

A voyage of liberty—A poem from Makena

by Ilutwa Makena

Verily, Verily, we say to you occupier
The Barotse freedom train trundles
Onwards and gaining momentum
Listen to the mesmerizing turn, turn rhythm
Of the royal drum, Ililimufu, sending a thrill in the air, as
Availed by the Ku-omboka day frill to a visitor,
In the interim, nothing seems to make sense to a reveler
Hurriedly, paddlers walk up and about,
Hearty greetings expressed with laughter and shouts, but
Let the Luwabelwa led by Mutwaleti give matching orders
All shall rally behind Minya-Litunga to the Nayuma,
In unison, like the feet of the millipede
The zebra clad paddles drive the Nalikwanda
To sail in a stately manner
A voyage to the Promised Land, the freed Lyondo Iya N̄uwa
Pursuing the passage to honor and glory
Enroute to actualizing our statehood conceived in liberty
There is no longer an exit point, Because
A point of no return has been reached
As the vibrating sound of Manjabila fills the air
It is too late for the faint hearted
And cowards to change their minds, inevitably
Over ambitious paddlers, in a bid to outdo each other
Miss the tune, whilst visionaries remain on course,
Like Nokushimba, new carriers
Always think they are the best carriers
No past, only present, no future
Like elsewhere, jostling and shoving form part
Of the floating wonder, Nalikwanda, Njonjolo mukulwamato mu lyambai
The docking point is never known by the lead paddler
As they take charge of the Imutusi, Interchangeably
Leading the Maoma, Lishoma and Manjabila melodies, and
Think the revelers only see them, But
The mesmerized onlookers only see the millipede, Yet
The new free state of Barotseland is forth, on the face of the world
The birth of a new state from an old nation is imminent