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RUWARE NE MAKOMO

(Boulders and Mountains)

by

SANDRA KAMUSIKIRI

Kopjes consist of piles of granite boulders, while others are solid mountains of granite. Here and there they are peeled by exfoliation. This type of hill formation is variously known by geomorphologists as a "sugar loaf" dome, inselberg, or bornhardt. Geomorphologists attribute all these hill forms to scarp retreat and the growth of pediments, a process known as pediplanation.

Kopje is not vocabular to Shona.
Inselberg is not part of the language
nor is bornhardt or hillock.

A black lexicographer
would look at the stone,
nuclear, a massed horizon,
and say "*ruware*," He would say *ruware*
is to inwrought with life, with history.
It is day to day and practical; a place,
broad and flat, where maize dries
in the sun, or a house has its foundation,
or where a bull is slaughtered to herald
a birth, a death, the coming of the rains.

He would say in the *makomo*, the mountains
of stone, our roots and defence
are corporate. Mt. Matonjeni,
the ancient oracle is the voice of our God.
The spirits of our ancestors keep Mt. Mutemwa;
a spring of pure water may appear there,
descending silently from its summit,
or beautiful cattle may walk
on its smooth sides and disappear.
A lost traveller can find food
in its caves.

Our independence derives from stone
pitched from stone. The caves

of Mutiwaura fortified our warriors.
They hurled down spears, arrows,
the mountain itself, until the invader,
the big tree, was felled.

What is exfoliation to a person
whose home is here, who has danced,
dried maize and offered libations
to his ancestors here?

If the prophet, Chaminuka
who is primary to our identity,
and synonymous with our hope,
is alive in Mt. Mandawe, if the spirit
of our warriors is there still,
and what is hurled is a compilation
of every rock and arrow,
then the big tree will go on falling,
and this must be the meaning
of greyness, granite, and stone.

SANDRA KAMUSIKIRI received her Master of Arts degree in English from the University of Iowa in 1973. Presently she is teaching English at the Nyadiri Teacher Training College, Rhodesia. Her poems have been published in many journals including *The Broadside Annual*, *Broadside Press*, *The Greenfield Review*, and *Pamoja*. She has shared her poetical talents by organizing and conducting a workshop in poetry writing for the Ecumenical Arts Association of Rhodesia.