

JWTC FRAGMENTS

Roberta Estrela D'Alva

Actress-MC, activist, director, singer, slammer,
researcher and spoken word artist

FRAGMENT 1

Johannesburg Gold Diggers

Here we are
digging for what's hidden
What's in the depth
In the root
Digging for the gold
Of the golden truth.

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FRAGMENT 5

What really matters

my gratitude for all that is gone, and still is about to
come

that opened new spaces in my mind

that opened new spaces in my heart

that gave me so much treasures

and gave me the opportunity to share it

in the end, that is still the beginning,

we've learned a little bit more about ourselves,

about this crazy world,

about how and who, about when...

about revolution, hate, struggle and faith

about love

(the only thing that really matters.)

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FRAGMENT 4

The chants of the Mothers of Waters.

Nanã

**the grandmother, Lady of the mysteries of life
and death, of standing water, lakes and mud.**

Ê vovó , ê vovó, ê vovó, ê vovó

Ê vovó

É vovó que vai que vem vovó

Ê vovó

Nanã, Nanã, Nanã, Nanã, Nanã, Nanã

Ê vovó

Iemanjá,

**the Queen of the Sea, representes motherhood
and love
is the “owner of heads”.**

Iemanjá é a rainha do mar

Iemanjá é a rainha do mar

Iemanjá é a rainha do mar

Iemanjá é a rainha do mar

Salve o povo, Salve Ela

Salve meu Pai Oxalá

Salve Oxossi, salve os guias

Salve Ogum Beira Mar

**Oxum, the Goddess of Rivers and Waterfalls.
The owner of gold, intimacy, beauty, youth.**

Aiê iê, Aiê ie

Aiê iê Mamãe Oxum

Aiê iê Oxumaré

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FRAGMENT 3

In honor of Ms Angela

“Good evening

The poem that I’ll share with you now is something I wrote some time ago, in 2003, and at that time I had no idea that one day I would be traveling through South Africa on a bus with all these wonderful people, knowing this amazing land and learning the history of their leaders, such as Nelson Mandela, Steve Biko, the Sisulus, and many others. And I could never imagine that Professor Angela Davis would be on this trip.

This is a privilege. A blessing. Having here someone who, like all these great leaders, did so much for us. And that, as these great leaders, sacrificed their lives, their freedom in the name of our.

Looking at you right now, Ms Angela, I think how urgent it is that our ideas again become dangerous. As your ideas were and still are. How were the ideas of all the leaders of which we spoke here

Yes, you are right: “This is our time”

And this poem I wrote has to do with this feeling. Trying to be useful to my country, to my community, to combat racism. I’ll say it in Portuguese because I really want to do it ‘by heart’, but let me first explain what it is about.

The poem is called “Diáspora.” And in this case Diaspora is as an entity that will be moving and sweeping entire unconsciousnesses, oblivion, fear, inferiority

complexes, and going, going, going and goes finding those dead and living leaders on the way, waves at them, thanks them, asks them the blessing, and then going, and going and finally asks for the license and the blessing of the orixás so we can continue on the way, struggling and protected from all evil and those who conspire against us account and freedom. That’s more or less it...

So now Ms Angela, we offer you this poem as a way to pay our tribute and as a way to express all our gratitude, love and respect for everything that you have done for us and for all that you represent to us.

DIÁSPORA

Abrem-se as portas

E a diáspora se levanta

Espanta

A dor, o medo, a dúvida

Desconfianças

Inseguranças

Complexos de inferioridade

Inconsciência

Esquecimento

Não dá mais pra disfarçar

A hora é agora

Chegou o momento

Identidade

Qual é a sua?

Quem é você?

Seus pais?

E os pais de seus pais?

Qual a origem da sua cultura?

De onde vieram seus ancestrais?

Pois respeitar quem veio antes

É ensinar quem vem depois

Conhecer a história

Ativar a memória

Saber quem é quem

Dar nome aos bois:

Ângela Davis, Luiza Mahin, Patrick Lumumba,

Amílcar Cabral,

Solano Trindade, Mestre Irineu, Malcolm X e

James Brown

Steven Biko, João Cândido, Huey. Bob Marley,

P. Newton, Nelson Mandela, Marthin Luther

King,

pastor na vida e na morte,

guerreiro da marcha, da libertação

e de todos os mártires da paz perseguida.

