

Remembering unique Eritrean in contemporary history

A short biographical sketch
Of
Dr. Reesom Haile



Compiled and edited

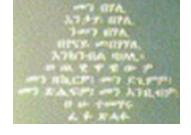
By

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Table of content

Early life and personal data	
Eritrea's Poet Laureate	
Dr. Reesom Haile: prophet of the global village The Asmara Declaration on African Languages and Literatures	
Scholar and poet: Eritrea's pride	
Dr. Reesom Haile's resources page	
Modern Poetry in Translation	
Collection of poems by Dr. Reesom Haile from the internet A few of the more than 2000 poems	
"Reesom Haile's Poetry" by Charles Cantalupo Words of appreciation from readers	
End of life Tribute in a poetic farewell	

Early life and personal data

Dr. Reesom Haile was born in 1946 in Eritrea and died in 2003. Regarded as *Eritrea's poet laureate*, he returned to his native country of Eritrea in 1994 after a twenty-year exile.

Reesom Haile is from a family of traditional farmers in Eritrea, where he was born, raised and educated through high school. After working as a radio and television journalist in Ethiopia, he continued his education in the United States. Obtaining a doctorate in Media Ecology from New York University, he served for twenty years as a Development Communications consultant, working with UN Agencies, governments and NGOs around the world before returning to Eritrea in 1994. Since then, he has written over two thousand poems in Tigrinya. His first collection, **waza ms qumneger ntnsae hager** won the 1998 Raimok prize, Eritrea's highest award for literature. His first collection in English was **We Have Our Voice** (Red Sea Press, 2000), also recorded as a two-volume, bilingual CD (asmarino.com, 2001). His second collection was **We Invented the Wheel** (Red Sea Press, 2002). Widely published and recognized for his revolutionary modernization of the traditional art of poetry in Tigrinya, one of Eritrea's main languages.

Reesom Haile has begun to receive scholarly and critical attention and wide media coverage, including BBC (UK), CNN (USA), Deutsche Welle (Germany), RAI (Italy), dmtsi Hafash (Eritrea) Radio Vatican (The Vatican), NPR (USA), SABC (South Africa), SBS (Australia) and VOA (USA). His performances in Tigrinya and English have inspired audiences throughout Africa, Europe and America. The enormous popular appeal of his poetry - in print and on the internet - is evident from the streets of Asmara to the far fields of the Eritrean countryside, where to stroll with Reesom Haile at any hour is to be approached by the young and old and all kinds of people who are delighted to quote his lines back to him.

Eritrea's Poet Laureate

Reesom Haile: the Lively Voice of Eritrea / la Voz Vivaz de Eritrea. Reesom Haile writes in Tigrinya. It is a Semitic language and, like the languages of Tigre and Amharic, derives from the ancient language of Ge'ez. It derives, like Hebrew and Arabic, from Aramaic, which is often thought to have been a language - along with Greek and Hebrew - of the original composition of much of the Old and New Testament and of Jesus.

The word "Ge'ez" also refers to the script of Reesom Haile's poems. It is Africa's most ancient and continuous, a 5000-year-old written language. It can be found, for example, on a stele in central Eritrea near the Ethiopian border. This stele was pulled down and run over by tanks, grinding it to pieces during the war between Eritrea and Ethiopia in 2000.

Dr. Reesom Haile: prophet of the global village

The Asmara Declaration on African Languages and Literatures

Writing in Tigrinya, Reesom Haile joined a growing movement of African authors who are now writing in African languages: their own mother tongues instead of colonial languages like English and French or, in the case of Eritrean writers, Italian and even Amharic, a major language of Ethiopia imposed on Eritrea before it won its war for independence in 1991. This rise of African vernaculars, paralleling the rise of truly independent and democratic African nations, promises a 21st century that will be an African century for literature.

This rise of African vernaculars, paralleling the rise of truly independent and democratic African nations, promises a twenty-first century that will be the African century for literature. For Reesom Haile, writing in Tigrinya is to go "back to what God has given you and saying 'I'm not going to give it up.' It's your freedom...your speech...your self definition...your self expression and you cannot give it up." With thousands of African languages dating back -- orally and in written form -- over the course of millennia, an unimaginably rich resource is about to be tapped by African writers and for Africans themselves, yet to be globally shared.

"The poet Reesom Haile talks of the arrival of a new generation knowing many languages. This new generation accepts the reality of an Africa of many languages and is determined to create a shared legacy in them. Dialogue between African languages is vital. But so is that between African and non-African languages. This collaboration between Reesom Haile and Charles Cantalupo shows one way in which that beautiful legacy can be shared."

Ngugi wa Thiong'o

"Reesom Haile's spare poetic line carries the weight of incisive image, narrative clarity, irony plus a droll humor that speaks ever after you finished reading".

Amiri Baraka

The Asmara Declaration on African Languages and Literatures :

We writers and scholars from all regions of Africa gathered in Asmara, Eritrea from January 11 to 17, 2000 at the conference titled Against All Odds: African Languages and Literatures into the 21st Century. This is the first conference on African languages and literatures ever to be held on African soil, with participants from East, West, North, Southern Africa and from the diaspora and by writers and scholars from around the world. We examined the state of African languages in literature,

scholarship, publishing, education and administration in Africa and throughout the world. We celebrated the vitality of African languages and literatures and affirmed their potential. We noted with pride that despite all the odds against them, African languages as vehicles of communication and knowledge survive and have a written continuity of thousands of years. Colonialism and neocolonialism created some of the most serious obstacles against African languages and literatures. We noted with concern the fact that these obstacles still haunt Africa and continue to block the mind of the continent. We identified a profound incongruity in colonial languages speaking for the continent. At the start of a new century and millennium, Africa must firmly reject this incongruity and affirm a new beginning by returning to its languages and heritage. Therefore, the question of culture, literatures and languages cannot be separated from the economic problems of African countries created by colonial and neocolonial forces and their local allies. Decolonization of the African mind should go hand in hand with decolonization of the economy and politics.

At this historic conference, we writers and scholars from all regions of Africa gathered in Asmara, Eritrea declare that:

1. African languages must take on the duty, the responsibility and the challenge of speaking for the continent.
2. The vitality and equality of African languages must be recognized as a basis for the future empowerment of African peoples.
3. The diversity of African languages reflects the rich cultural heritage of Africa and must be used as an instrument of African unity.
4. Dialogue among African languages is essential: African languages must use the instrument of translation to advance communication among all people, including the disabled.
5. All African children have the unalienable right to attend school and learn in their mother tongues. Every effort should be made to develop African languages at all levels of education.
6. Promoting research on African languages is vital for their development, while the advancement of African research and documentation will be best served by the use of African languages.
7. The effective and rapid development of science and technology in Africa depends on the use of African languages and modern technology must be used for the development of African languages.
8. Democracy is essential for the equal development of African languages and African languages are vital for the development of democracy based on equality and social justice.
9. African languages like all languages contain gender bias. The role of African languages in development must overcome this gender bias and achieve gender equality.
10. African languages are essential for the decolonization of African minds and for the African Renaissance.

The initiative which has materialized in the Against All Odds conference must be continued through biennial conferences in different parts of Africa. In order to organize future conferences in different parts of Africa, create a forum of dialogue and cooperation and advance the principles of this declaration, a permanent Secretariat will be established, which will be initially based in Asmara, Eritrea.

Translated into as many African languages as possible and based on these principles, the Asmara Declaration is affirmed by all participants in Against All Odds. We call upon all African states, the OAU, the UN and all international organizations that serve Africa to join this effort of recognition and support for African languages, with this declaration as a basis for new policies.

While we acknowledge with pride the retention of African languages in some parts of Africa and the diaspora and the role of African languages in the formation of new languages, we urge all people in Africa and the diaspora to join in the spirit of this declaration and become part of the efforts to realize its goals.

Asmara, 17th of January 2000

Scholar and poet: Eritrea's pride

Poet and scholar, **Reesom Haile** is the Eritrean author of *Waza Ms Qumneger Ntensae Nager* ("Tragicomedies for Resurrecting a Nation"), winner of the 1998 Raimok prize, Eritrea's highest award for literature. He is widely recognized for his revolutionary modernization of poetry in Tigrinya, one of Eritrea's main languages.



Dr. Reesom Haile in his national costume

Much of Dr. Reesom Haile's poetry tackles Eritrea's century-long struggle for independence, and its fight to retain its culture and ancient traditions in the face of modern manifestation and transformation. His voice is one of resistance and the courage to ask questions, through which, as Cantalupo so eloquently says: a local language and its poetry become the means of survival. His bilingual performances Tigrinya and English have inspired audiences throughout Africa, Europe and America and he's received kudos from sources as diverse as the BBC, CNN and The Vatican Radio!

He is widely recognized for his revolutionary modernization of the traditional art of poetry in Tigrinya, one of Eritrea's main languages. *We Have Our Voice* is the first bilingual collection of his poetry. Its enormous popular appeal -- in print and on the internet -- spills into the streets of Asmara, where to stroll with Reesom Haile at any hour is to be approached by the young and old and all kinds of people who are delighted to quote his lines back to him. Reesom Haile explains the phenomenon this way:

Our poetry is not something that has left our tongue and lived in the books for a very long time. Our poetry is participatory. When I recite my poetry at home, the people listening to me will say, "add this to that, add this to that." It is participatory. It's not something that we put on the wall and say "Oh, this is pretty." Our traditional poetry form is ad hoc. Someone will just get up and say something to try to capture the spirit of that particular time. And people will add, "why don't you say so, why don't you add this, why don't you extend it." It is very much part of the tradition. I am putting it on paper because I think it is about time we start storing it for the next generation.

Thus a poet, almost by necessity an individualist, can also be a voice of the people and a kind of nationalist, albeit spontaneously through the construction of a parallel between tradition and change: in John Coltrane's words, "a force for real good." It illuminates within *We Have Our Voice*, only a small selection of Reesom Haile's work, a wide variety of topics, including gender equality, colonialism, foreign aid, the use of knowledge, bureaucracy, history, crime, priests, travel, daughters and sons, sisters and brothers, camels, books, education, homecomings, exile, money, computers, braggarts, religion, political leadership, hopes, delusions, bravery, civic responsibility, stars, God, illiteracy, ambition, divisiveness, survival, Satan, democracy, old friends, mothers and fathers, cities, small towns, cruelty, soccer, intolerance, impulsiveness, love, language, nightlife, freedom, writing, indecision, non-governmental agencies, learning, sex and super powers, and often humorously.



The gallant poet Dr. Reesom Haile making a point

Dr. Reesom Haile's resources page

REESOM HAILE RESOURCES PAGE

Reesom Haile's Tigrinya Page

This site is in the Tigrinya language. It requires no special software to read, but it does require knowledge of the Tigrinya language. Those who don't read Tigrinya will still benefit from the audio file of Reesom Haile reading.

Africa World Press - Red Sea Press

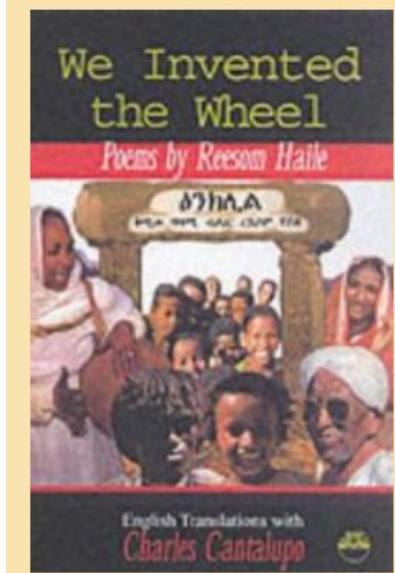
Publisher of the bilingual edition of Reesom Haile's *We Have Our Voice*. You can order copies from this site, and can check out the excellent list of other available titles.

