

Poems of Dennis Brutus : a checklist, 1945-2004. 2005

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Poems of Dennis Brutus: A Checklist, 1945–2004

Compiled by
Andrew Martin
National English Literary Museum

[BRUTUS, Pennis]

Take out the pretry and fire or watch it ember out of sight, or watch it ember out of sight, sainty reassembles its ash the moon relinquishes the right.

But here and here the remain the scalds,

But here and here the remain the scalds,

a sudden turn or breath may ache
and I walk soft on cindered pasts
and I walk soft on cindered pasts

for thought or hope (what else?) can break.

official rules.



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With a preface by Dennis Brutus and a tribute by Bernth Lindfors

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First Edition

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Preface

As I have recounted elsewhere, when I became increasingly active politically in the 1950s, including the period leading up to the Freedom Charter in 1955, I wrote less and found it difficult to connect poetry with politics although I was aware of the long narrative of activism in English poetry (Milton, Wordsworth, Shelley, and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, among others). It was through teaching W.H. Auden's work that I became aware of the possibilities of combining the private and the public, the personal and the political, in a way that freed me. I was able to acknowledge this when reading with Auden at an International Poetry Festival in Edinburgh in the 1960s.

What follows is a fair body of work. If, after all this, I have one regret, it is that I did not devote more time to the craft of poetry; to the use of language, of images, and of cadences; my excuse is that I was busy doing so much else that seemed to me worthwhile. It does seem to me a worthwhile body of work, all things considered, but of course one always wishes to have done more. Yet it is still important, I think, to go on doing what you can, as best you can. I think in asserting my own creativity I have helped others to find their own voices. To assert our humane values is to help all of humanity in some way.

A Note on the Pseudonyms in this Checklist

As you know, for a period—perhaps as much as twenty years—my work was banned in South Africa; it was illegal for me to publish, or for any editor to print, my work. So that explains some; but there were other times for other reasons—diffidence, mainly, I think—that I used pseudonyms.

Dennis Brutus

The following pseudonyms appear in this checklist:

"Le Dab" / "D.A.B.": These pseudonyms use the initials for Dennis Anthony Brutus. Brutus' second name is Vincent, but as a Catholic he adopted the name Anthony after St. Anthony.

"B.K.": These initials were borrowed from a friend, Bernice Kaplan.

"John Bruin": Bernth Lindfors suggested the use of a pseudonym "to bypass the South African censors so that the work could be sold and distributed in South Africa." According to Brutus, he used the name John Bruin "because it could also be read as Jan Bruin—a kind of John Doe."

"Julius Friend": According to Brutus, Lionel Abrahams, the editor of Purple Renoster, "suggested this pseudonym as a 'play' on the name Brutus."

"Dikeni Bayi": This pseudonym, according to Brutus, is "derived from the Xhosa names for Alice—Dikeni—and for Port Elizabeth—iBhayi." [Brutus studied at the University of Fort Hare in Alice and lived in Port Elizabeth for several years.]

Andrew Martin

Introduction

I am grateful for the privilege of having been generously afforded the opportunity by David Henige and the University of Wisconsin-Madison Libraries to produce this checklist of Dennis Brutus' published poems, on behalf of the National English Literary Museum (NELM) in Grahamstown, South Africa, in this, Dennis Brutus' eightieth year.

My interest in Dennis Brutus' poetry arose out of a project at NELM to compile a bibliography of creative writing and literary criticism by black South Africans from 1800 to 1990. My colleagues who initiated this project nearly ten years ago recognized that a large amount of black South African literature that had been marginalized, and in many instances banned and destroyed, for several decades, was in danger of being forgotten. The aim of this project is threefold: to find and, wherever possible, obtain copies of this literature; to document and preserve it; and to make it available for research. Part of this project is to collect the literature of South Africans living in exile and writers who had no option but to publish their work outside South Africa because of restricted access to publishing at home.

This led me to the large body of poems by Dennis Brutus that along with the works of several other South Africans—including Peter Abrahams, Es'kia Mphahlele, Lewis Nkosi, and Daniel P. Kunene—have been published extensively outside South Africa. In order to find this literature, I visited several university libraries in the US, including: Harvard University's Widener Library, Northwestern University's Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies, and most recently the University of Wisconsin-Madison Libraries. During my visit to Wisconsin in spring 2004, I met with David Henige, the Library's Africana/Near East Bibliographer who, after a lengthy discussion of my work, suggested this publication.

The primary purpose of this checklist is to document the poems written by Brutus and published in South Africa, of which only a handful appeared under his own name. All of these poems are listed here publicly documented under Brutus' name. This publication will serve both as a handy guide to finding a favorite Brutus poem and as research tool—to invite scholars who are not familiar with Brutus' works, to conduct their own research. This checklist can also serve as the next step towards a comprehensive Brutus bibliography. Further input and correspondence on this matter are welcome.

