

UFAHAMU

POETRY

MWALIM' ANGU WA KWANZA

By Pete M Mhunzi

Hongera Bw. Sumbi, mwalim' angu wa kwanza
Siasa 'meingia, Ukambani Kupanda
Kenya kuwakilisha, isitawi na nyayo
Za Rais Daniel Moi, ndizo ziongozazo
Pongezi Kwenu Sumbi, mpango umeanza
Hongera ndugu Sumbi, mwalim' angu wa kwanza
Siasa 'meingia, Ukambani kupanda.

Baada ya miaka mingi, na Kenya kuiwaza
Baada ya safari nyingi, na mengi kusambaza
Baada ya kuishi kwingi, shahada kuzipata
Baada ya maneno mengi, hotuba kutamka
Pongezi kwenu Sumbi, mpango umeanza
Hongera ndugu Sumbi, mwalim' angu wa kwanza
Siasa 'meingia, Ukambani kupanda.

Wakati umepita, tangu sabini na tatu
Safari yangu ya kwanza, kukalia matatu
Y.W. na C.A., kufikia kwenye Green View
Small World miti maharagwe, Ukambani kuzuru
Pongezi kwenu Sumbi, mpango umeanza
Hongera ndugu Sumbi, mwalim' angu wa kwanza
Siasa 'meingia, Ukambani kupanda.

Irio kisha samaki, na nyama ya kuchoma
Matunda nyanya mandazi, maziwa ya kulala
Safari mpaka pwani, nchi kunishangaza
Wanyama wale porini, Wamasai mazingira
Pongezi kwenu Sumbi, mpango umeanza
Hongera ndugu Sumbi, mwalim' angu wa kwanza
Siasa 'meingia, Ukambani kupanda.

POETRY

Sasa huku Marekani, habari zasikika
Utekelezaji iiiii! Pa Sumbi 'meshafika
Oye uwe na heri, usije kufilisika
Mambo mengi kukiri, na mengine kukataa
Pongezi kwenu Sumbi, mpango umeanza
Hongera ndugu Sumbi, mwalim' angu wa kwanza
Siasa 'meingia, Ukambani kupanda.

SYNOPSIS OF "MWALIM' ANGU WA KWANZA" (MY FIRST TEACHER)

This poem is written in the Utenzi verse-form. It consists of 14 mizani (vocalized syllables), to a kipande, and seven vipande (lines) in each ubeti (verse). The last three lines are a terminal rhyme which is repeated at the end of each ubeti. Because of the irregular rhyming pattern, this would be classified as Kiswahili guni (blank verse) by classical standards. The poem is written in praise of my first teacher of Kiswahili, Paul Mulwa Sumbi. He also provided me with my first opportunity to go to the mother land, in 1973. The praise was for his election to the Kenyan Parliament in 1984. The poem also attempts to illustrate my first impressions of Africa, specifically Kenya. The term "miti" in the third ubeti is an abbreviation of a phrase that is translated to Kiswahili from Kikamba: "kutupa miti" (to search for the opposite sex). This poem was written in response to a final lesson that Sumbi gave me as we were boarding the plane to leave the U.S.A. "You never praise me! You never build me up! I always praise you and say good things about you, but I never hear praise from you!" Eleven years passed between 1973 and 1984, but the words of my teacher never left me.