We Have Our Voice

CD recording of Reesom Haile reading. Includes audio clips.

Asmara Declaration on African Languages

Text of major interest in the history of Africa and linguistics - and a milestone in both the struggle for de-colonialization and the use of indigenous languages. This declaration came from the "Against All Odds" Conference held in Asmara, Eritrea, in January of the year 2000. So far it has been translated into 16 languages, and more translations are in the works.



WE INVENTED THE WHEEL

by Reesom Haile

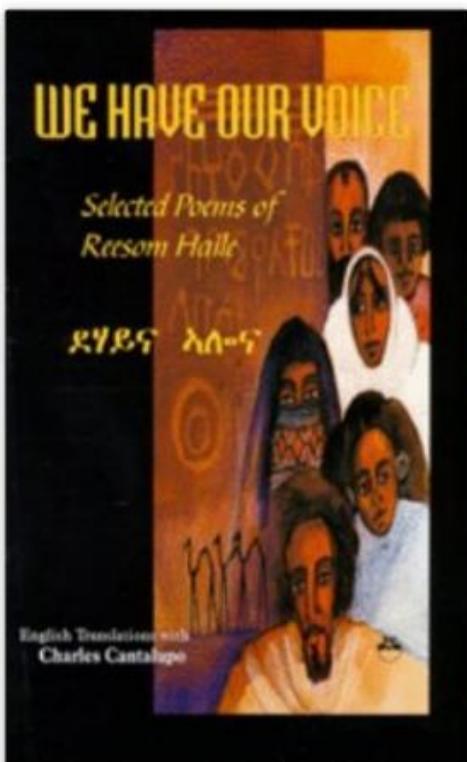
Translated by Charles Cantalupo

This is the second bilingual collection of the poetry of the contemporary Eritrean poet, Reesom Haile. It follows an earlier anthology, *We Have our Voice*, which was published in 2000. Haile is widely recognized for his revolutionary modernization of the traditional art of poetry in Tigrinya, one of Eritrea's main languages. The enormous popular appeal of his poetry—in print and on the Internet—has spilled into the streets of Asmara, where to stroll with Reesom Haile at any hour of the day is to be approached by the young and old—and people who are delighted to quote his lines back to him. Writing in Tigrinya, he joins a growing movement of African authors who are writing in their own languages.

Dr. Reesom Haile's first collection in English—"We Have our Voice" (Red Sea Press, 2000), was also recorded as a bilingual CD. His second anthology "We invented the Wheel" (Red Sea Press, 2002) was published and acclaimed for modernizing the traditional art of poetry in Tigrinya.

From the Back Cover

"Reesom Haile's spare poetic line carries the weight of incisive image, narrative clarity, irony plus a droll humor that speaks even after you finished reading." -Amiri Baraka "The poet talks of the arrival of a next generation knowing many languages. This new generation accepts the reality of an Africa of many languages and is determined to create a shared legacy in them. Dialogue between African languages is vital. But so is that between African languages and non-African languages. This collaboration between Reesom Haile and Charles Cantalupo shows one way in which that beautiful legacy can be shared."



Preface to *We Have Our Voice*,
by Charles Cantalupo

A bilingual edition of selected poetry by Reesom Haile with Charles Cantalupo, Africa World Press / Red Sea Press

We Have Our Voice is the first bilingual collection of the poetry of the contemporary Eritrean poet, Reesom Haile. Widely recognized for his revolutionary modernization of the traditional art of poetry in Tigrinya, one of Eritrea's main languages, he joins a growing movement of African authors who are writing in their own African languages. This rise of African vernaculars, paralleling the rise of truly independent and democratic African nations, promises a 21st century that will be the African century for literature.

I first encountered Reesom Haile in Asmara, one evening during Eritrea's annual, outdoor, 8-day cultural festival in Asmara: a highly popular event, thronged with people from Asmara and from throughout Eritrea and featuring all of the arts -- agricultural, domestic, industrial, language, performing, technological, visual. Taking place in the extensive fairgrounds called "Expo," the festival's theme was "Inheritance." It encouraged Eritreans from all walks of life to taste and see their new nation through the many forms of its longstanding and highly valued multicultural and multimedia expression. Be it a poem, a computer program, a painting, an ancient manuscript, a display of tools, a dance, desert housing, a popular song, a camel, a coffee, a textile or a pile of particular wood to make a fire, people could look all around them at a wealth of highly varied examples of their culture, including each other, and marvel, "We have...we have...we have."

I was following the crowd to a poetry reading. The area where it took place seemed to be shaped like a basin, with children -- whom I didn't expect to see at such an event -- seated in the middle, the poet and the audience at opposite edges. Actually, the arrangement was just a platform with a podium and the audience gathered in a flat place in front of it -- but my initial misimpression was telling.

Amiri Baraka, the poet of my home soil, Newark, New Jersey, has written that...." The arts are not peripheral to human development but at the center of it....They are education, information, inspiration and economic development, if someone would but recognize it....It's up to us, the artists, to take up the challenge and not leave it.... [A]rt is to raise the people, the artists must take it upon themselves".

The Expo festival put "the arts...at the center" in a way that I had never realized -- because it included so many different kinds of arts and people -- and never experienced before. However, when Reesom Haile read his poems, I saw "Art...raise the people" again as I had never witnessed. The audience and the reading space seemed physically raised up to be even with the poet speaking his lines. The children in the middle were joining Reesom Haile in his lines, anticipating and echoing them, with great pleasure, too, especially

when he spoke the poem, "Alowuna, Alowana," "We Have." It swept through the crowd and it was sweeping the entire nation and its diaspora with the verbal music of Tigrinya affirmation:

"Rejoice." I say it again when poetry can become a kind of daily bread or currency for all kinds of people -- writers, children, artists, young professionals, working people, the elderly, government people -- and create a rapport and a give and take among all, including the poet. This is a work of high value.

As for the English versions of Reesom Haile's poems, they are basically the products of an email collaboration between the author and Charles Cantalupo. Though they have met, become friends and both share experiences in each other's native places and cultures. Most generously, Reesom would email Charles a poem's literal translation and he would return it to him in the form of an English poem based on his original translation's sense and its appearance in Tigrinya. In *Waza Ms Qumneger Ntensae Hager*, the poem book had most of the poems already been published. In the book Charles also took into account how the poems sounded on an audio cassette of Reesom Haile reciting his lines. When necessary, he would graciously send back additional literal versions of his lines to indicate what the English version was still missing, and thus together they would try again to *join* -- which is the Tigrinya concept for the act of poetry, different from the European identification of poetry with the process of *making* -- the two languages in the common effort of poetry. Of course, Charles can only reproduce some of the many levels of meaning and association that a Reesom poem offers to anyone who hears or reads it in the Tigrinya original. While speakers of Tigrinya and English know what the English versions continue to miss, Charles's poetic faith is that more is gained than lost in the translation process.

A second constant in Reesom Haile's poetry is his music, in Tigrinya, of course, but also in the sense of the translations of his poems into English. Charles Cantalupo could only try to reproduce this sense and not the Tigrinya sound in English, which has its own music. Great poetry, however, should always carry with it, in its original language or translation, a universal music. It is our inheritance and poetry's source, as Reesom Haile also attests in reflecting on his own poetic beginnings:

It starts with z-ezm! ebum! b-ebum! -- which is our drum, our expression of happiness. That is all the struggle is about: that finally we can be happy. I start when Charles go back to the sound of z-ezm! ebum! -- to the...everyday songs....then the words start flowing in.

Light and Dust Mobile Anthology of Poetry.

Publication Date: June 2002

Book Description

This is the second bilingual collection of the poetry of the contemporary Eritrean poet, Reesom Haile. It follows an earlier anthology, *We Have our Voice*, which was published in 2000. Haile is widely recognized for his revolutionary modernization of the traditional art of poetry in Tigrinya, one of Eritrea's main languages. The enormous popular appeal of his poetry—in print and on the Internet—has spilled into the streets of Asmara, where to stroll with Reesom Haile at any hour of the day is to be approached by the young and old—and people who are delighted to quote his lines back to him. Writing in Tigrinya, he joins a growing movement of African authors who are writing in their own languages.

Charles Cantalupo works directly with Reesom Haile to offer versions of Haile's work which attempts to join two languages and two traditions in a common effort of poetry that is modern yet classical, epigrammatic, and enduring.

Reesom Haile: Prophet of the Global Village

Essay by Karl Young

When Herbert Marshal McCluhan penned his famous one-liner about the "world becoming a global village," over 30 years ago, he apparently had several things in mind. Prominent among them were the stereotypes of African society that run through his writing, based largely on photos from National Geographic magazine, Tarzan movies, and the reports of a few superficial anthropologists. The phrase has entered current usage over time, and perhaps it can accurately, and uncannily, describe phenomena that McCluhan could not have predicted, and perhaps could not have understood. If the world IS becoming a global village, it is doing so through odd and unpredictable alliances of the technologies of super corporations and the art forms of micro-cultures. It does so in part by the efforts of hearty "explorers" and "anthropologists" who come from African

communities to earn a living in the strange and alien cities of North America and Europe, Somet work in esoteric fields such as computer programming and bio-engineering. Then they bring lessons -- often lessons in what NOT to do -- back to their own homes.

Rock 'n' roll has become, for better or worse, the first universal art form. It was largely the invention of African communities along the Mississippi River and the African towns within such cities as Atlanta, Kansas City, Chicago, and Detroit. One of the offspring of rock 'n' roll, reggae, has reached out from the micro-culture of Jamaica to wide audiences of dark skinned people in Africa and India, and, carrying a somewhat different message, to the light skinned people of Europe, the Americas, and parts of Asia. Mega-corporations such as Sony and Phillips may be responsible for the delivery systems of the music, but the music retains much of its origins in the musical forms of East Africa and their development among slaves and the descendants of slaves in the Western Hemisphere. Through these forms, seemingly powerless micro-communities have reshaped the ruling classes' lives in a total fashion -- one that has altered everything from the way they walk to the way they dress to the way they work to the way they perceive the passage of time to the way they dream.

Although this example gives the world a common means of communication, it also tends to wear down local traditions, many of which remain useful and salutary, the product of long evolution and careful testing over many generations. If we ARE moving into a global village, we should strive to retain the best features of village life. This means preserving the distinctive characteristics of different parts of the village, while at the same time not isolating those parts into antagonistic ghettos and suburbs. Here in the United States, many of us hope to see the now almost entirely African city of Detroit pull itself out of the desperate economic wreckage of the American automobile industry. If it accomplishes this massive social feat, it will serve as a beacon and a model for other African cities around the world. In Africa itself, the rebirth of the ancient and venerable Eritrean nation may prove an inspiration and a model for other parts of the world, particularly those ravished and blighted by the atrocities of the slave trade, colonialism, and the dogmas, coercions, and bribes of competing religions and ideologies.

