

# Poets Corner

## DREADLOCKS

*Dread standing there  
with your crown of glory.  
Sign of your faith — your hair.  
Beautiful and black.  
Uncombed, matted,  
like a lion's mane.  
Your roar is your beliefs  
spoken for those who wish  
to hear, and understand.  
The history of black men  
shining in your eyes.  
The regimented plan,  
there for all who wish to learn.  
Your locks a sign of  
righteousness, pride, joy  
in being black, beautiful and strong.*  
**Warrior Woman.**

## POTRAYAL

*Racial minority addressed by media silence  
Only broken by parade of stereotypes  
Across page or screen.  
Why do we hear voices echoing in shade  
Of background vision  
Until spotlight falls on silhouette  
Swaying to dem dry bones  
Or caught in riot tearing up paving stones?  
Old myths remade by selection  
New ones laid  
Creation not reflection of reality.*  
**Pat Isiorho.**

## FOR THE PRISONERS IN AZANIA

*What squats its vast bulk  
at the end of my mind's  
shadowy recesses  
dominating my thinking like a  
legendary bastion, Bastille,  
labyrinthinely convoluted  
like a basilica upthrust on the  
Horn where ages intersect  
staring with basilisk-power to  
turn my brain to stone  
is knowledge of you, thousands,  
imprisoned,  
(The Fort, Rooi Hel, Pollsmoor, the Island)  
and the wound of knowledge  
knowledge of my powerlessness.*  
**Dennis Brutus**

## THE MISSIONARY

*The Missionary is a man  
To view with some suspicion,*

*He spends his life in foreign lands  
Denouncing superstition.*

*He comes (he says), to free the Blacks,  
To love and educate them,  
But once inside their humble shacks,  
Does nothing but berate them.*

*You must not worship deities:  
He castigates the chief,  
But practice White Man's pieties  
For spiritual relief.*

*Young lambs must not be sacrificed,  
Shamen must be despised,  
To save you from sin, Jesus Christ  
Was scorned and ostracised.*

*Out go old customs and taboos  
Like juju and rain dances,  
The churches fill their empty pews  
And lo: the tribble advances.*

*Repent, repent your wicked ways,  
Barrabas, Jezebel.  
If you don't: this fanatic says,  
You'll surely go to Hell.*

*Such is the Mission man's tirade  
Against his hapless brother,  
But all he does is trade  
One superstition for another.*

**A.P.**

## THE ART OF WORK

*Work is like running in a very long race  
Starting at a gentle pace  
Work too hard and you will find  
You'll never pass the finish line.*

*Concentrate right at the start  
It's a very simple art  
Time each piece of work you do  
Apply yourself, you'll see it through.*

*Without training, watch and see  
You will tire quite easily  
Apart from not passing the long white tape  
Open-mouthed your tongue will gape.*

*Another thing that you should do  
You rule work, don't let it rule you!  
Heed or there will be a bigger gap  
You might not finish the very first lap!*

*Exploitation will also lurk  
When you find a place to work  
Just like training when you begin  
The experienced campaigner will always win.*

*Nothing I'm afraid, you can do there  
You have to absorb and grin and bear  
But time will tell and when you learn  
The tide will eventually begin to turn.*

*Starting right at the bottom of the scale  
You can't possibly begin to fail  
Train real hard and you will see  
You'll eventually climb that beautiful tree.*

**Deverell Morris**