

Lebohang Masango
30 June 2021
South African Reserve Bank Centenary
Poem: A Purposeful Journey

A Purposeful Journey
By Lebohang Masango

The diminishing darkness of dawn dances about our feet
We, who wake the sun for the new day
We, mothers who boil kettles for family's bathwater
We, fathers who carry precious cargo in buses, taxis and trains,
We, children who pack school bags by candlelight
We, greet each morning before it even begins

With these feet we tramp, trudge, tread and trek
The span of this savannah-covered land
We journey; purposeful, powerful
Onwards, with a perseverance that has never been more grand
Our bodies crouch forwards, breath humming the hymn of this nation
We set to work: sell fruit, clean buildings, cut grass, teach, heal and serve

We set to work
So that our economy and futures rightfully expand
100 years on from segregation to **this** celebration
Each of you in this room, forge the foundation
Upon which the South African dream can proudly stand

Out of the fire and brimstone of a hellish history
When Suid Afrika dared to think it could achieve self-definition
While denying millions of their humanity
This bank dealt in gender inequality;
barring women from senior positions and higher salaries
Fulfilling the mandate of the few at the expense of so many
Time tumbled and turned until
This great institution dedicated itself to a dream
with Mandela's trust for reform taking the lead

The future demanded much more in inclusivity and diversity
So, equality and change became the new currency
The year was 1994:
You danced us out from the darkness into a democratic dawn
As memorialised on Lady Skollie & Neo Mahlangu's collectible coins
We greeted the morning,
In trains, taxis, buses, and by foot
Coins and bank notes passed from hand-to-hand
On our journey to the voting polls, we exchanged our Rands
We touched, laughed and cried as
We waited; waited and weaved threads of a dream
We were hope, determination, resilience and relief
Banking on our human rights and Constitution's creed
Denied in this institution for 73 years too many
Its doors now open to *all* on Helen Joseph street

Come in and hear these great names
Echo through the corridors of history:
Chris Stals, we salute you
Tito Mboweni, we salute you
Gill Marcus, we salute you
Lesetja Kganyago, we salute you
And Nelson Mandela, we remember you

Because we reached for the rainbow
Reached for the sky on this journey,
with gold gilded beneath our feet
And the sun golden on our land
Our hearts strong as diamonds
To the next 100 years
We journey, hand-in-hand
You. Me. We, the people.

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Through power. Through purpose.
Through change. Through freedom.