If it succeeds, YES, PARTICULARLY AGAINST ALL ODDS, it will do so in part by the strength, flexibility, and wisdom of its people, which in turn have allowed it to maintain its own unique identity without retreating into the dead end of isolationism in a world that could obliterate it with a single nuclear bomb. It will also do so through the poetry of people like Reesom Haile, who have worked out the means of retaining and defending their indigenous culture while simultaneously finding ways to integrate it into the other cultures of the world.



Dr. Reesom Haile lecturing dressed in national costume

In this universal context, Reesom Haile's poetry plays a major role, as poetry should in any form of social evolution. This poetry is at once local and global, as its author is at once a devoted champion and integral member of Eritrean community, as well as a confident and adept citizen of the world -- and, perhaps, one of the first prophets of a truly habitable and humane global village, seeking a type of poetry at once specifically and indelibly Eritrean, and a significant contribution to the poetry of the world at large.

Understanding this poetry, from the point of view of a total outsider to Eritrean culture, Reesom Haile's love of the Tigrinya language may seem difficult at first, but the language itself may play a crucial role in reaching a global audience. Reesom Haile states this love plainly in his poems, and of course, the statements come through with perfect clarity in English translations. But for a man to SAY he loves his language and to actually FEEL it are two different things. A curious indication of this love comes through from the way

Reesom Haile speaks and writes in English. His discourse is full, rounded, suggesting that he relishes speaking, likes to sound good to himself and to others, and that he constantly searches for the right way to say what is on his

mind. If he had not learned to love his own language, it seems unlikely that he would take such delight in another. In some parts of Africa, and perhaps more prominently in India, you can find Anglophiles who have turned their backs on their native language and put their energy into English. But there is usually something sadly missing in their English. If I am not mistaken in my belief that Reesom Haile's fluency and felicity in English comes in part from his love of his own language, perhaps this is one of the first and most profound things he has to tell us about the

global village. If you do not love and respect your native tongue, you may have difficulty talking to or understanding people from other parts of the world -- whether they be Eritreans living abroad or English speakers from Canada or Australia, England or the United States. In saying this I am not arguing for ANY kind of linguistic purity. People growing up in multi-cultural and multilingual communities often show great felicity in code switching and in creating new languages out of the different tongues spoken around them. But they, too, have learned to love their linguistic environment; and they often supply the ingenuity that keeps language evolving into something suitable to new needs. This has certainly been the case in many parts of Africa, and the impact of speakers and singers nurtured in the mysteries of linguistic syncretism keeps, and has kept, such languages as English and Spanish alive and dynamic.

Love of spontaneous native speech moves into the more deliberate and conscious areas of art.

Although this dimension remains specific to Tigrinya, there are things that an attentive listener can comprehend without knowing a single word of the original language. The sound properties of Reesom Haile's poetry become immediately insistent on hearing him read, even on tape or compact disk. The intricate rhymes, consonances, what seem to be grammatical vowel shifts, and other sonic characteristics not only testify to the poet's skill, they produce delightful sounds in themselves, whether you understand them or not.

In some places, the poet repeats lines, and this leads to one of the most intriguing characteristics of the sonic dimensions of the poetry: In some instances, the author produces lines that mean different things but sound so similar that only very careful listening (and probably some pointers from someone who knows the Tigrinya) allows an outsider to hear the difference between them. Rhetorical structures,

often built on apposition, parallelism, and antithesis, can come through in exquisite, sharply defined sonic units if you can follow the poem in translation. In yet other instances, minimal variations in sense come through in other languages. This became particularly clear in reading translations into Icelandic, German, Spanish, and French which I put up on my Internet World Wide Web site. One of my favorite poems illustrates this very well: Your sister (look at the table)

Your Sister	Exile
Daughter sister	Ethiopian women
Your own sweet daughter	Who are gorgeous
Your mother's	And wearing traditional dress
Daughter	Wait in Cairo airport:
Her sister's and brother's	Beirut bound export
Daughter	For restless lives
Your father's daughter	Of making beds
His brother's and sister's	And little money.
Daughter	Go with God, my beauties.
Your brother's and sister's	I don't envy you.
Daughter	
Your older brother's	
Daughter	
Your older sister's	
Daughter	
Whoever that may be	
Daughter of this town	Knowledge
Daughter of your neighbor	First the earth, then the plow:
Daughter and sister	So knowledge comes out of knowledge.
Of our nation	We know, we don't know.
Your sister	We don't know we know.
Your daughter	We know we don't know.
Your grandmother and mother	We think
Your fiancée and your wife	This looks like that --
Every daughter	This lemon, that orange --
Part of you	Until we taste the bitter.
Your own sweet daughter	
Sister to sister to sister	
Respect their rights	Foreign Aid
	Beg.
	I give.
	Beg!
	I give some more!
	So why insult me for giving?
	You make me beg.

In Tigrinya, such poems could be heard as relatives of the minimalist music of Steve Reich and Phillip Glass. It's hard to find instances of English poetry that come close to the intricacies of Reesom Haile's Tigrinya. There may be parallels in the call-and-response, solo-and-chorus forms that have already spread out from Africa, and such minimalist forms as those used by peoples in the Itruri Forest and the Kalahari Desert, which have remained local. I hope more knowledgeable participants at this conference can address such formal parallels. Aside from the deep significance of what the author has to say, it is not difficult to understand why Eritreans, even children, recite the poet's lines back to him when they encounter him on the street or in other public places: such sound patterns almost ask to be memorized and repeated. For some, particularly the children, the mnemonic value of rhymes and repetition may serve an educational or exhortatory function.

As intricate as the sound properties of Reesom Haile's poetry may be, it is difficult to imagine a poetry more straight-forward and unadorned in modes of address. Plain statements, often in simple declarative sentences, make up most of the poems, leaving no room for decoration of any sort. Even metaphor and simile appear sparingly, and they often come more in the form of a parable or story than adornment, embellishment, modification, example, or accessory. This is a poetry addressed TO YOU, THE READER; TO YOU, THE HEARER. They are not based in the conventions of theater or in private rumination, but the kind of speech that people engage in every day when relating to each other without intermediaries. What could be a more direct utterance than the following poem? Even if it was not actually spoken to the women or to someone observing them with the author, this is simple statement: Exile (look at the table above)

Reesom Haile's fascination with plain parallelism, antithesis, and dialectics alone can produce a wide range of poetries within the unadorned nature of his opus. The following seems appropriate to the laconic wisdom literature of many traditional cultures: Knowledge (look at the table above) Often the antithesis or dialectic breaks into two voices: Foreign Aid (look at the table above)

On the plainest and simplest level, Reesom Haile's poems replicate the speech of one person to another. And they can be read as such speech. But they can also represent a communal voice speaking in solidarity. This leads to one of the author's most important, and perhaps unusual, set of characteristics. He is a patriot whom readers can believe and take seriously -- this is highly unusual in late 20th century poetry. The United States has not produced an UNRESERVED but CREDIBLE patriot poet since Walt Whitman, and I doubt that it can. Perhaps Eritrea will go through a similar process of post-revolutionary enthusiasm that wanes as the country loses integrity, new ideas, hope, optimism. But perhaps Eritrea will defy the odds here as elsewhere and produce a durable poetry of optimism and trust in community. The America poet Charles Olson longed for just such a poetry, and it is unfortunate he did not live long enough to encounter the work of Reesom Haile.

It has become increasingly difficult to find a poet writing on politics and community without recourse to oblique imagism, argot [often stilted], collage, and, well, a whole catalogue of indirect forms. I can't think of anyone since Roque Dalton who could make sense and be taken seriously as a political poet who relied

on no artifice, but stuck to direct statement. Unfortunately, Dalton's poetry doesn't translate easily or well from the Spanish, and without capturing the particular snap of his delivery, the poems often come across as hack work tracts when translated into English. This is not the case with Reesom Haile. Perhaps the reasons for this depend on the two poets' associates: Dalton spent most of his adult life discussing, arguing, haranguing other party members or members of closely related parties. Reesom Haile has not. Instead, he has spoken to people in all walks of life in many parts of the world, from street sweepers to artists, from architects to derelicts, in Asmara, in New York, in Brussels. Even in Eritrea, where party lines can seem as confusing as those of Dalton's El Salvador, Reesom Haile's associates never seem confined to

cadres, but extend through the whole spectrum of society. In a personal letter to me that easily could have broken into a poem, Reesom Haile told of a visit to troops assigned to patrol Eritrea's dangerous border with Ethiopia. The troops took turns standing guard and helping local farmers bring in crops. His enthusiasm radiated out of the words like the lights of fireworks. Perhaps this unalloyed enthusiasm, on all levels, is precisely what sets him apart from other poets working along similar lines in other parts of the world.

The turning of this century finds western poetry in an odd position. The great renaissance which scholars now call "modernism" ended long ago, though its energy and inventiveness continue among people who work in near isolation, outside the imperialist and totalitarian cliques that spend more energy vying for literary-political leverage than they do with poetry, which they often see as "superseded" by theory. The Baroque nature of so-called "post-modernism" drifts farther and farther into Rococo decoration and irrelevant sophistry. But important things have always happened outside regnant cliques. I've already mentioned the origins of rock 'n' roll. The position of the great African-Caribbean's, particularly Derek Walcott and Aime Cesaire seems completely secure, though inextricably tied to European movements. Perhaps the work of Reesom Haile, Ngugi wa Thiongo, and others who have returned to Native African languages while making sure their work is available in one of the widely-spoken, widely-read, and widely-printed European languages, will set the pace for a new century, in which the global village does not patronizingly take its name from stereotypes of Africa, but originates in that continent -- particularly among people like Reesom Haile who fully understand the importance of sound, reliable, and pleasing communication in any village, small or global. Marshal McLuhan hinted at a giant village in which everyone watched the same television programs. Reesom Haile sets an example of active, participatory exchange among all citizens.

Scholar and poet: Eritrea's pride



Grassroots poetry

Reesom Haile considers his writing in Tigrinya

A going back to what God has given you and saying "I'm not going to give it up." It's your freedom, your speech, your self-definition, and your self-expression. You cannot give it up. If you lose your language, it isn't just the language you lose. It's the cultural codes imbedded in that language. It's the values, the sense of community, and the sense that I am responsible for my brother, my sister, my mother, and they are equally responsible to me. This is what I do not want my people to lose.

Reesom Haile also writes in a spirit that is inseparable from Eritrea's century-long struggle for independence. In his own words, The Eritrean struggle for independence is the primary motive force for my art.... We Eritreans have taken on all comers for our right to self-determination, and my art is but a continuation and an expansion of that struggle aimed at self-definition.

Eritrea's war for independence was simultaneously a war for its culture: its ancient traditions as well as its modern manifestations and transformations. Again in Reesom Haile's words,

Successive enemies of Eritrean independence over the years have tried defining Eritrea in ways that would justify the outrageous measures they would take to deny Eritrea its place in the sun.

They have tried to diminish Eritrea politically, economically, militarily, and culturally into non-existence except as an appendage of the builders of colonial and neo-colonial empires. But Eritrea has proved a survivor....

