

NATIONAL HO
LAND RESE
TRESPASSERS

I am a **Migrant** Too!

POETRY BOOK



I AM A MIGRANT TOO

Poetry Book

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Visit **www.iom.org.za** to learn more about the IOM in South Africa

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FOREWORD

This poetry book is a collection of poems written by artists of all ages, backgrounds and diverse life experiences. All of them invite us to reflect on what migration means and how migration is part of human nature and a part of our lives. Ubuntu has no borders; migration has the potential to bring positive and, at times indispensable, economic and social contribution to our societies.

The poems in this book celebrate migration and advance our understanding of migration. The poems celebrate the richness in the diversity that migration brings but also share the similarities between migrants and host communities.

We used poetry as a means of driving the message because we believe poetry can be the foundation for change. Poets transform silence into language and action because in their art, in their words and contact with their audience they build a bridge of understanding of the most complex issues.

My sincere gratitude to all the poets, including young children, who submitted their artistic work to this competition. I was particularly impressed by the poems submitted by young writers as they share with us a raw and vivid expression of their life's experiences. Some of them won awards, some of them received honorary recognition but to us, you are all winners and thank you for your contribution in making the world a better place.

I also want to express my gratitude to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and the City of Johannesburg for their contribution in making the 'I AM A MIGRANT TOO' campaign a success.

We are all migrants, how many of us live today in the city of birth of our four grandparents? Not many. We are all children, grandchildren or great-grandchildren of migrants. It is rare to find people who have settled in one and the same place for numerous generations. Migration is in the DNA of mankind. Let us celebrate it!

We hope you enjoy reading these poems as much as we enjoyed selecting and compiling them for you. Thank you.

Dr. Erick Ventura
Chief of Mission a.i.
IOM South Africa



REMARKS FROM UNHCR

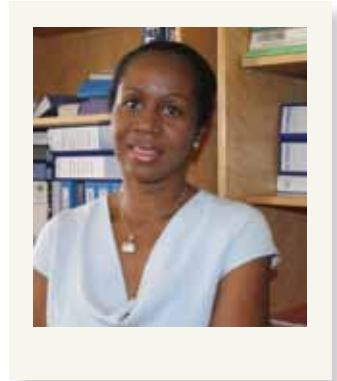
UNHCR is pleased to partner with the International Organization for Migration and the City of Johannesburg, for the I Am A Migrant Too poetry contest. Many migrants in South Africa were forced to flee their homes due to war, civil unrest, conflict or persecution in their home countries. Highlighting this as part of the International Migrants Day is most welcome.

The poetry entries from South Africans, migrants and refugees were indeed inspiring, making it very difficult to choose the best three. UNHCR extends our appreciation to all of the poets who thought about the topic and submitted poems for consideration. The poems that are included in this book show just how diverse the migrant community is in South Africa, as well as how many South Africans are willing to welcome migrants into their communities. That is definitely something to celebrate.

Refugees are migrants too.

Clementine Nkweta-Salami

UNHCR Regional Representative for Southern Africa



INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN

On 4 December 2000, the UN General Assembly, taking into account the large and increasing number of migrants in the world, proclaimed 18 December as International Migrants Day.

'I AM A MIGRANT TOO' campaign was launched by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in partnership with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and the City of Johannesburg to celebrate International Migrants Day in 2012. The campaign was aimed at sensitizing the South African public that migrants are an integral part of society; in fact, we are all either migrants or we are related to migrants.

The campaign helped promote peace and diversity by enabling South African communities to recognize that we are all – or have been at some point – migrants, and that migration should be therefore celebrated as part of our existence.

Many previous campaigns have focused on convincing host communities to accept and welcome migrants, in spite of their differences. While it is true that there is richness in the diversity that migrants bring, it is also true that there are a lot of similarities between migrants and host communities.

By also highlighting these similarities, namely that we are all in some way, migrants, the campaign hoped to make it easier for host communities to accept migrants.

AWARD RECIPIENTS

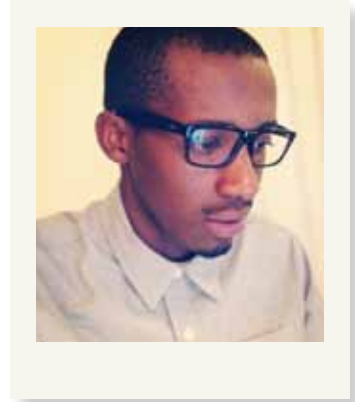
The world has become iKas'lam

Mzikayise Sithole

The vivid smells of Indian spices pass my nostrils,
As I tap my feet to the captivating sounds of Just A Band.
I gaze at this beautiful Somali woman passing by,
Indulgence takes over my thoughts,
Like a Nigerian meal does with my taste buds,
While watching Nollywood movies.
The world has become my neighbour.
The world has become my friend.
The journey has been shortened.

The world is in the neighbourhood.
Curiosity drives us to learn about it,
Insecurities will push us to judge it.
How can we be informed if we don't learn?
How will we protect what we claim is ours?

The world is closer.
You can hear its voice.
Understand its tongue.
Know its practices.
See its visions.
It is here to teach us what we don't know about ourselves.
Removing every perception and formed opinion.
Challenging our thinking.
Urging us to tell our stories,
And not let others do it for us.



“I am a migrant
that has never left his
birthplace,
But opened a door
to the one who left
theirs.”

We get to speak the same language.
Listen to the same music.
Share feelings.
Relate with each other.
At the end of it all, it isn't about what you have
But what we share.
We all have fears, ambitions, dreams; we are the same.
We just forget as we try to survive in the world we were
meant to live in.

I am a migrant that has never left his birthplace,
But opened a door to the one who left theirs.
I am a migrant that was looking forward to move out of
home,
But I have shed tears with those who miss their homes
everyday.
The world has been a great teacher,
I wasn't only enlightened about my brothers and sisters.
I got to perceive myself better.
Who I am, what I have and what to do with it.

The world is our home.

