

Part 1

I am Azania
Land of black folks
Grain grown
When stones were still
as soft as butter
I am Azania
Land of Zanj
Truth made redundant
By the tyrant's Gag
I am Azania
I ran wild and free
When dawns were young
I mastered iron
and I tamed iron
Long before
The steel-eyed plunderers came

Palabora
Bambadymnalo
And Mapungubwe
Are my living testimony

I am Azania
I've seen kingdoms rise
And I have seen kingdoms fall
I have seen Black Memphis
not far away
Carthage too
And Meroe
Kush
Monomotapa
Benin Ghana
Timbuctu Songhai
I have seen them all

I am Azania
Land of black folks
From the Persian Gulf
Suleiman the trader
Brought me his greetings
"The land of Zanj is vast"
Said he

My name entombed
I once lived in
The land of the Mau Mau
Tanzania
I nurtured
When I waded knee deep
In the islands of
Pemba and Zanzibar
Mozambique
Also heard my freedom songs
Songs only the free can sing

Part 2

I am Azania
Once land of hospitality
I flung my arms wide open
To Captain Diaz and
Vasco Da Gama
For I thought them lost
We sang and ate
And danced and laughed
for I had plenty to give
And I knew not their designs
Then one day
One infamous day 1652
The treacherous seas
belched forth
Three drunken ships at
Table Bay
Three drunken ships
Which stunk of gunpowder
and holy water
Dromedaris
Goede Hoop
Dreiger
Three drunken ships

As dusk was inching in
We met
bare as poverty
Into our assegais
My sons and daughters
Fell too
Bitten in the neck
By the settlers' bullets
Battles of yesteryear
Are engraved in my memory
I praise you
Sons and daughters
of Thaba Bosiu
Isandalhwana
Sandile's Kop
Keisikama Hoek
Blood River
I praise you all

I am Azania
Land of Black folks
Grain grown
When stones were still
as soft as butter
I am Azania
Land of Zanj
Truth made redundant
By the tyrant's Gag

I am Azania
I bend but do not break
Cecil Rhodes
Thought otherwise the
bastard
When he took my land
My Gold

Part 3

I am Azania
My name itself
A platform, a programme
I scatter the white mist
over Kliptown
I am Azania
Mangaliso Sobukwe
Heard my call
It was at Sharpeville
Sharpeville
A name that blossoms
Into the fervent hearts
Of black folks

I am Azania
The name reconciled
With itself
In the deeds of
Bantu Biko
Uncle Zeph Mothopeng

I am Azania
The name wrapped
in Soweto
A forest of black fists
Hammering
The sultry air
In Krugersdorp

I am Azania
The name
That rang loud and clear
In Nyanga, Langa
Guguletu

I am Azania
Land of black folks
Grain grown
when stones were still
as soft as butter

I am Azania
Land of Zanj
Truth made
redundant

By the
tyrant's Gag
I am Azania
Battered flesh
Of Bantustans
Sturdy voices
Of Robben Island
I am Azania
The mine
That ventilates back
Its own breath
Sweat
Tears
And Blood
Trapped in gold particles

I am Azania
Moan made murmur
Murmur made cry
Cry made Shriek
Shriek drilling
The settler's ear
I am Azania
The fierce black bull
I am the black dot
On the Boer's history
books

I am Azania
Land of black folks
Grain grown
when stones were still
as soft as butter
I am Azania
Land of Zanj
Truth made redundant
By the tyrant's Gag
I am Azania
The pregnant woman
Laid bare
On a cold
Concrete slab
I am Azania
Black consciousness
unbound
Only the pure I take
For I have no time
For liberal hypocritical minds

I am Azania
The meeting point of
Gun, Pen
Chisel, Brush
Hammer and Hoe

Boer,
I am Azania
The land
I am the whole land

I am Azania
Land of black folks
Grain grown
When stones were still
as soft as butter
I am Azania
Land of Zanj
Burning truth
Charring the
tyrant's gag
I am Azania
The truth made
dream
The dream made
true
Izwe letu!

A. Sheikh