

## POETRY

Three Poems  
by Abdoulaye Djibo Harouna

### Ever Been There?

To Nelson Mandela, Steve Biko, and many, many more who fought and died in the battlefields or who are dying day by day in the streets for noble causes. And to others whom I cannot mention by name who are still languishing in the sordid, inhuman jails under the world's most repressive dictatorial regime.

I've never been there  
In the land where the sky  
And the earth are whites  
But I can still feel the pain  
I've never been there  
Yet I can hear the clicking  
Sound of a thousand manacles  
The deafening barking of their dogs  
Their loud gunshots; these are real  
Not plastic; no better way to slay  
A bloody negro: one good shot,  
The matter is over!

No, my Lord, I've never been there  
Nevertheless, I always hear  
In my joyless nights  
Police cars tearing away  
Their roaring voices keep haunting me  
You can't eat here, sleep here,  
Pass here, board here, sit here

**WHITES ONLY!**

Move along nigger.  
I've never been there, my Lord,  
But it was taught to me  
As I will pass it on to my child.

### The Legacy

I bring you not peace but a sword.

Jesus Christ.

I will not be long my son  
 Promise me you will not cry.  
 Houses and stocks I have none  
 But you have life ahead of you  
 So I cannot but leave you my treasure:  
 Lumumba, Nkrumah, Cabral, and Sankara  
 Those who were all here before I was,  
 Those whose undying deeds nourished my soul.

I read despair and helplessness on your face  
 But cast these deceptive foes away from you  
 Turbid waters lead to the limpid source;  
 As boundless as the desert seems, it is not  
 For Fate and determinism jewelled it with oases  
 So follow the distant rainbow to our common bliss.  
 Though, to your infant eyes, this may not seem much  
 I leave you with nothing but the struggle  
 Or rather time, the struggle, and change  
 Since these are all you will ever need  
 To repossess what Nature and life gave you.

### The Unwelcomed Messiah

Dedicated to the perseverance of those  
 who stood up whenever and wherever  
 human dignity is questioned—Selma,  
 Little Rock, Soweto, West Bank,  
 Santiago, Belfast.

I asked the dark and silent night  
 And she said, ask me not for I know not  
 So I ran to the pale and fading moon  
 And bewildered she said, no, not me!  
 Then I asked the still-glaring stars

And at one, in shame, they shied away  
 So I waited, waited for the graceful dawn  
 Then up, UP UP came the naked Sun  
 To embrace me with a web of rays  
 I knelt and raised my hands to the filled sky  
 Oh! thou knowledge-beaming Sun...I said.  
 Speak no further, cut in the one-hour-old Sun  
 For I do know what you seek and much more;  
 For restless nights you sought where it was not  
 Look and you shall find it on Malcolm's face,  
 Him, behind whose smile humanity hides.