“I am a migrant that
was looking forward
to move out of
home,
But I have shed tears
with those who
miss their homes
everyday.”

I am a migrant too

Stella Mpisi

The hopes of a father, the dreams of a son
Abandoned in a country they once called their own
It all started when the civil war had begun
Forcing them to seek for peace in a country unknown
Their journey began with the fear of sadness
Heartbroken by the memories they were leaving behind
But down each cheek trickled a tear of gladness
For they believed that true happiness was what they'd find

A young girl leaves her parents and takes off on a train
A hopeful smile and wide curious eyes lighten up her face
And at the airport she boards her very first aeroplane
She looks at her shabby clothes and bows her head in disgrace
She arrives in the big city that her eyes have never seen
The dread builds up as she looks up to the scorching sun
Her heart beats faster, but what could this possibly mean?
A new vision, a new dream, a new life has just begun

There are many examples of migration that one can explore
Leaving your home, heading for a place you've never seen before
Some want peace, some want stability, and some just want so much more
Whatever the reason may be, we all search for that one open door
Migration affects us all though we're not always aware
But the truth is we are all migrants in way, and this we cannot forswear
And if you look around you, you'll find that amongst the people for whom you care
Some weren't always your neighbours, though now you breathe the same air

And as for me, this land on which I stand, I never always knew
Like many others, my parents had left their native country too
I've learnt to love this nation, and together we can accrue

And thus I am no longer ashamed to say that I am a migrant too



“Some want peace,
some want stability,
and some just want
so much more”

Genesis

Damian Oakes

Africa is the cradle of mankind
Tectonic plates shifted
Continents formed to be explored
Mankind's thirst for discovery
Motivation for migration
Settling in foreign lands
Movement is man's nature
Man is a nomad
We are migrants

Life commenced in Africa
Man's curiosity inciting exploration
Necessity; the mother of creation
Man's survival instincts engenders evolution
Pigmentation equates darker and fairer
Social constructs created 'White' and 'Black'
Fear creates boundaries
Segregation
There is no race
But the human race
I am a migrant, too

Human nature
Ever seeking greener pastures
Ever-evolving
Globalised world
Influx of people
Traversing man-made frontiers
Seeking sanctuary
Conflict, famine, drought
Some seeking Eldorado



“ We are one
We all share the
same sun
We all breathe the
same air... ”

Others seeking nourishment
Global warming
Hearts of men remaining cold
Jealousy
Fuelling hostility
Man consumed by hate
Man's inner animal manifests
Divide and rule
Absence of humanity
Lust for power
Corrupting absolutely
We are our worst enemy
I am a migrant, too

Revise one's history
Oneness of man
Unity, love, humanity
Universal values
Solution to today's problems
Replacing natural disasters
With human nature;
Solidarity, unity, love
We are one
We all share the same sun
We all breathe the same air
We all bleed red
Similarities outweigh differences
I am a migrant, too
Aren't you ?

“ ...We all bleed red
Similarities outweigh
differences
I am a migrant, too
Aren't you ? ”

HONOURABLE MENTIONS (TOP 10)

I am a migrant too

Raphael Griffiths

As day turns to night and darkness darkens the skies.

The only gleam of lightness, is a twinkle from the luminous stars and selenic light

I see my fellow brothers and sisters

In search for inner riches and pursuit for greener pastures

Cautiously crossing borders, jumping fences,

Manoeuvring their movements through thorny bushes and swampy rivers

Risking direful disastrous dangers of being devoured by crocodiles

Or injurious after effects of girls being molested by paedophiles

But even the thought of these dreadful horrific horrors

Never seems to dim the colour of the greenery scenery they expect once they cross over

A greater sense of accomplishment

That opens a gateway for further development

Fills their hearts once they are on the other side

A task that fulfilled a long felt need indeed

A need for a new beginning, need for a better life, need for a change

Smiles on their faces, but behind the smiles

You can see a trail of the grotesque traces they have left behind

Only to be welcomed with discrimination and brutality, oppression and irrationality

For mere difference like nationality

We are not one and the same they told

Divided by borders and born miles apart

They'll never get a glimpse of the silver and gold

Some are being assaulted while most are being forced to depart

The greener pastures now seem dull and they had no clue

Having slight heart attacks every time they see the man in blue

If you assaulting them, assault me
If you deporting them, deport me
For I am I migrant too
The fact that my forefathers came from foreign lands is no fairy-tale
Branches of South African, Zambian, Malawian, Portuguese, and
English form part of my family tree
My roots are rooted in 54 sovereign states
As the blood that flows in my veins is the same blood as my African brothers and sisters
We connected heart to heart
Therefore I feel the same pain as my Congolese people when I see the war in DR Congo
Same pain the Sudanese felt about the war in Darfur
Same pain from the genocide in Somalia
Starvation in Ethiopia
Humanitarian needs in Togo
Child trafficking in Burkina Faso
Same pain I felt about the xenophobia attacks in South Africa

Our continent is filled with so much pain and agony
So let's embrace our diversity
It's not about our ethnicity or sociolinguistic identity
Our roots go way beyond borders
So let's share every fruit we bare

I am a migrant too

Godel Sefu

I was born citizen of a great and beautiful country
In the heart of the African Continent
My resources attracted ethnic conflicts and unending wars
And today, with millions of my people, I am a migrant too

My mother just passed on twelve months ago
In the Eastern province of the DR. Congo
Where I am from and could no longer reach
To bury her with dignity, cause I am a migrant too

I have run my country for protection and humanity
And have been welcomed by hatred and xenophobia
That looted, killed innocents and burned people alive
And “Kwerekwere” will I be called ever, as I am a migrant too

I thought of finding a space to survive and enjoy some rights
But came to live and beg on the streets of Johannesburg
Undermined, facing theft, crime and bad weathers
And could not raise my voice, cause I’m a migrant too

I thought my disability could attract some humanity
But just pictured how much different I was
With not enough right of services based on a given paper
That limits access and human rights, cause I am a migrant too

And then, my beautiful daughter born South African
Asked me once “papa why am I not called Congolese like you?”
I said “my love, your birth here and my blood in you say it all,
You, my South African ‘Chandelle’, you are a migrant too”

No need to hate, no need to fight each other, blood of Africa!
Let bless and live the beauty of Nelson Mandela’s dream
That sees the future of the African continent
On the shoulder of those who have dreamt and came to suffer.

