

Nkgwana Magazine

Issue 1

Luca Radulovic

Aliyah

Pam Knapp

Tsholofelo Catherine

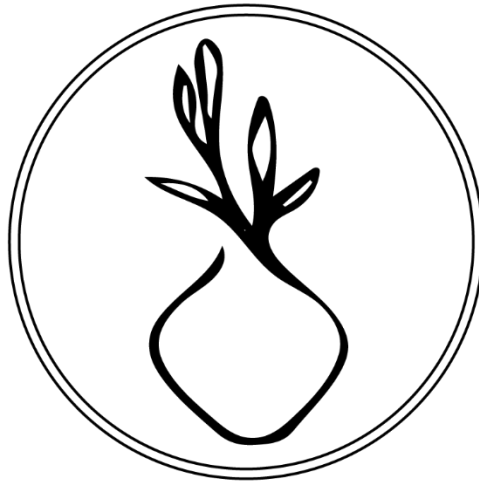
Zabathembu Mthembu

Nixon

Milena

Tamaki

Liam Mick



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Edited by

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Editor's Note

Our lives are marked by migration. Students become at school, and return home, over and over again. It could be that home is always changing or never fully formed, home can be anything for the many people we go through this routine of becoming with.

The poems that we have collected into this issue did not provide a singular answer to questions about home and what it could mean, but we did hope for these poems to act similarly to the fine lines of a map and lead us to the idea of home and what it could mean. This collection we offer stands in remembrance of our shared experiences and soothes us with the aroma of family. It also nudges us to look at the things that make us discontent.

We have arrived safely to the publication of this journal and we have honestly felt inspired by the poets that submitted their work. You have fed us with the comfort that words bring and reminded us that poetry is a lifeline indeed, and for that we are grateful. This is the genesis of a legacy manifested and planned over unending meetings and improvised shoots.

We hope you enjoy our first issue, please take it in gently on your way to the bus or to lecture halls. If your final destination in the day is home, please take this publication with you. Rest your tired bones and read on, read poetry.

grace,

Galaletsang Morake, Bhasani Mlambo, and Phumelele Manitswana

Forest

Luca Radulovic

The fish upon the land

Looking for its sea,

A lone swinging hive,

Waiting for its bee. A poor singing bird,

Hoping to be free and

The rogue, tortured soul

Aching for its glee.

My heart yearns for meaning and brings me pleading to my knees for Here I am

Lost in the forest Searching for the trees.

Luca Radulovic is a student, writer, photographer and musician from Cape Town, South Africa. Instagram: [@lucaradulovic__](#)

Half and half

Aliyah

Every day I choose which version of myself I will be

Fair skin from the South still a hint of brown made obvious in the North

My skin burns and swells it can shift and change I am adaptable to whites and brown

I am from a model c school with an accent that does not match

Half the time I'm frying spring rolls or going out for drinks with work friends

Going to my mamma's 70th at Athlone civic and then having sundowners on the foreshore

other times I stand at the corner shop, the one with the bright red coca cola sign

Woolworths suburbia otherwise, I am home between the aisles of

I stay stuck mixing my Afrikaans and English, trying not to roll my r's

but I prime my throat when I get to work, so only my best English comes out.

I am always split

down the middle

I am two halves of a whole

A resting place

Aliyah

I don't know if a place can be placed if
It does not have the smell of my grandmother in its walls.

Her scent and memory linger around the gates of Mowbray's graveyard.
As I stand above the hole, the smell of musk is soft around my ankles.

My prayer dress lifts slightly as I raise the palm leaves to my mouth,
Gently laying them on the mound of dirt above her head.

Back home, the shell of 51 Walnut stands empty of everything except
the smell of camphor that have remained in the walls from the last wash.

I am not sure if I can climb the towering roads of Walmer Estate
during the dusk of sunset without her hand on my back.

Before sunset or else she says the unseen will follow you home.
I walk in backwards if I come home late, so that nothing clings to the edges of my jacket.

I still hear her chanting in my ears on Thursday nights, making rushed prayers around me.
Always sending away the unwelcome and unseen.