War as a cultural education towards making peace requires not only the barrel of a gun but also the barrel of a pen, as Ngugi wa Thiong'o observes. The cultural bomb can be as deadly as bombs falling from the sky. What is in the mind of the person holding the gun and pulling the trigger? The fighter and the writer not only need each other. In Eritrea, they often have been the same person - yet always the same person in spirit. As Reesom Haile recalls:

I returned to Eritrea in 1994 after twenty years of life in exile. I came back to find our languages and our poetry a bit battered, but well, considering they too had been targeted for extinction.... But we carried our languages and our art in our memories and our voices, and we used them as effectively as we used our weapons to defend ourselves throughout the struggle.

Vitally linked, Reesom Haile's language of self-determination and political self-determination produce a supreme poetry of resistance with the confidence to ask,

<p>("The Transit of Tigrinya")</p> <p>But what did you assume About Tigrinya?</p> <p>Eritrea's daughter, She wants respect, The same as you. Dare her, She'll dare you, too.</p> <p>She knows the way To overcome The invading tongues: Her words, her names Cut them off.</p>	<p>A local language and its poetry become the means of survival:</p> <p>("Believe It or Not")</p> <p>Remember the Italians Who invaded and said <i>Eat but don't speak?</i></p> <p>Remember the English Who invaded and said <i>Speak but don't eat?</i></p> <p>Remember the Amharas Who invaded and said <i>Don't speak and don't eat?</i></p> <p>...</p> <p>Believe it or not, They want to kill us...</p>	<p>Poetry of resistance is inseparable from the life of the poet and his country:</p> <p>("<i>esh</i>")</p> <p>The dergue Behaved better Than the latest Swarm of invaders,</p> <p>Haile Selassie Better than the dergue, And Menelik Better than Selassie.</p> <p>...</p> <p>But my country says <i>Forward</i>, And <i>esh</i> the Turkish, <i>esh</i> Egyptians, <i>esh</i> Italians, <i>esh</i> the English, <i>esh</i> Amharas, <i>esh</i> Tigreans, <i>esh</i> the locusts.</p> <p><i>esh!</i></p> <p>Like a flywhisk.</p>
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While focusing on and from Eritrean culture, Reesom Haile's poetry of resistance also has a global dimension as a part of, again in his words, "the indomitable struggle of humanity." He has a self-stated "mission...to create links between my country and the world." Celebrating a "genuine," "Eritrean culture" that expresses "the essence of human struggle," as he sees it, his poetry can simultaneously partake of a literary impulse that is universal, making a literary truism breathe new life. His "imagination" with his "poet's pen," in Shakespeare's words, "bodies forth / The forms of things unknown." He "[t]urns them to shapes, and gives to aery nothing / A local habitation and a name." But if the habitation is African, let the name be African. Let the word itself and the word "language" in African languages ring out all over Africa: *Mutauro, Ulwimi, Edi, Okasa, Asusu, Lolemu, Ulimi, Lakk, Ruthiomi, Lughha, Harsha, Luqha, Qwanqwa*. They are the medium and they are the message, adding up to Africa's greatest expression of freedom: *Amandla!* The resounding African word is universally understood - as if the story of Babel and the confusion of tongues were not true - by people of all walks of life, all ages and in many languages, local and

international, from under the giant Sycamore trees of arid Eritrea to the elegant arts venues of downtown New York City; from the poor, local communities of Johannesburg, South Africa, or Newark, New Jersey to the halls of the world's most distinguished universities.

No one cultivates freedom in Tigrinya and the "local habitation" in Eritrea better than Reesom Haile does. Contained within his two bilingual - Tigrinya / English - collections of poems are myriad of subjects, including: gender equality, colonialism, foreign aid, the use of knowledge, bureaucracy, history, crime, priests, travel, daughters and sons, sisters and brothers, camels, books, education, homecomings, exile, money, computers, braggarts, religion, political leadership, hopes, delusions, bravery, civic responsibility, stars, God, illiteracy, ambition, divisiveness, survival, Satan, democracy, old friends, mothers and fathers, cities, small towns, cruelty, soccer, intolerance, impulsiveness, love, language, nightlife, freedom, writing, indecision, non-governmental agencies, learning, sex, super powers, bread, marital responsibility, competition, snails, American foreign policy, democracy, women's rights, global politics, casualties of war, love, the young, elders, the nature of advice, spousal abuse, cooking, cannibalism, coffee, self-image, sleeping together, proverbs, ethnic conflict, carousing, biblical stories, tourism, national identity, aging, values, the future, the pen, words, exile,

shoes, masculinity, teaching babies to walk, videos of weddings, religious hypocrisy, history, body parts, suicide, funerals, taboos, freedom, independence, infidelity, flywhisks, community, temptation, unspeakable evil, spirits, old and new housing, frankness, circles, labor, ancestors, mothers, prayers, parenting, toys, food, starvation, war, donkeys, the millennium, Jews, Muslims, Christians, punctuation, political evil, weather, onomatopoeia, loss, wisdom, literature, peace, jokes, teachers, culture, hierarchy, individualism, letters, pastry, paper, poverty, hope, surnames, God, George Bush II, sacrifice, survival, African leaders, dictators, devils, language, relationships, regrets, dependable people, dissent, angels, and home - and often humorously.

If there has ever been a poetry with something for everyone, this is it: which also accounts for the great popularity of Reesom Haile's poetry in Eritrea, yet which is now a major factor in his increasing, international acclaim.

His strong and prevailing sense of political struggle and ideals might be considered romantic if they were not so realistic and rooted in the unassailable Eritrean political experience of standing alone and winning a 30-year war for independence. Thus, joining ancient symbol and the modern Eritrean war for independence, he can directly and easily address his country's leader and, by extension, any national leader who needs to know the ultimate source of his or her power: (look at the table below)

<p>("The Leader")</p> <p>You wear our crown of leaves As long as we're free To say "yes" without force. As in the beginning, This covenant sways With each other's words, Leading to the good And holding us together Not apart in the storm To a stranger's delight. This way ? That? Around? Between? With this crown of leaves We meet heart to heart: With much to learn, but smart Enough to know what hurts. We choose you To wear our crown of leaves. It possesses no magic But our history and your name.</p> <p>("Democracy")</p> <p>Greek seedling, Dear democracy, Please come with me to Africa. I have water for the heat And fire for the cold. My medicine of local holy water Will control the termites And keep you rooted. Forget your fear. Come live with me. I need your shade to rule When the representatives meet, With only an acacia To prick me with its thorns.</p>	<p>("Eritrea's Daughter")</p> <p>Eritrea's daughter Tells it like it is Facts are enough for her And God for a witness.</p> <p>Eritrea's daughter Puts gold in its place, Knows hunger and the worst, And feeds her children first.</p> <p>Eritrea's daughter Knows what it takes To survive and make A home for her family.</p> <p>Eritrea's daughter Overcomes her fears, Dresses in bandoleers And takes on the world.</p> <p>Eritrea's daughter Fights for her country. She strikes like lightning And drips her honey.</p> <p>Eritrea's daughter Joins the old and young. Love her in all you do And she drips her honey on you.</p>	<p>("Garden Eritrea")</p> <p>When the blood Of Eritrean men Floods Eritrea, Our heroes grow Again.</p> <p>When the blood Of Eritrean women Floods Eritrea, Our heroes grow Again.</p> <p>When the blood Of Eritreans Floods Eritrea, We grow back Again and again.</p> <p>Deny peace To Eritrea And you garden Eritreans.</p>
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Modern Poetry in Translation

Poet Reesom Haile

Reesom Haile was Eritrea's first internationally known poet. He wrote in Tigrinya, one of Eritrea's nine major languages. In exile during Eritrea's war for independence from Ethiopia, he served for over two decades as a Development Communications consultant, working with UN Agencies, governments and NGOs around the world before returning to Eritrea in 1994. His first collection of Tigrinya poetry, *Waza ms Qum Neger nTensae Hager* (1997), won the Raimok prize, Eritrea's highest award for literature. He published two other books of poetry, translated by Charles Cantalupo and published by Red Sea Press – *We Have Our Voice* (2000) and *We Invented the Wheel* (2002) before he died in 2003.

- from Charles Cantalupo's introduction in MPT Series 3/14 *Polyphony*



International conference in African languages

African Anthem, Eritrea's Daughter and Poverty

Translation by [Charles Cantalupo](#)

African Anthem	Eritrea's Daughter
Rainbow, rainbow Where have you been? My mother needs a sash To match her skin. A shower of colors To catch her eye, A garment of light, Across the sky – Shining like her face, Streaming from the sun, Seven different colors, To reflect my special one. One color's not enough – Nor one without the other. All of them must be Worthy of my mother.	Peace Eritrea's daughter Says what is God her witness Peace She knows the worst Goes hungry Feeds her children first Peace Eritrea's daughter Makes a home For young and old Peace Eritrea's daughter Drips her honey Greater than Eritrea's gold Eritrea's daughter Also knows war Forgets fear Wears a bandoleer
Rainbow, rainbow Where have you been? My mother needs a sash To match her skin.	Peace Eritrea's daughter Love her in all you do And she drips honey on you
Poverty I have nothing. Taste it with me. If we share, We can bear The worst poverty. Run away And not even say 'God Bless. Good day'? Why choose Greed over me?	

Tigrinya (ትግርኛ)

Tigrinya is a Semitic language spoken in central Eritrea and in Ethiopia and Israel by approximately 5 million people. It is closely related to Tigre and descended from Ge'ez, an ancient language of the Horn of Africa. One of the longest poetic traditions in the world, much of Tigrinya poetry is oral; recitations remain very much a part of contemporary Eritrean culture.

Tigrinya poetry was first published by Italian scholars during colonization. Notable works include *Tigrinya Popular Songs* (1906), collected by Carlos Conti Rossini and featuring the genres *masse* (historical praise poems), *melke* (poems for the recently deceased), and *dog'a* (poems of mourning). Additional *dog'a* were collected by Jacques Faïtlovitch and published in *Habasha Poetry*. Abba Isaak Ghebreyesus published *Legends, Stories and Proverbs of the Ancestors* in 1949 which included a hundred stories, 3300 proverbs, and various poems.

More recently, poetry in Tigrinya has been written by Solomon Tsehay, Saba Kidane, and the pioneering Reesom Haile, who modernized many oral forms. Contemporary Tigrinya poets are featured with those working in Tigre and Arabic in the recent anthology *Who Needs a Story?* (2005) edited by Ghirmai Negash and Charles Cantalupo.

A very popular oral poem, ***Negusse, Negusse*** is about a legendary hero called Negusse. The events narrated in the 169-line Tigrinya text are believed to have taken place around the 1880s, just about a decade before the Italian colonization of Eritrea. According to Abba Isaak Gebreyesus, Negusse was initially a rebel but, because of his bravery and fighting skills, was acknowledged by the court of Ras Weldemichael, later becoming his general and then a chief of his own clan among the peoples of the region of Akeleguzai in Eritrea. In 1879, Negusse was killed in a battle, which was set in motion by a popular revolt of his own clan against his tyrannical and oppressive style of rule. Growing up in Eritrea, co-translator Ghirmai Negash heard this poem being sung and performed on many occasions – including by his grandmother who was a chronicler of oral tradition. Over the years, the poem, whose symbolism is interpreted as being relevant to all times, has been recited and documented by different performers and researchers and thus exists in different versions. This translation is based on the poem's published version by Gebreyesus: *Negusse, Negusse, Weiza Alem Blashe* (Asmara, 1995).