I am a migrant too

Kabelo Mazibuko

I am a migrant to a city no one calls home
A traveller from the deep villages of Mpumalanga
As parents got tired of working in the sugar cane farms
And they decided to move to a city well known as the city of gold
That is Johannesburg
Where I am a migrant

I am a migrant at a place where everyone looks for a better life
A place where only the smartest survive
A place where friends and neighbours are the people you don't trust
A place where everyone is an opportunist

I am a migrant in hunt of a better life and education
But to make it this far took a lot of dedication
The high building and fancy lifestyles where my inspiration
It was a long journey but I had the motivation
Yes I am also a migrant

At first I had difficulties to adapt
Because I was used to living around people who only spoke Swati
But here all African languages and languages from other continents were used
I even failed to make friends because I could not even greet
But as time went by I managed to adjust

I became able to speak the languages and it was easy to communicate
Life got much better
Daddy got a well-paying job
Education got more advanced
Now we live a decent life

I as person see migration as a good thing
It also needs to be celebrated
We can celebrate it experiencing its impact
By moving from one place to the other
By learning to adapt to other cultures and beliefs

Migration helped me to understand life
To understand other cultures
To understand peoples lifestyles
I am like a vulture in search of its food
And I am proud migrant
THIS IS ME, MYSELF AND I

I am a migrant too

Lucky Mongezi

I am the seismographer the calibrates
The impending earthquake in the spirit of the times
I am a migrant too because I am the citizen of the world
I am indeed a migrant too, whether on land, river or sea

I migrated, not by my own volition
But in bondages
The tyranny called poverty
And the carnage called unemployment
I migrated across the ocean of the word regardless of life constraints
I migrated
I migrated across the rivers
Of the planet earth with the intention of
Looking for paradise

I don't know how many trees, roads and grasses that
I passed from Northern Freestate to Johannesburg
I can't even remember how many hills, bridges and mountains that I passed
Migration has compelled me to be homeless but I strongly refuse
Migration has tried million times to tantalise
My soul but I resisted.

I can celebrate migration from North and South Pole
I can strongly celebrate migration from the North to the Southern hemisphere
I can indeed celebrate it from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean
I can even celebrate in the middle of the equator

I am a migrant too because I am a poet and citizen of the world
Viva migration Viva

A migrant I am too

Mamma Mpyana

A situation of starvation it was
And hope for prosperity
That lead to migration
Green pastures it was, forces that attracted
Due to poverty, forces that repelled
This made me...
Which is why I am a migrant too

The change need made me migrate
YES, the yearn to upgrade
I couldn't stand to degrade
I want to stand
However, human beings don't understand
As they stand on my beings
Like am of no being...

Migration flows in my blood corpuscles,
Inherited from my ancestors chromosomes
In search of a better living state
Just like the colonist that colonized my African soil.

An unseen precious diamond I am
The unfortunate is I
As I arrived to planet earth
The confused because I
As I start to search
The dreamer is I
As I walk don't this path
The migrant is I
As I move to prove my workability strength

God never lied as he said, that
The unlucky is us on earth for danger and evil is on our way
To fight us day and night...
Being not of your nature in your eyes affected
Dislike grew to make me neglected
The truth always reflected
That you and I don't belong, we migrated

I suffered the struggle
Walking back and forth like I mingle
With all my strength I fight this battle
For God gave us a challenge we can't conquer

All effects that affected
Built a strong person within me
As of today I can live the reality of my dreams
Just like those who can't claim to own this land
Even if it doesn't belong to them

Whether I belong or not
Whether I origin or not
Whether whatever it may be
Migration starts ugly before it gets beautiful

Like you
A migrant I am too

I am a migrant too

Clerence Gugulethu Ndlovu

I may toss, toil on the soil
The soil of the betrayed, the lost and the found
I never chose to be who I am
I never chose to be looked down upon
And I never chose to be a migrant
What can build a man, man can also destroy
No boundary can keep away those who starve
No fence can be barrier
To those who are scared to die
Everything started somewhere
I never invented migration
Neither did I condone it
What can I only do
Is to put a smile on my face
Look you straight in the eyes
And say don't hate me
I am a migrant too
The Bantu people migrated from North to South
Yan Van Riebiek migrated from Europe to Africa
Father Gonzalo Da Silveria migrated from Portugal to Mozambique
Our fathers migrated all over the world during the colonial struggle
We all migrated for different reasons
Swallow your pride and join me in my poem
I am a migrant too
I am a migrant too
Our skin colour might look different
Yes our languages may differ
But under the skin we are all the same
All created in God's image
Life is in the blood not the skin
Let our little boys leave pangas and carry pens
Let our little girls wipe their tears and say

We are people and proud
Put your hands with mine
Join me in my bronze car travelling on a silver road and we will reach the golden destination
Let's respect our differences and share our difficulties
The time is coming
When every drop of honey of every bee
Will feed every child in all corners of the world
But for now agree with me when I say
We are all nothing but a pen in the hands of an author
The is light at the end of the tunnel
I am a migrant too

The identity of an unknown migrant

Theresa Takarupiwa

I walk with my head held high
Stepping on the land beneath me
I pretend it burns...just to get attention
I call it my land simply because
I walk and talk like I own it
Just because i can get everyone to,
they admire me, they want to be me
Simply because they are meer migrants or so I call them

I am a citizen of this land
I tell them with passion just to sink their hearts
If only they knew what i know
If only they knew how I want to be just like them
In actual fact I am like them I am a migrant too
The only thing is my identity is unknown
Hidden underneath a web of lies and dead history

The very same reason you are a migrant is why I am one
We may call ourselves citizens of this land
We allow our minds to penetrate far and trespass
into finer lands with greener pastuers
Does that not make me a migrant
Unlike the migrants we despise
I cowardly conceal this
I have fancy names for this kind of migration
Fantasy is it not so,
Why not just admit it...
I am a migrant too

Why not celebrate this migration
Applause it for its benefits us
Like slaves the very same migrants work bent-double
I sure would also love to behold such glory
I am a migrant too

If only I could defy this gravity
If only I could let out a cry
Louder than that of thunder,
I would scream out loud and say...
I AM A MIGRANT TOO!!!

