

## Zimbabwe teapot

Hasani

The fires of dictatorship, oppression, corruption and incarceration burn beneath the kettle in which the people are imprisoned.

Torture, hatred and political rhetoric stoke the flames.

Inside, the people are trapped – hopelessness gives way to terror and despair.

As the heat increases and the pressure builds, they are forced out of this unbearable prison, and propelled across the world – helpless, out of control, silent, to land wherever fate takes them.

They hope that they are escaping to a better life, escaping from the worst.

They prefer the risks of lions and crocodiles, of drowning, of suffocation in a truck, of starvation on the journey, to what they are leaving behind.

But when they land, wherever they land, they may find they have only exchanged the frying pan for a new fire.

## Love poem I Feride Uncuoglu

You and I

We are both lying down

Our hands under our chins

We are at the top of a cliff.

We are watching the waves hitting the rocks

The sun is high in the sky

There is a fire inside me

We are so close, there is no room

For even a grasshopper to come between us.

Your skin is almost touching mine

You are my missing part

But when I see and hear

The waves crash against the rocks

I curse my destiny.

I am desperate, you feel guilty

I know my love is impossible

It weighs like an anchor on my heart.

## Dirty me Jade Amoli-Jackson

I try to kiss

Dirty me!

What have I done

To deserve this?

Horrible thinking

The sky is open

And the sun shines

To all, but me

When I try to yell

I have no voice.

I am dirty!

## Waiting Aso

This evening the butterflies are not coming back.

Home is nothing,

Except the damp, dark cellar.

Home is a broken boat on the edge of a still sea.

Home is nothing,

Except an old, destroyed, military submarine.

This evening, the butterflies are not coming back.

You are still waiting,

Like the moon waits for morning to come.

But this evening home is a hopeless place,

Cold, dim and narrow.

Home is nothing,

Except a large, parched, rootless tree.

Home is a cemetery of loneliness,

A silent cave, full of dead stones.

Home is hell without the butterflies.

No sound of steps, no breaths or shadows.

But you are still waiting.

Home is tiredness, fear and sleeplessness.

Home is the tears and sorrow of the mother.

Home is nothing,

Except the quiet snuffing of a baby.

No one returns home,

Home is emptiness.

But the young mother still waits with great anxiety

On this gloomy night.



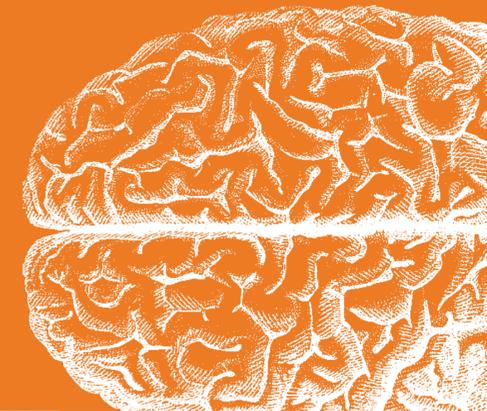
## My brain is an immigrant Senait

My mind can travel anywhere  
Across the ocean, across dry land  
Past, present and future  
No traffic lights or mind the gap  
No one can stop me moving.

My eyes can see the un-seeable  
My ears can hear the un-hearable  
My hands can touch the invisible.  
I think non-stop.

More bad, less good.  
Fear, flashback, scared, hopeless,  
Stressful.  
Sometimes I see no future.  
More sadness.  
Loneliness.  
Insecurity.

This is my immigrant mind.



## The journey Steven

'Run!'

In a split second, all fell apart.

Escape was a miracle, never taken lightly.

Jumped, skipped, sailed, I made it across.

My only luggage – courage, pain and sorrow.

'Chunk!'

Living in the world as an open prison,

It marked the beginning of the struggles ahead.

'Sign here!'

Years pass by, waiting to be me.

Life stolen away. Voices silenced.

Choices denied. Kept in the dark.

'We never received your file!'

Taking pleasure in the suffering of men,

Turned a blind eye on the human race,

Left floating in suspense.

All seems lost till –

'Daddy OK?'

A journey is a process of discovery.

It shows us the world and our purpose in it.

Painted by passion, struggles, belief

Face to face with ourselves and our past.

Swerving through waves and storms,

There is a flicker of light. I will shine.

'God save The Queen.'

## Inspired by Miss Havisham Feride Uncuoglu

You have gone

You replaced my heart with a stone

You left

You went with hope's light

You left, running.

I received your letter

At twenty minutes to nine.

I disappeared with the letter

I disintegrated inside

My eyes died, I became mute

You were already gone.