Poetry by Reesom Haile, poet laureate of Eritrea with introduction and translation by Charles Cantalupo:

National as well as international critical acclaim has established Reesom Haile as Eritrea's national poet. In Amiri Baraka's words, "Reesom Haile's spare poetic line carries the weight of incisive image, narrative clarity, irony plus a droll humor that speaks ever after you finished reading." For Carole Boyce Davies, "Reesom Haile offers poetry that is at once sensual and seductive, wise and politically clever, full of wonderful surprises. His poems communicate the author's deep love for life, his country, absolute freedom and the magic of the word." In Bob Holman's judgement, "Reesom Haile is Poet Laureate of Eritrea in the only way possible: elected by the people in the streets. His countrymen & women know and love his poems by heart, shout them back at him, confront him as if literature might walk, and breathe, and engage as life always engages in Asmara, shoulder to shoulder and lip to ear. How's that sound? is not a question here, because language and music and the great script Ge'ez all resonate full body."

Charles Cantalupo's books include literary criticism — *Against All Odds: African Languages and Literatures into the 21st Century*, *Ngugi wa Thiong'o: Texts and Contexts* and *The World of Ngugi wa Thiong'o* (Africa World Press), *A Literary Leviathan: Thomas Hobbes's Masterpiece of Language* (Bucknell University Press) and *Poetry, Mysticism, and Feminism: from th' nave to the chops* (Spectacular Diseases) — poetry — *Anima/I Wo/man and Other Spirits* (Spectacular Diseases) — and poetry in translation: *We Have Our Voice: Selected Poetry of Reesom Haile* which is also available on CD (Asmarino.com), and *We Invented the Wheel*. Cantalupo's essays and poetry have appeared in numerous journals, and he has given many lectures and poetry readings throughout America, Europe and Africa. His translations include poetry in Gikuyu, Russian, and Tigrinya. His plays have been produced in America, Cameroon, Puerto Rico and Morocco. In 1994, he directed *Ngugi wa Thiong'o: Texts and Contexts*, the largest conference ever held on an African writer. He was co-chair of *Against All Odds: African Languages and Literatures into the 21st Century*, a seven-day conference and festival devoted to the presentation and critical discussion of the languages and literatures of all of Africa, held in Asmara, Eritrea, in January, 2000, and he continues as co-director of the initiative. Professor of English and Comparative Literature at The Pennsylvania State University, Schuylkill Campus, he is married with four children and lives in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, 100 yards north of the grave of H.D.

Among the tigrinja poems of Dr. Reesom Haile translated into English by Charles Cantalupo with links to translations in other languages are:

አብታኑ ቁልጠት የሚጠበቅ ነው፡ ከመግኘ ወላይ ይስታ

Collection of poems by Dr. Reesom Haile from the internet

In the following pages online available poems of Dr. Reesom Haile are collected and type written.
Source: google and youtube. *NB. The English versions are translation by Charles Cantalupo*

ገጥምታት ነፍስኬር ደከተር ሌሎች ፍይል

አብታኩ

ጂል አደገኩ
ጂል አበሻ
ጂል አትናኩ
ጂል አዎሻ
ጂል አሞኩ
ጂል አከሻ
ጂል አውሻ
ጂል አብታኩ
ጂል አየሻ
ጂል አንቀኩ
ጂል መን አያዝኩ በቻኩ?
ጂል ገዢ-ትኩ
ጂል ዓደኛኩ
አብታኩ
መለ አደ ዓባይ መለ አደኩ
መለ አካይ-ትኩ መለ ለበደትኩ
መለ ጥፊ መሙረኩ
ነገድ ቅመኩኩ ስላ ማሁኩ
አቶ መሰላንዳ ታክልወለን አኩ?

ርክስኩ

ከትወለድ ካለኩ
እኔ ሌሎችኩ
ማዳሪ አለዋ
መፋት-አለኩ
ምሳ አደኩ ምሳ አበሻ
ምሳ መምህርኩ ምሳ ቅሽኩ
ምሳ በተሰብከ ከታ ይጋኙኩ::
እኔ መፍትኩ እንተ መፈለም
ከልለ ተበብ አለዋም ወይልኩ::
መጀመርያ ልኩይ ይለኩየኩ
እንተ አበየም
ዓዋኑ ዓዲ ደንቅር ይ-በለኩ
ብመክ-ብ-ብመንቅርቁር በይሸራ በመስመር
ቀብ አለዋም ከይሰበርም ደርሱም
የንኩስተት-ለኩርከመ-ኩ አብ ሌሎችኩ
ፈለጥ: ከፋት ሌሎች
ዝኩ-በለኩ ምሳ ዓበሻ

በህለ

መን በግለ
እንታይ በግለ
ንመን በግለ
በየኩ መበሃሳብ
እዝኩ-በል ቅጽለ

መን ገመን

ለማኩ!
ተኩበ!
ለማኩ!
ተኩበ!
ንተኩበ ተከ ደርፈ ንርባ?
ወይለከ!
ዘይተኩበ መን ገለማኩ ለማኩ ገይኩም?

ደግሪ

ደግሪ! ደግሪ!
እኩለ አኩበ
ስተሳለይ እብ ደካም::
ደግሪ! ደግሪ!
አዳኞስለይ አነሱያ
አብድለይ አብኩያ
ዓንማስለይ ነጠመያ
አብተይለይ አክምአያ
ስለም በልለይ ንድፈ ፍደያ
ደግሪ! ደግሪ!
አብርሃለይ ለማሳያ
መራት ምስ መስያ
እኩለ ንበር
አካም! አካካም! አካም! አካካም!
አብም! ዓብአብም! አብም! ዓብአብም!
ደግሪ!
እኩለ አኩበ
ስተሳለይ እብ ደካም
እኩለ አኩበ
ስተሳለይ እብ ደካም

ከይ-በለኩ

ከይ-በለኩ ገበል ከይ-በለኩ
ለማዳኩ ከም ከይለማዳኩ
ርክስኩ ከም ከይረክስኩ
ከንነበር እፍኩ ዓይኩ
ደሳር ከንካምምም ተካብለኩ
እንደብከም ዓይኩ እኔ ቁዋም
ለማዳብከም ዓይኩ እኔ መንግስትኩ
ኋኩ እኩ እኩ መስል አለኩ
ዘመሰለኩ ተዛቢኩ
ዘመሰለኩ ዓይኩ
ከንካድር ከም
ኋኩ ይኩልኩ እንተ ተጋቢኩ

Թ Ա Գ Վ Պ Վ Թ
Մ Ե Հ Խ Հ Վ Մ Ե Հ Ղ Մ Թ Վ
Մ Ե Հ Ճ Կ Հ Վ Մ Ե Հ Կ Ո Ո Վ
Ս Ա Ւ Մ Պ Վ Հ
Ո Ո Ւ Հ Կ Ո Ո Ւ
Ճ Կ Հ Ճ Կ

ՔՐԴԱՌԵՑ ՀՈՂԱ ԻԹԹ
ՀՈՂ ՊՅԱ ՀԵՎՆԵԽՈՅ
ՀՊԱԿԸ ԻՎՈՒ
ՄՈՒՀԻ ՔՃԵ ԻՎՈՈԼԳ
ՄՈՓԻ ՔԼԱՆ ՈՒԽԵԿ ԾՀՈ ՄՈՓԻ ԳԵ
ՀՃԵ ԻՎԹ ՀՃԵ ԻՆ ԲՔ ԳՅԵ ԳՏ ԱԳ:

ԵՐԵՎԱՆԻ ԴՐԱ

ሰውአትና
ግዳም አዲርም
ለእን ብቻበርም
መራከተና
ግዳም አዲርም
ለኋርም
ንስኋርም
ዘብለኋኋኋርም
ዶማርም ተከላር ዕማርም

ማርቆስ ሌኑን

የኢትዮ እስከ

ይትስብ አሎ
ይትስበረ'ሎ
መን ይተስብ?
አሳብ
እንታይ ይተስብ?
አሳብ
መሳቢ ይተስብ
ግብ አሳብ
ሰለምንታይ ይተስብ?
ሰለ አሳብ
ናይ ባሕቂ ይተስብ አሉምበካር
ኩወ ይተስብ አሎ::

፳፻፲፭

እኩ. የዚህና
እኩ. ተግባር
ከተወያም
ሙዕራ አለም ካልያልያም
ጠስማ አለም ክፍጥያም
በርበረ አለም ክፍጥያም
ዓንሰሳ አለም
ቁረቡዋ ቁረቡዋ
አስተማቁሩዋ

፲፻፲፭

ՀՈ ՈՒՐԴՔ ՄՈՒՐ
 ԶՈՒՄ ՅԱՅ ԳՐԵ ՄՈՒՐ
 ՊՈՂ ԳՈՅ ՀԿՈԼՈՅ
 ՀՆՎՈՂ ՍՄՈՒՇ!
 ՀՆՎՈՂ ՀԻՄՈՒՇ!
 ՀՆՄՈՂ ԳՅՈՒՇ ՀՈՐ!
 ԻՓՈՐԸ ՈՒՊԵԼՆԿ
 ԳՅ ՅԹՈ ԳՅ ՈՒԾԴԻ ՀՈԼՈՅ
 ԻԵՒԴՈՊԹՈՎ ՀՈՊԳԴԻ
 ՌՈՅ ՌՈՅՆԴ ՄՈՒՇԲ:
 ՀՈՒՄ
 ՀՈՅ ՄՈՎԱՅ ՃՈՒՐԻ ՌՈՂ-
 ԻՒՄ ՍԵՎՈՎ ՄՈՋԻՒՄ ՊՈՎԱՅ

፩፻፲፭

Նհամք քոյշ քաղաք
Դրանո՞ւ գտա՞ւ քրոջին
Եւ Աթունեալու Պանէ Շնամ
Հեշին համանալու
Ճառո՞ւ հեցն
Ահ Ինժեք Ինժեք քամուն
Շուն դժվարուն
ՈՒ մռաշե՞ւ
Էւ Լոյն Ուշէ Ծաղկան
Խնդի շաբաթ Խնդի Կամշէն

ՊԵՂԱ

ዓለም ተላዋዎጻት
ከም ቅልዓ
ከም አንበት
የት ተብል ዘኩድ ዘኩድ
የክፍ ፊቅርና ንግድ
የት ተብል ጽሁዳ
የክፍ ንግድ ንግድ
የት ከተማርያ ዘኩድ ዘኩድ
ይቀብ ደንብ ተማሪ ከተወቃቁ፡

ՊՐՈԴՅՈՒԿՏ ԶԻՒԾ ԸՆԴՊՐՈ (ԿԵԼ ԻՌ ՔԵՔՈ)

ՀԱՅՈՒԹ ՀԱՅՈՒԹ

ՀԱՅՈՒ! ՀԱՅՈՒ!
ՅԱԿԵՐԾ ՅԱԿԵՐԾ
ՍՅԹՔ ՍՅԹՔ
ԱԽԱԿ ԱԽԱԿ
ՅԱԿԵՐԾ ՅԱԿԵՐԾ
ԳՅԱՆԻ ԱԴՎՃ ԱԴՎՃ
ՆՄԻՈԹ ՆՄԻՈԹ ԱՄԾԸՆ ԱՄԾԸՆ
ԱՄԾԸՆ ԱՄԾԸՆ
ՀԱՅՈՒ! ՀԱՅՈՒ!
ԴԵՒՀԻՇ ԴԵՒՀԻՇ ԱՄՈՋԱԿ ԱՄՈՋԱԿ
ԱԲՀ ԱԲՀ ԱԲՀ ԱԲՀ
ԱԾ-ԱԾ ԱԾ-ԱԾ ՓՔ-ՓՔ ՓՔ-ՓՔ ԺԱԾԿ ԺԱԾԿ
ՀԱՅՈՒ! ՀԱՅՈՒ!
ՅԱԿ ԻԿՊՈՒՆ ԻԿՊՈՒՆ ԱԶԾԿ ԱԶԾԿ
ՆՈՑԵԾ ԱԿՈՒՆ ԱԿՈՒՆ ԱՑԼՈՒՆ ԱՑԼՈՒՆ
ԿՊՄԱԿ ԿՊՄԱԿ ԱՄԾԿ ԱՄԾԿ
ԱՆՈՒՆ ԱՆՈՒՆ ԱՑՏԿ ԱՑՏԿ
ՀԱՅՈՒ! ՀԱՅՈՒ!
ԱԾ-ԱԾ ԱԾ-ԱԾ
ԱԾ-ԱԾ ԱԾ-ԱԾ ԱՊԼԿ
ԱԾ-ԱԾ ԱՊԼԿ ԱՊԼԿ
ՀԱՅՈՒ! ՀԱՅՈՒ!
ԳՅ ՀԱՊԿԸ ԴԱՊԿԸ
ԳՅ ՌԱՅԸ ԴԱՅԸ ԱԴՅԿ ԱԴՅԿ
ՀԱՅՈՒ! ՀԱՅՈՒ!
ԻԿԱԾԸՆ ԻԿԱԾԸՆ

ወለዳ’ንደታ ‘ዛሬ
ወለዳ’ንደታ!