Branches from the same tree

Lucky Kunene

Cold ripples of ice blocks run down my spine
When I think of the thin line that draws hatred
Between you and I, for both you and I
Should be living in the world that milks out custard from a generous cow
Don't you think?

For both you and I we should be drinking pure milk
From the wine glass and feeding caramel chocolate
From lip to lip not drinking water from dirty toilets
Don't you see?

You and I should not be turned into the crops of anger and hatred
You and I should be listening and dancing to the contemporary African jazz
And make movements to our melodious sweet African voices
Don't you think?

You and I should turn our brutal hands to paint graffiti of love
Paint the trees that bear toffee-apples in the beautiful African mountains
In celebration of the worth of one another and solidify our unity
Don't you see?

You and I force words the words to paint smiles?
But still my tongue, your tongue, our tongues are imprisoned
To see differences in our images but still we say
We are both the images of God.
Still don't you see we are the branches from the same tree?
And we are all foreigners in our own rights

Let it be known

Xitha Makgeta

I Am A Migrant Too

I come from distant lands through narrow paths of night vigils in the bush

Chasing lights of cities that hold our dreams

We sleep under the stars and count them as blessings and the moon blanket our sleep

We dream more

Of flushing toilets and rates and taxes

Masks instead of faces

Awake!! Oh, child, the city is of many things

So we cross path with destiny

Our past stare at the depth of our spirit

We've seen it all, the war, poverty that make us celebrate this journey

So let it be known, we came this far cause we are citizens of the world

I am a migrant too

Written by Astrid Bulu grade

I, am migrant
in the city of Johannesburg
looking for peace, calm and
future for a better life

And here is Johannesburg
full of my desire, hopes
and courage that makes me
forget about the past,
believe that makes me focus
in the future

Johannesburg here I come,
as a migrant
have a vision to fight for life,
to have a better future,
to forget my past
Thank you, for welcoming me
And am here to stay.

Ferdinand

I AM AN Migrant too

WAR! WAR!

WHY ARE YOU SO EVIL

BECAUSE OF YOU I'M AN

MIGRANT IN A FOREIGNER

COUNTRY. I DON'T

KNOW WHERE TO START MY

LIFE.

WAR WHY ARE YOU SO CRUEL

TO ME BECAUSE I MISS MY

SWEET HOME CONGO.

Ajencia Sibonda

Our nation has invaded my land powerful and
 without number. Our Journey, it has level waste my
 vines and ruined my fig-tree, it has stripped off
 our bark and thrown it away, leaving our branches
 white. Our Journey, we have the teeth of a lion, the
 fangs of a lioness. On our way then we heard what
 sounded like a great multitude like the roar
 of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder
 shouting. Our sense of smell is, our Journey
 is very sharp like a razor. Then heard a
 voice saying wake up and go on a long Journey.
 We cared for each other in a desert of burning
 heat. We walked until our feet hurt, I landed
 in a beautiful country. I close my eyes and I just
 see a better day

I am we are migration

Michelle Francis

I migrated from dusty streets where violence and poverty played lullaby while I sleep
A place where you had to fight to stay alive either you do or you die
This place nurtured my fears and tainted my soul
It was my sanctuary and my hell
The motivation I needed to excel
To dream of something better,
Somewhere silent
I migrated from dusty streets to urban roads where my neighbours were ghosts
Where silence is too loud and fear still overwhelms most
I migrated from dreaming, to wanting, to doing
I migrated geographically, mentally and spiritually and realized
We are so different but yet so alike
The names of our streets, towns, cities or countries may vary
The colour of our skin, eyes, the texture of our hair
The culture, language and believes
Yet we are the same
We love
We hope
We learn
We grow
We fall
We cry
We survive
We Migrate
I am we are Migration

FINALISTS

I am a migrant too

Portia Dube

Most of you have so long gone away from your families
You have migrated in search for greener pastures
Now that you have tasted this palatable grass,
I bet you will not cease to graze
So many things have changed
And lives have changed for the better

Looking back from where we come from
I can boldly say migration is an achievement
Sometimes we live in fear
Not knowing what the foreign places have for us
In some, we find hatred and violence
But in some, love and peace

Our expectations are so great and our future bright
As we continue to gain knowledge and experience about life
All this we have obtained through migration
All of us are born with dreams,
Which keep us on our toes
Looking for better days ahead

Who would have thought you would have achieved this much by now?
In the end, some will just sit around
Talking about how good the old world was
Some will become gangsters but some will make it in this life
All I can say is that I will neither judge nor discriminate against anyone
Why? Because I am a migrant too

I am a migrant too

Thabiso Monnya

I am a migrant too

My stepfather is a migrant, i am a migrant too,
I made excuses not to invite friends at home, Because of what they might utter "migrants"
Though my sisters were proud to be Malawians, i was ashamed.

migration brought me a father, a father i never had
migration wiped tears in my mother's eyes.
migration opened another window, when the other window closed for me.
for my stepfather migrated from Malawi armored with honest and unconditional love.
a gift a honour and appreciate everyday

I am twenty-five now and after nineteen years, i still call him papa
but he now call me his friend.
a migrant raised me when no one bothered
I am a migrant too
Ere, i wonder what i could have become, if he never migrated in to my life.
I have more relatives now to be lonely, because i can now tweet from mzanzi to Bujumbura.
Years had passed and seasons too, since my friends came to know him
they call him a father i will forever be grateful to, i concur.

when nimbus gathered in our country and our rainbow nation,
Before it became a rainbow, was a blazing
Our grandfathers and grandmothers were migrants too
Neither were they refused shelter nor treated inhumane
Or their outcry laughed in lampoon
Our ubuntu herald us to love one another, to embrace one another.