Finding Brutus' poems in their first place of publication has been enormously challenging and rewarding. This checklist shows how Brutus has had poems published in an extremely wide variety of anthologies, journals, and newspapers. My chief source of information has been NELM, which has diligently collected Brutus' works over the years. NELM's computerized poetry indexes have made the task of bringing this work to print all that easier. So has a generous donation of items from Craig McLuckie and Patrick Colbert, collected in preparing their book, Critical Perspectives on Dennis Brutus. This book was also helpful in compiling this bibliography, as were several libraries in South Africa and America.

This whole endeavor has been made easier by the enthusiastic support and assistance of Dennis Brutus himself. Since our first e-mail contact seven years ago, Dennis has been extremely helpful in locating his poetry, in particular the early poems and poems published under several pseudonyms. I am very grateful to Dennis for his assistance and for submitting a preface and notes to the pseudonyms herein. I am also grateful to Bernth Lindfors for his contribution. Professor Lindfors has been a longstanding supporter and friend to NELM, and his assistance and encouragement over the years have been immense. A last word of thanks must go to David Henige and Elisabeth Owens of the UW-Madison Libraries for their assistance and for their support and patience in bringing this project to publication.

Dennis Brutus: A Tribute

Of necessity Dennis Brutus has written most of his poetry outside South Africa. The majority of the poems listed in this checklist were composed while he was living in exile in the United Kingdom and the United States, and were published in books and journals there. It is not widely known that his earliest poems were published in South African newspapers and journals. His first two published volumes consist of South African poems. Sirens, Knuckles, Boots (1963) was published in Nigeria while he was in prison, and many of the poems contained in Letters to Martha and Other Poems from a South African Prison (1968) were rewritten from memory after he was released from prison and left the country in 1966.

All of the poetry that Brutus published over the past half-century has found its way into print some distance from home. The reason for this used to be quite simple: during the apartheid era Brutus' political activism made him a "banned" (proscribed) person in South Africa, so none of his writings or statements were published, circulated, or even quoted under his own name there. However, Brutus did evade his censors by using several pseudonyms (as listed in the checklist). What is more difficult to understand is why this kind of public erasure has persisted since 1994, when a new political order was established in Pretoria, and apartheid itself was banned. To date, not a single book by Dennis Brutus has been published in South Africa.

This is a shame, for in some ways Brutus is the most South African of poets. Nearly everything he has written was shaped by his experience of injustice and oppression, first in South Africa and later in the wider world. The titles of his books trace this trajectory quite clearly. First, in Sirens, Knuckles, Boots he evoked the terrible brutality of jackboots, police sirens, and midnight raids, yet at the same time he expressed the anguish of his constant love for a plundered land, which he portrayed as a ravaged, suffering woman often unresponsive to his overtures. In several of these poems, he succeeded in making a poignant political statement through the use of erotic imagery. Letters to Martha dealt with some of the horrors of prison life, but again there were moments of tranquility, peace, and comfort alternating with an acute awareness of deprivation that sometimes bordered on despair. These poems set in South Africa spoke of confinement, of struggle, of unrealized dreams.

When Brutus went into exile, the mood of his poetry changed. In Thoughts Abroad (1970) and Poems from Algiers (1970)—subsequently brought together with Sirens, Knuckles, Boots and Letters to Martha in A Simple Lust (1973)—the poet-narrator was no longer constrained by shackles that kept him tied to one spot. Brutus was now free to roam the world but he continued to remember with fondness the people and places he had left behind. Travel made him homesick and he harbored "a simple lust" to liberate others. China Poems (1975), Strains (1975), and Stubborn Hope (1978), continued in this vein, expressing optimism that change would eventually come to South Africa despite the intransigence of oppressive forces there. When that hope began to appear capable of realization, Brutus, in Salutes and Censures (1984) and Airs and Tributes (1989), commended the stalwarts and martyrs who fought the battle for justice in South Africa, and condemned those who supported apartheid. He also denounced collaborators in other forms of systematic injustice elsewhere in the world.

One may be tempted to classify Brutus as a poet of protest, and hence of propaganda, but it would be shortsighted to overlook the softer tones in his work, tones conveying tenderness, sympathy, empathy, sensuality and yearning—in other words, tones of love and acceptance. A good number of his poems deal with very basic human emotions and articulate ideas that are profoundly humane. Brutus cannot be dismissed as a soapbox poet. Yet he remains a product of his times, and in South Africa those times were tough, so he found it necessary to speak out against social and political aberrations that harmed the majority of his compatriots. Brutus did so not only through words but also through principled actions, the consequences of which ultimately forced him into exile. One hopes, however, that his poetry will soon be repatriated to the country that inspired almost all of it, and that he will gain the recognition and respect that he deserves in the history of South African literature. Perhaps this checklist of his published poems will make South Africans more fully aware of what he has contributed, albeit in absentia, to the enrichment of their national culture.