Abolicionistas, guerrilheiros, lutadores, guerreiros, quilombolas

E todos os que lutaram e deram a vida pra que pudéssemos estar aqui agora.

Neste momento, entramos em cena, pedimos a todos a participar

E no passado nos foi concedida a permissão para começar

Planto os meus santos, abro o meu canto

Me visto de fé, de amor e de paz

Vejo uma estrela se aproximando

Toda a grandeza dos orixás

O brilho da lua, do ferro e do fogo

A terra, a lama, o vento e o mar

Peço licença e vou chegando

Respeito e humildade

Eu quero é cantar

DIASPORA (translation)

The doors are opened
And the Diaspora rises
Despises
The pain, the fear, the doubt
Disparities
Insecurities
Inferiority complexes
thoughtlessness
forgetfulness
It can't be disguised anymore
The time is now
The moment has arrived
Identity
What's up?
Who are you?
Your parents
The parents of your parents and on , and on
What's the origin of your culture?
Where did your ancestors come from?
Because to respect those who came before
Is to teach those who after come (come after?)
To activate the history
To activate the memory
To know who is who
Who is here, who is gone:

Ângela Davis, Luiza Mahin, Patrick Lumumba,
Amílcar Cabral,
Solano Trindade, Mestre Irineu, Malcolm X e
James Brown
Steven Biko, João Cândido, Huey. Bob Marley, P.
Newton, Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King,
Minister in life and death,
Warrior of the march of liberation

And of all the martyrs of the pursued peace

Abolitionists, warriors, fighters, quilombolas we take
a bow
And all of those who have struggled and have given
their lives so that we could be here now
In this moment, we get on the scene, and ask every-
body to take part
And in the past has been given to us the permission
to start

I plant my saints
I open my song
I dress myself with faith, love and peace
I see a star approaching
All the greatness of the orishas
The shine of the moon, of the iron and of the fire
The land, the mud, the wind and the sea
I ask permission and come
Respect and humbleness
All I want is to sing.

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FRAGMENT 2

Hage and hate.

“Die pig!”

It was all I could think after ten minutes in front of a television in the Apartheid Museum that was showing the image of Verwoerd, the minister of Apartheid, blood pouring from the nose and mouth after a murder attempted in 1960.

The attempt failed. I subsequently learned that six years later, he had been stabbed to death. And in some hidden recondite of my being, again I gave the verdict: he got what he deserved.

“Emotional issues are political issues”, the words of Professor Achille Mbembe still echo in my mind. Fact: to deal with racism’s subjects, is to deal with hate. Poisoned blood. The powerful energy that fits like a glove for the purposes of destruction. And still so powerful, that it can also construct. So, how ought we to deal with this ?

That’s where art comes in. Society needs the voices of its poets, discourses plucked out of the erosion of utility, that can act in an “out of time” field, or as a “time machine” (as our Neo magician Muyanga remembered). Something that can direct such tectonics; violent, vengeful and painful energies to a creative cry of liberty. That’s the vital importance of James Brown’s tribal scream, the deep 20 minutes trance that Fela let’s us intp, the “Get up! Stand up!” of Bob Marley’s

instruction, the beats from Kool Herc, Bambaataa and Grandmaster Flash and the entire the hip-hop revolution. All the blues, the jazz, samba and capoeira. Those are all medicine for bodies and minds mistreated and sick, full of fury and rage. The frequency of this poetics of culture gives voice to the voiceless. This is the injected antidote into the veins that works faster than anything. A verse by Racionais Mc’s (the most important and prolific rap band in Brazil) can wash away the inferiority complex of a 14 year old boy, built by 400 years of slavery. I saw, and I see this happening everyday. Boys taking pens rather than guns, and spitting their rage with words. Still violent, still aching, but living instead of dying. And letting live rather than killing.

Well. This is nothing new. This is not genius. Maybe I may have written it to convince myself that art is still a way forward. So I do not give up when face to face with my own hatred. I did not succumb face to face with my own individualism and cowardice. In the end I’m one more someone who tries to live in this turbulent world. Simple and complex. Like poetry.