፳፻፲፭

፳፻ ከተማ

እብ ከተማ አለው እተማኑ
ዓይና ዘይ-በላም ጥሩር አስናን
የዘንጂዥ ተቃዋሚ ከም ምራን ከም መጽግናን
አነጻ አሁን ለተሞኑ እታ ዓይቀም ዓይቀም
እታ ዓይቀም ከማኑ፡

፩፻፭፻

ሰብ ከይጥኑኝ አብ ቅልታይ
ማንኛም ከይደፍሩን አብቻ በታይ
አስተት ተስዋወም ምክንታይ
ቻብ ታንካብ ዘይነትንን ገለቻቻይ
አለፈ’ም ነውም ለከናጅ
የመሳሪያ እየተደርግ፡፡

১০৩

ԱԾԵՊԴ ՀՆԴՔԸ ԵՐԵՎ ՄՃՔ.Պ
 ԳՐՀՀՔ ԻԵՒՔ
 ՄԶՀՈՒ ԴՊԱՌՈՎ
 ԿԱՅԵՊԴ ՈԱԽԾ ՀԱԼԿ.Պ
 ԱԾԵՊԴ ԲԸ ԵՐԵՎ ՀՆԴՔ ՈԱ.Պ
 ԻԽԹՔ ԻԿՀՔ.Պ
 ԺԿ ՄՆԱԼ.Պ
 ՊԱՌ ԵՐԵՎ ԼՄԴ.Պ
 ՅՆԴՎՀԱ ՑՎՕ.Պ
 ՀԼ.Պ:
 ԷՆ ԱԾԵՊԴ ՀՆԴՔ ԱԾԵՊԴ
 ՄԾՀ Ը.Ի.Դ ԴԱՊԴ
 ԳԵ ՑՈՂԴ ՄՊԴ
 ԱԾԵՊԴ ԱԾԵՊԴ ՀԵ.ԴՈԱ.
 ՈԱ.Պ ԱԾԵՊԴ ՈԱԽԾ.Պ
 ԻԽԹ ԴՄԾ ԴՊԱՌՈՎ ԱՀԱԼ
 ՀԱԿ ԳԱԽԾ ՈԱԽԾ ԻԵ.ՎՍԱ.Պ

ትግርኛ

እኔ ቅንቃና ከንበላለ’ምበር
መዓስ ከንሰባገድለ
አልፍኑ፡ ተስማሚዕና
ተካብረርና ዓይና ከነጣተከለ
ሆይ ማርያም አማካና!
ሆይ ማርያም አማካና!
ሆይ ማርያም አማካና!

ዶላር በስንክኤሌ

ሁዘበና ይወዳኑ አሉ
ዶላር ይአየ ከምደኑ በስንክኤሌ
ዓዲናረብ፡ አማራክ፡ ዓዲጥልኝ፡
ዶለማርክ፡ ዓዲጋድኝ፡
ኩፍ፡ ዓዲንግለዝ፡ ፌርመኑ፡
አውሳኔታልኝ፡ ዓዲ ፍኝ
ከብዛ ዓዲ ጥሩ አውሳኔኑ ይብል አሉ፡፡
ስላም ከብ አው አዘበ’ለሁ፡
ስላም ከብ አውቱ፡ አዘበ’ለሁ
ስላም በለውተር አበበቁ’ለሁ
ስላም ከንበላለ’ለሁ
ወርቂ አደፊ ስይው ከንበላለ’
ገለና ቀይዙ በአገል አውሳኔ’ለሁ
ዶላር ይአየ ከምደኑ በስንክኤሌ
አቶ መንግስት እንታይ ይብሉ
አብና አደፊ ከድ አፍበላ
ከድ አውዳይ ይከለና
አብና ፍጋድና አቅልለ
ግባት ሽቦ የምስራት አሉ
ግባት መርሃ ያርሃ’ለሁ
ንቀበል ታተዘዘር ቴክናል አሉ
ከድ አውሳኔኑ ያላር በስንክኤሌ
አበይ አሉ’ቱ ከይታ? አበይ አሉ?
አበይ አሉ’ቱ ወርቂ? አበይ አሉ?
አበይ አሉ’ቱ ሰራሽ? አበይ አሉ?
ሁዘበና በተተዋወ ማኑ ከብለ
ሁዘበና ይደለሁ
እንና ከብለ
ዶላር በስንክኤሌ

አቅነት

ስለስተ ስብት አብና ካይደም
በኢትዮም ስማያም
በፋይዳም ሌሎችም አተነጻም
ምአፈላም ከብለ ገዢምርም
እንተ መሰኔርም
አቶ ገብኤል
አቅነት ማሻበረዋት
አዘይና አስበረ አስምሮ ከረከብ
የብለን ሰራዊት
አንዳሳ ተስፋር
አንዳሳ ተስፋር
ተመርከኑ ዓዋሽ፡፡

መስቀል

መስቀል መስቀል ደሳን ተቋልቀል ሆ!
መስቀል ከም አይብልና መስቀል ነጋይሽ ነገና
አብ የገዢ ሁዝቦና ስብና
ጽር እብ ሌሎች ዓይና
ተደረሰው አለው ዓይና መሠረምኑት መዝጋለና
አበይ መዓስ ከንሰቃለው እና?
መስቀል’ምበር መስቀልና አለው መለያ!

አየ ንክና

እኔና ዘለአና እሳያና
አንተ ከይህለ እሳያና ምረጋጭና
አብ ከዳና ከም አሁባይ ተአንጻርና
አቶ እልበቱ እልበቱና አሰመሰላና
ገለና ንዑስና ገለና ንዑስና ገለና
ንዑስና ይለና ታናድ በአካራርና
ግብና ይግብር ግብና ንዑስና ንዑስና::

ከፍል

እንተ ከፍል
እንታይ እየ ምስጠርክና
ከተለ ማዘ ምስ ከመጀክና
ከተረር መረር ተብል ልብና ንዑስና
አይመሏናን ነገፍዎክና አላማዎክና
በአገና በአገና በፋይና በአገና
ከተጥረክና መረር ከብለና
ዘንብና እንተይ እና እና እና
አንዳብ ይረ የውዳናና እንዳብ ገል የእትወክ
ይዋና አብተይ እንታይ ስትና
ናብረ ከብለ እንተይ እና እና
ማይ አይጠቀሙን አድሽ’ና እንገዢዎክና
አንተ ተሞስ ጉዝብ መውዳናልና
ከምዕ ፍተይ ጉዳና ይኖጋልና
አንተ ከይአመናና እልበትና ስተቶ እንሆልና
መን አሉ ገዳይ አቅልው ስተይ ከየኩበረ
ከይመልና::

በግል አይደ

ገልጋጥኩን ዘለጥኩን ከከሽኩን ጉጥታትኩን
ቅድመኩ ይግብረኩ ቅድመኩ ይግብረኩ ተብላና ንርክኩ
መን ስማውኩን ከንደይ ከይመለድኩን ከንደይ
ከይቀበርኩን በደዱወኩን
ገንዘብ ይሠብና ገብና እየከናን መስቀልትኩን
ሂጻዊም አምልስማ ፍርግ ዓቅኩን
እንግሉት እርትራ ፍረ ከርስኩን

ጥራ ክልብ

ጥራ ክልብ ምስ ክልብ ተባለብ
እና አስበሰስ እና እዋን ከተብላ ገብ
ከልብ ምስ ልብረው ከብ ገንዳ በንቃሳ
ገዢናው ከይ እብ አመድ ውስብ
በበይ ማኑ ከይተገበር ገብ

አሰመራ በለተ

በሸጋ ወጪለ ምስ መሰኑ እንዲ በግል ገታ
በር ማረጋገጫው ድሞች ተከልየ
ደተኞችምና ተመልቻቸው ተጠሪል፡
ደተኞችምና ተመልቻቸው
ወይለይ!
እበደ ይህ ክይደኛ አጥን እንሰቱ ተጠሪል፡
ሻታ! ቅዱ አዋጅ፡ እንታይ ክከል?
የወታ ሆኖና ክከል?
ወደ ቸራ ፍርድ ንብር ፍርድ መለያቱ?
አንተ ኮከልቱ
አዋጅ፡ ከም ቅዱ ክበርቅ!
ከም ድለይኩ ዘበር’ ላላም’ የ የገር’ የ!

୩୫

Ճ-Ճ-Ճ-Ճ Դ-Ա-Ա-Ա Կ-Կ-Կ-Կ
Ճ-Ճ-Ճ-Ճ Դ-Ա-Ա-Ա Հ-Հ-Հ-Հ
Կ-Կ-Կ-Կ Դ-Ճ-Ճ-Ճ Դ-Ճ-Ճ-Ճ
Հ-Հ-Հ-Հ Ճ-Ճ-Ճ-Ճ Կ-Կ-Կ-Կ
Ս-Ե-Մ-Ե-Մ Պ-Ը-Ը-Ը Ի-Ի-Ի-Ի
Պ-Ը-Ը-Ը Հ-Ե-Ե-Ե Խ-Խ-Խ-Խ
Պ-Ը-Ը-Ը Ի-Ի-Ի-Ի Փ-Փ-Փ-Փ Հ-Ե-Ե
Հ-Ե-Ե-Ե Ի-Ի-Ի-Ի Հ-Ե-Ե-Ե Ի-Ի-Ի-Ի
Հ-Ե-Ե-Ե Ն-Ն-Ն-Ն

፳፻፲፭

ՀՇ ԻՒՄ ԱԼՈՎ ԱԴՄԱՆ
ԳԵՆ ԱՅ-ԱԼՈՎԹ ՏՀԵ ԱԼԻՆ
ՔԻՆՉՈ-Ի ԸՖԻԿ-Ի ԻԹ ԹԱՀ-Ի ԻԹ ՄՈՃ-ԴԻ
ՀԻՒ-Ի ՀԻՇ-ԱՐԹ ԱԴ-Ի ՀԻՇ-Թ ՀԻՇ-Թ
Ճ-Ի ՀԻՇ-Ի ԻՄ-ՀԻՇ-Ի

መስቀል

መሰቀል መሰቀል
ደ.ኋን ተቍልዋለ ሆ!
መሰቀል ከም አይ-በልና
መሰቀል ነጋይሽ ገኩና
እብ ማርፍ ሁዝብና ስብና
፳ር እብ ሰሳራ ደርፍ
ተደጋው ከዚ ዓይ ይ-ከነት
መሆያምኑት መንጠረና
እቦይ? መዓቢ? ከንሰቃሎ እና?
መሰቀል፣ምባር መሰቀልስ አሉና
መለአ!