I used to have hopes

But you have taken them with you

You have stolen them from me

I am left with the letter.

An inanimate body

My ashes mix with my wedding dress

## I'd never seen the sea Yamikani

I'd never seen the sea until I left Zimbabwe, fleeing for my life. I had only a tiny bag with one handle with all my things. A lorry driver managed to smuggle me to a place where the border ran through a jungle. We got through the fence, and we were in Mozambique.

There was no road; a car couldn't go there. We had to walk. There were only two women in the group, and six men. We crossed the border at seven in the evening, in darkness. It was pitch black because of the dense trees.

Some time in the middle of the night, the jungle suddenly ended in a narrow strip of sand. To get to the place where my friends were waiting, I had to cross an inlet of the sea.

I had never seen the sea before. I had never seen such a mass of water.

I had never been in a boat, something which sits on the water and moves.

And it was a very small boat. I felt as though I were already dead. I was scared.

I remembered all the stories I had heard about crocodiles and hippos. It's not like here, where the sea is calm and safe.

I was thinking, 'I have run away from where I was supposed to be killed, and now I'm going to die here in this boat!' I got in, shivering, still with my little bag. Every time the tiny boat tilted I grabbed the man rowing, even though he was a man and I was a woman. I didn't think about that. What mattered was life.

The man kept on saying, 'Please don't keep touching me like that!' I was grabbing at his clothes. 'Can't you see the boat is tiny?' It was a narrow open canoe, made of wooden logs. There was just room for the two of us. His pole kept banging me on my breast as he worked. It was painful, and I heard him complain, but I couldn't help myself. In front of us was the wide mouth of the Zambesi river. We followed the bank inland, to where it was narrower, and then we crossed.

It took about forty-five minutes, maybe an hour. But to me it was like a whole day, because of the state of my mind. When we reached the other side the man swore and said, 'If I'd known what kind of person I was bringing, I'd never have agreed!' I think perhaps in his mind he thought, 'This person is not normal, their mental health is not good.' But to me it was a perfectly appropriate way to respond to that situation. I looked at his face, and I said, 'Thank you!'

He had to help me to scramble out of the boat. My joints had no power. I looked back to where I'd come from and shivered even more.

The boat man handed me over to some other people. From there we had to walk about a mile. It was hotter than Zimbabwe. Although it was four o'clock in the morning, it was like breathing in hot steam. It was very quiet; you could only hear mosquito music.

We reached the place where we were supposed to be meeting my friends with the car. But they weren't there. The people said to me, 'The money runs out here.'

They just left me. I watched them walk away. I started screaming. Eventually I was surrounded by a crowd of people, sitting on the ground, covering my face with my little bag, 'Yaaaaaaaaah!' As it turned out, my friends were in a hotel nearby. They heard the commotion and realised it might be me. 'She's looking for us, that's why she's screaming!'

When I heard that voice, it was like a baby crying for milk when it smells the breast. They took me into the hotel. I had sores in my mouth from the scars where I was injured. I couldn't eat or drink anything. No drinking straws in Mozambique.

It had been four days since I left on my journey, but to me it was like four years.



## The land Hasani

The soft sound of the ploughshare  
As it cuts through the wet, rich earth  
An acrid smell of sweat from labourers  
As they bend to their toil.

A dark cloud hangs above the sky  
Heavy with rain, waiting for the peasants  
To finish the hedging and ditching  
Of the land  
Before it opens its floodgates.

And the land, like a helpless patient, lies  
As new veins are cut through it  
To contain the fury of the rain.

Land the food provider  
Land the cause of wars  
Land the maker of landlords, landowners, land barons

We spit on you, we shit on you, we piss on you  
You are our mother, nourishing all your children  
Worker and idle alike.

Greedy and cruel you have made the honest man  
He covets you.  
'Sons of the soil', he shouts,  
'Take up arms and reclaim your land!'

Whose land? His land?  
My land  
Our land



## Tidal wave

Uvindu Kurukulasuriya

# Suicide of a lady

## Aso

In the corner of a wood, everything is quiet and colourful.  
A gentle wind makes the flowers and wet leaves dance.  
A ray of sunshine squeezes itself through the branches  
And kisses the lapping lips of the river.  
The river hides itself like pretty, shy girl.  
When the river is kissed by the sun,  
It shines like a diamond under a blue ocean.  
An unending moment of beauty.  
Suddenly, a young woman enters this quiet corner,  
And walks into the river.  
The woman is miserable and the river is so cold.  
Everything changes.  
The sun turns its light off,  
The wind blows cruelly  
A pink fog spreads over the grass and leaves  
The girl lies down.  
She sinks,  
And the river becomes full of colourful flowers.



