

## beautiful ones are dying

(hymn for dumisani dlamini)

beautiful ones are dying  
streets too are dead  
no soul  
just machinery faking heartbeat  
mad engines are petrol-drunk  
crush against mindless skulls  
of traffic lights  
and bleeding nights wipe the smile  
off my poem's face  
it cracks my guts open  
and out comes the gutter  
i jump into the sewer  
i stew up mad shit  
there'll be no vaseline and shiny bum  
of a toddler poem  
i swim into the muddy bottom  
of the sewer  
looking for an angry god  
if i die there at least i fertilise electricity  
of spoken word  
word spoken in tongues  
where beautiful ones are dying  
they take a plunge into the crazy scream  
of 7th street melville  
marinate their souls in the sea of spiro's beer  
and eternal conversations  
about changing this damn country  
my country where you can't get a free cigarette  
they lit their fingers  
cremated themselves  
leaving behind the ganja ash of memory  
the salt of tears for dumi  
who makes a sanzalicious movie  
in which the maker must die  
marechera are we truly  
*the fiction we choose to be*  
or just beautiful ones dying here  
we are dodging bullets  
here you die for the wallet in your pocket  
the muggers are up there  
in suits ties and lies  
rule us  
chew us

floss out bits of our flesh and swallow  
these sharks have no vision beyond the plate  
they don't even know who and what they ate  
it's history's baked beans  
causing a fart  
in the face of the poor  
a bum in the east  
and a bum in the west  
its g-string tearing rectum  
and floods of diarrhoea drown the promised land  
of nestum and syrup  
killing beautiful ones dying  
killing beautiful ones dying  
i am jumping into the sewer  
i am stewing up mad shit  
in my country which refuses to take off  
its clothes  
and show its un-publishable (p)arts  
country which pimps poetry  
and the poet is a vendor machine pops only  
with money  
my country whose angel liver shivers from  
whisky  
my country which burns holes in its lungs  
but won't stop smoking  
my country whose cough is full-blown laughter  
beyond cure  
my country which twists dreadlocks all day  
and won't go to work  
my country where beautiful ones are dying  
for a holy fix of bomb zol  
my country which sells rainbow cunt in oxford street  
and tourists cry with joy  
my country of cunt and cock at ease  
with disease  
my country whose house is robbed  
but gives diamond hugs and gold handshakes  
to thieves  
my country of screaming soil  
beneath concrete sheets  
and monstrous phallus of skyscrapers  
my country's tears screech against the tin  
shack's shackles  
my country which is the thin line  
between womb and tomb  
my country whose smile is a hideous scar

eating up the stars  
swallowing up beautiful ones  
my country which breastfeeds a million  
metaphors  
but won't feed a single rebellion

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This piece will appear in Kgafela oa Magogodi's forthcoming book *Outspoken*, a collection of his poetry and prose. It also features in his spoken word album *I Mike What I Like*, which will be released in Berlin in December 2004.