

Zimbabwe teapot

Hasani

The fires of dictatorship, oppression
corruption and incarceration burn
beneath the kettle in which the people
are imprisoned.

Torture, hatred and political rhetoric
stoke the flames.

Inside, the people are trapped –
hopelessness gives way to terror and
despair.

As the heat increases and the pressure
builds, they are forced out of this
unbearable prison, and propelled
across the world – helpless, out of
control, silent, to land wherever fate
takes them.

They hope that they are escaping to a
better life, escaping from the worst.

They prefer the risks of lions and
crocodiles, of drowning, of suffocation
in a truck, of starvation on the journey,
to what they are leaving behind.

But when they land, wherever they
land, they may find they have only
exchanged the frying pan for a new fire.

Love poem I Feride Uncuoglu

You and I

We are both lying down

Our hands under our chins

We are at the top of a cliff.

We are watching the waves hitting the rocks

The sun is high in the sky

There is a fire inside me

We are so close, there is no room

For even a grasshopper to come between us.

Your skin is almost touching mine

You are my missing part

But when I see and hear

The waves crash against the rocks

I curse my destiny.

I am desperate, you feel guilty

I know my love is impossible

It weighs like an anchor on my heart.

Dirty me Jade Amoli-Jackson

I try to kiss

Dirty me!

What have I done

To deserve this?

Horrible thinking

The sky is open

And the sun shines

To all, but me

When I try to yell

I have no voice.

I am dirty!

Waiting Aso

This evening the butterflies are not coming back.

Home is nothing,

Except the damp, dark cellar.

Home is a broken boat on the edge of a still sea.

Home is nothing,

Except an old, destroyed, military submarine.

This evening, the butterflies are not coming back.

You are still waiting,

Like the moon waits for morning to come.

But this evening home is a hopeless place,

Cold, dim and narrow.

Home is nothing,

Except a large, parched, rootless tree.

Home is a cemetery of loneliness,

A silent cave, full of dead stones.

Home is hell without the butterflies.

No sound of steps, no breaths or shadows.

But you are still waiting.

Home is tiredness, fear and sleeplessness.

Home is the tears and sorrow of the mother.

Home is nothing,

Except the quiet snuffing of a baby.

No one returns home,

Home is emptiness.

But the young mother still waits with great anxiety
On this gloomy night.



My brain is an immigrant Senait

My mind can travel anywhere
Across the ocean, across dry land
Past, present and future
No traffic lights or mind the gap
No one can stop me moving.

My eyes can see the un-seeable
My ears can hear the un-hearable
My hands can touch the invisible.

I think non-stop.

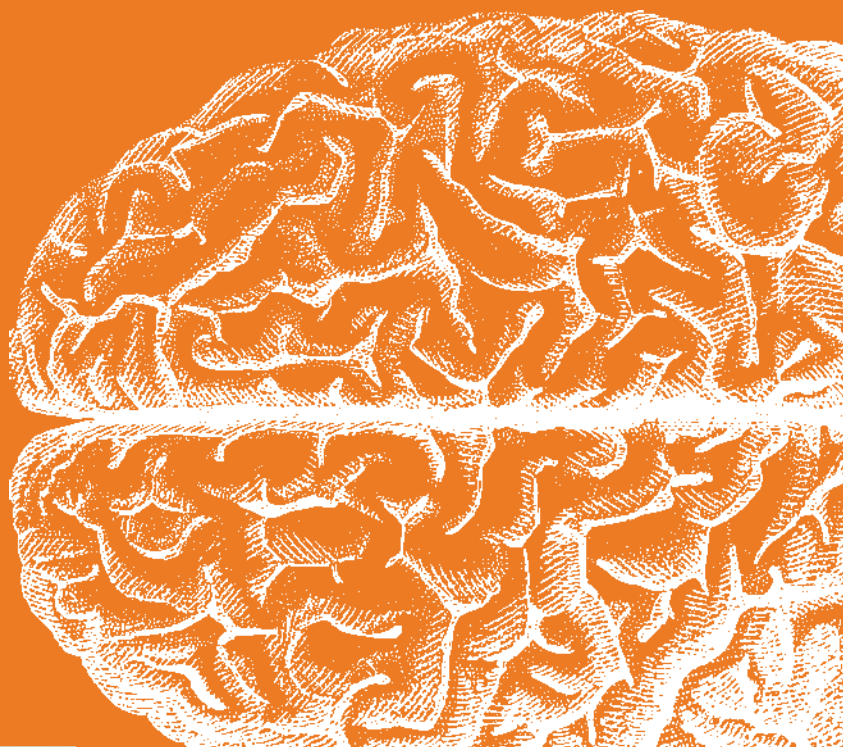
More bad, less good.