I pray to those who will migrate to be tolerated, not terrorized
I pray to those who know a migrant to show love not loathsomeness,
You who are migrants, i am a migrant too
Lets embrace each other, like the children of the same womb.

Goma

Jauffre Basubi

No light brightens this strange path I walk.
Every back faces me.

Stranger to the surroundings,
where I originated from.
Few children cried,
most women were silent.

An evil curtain has descended,
I suffered from the effect.
The words I thought ...
But never dared to unfold the stories they hold.

Gun sounds called fear,
the perils of human lives begin.
Where life becomes meaningless,
wherever we are Migrant.

These feelings my mind hold back,
a cloud of devastation ...
constructing my every thought,
a stranger on a familiar path.

I spent the night reliving clips,
horrifying tactics hold my peace.
Some turn out to be monsters,
others heroes.

A date which women live in infamy,
feeling of pride was suppressed.
So many women migrated mentally,
where nonexistence becomes existence.

Does my journey have no end,
will I ever find rest?

Democratic shadow I stand long night,
lift my eyes beyond the shining oppression.
I lock the doors and in a sense I become a migrant,
there has been a stony danger deafening my migration.

I go from a corruptible citizenship,
to an incorruptible refugee status.

Migration calls a reality upon me,
enormous solicitude affect me every day.

Even if knowing migration transforms and relieve,
as a beautiful symphony of brotherhood.
We must celebrate our pursuit of happiness,
every minute,

Goma.

I am a migrant too

Itumeleng Motama

Coming from the dusty village of Limpopo
Kua dithabeng tša Mamabolo
Moving from taxi to taxi, seat to seat
Just to make sure I make it to the big city
Called Johannesburg
I am a migrant too

A migrant born of heroes and heroines
Heroes and heroines who are also migrants from somewhere
Heroes and heroines who would not tolerate oppression
Intention not to cause tribulation
But achieve liberation of option
I am a migrant too

We all tried so hard to be where we are
Just having to deal with favourism
Having to deal with racism
Having to deal with tribalism
Having to deal with disrespecting abantu
And forget about ubuntu
But then again...
I am a migrant too

Now here I am
Trying so hard to settle in the big city
Trying so hard to be part of the society
Trying so hard to live in this complicated
And sophisticated world, full of corruption
And full of discrimination

But then again...
I am a migrant too

But whoever we may be
Whatever our immediate interest
However much baggage we carry from our past
As an African this is an achievement of
Which I am proud of
Proud without reservation
And proud without any feeling of hesitation

We might be of different races
We might speak different languages
We might come from different tribes
But we are all migrants from somewhere

Even me too

Mesfin Demisse

fled since childhood
unstable neighbourhood
endless civil war shake
uncertain to go back

discontinue the journey
to reach a destiny
limited by unknown
evil advance as human

victim of hatred
poor one exposed
drink through emotion
to relief painful tention

tiny bat in a cave
sheltered dark life
who have hope in God
seeks protection from bad

subject to be asked
wise man keeps little word
the one sleep intentionally
can not listen totally

citizen of the world
inner potential sitted
one day as I discharged
tentional tiresome wound
Have the scar erased , if...it would

I AM A MIGRANT TOO!

MY LIFE AS A MIGRANT
HAS CHANGED FOR THE BETTER.
NO LONG WALKS NOR I HAVE TO
WALK TO GET TO SCHOOL ...

CHANCES ARE GIVEN - TO REACH
FOR THE STARS AND SHINE.

MY LIFE AS A MIGRANT STUDENT
ACCELERATES SPECIAL IRREGULARITIES
IN ME. I CAN LEARN TO READ - I CAN
READ TO LEARN.

I AM A MIGRANT TOO!

WHAT MAKES ME A MIGRANT
ARE OPPORTUNITIES I WANTED TO
GRANT. MY LIFE IS MORE PROMISING
NOR I HAVE PROMISED MY LIFE THAT
THERE'S STILL MORE TO WHAT I'M
LEARNING NOW.

MIGRATION AFFECTED ME. I GAINED
EDUCATION. SOMETHING THAT CANNOT
BE TAKEN AWAY, SOMETHING THAT
KEEPS ON GROWING AND MAKING ME
A BETTER PERSON. LIVING IN A
BETTER REGION, SEEKING PEACE,
PROSPERITY AND HARMONY.

I AM A MIGRANT TOO !

ONE WAY TO CELEBRATE MIGRATION.

IS TO REMEMBER THOSE WHO DIED
FOR OUR LAND. IS TO REMEMBER
WHERE WE CAME FROM - OUR ROOTS.

IT IS BEST CELEBRATED WHEN WE
ALL KNOW, WE CAME FROM SOMEWHERE
THAT'S WHY WE ARE HERE.

Marcia Mbatha

A badge of migration

Khoeli Pholosi

Driven by the drunkenness of their minority rule,
they hounded me out of the land of my birth.
In exile I was bewildered, alone and lonely;
a pathetic migrant in a faraway land.

In the face of adversity I struggled to survive;
one lemon a time I took to turn into lemonade
and thus trumped exiled life's austere odds.
't was truly a triumph of human resilience.

In truth we all wear a badge of migration,
whatever our creed, colour and conscience.
We're rootless and ever on the move.
In us all is a yearning for freedom, dignity and peace.

Now cometh the hour to honour our Ubuntu,
a time to celebrate our unity in diversity;
a moment of reflection that All life is One.
Let's all cry out: 'One people, one planet, please!