Bernth Lindfors

About This Checklist

Arrangement

A single entry is made for each poem listed under what I have ascertained to be its first place of publication. For example, if a poem first appeared in the journal The Gar, then it is listed under a source heading consisting of that journal title and the edition in which it appeared. Entries from books are placed under a source heading consisting of the title with full bibliographic details. Source headings are arranged in chronological order according to date of publication. I have tried to be as accurate as possible in arranging the journal entries in their correct order. Collections and anthologies are placed last within each year of publication.

Titled poem are listed within each publication in the order of the page number at the end of each title. Untitled poems are italicized and listed by the first line for clarity.

Pseudonyms

Where a pseudonym is used, there is a notation in brackets under the source, for example [B.K., pseud.].

Notes

If a poem was published: a) under another title; b) in a longer version or as part of a sequence of poems; or c) more than once in the same year (and it is not clear which is the earliest publication), I have noted these within the entry and made references to the alternative publications. Full bibliographic details for sources other than Brutus' collections are included in these notes. Details for Brutus' collections are also provided.

Indexes

For ease of use, there are indexes to the titled and untitled poems and an index to the publications referred to in the checklist. A key to the poems included in Brutus' collections using the checklist numbers for poems is also included.

Omissions

This checklist does not include any republishing of poems (except as specified in Notes above), so poems listed under each source are often not the only Brutus poem in that publication. The entries listed under Brutus' collections are only the ones that have not appeared earlier elsewhere.

I was unable to locate copies of several publications in which Brutus' poems appeared. Some of these publications are mentioned in the acknowledgments in Brutus' collections; Brutus recently informed me of others, such as the Patersonian Observer (in which he published poems in the 1940s). In some cases I was only able to locate the journal but not the required edition, such as the Fort Harian and Christian Action.

I have not included Brutus' many unpublished poems. Besides those in his personal holdings, many of these are held by libraries, including NELM, Northwestern University, the University of York, and the Schomburg Center of the New York Public Library. (See McLuckie and Colbert, Critical Perspectives on Dennis Brutus.) A collection of Brutus' poems entitled Denver Poems (ca. 1970) was omitted, since although it is sometimes listed as one of his collections, it was only photocopied and not formally published. Broadsides of Brutus' poems were also omitted, except in one instance (see no. 532). Critical Perspectives lists several of these items. No poems from Internet sources have been included. Brutus has also published a few poems in Afrikaans, one of South Africa's other official languages. These have not been included.

CHECKLIST OF POEMS

SANC: South African Native College (Summer 1945)

["Le Dab", pseud.]

1. "Rendezvous." 26

New Age (12 April 1956)

[D.A.B., pseud.]

2. "For a dead African." 1

Evening Post (25 May 1957)

[D.A.B., pseud.]

3. "Moore in half-light: thoughts at an evening lecture at the Henry Moore exhibition in the George VI Art Gallery, Port Elizabeth." 6

Eastern Province Herald (15 August 1960)

[D.A.B., pseud.]

4. "At a funeral: Dr V.M." 8

New Age (7 December 1961)

[Anon.]

5. "Lutuli [Luthuli]: December 10th 1961." 1. Also published as "Lutuli [Luthuli]: 10 December 1961" in 7 South African Poets: Poems of Exile / collected and selected by Cosmo Pieterse. London: Heinemann, 1971, 15

Fighting Talk (June 1962)

6. "Nightsong: city." 14

7. "Erosion: Transkei." 14

Adelphi Literary Review (August 1962)

[B.K., pseud.]

8. "Greetings from South Africa." 4

9. "I might be a better lover I believe." 4

Adelphi Literary Review (October 1962)

[B.K., pseud.]

10. "Set down this indictment first." 4

Adelphi Literary Review (November 1962)

[B.K., pseud.]

- 11. "Somehow we survive." 3. Also published as "Poem" in Présence Africaine, 57 (1966), 312
- 12. "This sun on this rubble after rain." 4

Adelphi Literary Review (January 1963)

[B.K., pseud.]

13. "Autumn." 4. Also published as "Autumn comes here with ostentation" in Sirens, Knuckles, Boots [11]

Fighting Talk (January 1963)

[B.K., pseud.]

Four poems included under the heading "Tourist guide: for those 'confined to the magisterial district of X'."

- 14. "Port Elizabeth." 9
- 15. "Cape Town." 9
- 16. "Durban." 9
- 17. "Johannesburg." 9

Adelphi Literary Review (June 1963)

[B.K., pseud.]

