UPON BEING BANNED

by

DON MATTERA

There are words
within the recesses of my troubled being
but they are not poems
not all the flowers, grass
nor singing trees can move my pen

Not even the hues of the setting sun
now move the soul in me
there is no poetry inside
but a dry froth of bile
on the lips of a volcano

How can I sing
when the white vultures
rip my tongue
Except by walking in the woods
How can one tell it is Spring

There is no poetry
in being cheated out of one's land
no ryme in shackles
no merriment in misery
How can a Black man sing of Bondage...

DON MATTERA is a Black South African poet and journalist banned (as of November 1973) for five years.