

- Uitenhage - Cradock - Great Brakke - Swartbaai - Alexandria - Graaff-Reinet - Uitenhage - Cradock - Graaff-Reinet



F R A N K M E I N T J I E S

Day of reckoning

spurred
by the piercing cries
of our children
we flood the streets
with songs and colours
of resistance
and liberation

but they cut us down with bullets
as the fingers
of our blood
clutched the earth
in tragic embrace
they beat their breasts
in hollow victory

but when our anger
bursts its banks
and our wrath
pours forth like summer rain
and when they see their powers
and their pleasures
prostrate
in the ashes of our vengeance
and the mothers
and the children
and the workers
call them to account

what will they do then?

Ullennaga
Ullennaga
the power
and pain
of your outburst
rips through the word
of timeless time
Kwanonina
nestling
in the hungry belly
of the eastern Cape
oozing
rivers of human blood
hippo-killed
shotgun-wained
army-trampled
Kwanonina
capital's wasteland
soarbird's killing-field
as ever
you have outlived
the slave-master's wrath
brutal and cold-blooded
sinewed fists
rise out of the open grave
clamber from the grieving heart
beriding
the closing stages
the final blood-struggle
before freedom dawns

of said
county
with



of said
county
with

Unemployment

here I sit
with my back against the tea-room wall
the hours shuffle past
it's been months now

'try at Rex Trueform'
'try at Doorman Long'
my girl-friend says

but everywhere
the SORRYS
the NO VACANCIES

'sorry'
my girl-friend says
and forks out a coupla silvers
for skyfs and perhaps a zol

here with my back against the cafe wall
and my pride buried
I think and think
and I hear my teacher's voice
'education is the key'
then the dagga mocks and asks
'but where's the door?'

the hours pass
it's been months now
I get up later every day
I beg - to keep myself in skyfs
sometimes I grab an apple
when the shop-keeper's back is turned

the decent people
the victims of my begging
walk past and skinner:
shame, that's aunty Florrie's son
he's really become a skollie, hey



The ragged ones

Beside the fatted bins
the ragged ones
stake out
the well to do
the seasoned dirtmakers
pass by
not too party-drunk
to stare
muted annoyance

The ragged ones
shrug
lethargic eyes
trace
patent-leather shoes
clip-clattering
the beat fades out
into smothered stillness

Stalling in your truck
before taking the newspapers
to townships and suburbs
hearts and minds
to vulnerable
to untold news
and twisted truths

The red light
meets your eye
Your mind fast-forwards
to coming days
of struggle
of determined worker action

Leads to living
under the hand of domination
has died
colour-sharp sight
sustained sharp thoughts

The orange light stares
fast forward -
the family warmth
the rented house
the shadows of debt
the jobless youth

A contrast passes
you lean out of the window
about 'essential'
The reply, cheerfully
'one day workers will be free'
you agree
Mr. B.



Since June 1976

since June '76
how many Sowetos
perpetrated across this land
uitenhage, ngoye, cradock, guguletu, mamelodi, alexandra ...
how many triggers pulled
how many barrels burned
dispensing the full horror of their domination

black corpses lay single file
from here to Cairo and back
a chain of human sorrows
a churning river of pain

still the maqabanes advance
they say: freedom, where are you
in this land
where reason dies, is killed, is eliminated
where the sun is strangled?

they say: this decade of defiance
shall not be infertile

litres of blood
streams of sweat
manure this field

yes
this decade of defiance
has yielded
lush
resistance



eGoli

it was a vrek cold winter
in the jaws of a depression
and I was in eGoli to see you

I searched for
the contours of your face
on gaudy neon lights
and monstrous bill-boards
in thronging streets
and deserted alleys
pulsating with pent-up silence
but you were nowhere