Fear, flashback, scared, hopeless,
Stressful.

Sometimes I see no future.
More sadness.

Loneliness.
Insecurity.

This is my immigrant mind.



The journey Steven

'Run!'

In a split second, all fell apart.

Escape was a miracle, never taken lightly.

Jumped, skipped, sailed, I made it across,

My only luggage – courage, pain and sorrow.

'Clunk!'

Living in the world as an open prison,

It marked the beginning of the struggles ahead.

'Sign here!'

Years pass by, waiting to be me.

Life stolen away. Voices silenced.

Choices denied. Kept in the dark.

'We never received your file!'

Taking pleasure in the suffering of men,

Turned a blind eye on the human race,

Left floating in suspense.

All seems lost till –

'Daddy OK?'

A journey is a process of discovery.

It shows us the world and our purpose in it.

Painted by passion, struggles, belief

Face to face with ourselves and our past.

Swerving through waves and storms,

There is a flicker of light. I will shine.

'God save The Queen.'

Inspired by Miss Havisham Feride Uncuoglu

You have gone

You replaced my heart with a stone

You left

You went with hope's light

You left, running.

I received your letter

At twenty minutes to nine.

I disappeared with the letter

I disintegrated inside

My eyes died, I became mute

You were already gone.

I used to have hopes

But you have taken them with you

You have stolen them from me

I am left with the letter.

An inanimate body

My ashes mix with my wedding dress



I'd never seen the sea Yamikani

I'd never seen the sea until I left
Zimbabwe, fleeing for my life. I had
only a tiny bag with one handle with
all my things. A lorry driver managed
to smuggle me to a place where the
border ran through a jungle. We got
through the fence, and we were in
Mozambique.

There was no road; a car couldn't go
there. We had to walk. There were
only two women in the group, and six
men. We crossed the border at seven in
the evening, in darkness. It was pitch
black because of the dense trees.

Some time in the middle of the night,
the jungle suddenly ended in a narrow
strip of sand. To get to the place where
my friends were waiting, I had to cross
an inlet of the sea.

I had never seen the sea before. I had
never seen such a mass of water.

I had never been in a boat, something
which sits on the water and moves.

And it was a very small boat. I felt
as though I were already dead.
I was scared.

I remembered all the stories I had
heard about crocodiles and hippos. It's
not like here, where the sea is calm
and safe.

I was thinking, 'I have run away from
where I was supposed to be killed, and
now I'm going to die here in this boat!'

I got in, shivering, still with my little
bag. Every time the tiny boat tilted I
grabbed the man rowing, even though
he was a man and I was a woman. I
didn't think about that. What mattered
was life.

The man kept on saying, 'Please don't
keep touching me like that!' I was
grabbing at his clothes. 'Can't you see
the boat is tiny?' It was a narrow open
canoe, made of wooden logs. There
was just room for the two of us. His
pole kept banging me on my breast as
he worked. It was painful, and I heard
him complain, but I couldn't help myself.

In front of us was the wide mouth of
the Zambesi river. We followed the
bank inland, to where it was narrower,
and then we crossed.

It took about forty-five minutes, maybe
an hour. But to me it was like a whole
day, because of the state of my mind.
When we reached the other side the
man swore and said, 'If I'd known
what kind of person I was bringing,
I'd never have agreed!' I think perhaps
in his mind he thought, 'This person
is not normal, their mental health is
not good.' But to me it was a perfectly
appropriate way to respond to that
situation. I looked at his face, and I
said, 'Thank you!'

He had to help me to scramble out of
the boat. My joints had no power. I
looked back to where I'd come from
and shivered even more.

The boat man handed me over to some
other people. From there we had to
walk about a mile. It was hotter than
Zimbabwe. Although it was four o'clock
in the morning, it was like breathing in
hot steam. It was very quiet; you could
only hear mosquito music.