18. "It is the constant image of your face." 4

Penpoint, 15 (July 1963)

- 19. "Patriot." 43
- 20. "I am out of love with you for now." 43
- 21. "When they deprived [deprive] me of the evenings." 43-44
- 22. "Take out the poetry and the fire." 44

Transition, 10 (September 1963)

23. "Sabotage, 1962." 21

Purple Renoster, 5 (Summer 1963)

[Anon.]

- 24. "Off the campus: Wits." 8
- 25. "Longing." 8
- 26. "A troubadour, I traverse all my land." 9
- 27. "So for the moment, sweet, is peace." 9
- 28. "Kneeling before you in a gesture." 10. Also published in Black Orpheus, 12 [1963], 17

Breakthru, 3, 13 (November/December 1963)

29. "The mob." 13

Sirens, Knuckles, Boots: Poems / Dennis Brutus. Ibadan: Mbari Publications, 1963

- 30. "Between the time of falling for the flowers." [4]
- 31. "The sibyl." [5]
- 32. "More terrible than any beast." [6]
- 33. "Out of the granite day." [6]
- 34. "Time: ordinary time." [8]
- 35. "Waiting (South African style): 'non-whites only'." [9]
- 36. "No banyan, only." [12-13]
- 37. "The sounds begin again." [17]. Also published as "Sirens knuckles boots" in Other Voices, Other Places: An Anthology of 3rd World Poetry / collected by Cecil Rajendra. London Christian Aid/British Council of Churches, Community Race Relations Unit, 1972, 39
- 38. "For my wife, in separation." [19]
- 39. "Mirror sermon; I." [20]
- 40. "Mirror sermon; II." [21]. Also published with "Mirror sermon; I" as one poem in Simple Lust, 21
- 41. "A common hate enriched our love and us." [22]
- 42. "The rosy aureole of your affection." [23]
- 43. "Gaily teetering on the bath's edge." [25]
- 44. "Anguished passion knots your brows." [26]
- 45. "Let not this plunder be misconstrued." [27]
- 46. "For Bernice." [28]
- 47. "Under me." [30]
- 48. "Desolate." [31]

Transition, 15 (1964)

49. "Poem: In the friendly dark, I wheel." 31

Journal of the New African Literature and the Arts, 3 (Spring 1967)

Four poems included under the heading "Poetic sketches."

- 50. "On a Saturday afternoon in summer." 31
- 51. "Cement-grey flyers and walls." 31–32. Also published in expanded sequence of four short poems, "On the island" in Letters to Martha, 38-39
- 52. "Mere falsified tenderness pricks my eyes." 32
- 53. "Now that we conquer and dominate time." 32

Breakthru, 5, 27 (March/April 1966)

- 54. "Christmas 1965." 6
- 55. "Human Rights Day." 6

Purple Renoster, 6 (Winter 1966)

[Julius Friend, pseud.]

56. "Penelope." 22

Black Orpheus, 22 (August 1967)

- 57. "Through jagged streets in Vrededorp." 14
- 58. "Easier even than despair." 14
- 59. "I remember this place." 15
- 60. "Walking through this hilly peopled city." 15

Transition 32, 7, 1 (August/September 1967)

61. "Flight/the exile/exit: for James Cook, who arrived from South Africa, June 1967." 31. Also published as "To be thrown outward in a steel projectile" in Simple Lust, 112–13

South African Writing Today / edited by Nadine Gordimer and Lionel Abrahams. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967

62. "On the beach." 235

Sechaba, 2, 2 (February 1968)

63. "The guerillas: for the fighting men in southern Africa." [17]

Africa Today, 15, 1 (February-March 1968)

64. "For Chief: a tribute to Albert John Lutuli [Luthuli]." [46]. An extended version published in Simple Lust, 170-75

New African, 7, 2 (1968)

65. "Here by the pool my scarred ungainly body shrinks." 41

African Arts 1, 4 (Summer 1968)

- 66. "No incantations of horror." 12
- 67. "Always we are promised some relief." 13
- 68. "Ikeja Airport, Lagos." 13
- 69. "On the death of Chief Albert Luthuli." 13. Also published as part of sequence "For Chief: a tribute to Albert John Luthuli" in Simple Lust, 170-75
- 70. "I am the tree." 13

Letters to Martha: and Other Poems from a South African Prison / Dennis Brutus. London: Heinemann, 1968

