



Ahadada Books

# Chapbook

## Songs of the Colon

Eileen Tabios

### Eileen Tabios

Eileen Tabios is a poet, fiction writer, editor, critic and publisher. She has released a poetry CD and written, edited or co-edited 16 books of poetry, fiction and essays. Her most recent books are a selected prose poem collection (1996–2002) entitled *Reproductions of the Empty Flagpole* (Marsh Hawk Press, N.Y. 2002), her first short story collection *Behind The Blue Canvas* (Giraffe Books, Quezon City, 2004), a poetry collection *Menage A Trois With The 21st Century* (xPressed, Espoo, 2004) and the multi-genre collection *I Take Thee, English, For My Beloved* (Marsh Hawk Press, 2005). Her other books include *Beyond Life Sentences: Poems* (Anvil Press, Manila. 1998); *Black Lightning: Poetry in Progress* (The Asian American Writers' Workshop, 1998); *The Anchored Angel: Selected Writings by Jose Garcia Villa* (Kaya Press, NY. 1999); *Babaylan: An Anthology of Filipina and Filipina American Writers* which she co-edited with poet Nick Carbo (Aunt Lute Books, San Francisco, 2000); *Ecstatic Mutations: Experiments in the Poetry Laboratory* (Giraffe Books, Manila, 2000); *My Romance : Essays* (Giraffe Books, Philippines. 2001). Her awards include the Philippines' Manila Critics Circle National Book Award for Poetry, the Potrero Nuevo Fund Prize, the PEN/Oakland Josephine Miles National Literary Award, a Witter Bynner Poetry Grant and a PEN Open Book Award. She is the founder of Meritage Press, a multidisciplinary literary and arts press based in St. Helena, CA.

The poems in “The Estrus Gaze(s)” were previously published in *Belladonna Chapbook #67* (thanks to editors Erica Kaufman and Rachel Levitsky). Some of the poems from “The Masvikiru Quatrains” were previously published in *SOFTBLOW* (thanks to editor Cyril Wong); *MAGANDA*, (thanks to editors Kristina Ordanza and Vin Salvatore); *SHAMPOO* (thanks to editor Del Ray Cross); and *SLEEPING FISH* (thanks to editor Derek White). The Afterword essay for, and other poems from, “The Masvikiru Quatrains” were previously published in *MORIA POETRY* (thanks to editor William Allegrezza).

Salamat to Jesse Glass and Daniel Sendecki of Ahadada Books . . . for asking.



*Table of contents*

3	<b>THE ESTRUS GAZE(S)</b>
	4 : CONTEXT AND STRAWBERRIES
	5 : ARCHAEOLOGY
	6 : HAYSTACK
	7 : WILD
	8 : THE ESTRUS GAZE
9	<b>THE MASVIKIRU QUATRAINS</b>
	10 THE FOURTH PAGE
	12 THE FIFTH PAGE
	14 THE SIXTH PAGE
	16 THE SEVENTH PAGE
	18 THE EIGHTH PAGE
	20 THE NINTH PAGE
	22 THE TENTH PAGE
	24 THE ELEVENTH PAGE
	26 THE TWELFTH PAGE
	28 THE THIRTEENTH PAGE
	30 THE FOURTEENTH PAGE
	32 THE FIFTEENTH PAGE
	34 THE SIXTEENTH PAGE
	36 THE SEVENTEENTH PAGE
	38 THE EIGHTEENTH PAGE
	40 THE NINETEENTH PAGE
	42 THE TWENTIETH PAGE
46	<b>AFTERWORD</b>
	44 AN EKPHRASIS: ON THE PATH OF THE SHONA TO SCULPT "THE MASVIKIRU QUATRAINS"
48	<b>SELECTED NOTES TO POEMS:</b>
	46 THE ESTRUS GAZE(S)
	46 THE MASVIKIRU QUATRAINS



## THE ESTRUS GAZE(S)

*“Our affinity would meet in being filled with archaic darkness  
and persisting memories of a time when all things were one, even  
in the midst of individual responsibility.”*