I am a migrant too

Poloko Paul Mofokeng

I Am a Migrant Too
Call migration an ancient tale
Familiar and easily remembered like fables
I am a migrant too
Young man engulfed with yesterday's memories
From Maloti a Lesotho
Indeed migration is not limited to our borders
I live equally in two worlds
And I'm making a living fatsheng la baditjhaba.
Today I pen down letters to provoke misguided minds
Candidly refusing to be called a foreigner
In this beautiful continent of Afrika
I am a migrant too
A definition of movement from two places
But not a logo to be seen like a misnomer

My home town is a stone- throw away from few borders
I can blow a whistle only to be heard ka hara naha
Somehow I'm related to one South African patriot
Migration is just another term for historical divisions
Indeed historical plights are too complex and rigid
Sometimes malicious like euthanasia!
SA, the land of harmony, here is my home too
'Away' is an amazing place
I heard that migration gave birth to a rainbow nation
We are now diverse like lilies
Call migration an ancient tale
Its tune is eternal like songs of canaries.

I said I am a migrant too but
Not a tool to be used by pimps
Hear me loud and clear with an accent ya Basotho
I value respect more than the diamonds I left back home
And I'd be honoured to be called Kgabane
Here I joined the likes of economic refugees
Brothers and sisters sent here by different ordeals
Some genocide and others education
Like them, I Am a migrant Too.

I am a migrant too-Mother Africa

Thokozane Mzila The Prophecy

After years of existence

This dear child we have named Freedom

Natured by Mother Africa and her descendants

People who resemble her every imperfection

Be it a pimple,blackhead,white head,ect

People from the top of her split ends in Ra's Al Abyad to her beautiful toes at the tip of the Cape Agulhas

Her twisted smile hiding the wickedness of her distasteful tongue

She feeds me lies about how so much has changed

Yet I still see hatred and pain

The suffering beyond adjectives, have we no shame?

Her heartbeat,the master of equivocation, has skipped a beat to the people it has failed

Whilst pockets deepen with riches

Sand fills the inner coils of little cracked hands

Bloated stomachs are the face of humanity

Africa falls to her knees at the hands of the greedy

Brothers,sisters,mothers,fathers are we not better?

I and you were once strangers in this foreign land

Yet I see ghetto judges put the death penalty into practice on our neighbours who fled the same

Have we no shame?

Have the ideals of Biko,Luthuli,Sobukwe,Mandela,Tambo and Sisulu amongst others fallen on deaf ears?

Who cares? They say as they have their way

The wicked whip lashes glide graciously across the skin,each opening wound a memory to be remembered, each tear a story to tell

I say,brothers,sisters,mothers and fathers are not better?

Are we not migrants too? Have we alternated from Ubuntu bonke to Umuntu yedwa?

What has happened to what makes us...distinctly African...?

I am a migrant too

Khomotso Mosese Leshaba

While I was starving in a tunnel full of darkness,
I saw a green light to a place of gold, Gauteng,
Without hesitation, I followed the light with happiness,
What a sigh of relief! Here I am migrating,
Was it a forced migration? No! It was an economic migration.

I am a migrant too, in Gauteng,
Among other migrants from various countries of origin,
From Mpumalanga, I flee my forefather's dwelling,
A place with hopeless dreams and endeavors,
And I came across a new destination so appealing.

In it I found everlasting happiness,
Not forgetting a long-lasting comfort through emigration,
Hold on! I found money in abundance,
Was it a forced migration? No! It was a labor migration,
Nonetheless, like others, I am a migrant too.

It's a new door to a new life,
It's like a new dawn to a new day,
Against criticism and discrimination I survive,
Suddenly, hard work and determination pay,
Proudly, I am a migrant too.

Thanks to migration that I'm multicultural,
Because of various ethnic groups I came across,
Thanks to migration that I'm multilingual,
New languages, skills, and techniques arose,
Consequently, I celebrate migration because I'm a skilled migrant.

I am and you are a migrant too,
Through labor migration I earn a living,
Through migration I created new friends too,
And I explore diversity of cultures in migrating,
Therefore, I am proudly a migrant too.

Let migration be not subjected to xenophobia,
Let migration be subjected to freedom of movement,
All because I am and you are a migrant too

I am a migrant too

Nyasha Dafi

I flow in the streets of the unknown
Caressing lands I am unfamiliar with
Walking with a little fear
Speaking with no remorse
Transferred from the North
Residing in the South
A home away from home
I am a migrant too
When I wave and smile at you
When I speak my speech, making sure it's all truth
You and I, siblings from distant mothers
We all pray to entities that live far above us
From far away places we are, yet we all need fathers
I am a migrant too
We are all the same
Experiencing moments of pain and wincing
Tears paraphrasing the sadness
Wet cheeks like we are standing in the rain
When we suffer injustices, we get explosive some kind of insane
But at the end of it all, we are all the same
Whether you took the bus from Giyani
A kwaito blasting taxi from Mabopani
Flew to OR Tambo International in '04
Or travelled from Rusape in early 1994
We are all migrants circling in this world
We are one and the same
You are me and I am you
I am infinitely a migrant too

I am a migrant poet

Enock Shishenge

My heart desires the beauty of green mountains;
The valleys and streams of generosity of Mazimbu;
The red roses and flowers of Matola;
I am a migrant poet

This is just a voice of desire and gratitude
To the village and towns of Tanzania and Mozambique
For being homes away from home
For this migrant poet

An admiration of an eye is so sweet to pronounce;
Tanzania your hands are warm and caring;
Mozambique your face is full of smiles;
To this migrant poet

Morogoro you are so sweet and calm
Maputo you are so cool and bright
This is the beauty of being a travelling poet
I am a migrant poet

I am a foreigner; I am a nomad;
I am wander; I am migrant poet
To litter verses in all nations
I am a migrant poet

I am a migrant too

Wisani Maluleke

I AM A MIGRANT TOO

Just started like a ticking clock.....

How splendid a salutation the sun stretches to the foothills!

It is Green, Red, yellow, blue, black and white

Somewhere over the rainbow, way up high

From nothing to something one can be one day

From place to another

Even in my birth land I remain the migrant

It is a voyage, it is life one deserves

Where the nation don't lift up sword against one another

Where everything is connected to African roots

Where boulevard is too voluptuous and precarious, but yet the land is caring

Where the fortune is to discern oneself

Where we all go up- -or else all go down--as one nation

I will go and keep on going 'cause I am a migrant too

Happy is the nation with history, Good or bad

It made me who I am today

I am a migrant too....

