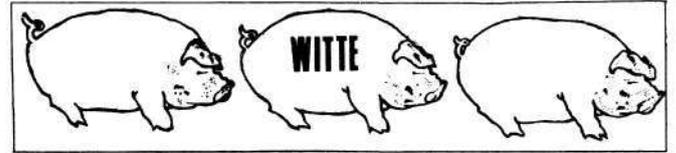


POEMS

Poems from "Cry Rage" by James Mathews and Gladys Thomas (Sprocas Publications, Johannesburg 1972).

This book, but not the poems it contains, has been banned.



white man
seated in your luxurious pad
walls illuminated with the glory of
nina simone, josh white and miriam makeba
you say that you are my soul brother
paying homage to the songs, sung by
singers singing the bitter blues brought on
by gut-clawing, soul-searing, castrating white laws
and you tell me that you are my soul brother
when the hypocrisy of your pious double-talk
of sharing my pain and plight sickens me
white man
get lost and go screw yourself
you have long-gone lost your soul

Suffer little children
and forbid them not to come unto me
the words of Christ, the Master,
have lost their meaning
when his natal day is celebrated
with separated seating
and little black and brown angels
not wanted in the cast
all they can do is sit and watch
Christ and his message of love
turned into a mockery
little black and brown children are to suffer
and not wanted, a damn!

Freedom's child
you have been denied too long
fill your lungs and cry rage
step forward and take your rightful place
you're not going to grow up
knocking at the back door
for you there will be no travelling
third class enforced by law
with segregated schooling and sitting on the floor
the rivers of our land, mountain tops
and the shore
it is yours, you will not be denied anymore
Cry rage, freedom's child

Student Protest

They stood there
on the steps of the cathedral
a valiant band of youth
who had no need of standing there
and I safe on the other side

I stood watching
their banners screamed our protest
making our cause their own
their voices clear of fear
and I did not utter a word.

They were lashed
their fair faces stained crimson
man nor maid was spared
as authority showed its might
and I watched and wept my shame

Can the white man speak for me?

can he feel my pain when his laws
tear wife and child from my side
and I am forced to work a thousand miles away?

does he know my anguish
as I walk his streets at night
my hand fearfully clasping my pass?

is he with me in the loneliness
of my bed in the bachelor barracks
with my longing driving me to mount my brother?

will he soothe my despair
as I am driven insane
by scraps of paper permitting me to live?

Can the white man speak for me?

Liberal Student Crap!

The basis of democracy rests upon
Fraternity, Equality and not LSD

I should know fellows
Progressive policy the salvation of us all

You just don't understand
There's no one as liberal as me
Some of my best friends are
Kaffirs, Coolies and Coons

