

SOUTH AFRICAN EXILE

"teacher, teacher!"

I English Syllabus: A Century of South African Short Stories

wuthering heights
averted eyes
pride and prejudice
newshid cries — I fly

this heart
-ofdarkness
is waiting for god...
crossocean

home is the big english department in the sky
where ignorant armies flash-
masturbate by night
sun is blindfire



II only

Helen Joseph drips with egg
Beyers Naudé old-Afrikaans, detention-bent
when _____

_____rush to the streets to "free
Mandela"

BUT AMANDLA WAS A SELF-CONSCIOUS FIST ON A LIMP-RAISED ARM
AND THE WORDS...THE WORDS TO "NKOSI, SIKEL' I...".

John Vorster Square tempts yet

we drove to black and gold parties
work in five star hotels
- some of our best friends are maids

"Play, play, play!"
Baas, we cracktried -
shufflesmiled *clig*

did talk earnest
in late-nite cafes,
hobby: anti-apartheid

o *ness*

"IF YOU GO DOWN TO THE WOODS TODAY..."

outside

"the Brixton tower is falling down, falling down, falling down..."
SING!

Soweto smokestark
billboard wasteland
Bantu Beer skinlightening hairstraightening;
billboards peel
under smashed giraffe street lamps
dust tufts of grass - soccer balls bounce
against cell houses blocks in a building block game

"the horror..."

I flew

running on the streets

III wait;
far away in the land of Soweto
"everything is under control"

this:
at a greasy cactus thorn
an ant staggers under a sugar
granule sticky in the
blowing heat

VIR VOK EN VADERLAND

"suikerbossie 'k wil jou hé
wat sal jou mama daarvan sê..."

sip blood on the stoep at dusk
sun swirling time
Jo'burg painted pink with
Houghton pine trees;
ring the bell for dinner call the
girl

"MORNING, NKOSI"

mouths can't round any longer

"too ghastly to contemplate"

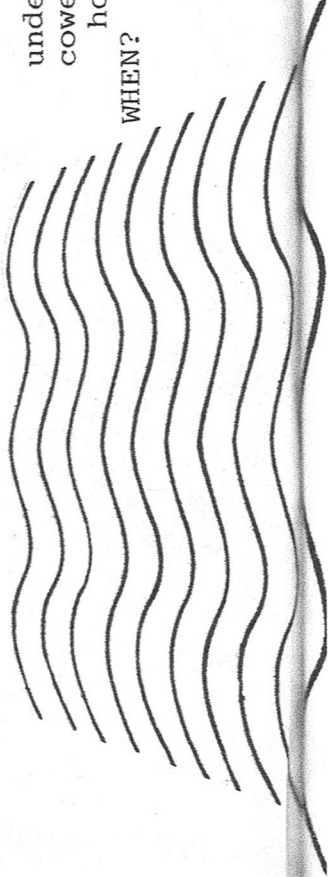
WHERE?
sing!
free Mandela

Mandela will be
free to face the fucked-up
bloodlooks of this historied...

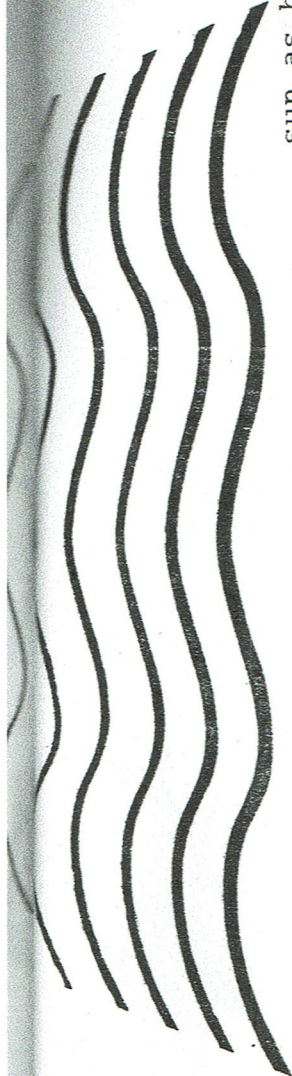
a fly swats madam,
the puppy's drowning in the
swimming pool,
globes of cut ooze in under the
kitchen door across the
newspapers for fat from
frying;

under the bed teeth rattle
cower in two-story Houghton
home - lock the gate on the landing

WHEN?



not snitted back



sun as bloodshot eyes
gritty in the streets where
Uhuru is called
mist made of light through a
dustgauze curtain

no drums here

come

Azania

Hail the who?
Hail the who?
Mandela will not free
"Blacks will wee in the sea"

B A A ! B A A !
B L A C K S H E E P !

!

IV

dying
away from home
I
kill self
(Brandt Fourie speaks on TV
ungrammatically)

in dreamcouch
beaches are being desegregated
'phones echo under the sea
and tears can well now
here in Amerika
San Diego
where the city suspension-bridges women with plaits and babies

--Ian Barnard