

# POEM

## Selotape for bullet holes

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I hadn't visited my mother in a while but when I entered my old room the roof had changed

The hole was missing and covered in large strips of selotape

Meant to hide but clearly there. The bullet hole was not invisible even though I couldn't see it

Mother, why do you rarely leave your house?

Why are you afraid of the boy you watched grow up and his gun?

Why don't you take it?

All of you, all of us. Why do we watch our sons and brothers and cousins and long-lost friends die?

The sound of a bullet shooting from a gun is no longer scary to us.

I can tell you how I woke up that night, shards of glass everywhere and the bullet right there, next to me.

How many rolls of selotape can Bishop Lavis, Elsies River, Manenberg, Ravensmead and Uitsig sell?

They think we're uncultured, no real 'tongue' mocking our mother-tongue as if it wasn't born in the kitchen of slaves. Uneducated the stats say. Fatherless the stats say. Selotape their mouths I say.

This tongue can speak Kaaps with meaning but has to speak to you like this. So you can understand.

For your sake.

I have seen boys find family in gangs, real brotherhood and fatherhood shown at the consequence of a gun. How else? When men were left powerless and landless and man-less. How else do you take it back but by taking the little land you can see with a gun?

Coloured man, with your roots all mangled up in every part of history I wish my mother would take your gun.

I wish you felt more like a man. I wish we could selotape the words you were called. Are called.

I wish your search for a pa didn't need to leave you at the mercy of a father you never wanted to have, teaching you how to load a gun, not ride a bike.

Do you think we can selotape the parts of history they left us out of? Or maybe rip the selotape off our own skin and let them see the bullet holes

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