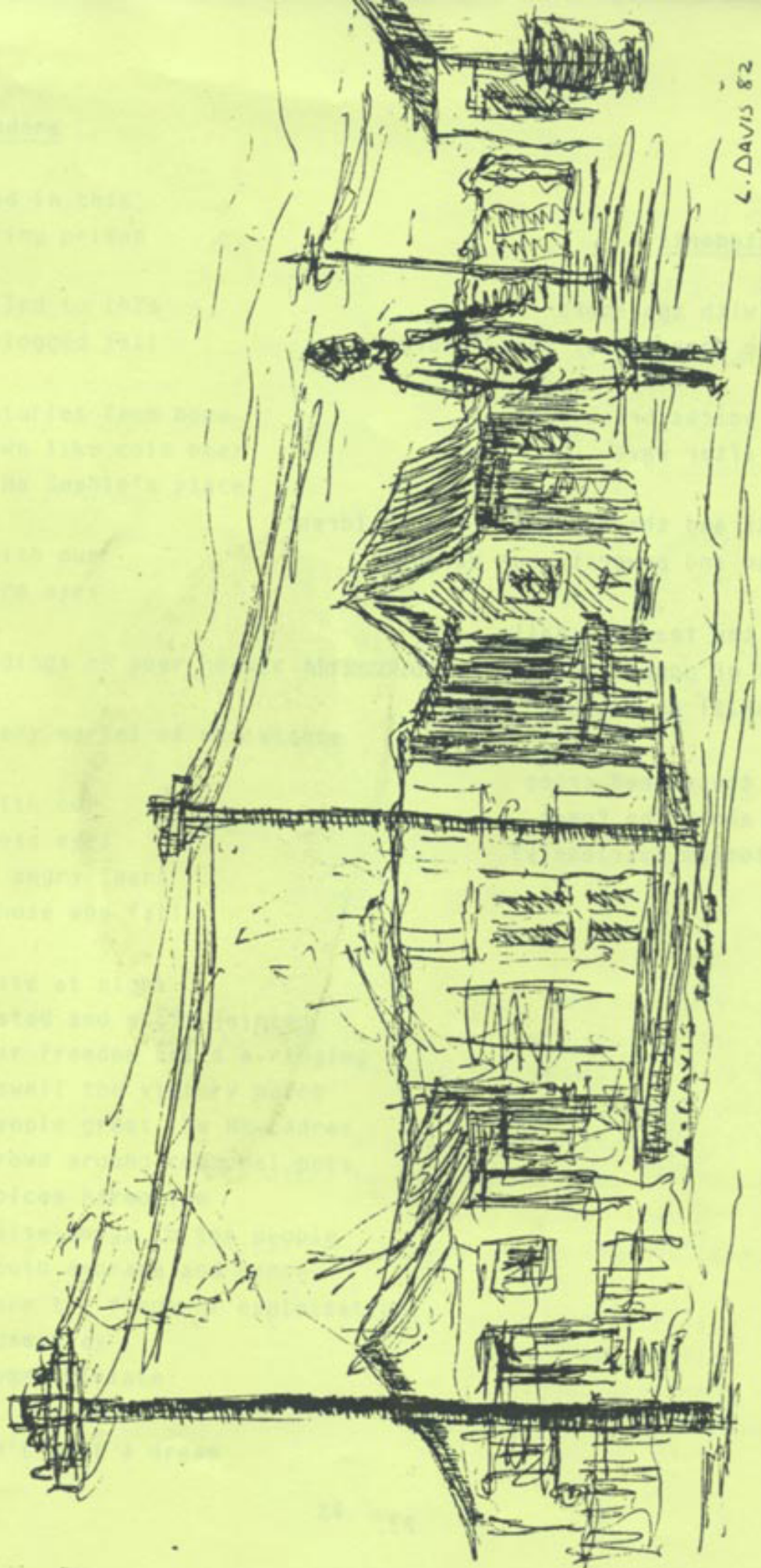
acid songs spewed from late-nite clubs
discordant tunes, tortured voices
the soul-sad prophets of a blissful chaos

hordes of iron-faced workers
pour from graffiti-stained subways
demarcate another fragile day

somewhere, they tell me, a workers' strike
is brewing
somewhere, headlines say, a township mayor
mourns a fire-gutted house
and today, in court, they say
an MK-bomber will know his fate

This is Johannesburg
bursting with gold
- and contradictions

it's cold
and I wanted to talk
I wanted to stand before your fire-place



L. DAVIS 82