

My whole body hummed with awe:
A marvellous stream of golden words!
But I was always wondering
If I were hearing truth or lies.

*We sure know how to lie
And make it seem true, too;
Also, we can speak true
Truth, if and when we like.*

They plucked and barked a laurel shoot,
Smooth and strong and white as bone,
Gave it to me, breathed into me
The breath that was the golden song.

*Now this voice is yours, and you
Will sing the words we sing, through you,
Of things that were, and will be,
And the births of gods and men.*

.....

SIYANDA QOTO

In Recovery

Day 1, Hung over

The minute hand ticks
and I, rigid, in a stupor, cataleptic,
squinting, gleaning,
almost in rigor mortis,
stiffening, flailing, catatonic,
non compos mentis,
full of beers, gin and tonic,
looking like a puff-no-pass
on a bag full of chronic.

Day 4, Alcoholics Anonymous

Monday, 30th October,
nightfall finds me sober;
been through this,
over and over,
now off to AA for cover,
where they say a prayer
about serenity, change and acceptance
and courage and something
about knowing the difference.
These are old men
still running their race:
"One day at a time,
we are going the distance."

Day 6, Good Grief

The weekend, according
to my friends in Gqeberha,
begins with Nompozolo's
Jam Sessions Kwa Nceba,
or, sometimes, with
Wine Wednesdays at Black Impala
at R50 a ticket
and you drink for *mahala*,
fielding their texts
and avoiding *wahala*.
On the straight & narrow
(for good this time), *mzala*.
"Congratulations, young blood.
We're proud of you. *Halala!*"
Six days on the wagon,
greys are fading into colour.

NOTE: *mahala* = free; *wahala* = trouble; *mzala* = cousin; *Halala* = congratulations