We reached the place where we were
supposed to be meeting my friends
with the car. But they weren't there.
The people said to me, 'The money
runs out here.'

They just left me. I watched them walk
away. I started screaming. Eventually I
was surrounded by a crowd of people,
sitting on the ground, covering my face
with my little bag, 'Yaaaaaaaah!'
As it turned out, my friends were
in a hotel nearby. They heard the
commotion and realised it might be me.
'She's looking for us, that's why she's
screaming!'

When I heard that voice, it was like a
baby crying for milk when it smells the
breast. They took me into the hotel. I
had sores in my mouth from the scars
where I was injured. I couldn't eat or
drink anything. No drinking straws in
Mozambique.

It had been four days since I left on my
journey, but to me it was like four years.



The land Hasani

The soft sound of the ploughshare

As it cuts through the wet, rich earth

An acrid smell of sweat from labourers

As they bend to their toil.

A dark cloud hangs above the sky

Heavy with rain, waiting for the peasants

To finish the hedging and ditching

Of the land

Before it opens its floodgates.

And the land, like a helpless patient, lies

As new veins are cut through it

To contain the fury of the rain.

Land the food provider

Land the cause of wars

Land the maker of landlords, landowners, land barons

We spit on you, we shit on you, we piss on you

You are our mother, nourishing all your children

Worker and idle alike.

Greedy and cruel you have made the honest man

He covets you.

'Sons of the soil', he shouts,

'Take up arms and reclaim your land!'

Whose land? His land?

My land

Our land

Tidal wave Uvindu Kurukulasuriya



Suicide of
a lady
Aso

In the corner of a wood, everything is quiet and colourful.
A gentle wind makes the flowers and wet leaves dance.
A ray of sunshine squeezes itself through the branches
And kisses the lapping lips of the river.
The river hides itself like pretty, shy girl.
When the river is kissed by the sun,
It shines like a diamond under a blue ocean.
An unending moment of beauty.
Suddenly, a young woman enters this quiet corner,
And walks into the river.
The woman is miserable and the river is so cold.
Everything changes.
The sun turns its light off,
The wind blows cruelly
A pink fog spreads over the grass and leaves
The girl lies down.
She sinks,
And the river becomes full of colourful flowers.



Marriage proposal
with a shaky start
Jade Amoli-Jackson

Beautiful as she is,
Can't avoid feeling
Let down
As tears roll down her eyes
Right to her beautiful dress
You know why
She heard the best news
News no one can change
You know she thought
Her boyfriend was going to propose
To her after ten years together

He is a nasty
Piece of work! She thought.
'What was that for?', he asked
'Come for breakfast,
And for once, listen!
After carefully thinking
She joined him at the table.
She was about to
Pour hot water in the cup
When she saw something in the cup
Emptying the cup

She saw the ring
She was gobsmacked
'That's when she started crying
Tears running down her
Beautiful face onto her
Lovely dress
Leaving behind
A trace of joy.

I am that man
Uganda

Well, among men, I am a man
There is a man in me, and that man is I
I am a man, the picture of the dream
I am the man in the mirror.

The man women don't see, but the one they cry for
They see my clothes and call me that man.
I am the man you never knew, the stranger you ignored
The man you looked at, and turned away without saying hello
I am more than the designer suits in the United Nations.

I am a man who loves peace and freedom
I shed a tear when joy overtakes fears
I put on a smile even when I am burning inside.
I open my ears wide, but take in only what feeds me
I don't blame, but I encourage, and learn from mistakes.

I am a man with a lot to offer, a man with wings of an eagle
A man with perfume I pour on others, and a few drops splash on myself
I am a man you can lean on. It's true – I am.

I am a man soft as cream, a man with open arms
A man with rivers that reach all nations
A man with two hands, one for helping myself, and one for helping others
A man who thinks of giving, not as a duty, but a privilege
I value what I give, not what I might receive.

I am the man who listens to the voices of children, and helps
I am the man who stands up and defends what is right
The man who speaks for those without a voice
The one who gave you a hand when you were down
I am him, him. Yes, I am him.

I don't believe 'I can't', I believe I can.

