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**Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies**

**Title**

*Upon Being Banned*

**Permalink**

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**Journal**

Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies, 5(1)

**ISSN**

0041-5715

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**Publication Date**

1974

**DOI**

10.5070/F751017518

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UPON BEING BANNED

by

DON MATTERA

There are words  
    within the recesses of my troubled being  
    but they are not poems  
    not all the flowers, grass  
    nor singing trees can move my pen

Not even the hues of the setting sun  
    now move the soul in me  
    there is no poetry inside  
    but a dry froth of bile  
    on the lips of a volcano

How can I sing  
    when the white vultures  
    rip my tongue  
    Except by walking in the woods  
    How can one tell it is Spring

There is no poetry  
    in being cheated out of one's land  
    no ryme in shackles  
    no merriment in misery  
    How can a Black man sing of Bondage...

*DON MATTERA is a Black South African poet and  
journalist banned (as of November 1973) for five  
years.*