



Testimonials about

Dennis Brutus

Excerpts from
institutions,
individuals
and media

Photo by Anthony Arnove

Institutions

AFRICA ACTION and **JUBILEE USA** (Washington): We mourn the loss of a great friend, artist, and activist. We had the honor of working with Dennis for many years.

ANTI PRIVATISATION FORUM (Johannesburg): Comrade Dennis was always on the side of the oppressed and remained true to his principles in fighting for an anti-capitalist South Africa and world. His pen and his voice were always a thorn in the side of the rich and powerful, whether here or abroad, and were constant reclaimers of our collective consciences and humanity. In the ten years since the formation of the APF, comrade Dennis was a regular source of solidarity, encouragement and lively debate. He never shirked from joining the fight against narrow nationalism, ethnic chauvinism and gender oppression and always had a word of affirmation for his fellow comrades.

FREE BURMA CAMPAIGN SOUTH AFRICA (Johannesburg): Comrade Dennis is always forefront of the powerless.

COMAFRICA (Rio de Janeiro): ‘A Luta continua!’ Este slogan tão conhecido em nossa língua portuguesa e que se incorporou, no âmbito das lutas de libertação nacional, a várias línguas da África Austral, com a sua sonoridade do nosso vernáculo, bem caracteriza a obra de Dennis Brutus e sua vida, cuja divulgação nesta língua merece continuar.

CRICKET SOUTH AFRICA (Johannesburg): He was jailed and banned from public life in South Africa during this struggle, but this did not

diminish his commitment to bring about non-racialism in sport and democracy for his nation.

JERICHO NATIONAL AMNESTY MOVEMENT (New York): Dennis was one of those former political prisoners who never once forgot what it was like to spend time behind bars, or the significance of working for the release of political prisoners world-wide. We must pay our respects to one who never left others to languish inside prison walls. His was a principled for freedom of all people. Free 'em all.

JUBILEE SOUTH (Buenos Aires): Jubilee South is fortunate to have been able to draw on Dennis' multiple talents and commitments since our founding 10 years ago. He was a significant presence not just in the fight against apartheid debt, and for reparations, but in the struggle always against all forms of debt domination, ecological debt, climate debt, mining, water and privatisation debts - ¡AMANDLA! he cried, ¡A LUTA CONTINUA!

JUBILEE SOUTH AFRICA (Johannesburg): Perhaps, the most prominent ideas upheld by Dennis belonged in the sphere of political economy. He was such a formidable critic of the role played by debt in the economics and human rights of the people of the world that he was one of the founders of Jubilee South Africa in 1998. He has been its most active patron ever since, joining the organisation in its strategising, campaigning, educational activities and action on the streets. He was also active in the international Jubilee movement and thought it was of prime import that the oppressed people of the world should find a rallying call for themselves in the World Social Forum. When he was already bed ridden, he expressed his strongly felt concerns at the capitalist system as an enemy of Mother Earth and that the great powers were organising a fraud in Copenhagen. He urged the organisations of the oppressed to put up such a counter pole to them in that conference as would recall the events of Seattle at the end of the last

century. Without him, our movement is that much poorer. It is now the duty of those he has left behind to live up to the glorious example he has set.

NELSON MANDELA METROPOLITAN UNIV. (Port Elizabeth): Professor Brutus never stopped in his quest for a humane society, and indeed became even more active in the post-apartheid period to campaign for social justice for the poor in South Africa as well as poor people across the planet as we are grappling with the negative effects of neo-liberal globalization. We have learnt immensely from his extraordinary life as a teacher, political activist and poet. NMMU is honoured to have been able to bestow a honorary doctorate on Professor Brutus in 2009, as a mark of our esteem for his distinguished record in service of democracy and human rights.

NEW UNITY MOVEMENT (Port Elizabeth): We salute his memory and dedicate ourselves anew to striving for the more humane, and just socialist order in which he so fervently believed.

PATERSON SECONDARY SCHOOL (Port Elizabeth): Paterson is proud to have played a role in his high school education and was blessed to have had him back some years later as educator. Brutus will forever be remembered in the history of Paterson High. He penned the lyrics of our school song and together with his poetry, his legacy will live on.

SA GOVERNMENT (Pretoria): [His] contribution to the struggle against apartheid and passion for social justice and human rights for all mankind has left an indelible mark in South Africa and the international community. As we celebrate his lifework as a South African poet and political activist let us remember that Brutus's poetic license was first and foremost inspired by the quest for the restoration of human dignity and achievement of a better life for all.

SA NON-RACIAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE (Port Elizabeth): The South

African sport boycott owed much to his fierce commitment and relentless organizing, from his founding of the Coordinating Committee for International Recognition in Sport (1955) to the South African Sports Association (1958) and its successor, the South African Non-racial Olympic Committee.

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS INDABA – KZN (Durban): The world will be a little less friendly, a little emptier but we know that he will live forever in the minds and hearts of those who knew him.

SPLIT THIS ROCK POETRY FESTIVAL (Washington): Split This Rock mourns the passing and celebrates the life of Brutus, who shared his prophetic vision with us as a featured poet at Split This Rock's inaugural festival in March 2008.

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL (Durban): We are deeply saddened by the loss of one of this university's greatest figures, a poet whose work will be celebrated forever, and whose wisdom in so many campaigns for social justice will be sorely missed. A profoundly humane and sympathetic individual, full of love and caring for those around him, and for those who suffer anywhere and everywhere, he was a moral beacon at a time when so many have drifted from social and environmental awareness to pursue selfish ends.

UKZN CENTRE FOR CREATIVE ARTS (Durban): A true gentleman, frontline intellectual, grandmaster activist, great poet, and a very kind human being. The Centre for Creative Arts has been privileged to know Dennis personally and honored to provide platforms for him within our Poetry Africa and Time of the Writer festivals where his conscientising articulations have inspired and motivated so many.

UKZN PRESS (Pietermaritzburg): The University of KwaZulu-Natal Press is proud to have been associated with, and to have published an edited collection of work by and on Dennis Brutus. We are saddened

by and mourn his death, but we also celebrate a life that remained revolutionary right to the end.

WORCESTER STATE COLLEGE (Massachusetts): Brutus was a beacon of hope for human rights. The entire campus community and lovers of freedom everywhere will miss his great spirit. We are so very fortunate to be the permanent home of his books, papers and journals.

ZIMBABWE COALITION ON DEBT AND DEVELOPMENT AND SOUTHERN AFRICAN PEOPLE'S SOLIDARITY NETWORK (Harare): We are deeply saddened with the loss of such a respected and trusted colleague in the movement.

Individuals

TINA ABREU: Our best tribute will be to continue campaigns and fight for causes he believed in and illuminate others with his insights.

LIONEL ADRIAAN: I was a pupil of Dennis at Paterson High School in the late 50's. I had the good fortune of playing table tennis with him. I also witnessed his skill in the field of jive during his leisure time and was often worried that he would break his thin legs. His favourite 'swear' word often used for the difficult, troublesome and simply dumb pupils was MUGWUMP!

LAWRENCE AFRICA: I was in his English Class at Paterson High school in 1959 and 1960, and owe him much: 'now I understand what he tried to say to me, how he suffered for his sanity...'

BIKO AGOZINO: He achieved a lot more in those final years than he could have achieved in exile, at least judging by all those honorary doctorates that our Baba Dolphin gathered compared to the sterile chlorinated pool that he resisted being deported from when the wild sea was still ruled by apartheid sharks!

NEVILLE ALEXANDER: A gentle, erudite and courageous man, an exemplary revolutionary, erudite scholar, master of the English language, dignified, calm and always willing to serve others.

CHADWICK ALLENBAUGH: A beacon in my memory with his enduring spirit, infectious laughter, unrelenting sharpness, his great appreciation

for sport and chess, and humble service and true leadership for causes greater than one person, yet courage to stand... to act... to speak and prove one person can and did make a difference for many far beyond himself, his loves, his country.

ISAAC OTIDI AMUKE: A name that to me meant resilience, you inspired many all over the world, you took the right position of the writer/poet in society, spoke the talk and walked the walk.

FAROUK ARAIE: A political icon and legend. He was an Ajax defying the lightning of despotism and an ardent foe of racism. He also taught us not to be subservient at the cost of liberty. He was the intrepid vindicator of what he conceived to be the absolute rights of those whose cause he espoused.

SUSAN ARDEN: In his wonderful poems, South Africa is the beloved, and Dennis is the always faithful, if dismayed, champion. A man of good humor and humility, Dennis was modest about his own efforts, always giving the credit to others. He was a great teacher, mentor and inspiration to his students at Northwestern University, of whom I was one.

GRAHAM BAILEY: Dennis would want us to celebrate his life by learning from and mimicking his leadership, indefatigable energy, and total commitment to the ongoing struggles.

AZWELL BANDA: I first met Denis through his poetry, when I was in high school, in Zambia. He took pride of place among some of Africa's greatest writers such as Cyprian Enkwensi, Elechi Amadi, Chinua Achebe, Ngugi Wa Thiongo, Wole Soyinka, and so on.

NNIMMO BASSEY: Dennis was such a huge inspiration. He lived his life to the full. Always at the forefront of the struggle. Never gave up hope!

