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Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies

Title

Echoes from the Past

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Journal

Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies, 27(1-2-3)

ISSN

0041-5715

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Publication Date

1999

DOI

10.5070/F7271-2-3016613

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Echoes from the Past

Benedicto W. Malunga

So it was not true
That they hated getting wet
In the torrential rains of dzinja
As they followed the Lion
To the four winds
To inspect crops
While receiving forced gifts
From the poor he spoke for
When he broke the stupid federation?

So it was a lie
When they claimed
They were fed up
With buying cards for the unborn,
Going to dancing rehearsals daily,
Travelling on open lorries to rallies,
Sitting in dizzying heat all day,
Leaving sick children behind,
Sleeping in classrooms for days?

So they were bluffing
When they grumbled about
Their disappearing sons
Who never returned
To tell the tale of their plight
Their Nyakula - wearing husbands
Who were dragged to death
By red - shirted men
Called youth leaguers in their forties?

Brother they should have known
That the dissenters at Nfikuyu
were no mad men
But prophets who saw beyond tomorrow

They were thinkers
who knew when to say
Enough is enough
They were pathfinders
of a better tomorrow.

Sister they should' have seen
The writing on the wall
when our brilliant cousins fled home
In search of peace elsewhere
They should have listened to the tenor
of poets communicating in riddles
The baritone of prose writers
Turning symbolism into a guerrilla's landmine.

(For J.T and G.C)