- 71. "Letters to Martha; 1." 2
- 72. "Letters to Martha; 2." 3
- 73. "Letters to Martha; 3." 4
- 74. "Letters to Martha; 4." 5. Also published as "A poem written from prison on Robben Island" in Torch in the Night: Worship Resources from South Africa / compiled by Anne Hope. New York: Friendship Press, 1988, 93
- 75. "Letters to Martha; 5." 6
- 76. "Letters to Martha; 6." 7
- 77. "Letters to Martha; 7." 8
- 78. "Letters to Martha; 8." 9
- 79. "Letters to Martha; 9." 10
- 80. "Letters to Martha; 10." 11
- 81. "Letters to Martha; 11." 12
- 82. "Letters to Martha; 12." 13. Also published as "Nothing was sadder" in Dreaming of Freedom: The Story of Robben Island / edited by Penny Nyren. Bellville: Mayibuye; Johannesburg: Sached, 1995, 76
- 83. "Letters to Martha; 13." 14
- 84. "Letters to Martha; 14." 15
- 85. "Letters to Martha; 15." 16
- 86. "Letters to Martha; 16." 17
- 87. "Letters to Martha; 17." 18. Also published as "In prison" in Echoes of the Sunbird: An Anthology of Contemporary African Poetry / compiled by Don Burness. Athens: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 1993, 38
- 88. "Letters to Martha; 18." 19
- 89. "Postscripts; 1." 20. Also published as "Reflections from prison" in Ufahamu, 3, 2 (1972), 65
- 90. "Postscripts; 2." 20
- 91. "Postscripts; 3." 21
- 92. "Postscripts; 4." 21
- 93. "Postscripts; 5." 21
- 94. "Postscripts; 6." 22 95. "A letter to Basil." 23
- 96. "Presumably." 24
- 97. "For Bernice." 25
- 98. "Blood River Day: for Daphne Edmondson." 26
- 99. "The impregnation of our air." 27
- 100. "Their behavior." 28
- 101. "It is a way of establishing one is real." 29
- 102. "Equipoise." 31
- 103. "One wishes for death." 32
- 104. "Prayer." 33
- 105. "Above us, only sky." 35
- 106. "Train journey." 37
- 107. "On the island; 1." 38
- 108. "On the island; 2." 38
- 109. "On the island; 3." 39
- 110. "On the island; 4." 39
- 111. "On the road." 40
- 112. "The companionship of bluegum trees." 42
- 113. "Steeling oneself to face the day." 43
- 114. "Nightsong: country." 44
- 115. "Abolish laughter first, I say." 45
- 116. "After the entertainment." 46
- 117. "No, I do not brim with sorrow." 47
- 118. "Cold." 48-49
- 119. "Let me say it." 50-52
- 120. "Our aims our dreams our destinations." 53-57

Zuka, 4 (December 1969)

121. "In memoriam: I.A.H." 54

Africa Today, 17, 2 (March-April 1970)

122. "Milkblue-tender the." 25

The Rag, 4, 23 (27 April 1970)

123. "What does one know?" 15

Labour Monthly (July 1970)

124. "South Africa Freedom Day." 313. Also published as "Today in prison" in Simple Lust, 109

Zuka, 5 (October 1970)

125. "The island." 27

Jewel of Africa, 3, 1/2, (1970)

126. "After Cleaver." 6

127. "UPM/Denver." 7

Poetry One (1970)

128. "Sherds." 30

129. "And the hours drag." 30

Thoughts Abroad / John Bruin. Del Valle, Texas: Troubador, 1970

[John Bruin, pseud.]

- 130. "When last I raged and revelled all your length." 3
- 131. "Light, green-yellow luminescent, tender." 4
- 132. "November sunlight silvers my grimy panes." 5
- 133. "Frys still sell chocolate." 6
- 134. "Black hills surround Belfast city." 7
- 135. "Shakespeare winged this way using other powers." 8
- 136. "Here." 9
- 137. "Blue pools of peace." 10
- 138. "Eight years in exile." 11
- 139. "Through the midnight streets of Teheran." 12
- 140. "Under the Fijian moon." 13
- 141. "Off to Philadelphia in the morning." 14
- 142. "I must lug my battered body." 15
- 143. "In the comparative calm of normalcy." 16
- 144. "...and I curl my lip." 17
- 145. "I am alien in Africa and everywhere." 18
- 146. "A tree, a stone." 19
- 147. "At an edge." 20
- 148. "I have a sense." 21
- 149. "At last the roses burn." 22
- 150. "The copper-beeches resume." 23
- 151. "It is hers, England's, seducing charms." 24
- 152. "Does the heart survive the death of love." 27
- 153. "I yearn towards the heaving earth." 28

Poems from Algiers / Dennis Brutus. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1970

- 154. "And I am driftwood." 5-9. Also published as "And I am driftwood on an Algerian shore" in Présence Africaine, 78 (1971), 180-81
- 155. "A wrong-headed bunch we may be." 10-11
- 156. "In the sunlight." 12
- 157. "A South African in Algiers: homesickness." 13
- 158. "I remember nights in the semi-dark." 14
- 159. "Only in the Casbah." 15
- 160. "Mystery, beauty, withdrawnness." 16
- 161. "My lusts will not let me rest." 17