BEVERLY BELL: I met Dennis when he was fighting for political asy-

lum from the Apartheid regime in the early 80's. Our collaboration began when he sat on the board of the Washington Office on Haiti where I served on the staff. Never mind that he could never attend the meetings due to his back-breaking schedule; he always took the time to send beautiful notes of inspiration for the Haitian liberation struggle, written in his remarkable free-hand calligraphy. How we treasured those notes! He later sat on the board of the Center for Economic Justice that I ran, and this time he showed up for most of the meetings. Though reaching the remote city of Albuquerque required many hours of travel, and though he often had meetings or presentations in other countries on the front and back ends, and though his participation was often for no more than a day, still he came... for Dennis was faithful to whatever he committed to. The same was true of the World Bank Boycott, of which we were two coordinators: Dennis appeared for most any workshop, presentation, or meeting we asked of him, raising high the flag with all his strength and brilliance. He didn't just show up in body, of course. He came with his most pressing passions and most politically urgent campaigns. He lobbied all to involve ourselves, to turn out, to unite our voice and strength, to do more than we were doing. The man was tireless and fearless, and gently urged us to be, too. I recall running a workshop on strategies to fight the World Bank in a church in Washington during a week of protests. Making a cameo appearance, Dennis asked for the floor and proceeded to make a long appeal for everyone to join him at another gathering on another topic, many months out, in another country. As he went on about whatever the topic of that gathering was, a young woman hissed at me that the speaker was off-message and that I should cut him off. I tried to be polite while denying her request, but what I really wanted to say to her was, 'Do you have any idea who is speaking? You should just feel honored. Just listen very carefully to what he has to say.' During one of his narrations in my living room, I noticed that the self-deprecating chortle that usually punctuated his stories had vanished. Dennis was

softly crying. A tear ran down his nose and hung at the tip, where it remained throughout the rest of his tale of horror and brutality. Like Dennis' life, the sadness or frustration it revealed did nothing to stop or quiet the truth-telling in which he was engaged. The same was true with his approach to the movement. When comrades and allies around him made errors, his response always shone like a beacon above the oft-divisive internal politics. He seemed to know better than most that we are all limited and imperfect, and that the benefit of the doubt or the possibility of change is a grace we need for humanity to continue to evolve. Or perhaps it was simpler: perhaps he knew that he was no one's judge. I would say I will miss Dennis, but he's not going anywhere: he is in all of us who care profoundly for humanity and justice.

WALDEN BELLO: Dennis was a beacon to all of us. We will all sorely miss him.

ALEXANDER BILLET: Reading Brutus' poetry tells you just about all you need to know. A man of deep compassion, an ironclad sense of solidarity, someone whose formidable way with words never managed to overshadow his love for humanity. Kind, upbeat and friendly, whose words and actions were firmly rooted in the belief that ordinary people can change the world.

DEAN BIRKENKAMP: Dennis and his wife lived in Boulder for about two years during the 90's, when he was visiting professor at the University of Colorado. After a talk he gave at the Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center, he said simply, 'Can you run over with me to the Hill? We might be able to catch the last few minutes of the memorial for Allen Ginsberg.' After we entered the theatre, what I hadn't expected was that he dart straight up to the stage and jump up on it, as the MC recognized him and announced that Dennis would now deliver the final poem and eulogy of the evening. Never a dull moment with Dennis! He surely was one of the most determined activists who ever graced the planet.

STEVE BLOOM: I approached him, somewhat hesitantly, to share a poem I had written referencing the struggle in South Africa. He read it immediately, and eagerly. Then, to my surprise, he began a conversation as if we were long-time comrades and collaborators. That, in my experience, was Dennis Brutus summed up: a man who had achieved greatness by any ordinary standard. But the esteem in which he was held by others seemed unimportant to him. He felt, and acted, like an ordinary human being simply doing what needs to be done. He treated others, even strangers, as if that were true as well. The overwhelming majority of young activists in the struggle for a better world believe that they are committed for life. Very few, however, actually fulfill this promise which they make to themselves. How many who were Dennis Brutus's comrades in the anti-Apartheid struggle, for example, ended up compromising their commitment to human liberation once the overthrow of Apartheid was achieved and power transferred into their hands? Dennis, however, remained committed to the poor and oppressed of South Africa and of the world until his final days. He was constitutionally incapable of doing otherwise. The world will miss him. I will miss him, too.

BRIGGS BOMBA: He lived a full life and his works will continue to inspire our struggles. I am very thankful that we were able to video skype Dennis into Busboys and Poets for what was his last Washington DC performance.

PATRICK BOND: Traveling from court to court during the Middle Ages, the troubadour was Southern Europe's sage, a wit whose satirical songs offered some of the most creative expressions of love for life and people. Too often, though, Brutus' poetry reflected such acute pain, suffering and above all anger at the court's ruling elites. No South African threw themselves more passionately into so many global and local battles.

RUY BRAGA: Dennis will be remembered among us, Brazilian socialists, as a WONDERFUL comrade.

MARCELLE BRINKHUIS-ABRAHAMS: Our signed first edition of *Poetry and Protest* will be treasured. The writings therein resonate profoundly.

LISA BROCK: He was the person who got me quickly involved in the struggle against apartheid in Chicago when I was a graduate student. I will never forget him.

TONY BRUTUS: In the living room of our Shell Street home in Port Elizabeth, he would greet neighbours and fellows from near and far. And in fact, the names of Govan Mbeki, Walter Sisulu, MN Pather, Lutchie Lutchman, Luthuli, were household names for me growing up. He took pleasure of mooching down to the Port Elizabeth docks to greet and befriend foreign sailors arriving from far and stranded without a knowledge of the town - and he was rewarded with a unique and broad collection of jazz records and wonderful East German cameras. Dennis was an intellectual guide, a pilot light assisting other souls with unfailing insight. Arthur Nortje, Vaughn Faile, Charles Abrahams are among immensely talented young people who have with his nudging, achieved magnificent accomplishments. By example that soul force will defeat police cordons: pen in hand, clear of his conviction, he use his charm and courtesy, and ability to spin a story as a formidable weapon. We were not very much in touch with each other in recent years, but then that changed and it is a credit that Dennis could put aside the differences between us and say that he would spend some months with us as his candle started to flicker. Eighty five years is a decent span. Hamba Kahle Dennis!

HORACE CAMPBELL: The spirit of Brutus will live among all those who strive for peace and justice.

NOEL CABANGON: How he fought for justice has inspired most of us and we shall never waver. He will remain in us in all our struggles.

BEN CASHDAN: Dennis you made me laugh, believe, hope and then laugh some more. When we travelled together in South Africa, the USA and Europe, screening and shooting documentary films, you always had an amazing (and hilarious) story to tell of your past battles and struggle antics. I was always struck by the fact that you took the time to listen to what I had to say and to give me generous feedback. Everywhere we went you were surrounded by people young and old who found your youthful optimism infectious. You inspired me to tell stories in my films and your inspiration will be with me always.

GUSTAVO CASTRO: This admirable man's life was so notable to me: his life, his words, his person. Dennis hasn't left, he remains with us forever. Dennis may rest in peace, for surely he knows that the rest of us will continue to uphold the struggle.

FANTU CHERU: Dennis had for many years enriched our lives and kept us to our principles.

NOAM CHOMSKY: It was with great sorrow that I learned of the passing of Dennis Brutus, a great artist and intrepid warrior in the unending struggle for justice and freedom. He will long be remembered with honor, respect, and affection, and his life will be a permanent model for others to try to follow, as best they can.

TONY CLARKE: I will never forget that incredible evening several of us spent last May with Dennis at his bedside - reading poetry, swapping stories and sharing analysis - sprinkled with bursts of laughter into the wee hours of the morning.

BARBARA LEVY COHEN: I was a student at the University of Denver when he first came to the States and taught there. It was an honor to have been taught by Dennis and to know him and to stand alongside him for human rights.

ROBERT COMPTON: A true humanist with a heart of gold and a razor sharp mind.

DAN CONNELL: I am certainly glad to have traveled with him intermittently as we launched the hybrid humanitarian agency/solidarity committee project we named Grassroots International in 1983. Dennis's contribution was the depth and breadth of his political vision and personal commitment, never separable, always inspiring. It was just so last year when he visited my class in African politics at Simmons College.

IMANI COUNTESS: On September 18 the New York-based War Resisters League awarded Brutus a Peace Award for his life-long advocacy. Despite failing health, Brutus was involved in a lawsuit against US oil and automotive corporations for reparations to victims of apartheid. In accepting the award, Brutus urged activists 'to fight back, to save our planet...' I had the privilege of co-hosting that program. I have long been inspired by Brutus' work; his poetry is honest and moving.

DEMBA MOUSSA DEMBELE: The passing of Brutus is an immense loss to the international social movement and especially to the progressive African movement. He was a model of modesty and simplicity, like all great men or women.

SARAH DIONNE: I am a former student from the University of Ottawa. I really loved his poetry, and will now treasure my copy of *Poetry and Protest* even more.

DESMOND D'SA: A giant amongst men, a principled man, a fighter for the poor, a soldier for the oppressed, a father to us all. Hamba kahle.

STUART EASTERLING: Dennis came, more than once, to the meetings of the Palestine solidarity organization at the University of Pittsburgh. At the end of these kinds of meetings, as activists know, everyone takes a handful of posters for the next meeting from the pile. Dennis would

of course do the same. Except I also remember seeing Dennis, more than once, painstakingly putting them up around campus. At the Boston Social Forum, at a massive plenary session, a fellow African, upon realizing Dennis was there, was clearly overcome with excitement and was ushering him up to the platform. Dennis spoke about the conditions in the 'new' South Africa. He spoke of the history of struggle in that country, and how so many people's hopes had been dashed. And at the end of his brief remarks, he simply began repeating: 'We Will March Again.' 'We Will March AGAIN.' 'We WILL March AGAIN.' 'We Will MARCH AGAIN.' 'WE ... Will March ... AGAIN.' He repeated those simple words, beautifully, as a poet, and as an agitator. The air in the room was absolutely electric. I don't remember how long he did this. But I will never forget it.

COMRADE FATSO (Samm Farai Monro): My heart is sore for the loss of an amazing comrade. He lived a long life and left a powerful legacy of struggle and poetry. Our show last night was dedicated to him. Much respect to a great man.

BILL FLETCHER: Perseverance, dedication and eloquence made him not only a hero for the South African freedom struggle, but for all those who struggle for social justice.

MICHAEL FRIEDMAN: Dennis was a truly consistent fighter for equality in South Africa.

