

Bokgabo le Setšo

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Tše direto re di nyantše
Di re kgomaretše magalagapa
Di elela le mašika nke ya Tugela meela
Ke ditaola tša bogologolo
Maleme a bagologolo
Ge ebe ba rutlumulla bjoko ka ditheto
Go tšhikinyega le thaba ya pelo

Mekgolokwane ya gona
Legodimo le be le theoge le gokare lefase
O kwe nke lefase le opa magoswi
O kwe nke mawatle a letša mekgoši
Bohwa ke lehumo

Re ka mokona dithai le dinonwane
Wa bogale mollo o sohlasohla tša mohwelere dikgonye
Meno a tlošwa bodutu ke dithotse le dithuthupe
Ya maotwana a mararo e bipetšwe ke ditloo le ditloo-maake
E goragora nke e a tsikiditlwa

Nka le tuntetša gare ga diema le dika
La šala le kgohlotše mahlo nke mankgohlo
Ge nka re matšhidi, mahlatswa, dihletlwa
Ge nka re lesele, sego goba thitelo
Bjoko bo ka ema pho!
Gwa thunya muši wa kgakanego

Yaka pelo e rothiša ya bohloko
Bohwa ke selo se šele go rena ba kalana ye ntshwa
Re kakatletše tše šele ka tša go kompula meratha



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Ra furalela le go thuntšhetša lerole
Dijo-kgolo tša bogologolo

Metse go swa mabapi
Tša hloka seboka di šia ke nare e hlotša
Ke moka re di furaletše, bongwana' magana go botšwa
A ke gona ge re itlhapila diatla
Diatla tša go relela ruri
Di a re phonyoga tša bogologolo

Heritage (Translation of “Bokgabo le Setšo”) by Mosima Kagiso Phakane

We were breastfed these poems
They hang onto the palates of our mouths
Flow through our veins
Like the flow of the Tugela falls
These are ancient bones
Tongues of those we descended from
They scattered brains with praises
Shook the rockiest of hearts

The ululations
Heavens descend and pulls earth into its arms
You'll hear as if earth is applauding
You'll hear as if oceans are singing praise
Heritage is wealth

We can devour riddles and indigenous stories
As the fierce fire gobbles the dry wood
Keeping our teeth company is fried and dry pumpkin seeds and maize seeds
The three-legged pot almost overflowing with nuts
Unsettled, as if being tickled

I can baptise you in proverbs and idioms
Leave you so wide eyed with shock, like an owl
I could tell you about a variety of wild berries
Mention a variety of indigenous apparatus
Brains would stand still
And smoke of confusion would fill this space

My heart sheds tears of pain
Heritage is foreign to us
We hold tightly to foreign deeds
Easily erasing the roots we descended from

One flaming house can easily lead to a stream of houses on flames
A herd of lions divided is easily outrun by a limping buffalo
Have we really discarded all these teachings, an unruly generation
Are we really erasing the roots we descended from
Slippery hands, the lessons they've fed us are slowly slipping away