

REVISIONS

I awaken, but
there's nothing I have to do
the light coming through the shutters
makes the wall loom white
I no longer count the days

somehow
I seem to be looking at my life as a poem
to make some wild revisions
trying to change, not particles,
but the style itself

I try pushing and patting my daily life into shapes
instead of knocking at the door to words
I timidly stare
at my slippery soul
like a shelled, boiled egg

come to think of it
I've been fond of molding myself since I was a kid
If I was the one who was touching
who was it
that I was touching?

I close my eyes
I feel warm breath on my cheek
cool fingers move down toward my lower belly
I am motionless
like a line about to be touched by red ink

WIND SEDUCES STONE

Stone, dear,
where did you come from?
Did you fall out of the deep blue sky?
Did you well up from the bottom of the earth?
Or from inside the pocket of someone's jacket?

Stone, dear,
what is on your mind now?
The time a mammoth stepped on you?
The time you were hurled at a radiant martyr's face
on a gallows in the capital city?
Or the morning after a nuclear war when you alone survive?

Don't worry, dear. You don't have to answer me.
I like you
with your silent and lonely stubbornness
better than water so agreeable to all,
better than flames that burn out so quickly
in spite of all their flare.

Yesterday, I was over the sea
over the savannah before that, and the Sahara before that
I know every little alley on this planet
except for one –
the place called "home"
Freedom is arduous, you see, more than you might imagine.

Stone, dear
won't you try to sail to me?
We can surely make it, if we pull our forces together
Try to levitate
just one millionth of a millimeter will do –
even a stone will have its hair stand on end.

SONG OF AWAKENING

Whistle

for those who come here for the first time
hyoe hyoe hyoe hyorihyohtoh

Greet

soliida soliida liida liida

(Ah what a mysterious sight
Chenchi is playing with a dog)

Whistle

for those who come here for the first time
going round and round
hyoe hyoe hyoe hyorihyohtoh
hyoe hyoe hyoe hyorihyohtoh

Children, bathe in this light
like savoring the only fruit in the forest

(Is that Earth's roar
from Mubira of Vatonga
or is it from Magau?)

Come, let us greet
soliida soliida liida liida
soliida soliida liida liida

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Behold Behemoth

He is my creation!

Behold the sinewy power in his loins, in his belly, in his thighs!

Behold the water dripping off his tail and
horseflies hovering over his back!

The mountains soar

Wishing to be reflected in his eyes

the rivers snake

to pour into his pink gaping mouth

Oh, look, he is about to lie down

beneath lotuses, or among thick marsh-reeds or in the pond!

My love and sword eat the world!

Humans, know that you live crowned with dazzling rays from the sky
only in order to see one single Behemoth

Note: The poem references oral Zimbabwean tradition and the *Book of Job* 40:15-23

THE HOLLOW MAN

I wish to be hollow
I'd love to just stand in an open field
it would be nice if I could air
all the words stuffed inside my head
like straw drying in open air
in neat diagonal rolls in the sun. See,
the breeze blows across
the totally dry grass
I'd really love to whisper like that.
Mice scurry across broken pieces of glass
in an utterly dry basement
I'd love to be as gentle, freed from meaning.

Shapes free from borders, shadows dyed with no colors
forces that do not harm, a residual vision of beating wings

so that I can commune
with those who have left the earth,
so that I can look at myself on earth
with the gaze of the one who looked back from the other shore
I wish to be hollow
I'd love to just stand in an open field.