የወጪ በት ስሜ

ከዢናብር ስምይ ከባና’በዘዴ
ከባና ይረጋግጣ
ከብ ደካኤል ቁዕስታም
ለይቻ አውርክስታም
እንታይ ሲፈተም?
አዲ ከብላቶም ጥሩት መረጃ
ናብ ገዢታም አብላው
ምሳ ከንድነህ በዝተም
ከንድነህ ቁዕስታም
እኔ ለይቶም በለይቻ እና
ደረሰኝ ዘኑና በፈቅ’ሎ ለይቻ
የይሁዴኝ እይተለዋኝ
አብርር ጥራይ አብርር

ኢት አመዳቸውለሁ

እኔ ከመዳእስ ወላደ መዳእስ አ’ሎ
ተሳኑ በአድራሻ ጉምበለው
የየ በታ ከርድና ነገልጻው
መርካብ በደረሰናን መዳእስ፡ ወልካም
ይልክናውን ስያነ በንግድናኋኅ ታስቦ
አብ ጉማር አብ
ማግ አውጥና እግናዣ ታስቦ
ነበላናየ ካትተና እግማብ
ኋማምው ምርመራ ዘርፍበ
ኋላንዋ ንግድበበ
በታ ፍብ በታ ንብ
ምስ በበየ ክፍናቸው
ይመሂር የጽንናየ የንብበ
እኔ ባህሉ እኔ ተጀሪ ዓይ’በ
አይደና ጉምበለው ገለበ
አይደና እኩለፈና ከዚተሁበ
ዝቀልና መግኑባ ጉዢዎበ

፲፭፻፯

ՃԵԳ ԶԱԼԱԳ
ՀԱՅՈՆ ԱԿԴ ԽԵՍԽԱ
ՀԱՅՈՆ ԹՋԸՆԸ
ԻՐ ԻՒԺԻ ԻՄ ԽՍԴՅ ՔԴԻՇՆԸ
ՀԵ ԿԱԾՈՒ ԿԱԾՈՒԴ ՀԱՄՄԱԾԱԳ
ՂԱԳ ՉՎ-ԸՆ ՂԱԳ ՉՎՓՈ ՂԱԳ
ՉՎ-ԸՆԸ ԶԱ ՉՎ-ԸՆ ՈՒՀԱԸ
ՊՈՒՆ ԵՊՈԸ ՊՈՒՀԱԳ ԽԵՏԸՆԸ

፩፻ መጽሐፍ

አዲሱ ማኅንድ ካት ወዳ አዋጅ እያ አልሳሳሽ ብ
ቀዳማቸው ወዳ እጥል ከይቅዬና ገዢል ወደፊጥ
እንታይ ሽጭ
አምሃራር ከነፃ ገለ ከተማውን መግለጫና
ከተባበረ ለተለዋዋሪ ለተጠበቃ
ንስ ገዢነት ከነፃ ከርዳደ
እኔ መግለጫና ለፈጸመ ከነፃ ሁኔታ
ጠልቃዎች ከይነትዎች እንታይ እሉ ከተማው
መግት ከምድክአለሁ ከቶ፡፡

መልቲ

ሰበድ አዘጋጅ

ዶክተር ሌሎም ፀይለ
እንተ ተኩወለአርሱች በኋላ
ፍልሰ እንተ በልደ እና በረሰ ስጋ
ዶታት አይጣጥን እነሆንድ ማረ
ዓመት ቃመት ከም ጽሁ፻ በጥሩ
መዓልቱ ቅጽርና መዓልና ገብርዎር
ስለ ቁኔስ ሰቦ ጥያቄ ገዢር
ስለ ገናፍች ታሪካ ገዢር
መምህር በምንባሩ ይጠተና ገናገል

ዶክተር ሌሎም ፀይለ
ከብዕ ዓለም እንተ ተኩወለ
ብርሃን በምንባሩ ተብረ መንገዶ
ሽሳይ በምንባሩ ለምላም ስዕስት
ዋሕሳ በምንባሩ ገኑቁ መጋጥ
በኩብረ በቀቂስ
አብ ዕለተ ጥሩ ገንዘቤ በኩብረ
ጥሩቂ ይጠለም ይኩኑ አቶ አየፍቃቂ
ጥሩቂ ይጠለም ይኩኑ ፍሰጠት አየፍቃቂ
ጥሩቂ ይጠለም ይኩኑ ቅኑስ አየፍቃቂል::

አተም አከዋኑና ሰበድ
አዘጋጅ ይግዝኬና
አግዝኬር ባፍቃቂ
ሰብ በድግዳይ
አግዝኬር ባድግ
ሰብ በድግዳይ
አግዝኬር ተቃጥ
ሰብ ተቃጥ
አግዝኬር መጀመ
ሰብ መጀመ
አግዝኬር በአልፎ
ሰብ በአልፎ
አዘጋጅ ሪሳብ
ሰብ ሪሳብ ሪሳብ
አግዝኬር ከም አብና አድና
ሰብ ከም አውና አብኑና
አግዝኬር ዝዕልአለምና
ሰብ አናበረሩና::

ይመስጥን

አበደን

አበደን አው አበደን
ዶታት አይጣጥን
ግብሩ አይተረሰቦን
ዶሃቶ አይተተብበን
እነሆ ልሳኑ እነሆ ድርሻነ::

ሰብ ከይግባኬኝ ከነ ወልጋቸ
ማንም ከይደፍጋኝ አብቻ በቻይ
አስተካት ተሰዋወም ምእንታይ
ትሏስ ተንተስ አይሰእንን ገልቻቸ
አለፈ’የ አባበኩ ሲከፍቸ
ይመስጥን ክይቸቸ::

The following pages contain the English translation of Dr. Reesom Haile's poems by Charles Cantalupo

	<p>፩ልጋት</p> <p>ንአመድ ደንብ የወጪ የጥልጋት ፍልተት የምግኘ ነፋ በደንደልዎ ምስተ ገልፎ እረሰና አመሰሰልና ፈልጋዎ እኩኑ</p>		<p>Knowledge</p> <p>First the earth, then the plow: So knowledge comes out of knowledge. We know, we don't know. We don't know we know. We know we don't know.....</p>
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Eritrea's daughter

Eritrea's daughter
She wants respect,
The same as you.
Dare her,
She'll dare you, too.

She knows the way
To overcome
The invading tongues:
Her words, her names
Cut them off.
"The Transit of Tigrinya"
Remember the Italians
Who invaded and said
Eat but don't speak?

Remember the English
Who invaded and said
Speak but don't eat?

Remember the Amharas
Who invaded and said
Don't speak and don't eat
Believe it or not,
They want to kill us...
"Believe It or Not"
The dergue
Behaved better
Than the latest
Swarm of invaders,

Haile Selassie
Better than the dergue,
And Menelik
Better than Selassie.
...
But my country says
Forward, And *esh* the Turkish,
esh Egyptians,
esh Italians,
esh the English,
esh Amharas,
esh Tigreans,
esh the locusts.
esh!
Like a flywhisk.
("esh")

Speech online

Can set you free....
ezm! z-ezm! ezm! z-ezm!
ebum! b-ebum! ebum! b-ebum!

...We share the screen
Like the sun
And our freedom of speech
Reads the poetry in thought

You wear our crown of leaves
As long as we're free
To say yes without force.
As in the beginning,
This covenant sways
With each other's words,
Leading to the good
And holding us together
Not apart in the storm
To a stranger's delight.
This way ? That?
Around? Between?
With this crown of leaves
We meet heart to heart:
With much to learn, but smart
Enough to know what hurts.
We choose you
To wear our crown of leaves.
It possesses no magic
But our history and your name.

Ethiopian women

Ethiopian women
Who are gorgeous
And wearing traditional dress
Wait in Cairo airport:
Beirut bound export
For restless lives
Of making beds
And little money.
Go with God, my beauties.
I don't envy you.

You wear our crown of leaves
As long as we're free
To say "yes" without force.
As in the beginning,
This covenant sways
With each other's words,
Leading to the good
And holding us together
Not apart in the storm
To a stranger's delight.
This way ? That?
Around? Between?
With this crown of leaves
We meet heart to heart:
With much to learn, but smart
Enough to know what hurts.
We choose you
To wear our crown of leaves.
It possesses no magic
But our history and your name.
("The Leader")

Greek seedling,

Dear democracy,
Please come with me to Africa.
I have water for the heat
And fire for the cold.
My medicine of local holy water
Will control the termites
And keep you rooted.
Forget your fear.
Come live with me.
I need your shade to rule
When the representatives meet,
With only an acacia
To prick me with its thorns.

Team or Twins
Left -- right
Black -- white
Open -- bite
Peace -- fight
Stop.

What is this?
Team or twins?
Twins or team?
Don't confuse the seam
With how to win.
Eritrea's daughter
Tells it like it is
Facts are enough for her
And God for a witness.

Eritrea's daughter
Puts gold in its place,
Knows hunger and the worst,
And feeds her children first.

Eritrea's daughter
Knows what it takes
To survive and make
A home for her family.

Eritrea's daughter
Overcomes her fears,
Dresses in bandoleers
And takes on the world.

Eritrea's daughter
Fights for her country.
She strikes like lightning
And drips her honey.

Eritrea's daughter
Joins the old and young.
Love her in all you do
And she drips her honey on you.

("Democracy")

To Eritrea
And you garden
Eritreans.
"Garden Eritrea"

Who can deny
Kabila, leader of the people,
Got his fill?
His belly testifies.
But I want to know
If his country can grow
On the leftovers.
Kabila, Kabila, Kabila

"Eritrea's Daughter"

When the blood
Of Eritrean men
Floods Eritrea,
Our heroes grow
Again.
When the blood
Of Eritrean women
Floods Eritrea,
Our heroes grow
Again.
When the blood
Of Eritreans
Floods Eritrea,
We grow back
Again and again.

Knowledge

First the earth, then the plow:
So knowledge comes out of knowledge.
We know, we don't know.
We don't know we know.
We know we don't know.
We think
This looks like that --
This lemon, that orange --
Until we taste the bitter

We have men and women...
We have women and men....
Without end in the struggle
To grow, study and persist.
Who think and think again
To teach, learn and know...
Without the lust for power.
Who stand up or down
With our consent.
We have God and a future.
We have men and women
Who belong in our nation
And we belong with them....
We have women and men.
Rejoice.

