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In Honour of:

Desmond Mpilo Tutu

(7 October 1931 – 26 December 2021)

pryslied vir 'n vreeslose gewete¹ (Antjie Krog)

hy wat daardie verskriklike dag met
sy blindelingse vaart van aankoms
homself bo-oor die liggaam van 'n
veroordeelde gegooi het
wat tussen siedende comrades, petrol
en vuurhoutjies
met sy eie liggaam die liggaam van 'n
vertrapte bedek het
sodat op daardie oomblik die goeie in
die wêreld heilig word
en groei ten aanskyn van 'n land vol
ontmensliktes

ek glo nie in heiligmaking nie
maar die ingrypende aantasting van
'n ganse land
deur hierdie enkele mens laat my glo:

nou is hy dood – hierdie gewete

'n gewete wat nie bang was om alleen
te wees voor 'n skare nie

'n gewete wat nie bang was om woedend
soos 'n leeuwyfie om te draai

en die verkeerdes in die oë te
staar nie

1 The Afrikaans and English versions of this poem was reprinted with permission of the author. It was first published in "Plunder", Antjie Krog's book published in 2022 with Human & Rousseau.

'n gewete wat nie bang was om alleen soos 'n skildvel te staan
 terwyl leuens en beledigings hom tref nie
 'n gewete wie se tong kon spreik soos die vlerke van 'n arend
 wat 'n skare mense kon optel en neersit anderkant die vlamme
 'n gewete wie se gebede die son kon laat stilstaan
 in die dal van bevoorregting
 en die maan oor die velde van townships
 'n gewete wat daaglik gebede kon weef
 rondom die dubbele ruggraat van 'n land
 nou is hy dood – hierdie gewete

eiehandig het hy aan 'n diepverdeelde land
 'n taal van ons-heid gemunt
 hy wou dat ons woedend wees oor onreg
 hy wou dat ons instem op die toonaard van omgee
 hy wou dat ons leef in solidariteit met uitdeel
 hy wou ons saambind in omarmende bondels
 hy wou beskutting met ons bou
 hy wou groot en magtige dakke met ons pak
 hy wou ons omskep in stellasies van menslikheid
 nou is hy dood – hierdie gewete

ek prys die man
 wat groot ruimtes oor die aarde versprei het
 soos hy sy vel, sy liggaam, sy volkome wese
 tot met sy oudag
 selfloos oor ons uitgebrei het
 hy is ons eie onheilige heilige
 wat ons in die sleurstream van die Goeie probeer hou het
 ons, wat hom gefaal het, eer hom: Desmond Mpilo Tutu
 ons, in ons wanhoop, treur oor hom: Desmond Mpilo Tutu

want hy is dood nou – hierdie gewete

praise song for a fearless conscience

he who that terrible day with his headlong arrival
threw himself over the body of a condemned one
who amongst seething comrades, petrol and matches
covered the trapped body with his own body
so that at that moment the good in the world became holy
and blazed at the sight of a country filled with dehumanised souls

I don't believe in sanctification
but the interventionist assault on a whole country
by this one man makes me believe:

now he is dead – this conscience

a conscience that was not afraid to be alone before a crowd
a conscience that was not afraid to turn around like a furious lioness
and stare the wrong ones in the eye
a conscience that was not afraid to stand alone like a shield
while lies and insults struck him
a conscience whose tongue could spread like an eagle's wings
that could lift up a crowd and set them down beyond the flames
a conscience whose prayers could make the sun stand still
in the vale of privilege
and the moon over the fields of townships
a conscience that could weave prayers daily
around the double backbone of a country

now he is dead – this conscience

singlehandedly he coined a language of us-ness
for a deeply divided country
he wanted us to be enraged by injustice
he wanted us to assent to the modality of caring
he wanted us to live in solidarity with distribution

he wanted to bind us together in embracing clusters
he wanted to build shelters with us
he wanted to raise great and mighty roofs with us
he wanted to recreate us in frameworks of humanity

now he is dead – this conscience

I praise the man
who spread great spaces across the earth
as he spread his skin, his body, his whole being
into his old age
selflessly over us
he is our own unholy holy one
who tried to keep us in the slipstream of the Good

we, who failed him, honour him: Desmond Mpilo Tutu
we, in our despair, mourn him: Desmond Mpilo Tutu

for he is dead now – this conscience

(translated by Karen Press)

Sincoma iSazela

nguye, uSazela weli lizwe ongoyiki ngakoyikiswa
ubhubhile

nguye, owangena phakathi kwezivuthe-vuthe zamaqabane,
wapheph'ipetroli nematshisi walikhuse ngowakhe umzimba' ekhusela umzimba
womntu owawunyhanyhathwe ngeenyawo khon' ukuze lowo mzuzu ibe
kukubona kwehlabathi ukujika kobuhle bube bubungcwele, obona buqaqawuli
kubuso babagxeki nakoothob' isidima sabantu