The call to prayer is ringing in my eardrums the morning after,
a looming voice above the mountain that reminds me of God.

God reminds me that He only sends for what is His.
My grandmother used to say "*To dust you are, and to dust you will return*".

Aliyah holds a Bachelor of Social Science from the University of Cape Town. She completed her honours in English Literature in 2022 and is currently a Masters student at the University of the Western Cape specializing in Creative Writing. She has interned for Mail & Guardian Africa and has published two pieces during her internship. She has since contributed literary pieces to different publications but is still navigating the world of poetry. Her current pieces are heavily influenced by both religion and ethnicity, specifically as a young person of colour in South Africa. Aliyah is committed to exploring the history and culture surrounding communities of colour through her literary pieces.

Baby Girl

Pam Knapp

Welcome Baby Girl
Come take your place
Come claim your space
The world and all its wonders await

Welcome Baby Girl
Welcome to the Sisterhood
To the love, the care, the all-consuming good
that thrives here in the sisters' neighbourhood

We'll teach you, Baby Girl
to wear life's ups and downs
like velvet robes and golden crowns
To learn tenacity, to be fortune's queen

You are history unfolding
This is where you begin
Each day, the dice of chance
is yours to throw and spin

You are all our hereafters
You carry the winds of change
You are our hopes and hearts combined
Our promise and purpose entwined

So cry out, Baby Girl, introduce yourself to the world
Cry to be known, cry to be heard,

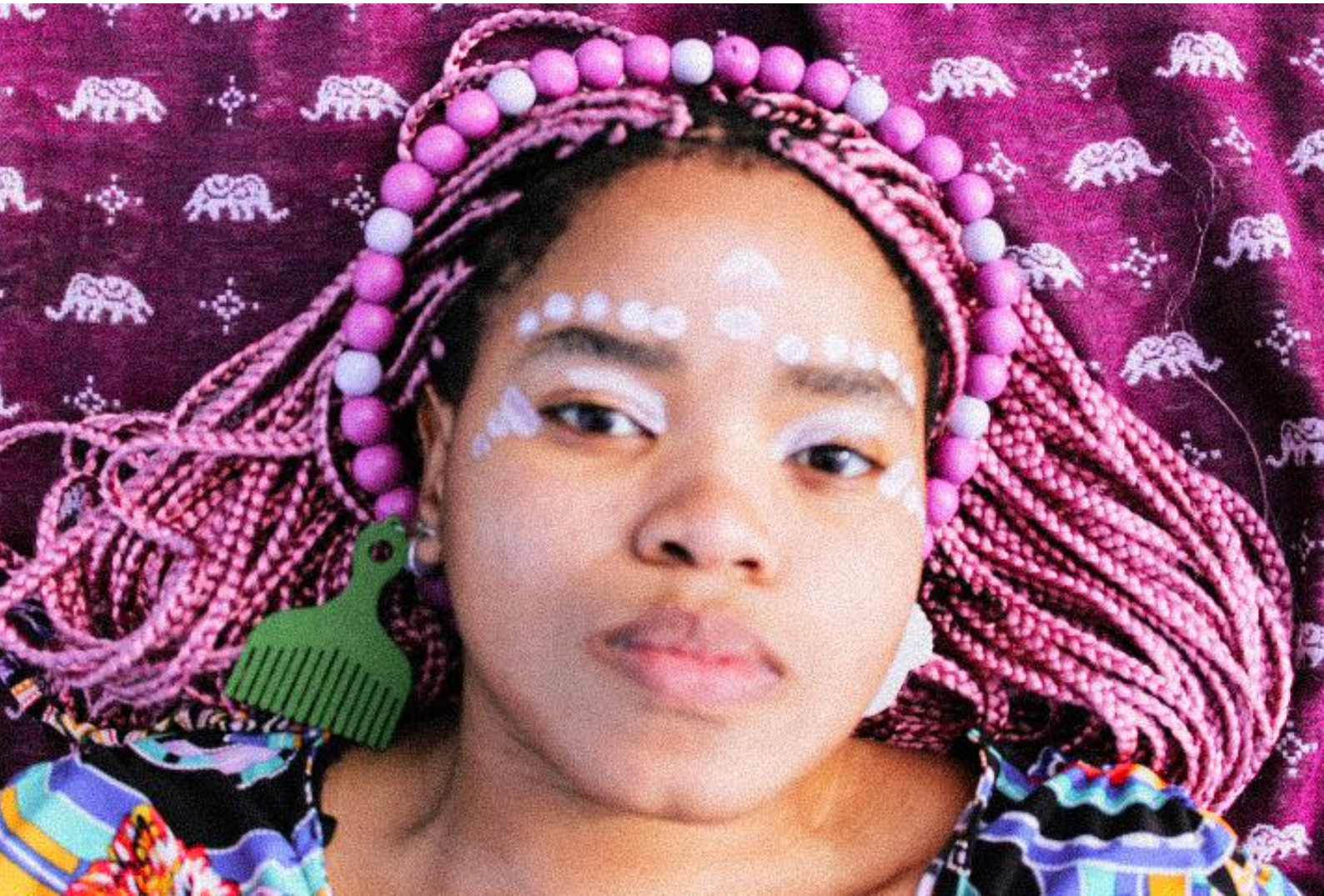
Be the loudest of the songbirds
and sing the bonny sound of you