Outposts, 88 (Spring 1971)

162. "Veiled women in Algeria." 10

Okike, 1, 2 (December 1971)

163. "And some men died." 36

Research in African Literatures, 2, 1 (Spring 1971)

164. "The year of the giant." 27

7 South African Poets: Poems of Exile / collected and selected by Cosmo Pieterse. London: Heinemann, 1971

From a set of fifteen poems included under the heading "Climates of love and continents"

- 165. "Miles of my arid earth." 16
- 166. "Greenness." 17
- 167. "By the waters of Babylon." 18
- 168. "The yellow gorse is out." 21
- 169. "I walk in the English quicksilver dusk." 22
- 170. "In the dove-grey dove-soft dusk." 23
- 171. "En route." 24
- 172. "They backed the truck." 25
- 173. "Over the thunder-heads of terror we may fly." 26
- 174. "At noon we were heeling northward." 27
- 175. "Being the mother of God." 29

Pan-Africanist, 4 (July 1972)

- 176. "In seventy-two." 24
- 177. "Drizzle, snowfall, leafdrift." 24

Other Voices, Other Places: An Anthology of 3rd World Poetry / ed. Cecil Rajendra. London: Christian Aid/British Council of Churches, Community Race Relations Unit, 1972

178. "Sorrow descends on me." 9

Ba Shiru, 5, 1 (1973)

179. "Sharpeville." 91

Ufahamu, 4, 2 (1973)

180. "For Frank Teruggi: killed in Chile: buried in Chicago." 16

Granite, 5 (Spring 1973)

- 181. "Landscape of my young world!" 63
- 182. "In the night, in my mind." 64
- 183. "As a ghost in the starlight: Suntzu: the art of war." 67. Also published as "Moving intangibly" in Echoes of the Sunbird: An Anthology of Contemporary African Poetry / compiled by Don Burness. Athens: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 1993, 48

A Simple Lust: Selected Poems Including Sirens, Knuckles, Boots; Letters to Martha; Poems from Algiers; Thoughts Abroad / Dennis Brutus. London: Heinemann, 1973

- 184. "Through your blue and lucent." 27
- 185. "The springs of the flesh flow slack." 38
- 186. "Crossing the English coast." 100
- 187. "I must conjure from my past." 107
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- 228. "Spell cold and ironic." 4
- 229. "The same to you." 5
- 230. "Go back." 5-6
- 231. "Exception." 6
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- 238. "I was wrong to feel." 5
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- 240. "I have learnt a new obscenity." 5

The Gar 27, 4, 3 (February 1975)

Poems included in article under the heading "Dennis Brutus talks of exile and commitment" / Hal Wylie

- 241. "When I think what I have done." 11
- 242. "And still one battles." 11
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- 244. "Briefly, I earned an undeserved esteem." 12
- 245. "And the leaves lie." 12
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- 248. "Speak to me of mushrooms." 24
- 249. "I dreamed I was a poet making words." 24
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- 252. "Under the shower." 25
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- 255. "It will not avail to stub out your cigarette." 25

Okike, 7 (April 1975)

- 256. "A comparative peace." 7
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- 274. "Over the Bridge of Golden Water." 42

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- 275. "On the roofs." 10
- 276. "Poplar." 14-15
- 277. "It is to preserve." 18
- 278. "Seeing the peaks." 19
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- 280. "Miles of corn." 21
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- 287. "No task." 29
- 288. "The barges clamorous on the river." 30
- 289. "Do all old men feel thus?" 31
- 290. "The lust of the eyes." 32
- 291. "I have commuted between the world's capitals." 33
- 292. "The mirror serves." 34
- 293. "Not in my hands." 36

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- 294. "It is the human form." 8
- 295. "Oh to shrug off this shabby garment of flesh." 12
- 296. "Words for music." 13
- 297. "Winged Pegasus stands transfixed." 14
- 298. "A mauve haze." 15
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- 300. "Montelimar, Marseilles and Nice." 18-19
- 301. "To those who persuade us." 21. Longer version published in Poets to the People: South African Freedom Poems / ed. Barry Feinberg. London: Heinemann, 1980, 9
- 302. "We shall all die in exile." 22
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- 316. "Sequence for South Africa." 31-32
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322. "Pray." 58-59. Also published in Lakeside, 1, 2 (1976), 19

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- 323. "There is no one here." 17
- 324. "Message to the oppressors in Zimbabwe." 17
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- 344. "If you can make blades of grass grow." 30

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- 345. "Words for farewell." 1
- 346. "Inscription for a copy of Road to Ghana by Alfred Hutchinson." 1-2
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517. "Nelson Mandela." 16

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- 527. "In my kitchen." 17
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552. "Yes, Mandela, some of us." 4. Also published as "February, 1990" in Still the Sirens, 24

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Key to Dennis Brutus' Collections

The following numbers refer to the poems that are published in collections written by Dennis Brutus.