MARY GALVIN: My young son Cameron wants to know why Dennis had to go. He remembers Dennis spending time in a fort he built, sharing many lunches and dinners, and coming to hold his new baby sister Kati. A few months ago, Cameron came home with a school assignment that his greatest wish was that Dennis would get better. Now he has a photo of Dennis over his bed, a sort of a Father Christmas looking over him. Dennis played an important role in many people's

lives, touching us all in different and subtle ways. There is no question that we will continue to be inspired by his life commitment to social justice, but then his poetry forced us to see the personal and the political as one. And his keen sense of boyish humour in planning and carrying out protest actions, mimicking marriage and throwing shoes and pies. And his moral outrage at the political shenangans that continue, which provided him only a short space between Copenhagen and 2010 to leave peacefully with his family around him. All of this was somehow accessible in the friendly Dennis. Why did Dennis have to go? He has passed the baton to us, let's not let him down.

SANDY GAUNTLETT: From someone who was very active in the Halt All Racist Tours campaigns here and especially in the 1981 Springbok Tour campaign, let me express my deep sorrow. People like Dennis were an inspiration for so many people to fight back around the world that it is impossible to truly judge the impacts of their lives. Kia Kaha (be strong).

LARS GAUSDAL: Personally, I had the honor of attending some of his lectures last year in Durban. His engagement and commitment over the years has and will serve as motivation for a activist-rookie as myself.

JAKES GERWEL: His contribution to the struggle against apartheid and his efforts to bring about social justice in the world are appreciated and will be remembered for many years to come.

AMY GOODMAN: His life encapsulated the 20th century, and even up until his final days, he inspired, guided and rallied people toward the fight for justice in the 21st century. Many young activists know Brutus not for his anti-apartheid work but as a campaigner for global justice, ever present at mass mobilizations against the World Trade Organization, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund-and, most recently, although not present, giving inspira-

tion to the protesters at the UN climate summit in Copenhagen. He said, on his 85th birthday, days before the climate talks were to commence: 'We are in serious difficulty all over the planet. We are going to say to the world: There's too much of profit, too much of greed, too much of suffering by the poor.... The people of the planet must be in action.'

SELIM GOOL: After teaching in PE Dennis came to C.T./Western Cape and met 'the intellectuals' of the NEUM/anti-CAD fraternity and became a left-wing socialist, left them and joined the ANC ('Alliance') of Stalino-Nationalists and then fought with them later for their horrible lies and corruption, stealing of State monies and ARMS DEAL spending etc, and later, fought for a Good Leftist Socialist Programme, so let us NOT forget this comrades!

NADINE GORDIMER: A freedom fighter who never thought it necessary to give up being an intellectual, but combined both.

HOPEWELL GUMBO: I met you in the last days. Your frail voice, from the wheel chair was a touching inspiration, a sign of courage, determination and ammunition for those you were about to leave, all who had gathered for nothing but the road to an alternative world. With my eyes closed I can see you so fresh in the long red sea march from Alex to Sandton, taking every opportunity to inspire with slogans that told us that there was no other way than that of struggle. For freedom was you call and we will carry the torch as you constantly reminded. Your departure is the vindication that struggle is our birthright and we will forever will to set you soul free.

SANDILE GUMEDE: Remember when him and CCS Staff were demonstrating outside US Embassy, Durban, against Prof. Adam Habib's refused entry to the US. I couldn't believe there's a person who puts his life in line for another being.

VINEETA GUPTA: Dennis always seemed so timeless that news of his passing away almost sounds like a false rumor.

SHALMALI GUTTAL: He was always sensitive, inspiring and so supportive of even the smallest acts of resistance to imperialism, racism and exploitation that we felt powerful listening to him, and confident that we could change things. His own political history was/is already proof of that.

SUSAN GZESH: I was Brutus' lawyer in 1983 when we began his ultimately successful bid for political asylum. Due to the Reagan administration's good relations with the South African apartheid regime, they did not want Brutus, a capable opponent of apartheid, staying in the US to embarrass them - particularly if he was staying because the US granted him asylum and, by implication, stated that the South African regime persecuted its opponents. Brutus won his case for asylum because the anti-apartheid movement was able to create a political climate in which it would have been impossible for the US government to deny that Brutus would have been persecuted had he been returned to South Africa. The asylum case provided a vehicle for activism and public education on apartheid - with Brutus as its poetic, brilliant center.

ADAM HABIB: This was a great loss not only for CCS, but also for the SA and global justice movement. We all will miss his principled solidarity for all of the struggles of marginalised communities across the world.

ADELAINE AND WALTER HAIN: He was an indefatigable campaigner against the Apartheid regime, never stinting himself in his fight, particularly as we knew, on the Sports Apartheid front. He will be always remembered and missed by his fellow campaigners all over the world.

PETER HAIN: in his leadership of SAN-ROC, he was massively instru-

mental in isolating white South Africa from all international sports. Dennis, we salute you as one of our freedom warriors

KATE HENEY: It was a pleasure and an honor to have met this brave and brilliant man during our studies in May at the CCS.

DOUG HENWOOD: Aside from his great political work, I was always moved by what a warm and good human being he was.

LARRY HILDES: A wonderful poet, amazing organizer, and a great human being. I first met Dennis at Northwestern back in 1984 when the anti-Apartheid struggle in the US began to pick up steam. During the many weeks we occupied the plaza of the Administration Building trying to force the university to withdraw its investments from companies doing business in Apartheid South Africa. Dennis, who was the in the English Department would come out after his classes were over for the day, and talk about his struggle and the struggle overall, and read poetry as the sun went down.

JOSEPH HUTCHISON: A short, compact, self-contained man with gray Einsteinian hair, he read poems about systemic and individual brutality in a quiet voice that only made the horrors more vivid. He also read tender love poems and aphoristic, philosophical verses, poems of exile and celebration - all burning in the shadow of his vast sadness.

MONIKA IDEHEN: I had the great privilege of knowing him and the pleasure to hear him call me a friend.

BRIAN ISAACS: A visionary. We owe it to people like Brutus to build true non-racial sports organisations.

KIAMA KAARA: He inspired us all who met him and we are resolute that he died fighting Capitalism through and through. We all will endeavour to live his spirit.

BRIAN KAGORO: Brutus' life journey was incredible, his contribution to humanity and global justice is only matched by a handful of living legends. He often reminded us that poverty was not a gift from God, or the result of some misfortune but rather the curse of a global political and economic system that rapes the environment, destroys humanity, shreds dignity, shatters freedom and shuns equality. We in Action Aid International had the privilege of benefiting from his wisdom, candour and relentless humour in the several training sessions that he conducted for us on global justice issues. Comrade Dennis was as outstanding performing a one-man play of Karl Marx as he was penning out poetry on social justice. Hamba Kahle Qhawe le Africa!

WAYNE KAMIN: I remember when over thirty-five years ago here in Austin, Texas, he spoke with and read poems to one elderly woman who wanted to, but was fearful of registering to vote. After that meeting in her home, she let me take her to the polls the rest of her life. Dennis also met even the smallest classes of children and young adults. He organized ad-hocs, letters writings, petitions and protests for the greater good. The release of prisoners of conscience and of those under the death penalty never failed to rouse him. He addressed local to international forums on environmental and economic apartheid. He wrote his eloquently scholarly, reasoned and unassailable prose, like his poetry, with characteristic detail, color, rhythm, passion and restraint. In every instance, Dennis Brutus's message was the same. And he was so fond of saying, 'A luta continua - -the struggle continues.' So does his goal remain the same: compassion, truth and equitable, fair shake for all in access to health, safety, food, shelter, and an opportunity for advancement which does no harm to others. For nearly forty years, Dennis Brutus was my teacher, mentor, colleague, comrade and friend. He and his work and hope lives on in me and in you. Just think how luck we are that he passed our way and bestowed us his burden. Hey, Dennis!

KASIEKULTURE: What Brutus and millions of informed South Afrikans saw with the Mandela-ANC was the perpetuation of the same status quo. That is the reason I had a problem with a newspaper that sad it was a tragedy [or travesty] that Brutus refused to embrace the 'new South Afrika'. He was not alone; some of us have a problem embracing a sham when we know what the ideal looks like. I met Brutus two times and everytime I spent time with him he had something important and revolutionary to teach me. I enjoyed my times with Brutus and learnt the importance of sacrifice, altruism and international activism beyond narrow battlefields like who should be the CEO of the SABC, Transnet, Armscor or who should be in cabinet. Something bigger than a tender. Brutus understood that South Afrika will never be free until the last oppressed soul on earth has been granted self-determination. Brutus was a poet, a soldier and a father. He was a comrade's comrade and a realist - something many so-called comrades today are not.

RONNIE KASRILS: He fought fiercely for freedom, equality and justice, and apart from many admirable qualities was one of this country's outstanding. He lived a life of fulfillment and will be remembered for his sterling qualities and the courageous role he played to set our country free.

DENIZ KELLECIOGLU: Millions of people inspired by his words and person. Much respect.

JAMES KILGORE: He showed us there was an alternative to aging gracefully or with bitterness. He aged with fire!! What a spirit and inspiration - a militant for all ages.

MICHAEL KOHN: A pivotal figure in the anti-Apartheid movement. He was a critical thinker who forged a strategy on how to bring the horror of Apartheid to world attention. Everywhere he went and lectured he sparked a divestiture movement often forcing colleges to divest their

endowments from companies doing business in or with South Africa. Brutus' work did not go unnoticed by the South African government, who listed him in a secret memo as one of the most dangerous people to the Apartheid regime. Shortly after the Reagan Administration began, Brutus found himself facing deportation. In the spring of 1982 we organized a sell-out Pete Seeger benefit concert at Northeastern University, raising funds for his legal defense and mobilizing thousands of people for his support. Along with Chicago's Northwestern University community, we led a letter-writing campaign producing over 50,000 personal letters of protest delivered to the INS hearing judge and to the State Department. The Senate passed a resolution offering Brutus U.S. citizenship. Brutus turned away the offer: 'I am in involuntary exile. It would be a compromise for me to take permanent residence anywhere until I can go home.' Instead, he put the Apartheid regime on trial and was granted political asylum. Stephen and I remained in close touch and often collaborated with Dennis who, in 1988, signed became a founding Board member of the National Whistleblower Center. He remained on our board until his death. Dennis understood the power of whistleblowers and the importance of protecting them. One of his dreams was to spread whistleblower protections throughout the world, especially to his native South Africa.