The
migration
milestone
Steven

It happened so quick. One split second, a whirlwind of despair. All seemed muddled and lost.

Then, come on, time to fly, Migrating but where are my wings?

Interrogated at the gates of entry. Finger printed, my DNA taken. Bundled into a van. Too scared to digest the malted biscuit with a cup of tea. Strangers seemed interested to hear, double-faced.

A migrant never counts the miles covered. Milestones punched into the ground. The beginning and the end. No trace between. Our only milestone, heartfelt sorrow.

Milestones indicate the end of a journey and direction of your voyage. A sign that others have come this way. A migrant doesn't care about direction. All we know is the arrow, 'away'. We fly to receive our punishment, not caring if others have seen the same.

Like an athlete out of the blocks, running on the journey, my milestones are the wells deep down in the forest. The rise of the sun to tell the time. My direction. Relying on the best of nature.

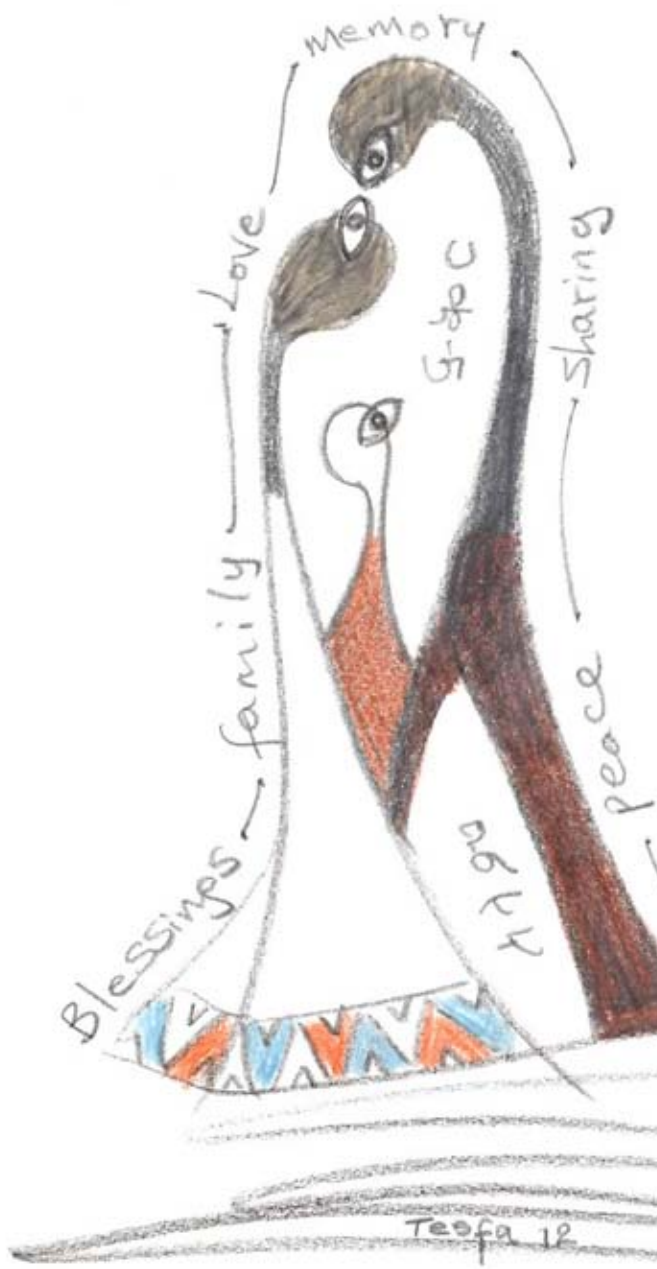
Find the Good Samaritan that would accommodate you for the night. Give you rest, food and local knowledge. Guidance. Stay as a group. Don't take that path. Take the bridge. Then you leave, on again to the next milestone.

On and on, walking this journey to life. Aching and sad. Yearning for home. Then I see it. By the road. A milestone to end my pain.

Tall, solid, grey metal, the colour of the sky. Topped like a tree by a dangerous sharp star. Weather proof, cold to the touch. Marking the 1000th mile for the English Cycle Network. I can't stand the countryside; too much abuse.

