

Salt River

Teresa Barnes

cracked chairs and chicken bones
 chips plastics and dented tins of all nations
 bullet-stroked t-shirts, tossed in the canal
 the quick-eyed slide of
 calculation
 Free Mandela! paint on long streets walls
 where one day only slaves could prance, here:
 sweet water weaves the salt river marrow down to the opening sea.

before concrete triumph perched on despair mountain people dreaming the
 rainwind dark day
 it grandly entered the one-breasted bay
 most honoured stream, revered with reed songs.

the sweet and salt waters mingle, still, between her warm brown lips
 everything that sups there, grows there, learns there
 brings her joy
 and acquires dual vision.

★

if this is the oldest continent
 and the earth's oldest gold is found in the little town of Barberton
 in
 Mpu
 ma
 langa
 then surely, the world began
 in

Langa

or, at least, a geological millimeter away

in Sea Point

where the cool shapely Atlantic leg

meets the warm ancient Indian leg

there, by the tidal pool, all that saltiness mingling and churning.

surely this firm right angle of sand is the *poes* of the world

right here at the turn of Beach

Road into Western Boulevard.

– For the cast of "Reclaiming the P...Word"

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