MEREDITH KOHUT: Incredibly humble, witty, inspiring thinker, spent his life devoted to political activism.

DAVID P. KRAMER: May the very full life that he lived continue to inspire you in all that you do.

GRACE KWINJEH: I shall always remember your comfort and inspiration in UKZN during my time of despair, recovery, no greater mentor than you.

MUNA LAKHANI: A giant among Humanity has passed on, leaving us

bereft of beauty, poetry, clear and lucid thought, and compassion that seemed limitless. Dennis Brutus shone a bright light on the path of justice, truth and integrity, a rarity in these money driven times. His never failing wisdom, his ability to see through greenwash and political-spin; his unflinching stance on the shortcomings of some who claim to be our leaders for the benefit of the poorest amongst us; and his mind-, soul-, and compassion-expanding poetry, begins to indicate how much of a rock he has been for so many of us - always with us in struggle, never failing to encourage us onwards, supporting so many of our campaigns, that people with enormous reserves of energy battled to keep up with him. Dennis, I hope that many of us re-commit to helping in whatever small way we can, to hopelessly try and fill the immense void you have left behind you... I miss you - travel safely, till we meet again.

RICHARD LAPCHICK: Brutus came to the United States 40 years ago as a visiting poet at the University of Denver, where I was a graduate student focusing on international race relations. I met him at a Friday evening reception held for him by George Shepherd, my dissertation chairman. My two main passions were sports and fighting racism, but before meeting Brutus, I had not seen a way to combine the two. I went home and wrote a new proposal to study the effects of apartheid in sport in South Africa and the international response. I did not sleep for two days. My original dissertation proposal on the racial factor in American foreign policy took six months to write and get approved. This one took three days to write and was approved that week by my committee, which eventually included Brutus.

CHRISTOPHER LEE: My favorite poem of his is 'Sharpeville.' I use it for teaching often and have a copy permanently posted on my office door.

LLEWELLYN LEONARD: I had the honour of personally meeting and speaking to him in 2007 during my time as visiting scholar at the Cen-

ter for Civil Society. Prof Brutus was an inspiration to all those around him, especially the youth, which he inspired through his prolific speeches for action against corporations, government and other forms of domination. I clearly recall the talks he gave to students at UKZN in 2007 to support workers striking at the institution against poor working conditions, against increases in student fees, including against bureaucratic management at the university. I could see that his ability to mobilise people for action arose from his personal experience, guiding us as fatherly figure in that same fortitude.

MARIETTE LIEFFERINK: Brutus was held in the highest esteem by all who knew him.

MONICA MARTINS: My condolences in the name of those who make the Nationalities Watch research group and *World Tensions* journal.

EMMANUEL MASSAWE: I read one of his poems in my High School studies in Tanzania. I met him in South Africa in 2007. We talked and I shared with him the insights I got from his poem. He was very friendly, talkative and approachable.

MZWANELE MAYEKISO: Dennis Brutus leaves a great legacy for those of us who have followed his political work—who were influenced by his work, etc, over the years! I had two moments that I continue to cherish to this day, when we marched together in Chicago in the early 1990's against the apartheid state in Chicago; and in the late 1990's when we again marched against the elitism and cronyism of the IMF and the World Bank in Washington. Thuthuzelekani, akuhlanga lungehlanga-inkungu ilala kwintaba ngentaba! The spirit of this greatest son of Africa will always be with us, to inspire us to continue the fight for equality and justice for all in this beautiful planet of ours! Although the mighty SPEAR has fallen, there are many others who will pick it up and follow on his foot-steps! Lala Ngoxolo Qhawe lama Qhawe!

ANNE MAYHER: Thanks, Dennis for taking the time to pass on your knowledge and inspiration to so many of us. Your work lives on as we all do our little part to push for a more just system. I think I felt the earth shake a bit the day you passed to the next life, but your spirit is present everywhere I go - you have encouraged us to have the courage to speak the truth against the most powerful corporations and most powerful governments! You live on, Dennis! The deepest gratitude to you for sharing so much of yourself with us.

FATIMA MEER: I admired Dennis all my life and at this moment my mind goes back to his energetic involvement at the Northwestern University where I had the supreme honour of running behind him as he sped up and down the el to meet his extramural class which he was holding downtown at the end of a full university day. Dennis was a fearless fighter against oppression, against tyrants who sought to exploit and destroy the poor and the powerless, and those who sought to profit from the labour of the people.

STEVEN MENTOR: When I came to Stanford University in 1976 I thought I was going to study Renaissance rhetoric, or perhaps Modernism and the experimental novel. Instead I found the anti-apartheid movement, a group called SCRIP, some truly amazing organizers young and not so young. I rediscovered the troubadours, the modern ones like Dennis, and the older European ones whose vision of a world not simply dominated by Mars but also inhabited by Venus, inhabited as well by flights of imagination tied to a new/old way of living freely and joyously on this earth. So Dennis, wherever you are. I'm raising this cup to you, and vowing to bring more troubadour into my own life, more social justice into my own actions, and more hell raising into the belly of this beast we must, and will, slow down and eventually tame, if we are to survive as a species, and laugh to tell the tale.

MATT MEYER: Dennis and I worked closely together when he was

named President of the Vieques Tribunal (roughly ten years ago). An international Gandhian conference in India at the end of January will surely raise Dennis' name, words, and poetry. Truly in every corner of our fragile but resilient earth, Dennis will be celebrated and remembered, as his legacy will continue to inspire millions.

JOHN MINTO: Dennis visited New Zealand in 1976 at the height of the campaign to stop that year's planned All Black tour to South Africa. The impact of his visit was profound. He was inspiring with his message and infectious in his energy and passion for justice. That tour went ahead in the face of the Soweto uprising and Dennis was at the centre of the Montreal Olympic boycott by 29 African and Caribbean countries later that year after the Olympic movement failed to censure New Zealand. His impact on the international solidarity movement was immense which others have attested more adequately than I can. We admired his principled rejection of entry to the South African Sports Hall of Fame two year back. I finally met Dennis in April last year in Durban and felt greatly privileged to spend a morning with him. I reminded him of one of his poems called "For a Dead African" which had a big impact on me as a young activist back in the 1970s. He wrote it after John Nangoza Jebe was killed by the South African police and the final lines are these: 'Yet when the role of those who died to free our land is called, without surprise these nameless unarmed ones will stand beside the warriors who secure the final prize.' The land is not free, the final prize is still beyond reach but Dennis will stand tall with a name well known alongside those who achieve it. Haere ra e hoa - haere, haere, haere.

SAMMIE MOSHENBERG: Hamba Kahle - your gentle soul and strong leadership shall be missed.

RETHABILE MOSILE: Poems he wrote while in prison on Robben Island are mainly why I write poetry.

ROGATE MSHANA: We mourn for this giant of justice, a man who gave all his life for the marginalized and the downtrodden.

BRANNY MTHELEBOFU: My wish is to see his name honoured in the world, that is the reason I was so close to him through filmmaking. I have learned many things from him and will share his knowledge with the rest of the world.

MOJALEFA MURPHY: Having been sentenced to serve time on Robben Island, he had a criminal record that disqualified him to enter Canada, a prohibition that somehow did not apply to former President Nelson Mandela and others! The liberal politicians in our constituency had then suggested that he obtain a letter of recommendation from Mandela and present it to the nearest Canadian embassy in the US. When I related this suggestion to Dennis on the telephone, he laughed and explained that he would find it very difficult to reconcile his political position in respect of the post-1990 neo-liberal South Africa and a possibly humiliating request for support from one of its principal architects to deliver a strong message of opposition!

MSHAI MWANGOLA: I first fell in love with his writing when a school kid, and decades later, when I did get the chance to meet him, was relieved to not to be disillusioned. Even then, he was all fired about coming to Nairobi for the World Social Forum, less interested in resting on all laurels than in fighting the new battles.

LIDY NACPIL: Dennis joined us as one of the founding members of Jubilee South ten years ago - and by then he was already a much beloved, renowned, and deeply admired veteran of the struggle for justice and liberation not only of South Africa and the whole African continent but of the world. We are blessed to have met him, worked with him, marched with him, heard his stories, partaken of his wisdom, humor and wit, listened to his touching poetry, moved by his

passion. There are no words sufficient to truly celebrate and honor Dennis and the life he lived. We can only work even harder to follow the example he set.

JAYARAM NAIR: An extremely disciplined human being and was not influenced by greed like many from the liberation movement. He stood his ground and was never ashamed to say his piece when it mattered. There are few from the struggle that can take credit like Dennis.

TREVOR NGWANE: The soldier did all that he had to do and more, may he rest in peace.

ILSE SCHREIBER NOLL: I will miss him. We had collaborated on several artist books over the years and I admired Dennis for his generosity and kindness and strong ideas.

ENE OBI: What a departure of a great man! It is a passing of a generation. I read his books from primary through secondary school. Meeting him in person remains one of my greatest moments in life. It was like a fairy tale and a child's dream becoming real. It was like fantasy. I will miss him but I am encouraged by his life and times. The power of an individual is much more than we can ever imagine. Never give up on who you are, because you are making a difference. This is again a wake up call to all Comrades.

KWAME OKOAMPA-AHOOFÉ, JR: Brutus was a poet of unbested refinement and the most delicate of esthetic sensibilities among Africa's major poets of the twentieth century. I once sat right beside him at a conference in Philadelphia when, within the fleeting moment of ten minutes, Brutus penned and edited a poem and handed it over to me and another attendee, seated to his left, to peruse, while proceedings were at full-throttle. As a person, the renowned sonneteer was soft-spoken, reflective and uncharacteristically reticent for a formidable anti-Apartheid firebrand.