Deny peace

You wear our crown of leaves
As long as we're free
To say yes without force.
As in the beginning,
This covenant sways
With each other's words,
Leading to the good
And holding us together
Not apart in the storm
To a stranger's delight.
This way ? That?
Around? Between?
With this crown of leaves
We meet heart to heart:
With much to learn, but smart
Enough to know what hurts.
We choose you
To wear our crown of leaves.
It possesses no magic
But our history and your name.

Reesom Haile's poetry by Charles Cantalupo

While focusing on and from Eritrean culture, Reesom Haile's poetry of resistance also has a global dimension as a part of, again in his words, "the indomitable struggle of humanity." He has a self-stated "mission...to create links between my country and the world." Celebrating a "genuine," "Eritrean culture" that expresses "the essence of human struggle," as he sees it, his poetry can simultaneously partake of a literary impulse that is universal, making a literary truism breathe new life. His "imagination" with his "poet's pen," in Shakespeare's words, "bodies forth / The forms of things unknown." He "[t]urns them to shapes, and gives to aery nothing / A local habitation and a name." But if the habitation is African, let the name be African. Let the word itself and the word "language" in African languages ring out all over Africa: *Mutauro, Ulwimi, Edi, Okasa, Asusu, Lolemu, Ulimi, Lakk, Ruthiomi, Lughha, Harsha, Luqha, Qwanqwa*. They are the medium and they are the message, adding up to Africa's greatest expression of freedom: *Amandla!* The resounding African word is universally understood - as if the story of Babel and the confusion of tongues were not true - by people of all walks of life, all ages and in many languages, local and international, from under the giant Sycamore trees of arid Eritrea to the elegant arts venues of downtown New York City; from the poor, local communities of Johannesburg, South Africa, or Newark, New Jersey to the halls of the world's most distinguished universities.

No one cultivates freedom in Tigrinya and the "local habitation" in Eritrea better than Reesom Haile does. Contained within his two bilingual - Tigrinya / English - collections of poems are myriad of subjects, including: gender equality, colonialism, foreign aid, the use of knowledge, bureaucracy, history, crime, priests, travel, daughters and sons, sisters and brothers, camels, books, education, homecomings, exile, money, computers, braggarts, religion, political leadership, hopes, delusions, bravery, civic responsibility, stars, God, illiteracy, ambition, divisiveness, survival, Satan, democracy, old friends, mothers and fathers, cities, small towns, cruelty, soccer, intolerance, impulsiveness, love, language, nightlife, freedom, writing, indecision, non-governmental agencies, learning, sex, super powers, bread, marital responsibility, competition, snails, American foreign policy, democracy, women's rights, global politics, casualties of war, love, the young, elders, the nature of advice, spousal abuse, cooking, cannibalism, coffee, self-image, sleeping together, proverbs, ethnic conflict, carousing, biblical stories, tourism, national identity, aging, values, the future, the pen, words, exile, shoes, masculinity, teaching babies to walk, videos of weddings, religious hypocrisy, history, body parts, suicide, funerals, taboos, freedom, independence, infidelity, flywhisks, community, temptation, unspeakable evil, spirits, old and new housing, frankness, circles, labor, ancestors, mothers, prayers, parenting, toys, food, starvation, war, donkeys, the millennium, Jews, Muslims, Christians, punctuation, political evil, weather, onomatopoeia, loss, wisdom, literature, peace, jokes, teachers, culture, hierarchy, individualism, letters, pastry, paper, poverty, hope, surnames, God, George Bush II, sacrifice, survival, African leaders, dictators, devils, language, relationships, regrets, dependable people, dissent, angels, and home - and often humorously. If there has ever been a poetry with something for everyone, this is it: which also accounts for the great popularity of Reesom Haile's poetry in Eritrea, yet which is now a major factor in his increasing, international acclaim.

His strong and prevailing sense of political struggle and ideals might be considered romantic if they were not so realistic and rooted in the unassailable Eritrean political experience of standing alone and winning a 30-year war for independence. Thus, joining ancient symbol and the modern Eritrean war for independence, he can directly and easily address his country's leader and, by extension, any national leader who needs to know the ultimate source of his or her power:

Words of appreciation from readers

Dr. Reesom:

I like your poems. I don't know if any one can describe the fabrics of our culture the way you do it, with your simple, yet culturally enriching poetic style. I like the way you do them. You go around and touch almost every aspect of our culture and way of life that you can put your hands on, and you give it the beauty and luster that it deserves. IMO, Your poems are not sentimental or whimsical so to say, but they are descriptive and straight to the point. With some more work, your collected works can be a biography of our cultural heritage. You are the moulder and shaper of a unique style of tigrinja poetry.

Hei.

I am a big fan of Dr. Russom's poems....I love them. But I didn't get a chance to own his books until recently. I would get one poem from here and one from there. Finally, I got one of his books from Amazon (I wonder why I didn't search in Amazon till now). Anyways, I got the book "we have our voices"...a selected Poems of Reesom Haile. The book has 56 poems along with their English translation by Professor Charles Cantalupo of Pen State University. For any one who has some interest in art/poetry, it is a great book to have it on your shelf. I didn't get his other books, and I hope I will get them, especially the one with the audio (and if you know how to get it, pls tell me).

Why I love Dr. Russom's work:

I love them, because they are full of art; they have beauty in them, there is creativity in them. They have full of humor. They are not a full page essay like other....they are short and precise. Unlike other Tigrigna poets which are usually loaded with heavy words, Dr. Russom's poems are constructed from the words of the ordinary guy. They are simple, yet they always have powerful message. They are original and you wonder how he used them to tell his message.

Well, I may not be good enough to explain the power of his work. You have to read them for your self to appreciate them. So, I encourage you to get the book. But for now get some flavor from the following two of my favorite (from among many in the book).

Quan-qua-na
E'zi quan-qua-na
E'zi Tigrigna
K-t-ea-m
Chew a'lewo!
K-lm-lm
Te-s-mi a'lewo!
K-qe-m-m
Ber-bere a'lewo!
K-f-g-m
A'xmi a'lewo!
Q-re-bwo qu-re-b'wo
Ae-s-te-ma-q-r'wo!

The message here is clear. The beauty is on how he creatively constructed the lines to express the message. It looks he is responding to those who claim 'Tigrigna dereq eyu, n'fkri kgelx ayk'aln eyu...can't be used to express ...this and that". Here, he is not only telling us that their claim is not true, that Tigrigna has all the qualities, but is also showing us it has the qualities through this poet and his choice of words. The Second of my favorite is Desta. Here is a PDF version of it.

THANK YOU so much for sharing this - I only wish it were a long documentary about his life and art. Dr Reesom Haile was such an amazing poet; he really modernized Eritrean poetry and made it accessible to the masses. Do have a look at this link where you can hear some of his audio recordings (my favourite has to be 'Ova Signora')

Hawka Michael

Remembering Dr. Reesom Haile is a video clip available in Youtube. Here is the link:

https://showyou.com/v/y-2ljLPgZ_vP8/remembering-dr-reesom-haile

End of life

Reesom Haile is Eritrea's best known poet, especially internationally. A poet and scholar with a Ph.D. in ... translations by Charles Cantalupo). He *died* in 2003. In 2004, 'Inside Africa', featured another story on *Reesom Haile*, prompted by his *death* in 2003. The segment included *Reesom Haile* reciting excerpts from his ... *Reesom Haile* is Eritrea's best known poet, especially internationally. A poet and scholar with a Ph.D. in ... translations by Charles Cantalupo). He *died* in 2003.

Dr. Reesom Haile wrote remarkably simple, but, at close inspection, deeply fascinating poems. Dr. Reesom burst into the scene in the early 1990s and in a short time had managed to introduce the Tigrigna language to a much wider world wide audience. He had his own style. Particularly his admirers remember his graceful reading of his poems to an American audience at George Mason University in Virginia. He had his audience mesmerized even though they had no clue what his poems meant. He was dressed in traditional clothing with his "gabi" over his shoulder. The four or so of his Eritreans compatriots, along with the rest of the audience, proudly sat listening in rapt attention. His delivery was impecable. He was graceful and very humble. His life ended at a relatively young age. His death came as a total shock to his fans and admirers. Many thousands of Eritreans world wide and many thousands more in Eritrea proper mourned his untimely death.



Tesfaledet Meharena pays tribute to Dr. Reesom Haile in a heartbreakin poetic farewell.

መልቲ

ዶክተር ሌሎም ፈይල
እንተ ተኋወለ አርሱች ብኩ
ፍልሰ እንተ በልሆ እነዚ በራሱ ስጋ
ዶቶረስ እያምተኝ እነሆንዳ ግዳ
ዓመት ዓመት ከም ንህበ በግድ
መዓደቱ ቅጽርና መዓደሩ ገብርበር
ስለ ታክስ ልቦ ባድኑ ገኗር
ስለ ጉዢች ታሪክ ብከር
መምህር በምንባኑ ይብተኑ ገንዘብ

ዶክተር ሌሎም ፈይල
ከብዕ ዓለም እንተ ተኋወለ
በርሃን በምንባኑ ፍብር መግዛዬ
ስሳይ በምንባኑ ለምለም ስሸላት
የአሳ በምንባኑ ገኗፅ መዓደቱ
በኩብር በኩች
እና ዕለት ባቂ ዘንበረለ ብኩ
ጥይቻ ይበለዋ ይኩኑ ፍብር ከምቀኑ
ጥይቻ ይበለዋ ይኩኑ ፍልጠት ከምቀኑ
ጥይቻ ይበለዋ ይኩኑ ታክስ ከምቀኑል::

እበደን

እበደን እው እበደን
ዶቶረስ እያምተኝ
ግብር እያተረሰቦን
ደንቅ እያተካብካን
እነዚ ልቦት እነዚ ያርሳነ::



The end / ተፈጻሚ

A wakeup call

Many countries in the world honor their heroes and commemorate them eternally by erecting statues, naming streets, parks, schools, universities and all sorts of institutions in their names. Eritrea has failed to remember its heroes in all spheres of life and fields including statesmanship, military, scholarships, arts, literature, religion, music and sports. It would be too long to list all the great Eritrean personalities from antiquity to the present. Even the heroes of the last 50 years who have not been recognized and honored are very many.

I believe many will agree with me that Eritrea has many amazing individuals in history who have done something unique to their country in the field of politics, culture, education, sport etc, which we need to remember them for what they have done. It is disheartening though not to see biography books of Eritreans in the library shelves. Lately I have decided to open a section in my website that will be dedicated to the biography of individual Eritreans from all walks of life in history (www.emnetu.com).

To start with I have randomly established a list of possible candidates. I therefore ask you all to put additional names to the list and return it to me. The list has to accommodate only individuals who have passed away. In other words we will concentrate only on post mortem biographies. I will update the list when I hear from you. The list will remain open all the time for additional names.

If you are positive about this idea and you have the time I would challenge you all to write biographical sketch or find individuals who can be interested to write a biography on any in the list. If you come across anyone who has access to information but not ready to write, you can ask him/her to supply the information to me in any format (paper, diskette, gramophone dish, cassette, videos, photographs etc) so that I can send it to the one who is interested to write.

The size of the file is not important at all. What is important is remembering them and trying to document their history before it disappears all together. The size will be determined only by the amount of information available on these individuals. Of course the individuals in the list must have done something positive to the cause of our country or to the well being of our people and our culture.

Emnetu Tesfay

A biographical sketch of Dr. Reesom Haile