

"Coming Home is more than an anthology of poems. It is a remarkable testimony of genuine passion ... [These poems] inspire us, provoke us, challenge us and heal us ... in the pages of a book for generations still to come."

Ismail Mohamed

(CEO of the Market Theatre Foundation, Johannesburg; formerly Artistic Director, National Arts Festival, Grahamstown)

COMING HOME :: POEMS OF THE GRAHAMSTOWN DIASPORA

EDITED BY HARRY OWEN

POETS PRINTERY

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LUNGA IZATA

He said...

9 o'clock
We were on time!
But it was late
It was too late to fight for him
To fight for my love
To claim the love I deposited...

We were waiting for him
He came in a rush
He looked surprised
He looked lost
He invited me in
And told me to sit down

Sit down
He said
I do not love you
He said
I do not have feelings for you
He said
But I do care for you
That's why I told you to sit down
He said

Sitting prevented me from falling
I guess
But didn't prevent me from becoming:
Deaf
Blind
Dead...

Ears never experienced such words
Eyes couldn't believe
How detached from me he was

And all those sensations killed my spirit
It felt like a cheerleader trial
And turned out I couldn't cheer him up anymore

He didn't know us anymore
Remember us?
Us...
Me and you?
Remember how we didn't care that I was laughly
That you were enraged
That I was imperious
That you were indignant
That I was infernal
That you were delusional

It did not matter!
But it does hurt!
Not every day...
Only when they ask me about you
Only when I am writing
Only when I wake up
Only when I am breathing...

Don't ask me to explain my poem:
This poem misses you more than I do
This poem, besides comfort,
Carries the love you have denied me

ANTON KRUEGER

moving house
rowing on
to the next berth

so slow to let go
of these barnacles
slugging my base
this rust grows
quick
undertow catches
eddies of memories
foam of words
trails behind,
surface impressions
traces of mind
still here
not here
not ever again
any longer

CAROL LEFF

SWEET WATER

Greetings in the name of Jah
say the dreadlocked guys
readying some ganja
as I reach the spring
at this sacred place of water-gathering
their bucket overflows beneath a rusted old pipe

while they laugh through sparkling eyes
and make lazy conversation
I place a container on a stone slab
to catch the trickle of nectar
and continue thus to fill
several five-litre water bottles

I am watched over in a cloud of smoke and smiles
as I sit on a tuft of river grass
surrounded by patches of *helichrysum* nearby
that add a floral scent to the earthy mix
perhaps it is the herb
or the warm sun on my shoulders
that relaxes me and lets my mind wander
but I find myself musing:

here in this City of Saints
we all draw our water
from the same spring

Resting

We have had good rains
these past few days
not enough to break the drought but
ample to begin digging your grave
in the heavy clay soil
between the rose bushes.

As I dig, you stumble nearby
scarcely able to walk, yet
not wanting to stay still –
wondering where you are
no longer knowing who I am
what on dog's earth is happening?