YUNUS OMAR: We are reminded of the immensely powerful public stance taken by Brutus on the occasion of his intended induction into the SA Sports Hall of Fame. Hopefully the call made by Brutus on this, and other occasions, will be actualised, i.e. to convene fora (in the arena of sport, et al) that will lay bare the injustices of the past as they continue to be re-articulated in extraordinary ways in the present.

JOWI JAMES OTIENO: He helped shape our understanding and appreciation of poetry and especially its role in the quest for justice for the downtrodden.

DEENA PADAYACHEE: In some senses of the term he was a martyr but he never carried himself with a sense of victimhood or martyrdom. He consciously immolated his life in order to help liberate the world from tyranny, racism and oppression. God was good to allow him to be on Earth. He was a sentient human being of impeccable integrity and incredible nobility. He was at home with the 'simplest' among us but he could cross swords, most deftly, with the most assinine among the arrogant academics and the many mean spirited ogres who dwell among us. His manner, the way in which he carried himself, reminded me of aristocracy - without the arrogance which usually accompanies that state of being. He was as naturally noble and charming as breathing is for the rest of us. His charm and soft manner of expression was always at odds with the way the Apartheid media had reported about him with great ire - the way they reported about his activities which he conducted on behalf of us all. It goes without saying that he was not for sale. If you were his comrade you counted yourself truly blessed. If he took your assistance, then you counted yourself fortunate, because he never asked for it. He was the essence of good manners. Cast in the role of the thorn child, it was inevitable that he would have to oppose the gangsterism of fascism. His resistance to tyranny was never done with the uncouth, wild aggres-

sion of the immature. His was a resistance that was always conducted with a Gandhian dignity and with a great deal of respect. Those who he resisted must have gone away feeling, somewhere within themselves, a great deal of shame. In his everyday conversation Dennis was about subtlety - never for him the rudeness and tactlessness of direct confrontation. When he criticised individuals it was always done with careful consideration for the other. Poetry is about many things including emotion; yet, somehow, Dennis always seemed to be in control of his emotions. Dennis Brutus is immortal. He represents the best that is in Homo Sapiens.

SHAILJA PATEL: I was moved and honored that Dennis always took the time to respond to emails, to mentor and support my work. The experiences of Dennis that I will hold and carry forward:

- his generosity of spirit and largeness of heart. Expressed constantly in his encouragement of, and genuine interest in, younger poets
- his unquenchable energy. He could - and frequently did - out-toyi-toyi activists 50 years younger than him :-)
- his tenacity and discipline of purpose. He showed up, year after year, decade upon decade, in the face of every setback, betrayal and defeat. He never, ever gave up on his vision of justice. Safiri salama, Dennis. Tutatambuana.

COLIN PENTER: There are some people whose lives inspire the rest of us to never lose our voice on social justice and human rights.

HEATHER PETROS: Ustawi organization, started by myself and other African women, invited him to Seattle several times. I was very fortunate to know him as a friend, father in struggle. Personally I feel Africa just lost its voice.

JOHN PILGER: I was so honoured to meet Dennis last year, finally. He was a giant of a human being who changed the world in so many ways. His tenacious humanity inspired so many to go on and not let the bastards win in the long run. I salute you, Dennis!

DANIEL PINK: The person who gently urged me to apply what I'd learned in class to endeavors outside of poetry, was my professor - an extraordinary poet. Brutus cut an imposing figure in the seminar room. He had a rich voice, a sprawling beard, and a thick mane of hair. A stature that I'd never encountered, as well as a certain ethereal quality.

GARNET PRINCE: Brutus was our English teacher when I was in matric at Paterson High School in Port Elizabeth in 1951. He did not teach me English in class, but inspired me when he walked down the passage constantly reciting poetry, such as 'The Donkey' by GK Chesterton. Needless to say I passed English with merit. It was through his involvement with table tennis that he drew attention to the restricted apartheid sports. I am 75 years old and still have vivid memories of my high school years where Dennis Brutus was our teacher - an educationist extraordinaire.

PETER RACHLEFF: I was tickled to imagine him performing Marx himself in several stagings of Howard Zinn's *Marx in Soho*. Who, I wondered, could be more appropriate, could embody the old radical better than this old radical? I thought of Dennis' hair and beard as having waited decades to be ready for this role. No need for make-up! Dennis' sweetness just filled whatever room he was in.

MARIE RACINE: I join all of you in mourning the loss of a good man, a friend, a tremendous comrade and such a great poet.

VINOD RAINA: His solidarity in defense of justice anywhere in the world was spontaneous, and infectious; his sense of compassion im-

mense. The best tribute to him, of course, would be to celebrate his life by doing more vigorously what he did best - resist all forms of injustice and stand up for the downtrodden.

SAM RAMSAMY: Brutus did not fully comprehend the realities of reconciliation. Sadly, he divorced himself from post-apartheid reconstruction of South African sport. I believe that was because he did not fully comprehend the realities of reconciliation and the difficult process of uniting all sectors of South African society. He was an activist on many fronts for countless causes; but not always in tune with majority opinion.

EVA RANGE: During the time I spent at the CCS, Dennis embodied so much the spirit of the CCS, he was its mentor.

MARCUS REDIKER: A world-wide mover and shaker. You could never be sure at any given moment which continent Dennis was on, what particular cause of justice he was taking up.

CHERYL ROBERTS: His principled and passionate contribution to non-racial sport created a legacy for South African sport to develop non-racial structures throughout our country and for a new generation of black youngsters, like me, to have a home in non-racial sport, where the colour of our skin, or money, had no reference. We must never forget to honour and pay tribute to the leaders of our anti-apartheid sports struggle or the sacrifices of our leaders and officials, heroines and heroes who chose a difficult journey in the name of creating an equitable, non-racial sports dispensation.

ADRIAN ROSCOE: (from a 1976 tribute) It is remarkable that a man who has suffered the worst inhumanities which white men have inflicted on Africa, including forced labour and a bullet in the back, should protest in so quiet a voice, in such measured tones, in such unpretentious verse. Where violence or screaming despair might be

appropriate from an artist in Brutus' position, his characteristic response blends dignity with patience, and calmness with reason, determined always that emotionalism must never triumph. Perhaps, too, Brutus believes that a coolly argued low-key approach is best suited to an oppressor who appears to scorn hysterics and claims above all that he is reasonable. Thus, like Kenyatta in the Thirties or Awolowo in the Forties, Brutus offers an extended exercise in forensic persuasion, though he has stated his broad aims more in terms of morbid pathology. But why has such unassuming verse been received so warmly, with the *Guardian* saying 'he has a grace and penetration unmatched even by Alexander Solzhenitsin'? The answer lies partly in a skill with poetic logistics which routinely underlies Brutus' verse. If complex metaphor, recondite allusion, and sensual imagery are played down, the struggle to persuade must be waged with other devices. (2010) May Dennis rest in peace and may future generations look back on his remarkable life, his powerful literary achievement and his fine family.

LESLIE ROSE: It was a true privilege to be a part of Dennis' life and learn from him what it is to dedicate one's life to the struggle against injustices, and perhaps most inspiring to me, that he didn't let it take the enjoyment out of life. It was always fun and exciting to be around him, to me he had the spirit of a teenager, and the heart of a lion.

ABDULLAH SAEED: Dennis Brutus was a human rights icon, a global champion of truth and justice and an opponent of discrimination. I was fortunate to travel with the late Yusuf Haffajee (Essop) and another friend to the Time of the Writer festival, organised by the Centre for Creative Arts University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban. Dennis Brutus, easily recognisable with his long hair and full white beard, was seated on the stage with John Pilger, an Australian journalist and documentary maker, Ferial Haffajee who was then the editor of *Mail and Guardian* and UKZN academic and writer Patrick Bond. Dennis Bru-

tus gave an inspiring short talk and many anecdotes as an introduction to Pilger's film *The War on Democracy*.

PAUL SAOKE: A son of the world and very famous here in Kenya through his books.

BEREND SCHUITEMA: With Dennis around we always felt the immediacy of the struggle and the certain belief that not only is our other world possible, but already in the making and arriving sooner than we may think. Dennis you are more than an icon - you have become larger than life and we will always be proud of you!

LAURENCE SHOUP: I have always admired Dennis, and was fortunate enough to know him briefly when I was a graduate student at Northwestern U. in the early 1970's, we protested the war together, among other things.

KHADIJA SHARIFE: dennis's thoughts will always be one of those whose footsteps dance across the landscape of my mind; poetry and life in motion, because he could, with the fire and dignity that characterised him even as confronted the dementors, head on. always head on (we drove them away, he would say, clenching his fist). and because i lived up the road, and was quiet enough (at the right times) and noisy enough (when the silence became shadows), he opened the door at all hours, of his memories, his past, his hopes, and my own, and i who had spent too many hours sitting on the curb, watching life go by car length by car length, was let in (we already know each other, he'd said). now his is the voice of all the poets, auden and yeats and okri ...and brutus.

ARI SITAS: My generation grew up with *Letters to Martha*, matured to play soccer in bad conscience and will continue making it hard for empire until it vanishes.

ISSA SHIVJI: Denis has left a rich heritage - immeasurable contribu-

tion - unwavering commitment - fighting to the last - and enjoying it - a man of the era of liberation.

CHARLENE SMITH: I appreciated the way you embraced us all as friends and would give gifts of poetry, but most of all how you embraced every aspect of life and truly loved.

LAMONT B. STEPTOE: I am deeply grateful that I knew and worked with him for as long as I did. His legacy is a brilliant crystal struck by the sun, blinding in its glare.

DEBRA STOLEROFF: I met Dennis in 2004 when he spoke at a peace and justice/anti-war conference here in Vermont. After the conference he continued to write and support the work I do. His efforts were greatly appreciated.