# I am that man

## Uganda

Well, among men, I am a man  
There is a man in me, and that man is I  
I am a man, the picture of the dream  
I am the man in the mirror.

The man women don't see, but the one they cry for  
They see my clothes and call me that man.

I am the man you never knew, the stranger you ignored

The man you looked at, and turned away without saying hello

I am more than the designer suits in the United Nations.

I am a man who loves peace and freedom  
I shed a tear when joy overtakes fears

I put on a smile even when I am burning inside.

I open my ears wide, but take in only what feeds me

I don't blame, but I encourage, and learn from mistakes.

I am a man with a lot to offer, a man with wings of an eagle

A man with perfume I pour on others, and a few drops splash on myself

I am a man you can lean on. It's true – I am.

I am a man soft as cream, a man with open arms  
A man with rivers that reach all nations

A man with two hands, one for helping myself, and one for helping others

A man who thinks of giving, not as a duty, but a privilege

I value what I give, not what I might receive.

I am the man who listens to the voices of children, and helps

I am the man who stands up and defends what is right

The man who speaks for those without a voice

The one who gave you a hand when you were down

I am him, him. Yes, I am him.

I don't believe 'I can't', I believe I can.

# The migration milestone

## Steven

It happened so quick. One split second, a whirlwind of despair. All seemed muddled and lost.

Then, come on, time to fly, Migrating but where are my wings?

Interrogated at the gates of entry. Finger printed, my DNA taken. Bundled into a van. Too scared to digest the malted biscuit with a cup of tea. Strangers seemed interested to hear, double-faced.

A migrant never counts the miles covered. Milestones punched into the ground. The beginning and the end. No trace between. Our only milestone, heartfelt sorrow.

Milestones indicate the end of a journey and direction of your voyage. A sign that others have come this way. A migrant doesn't care about direction. All we know is the arrow, 'away'. We fly to receive our punishment, not caring if others have seen the same.

Like an athlete out of the blocks, running on the journey, my milestones are the wells deep down in the forest. The rise of the sun to tell the time. My direction. Relying on the best of nature.

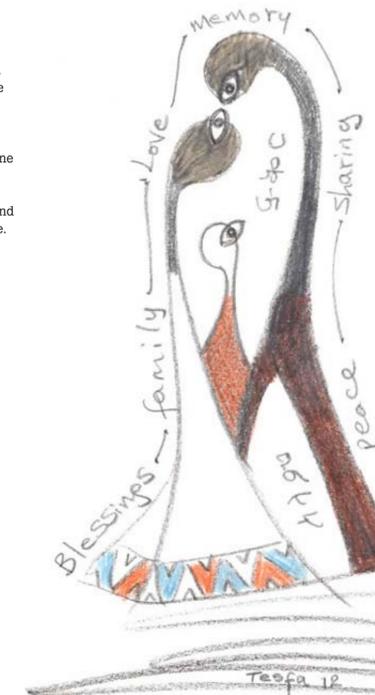
Find the Good Samaritan that would accommodate you for the night. Give you rest, food and local knowledge. Guidance. Stay as a group. Don't take that path. Take the bridge. Then you leave, on again to the next milestone.

On and on, walking this journey to life. Aching and sad. Yearning for home. Then I see it. By the road. A milestone to end my pain.

Tall, solid, grey metal, the colour of the sky. Topped like a tree by a dangerous sharp star. Weather proof, cold to the touch. Marking the 1000th mile for the English Cycle Network. I can't stand the countryside; too much abuse.

A lonely man running towards me. A milestone on the right. A totem pole. A leafless, lifeless stick, lopsided and man-made, foreign in nature. The heavy dark cloud, so sorrowful and dense, a broken promise from heavens above.

The migrant still in a tropical mind, expects sun every morning, looking through a netted window.



# Do not disturb

## Glory

Let me dream about my family

Let me put myself in a circle of the soul we share.

Let me thank them for bringing me into this world.

Let me get the courage to be strong and alive

Let me pray to God to keep my family safe and alive too.

Let me count the blessings we shared for years.

Let me see the smile on their faces

Let me feel their hugs and kisses

Let me feel the comfort of a soft kind cuddle and forget all the worries I have.

Let me breathe in and out the smell of my family, to remember where I came from.

Let me laugh and smile to let them smile and be happy

Let me cry and feel sad, to make them feel sad, feeling my pain.

