

TOGARA MUZANENHAMO

New Poems

Braille

1

The law states: the sun should not shine in anyone's face, or on their chest.

There were exceptions though: trusted astronomers were allowed to sunbathe belly up, mathematicians made to run into the eye of the rising sun. The head of state addressed the island every Thursday at noon.

The sun bouncing off his forehead like a beacon.

Though the young were taught to hate the sea for stealing their future - they kept the old traditions alive by making boats.

People ate fish with sour faces.

'Salt', in their language, was the word for 'grief'.

2

We stood and sang by candlelight.

Over the years nothing had changed: the roads plugged with traffic, the engines of industry laboured with fumes and heat, people fell asleep after sex – thinking how in their lifetime things never seemed to happen.

Had they listened, the whole world would have deafened them with screams.
If only they themselves would stop screaming.

Eight

Five times over, then nine till you're done.
The bet was, you couldn't do it till dawn –
Yet by noon, our laughter turned to silence;
twelve days of tears brought on a violence

Of sweat. These games were for the poor,
But those days are gone. Was it then when
we wore hats in the sun, slept on the floor
and lost ourselves in the purity of oxygen?

Last year I met VaSimbarashe, the grandson
Of the great fisherman. I asked questions
He would never answer. We took to the sky
Crossing our arms, keeping quiet all the way.

History

with the last load and the quadrant done
we returned to Passacaglia
boots tired
eyes worked vacant by labour

passing Brahe's Point
we watched in silence
its gold dome shooting clear bolts of sunlight into darkness
the effect religious yet cartooned
the light narcotic

American Pages

'Cantrell told the Star not to bother, then smiled...'

I.

Boredom. Raw months of nothing.
Moon after moon. All the days were hot.
Would the lord not stop his mockery. His words
stuck like a fish-bone in the eye of a cold thought.
Where has it all ended, why has it all become this:
Hitler and Jesus in the same apparition,
unfolding time with fire.

Cantrell! they're waiting! But what good will it do.
What good has any of it done before? They wait,
you wait, until something happens. The meat is always
cold, their soup lumpy - what can anyone do but
feel damned. Cantrell! They're waiting for you!
ooooooBut he never listens, all day he lies in bed
with his visions. And Jesus says,
with a calm finger poised in the air,
Patience and Love My Brother.
Patience And Love.
Then whispers:
providence

II.

The black-haired warmonger is waiting.
He has learnt some of the art of Patience. The years
have cooled the fire in his mind. But it is still
the bloody activities he can not live without;
Blood oils grass red, darkens desert sands,
sweetens old concrete with the taste of iron.
For years he has waited, he has thought about it
all the time. Can we find him, will he speak?

A few messengers are here! The nightmares all real.
Their thin pale bodies have no arms. Lack of arms
means no dirty fingernails. Notes are delivered in the dark
with rotten serrated teeth. Not yet time to speak,
these bald messengers too young for the words,
molasses curdling with starlight in their throats,
the black binge for sunlight. Their time will come.
It always does when they flense their own bodies
with the shadows of corrupted flints.

*

Dreams flick out fast - who knows what dreams
The hot sun lets you catch blind. Dreams grip
your neck, shake you like a rag doll, fling you
in and out of something dark.

Why do they move the mirrors!

Why does it all have to come down to this! Don't they realise
our faith is strong. The reasons that kept
us running were pure. What harm was the harm in it all.

III.

The night ape's call roars out then echoes off.
A warm night again lost in the American pages.
Poet is friend, remember that.

Word is word universal, but partially.

Word is curved by language, where even light is bent
by gravity. No eternal line is straight, and tested.
There are no rights to eternity.

Universe is partial.

But it works though, these simple intricacies,
these crowded meanings waiting behind the noise
that shades the noise - to have their silent time, to shine
within the mind of stellar

communication.

Evening crickets call. But wait, what are all these places,
bridges and rivers - these men and women I
now have also given featureless faces too, who stand with
the Russians, the Greeks and the French -
who also come from Africa and Asia, who
struggled for their place - until after Auden landed,
louder than bombs, fleeing the old world.

IV.

To sleep beneath the covers is confirmation.
She reads a book, not *The Meaning of Meaning*.
The quiet almost as unbearable as the morning traffic
and daytime chatter. Everything says Close Your Eyes,
but nothing really works.

Cantrell. Cantrell must be at his flat soldering something
with a soldering iron.
In the Midlands Jimmy and Cliff agree in their one-roomed flat.
NO! Cantrell was not in his flat. Cantrell
was in a bar playing pool with friends.

Always the blond

beer for Cantrell, cigarette in the corner of his mouth,
a slight squint of his left eye as he eyed the white ball and cued.

'You read 'K', No. 'You haven't read 'K' No.
Nothing else said.
He stretched, lifted one foot up, posing like a skater sunk the eight-ball.
Notes were exchanged.
He bought the next round.

K.

Always wanted to go either to
Boston or Vermont. Can't really say why. Was Bartok
in Vermont for a bit, away from New York. Pete Rock,

Pete Rock, Sanburg, Kunitz. My grandmother, the almighty Lutheran,
blue skies and yellow grasslands. Summer is here!
And the wide eye of eternity simply stares unmoved,
weighted by boredom
flooded with rheum.

K.

will not stand the simplest solution - but stare back
armed with nothing but religion and history.

V.

drove heat into words. Cooled others cold.

ambulance's sirens,
needles

Babel.

We all frothed at the mouth.

VI.

el ojo es una hora inmensa.

The classical pose:
eyes up, solitude in thought,
the modernity of photography.
Still, godlike as we stared up
from the vantage point of the photographer;
this God of poetry, this human ambassador
from the passionate Americas
where language kept the kilns of
life alive, where the pottery of love
owed it's debt to poetry,
the urge of skin needing skin-
where dark corridors permitted life
to divide in the armoury of the womb.

Your mouth is sloped Dear Ambassador.
Mountains, idiots look up at - call
close walls, breaths' thoughts
called breaths.

Where were you going.

Where had you come from.

Athlete of thought.

Your mind's breast

breasting tapes.

VII.

Cantrell told the staff not to bother, then smiled
unconvincingly. Whatever he said, he knew they
would disregard. Some stood unmoved
with their arms folded - looking at him;
Why had the Death Star come again, why
couldn't he blot out the light. It would all begin again soon;
and they were all waiting.

The Geometry of Sound

The festival of light began long before they entered the clinic.

Men and women fell into casual delight as the sky spun like a disc.

Starlight was thrown in every direction bringing dream and myth together in one warm colour.

Love swung and could not tell the world apart from the world within.

Here, the geometry of sound was shaped - every word conveyed a clarified meaning as music dissolved landscapes and sang in the blood. And time, time almost disqualified itself...

So there it was – the thought that came, saluted by two sober exclamations: The greatest books!
The greatest books were written by mathematicians!