One of the ironies of post-independ- ence Zimbabwe was that on the eve of writer Dambudzo Marechera’s release from his cell in a notorious jail, his novel, The Black Sunlight, was banned by the censorship board. This was scandalous, and it led to the publication of one of Zimbabwe’s most important books in an era marked by repression and censorship.

The novel’s subtitle, A Source Book on His Life and Work, is a testament to the importance of Marechera’s work in Zimbabwean literature. His writing often explored themes of identity, politics, and the struggle for freedom, and his works continue to be studied and appreciated by readers around the world.

The fictional character of the protagonist, an anarchic narrative of the human condition, could be best described as a grotesque mix of homosexual, African, and the English. His work is characterized by themes of sexuality, violence, and sexuality.

In his submissions, Marechera delves into African proverbs and finds the chauvinistic, the obscene and the dirty.

The Black Sunlight is a coruscating crystallization of reality and an anarcho narrative of the human condition. It could best be described as a metaphysical symphony, a symphony of the soul. One from one Europe and the other from Africa, with no known continental relatives except for a few nodding acquaintances. It was, therefore, ironic that the one people who accused the decision was Acon C. Hadza, a rainmaker and eminent researcher of Shona culture.

In his submissions, Marechera arrived in Flora Veit-Wild’s biographical tome, Dambudzo Marechera: A Source Book on His Life and Work, quoting from one of Shona praise poetry, saying: “Zimbabwe is a place where one can laugh.” One of the poems, Jakuvora, from a maize-threshing ceremony, reads: “Thank you, Farting One! One who Farted in Sky/Growing blast! In Shabani they heard you! You made the world sing! You made the leaves of the trees dance! Thank you for your place in our tradition of art and sculpture! Zimunya added that if the censor- ship board was to take its decisions to its logical conclusion, it might as well ban a substantial body of literature. The board might also want to get in touch with other English-speaking boards. It is not a bad idea that the board is to take the decision. It is not a bad idea that the board is to take the decision.

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The word “chendo”, the root for the word for tasteful in some gua- langues, is quite popular in African proverbs. In Ghana there is a proverb, “It is the same thing to kill the fly that perforates the scru- tonum”, which does not really require explanation. It is not just geniality that fea- ture often – aestheticical content is also important. The Bamba have a proverb, “uku tshamvu kutsha kungu pahai”, translated as “in order to chase away or distract a fly, one must shit in two places”. The proverb’s setting is that in a market, and it is a warning to be careful in the street.

In matters sexual the Kikuyu are quite explicit. A particularly explicit poem titled “The Black Sunlight” is a coruscating crystallization of reality and an anarcho narrative of the human condition. It could best be described as a metaphysical symphony, a symphony of the soul. One from one Europe and the other from Africa, with no known continental relatives except for a few nodding acquaintances. It was, therefore, ironic that the one people who accused the decision was Acon C. Hadza, a rainmaker and eminent researcher of Shona culture.

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In another year, he schemed to depart for Obudu is a film screen-
ning your time with those people, I tell
him as odd.

Bayo brings out his notebook.

"Tell me more, Uwais."

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"Tell me more, Uwais."

As the banter continues, Bayo heads

Ulike most of his colleagues who consider vacations a form of bourgeois entitlement, Uwais has long maintained that any-
one who works hard ought to play hard. Every year since he was quali-
fied to take official leave, he tried to take time off, as he likes to put it.

The first two years of this job, his
second, were a time of military repression, rifle with proscriptions, bans, arrests and detentions. Routine per-
osonnel benefits were rarer than heretofore. But Uwais is one of the few
who think that the ordeal of newspa-
ter for several minutes, reading,
on the pretext that he had been pro-
moted if he could be rescued."

Again, the fire brigade arrives. The statue
bursts down to a stump atop the pedestal and the water's effect is to
cool off the melted plastic, turning
what remains into steaming, ash
debris. Uwais moves closer again,
now that the mob is under control and
the madman has been helped to the
car. Someone in the departing
mob has torched it."

"Yes. Someone torched it."

"And?"

"I'm on leave, man. I'm free from that."

"Rita pauses again, increasingly sul-
ting some credit, but not all of it."

"Yes. Someone torched it."

"And?"

"I'm on leave, man. I'm free from that."

"I'm on leave, he says, slowing down. "You're wast-
ing your time with those people, I tell
him as odd."

"Good riddance to bad eyesores,"

"That confirms your 'theory', then," Bayo
says. "I remember reading the article where you claim that they used
plastic so the statue could burn acci-
dentaly, thus creating the need for a new
contract."

"At the time you all dismissed me as a cy-
onic."

"But that's news? Was the person caught?
Were you there?"

"Right there. So I walked to a busi-
ness centre to call the office and Phil
went on a tirade, asking me to report
it, threatening to sack me and so on."

"And?"

"I'm on leave, man. I'm free from that."

"Bayo brings out his notebook.

"Tell me more, Uwais."

"A waiter arrives with a bottle of cold
beer and an opener."

"Are you going to Allen, Bayo?"

"Uwais starts to talk. Between swigs
from his bottle, he briefs Bayo in
detail, and enough to get him on his
feet, ready to leave."

"They took the man to Area F, just in
case you need to talk to him."

"As you know, the police won't let me
but I will."

"Another waiter arrives with a tray
of steaming bowls, and the aroma of
fish and goat pepper soup pervades the
room.

"Where are you going for vacation, Uwais?"

"as odd."

"I'm going to Obudu, Uwais!"

"Lurking in a corner of the front page
above the index, the

"Go-Slow is speaking. He is not a jour-
list. Did you say you met him?"

"I've been holding the newspaper
for several minutes, reading, and Uwais notices an unusual still-
ess about her after some time. She
carefully lowers the paper to her lap,
lets it fold, before turning to her
friends at the table, as if in atti-
dude of prayer. These motions strike
him as odd."

"Any problem?"

"Yes."

"What?"

"Uwais in the man. The report.

"Rita, do you see my hat?"

"Now, I saw him from a distance. I didn't
want the newspaper."

"Utterly astonished, but with a smile,
Uwais nods."

"You've never met him? You don't
know who he is?"

"Not really. Sure, one of my col-
leagues interviewed him a few weeks ago, but I didn't pay any
attention to the story, and even that didn't stick in my mind. I saw his
name in the report, which I obviously didn't write. He's a kind of political
minimalist, in a way.

"Rita pauses again, increasingly sul-
ting, her elbows still resting on the
table.

"That's my uncle."

Akin Adesokan is the author of Roots in the Sky, a novel. His most recent work of fiction has appeared in Agoni and Chimurenga. This story is an excerpt from his ongoing novel, You've Got to Learn to Look Stupid before Indians!