LEE SUSTAR AND AISHA KARIM: We share their profound sense of loss of this sweet, generous fighter for social justice, and we hope to encourage a new generation of activists to examine what will be his enduring political and artistic legacy. Brutus was central to an academic rebellion that put African writers such as Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka and Ngugi wa Thiong'o onto university curriculums, helping blaze a trail for today's study of postcolonial literature. Dennis, who disdained any attempt to separate sports from politics in South Africa, was insistent on the political responsibilities of the African writer. 'What we are engaged in is a struggle against imperialism,' he said in a 1974 speech. 'It is not a local, nor even a national struggle. We see ourselves as an element in the global struggle against imperialism. This seems to me to be the truly revolutionary element in our struggle for cultural liberation.' In his sixty-plus years of activism, Dennis accumulated an astonishing range of contacts - from Mandela and Sisulu to the poet W.H. Auden and boxer Muhammad Ali. At the fall of apartheid, he could have easily returned home to South Africa, a com-

fortable university post and retirement. Instead, he generalized his struggle to a world that was growing steadily more unequal in the supposed 'triumph of capitalism' that followed the end of the Cold War. The alternative Dennis put forward was the same one he advocated as a militant teacher in the 1940s: socialism.

YASH TANDON: He has left behind a good, humane legacy and a challenge to us all.

NEIL TANGRI: Condolences to us all on the death of one of our leading lights. I hope he saw us through the worst of times.

ERNESTINE TEWAH: He will fondly be remembered always.

ALICE THOMSON: We will mourn the loss of this wonderful soul and celebrate the gift of his life.

BERNICE TOBIAS-ALEXANDER: I am not a person of many words, but would wish to say that 'Uncle Dennis' as we know him, was a man with a power of strength. He fought to the end for justice and peace.

ARCHBISHOP DESMOND TUTU: When we needed the support of the international community to end the vicious system of racial oppression called apartheid, we had to have eloquent advocates to tell the world our story and persuade it to come to our assistance. We had none more articulate than Brutus, our wonderful poet-campaigner. We owe him an immense debt of gratitude.

FRANK VAN DER HORST: Professor Dennis Brutus was the founder of the national non-racial sports struggle, a respected dedicated teacher, a great visionary, outstanding poet, master strategist and dedicated activist in the struggle for social justice and equal human rights. He challenged the racist whites-only South African Olympic Committee to honour the Olympic Charter to open sport to all

without any form of discrimination at all levels. When they refused, the focus shifted to isolate and expel racist South African sport from all international competition and the Olympic Games. Brutus left South Africa in 1966 to join Chris de Broglio and Reg Hlongwane to re-establish SANROC in exile in 1967 in London. He was then closer to international sports bodies and extended his brilliant strategy to isolate, boycott or demonstrate against racist South African sports bodies or their tours from this new central base. SANROC mobilised massive international support, with devastating effect on apartheid sport in South Africa. SANROC became the overseas wing of South African Council of Sport (SACOS) and Dennis Brutus served as a patron of SACOS. Dennis Brutus, SANROC and SACOS shared basic principles that non-racial sport can only exist and flourish in a new non-racial society free from racial, educational, residential, social, colour, economic or class discrimination that was prevented by segregated institutions and oppressive laws in apartheid South African society. Brutus who founded, strategised and successfully built SANROC was himself, together with Chris de Broglio and others, expelled from SANROC. An apparently harmless request was tabled by Sam Ramsamy that SANROC in London, be recognized as the sole representative of SACOS to avoid any form of misrepresentation. This request was accepted in good faith but became the weapon to unilaterally and bureaucratically expel Dennis Brutus and others from SANROC. These events were graphically explained by Dennis Brutus and Chris De Broglio at the Sport and Liberation Conference held in October 2005 in East London where he was a key speaker. It became clear that Dennis Brutus was the first and most important casualty in the attempt to capture both SANROC and SACOS. The aim was to weaken or moderate the organization's principles, in order to make it more flexible and amenable for a negotiated settlement that was really masterminded by rich countries with huge and highly profitable investments in South Africa. The non-

racial sports struggle was to become a mere sacrificial pawn in the wheeling and dealing of the bargaining process that led up to and including the negotiated settlement of social elites in 1994. Dennis Brutus was highly critical of the negotiated settlement as it embedded gross social injustices in the new capitalist society although the colour bar laws and institutions were abolished and new democratic elections instituted. The 'quota system' and 'development programmes' in sport all proved ineffectual as sport was effectively co-opted by the former ruling class structures, with their mercenary traditions that undermined the community base of the non-racial sports movement. National sport became a commodity, mainly a profit making business, with attractive salaries. Some minor, token, or superficial changes were introduced with plumb well-paid jobs for 'new' officials. We who worked alongside Dennis Brutus were honoured to have a dedicated principled comrade in struggle, a revolutionary in his thinking and activities, a humble person with tremendous integrity, seeking no salary, monetary or material rewards in the struggle for social justice, who inspired and motivated us all to greater heights in our non-racial sports struggle as an integral part of the broader struggle against all forms of social injustices.

SIMON WACHIRA: The world is one sage poorer.

SHANNON WALSH: The humility and huge heart with which he moved through the world touched so many people, and will continue to remind us that we can really change the world. We will not disappoint his memory.

NJERI WANGARI: The news of the death of Dennis Brutus came as a rude shock to many, not just in South Africa but to the world at large who knew him for his poetry and activism against the Apartheid Government of South Africa in the 1960s and his fight for social justice throughout his life. Tributes and news of Brutus' death were featured

on Poéfrika in Lesotho, Khanya and Empty Sky both in South Africa, Bagucci in Nigeria and Myself, KenyanPoet in Kenya. Rasta People 100 has put a photo slide tribute on Youtube, with Lucky Dube's song on Apartheid. MediaGrr19, shares a video from a news clip that featured Brutus' 2005 interview on *Democracy Now!*. As Poets worldwide moan his death and wonder who will be fit to fill the shoes that Brutus has left, I leave you with a comment by Rethabile of Poéfrika; 'I think, as Barack Obama said, 'We are the ones we've been waiting for.' We need to step into such shoes today, or else...'

PETER WATERMAN: Dennis provides us with an exceptional model - the social movement activist who does not 'take power' (i.e. is not taken by power) once the revolution 'succeeds' but who continues to build power from outside and below.

ANN WOLFE: I myself met Dennis only on two important occasions, but I know how much he meant to my late husband, John Harris. Dennis and SANROC, were synonymous to John. The occasion, on which I got to know Dennis a little was when I drove with him and John to Swaziland, hoping that Dennis could escape. We were in John's parents' VW Kombi-camper, and, on crossing the border, Dennis hid in one of the under seat cupboards, so squashed that he could barely breathe I think.

NEIL WOLLMAN: Dennis lent his hand to so many causes that those in our effort to being social responsibility to a single pension fund felt blessed by his participation in such a focused effort. He was involved for years in efforts to get TIAA-CREF to be more responsible in its investments and policies (TIAA-CREF is the country's largest pension fund, mainly for educators and non-profits.) He was involved on email discussions and for several annual meetings of the fund he attended and gave our opening dramatic speech that set the way for others to fill in details.

DAVID VAN WYK: Brutus has passed and left an indelible mark on our national consciousness.

VINCENT ZEPP: Dennis made all of us feel like we were his best friend and the time spent with him was always a gift comprised of wisdom and laughter. We'll not see another like him.

DAVE ZIRIN: I had the privilege to interview Brutus extensively three years ago about why he came to see sports as an arena to fight for justice. His answer was, I have come to learn, typical Dennis: refusing to be anything less than blunt and provocative. I asked him whether he agreed with me that sports could still be a lever to change the world. Instead of cheerleading the notion, he said to me, 'My own sense is that sports has less capacity now to change society than it had before. For instance, the degree that sports has become commercialized. The degree that your loyalty is no longer to a club like it used to be because guys are bought and sold like so many slaves... The other thing that really scares me is the way that sport is used to divert people's attention. Critical political issues in their own lives. Their living conditions. The Romans used to say this is the way to run an empire. Give them bread give them circuses. Now they don't even give you bread and the circuses are lousy...' As people are criminalized in Vancouver to make way for the 2010 Olympics, as the poor are dispossessed in the name of the 2010 World Cup, we should proudly claim Dennis's well-worn place at the march, never allowing those in power the comfort of indifference.

Media

ASSOCIATED PRESS: A distinctive figure in old age with his flowing white hair and beard, engaged in protests against world financial organizations and in calls for action against global warming.

BLADE (Toledo): An outstanding poet and dedicated teacher who encouraged an ethic of global engagement. Mr. Brutus' life could serve as a blueprint for principled action. Brutus refused to look back with regret when he could move forward with purpose.

DAILY NATION (Nairobi): An outstanding capacity to trigger virtually every sensory impulse. His poetry was marked by brevity; often dense but always full of sentimental emotion surprising us by linking things we have never experienced with everyday feelings such as fear, anger, mirth, love.

DIAMOND FIELDS ADVERTISER (Kimberley): A tireless and principled activist who as soon as political freedom was achieved, refused to ignore the continuing economic and social injustices suffered both at home and abroad. He was also a legendary teacher who shaped and informed the minds of some of the country's leading intellectuals and journalists. South Africa has lost a national treasure.

FINANCIAL TIMES (London): Few poets, through both words and action, can have achieved in their lifetimes the political impact of Dennis Brutus. Indisputably among Africa's leading poets.

INDEPENDENT (London): With his trademark long white hair and beard, he was a relentless campaigner on climate and apartheid reparations, even as he battled prostate cancer.

MORNING STAR (London): His family said Brutus lived his life in the service of justice, peace, freedom and protecting the planet. 'He remained positive about the future, believing that popular movements will achieve their aims.' It is with this sense of optimism that he will be best remembered.

NEW YORK TIMES: Brutus was an outspoken critic of South Africa's embrace of capitalism and remained deeply skeptical about racial attitudes long after apartheid had dissolved.