I am a migrant too

Nthabiseng Ngoasheng

I heard the call
from yonder
Perked my ears
to the distant drum
Doe eyed
and gangly legged
I summoned
warriors
From book
and mind...
Said a prayer
to the Mother
of nations
to guide my
every step
Clambered
for untold wisdoms
_from every crevice
Every mountain
Every journal and
classroom too...

I Am a child
of this world
In search for gold
As I search for me
Hailing from
Limpopo
Rooted in the heart
of Africa
Yearning for the East
And (yes) the wildest
of wild Wests
Because I,
am a migrant too

And I live
on the wingspan
of my dreams

Reflection

Felly Thema

That giddy feeling of love
That refuses to listen to rationale
Or be restricted by borders
Or overwhelmed by language barriers
Or the plaintive wailing of relatives
That swallows the fear of the unknown
Or the tales of crimes most atrocious
Or the pain of leaving the familiar
That giddy feeling of love
That propels me ever forward
And inspires me to embrace totally new things
And finds me emeshed in a cultural melting pot
And having hopes and aspirations for a land not of my birth
That giddy feeling of love
That has me gazing at the horizon
And watching the clouds flit across the sky
And the sun's rays tickle the earth
And I am content just knowing that like millions and gazillions of others
I am a migrant too.

I am a migrant too

Yamkela Sigwili

We are poor souls who are often searching
Looking and seeking in most strange places
We go where people would call 'disgusting'
We are not afraid to get dirty
Chasing our dreams

I'm the listener, often listen to what is not being said
I'm the eye that lies awake
I see beyond what is shown
I ace the most complicated equations
I am migrant too

I'm a girl who is from green field
The richness of the soil
Where mountains never meet but were once together
Still they make a marvelous couple
Where I see the beauty of a child through the dust on their faces
Where I see a true smile through their dirty teeth
When something is true nothing makes it less truthful
I'm from where the rivers flow like the crowd dances to the beats
Kwantu the Xhosa land

uBom yi ntsikelelo
Kwaye wamkele
uBom yi mpumelelo
Kwaye womelele

My inspiration is not just from the modern
It's not just from the feet that fit on a high heel
But from where the feet touches the ground and feels the sand

I am an internal person
I give the external through my work of writing
I am migrant too
Because we meet and greet on the four way path
Where one is from the West, South and North
I'm from the Eastern side of the Cape
I am migrant too

I am a migrant

Joseph Musiyambiri

From the dusty street of a place I called home,
Restless thoughts of a new life hounded me
Life wasn't the same, everything around me had changed
Here I am sitting in my room at night
Thinking hard about life
I had to begin a new journey,
A new life, a new dream

A new place, new surrounding, new culture
Where dreams are real and full of opportunities
Neither did I know how tough life would be
I walk through alleyways and highways,
Which connect to the heart of Jozi
In search of Gold
Golden horizon, Golden thoughts

An inner guide helps body to explore,
Create meaning of life,
Detour from the real world.

Along these routes,
Body seeks a dwelling
and to be nourished.

Life is not as easy as it seems
But some days,
eyes gaze out the window.
Looking for that dream,
Buried in my own thoughts i stare into the future,
How I long to explore the culture around me.

Adrenalin circuits the body in anger,
To sweat out knots in the system.

Later, as it cools a stillness ensues.
This is the end of the contest.
No job, no food, no place to sleep.
I knows how thought-forms jolt and tingle.
As it unplugs from these
the spine above the head
distils a higher voltage.

I look down pondering on my next move
towards the next domain,
lit up by high expectations.

Before it goes
It reveals the meaning of "I am a migrant"
I now have a new home, a new life
Surrounded by love
I have learnt the language of love,
I have been accepted by communities
And now most of my friends are locals

And "i am a migrant"

