

AFTER EXILE:

REVISITATION OF ZIMBABWE, 1999.

Mike, my "marine lover" has just woken up from sleep: Burping; yawning -- bumptious, even: Fresh. His innocence is golden.

I first smelled the Earth  
as I was descending over Africa. They pump the air in from outside, because I sensed dampness, and heaviness in the air, which is not common, for example in Australia.  
Darkness and a kind of stagnant festering...perhaps... But also a superabundance  
in the smell of life's composting:  
a place of soft- hearted romanticism.

There is softness and a lack of suspicion in the air.  
Here I am, on African ground.

Seventies music is played constantly over the airwaves: The only music people seem to know.  
The films I see are also dated to the early eighties.  
This appears to be a deliberate,  
wayward reaction of these parts...that Christianity, too, is deep and pervasive.  
An austere denial of political machinations & historical  
disruption which this society must have felt in the close of Rhodesia of the seventies: this was a  
European culture put on ice. The culture of the Seventies will remain on ice, almost as Platonic  
Forms, silent and repetitive, purified, unchanging -  
Adaptation is still the hardest thing to do:

Most people remain  
comforted by the multifarious elements of the past,  
Women here are made to feel they must sit still ."You should not climb trees as you are a girl!"  
One mother told her daughter.  
Men here are big and bulbous, though -- cook meat, have hairy stomachs,  
beers in hand. I do notice people here are more emotional in their makeup; they ask why I am  
such an "impersonal" person.

SILENCE is the effect of Africa;  
this continent has the feeling of an immense deranged garden, culturally unedifying, and without  
dynamic feeling of transition,  
yet supporting hopes that no longer make any sense;  
simple values of "the goodness of industry" --a common illness is a form of blindness:

such as, seventies pop music  
with its hypnotic tone,  
which will pitch-blind the partially blind to all  
their myriad of forgotten aspirations --  
releasing them from all historical sensibilities.

I rose up to meet Her.

Only it was myself --.

I have taken up sparring in the gym and even started writing. I have walked around at times entirely in the nude, robust and kicking for joy. I am at home in the world. Measureless joy met me with a new adventure into intellectual pursuits. When I encountered "idea land", years, or hours, were spent in a particular kind of pleasure -- the intellect. Then the outdoors:

A whirling spiral of divine being, in the air, met me: I sat in an open door aircraft as it powered to Zimbabwe's heavens. My head was as small an insect's head, when seen below, but white and balloon-like with awe, viewed as enormous by the others, where we sat. And clouds swirled in.

Flustering winds greeted my intrepid limbs, then body, as I stepped out of the plane; I held the metal of the strut between my fingers. In the vicinity of exhilarating motion and danger, I then embrace her, kissing at the shocking force fearlessly, (as she was dressed in stormy blue) -- felt her icy, sticky fingers sharply wend their way up through my nasal passages, reaching to my eyes, lifting out the cobwebs. The air at this height is sweet and sugary, not inhaled by human beings.

Then I let go! First, my helmet hit the strut, rapidly my tooth shattered to powder around my gum. Still in good time, I remembered to check my 'chute. The air beat in at me -- grey and blue. Then it was that I looked down and found a row of tiny aeroplanes, rightwards. I'd woken up.

Everything below was green.

Before a minute's passing, I could make out yellow helmets' signals and I orientated myself deftly towards them. I came down gradually, in the midst of crushing emerald fields.

I managed to stand up this landing, unlike several of the other jumps before. It all seemed much easier than I had dared to believe. My spirit was like an air goddess.

I burst out laughing--sheer joy of being alive.