THE PROGRESSIVE (Madison): An imposing figure, with a rich and distinctive voice, who bore the scars of apartheid nobly. Thank you, Dennis Brutus, for fighting the good fight, and for underscoring the triumph of tenderness.

SUNDAY INDEPENDENT (Johannesburg): Most followers will find his legacy of politico-literary contributions reason to adopt the title of another Brutus poetry collection: Stubborn Hope.

Poems for Dennis Brutus

THE POET'S POET

Trumpets boasting through the cosmos
As he reads his latest Haiku
Politico and activista for the ages
Encouraging prodding calling us to action.

He is more than a weathered warrior
More than Speaker of the House
He is the righteous soul of South Africa
and the conscious of the world.

Dennis mighty Dennis!

—Tess Arenas

DENNIS ON THE MARCH

goatee-bearded pilgrim
in thick rimmed glasses
unbent driftwoodleaf bard
you say with impassioned breath
work while the light lasts
the sun is shining

the moon so sprightly bright
in neat jacket
t-shirt & suitcase
you soar
from cities of gems
to villages of cow-dung
unscathed by genocides
& tornados
warrior spirit
you traverse
across burning mountains
& the tumultuous atlantic
braving typhoons & tsunamis
wordsmith with a simple lust
for freedom
you fly far & wide
braving earthquakes
& volcanoes
ready to twirl & turn
in storms of tyranny
here you come
old young man
with fire
to blow
the cowed contractors
of global greed
here you come
old young man
with such undimmed light
& untamed fervor
let grabbers of wealth
open their ears

& hear the truth
let them learn
to listen sufficiently
to people
in tin shacks

maker of revolution
with a stubborn hope
for a better tomorrow
fire glows in your eyes
in the streets of joburg
in broad daylight
the green flies
stuck a bullet in your back
they wanted you dead
yet you carried the bullet
& galloped into exile
even today
at the age of eighty
you still march
in the streets of joburg
feet firm on the ground
though in the smothering sun
of squeezed dreams
you march
with the hungry patriots
whose harvest of freedom
is but dust
red flags fly
up high in the sky
not against the draconian pass laws
or botha's total strategy

but you drum stern words
into your former comrades' blacked ears
those comrades you broke quarry with
in robben island
those gucci socialists
with treacherous sickness
those who now disown their people
ravaged by throbbing pain
those potbellied men & women
abandoned by people's vision
to chart the path of the freedom charter
you march
with the angry masses
calling on people of the world
to smash the world bank of beasts
you march
in streets & squares
raising a clenched fist
demanding the paris club
& london club
to cancel the debt

unbent revolutionary
you know the underclass
in factories
can't eat gear promises.
the underclass
in gutted townships
won't breathe nepad hollow air
radical with a young heart
you march
between murky alex shacks

hand over people's cries
to sandton of villains, pirates & suckers
blended voices
of the working class
sing in unison
radical with a young heart
though mandela is free
rivers of typhoid
& cholera flow freely
& consume the poors of the world
blade-sharp revolutionary
you march
alongside the landless peasants
the evicted & the unemployed
you march
alongside the students
& the hiv-positive
you march
alongside the harangued retrenched workers
& climb over hills of working class tribulations
ask why in the periphery of cities
of the new south africa
filthy shack tin-roofed camps grow
along modern throughways
& drifting highways

teacher of the people
brewer of raw music
fire glows in your eyes
in leuwkop dungeon
apartheiders kept you behind bars
interrogating & torturing you

in the small hours of the clock
they wanted you numb & still
& they failed
you survived steel hands & fists
march on
without tremor comrade brutus
in durban
porto alegre
seattle
in genoa
prague
quebec
in cochabamba
bamako
nairobi
far & wide
in distant skies
dutifully handing out
press cuttings & leaflets
for not even the police armed with dogs
can stop you
from addressing the media

comrade dennis
forever in the battlefield
against the obscenities
of bush & blair
dennis on the march
shouting
free mumia abu jamal
who waits without tremor
nor fear on death row

dennis on the march
shouting viva hector peterson
commemorating the fighting spirit
of june 1976 children
spirited young lions
who fought
the enemy
with fire, stones, dance & poetry
causing all shriek
in apartheid junta's spine
dennis on the march
reminding us that without robust debate
democracy belongs to the dogs
even mandela the freedom fighter
must be questioned
dennis on the march
digesting spender, donne
langston, pound
in pleasure
dennis on the march
languid leaves fall
the wind howls
the sun & light
brush your face swiftly
dennis on the march
forever reminding aspirant poets
how to write poems with brevity
how to jam & not just slam
knowing to be human is to be creative
& to be creative is to be human
dennis on the march
telling us the world is filled

with soundless weeping
man with stubborn hope
at eighty
courageous & strong
i salute you
the struggle against tyranny
is worth living for
your unequivocal love for life
is deep beneath your skin
& every molecule
of your body

—Vonani Bila

STONE HAMMERED TO GRAVEL

The office workers did not know, plodding through 1963
and Marshall Square station in Johannesburg,
that you would dart down the street between them,
thinking the police would never fire into the crowd.
Sargeant Kleingeld did not know, as you escaped
his fumbling hands and the pistol on his hip,
that he would one day be a footnote in the book of your life.

The secret policeman on the corner did not know,
drilling a bullet in your back, that today the slug
would belong in a glass case at the museum of apartheid.
The bystanders did not know, as they watched
the coloured man writhing red on the ground,
that their shoes would skid in blood for years.

The ambulance men did not know,
when they folded the stretcher and refused you a ride
to the white hospital, that they would sit eternally
in Hell's emergency room, boiling with a disease
that darkens their skin and leaves them screaming for soap.
The guards at Robben Island did not know,
when you hammered stone to gravel with Mandela,
that the South Africa of their fathers
would be stone hammered to gravel by the inmates,
who daydreamed a republic of the ballot
but could not urinate without a guard's permission.

Did you know?
When the bullet exploded the stars
in the cosmos of your body, did you know
that others would read manifestos by your light?
Did you know, after the white ambulance left,
before the coloured ambulance arrived, if you would live
at all,
that you would banish the apartheid of the ambulance
with Mandela and a million demonstrators dancing at
every funeral?
Did you know, slamming the hammer into the rock's
stoic face,
that a police state is nothing but a boulder
waiting for the alchemy of dust?
Did you know that, forty years later,
college presidents and professors of English
would raise their wine to your name
and wonder what poetry they could write
with a bullet in the back?

What do the people we call prophets know?
Can they conjure the world forty years from now?
Can the poets part the clouds for a vision in the sky
easily as sweeping curtains across the stage?

A beard is not the mark of prophecy
but the history of a man's face.
No angel shoved you into the crowd;
you ran because the blood racing to your heart
warned a prison grave would swallow you.
No oracle spread a banquet of vindication before you
in visions; you mailed your banned poems
cloaked as letters to your sister-in-law
because the silence of the world
was a storm roaring in your ears.

South Africa knows. Never tell a poet: Don't say that.
Even as the guards watched you nodding in your cell,
even as you fingered the stitches fresh from the bullet,
the words throbbed inside your skull:
Sirens knuckles boots. Sirens knuckles boots.
Sirens knuckles boots.

—Martín Espada

DENNIS BRUTUS,

I salute you master of the word,
Where have you gone?
Who opened the door?
Can the wind shut it?

But you have seen that path.
I must accept this.

Go well and yet do not go,
Poets never go to a silent night.
their words lighting lit and unlit candles
staying on pen tips and lips.
Yours grip stonger than
a good handshake,
hold onto us,
on us and Africa
whose dawn,
rises in your eyes,
do not shut them
when they do.
See beyond lids
and stay alight.
On this tiny wicker
that snows dampen,
and which again and again,
Is lit in you.
may your spirit glow.

—Philo Ikonya

PASSING OF A GREAT HEART

We've come through a year, a year
Unimaginable, hanging heavy like
Summer grapes on the gut
Witnesses to a mass exodus of Great Hearts:

Leaders, movers, rockers, shapers of our Age
We re-enter our time

In the green family garden with dogs and children,
Indigenous floras burgeoning into a vegetal tapestry,
Giant strelitzias, birds-of-paradise
Soaring skyward like arrows
We toasted your four score and fifth year

With the summer breeze spiced lemony geranium,
Perched on your mobile throne
Poet – warrior – king
Cradled against the softness of skins
Body failing, voice faltering
A spirit alight with undying fight
We wished you –

“You’re here”, you said
Eyes fiery yet faraway
I gently took your hand
Your pain pulsing in the palm of my hand

At high school in the post- Sharpeville ‘70s
Nortje’s world and “Dead Roots” made me
Discover you and Langston Hughes
“Letters to Martha” and “A Simple Lust” ripped off
The cataracts veiling my vision –
Iconoclast, exiled mentor, you
Blasted a whole generation of youth
Out of slumber into action
Our poems, the fire and ice of your influence
Tireless troubadour of truth, hope and justice

Our skies, air, atmosphere, our strip-mined
Wilderness, Eagles, rivers, seas, estuaries, fish
Whales, bears, honey bees and the burnt
Little ones languishing in sweatshops and wars, the
Leached labourers of the world, refugees,
Prisoners and torn souls ensnared in
Concentration camps still dotting our planet
Call out your name; drum your praises into the wind

Dennis, amidst banners and loudhailers,
Vitriolic poet-campaigner, fearless eco-warrior,
You strode the struggle-rent perimeters of the globe
From Josie to Mozambique, Robben Island to London,
Sweden to Dakar, Caracas to Cuba, Cairo to Iraq,
Seattle to Switzerland, Mexico to Maddrid,
Rotterdam to Nigeria, Algeria to Afghanistan
And across your wintering hours
Your spirit ached to soar to Copenhagen;
To Seattle Copenhagen, menace to the oil Moghals,
Demand the survival of our people, forests,
Mountains, waterways, dwindling birds and animals,
Demand the survival of our planet as we know it.

—Deela Khan

A TRIBUTE TO MY FRIEND AND COMRADE

Halala Dennis Brutus! Halala

Indomitable spirit!
Immortal now!