I am a migrant too

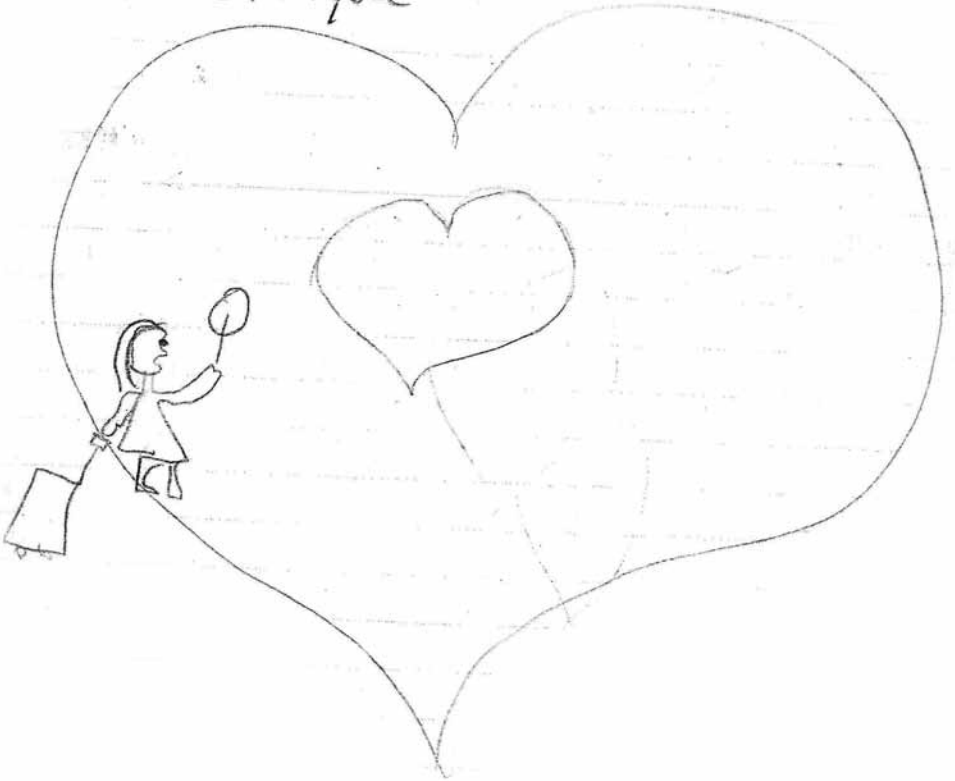
Jubilee Kukeka

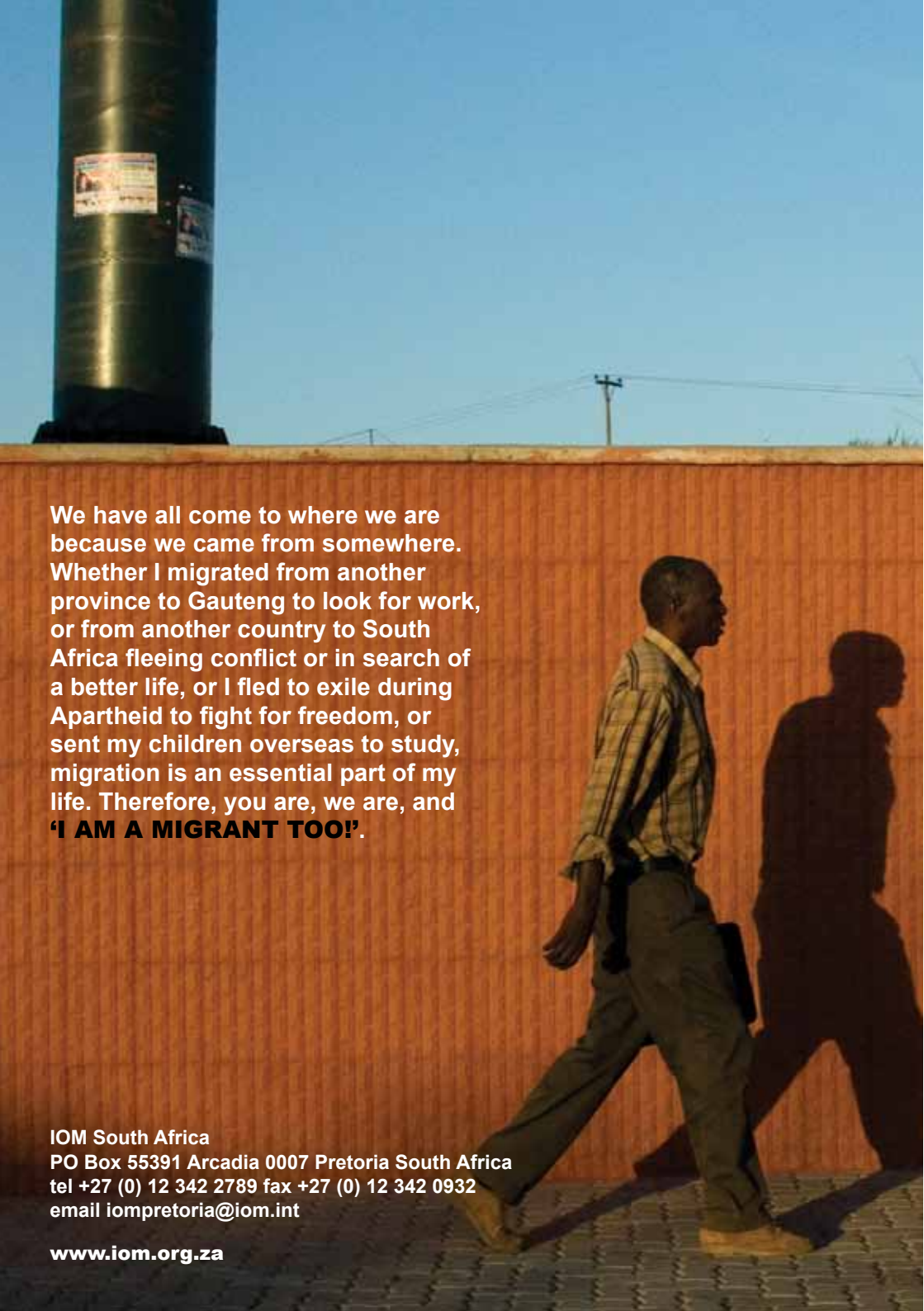
We all come from somewhere
Limpopo, Mpumalanga, Kwa-Zulu Natal
We are going somewhere
Gauteng, Western Cape, Northern Cape
To day we are here, tomorrow we are there
We move from one place to another
Because we seek for a bigger, better
And brighter life. And that life
Includes education, success, changes in
The communities for the better
A life where we work, strive and achieve
The greatest challenges in life
A life where change the world into a peaceful and priceless place
From the wildness of Mpumalanga, wonders of Kwa-Zulu Natal
Mysteries of Limpopo the breadth
Taking city of Gauteng
I am a migrant too

I am not an enemy, stranger or destroyer here
But a brother, sister, a friend that education with you
I have travelled through thick and thin to be where I am
You may judge a look by its corer
Because it's torn and not eye-etching
I am a book that is educated, proud and peaceful because
I am a migrant too

A migrant who is prepared to make
A positive change in the communities
Who would have thought that an
Ordinary girl like me would have persuaded her dreams
How far would you go to unlock the doors of your future
As a migrant I know because you are a migrant
And I am a migrant too

Thank you



A man in a plaid shirt and dark trousers is walking from left to right across a paved area. He is walking past a wall made of vertical wooden slats. His shadow is cast onto the wall behind him. In the background, there is a clear blue sky, a utility pole with wires, and a large black cylindrical structure on the left side of the frame. The overall scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

We have all come to where we are because we came from somewhere. Whether I migrated from another province to Gauteng to look for work, or from another country to South Africa fleeing conflict or in search of a better life, or I fled to exile during Apartheid to fight for freedom, or sent my children overseas to study, migration is an essential part of my life. Therefore, you are, we are, and **'I AM A MIGRANT TOO!'**

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