Roar out our tomorrows, roar you lion cub
Roar our stories and our lore, roar and raise us up

Holler Holler you baby warrior
Call again and again until all know your name

Cry and roar and holler, Baby Girl
The future is yours
Go claim it, Baby Girl

Pam Knapp lives in the UK's rolling countryside of the Sussex Downs, close enough to London to feel the heat, far enough away to avoid being burnt. Optimism is her greatest asset. Her most recent writing can be found in Dreich Magazine, Green Ink Poetry, Owl Hollow Press, Vocivia and Pure Slush.



Ten Things I Can't Pack in My Suitcase

Tsholofelo Catherine

My mother's tears when she saw me in
my graduation gown on the 18th of April.

My grandmother's absence on that day.

My uncle that drove an Audi and a Mercedes and always asked
"motlogolo! di tsamaya byang tsa skolo?" and promising
he'd come to Cape Town one day. He never did.

His blue and white asthma pump he lost and
had to be rushed to the hospital.

My grandmother's silver clutch she used
to reprimand my brother and I.

Her green money tin from which she'd give us
green ten-rand notes.

Our silly little smiles when we bought
seven-rand choc-mint ice creams.

My little hand that stole one rand so
we can buy another one from our change.

My mother's pain when my grandmother
passed away.

My grief when I understood
the permanency of death.

Butterfly Effect

Tsholofelo Catherine

I saw five black and yellow butterflies that day.

Mama was cleaning the shack at the back
and throwing away old stuff.

I was hanging wet laundry and papa
was somewhere outside the yard either
shoveling very small weeds or raking them.

The first one I saw flew right next to
the yellow damp shirt that was on my shoulder,
waiting to be hung next to my white tights.

Mama said I saw the same butterfly five times.

The second one I was going to the bathroom outside.

The day was almost ending and we had
already prepared supper on the gas stove
papa had lit for us.

I saw the third one while taking pots to the main
kitchen from the shack. The fourth somewhere
near the roses.

Each time I saw them I smiled because

I knew this was proof of faith,
“the substance of things hoped for,
the evidence of things not seen.”

I had never seen so many butterflies.

I don't remember where I saw the fifth one.
I was already tired of counting one butterfly.
At exactly 5pm, my phone vibrated to
an email of acceptance. My hands were shaking
and my throat embraced a lump.
I knelt in the bathroom and spoke to God.
I told Him how much I loved butterflies

Tsholofelo Catherine is a poet by choice, a writer by default. She is currently pursuing her honors in English at the University of the Western Cape and is very passionate about Creative Writing, Performance Poetry and Theatre Topics. She's interested in the spaces between a thought, words and paper that allow one to create and exist at the same time. She believes once a thought finds its words, there is no space for the paper to complain about how permanent the ink is.