Ever leading us!
Ever inspiring us!
Ever with the poor and the powerless!
Ever empowering them to be free.

Intolerant of oppression and corruption
Fighting it fearlessly at every step of your stride
Your voice rang out to the people to be free in themselves
To be like you, fearless against the oppressor, crushing
 corruption
You battled on relentlessly, invincibly against the corrupt
 usurpers of the people's power and the people's rights

Comrade, friend, you will remain forever with us.
A moral standard to follow, a moral standard to uphold
Like you, we will remain forever free
Crushing the demon exploiters but never being crushed by
 them
We will follow every step of your powerful long strides and
 conquer the unconquerable

This is not a time to feel low and hopeless because we have
 lost one of the greatest leaders we had known
It is time to know this leader
To recall him, recall his might and power
It is a time to recall Dennis.
A time to gather the moments he lived amongst us and
 understand its meaning.
For those moments are his legacy to us, we have to pledge
 that we will never abandon that legacy
That we will forever remain true to it and realise it in
 ourselves, in our time.

What is that legacy?

Dennis Brutus was a fearless fighter against oppression, against tyrants who sought to exploit and destroy the poor and the powerless, and those who sought to profit from the labour of the people.

Dennis Brutus was freedom itself. At every step of his long stride, he sought freedom, never for himself, but for those around him, who lived in shacks, under leaking roofs, prey to hunger and cold.

He forever impressed on us that those in power, regardless of their race, would not serve our freedom, they would serve their own self interest; that only we could gain our freedom through our tireless efforts.

Hamba Khale Comrade secure in the belief that we go with you and will forever aspire to be like you.

—Fatima Meer

IN HONOUR OF A GIANT

The rock that does not crack,
the river that does not get dry,
the grass that remains green,
the snow that never smelts,
the ice that does not splitter,
the sun that always shines,
the air that others breathe,

the inspiration that never fades,
the perseverance that never ends,
the courage that never bows,
the upright walk against all odds,
has passed the gate into eternity.
Dennis Brutus,
intellectual giant, political and cultural icon,
salute to you, who departed,
with respect and in humbleness.
You live on in our actions and thoughts.

—Henning Melber

THE MAHATMA OF POETRY

Under the skin

When we were helpless and abused,
When your very name was illegal,
When your thoughts were unutterable,
When your writing was banned,
When you were shot by the South African secret police,
When you were incarcerated on Robben Island with
Mandela,
When your bullet wound was kicked by the savage warder
on Robben Island,
Your very survival still gave us hope,

dear Dennis.

Your wife, your children, your career, your life,
all in the clutches of a merciless, vile regime,

Still, you did not falter.

How could a sentient soul,
like you even exist,
We asked,
if there was no God,
if we are not also God's creations?

Blessed with a great intelligence,
incisive perception,
incredible vision,

Goaded by the overwhelming injustice in your native land,
You forsook yourself,
Your family,
Your life.
You volunteered everything that you are
for South Africa,
for the service of humanity,
for the world.

Imperfect as we are, human as we are,
Unethical as we can be, false as we can be,
Dishonourable as we can be,
You still believed in us,
You risked your skin for us,
You made yourself into a target for us.

You loved us
When the powerful and the influential
Asserted
That we are not worth loving.

You believed in us, Dennis,
When we were rejected everywhere,
When we did not believe in ourselves,
When everywhere in our native land,
We were treated like vermin by the oppressor and the
oppressed.

You helped us believe in South Africa,
in South Africans,
when all over our native land
we were confronted
by devilish vileness,
unethical 'laws',
sophistry,
and unbelievable bad manners.

At the zenith of the barbarism,
Fearlessly,
You held South Africa's head up high.
The light of freedom grew,
Illuminating our claustrophobic, circumscribed existence.
Your life, your skin, your courage, your example,
Helped nurture the light
When so many of us were too scared to even think.

You gave us hope when
despair asphyxiated us like a shroud
taking the very air from our lungs
the very blood from our hearts.

Like a being sent by the All Mighty,
You helped us believe

That somewhere in the distant future
there might begin a glimmer of civilisation,
there might even be liberation.

That my aged mother might one day
also be allowed to walk freely anywhere in her native
country.

That we too, might one day become an integral part of the
human race,
that we too, might one day be invited to represent our native
land,

That we too, might one day savour the Indian ocean
off the beaches of paradise.

Like a mythical being,
Brutus fought on the side of the truth,
on the side of the helpless,
the legally handicapped, the poor,
those who could give him no advantage,
a heroic stance that would earn him no peace,
only the brutality of the immoral, the whores, the
omnipotent.

Like an indestructible truth shimmering through the
shroud of lies and propaganda,
Dennis Brutus shone through the darkness.
We realised that
that not all beings blessed with intelligence,
knowledge and power are abusive.

Like an Avatar of old,
Like a Miguel Cervantes,
He fought the awful terror,

his only armour,
his belief system, his value system,
his sense of what is right and what is wrong.

And yes, despite the most horrendous, all powerful enemy,
Despite the back-stabbers, the betrayers,
the sell-outs, the ipimpi, the prostitutes,
He triumphed,
He survived.

The Mahatma fights on,
Peacefully,
His only weapons, his divine mind,
His immortal writing.

Assailed from every quarter,
His integrity could not be undermined.
Monitored ceaselessly,
He still manages to maintain a civilised equanimity.
He believes in the most intellectually disadvantaged,
the most unlettered, the most destitute among us.
He believes in us, the All Mighty's creations.

Undeterred, he risks everything that he is.
Unafraid, he voices his opinions
Even when he offends the mighty and the influential,
He speaks for all of us,
The intimidated, the weak, the terrified, the powerless.

His entire life is devoted to lessening our pain,
our suffering,
He soldiers on in the service of our noble cause,

Asking for nothing, taking nothing.
Honoured all over our battered world,
And even in South Africa,
Sadly, he is sometimes still snubbed in his native land.

Even now,
with racism, savagery,
and an absence of conscience dehumanising our country,
Steadfast and resilient,
He does not veer from the path of civilisation.

For Dennis Brutus there is no quiet retirement,
no happy solace among his great grandchildren.
While you can breathe, Dennis,
You still feel, you still speak out,
You still write,
You still care for those
who do not even know
that you are blessing them with your ardour.

Unbelievably humble,
You demand nothing from us.
You do not show regret or even anger at our ignorance,
our inhumanity,
our pathetic lack of morality and integrity.
You keep to the path of honour no matter what.

Your life is dedicated to us,
Your enemies are numberless,
Every greedy tyrant, every autocratic dictator,
every cruel savage who fears the truth,
who wallows in greed, inhumanity, propaganda and censorship

hates you,
But still, somehow,
You survive among us,
blessed helots,
Almost anonymously.

Despite everything,
You still believe in us,
You still believe in yourself,
You still believe in our ravaged, yet blessed land,
South Africa.

—Deena Padayachee

LIONHEART DENNIS

Gentleman Dennis, gentle soul,
silverbeard, quicksilvermind,
there are many ways and means, good general,
to keep your foot upon the frontline.

Swopping chariot for an armchair, your sword for a pen
may the muse accompany and inspire you
on new adventures, happy trails and bends.

Stoic stalwart, steadfast lionheart,
your steel-eyed principles radiate both heat and light
no matter where, why, how, who for
you remain champion of the cause.

—Peter Rorvik

EPISTLE FOR DENNIS BRUTUS

March on soldier
progression can not be kaput
forever and a day
your never-aged spirit shall be extolled

if parting ways means ascension
go on
perhaps bigotry tumbles down from the blue above
go on
glow like all conscientious stars up in the firmament

if exodus orders descending graveward
chauvinism in the deep below
evil roots of capitalist bushes it fertilizes
go on
plunge cavernously and squeeze this insularity out
out like a hot magma tourist attraction eruption
to free the poor from capiterorism horrors

if resettlement constitutes lingering at legroom confinement
in the grubby air that asphyxiates us to paucity
go on
be an incensation of full consciousness
it's a mandate comrade - - - obey it
long drawn up has been the memorandum
go on
from your dust mound
liberators shall emerge

from your ashes
echoes of more fire
shall be heard
more fire
until capitalism dies
more fire
until turncoats repent
more fire
until ubuntu take-a-stand
more fire
until.....until.....
the end

—Prince Shapiro

BRUTUS, SIEMPRE

Between Christmas and Epiphany
a great tree fell, unheard,
'neath the silent, African night,
his fleeting spirit within sighting sigh
of cloud-shrouded Table Mountain.

Between the island of Makana *
and the receding shore-line of freedom
he referenced for us, this bearded colossus from ebhayi, **
from the archives of injustice
the simple truths, the magificat of freedom
now footnoted into the his-stories of board-rooms and
the like
from whence capitalism's newly-ordained,
baptised him ultra-left.

Between this now and a past of commemoration services,
- the Caspian idling promise of the violence to come -
in a church hall in Mitchell's Plain
a chorus of young voices, "Today in prison, they will sing
just one song"
sourcing an elusive courage, "... strong and steady..."
numbering themselves amongst "... those who will do the
much that needs be done ..."
Brutus is, as he was then, a muse of freedom.

Between Christmas and Epiphany
this magi of the poors,
paused ... his ears alert to children's voices on old Hanover
Street,
detailed between the banjo chord and Boeta Achmat's
steady, alto tenor
"... da korrie Alabama ..." and then a slow, resolute turning
towards the orange-hued sun spilling over the Hottentots
Holland
his African/Latino/Palestinian soul blazing a path
on his march onto other geographies of freedom.

- * Makana was a 19th century Xhosa Chief who resisted the British and is numbered amongst the first political prisoners incarcerated on Robben Island, also known as Makana's island.
- ** Zimbabwean born Dennis Brutus lived and taught in Port Elizabeth for a while.

—Michael Weeder

*For Dennis Brutus,
28 November 1924 – 26 December 2009
You will be deeply missed.*



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