

House of Hunger poetry slam Translations from Shona

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The original broadcast in Shona is available through
<http://www.pambazuka.org/en/broadcasts/index.php>

Mhuri Yekwangu

I want to drop a piece. As I was coming here, I passed through that back lane there. There's a brother who said 'Ah, Jahman are you getting lost? Ah you remember those days when we were fleeing those people wearing berets?' I was really lost and had forgotten what he was talking about. So I went and had a chat with him and then I recollected. Like last year when I got this car, there was a time when the forces were running amok in the streets and I had to...the brother had to secure some shelter immediately. So those brothers provided shelter for me. So I'm going to do a piece that I wrote on the same day that this encounter with the brother happened. It's called Mhuri Yekwangu. I'm trying to develop it into a song, so you get to hear a preview. Copy left.

Fathers in thuggery
Mothers, at the market, getting clobbered
The youth, their knowledge wounded
Tots in the sand
Dust everywhere
Kith and kin

Fathers in thuggery
Mothers, at the market, taken into custody
The youth, their knowledge wounded
Tots in the sand
Dust everywhere
Kith and kin

Our homes razed
Our sweat, they...
In knowledge they are sucked and spat
Till when, being clobbered by bandits
Kith and kin

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Our homes razed
Our sweat, they...
In knowledge they are sucked and spat
Till when, being clobbered by bandits
Kith and kin

No
Dig a hole in the ground betrayer
Your time has come
There is nothing;
You lied to the elders
You are done with the war
*Toyi toyi*¹; we have brought it back
Kith and kin

I say
Dig a hole in the ground betrayer
Your time has come
There is nothing;
You lied to the elders
You are done with the war
Toyi toyi; we have brought it back
Kith and kin

Kawupenyu Kacho

The one that I'm holding now is called Kawupenyu Kacho

I was just singing a song
Slowly pedaling forward
To see VaChihera the porridge stirrer
Then came the fire powered cart
Driven by one who had bought a stamp

It took me from behind
Into the air I spun
Wiriwiri wiriwiri; downward
And crash!
Driven by a fear of handcuffs, he turned back to take me with him

¹ <http://www.answers.com/topic/toyi-toyi>

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Then without anyone noticing, melted away
People,
It's an accidental kind of life this one

Onlookers crowded around me
All eager to help
Stupefied, by then I was
An astute one thought of the police station;
All agreed
With me, they took to the road
People,
It's an accidental kind of life this one

Their intention, to get me an ambulance
The first step into the police; the lights blacked out;
As if ill luck was with me.
The police radios;
We were told to wait
And we hung on
And the blood, drip drip it went
Later, way later
The radios went 'over over over'; my heart lightened
'At last,' I thought
People,
It's an accidental kind of life this one

The police sent a message for the ambulance
They were told there was no fuel; only a single vehicle available
And it had go out for woman who was about to give birth
We waited for it yet again
And the blood, drip drip it went
People of my kind,
It's an accidental kind of life this one

Later, way later
We heard the ambulance arrive
It took me and we raced to the hospital
On arrival, I needed some stitching up;
I was placed in the theatre
And left there by *mukoti*
Who, forever, disappeared

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Through the walls, heard what they were talking
One said 'When I go away on leave I'm not coming back'
While another said 'I'm only have a day to go'
Someone saying, 'This is my last night'
And yet another saying 'I've saved enough for a visa now'
'To go away to burn some foreign currency'
Way later *mukoti* came back
People,
It's an accidental kind of life this one

He came with an injection
For tatenus; so he said
And that he had pulled it straight from *nyamukuta*
Because the hospital had run out of medicines;
My treatment over, I heard the radio:
'...a respectable member of the city
made a hasty journey to South Africa
He was accompanied by his wife'
People,
It's an accidental kind of life this one