



A New Language

Karabo C. Modise

A New Language

Karabo C. Modise



Karabo C. Modise x A New Language

First published independently in 2020 in partnership with
Cobweb Creative Network
www.cobnetwork.co.za
info@cobnetwork.co.za
© Karabo C. Modise
All Rights Reserved

Foreword

Tswana girl. Born in Somerset West, raised in a SeSotho isiZulu community in the north eastern suburbs of Joburg.

Locked down. With my family and my thoughts, I was constantly in prayer – between friends at the start, and the end. Understanding safety as a black woman in South Africa. Processing the trauma of emotional abuse to name a need and notice how it's being filled. Here is where we come across **A New Language**. A need for deeper self-awareness becomes invaluable and with it comes the desire to speak on it shamelessly.

Contents

- xi. the fight
- x. sleep
- ix. Time Warped Reality
- viii. Still Insecure
- vii. a hold on me
- vi. a million little things
- v. bed peace
- iv. 57
- iii. Day 10 of 21
- ii. Faves
- i. Feet

Karabo C. Modise x A New Language

Feet

Where do you keep the words you choose not to
speak?

Sneak peek.

As I find my footing
Walking into uncertainty
Release
Reprieve
Escape is all I seek.

As I find my footing
Walking into uncertainty
Release
Reprieve
Escape is all I seek.

Peel back the layers
hidden beneath
years of careful concealing.
If grounded is what I had to be
then cut off my feet.

Lost
without the dangerous teenage bravado
twenties
what say?
satisfactory
Enough, I guess.
for now, at least
a hit and a miss.

Faves

Loaded

Are the questions my friends ask
when only a drop is released
from the faucet of my mind

Hairtrigger

To the gush that pours out of me

Out of honesty

Loyalty to the cause

or

because they love me

and

I, them

Day 10 of 21

tethering off the edge of myself
there are so many things in my head
i wish weren't mine

memories of sex
induced by alcohol
extended bouts of lost control
in rooms and backrooms
in cars that were never mine
bodies of people I couldn't describe

moments in time where
nothing
no one
mattered
even today
untangling
days with months
years with fronts
lies I told to get my way

now a ship has sailed
floating in the ether
somewhere in space
vast and endless
detached from the spread

a feast I prepared
to appease the gluttony
of more
better
something
easier
to keep undetected
the truth that
I'm still attached to this body
to all of those places
suddenly I'm faced with
a daunting reality
how much
I don't love me

always working to fail
reaching onto rails
hoping I'll bail
head first onto
the sharp side of a brick
so as to
die
quick
on impact
I'm sick

- like -
what's the point
of fighting
again
the sun will rise
and I may have survived
but tomorrow
I'll lose
or maybe the next
who cares
it's stress
it goes away
anxiety and self-hate
that shit stays

57

I don't have time
in my day to think about this
so I do it all at night,
wee hours of the morning
trying to get my head right
before bed time

daylight worries
carrying themselves
over white noise
of a buzzing worker bee
kodwa ebsuku
ku'bi

sterile walls
locked doors
I'm met with lockdown
and it's most gaping hole,
a lone lonely loner
lost in thought
of present and past
reoccurring reverie
featuring characters long moved on

but my stubborn heart holds fast
my finger scrolls farther
deep diving
clicking on faces
I have no business being faced with

bed peace

today
if you were to set my bed on fire
I doubt I'd leave
I'd much rather cleave and cling
to the sweat stained sheets
feel the heat of the flame
as the sizzle seeps
into my skin
so I can only feel you again
tomorrow

a million little things

I'm not where I'd prefer to be; emotionally
not with God

or

how I feel about myself.

I'm not satisfied with the progress I've made.

Progress is a slow process

yes

still

feel like I'm kind of a mess though.

Scared to open up

never mind

asking for help.

I can help myself

with the best *self help* book out

to guide my revelations

I'm wondering about him.

That mysterious him

an ex

or lover

whatever

of a time heavy laden with insecurity.

