

The Parable of Steve Biko

The notion never was
To take Steve Biko
Dead or alive.
Dead,
He'd most assuredly be
A martyr.
Alive,
Just another pesky symbol
Of what someday will come to be:
A life,
Prideful and bold
For all the world to see,
For all the world to cherish.

Like Mandela's
Governance from exile.
No,
The notion never was
To take Biko
Dead or alive.

But, to cripple and maim him.
A cruel, yet effective example
For all to see
For all to pity.

For no man to aspire to.
His magnificence
His humble eclecticism,

Bob Williams

His nonviolent ways,
All that he stood for:

Lost,
Crippled and maimed,
Forever.

The Security Forces
Couldn't have delighted more
In such thoughts.

So, they played with him at first
Careful to never let him go
Their lethal rage.

Toying with him,
Taunting him,
Dealing him swift and deft body blows
With their rubber billies,

They tried their very best
To bind, gag and break
His willful spirit.

Do with him what they might:
His spirit would give sway,
It would bend
And then snap back.
But, it would not break.

Bob Williams

The more bones they crushed,
The stronger he became.

The more they taunted him,
The more his humanity
Came to the fore
And restored him.
the more they tried to strip him
Buck naked of his dignity and
Self-respect,
The more he gained on them.

So, feeling frustrated and thwarted
They killed him
In a visionless rage.

Conveniently forgetting all the while
That their original objective
Never was to take Steve Biko
Dead or alive.
Only to cripple and main him,
For all the world to see