Poems

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Abstract
AN ANGRY LETTER IN JANUARY, HOMESICKNESS - for Anna Rutherford, AN INSIDER'S VIEW - for Kinna VI
Dear Bank Manager,

I have received your letter. Thank you very much: threats, intimidations, and all.

So what, if you won't give me a loan of two thousand? Or only conditioned by special rules and regulations?

Because I am not white male or a 'commercial farmer'?

(And in relation to the latter, whose land is this anyway?)

I know that but for what I am not, you could have signed away two solid millions, and not many questions asked.

Of course I am angry.

Wouldn't you be if you were me?

Reading what you had written was enough to spoil for me
all remaining eleven months of the year, plus a half.

But I won't let it.

I had even thought of asking God that the next time round, He makes me white, male, and a 'commercial' farmer.

But I won't.

Since apart from the great poverty and the petty discriminations,

I have been happy being me:

an African a woman and a writer.

Just take your racism your sexism your pragmatism off me;

overt covert or internalised.

And damn you!
HOMESICKNESS
- for Anna Rutherford

This afternoon,

I bolted from
the fishmarket:

my eyes smarting with
shame
at how too willingly and sheepishly
my memory had slipped up
after the loss of my taste buds.

- Just like an insecure politician creaming up
to his boss.

Familiarly in an unfamiliar land,
so strong and so sweetly strong,
the smells of the fish of
my childhood hit hard and soft,
wickedly musky.

All else fall into focus
except the names of the fish.

While from distant places in my head
The Atlantic booms and roars or
calmly creeps swishing foam on the hot sand.

But I could not remember their Fantse names.

They were labelled clearly enough
- in English -

which
tragically
brought no echoes...

One terrifying truth
unveiled in one short afternoon:

that
exile brings losses like
forgetting to remember ordinary things.

Mother, when next we meet, I shall first bring you your truthspeaker's stone:

the names and tastes of fish are also simple keys to unlock secret sacred doors.

And I wail to foreign far away winds:

Daughter of my Mother and my Father's Orphan, what is to become of me?

And Those like me?

AN INSIDER'S VIEW – for Kinna VI

Even a self-imposed exile is another prison.

I opened the gate, banged it shut on myself, and threw the key away. Or just misplaced it.

I thought I could get that key again and easily if only I could find some time, and carefully look.

But in this nightmare world of:

Aliens Compliance Orders
Temporary Work Permits
regular applications for regular visas
permanent residence requirements
Green Cards,
Red Cards and
Blue...

...And not to mention:

just learning to cope
in places where
I cannot take anything at all for granted,

we know that
other doors out of this prison are open
all the time.

But they only lead to *suminado*:
the backyard
the outhouses
the fields beyond.

So of course
I can run all I want. To
other lands other exiles.

Going home is another story.