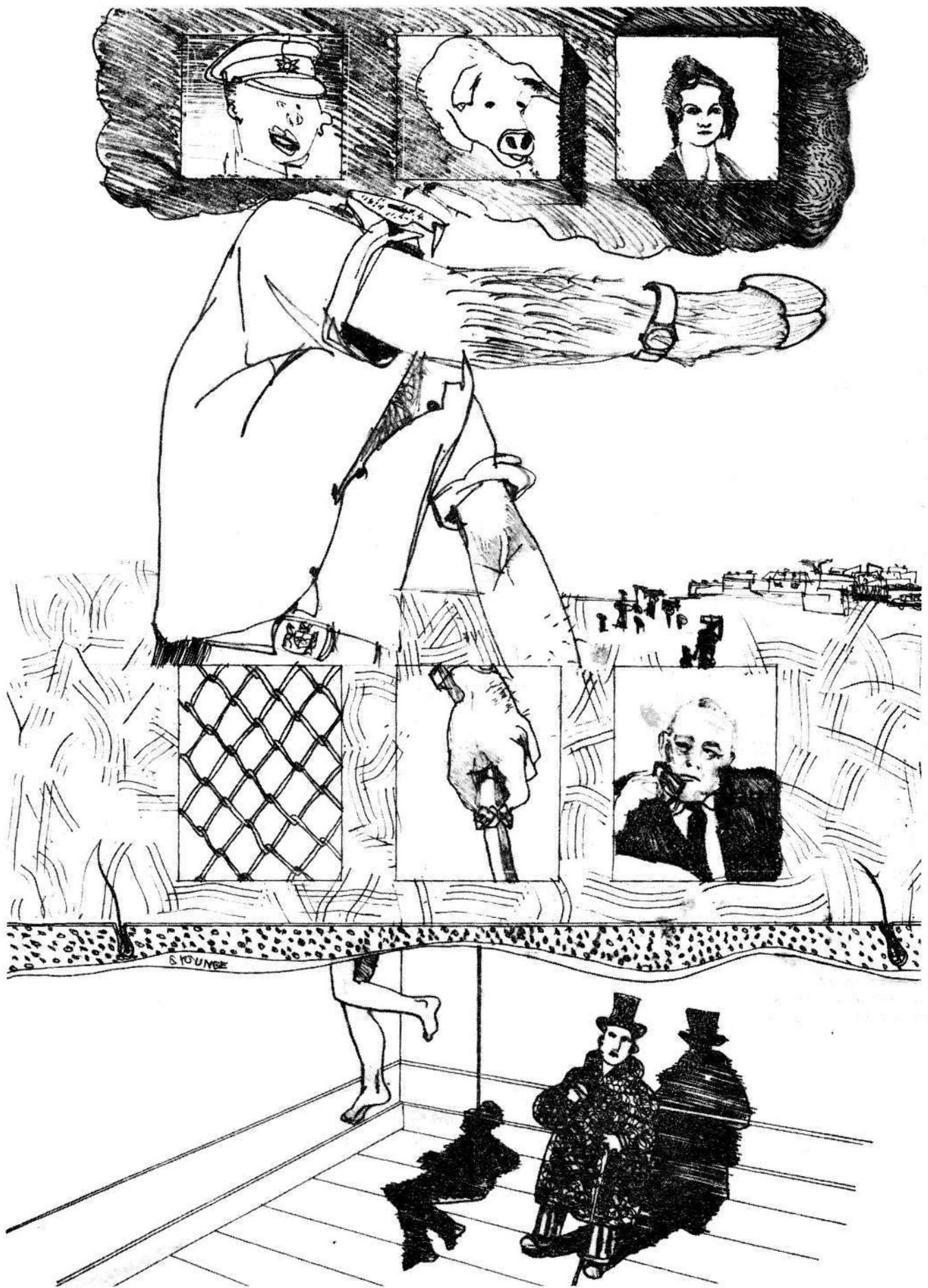
Forgive me, I mean other ethnic groups
How could it be otherwise?

I'm Jewish; I know discrimination
From the ghetto to Belsen

So, don't get me all wrong
Cause I know just how you feel

Come up and see me sometime
My folks are out of town

But right now I've got to rush
I'm escorting the rag queen tonight



Fall Tomorrow

Don't sow a seed
Don't paint a wall
Tomorrow it will have to fall

Let the dog howl and bark
Tomorrow he will
Sleep in the dark
Let the cock crow
Let the hen lay
Tomorrow will be their last day

Let the children chop trees
Let them break
Let the destructive little devils
Ruin and take
For tomorrow they know not their fate

Don't sow a seed
Don't paint a wall
Tomorrow the yellow monster will take all

Let our sons dazed in eye
Rape and steal
For they are not allowed to feel
Let the men drink
Let them fight
Let what is said about them
Then be right
For they are not allowed to think

So bark, howl, crow,
Chop, break, ruin,
Steal, drink, fight,
Let what's made of us be right

Tomorrow we gaze at a new view
Seas of sand given by you
And we say
Sow the seed
Paint the wall
Be at home in our desert for all
You that remade us
Your mould will break
And tomorrow you are going to fall

houses stand showing gaping wounds
the people they have sheltered are gone
a broken flower pot sits forlornly
on a windowsill
the lone flower it holds waves sadly
in the wind
a store shorn of goods sports a scabby cat
asleep on its shattered counter
people walk the street scanning each other's face
for assurance that the district is still alive
a lorry trundles along tyres sagging
second-hand furniture going into exile