I wonder if he's in a pause

if he ever paused

or just kept moving
forward
without thinking
- taking a second
to think of me -
has he considered texting an apology
telling me something I need to hear.

Sensitivity is tricky, you know
brutal
in the way it chips away at you
cutting
to the core
hardly moving beyond raw
deep breaths
sullen sighs
the toss and turn act
urgh
a bore

maybe this is grief
finding its home in me
coming in waves
opening its arms to me
because it's easier

to think about a boy
the boy that broke my heart
over my boy
who might never grow into a man
who might breathe his last breath tonight

a hold on me

with him he held
the love that I always wanted
withholding himself
he hardly gave to me.
the love that's freely given
I struggle to hold close to me
instead I'm holding
onto you
expectations
set by you
faith in myself
given to you
for a fire in my loins
I gave the torch to you
never hesitating to set me alight
burnt to a crisp
I withheld ever since

"you don't deserve me
work harder
you could earn me
push farther
give me what I want
you know you want it too

satisfy me if it is your will
or I will find someone who will"

so I became someone who would.

I never held back with you

I'd run as far as you'd let me chase

I was a dog with a bone

I was a dog you had a bone

a puppy barking into your phone

until you put it down

and I thought it was love

when I put myself down

oversharing to a brick wall

sending love songs

(seriously, bad call)

I was asking for so much more than you were willing

to give

I thought, something's gotta give

I gave in

took it in stride

wiped my tears

with no place to hide

but with you

lonely but at least not alone

Still Insecure

it's uncomfortable,
talking about my feelings with you.

my feelings about you;
they're sentences with too many conjunctions
and I'd rather it be simple.

it's disheartening,
to be faced with all the ways I failed you:

failed at pointing out sore spots
my anger at the parts you unknowingly pick at
the cold shoulder I use in defence.

I don't like that you make me look at me;
it's intimidating.

knowing that I'm responsible for my own healing
to resist the insistence to put up walls
allowing patience and kindness to lead the way.

I can't avoid being uncomfortable,
it's nonsensical.

avoidance only pulls us further apart
when really, all I want is you by my side
these insecurities will not fall victim to pride.

Time Warped Reality

...

be that as it may
a matter of fact;
Becoming.
a matter of fiction?
rather troubling
lies collate
marking arbitrary signs
on a whim
about a stigma
or sustained
and carry the weight of bias
stereotype n prejudice

with consequence
way beyond sense:
Unbecoming.
Ignorance
bliss of the baby boomer
cancel culture:
a curse coddled by gen
where the x
and

who the z
millennial says,
"could never be me"?

...

be that as it may;
both fact and fiction encompass reality
compassion lays with sinister thought
complexity encases each fragility
wrought alongside,
so be it
so it be

sleep

Without a reason to wake up
I find it difficult to fall asleep

With nothing left to dream
and little to hope, it seems
in me, I mean

hope exists
on a grander scale
for the justice system
for racists and sexists
For the life I lead
is nothing to envy
to be raped and killed
in my home
across the street
nowhere is safe
nowhere can I breathe
freely
but in my sleep

the fight

In violence
to choose peace
in the confines of my home.

A home built on trustless foundation
me, being unreliable
me, untrustworthy

the womb as my first home
and with one of my own

violent
is the fight for my life
for peace

a stay
with the full taste
of freedom
shaped by something

A little more
whole
like love

A little less
fear
but

violence
still finds home in my mind

in the form of thoughts
unwanted
whispering about a pending demise

it takes more than a second
a minute, to realise
quieting that voice
is to settle on the side of peace

Author Biography



Karabo C. Modise obtained an honours in Digital Humanities and completed a BA in Theatre and Performance at the University of the Witwatersrand where she majored in writing and directing. She has worked as a corporate team building facilitator while performing in and stage-managing plays at the Wits Theatre, Joburg Theatre, POPArt theatre and The South African State Theatre. Modise began to journal and write songs at age 10 which then transitioned into poems from her teens, onward. As a diagnosed anxious depressive, Modise uses poetry to investigate her faith, family and friendships amid the nonstop tempo of everyday life.

