*

Ho-o-o-o-yini! Ho-o-o-o-yini!  
It's me that's talking, a man of no worth!  
It's me that's talking, a man who knows how to speak!  
What kind of creature did you think I was,  
One who says things that can't be said?  
Today the country's in labour;  
Today the land's in pain;  
Beware of something in the stomach,  
Suspect this thing in the womb;  
Today it's as if Gilikankqo'll be born,  
As if a doe who spurns her own fawn will be born.  
Ho-o-o-o-yini! Ho-o-o-o-yini!  
The trumpet sang out for the start of a journey,  
The horn bellowed to gather us,  
The day we crossed the Kei armed to the teeth;  
The day not a word passed Zanzolo's lips,  
We saw the flames flash from his eyes,  
We saw the smoke billow from his nose,  
We heard the shrilling of whistles in our ears.  
Someone said today the beast's enraged,  
Something long expected had now come to pass,  
For they looked at his brows and saw he was furious;  
Today those brows are like clouds on a thunderous day,  
Today they're flashing like lightning, and the people tremble.  
Someone said today the world's at war,  
In the land of Rharhabe all things are in turmoil,  
Shame and disgrace have befallen the Xhosa.  
Oh! the things that occur on this earth!  
How could the child sidle up to his mother?  
Crane feather piled on crane feather, at Hoho;  
Iron bit into flesh, at Hoho;  
Club clashed against club, at Hoho;  
The oxhide thudded, at Hoho;  
There was thumping here and there and there, at Hoho;  
Someone passed on without prayer, at Hoho;  
He joined the multitudes in a moment, at Hoho;  
The vulture fed with his dogs, at Hoho;  
The buzzard fed and left more for the raven, at Hoho;  
The hyena fed and passed on to the wild dog, at Hoho;



The green fly fed and left more for the maggot, at Hoho;  
Ho-yi-i-i-i-i-i-i-ni!

Please lay down your weapons now, warrior;  
Please lay down your shield now, valiant youth;  
It seems your task is done in the land of Rharhabe,  
For my part, it seems you've scattered your foe.  
Go now, there's much to put right,  
For you abandoned your homes with no one in charge,  
You left your children to set fire to each other.  
There are rows on rows of things you must tackle.

There are so many things that you must attend to –  
Haven't you heard of the visions of old man Khulile?  
Haven't you heard what will come to pass in this land?  
Haven't you heard of the weighty Book that's impending?  
Won't we send you to examine it for us?  
For by then our own eyes will have dimmed.  
Haven't you heard of the prince who will speak?  
Even in this battle his presence was felt.  
They say that he's Gaba's son of the Cirha.  
Haven't you heard of a girl who will speak?  
We'll call it destruction, but it's sacramental slaughter.  
Haven't you heard of Bright Ears who are coming?  
What you say, for we hear they're coming with scourges?  
Haven't you heard of these flowing-hair nations!  
We hear that they're people who traffic in lightning.

So I, son of Zolile, address you young warriors,  
Go home but stay watchful, the country's in labour –  
When it gives birth I say it will bear Gilikankqo:  
It will bear a doe who spurns her own fawn.  
Go home but stay watchful, there'll be pools of blood;  
Go home but stay watchful, mankind will come to an end;  
Go home but stay watchful, you will sell your fathers;  
Go home but stay watchful, your fathers will sell you;  
Go home but stay watchful, chieftainship will die;  
Go home but stay watchful, you'll examine the Book for us;  
Go home but stay watchful, the shooting star will flash;  
Go home but stay watchful, you'll stand on guard for Zanzolo;  
Go home but stay watchful, you're the props of the nation;  
Go home but stay watchful, your family's in danger;  
Go home but stay watchful, darkness will descend;  
Go home but stay watchful, we'll not endure forever;  
Go home but stay watchful, prepare for future generations;  
Go home but stay watchful, I say the real battle is upon us.

(tr. isiXhosa Jeff Opland and D.L.P. Yali-Manisi)

## Could you not Write Otherwise?

Could you not write otherwise, this woman said to me,  
Could you not write of things really poetical?  
Of many-coloured birds dipping their beaks  
Into many-coloured flowers?  
Of mine machinery standing up, you know,  
Gaunt, full of meaning, against the sky?

Must you write always of black men and Indians,  
Of half-castes and Jews, Englishmen and Afrikaners,  
Of problems insoluble and secret fears  
That are best forgotten?  
You read the paper, you post your letters,  
You buy at the store like any normal being,  
Why then must you write such things?

Madam, really, since you ask the question,  
Really, Madam, I do not like to mention it  
But there is a voice that I cannot silence.  
It seems I have lived for this, to obey it  
To pour out the life-long accumulation  
Of a thousand sorrowful songs.  
I did not ask for this destination  
I did not ask to write these same particular songs.

Simple I was, I wished to write but words,  
And melodies that had no meanings but their music  
And songs that had no meaning but their song.  
But the deep notes and the undertones  
Kept sounding themselves, kept insistently  
Intruding themselves, like a prisoned tide  
That under the shining and the sunlit sea  
In caverns and corridors goes underground thundering.

Madam, I have no wish to be cut off from you  
I have no wish to hurt you with the meanings  
Of the land where you were born.  
It was with unbelieving ears I heard  
My artless songs become the groans and cries of men.  
And you, why you may pity me also,  
For what I do when such a voice is speaking,  
What can I speak but what it wishes spoken?

Me, Coloured

Aunt Liza.

Yes?

What am I?

*What are you talking about?*

I met a boy at the river.

He said he was Zulu.

She laughed.

*You are Coloured.*

*There are three kinds of people:*

*White people, Coloured people,  
and Black people.*

*The White people come first,  
then the Coloured people,  
then the Black people.*

Why?

*Because it is so.*

Next day when I met Joseph,  
I smacked my chest and said:

Me, Coloured!

He clapped his hands and laughed.

Joseph and I spent most  
of the long summer afternoons together.

He learned some Afrikaans from me.

I learned some Zulu from him.

Our days were full.

There was the river to explore.

There were swimming lessons.

I learned to fight with sticks;

to weave a green hat

of young willow wands and leaves;

to catch frogs and tadpoles

with my hands;

to set a trap for the *springhaas*,

to make the sounds of the river birds.

There was the hot sun to comfort us.

There was the green grass to dry our bodies.

There was the soft clay with which to build.

There was the fine sand with which to fight.

There were our giant grasshoppers to race.

There were the locust swarms

when the skies turned black

and we caught them by the hundreds.

There was the rare taste of crisp,

brown-baked, salted locusts.

There was the voice of the wind in the willows.

There was the voice of the heavens

in the thunder storms.

There were the voices of two children

in laughter, ours.

There were Joseph's tales of black kings

who lived in days before the white man.

At home, I said:

Aunt Liza?

Yes?

Did we have coloured kings before the white man?

No.

Then where did we come from?

Joseph and his mother come from the

black kings who were before the white man.

Laughing and ruffling my head, she said:

*You talk too much. Go 'n wash up.*

*(Tell Freedom, 1954)*