Let me see myself through them, because they are like a mirror reflecting who I am.

Let me think of what they told me about the story of my country, to be proud and confident.

Let me learn the value of friendship and to love my neighbour.

Let me learn to respect and help my elders

Let me learn to love others, to be loved

Let me take all their words to keep me going on my journey.

Let me dream.....let me dream.....don't disturb.....let me dream.

# Marriage proposal with a shaky start

## Jade Amoli-Jackson

Beautiful as she is,  
Can't avoid feeling  
Let down  
As tears roll down her eyes  
Right to her beautiful dress  
You know why  
She heard the best news  
News no one can change  
You know she thought  
Her boyfriend was going to propose  
To her after ten years together

He went down on his knees  
And said, 'Honey,  
Come for breakfast!  
She was shocked and angry.  
She threw the lipstick  
She had been applying  
At his face and wanted  
To wring his neck  
Thinking that was the  
News – breakfast!  
My foot!

He is a nasty  
Piece of work! She thought.  
'What was that for?', he asked  
'Come for breakfast.  
And for once, listen!  
After carefully thinking  
She joined him at the table.  
She was about to  
Pour hot water in the cup  
When she saw something in the cup  
Emptying the cup

She saw the ring  
She was gobsmacked  
That's when she started crying  
Tears running down her  
Beautiful face onto her  
Lovely dress  
Leaving behind  
A trace of joy.

# The hidden market

## Achille

Ding dong.....Ding dong.....The bell is ringing;  
Sleep leaves my opening eyes slowly unwillingly like a true lover, because it is market day.  
It's five o'clock in the morning, my family is ready to go with our produce.

The whole family is preparing for the big day; once a week, every Friday in Bafia.

Bafia is my countryside,

It's about 200km from the capital Yaounde.

Our products are  
Vegetables  
Palm oil  
Fou-fou...cassava;  
Coffee nuts, etc..

It's noisy, music everywhere, this is my home town;  
It's nice to have a browse and take a quick peek.  
There's a riot of colours up and down the street,  
And mouth-watering smells from all the food to eat.

There's an explosion of different sights and sounds,  
And dozens of people are milling around;  
At the market, there's always a great atmosphere;  
And there's nothing for sale there which is too dear.

At five, the market closes officially, but people are still enjoying.  
Come late afternoon, they pack up after a long day.  
They load up their vans and are soon on their way.  
When they have all gone, all that is left is a space.  
And, of the market, there isn't a single trace.

# If you were to come back

## Hasani

If you were to come back  
I would grab you, as a fledgling in its nest  
Ravenously snatches at the grubs brought by its mother  
As fast as wind sweeping the dust through a deserted street  
I would run with you, far away.

My youth, you are precious  
I would take you again  
To the land that's not on any map  
without cares and pain.

Like a mother cat, guarding her kittens  
I would shield you from Time, that great thief.  
Like a poor woman at a village market,  
Who hides, deep inside her clothes,  
The few pennies she makes from her toil  
I would hide you.

We would sing, 'Mvura naya naya tidye mupunga'  
Summoning the summer rain.  
We could leave behind all this misery of growing up  
And live together forever  
If you were to come back.

# Mrs Carl Myer

## Senait

You are so beautiful,  
With your elegant shape,  
Your red cheeks,  
The way you are dressed up.  
The way you reach out to your beautiful children.

I am just a statue.  
This world is not for me.  
I can't vote, I do not have the right to my own property,  
And I worry about my children,  
My beautiful children.



How are you Sir?  
Where are you from Sir?  
I am from Wood Green?  
Any justification Sir?  
What are you doing here Sir?  
Don't lie Sir, you are from Sri Lanka.

How did you come here?  
Lorry?  
By ship?  
By swimming?  
By plane?  
By bus?

Where are you from??

Uvindu  
23/05/2012



METROPOLITAN POLICE SERVICE Form 5096

Family name\* KUREKULASURIYA

First name\* UVINDU

Gender  M  F  DOB 14/04/1978 Age 34

EA code  SPE Code  A] Height F 507

Address 123, Annex Way

WINDY Post Code W11 1AA

Vehicle Type N/T VRM N/A

Stop & Account Behaviour  Action  Presence  Arrest

Search Grounds SEARCH GENTLEMAN WAS STANDING OUTSIDE BROADWAY UNDER GROUND STATION, WELFARE CHECK CONDUCTED

Date 23/05/12 Search (if different location)

Time 17:15

Location 111 MATHER SMITH BROADWAY BOGU code 101

Stop only  Search  Outcome  Arrest   
Code Code Code Code