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## BILOXI TO SOWETO, THEIR LOVE LETTERS

By

Marvis Hughes Broulon

What can I send to you, tempestous 'sotsi,'  
Love letters filled with rose wine and soft lyre?  
In the whip-chiselled soul of slavery's hour:  
Bellicose vines yield only blood fruit, bitter and dour,  
Festering streams grow a strange deformed flower  
Unfit for the ancient bouquet,  
Cackling carrion feed on burning black flesh  
Pluck out our eyes and fly away  
With the ode and elegy; a mocking carcass left, grey,  
Knit with rotting rhymes in the white maws of death,  
Worms bore into open-breasted Harmony  
Eternally bereaved, bereft and moaning in the light of day.  
We know too much of blood to sing of live, some will say.

But, Ah, sweet warrior ebony manchild, I do not cry.  
I sing thy garbage-can-lid shield & assegai.  
We will not let them plague our tomorrow  
And its strong song.  
Do you not hear the fiery stanzas of the melody  
This ancient song I send thee  
On tensile laughter of sun-prism spires and time  
To mend thee  
The earth washed clean in raindrops of fire  
Attend thee  
A tender cavern of mystery giving birth  
To love  
Volcano's molten symphony  
Womb of the nations  
Giving birth.

From the throat of coffled black patience  
From ocean-bleached bones of haunting kalimbas  
Comes the wild song of love.  
Out of cotton bales and Harlem saxophones  
Swelling rivers and riveting hate it comes.  
The crack of a hundred whips and  
Tower of a thousand right hands  
Cannot hold it back.

We feast upon starlight and glisten  
Listen to the wisdom of thunder  
How tenderly birds' flight  
Adorns the air, caresses life

Like a gentle lover,  
Thinks with an ancient grace.  
It is love of it  
That keeps it whole.

Listen to the tone  
Of a million voices  
Deep with ancestral time  
Listen to the blazing song  
of Africa rising!  
This is our love song,  
Yours and mine.

Ah! Sweet warrior ebony manchild.