A lonely man running towards me. A milestone on the right. A totem pole. A leafless, lifeless stick, lopsided and man-made, foreign in nature. The heavy dark cloud, so sorrowful and dense, a broken promise from heavens above.

The migrant still in a tropical mind, expects sun every morning, looking through a netted window.



Do not disturb
Glory

Let me dream about my family
Let me put myself in a circle of the soul we share.
Let me thank them for bringing me into this world.
Let me get the courage to be strong and alive
Let me pray to God to keep my family safe and alive too.
Let me count the blessings we shared for years.
Let me see the smile on their faces
Let me feel their hugs and kisses
Let me feel the comfort of a soft kind cuddle and forget all the worries I have.
Let me breathe in and out the smell of my family, to remember where I came from.
Let me laugh and smile to let them smile and be happy
Let me cry and feel sad, to make them feel sad, feeling my pain.
Let me see myself through them, because they are like a mirror reflecting who I am.
Let me think of what they told me about the story of my country, to be proud and confident.
Let me learn the value of friendship and to love my neighbour.
Let me learn to respect and help my elders
Let me learn to love others, to be loved
Let me take all their words to keep me going on my journey.
Let me dream.....let me dream.....don't disturb.....let me dream.

If you were to
come back
Hasani

If you were to come back
I would grab you, as a fledgling in its nest
Ravenously snatches at the grubs brought by its mother
As fast as wind sweeping the dust through a deserted street
I would run with you, far away.

My youth, you are precious
I would take you again
To the land that's not on any map
without cares and pain.

Like a mother cat, guarding her kittens
I would shield you from Time, that great thief.
Like a poor woman at a village market,
Who hides, deep inside her clothes,
The few pennies she makes from her toil
I would hide you.

We would sing, 'Mvura naya naya tidye mupunga'
Summoning the summer rain.
We could leave behind all this misery of growing up
And live together forever
If you were to come back.

Mrs Carl Myer
Senait

You are so beautiful,
With your elegant shape,
Your red cheeks,
The way you are dressed up.
The way you reach out to your beautiful children.

I am just a statue.
This world is not for me.
I can't vote, I do not have the right to my own property.
And I worry about my children,
My beautiful children.



The hidden
market
Achille

Ding dong.....Ding dong.....The bell is ringing;
Sleep leaves my opening eyes slowly unwillingly like a true lover, because it is market day.
It's five o'clock in the morning, my family is ready to go with our produce.

The whole family is preparing for the big day; once a week, every Friday in Bafia.
Bafia is my countryside,
It's about 200km from the capital Yaounde.

Our products are

Vegetables
Palm oil
Fou-fou...cassava;
Coffee nuts, etc..

It's noisy, music everywhere, this is my home town;
It's nice to have a browse and take a quick peek.
There's a riot of colours up and down the street,
And mouth-watering smells from all the food to eat.

There's an explosion of different sights and sounds,
And dozens of people are milling around;
At the market, there's always a great atmosphere;
And there's nothing for sale there which is too dear.

At five, the market closes officially, but people are still enjoying.
Come late afternoon, they pack up after a long day.
They load up their vans and are soon on their way.
When they have all gone, all that is left is a space.
And, of the market, there isn't a single trace.

How are you Sir?
Where are you from Sir?
I am from Wood Green?
Any Justification Sir?
What are you doing here Sir?
Don't lie Sir, you are from Sri Lanka.

How did you came here?
Lorry?
By ship?
By swimming?
By plane?
By bus?

Where Are you from??

Uvindu
23/05/2012

METROPOLITAN POLICE SERVICE Form 5096
Family name* KUREKULASURIYA
First name* UVINDU
Gender M ☒ F ☐ DOB 24/04/1994 Age 20
EA Code 2 SPE Code A Height F 507
Address 123, WOOD GREEN
Post Code NN11 1AA
Vehicle Type N/A VRM N/A
Stop & Account Behaviour ☐ Action ☐ Presence ☒
Search Grounds 5090 GENTLEMAN WAS
STANDING OUTSIDE BROADWAY
UNDER GROUND STATION, WELFARE
CHECK CONDUCTED
Date 21/05/2012
Time 17:00
Location 111 MATHER SMITH BROADWAY
BOGU CODE E11
Stop only ☐ Search ☐ Outcome ☐ Arrest ☐
Code Code Code Code
Details