Locational Heritage

Zabathembu Mthembu

Shack

Mansion

Four roomed House

Estate

Complex (ities) of locational Heritage

Where your Home is matters

It tells people things

It whispers in their ears and decides who you are.

I live Constantia a man says

Wearing a plaid shirt with golfer shorts

He is a good lad the whisper says

He will get you there

But won't play fair.

I live in Khayelitsha a girl says

Wearing pep jeans and plain shirt

She is trouble the whisper says

If you go with her you will pay double

She might play fair

But if I were you I wouldn't dare.

I live in Claremont a person says

Wearing Solomon shoes with cotton on socks

They are alright the whisper says

Although don't be forthright

It might be time to not play fair
There is not much there to even care

What is this you ask... this whisper?
I don't know the whisper says
I am simply the essence beyond knowing
the assumptions memories make.
In my place I form locational heritage
through my unjust prejudicial discretion.

Zabathembu Mthembu is currently an aspiring lawyer, business woman and poet. Through her work in poetry she aims to invoke a sense of emotion that makes people really think about how they interact with literature. She believes that literature works should operate in such a way that is accessible to everyone. It should reach as many people as possible because she believes that everyone is entitled to a poetic experience. Through this an inherent new appreciation for poetry can be found. She is originally from KwaZulu-Natal and is excited to share some of her experiences with a Cape Town audience. @Visual__Voices on Instagram is a new concept that she is working on with her business partner Dimpho Sefora.

The Journey (Cape Town 1999)

Nixon

Bosman Train Station. Destination. Cape Town. Time: 10 am.

The chugging and jolts of the train pacifies my chaotic mind.

Twenty- eight hours later, Cape Town looms in the distance.

The train jogs to a halt and vomits me out onto a drab platform.

I pick up my red and black striped Shangani bag that even cannot fit

one folded blanket. The zip gave up the fight a few days go

from sprinting frequently to and fro.

To gag the mouth to avoid revealing my skeleton

I put masking tape

across all over the loose straps

before it lost its name to bundle.

Outside, the Table Mountain is naked.

It smiles and winks at me.

The Lion's Head shakes its head.

A gaggle of street kids with the faces of old men

are fighting over a bottle of glue and a spliff

to sniff and smoke their country's future away.

A mad man with ragged dreadlocks wearing a dirty white Steve Biko T-shirt

is upsetting the city council's bin.

The innards of bureaucrats puked out onto the pavement.

Shaking his head, he kicks the bin that toyi-toys back

to the corner of Darling & Parade Street.

The streets are noisy, but I cannot comprehend the voices.
A language that I cannot understand
becomes a noise like the chomping of bitter pills in a closed mouth.

My tongue must be twisted and impaired
my ears are attuned to absorb
the new language:
the chaos of amalgamated noises.

My old tongue must be cut off and packed up in a box
couriered back home to Lilongwe. Locked in my room
the key stashed in my Mama's bra.

My home language here is as useless as a plate
without food.

With nowhere to go, no friends or relation in the city
I pick up my bundle of books, tuck it under my arm and lose
myself among hurrying commuters.

At the taxi rank I see no sign of my home town, Kawale.
It is: Milnerton, Mowbray, Khayelitsha, Gugulethu, Hanover Park, Wynberg, signs
that shout and assault me. But none are home
they never will be.

Sounds of day

Nixon

From my room

I can hear the sounds of day

the muffled laughter of children

playing on empty stomachs in the dusty street

mothers scraping off black soot

from piles of pots

with sand

the township is reeling in

another gruelling day

angry people have cut off

dead powerlines

that have become washing lines

for birds

a poor man's pot of tea

is sitting on a cold stove

his cup of life

is without honey

and his spoon

sharpened into a knife

to kill

another life

Nixon Mateulah was born in Lilongwe, Malawi. He moved to South Africa in 1996. His writings have appeared in *Munyori*, *Jungle Jim Magazine*, *Storymoja*, *Aerodrome*, *Kalahari Review*, *Tuck Magazine*, *Stanzas Magazine*, *Too Powerful Word Magazine*. Some of his poems appears under pseudonym, Chichapatile Mangochi. He is currently pursuing his Masters in Creative Writing at the University of the Western Cape.

