

# Decolonised Tongue

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Open your mouth,

w i d e...

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 *Abogan*<sup>1</sup>.

Open your mouth,

w i d e r...

Feel the clicks and echoes return and

rise from your belly.

Remember! Remember when your *gowab*<sup>2</sup>

was yours and didn't need

colonial justification.

*Vai-oa*<sup>3</sup>!

Yours is the task of untangling twisted tongues

from censored silence—

*Vkh̄ibagus sa cgaob ts̄i vais*<sup>4</sup>

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. *Vkh̄ibagus sa cgaob ts̄i vais*: Reconcile your heart and mind

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