

TILL LOVE IS LORD OF THE LAND

by Chris Zithulelele Mann

This poem is not designed to be read on the page in silence by an individual but to be recited aloud in a group.

The design is based on the call-response structure of indigenous black music with the addition of a western-type chorus.

The rhythm is steady and stately as befits the subject matter, with three strong beats to each half of the line.

If you are unfamiliar with oral poems, read this first to a friend. □

We shall dance through the yards of the prison . and dance through the prison gate,
We shall dance through the hills of the country . and dance through the streets of town,
We shall dance with the old till sunset . and dance with the young till dawn,
We shall dance in the arms of the prophets . and dance to the spirit's drum,

And the dogs of the days of darkness . the dogs shall cower on the sand,

And we shall not cease our struggle . till love is lord of the land.

And the walls in the hearts of the hated . the walls shall be broken down,

And the walls in the hearts of the hater . the walls shall be broken down,

And the fear in the bowels of the tyrant . the fear shall be pacified,

And the wrath in the blood of the captive . the wrath shall be pacified,

And the dogs of the days of darkness . the dogs shall cower on the sand,

And we shall not cease our struggle . till love is lord of the land.

And the stones of the people's power . the stones shall be gathered up,

And the bullets of the tyrant's power . the bullets shall be melted down,

And the flame of the people's necklace . the flame shall be cast aside,

And the knot of the hangman's necklace . the knot shall be torn apart,

And the dogs of the days of darkness . the dogs shall cower on the sand

And we shall not cease our struggle . till love is lord of the land.

And the steel of the soldier's rifle . the steel shall become a plough,

And the blood of the broken bodies . the blood shall become the soil,

And the bomb of the freedom fighter . the bomb shall become a seed,

And the sweat of the worker's forehead . the sweat shall become the rain,

And the dogs of the days of darkness . the dogs shall cower on the sand,

And we shall not cease our struggle . till love is lord of the land.

And the wounds that are deep as the dongas . the wounds shall begin to heal,

And the scars that are grim as the ghettos . the scars shall begin to heal,

And the grass on the hills of freedom . the grass shall be green again,

And the grapes on the wine of freedom . the grapes shall be sweet again.

And the dogs of the days of darkness . the dogs shall cower on the sand,

And we shall not cease our struggle . till love is lord of the land.