Andikholelwa kubungwalisa
kodw' uhlaselo olubi kwilizwe lonke
ngale ndoda
lundenze ndanokholo: kufefe, nakokulungileyo
uSazela weli hlabathi
ubhubhile

uSazela owayengoyik' ukuba ngumth' umzimele phambi kwenyambalala
uSazela owayengoyik' ukuba ngumth' umzimele okwemaz' engonyama
ajamel' emehlweni abenzi bokungendawo
uSazela owayengoyik' ukuba ngumth' umzimele okwekhaka lofele
xenikwen' edlakazwa ziimbumbulu zobuxoki nemikhonto yezithuko
uSazela onteth' isandi sithe saa okwamaphik' okhozi
omazw' aphakamisa izihlwele az' azihlalise phants' okungaphaya
kwamadangatye
uSazela omithandaz' ingamisa ngxi ilanga kwezo ntlambo zeelokishi
nenyanga kwezo ntsimi zobulungisa
uSazela omihla ngemihl' uthung' imithandazw' ejikeleze umqolo walo mhlaba

eyedwa waziqingqela inteth' ekhuthaz' imbumba yobunye
belizw' elitsha elineyantlukwan' eyondeleyo
wayefuna siyichas' intswela-bulungisa
wayefuna sibe yinxalenye yobuncwane bokunik' inkathalo
wayefuna sihlale simanyene, sabelane kwaye kwabiwe ngokutsha
wayefuna ukusihlanganisa sibe yimbumba okwezithungu

wayefuna ukusibeka sibe luphahl' olukhulu, olomeleleyo
wayefuna ukusakha sibe ziindaw' ezikhuselekileyo ezincinane
ukuz' asenz' amanqwanqw' okunyuk' uluntu

ah!, sincom'indoda

eyavul' inkitha yamathuba kumhlaba jikelele,
walunwebela phezu kwethu sonke ufele, umzimba, nobuqu bakhe
ngokuzinikezela
kwade kwasekufeni enteth' ivuth' umlilo wamadangaty' obulungisa
naloo ntsini yobulungisa, ethandekayo

ubengoyena msindisi weth'ongcwele ngcwele
obesolok' esigcine sithe qwa ekwenzen'okuhle

sithi, abamphoxileyo, mwongeni yena: uDesmond Mpilo Tutu
sithi, abamphoxayo, khathazekani ngaye: uDesmond Mpilo Tutu
siyalambatha ngaphandle kwakhe, kwaye singamadlavu

ubhubhile ngoku

ongoyiki ngakoyikiswa uSazela ongumhlanganisi - luntu luphela.

(translated by Dr Nomfundo Mali)

thothokiso ya mohale a tswang maroleng

yena eo ka letsatsi lela la mohlolo a fihlileng ka sefutho sa mohale
a itahlela ho kgurumetsa mmele wa ya tjametsweng ke polao
eo hara baitseki ba halefileng, ba fupere peterole le mollo
a kgurumetsa mmele wa ya tlangweng ka mmele wa hae
hoo hanghang botle lefatsheng bo fetohileng kgalalelo
mme a tadima naha e tletseng meya e tlohileng botho

Ha ke dumele kgalaledisong
empa matla a monamodi naheng yohle
a monna enwa a le mong a ntshokollela tumelong:

jwale a se a ile boyabatho – maikutlo ana

maikutlo a pudumo ya seema-nosi hara letshwele
maikutlo a sa tshabang ho puruma a potoloha jwalo ka tau e befetsweng
mme a tjamela ba fositseng kahara mahlo
maikutlo a neng a sa tshabe ho ikemela jwalo ka thebe
ha a kalla mashano le mahlapa
maikutlo a alang leleme la ona jwalo ka mapheo a phakwe
a ka phahamisang letshwele le ho le hwaramanya kamora kgabo ya malakabe
maikutlo a dithapelo tse ka emisang letsatsi kgekgenene
phuleng ya boiketlo
ke kgwedi e aparetseng masimo a makeishene
maikutlo a ka lohany dithapelo letsatsi le letsatsi
ho potoloha naha e mekokotlo- mmedi

jwale a se a ile boyabatho – maikutlo ana

ka letsoho le le leng a bopa puo ya bo-rona
molemong wa naha e arohaneng ho tebileng
o ne a batla hore re kgobohiswe ke toka
o ne a batla hore re hahamalle mokgwa wa tsotellano
o ne a batla re phele bonngweng ka qhalakano

o ne a batla ho re bopa ngatana ka mahlopho a matahano
 o ne a batla ho aha diqhobosheane tsa botshabelo mmoho le rona
 o ne a batla ho emisa kgurumetso e kgolo ya botumo mmoho le rona
 o ne a batla ho re hlahisa botjha meralong ya botho

jwale a se a ile boyabatho – maikutlo ana

Ke rorisa monna enwa
 ya anetseng ka pharallo masabasaba a potolohang lefatshe
 moo a thakgisitseng lekoko la hae, mmele wa hae, le boyena bohle
 ho fihlela boqhekung ba hae
 ka ho hloka boikabo hodima rona
 ke mohalaledi wa rona wa mohlolo
 ya lekileng ho re boloka molatswaneng wa ho Loka

rona, ba mo phoqileng, re a mo tlotla: Desmond Mpilo Tutu
 rona, tsielehong ya rona, re a mo llela: Desmond Mpilo Tutu

hobane a shwele jwale – maikutlo ana

(e fetoletswe ke Thabiso Ntsielo)