

**City Johannesburg by Mongane Wally Serote**

- 1 This way I salute you:  
My hand pulses to my back trouser pocket  
Or into my inner jacket pocket  
For my pass, my life,
- 5 Jo'burg City.  
My hand like a starved snake rears my pockets  
For my thin, ever lean wallet,  
While my stomach groans a friendly smile to hun-  
ger,  
Jo'burg City.
- 10 My stomach also devours coppers and papers  
Don't you know?  
Jo'burg City, I salute you;  
When I run out, or roar in a bus to you,  
I leave behind me, my love,
- 15 My comic houses and people, my dongas and my  
ever whirling dust,  
My death  
That's so related to me as a wink to the eye.  
Jo'burg City  
I travel on your black and white roboted roads
- 20 Through your thick iron breath that you inhale  
At six in the morning and exhale from five noon.  
Jo'burg City  
That is the time that I come to you,  
When your neon flowers flaunt from your electrical  
wind,
- 25 That is the time when I leave you,  
When your neon flowers flaunt their way through  
the falling darkness

On your cement trees.  
And as I go back, to my love,  
My dongas, my dust, my people, my death,

30 Where death lurks in the dark like a blade in the  
flesh,

I can feel your roots, anchoring your might, my  
feebleness

In my flesh, in my mind, in my blood,  
And everything about you says it, That, that is all  
you need of me.

Jo'burg City, Johannesburg,

35 Listen when I tell you,

There is no fun, nothing, in it.

When you leave the women and men with such  
frozen expressions,

Expressions that have tears like furrows of soil  
erosion,

Jo'burg City, you are dry like death,

40 Jo'burg City, Johannesburg, Jo'burg City.