

THE CYCLE OF KNOWLEDGE

By Thembani Maat Onceya, journalist, script writer, drama artist and poet

The Cycle of Knowledge is a movement of writers, poets and drama artists which promotes and advocates for the full realization of the rights and wellbeing of all writers and promotion of literacy in South Africa.

It is through the realization of silence views and silence words that we came together. We came from different backgrounds with different opinions and writing styles.

As writers of this small community, we turn to believe that "Those who writes are those who read." We called ourselves the Cycle of Knowledge because we want to share our experiences, memories and ideas through poetry, music and drama. "Shared memories" is what calls us, "Shared intelligence" is what keep us going.

We are a group of 20–25 members, we come from different experiences, and we were united by poetry. To us, poetry is a healing, inspiration and a potential to grow. Through poetry we comment to social issues, to dominant perspectives and to our social practices.

We write about politics, abused women and children, poverty, love, healing, and unity. It is through this sense of thinking that we gather our emotions, sadness, remembrance and happiness, smiles and hatred, every Tuesday, to what we call "Poetic Tuesday". This is a day that we selected for our every week meetings. These Tuesdays are spent between Duna Library in Joza and the Rhodes University English Department. If we are at Duna Library the bus will take students at Rhodes University to the venue and if we are at Rhodes University the bus will go

and take community writers at Duna Library and Fingo Library. The bus is organised by Rhodes University Community Engagement.

STRUCTURE

As a movement we do not have a chairperson kind of structure but we have a working group. We have a team that organize the venue, transport and other performances that are happening around the community. It is this team that drives the mission and aims of this movement.

LANGUAGE

As a Cycle of Knowledge, the Cycle of Intelligence, through the vision of Share Memories. We decided to, as a movement we must open the space for different tongues, different languages and different choice of writing. In that way, we officially accepted any kind of language that we can find in South Africa and outside the country. Learning is what calls us, teaching will find us. These are some of the languages that are spoken and that can be spoken within the movement: Xhosa, English, Zulu, Sotho and Afrikaans, Venda, Setswana, and Sepedi. However, additional languages may be considered according to specific needs. This is more like bringing your own language as we also consider English as a universal language. So our writers do translate their poems or briefly explain about what the poem was about. In that way we all understand while we also learn new words that we were not exposed to. See the boxes on the next pages to read a poem written in Xhosa language.

CHALLENGES

We have developed our website but we are still struggling to get it functioning. It is not yet working. It will work when we discover an organization that can host us. We do not have money for internet license but we are willing to make things happen.

At Duna Library we were asked to pay R20 for the venue. I do not know how we are going to develop our community if the public spaces are being closed to the public. We do not have money to pay for the library because we are working for the community. We are trying to develop ourselves, our community and our Makana. Why should we pay the library? The Cycle of Knowledge has decided to look for another venue in the community where we will not pay for doing poetry reading.

Most of us are performing poets, we like to perform and see how the audience will respond. But we do not have our own PA system (sound system) that we can use to host outside/public poetry. We wanted to have many events this year but we do not have a music system to make that possible.

ACHIEVEMENTS

There are three theatre productions that we have produced during the National Art Festival: Exams are no enigma (2009), World Revolution (2012) and Programmed (2013). We hosted workshop about Literacy in 2009 and our keynote speaker was Lebo Mashile. In 2013 we performed at the Makana Freedom Festival. We also performed at Trading Live Mandela celebration hosted by Rhodes University Community Engagement in 2013 and in 2014 we performed at the Human Chain Nelson Mandela celebration.

Ndikhumbul' ekhaya

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Ndikhumbula ekhaya, apho kusekho ukukhanya,

Kaloku ikhaya sisiseko sobomi, ubomi, sobomi...

Ndiqubula konke okwam ndibhekisa ngasezibhasini



Kaloku isigqibo ndisithathile...Ndibuyela eZILALINI.

*Ubunzima balomhlaba bundigqibile,
Kodwa ndisatsho "usana olungakhaliyo lufela embelekweni".*

*Ledolophu indigqibile ngoku sele ndishiy-
eke ngamathambo asezimbanjeni...*

*Ngoxhongo nentungo' ndibhitye ingathi
ndiyintonga...*

*Ndandihlala eBhayi, kwilokishi ebizwa
ngegama- i- Soweto,*

Kwisitilato esaziwa ngeBafana.

*Ndandineminyaka emithathu ndifikile,
kodwa ingathi kudala.*

Zazisiwa ubusuku nemini sizidala,

*Sisithi walala-wasala kwasuka kwajika
kwamnyama...*

Ndawashiya amasiko nezithethe

*Kubunzima bokuba iinyoka zindinqola
izithende,*

Ndingenile kwezinkonzo ndiphuma

*Ndathi ndisaghuba ndaboba iingcina zin-
dikhumbuz' ekhaya*

*Apho kusekho ukukhanya- kaloku ikhaya
sisiseko sobomi...*

*Ndizizamile zonke ezalomhlaba, ooh hayi
azindilungelanga.*

*Ebutywaleni nasebutsotsini ndingene nge-
nyawo zombini,*

Lasuka latshona emini ilanga.

Bendingu m'rapper nembongi yosiba

*Ndathi ndisagquba ndabona litshona emin'
ilanga...*

*Kwanqaba imisebenzi, lema ngembambo
ithumbu...*

Qamatha lemeko ayingangam,

*ndisuke ndangumpho ochutywe walahlwa.
Ndifunyenwe ngumtha wendolo.*

*Ndikhumbul' umakhulu, neezantsomi
zakhe zikamvundla no-volf.*

*Nalamabali ndandiweva ngo-bhuti an-
go-Van Damn- no- Dolf.*

*Kumhlaba wakwa Tuku, kwelase Ng-
qushwa...*

*Apho ubona ngeentlambo ezityekeza
amanzi*

Intyatyambo ezimabalabala.

*Iintaba ezifukame, okwenkunku ziqandu-
sela amaqanda.*

*Apho ndandithandwa ngumntu wonke
ndiphethwe okweNkosi.*

*Ndikhumbul' ekhaya apho kusekho ukuk-
hanya*

Kaloku ikhaya sisiseko sobomi....

*In this poem, I am talking about myself
sleeping in bed inside the shack. In this pictu-
re, I was far away from home. I had no one.
And I was also sick. This was after sleeping
with many women, drinking with many
brothers and robbing many people. While I
was sleeping in that bed, I thought of my fami-
ly, friends and the whole entire community. I
thought about the way people use to treat me
at home. I was treated like a king. I remem-
bered: "It takes a village to grow a child." My
memory took me to the village where life was
simple.*