Neglected

Milena

A text goes
unnoticed, it fades.
To the dump,
with all the others

A smile
unreturned, it fades.
with the wind
it goes, like all the others

A hug given
Cold, it returns
without the warmth
it craves for

A present goes,
Unreturned I wait
upon void promises
Like all the others
I let it slide

Tomorrow I come
more enthusiastic
Expecting a difference
but yet again, Like
all the others

I let it slide.

Milena began writing as an early teenager as a way to express herself when she felt misunderstood. She was born in Zimbabwe but grew up in South Africa. She enjoys hiking and being around nature. Milena is more talkative on paper than she is in person. She is inspired by the work of Maya Angelou and hopes to write thought provoking poems in future.



I am Home

Tamaki

They say home is where the heart is
I, with a fickle heart that jumps from one joy to another
Never settling, a nomad of the known and unknown,
Have no place to call mine

They say home is where the heart is
I, with a heart made of dust, blown away easily
Always pass through, forgotten as soon as I have gone,
Never a choice of settlement

They say home is where the heart is
I, with a ball of fears where my heart should be
Never trusting, comfortably basking in my chaos
Say home is me, its death, its pain, it is us
For we are one

Tlamele Tamaki Makati is a 2nd year PhD student (Computer Science) at TU Dublin. Her educational background is in Mechatronics Engineering and Drone Technology. She is a 28-year-old village girl, born in Lentsweletau and raised in Metsimotlhabe, Botswana. Though a tech-head, the arts are her other passion. She enjoys dancing, writing, reading and just creating art (through dancing, fashion, poetry, digital art).

Publications: https://issuu.com/auyouthenvoy/docs/sauti_oye_2020/s/11013565

Picture

Liam Mick

It took a while, but I started to see,
The more I visited regularly,
Arriving by your place,
Fitted casually,
Fitting that you're tailoring for a salary,
Midnight's studying on a bursary,
It's burdening and I saw the hurt within.

Right now I'm holding your hand,
Seeing it all happening,
Seeing you being draped in that gown,
Family all around, witnessing the placement of your crown,
looking at it now, I'm glad I stayed,
Purpose never felt more profound,
This partnership was made,
Not one that was found.

Thirty years later,
Not a single sound surrounds,
No screaming babies,
No fighting toddlers,
Myself in the gym,
You in the pool, deciding to swim,
Our kids with their own kids,
How did we raise children,
When I travelled to different sets,

While you built another business?

Twenty years later,
Reaching the end of our seventies,
We're approaching the eighties.

Our kids babies are being blessed with their own babies,
All decisions we make now are clarified with a yes, no,
No ifs, buts or maybes.

If I could travel back to change anything,
I wouldn't, neither would I change the scenery we've been seeing lately,
In and out of hospitals,
It's crazy, but we've battled these climates before,
We can beat this, no ifs, no maybe's.

I remember us rushing here,
You squeezing my hand,
Breathing, the doctor handing us our baby,
You telling me "I did the work",
Me smiling at your sass,
You doing your best not to smile back.

Sitting here now,
Holding your hand,
I feel your veins,
I feel the present,
I feel the past.

You still have that smile,
Then comes the laugh,
You're coughing out your chuckles,
Looking at me with those same eyes
that gazed into mine when we first crossed paths.

Your hand is easing out of mine,
In this moment, I know we've had our last.

His name is Liam Mick. He is an aspiring actor, writer and presenter.

He currently presents at UCT Radio on the Friday Hip Hop Specialist Show from 7pm to 10pm.

He was the production manager at UCT Radio from late 2021 to early 2022, and has interviewed artists such as DJ Azuhl and Ben Caesar.

He is part of the music group Roots and Love alongside Maru Da Soul and Siya, with their work available on Soundcloud.