Sirens, Knuckles, Boots (1963)

4, 6, 7, 9, 11-13, 18, 22, 24, 26-28, 30-48

Letters to Martha (1968)

25, 29, 50, 53, 62, 71-120

Thoughts Abroad (1970)

9, 20, 130-53

Poems from Algiers (1970)

123, 154-61

A Simple Lust (1973)

2, 4–7, 9, 11–13, 18, 20, 22, 24–48, 50, 53, 61–62, 64–65, 70–120, 122, 124, 129-43, 145-47, 149, 151, 153-54, 156, 159, 163, 165, 169-70, 173, 181-82,

China Poems (1975)

268-93

Strains (1975)

23, 49, 57, 59–60, 164, 179–80, 183, 220–27, 240–43, 247, 261, 294–315

Stubborn Hope (1978)

21, 23, 56, 121, 128, 164, 179–80, 183, 209, 218–19, 224–25 243, 256, 258, 263-64, 268-69, 271, 273-76, 278, 281, 283-84, 288-93, 299, 303, 307-10, 312, 316-20, 339, 345-474

Salutes and Censures (1984)

322, 327, 338, 340-43, 477-78, 480, 488, 490, 493-98, 502-12

Airs and Tributes (1989)

524-25, 527, 529-30, 532, 538-48

Still the Sirens (1993)

526, 528, 533-34, 537, 552, 560, 563, 565-92

Dennis Brutus' Published Collections

Airs and Tributes. Ed. Gil Ott; introduction by Samuel Allen. Camden: Whirlwind Press, 1989.

China Poems. Translated into Chinese by Ko Ching Po. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1975.

Letters to Martha: And Other Poems from a South African Prison. London: Heinemann, 1968.

Poems from Algiers. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1970.

Salutes and Censures. Enugu, Nigeria: Fourth Dimension, 1984.

A Simple Lust: Selected Poems Including "Sirens, Knuckles, Boots," "Letters to Martha," "Poems from Algiers," "Thoughts Abroad." London: Heinemann, 1973.

Sirens, Knuckles, Boots: Poems. Ibadan, Nigeria: Mbari, 1963.

Still the Sirens. Santa Fe: Pennywhistle, 1993.

Strains. Ed. Wayne Kamin and Chip Dameron. Austin: Troubador, 1975.

Stubborn Hope: New Poems and Selections from "China Poems" and "Strains." London: Heinemann, 1978.

[John Bruin, pseud.] Thoughts Abroad. Del Valle, Texas: Troubador, 1970.

Notes on Further Study of Dennis Brutus' Poetry

Dennis Brutus has been widely published internationally, so there are a substantial number of citations and articles on his poetry and reviews of his collections. Most published bibliographies and online sources on African literature contain listings for Dennis Brutus. A good example is Bernth Lindfors' six-volume series Black African Literature in English. In addition to listing Brutus' citations in general and thematic studies on African literature (including other bibliographies), this work provides listings of biographical and critical articles on Brutus and his work (including interviews), as well as literary articles written by him. The following volumes comprise this series:

Black African literature in English: A guide to information sources / Bernth Lindfors. Detroit, Michigan: Gale Research, 1979

Black African literature in English, 1977–1981 supplement / Bernth Lindfors. New York: Africana, 1986

Black African Literature in English, 1982–1986 / Bernth Lindfors.

London: Hans Zell, 1989

Black African literature in English, 1987–1991 / Bernth Lindfors.

London: Hans Zell, 1995

Black African literature in English, 1992–1996 / Bernth Lindfors.

London: Hans Zell, 2000

Black African literature in English 1997–1999 / Bernth Lindfors. Oxford: Hans

Zell, 2003

Critical Perspectives on Dennis Brutus (see compiler's introduction), contains more specific information on Dennis Brutus. In addition to numerous critical essays and a very useful biographical essay, this book contains an extensive bibliography of Brutus' publications, his collections, poems published in journals and anthologies, as well as his literary criticism, essays, articles, and interviews. This is followed by a long list of biographical and critical articles on Brutus, as well as reviews and a guide to his manuscript collections.

