Decolonised Tongue

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Open your mouth,
   wi de…
Wider than the rounded constraints
of a stolen language
you try so hard to master.
Allow your tongue to time travel;
They say it cannot forget the language
   of your Abogan¹.
Open your mouth,
   wi de r…
Feel the clicks and echoes return and
rise from your belly.
Remember! Remember when your gowab²
was yours and didn’t need
colonial justification.
   Vai-oa³!
Yours is the task of untangling twisted tongues
from censored silence—
Vkhībagus sa cgaob tsî vais⁴
so the stories of old are forever told
with your mouth wide open.

KhoeKhoe Translations Provided by Flow Wellington

1. Abogan: Ancestors
2. gowab: language
3. Vai-oa: Remember
4. Vkhībagus sa cgaob tsî vais: Reconcile your heart and mind