

POETRY

Four Poems by Mazisi Kunene

To My Guardian Spirit, the Goddess Nut of Annu

Since you are my beginning
 I shelter in your folded hands like a child
 From here my mind must fulfil its awakening,
 And I? I am moving slowly into your eyes
 We, the restless race of the earth, are blind
 But you, you are the thousand blades of lightning
 You are the thousand suns rushing into space
 By your power I have seen all the magic suns
 I have seen all the walking and wakening, I have seen eternity!
 She was floating in space like a cloud of stars
 I was filled with terror but you calmed me by your warm hand
 And I saw the cosmic bird carrying the sacred egg
 Where all life begins, where all life is fulfilled.
 I saw the speeding antelope carrying the symbols of time
 And all the ruins of our world rose to life like mushrooms
 And your high priestess put your mark on my forehead
 And I was her son again, and I was in your dream.

Generations

These planets are peeling from the light of the sun
 To make creation always young and beautiful
 And your name must be seen clearly on the green grass
 And all living creatures must attain the freedom of movement
 When these powers enter into their beginning I have become a tortoise
 Whose movements are slow, whose ability to see is guaranteed
 It must observe our earth turning and turning and turning
 Until it is as though it is trapped in its eternal movement
 Two loops of time coincide;
 Because we are all caught in a life of movements
 Whose powers are not in the future nor in the past
 But only exist in one moment of time and eternity
 We must celebrate neither past nor present but the always
 That is the ALWAYS

The Sacrifice

I must, at last, make the sacrifice
 And when I begin to sing your praises
 Let me gaze into the inner soul of your sun
 Where I shall feed my mind with your spirit
 And be nourished by your sacred seasons
 Then I can see into the myriad creations of a budding seed
 Beside the travelling stream the mist of forgetfulness must intervene
 And when I go insane and see beautiful things
 A name that is mine and mine only opens my visions
 Then you must reward me with your poems
 Whose violence shall shutter the final veil of sleep
 And let me see the big, round calabash
 Where all your devoted followers have come to rest.

Cosmos Without Us

The essence of our unfulfilled lives that we have been waiting for
 Harbors in the final light of the evening
 This we shall not devour by our efforts
 But by the memories which continue to flourish
 And are always ahead of us in a crimson cocoon
 They are soft and carry us swaddled on their backs
 To leave us in the cradle of the noontime dream
 Where time will not surrender even to NOTHINGNESS.
 Because we know only that which is our truth,
 We know only the surface of our existence.
 Into it all Being churns endless movements without us
 Where even our sun is spinning backwards into its tomorrow
 But is not our tomorrow, ours is fulfilled bit by bit
 Only our visions make us leap over our death into the sun
 Because at the grounds of eternity there is no eternity
 There is only the happening of things there is only movement
 Whose pace is of life and of death and of death and of life
 Like the spider-trails of the giant snail in a vast forest
 Whose truths do not reveal a million years but are images
 Strewn on our paths to celebrate our birth and rebirth
 And the forever and ever.