

IV. Celebration Head 2003

On his face two mouths
 Both in rage
Or anguish, angled to the side,
 Teeth bared.

His head is a fog
 Distinguished
By the threat of trained dogs
By the number 7867
 Half of him has that wish to
 Relinquish
Even his defining features to
 Extinguish
The blaze of the past, the forced removals
 From District Six.

Names recited like litanies in the dark:
Robben Island, Transvaal,
 Nelson Mandela, Steve Biko,
 Pondoland, Oliver Tambo
Ruth First, Joe Slovo, Sharpeville...
 Walter Sisulu...
On his face, the fierce times, the fear of weapons
 brandished
 the past stamped on all tomorrows,
the death counts in all
 celebrated sorrow.