

DEFYING THE DISEASED HOUR

Tonight your prayers are saddened.
Footlights eclipse your generous face,
A mother's dreams frozen with sudden dread.
Heavy traffic congesting across your brown face,
Pestilence terrifying your rooted heart.
Your wet eyes are our waves. Energizing love for family.
We shoal and break, tearful, softly singing with you.
You're the sea teeming with memories, joyous riffs
Shining grass flower tufts, a mother's luminous reefs.
Prayers cursing the poisoned incessant winds.
Something in the air is seedling, yet darkly manic.
In your face we search for tiny bubbles
Umqombothi home-brew delights.
Missing our warm nest, your besieged heart,
Filling us with tears, when no one is dead yet.
Along the Umkhomazi River the dancing festival begins,
The beast of uncertainty surrenders her garbs.
Maidens weave merriment into bright triangular scarfs.
Expectant prayers warming the napes of our necks
The blue sea lacing the earth in dazzling triangular scarfs.
Our mothers' songs defying the diseased hour,
Ancestors up in arms, dancing, spitting fire across the arena.

Their hands killing the fattest bull as boys and maidens sing.

A mother's revived wings now mighty as the eagle's,

See her stride into the high square, a sharp light beam.

Sandile Ngidi, Umkomaas, South Africa

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