Andrew Martin



The National English Literary Museum

The National English Literary Museum (NELM) in Grahamstown, South Africa, was founded in the early 1970s by Professor Guy Butler and the Institute for the Study of English in Africa at Rhodes University. In 1980 it became a government-funded Declared Cultural Institution. NELM collects all genres of creative writing—novels, poems, short stories, and plays—as well as autobiographies and essays, in English by writers of southern African origin. The library also holds a vast quantity of the critical apparatus necessary for scholarly research into southern African literature. The central role of NELM is to afford access to the texts and material held in the collections. In order to do this, every item is captured in a database, curated, and preserved for future use.

The library has over 19,000 different titles, apart from numerous journals and thousands of analytical articles. Almost every item is indexed; there are more than 178,000 entries in the electronic databases. The vast and unique press clippings collection has a wealth of information on the full range of upto-the-minute literary activities in southern Africa. There are files on well over 5,000 different authors, as well as a large collection of authors' manuscripts, playscripts (many unpublished), proofs, diaries, correspondence, publishers' contracts, photographs, ephemera, posters, theater programs, and audio-visual materials. The holdings on South African drama are particularly impressive. Further details on all of these collections can be obtained from NELM. (http://www.ru.ac.za/affiliates/nelm/)

NELM serves as an important information center, with research staff to assist with any queries on southern African literature in English; responses are sent via mail, telephone, fax or email. In many instances printouts are also supplied from the library databases. The library is also able to accommodate visiting researchers by offering space in which to work, access to the collections, and the willing assistance of staff. NELM staff provides education programs for schools, gives lectures, and prepares and mounts exhibitions for conferences, literary events, and book launches.

In addition to holding copies of each item in this bibliography, the library also holds a large number of Dennis Brutus' other publications—articles, reviews, literary criticism, autobiographical writings, and essays. It has several files of press clippings under the headings: works by Dennis Brutus, biographical articles, reviews, and interviews. The library also has extensive manuscript holdings, including several files of unpublished poems, papers relating to his last three collections—Salutes and Censures, Airs and Tributes, and Still the Sirens—as well as papers and correspondence relating to his activism in politics and sports, and audio-visual material.

Direct queries about Dennis Brutus or other writers or aspects of southern African Literature to:

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Dennis Brutus

Dennis Brutus was born in Southern Rhodesia in 1924, and moved to South Africa with his family at an early age. He was schooled in Port Elizabeth and attended Fort Hare, after which he taught at schools in Port Elizabeth. It was during this time that Dennis Brutus' political activism began, in opposition to apartheid and, in particular, to the refusal of the government to allow black athletes to represent South Africa internationally. As a founder and secretary of the South African Sports Association (SASA) from 1958, and later as founding chairman of the South African Non-Racial Olympic Committee (SANROC), in 1963, he was instrumental in securing South Africa's expulsion from the Olympic games and other international sporting events. Brutus' activities resulted in his being banned by the South African government and prohibited from being published or even quoted. This prompted a move to Johannesburg to study law at University of the Witwatersrand. After an attempt to leave South Africa, Brutus was arrested and then shot by South African police in an escape attempt. He was sentenced to eighteen months of hard labor on Robben Island. After his release in 1965, Brutus was placed under house arrest until 1966, when he was granted an exit permit to leave South Africa. He and his family moved to Britain, where Brutus served as a director of the World Campaign for the Release of Political Prisoners and worked for the International Defense and Aid Fund.

Brutus moved to the United States in 1970 to take up a visiting professorship at the University of Denver. Since 1971 he has taught at several universities, including Northwestern University and, more recently, the University of Pittsburgh. He has received numerous literary and humanitarian awards and accolades including the Mbari Prize for Poetry (1963), and the First Annual Paul Robeson Award for Excellence, Political Consciousness, and Integrity (1989). Brutus was inducted into the National Hall of Fame for Writers of African Descent by the Gwendolyn Brooks Center at Chicago State University in 2004. Brutus, now eighty, remains a fearless fighter against injustice and inequality—particularly world poverty, Third World debt, and globalization. As a poet, he has published several volumes of poetry, and his poems have been published in a wide range of journals, newspapers, and anthologies. His latest collection is Remembering Soweto 1976 (Whirlwind Press, 2004), and another, Leafdrift (Whirlwind Press), is forthcoming.

Bernth Lindfors

Bernth Lindors is a Professor Emeritus of English and African Literatures at the University of Texas at Austin. Lindfors is a literary scholar and critic, editor, bibliographer, and author. Born in northern Sweden, Lindfors and his family moved to the United States, where he attended Oberlin College and then Harvard University for a master's degree in teaching, and Northwestern University for his degree in English. Lindfors moved to East Africa where he taught English, history, and geography. He accepted a faculty position at the University of Texas at Austin in 1969 and subsequently created and edited a journal, Research in African Literatures, that continues to be one of the premier journals in its field. Lindfors has written and edited several books on Anglophone African literature and has received two honorary doctorates and multiple awards.







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