*—from Songs of a Gorilla Nation: My Journey  
Through Autism by Dawn Prince-Hughes*



**: CONTEXT AND STRAWBERRIES**

: when ripeness becomes “unfinished” if the matured object refuses to be eaten

: the insistence that glass shifts because of a “pretty illusion” articulated as “ancient sea”

: some poems, yes, should be silent when lifted from the page

: a zoo with non-existent cages

: the gorilla’s fingerprint forms the outline of your face

: ceasing the hurtle through cold, dark Milky Way

: relax...*ation*



: **ARCHAEOLOGY**

: “You were standing by the gate of a zoo”

: to turn time into eternity, as gorillas do, by making it about presence not absence

: *Oh! That hot lemon smell of gorillas, and the thicksweet smell of the hay!*

: we are all born

: the haven defined as “utter lack of inspection”

: God as Love without a steeple for there has never been a roof

: smorgasbord



: *HAYSTACK*

: salt from expired matchheads

: background defined as the melting colors from a spinning globe

: unfamiliarity with the edges of one's body

: a meltdown if the evening ends without exactly seven lightning bugs in a jar

: this flawed archaeology when conducted fearfully!

: "heaven" defined as "a place where nothing changes"

: pebble



: *WILD*

: the all-consuming business of prehistoric histrionics

: refusing to believe math is synonymous with description

: place become person

: sodden tissue balled up into a small, dead bird

: fleshing out the ghosts of unicorns

: a complexion formed from miles and miles of bad and bad roads

: “dreadlocks”



: *THE ESTRUS GAZE*

: heal face blindness by introducing -- acknowledging -- context

: incomplete narratives formed from remnants not yet borne away by birds, tiny animals, *wind*

: inevitably, egg yolks fragmenting from a table's edge

: we make love to concede to nostalgia

: the wave is perfect for being temporary, though not conceded by surfers apostrophed by snow flakes coagulating into white ponytails

: relief introduced by words forming a consistent, never-ending pattern

: holograph



from  
**THE MASVIKIRU QUATRAINS**

*"I take the dead out of the stone and find the sculpture."  
—Lazarus Takawira, Shona sculptor*

*"When one looks at great Shona sculpture—its powerful mass, sharp edges, delicate balance, straight masterful lines—the technical mastery of the one who carved it is obvious. Admiration turns to incredulity and awe when one realizes the context in which it was carved. Despite the incredible proportion and balance many artists achieve, there is no pre-sketching, pre-drafting, or pre-shaping of their work. It issues from deep in their mind's eye. Many of these carvers, working outside their rural imbas, simply sit in the dirt and begin with a crude tool in their hands and a vision in their head."*

*—from Spirits in Stone: Zimbabwe Shona Sculpture by Anthony and Laura Ponter*



## *THE FOURTH PAGE*

foolery: pollinate eyrie

progress: retinal runners-up

forgery: nimbus dowdy

round-the-clock: penetrate rot

proton: airship lire

Vaseline: nose dive

freebie: damper promiscuous

specialize: betterment bloat

persuasiveness: midget manipulative

IQ: crabbed Ra

spage-age: hula slake

faintness: instrument snowsuit

lachrymal: slickness profuse

AM: ahem misfire

idiomatic: rations periscope

thrash: quarry inhalator

hobbyist: converse sheaves

epoxy: semen discrepancy

trillion: planetary wintergreen

anthem: lumber jealousy

lodge: slippery atty.

campanile: softball issuance



liquefy: pox downwards

averse: amicable perquisite

copra: nameless feasibility

panorama: negotiable dorm

decadence: outflank tweedy

offal: conjoin uncounted

plainclothesman: radicalism dire

skin: N.Mex. woodwind

upstart; gravestone outmaneuver

pointy: Mediterranean fend



## *THE FIFTH PAGE*

referendum: resell insipid

armed: reproach forbidden

wave: entrapment parallelism

twinkle: unsold reusable

mudslide: sewing white

whereby: compendium gable

pinkish: anthropoid coastal

talent: scout interruption

allot: midterm housework

alternator: northeast kettle

Congress: defensive mordant

bullet: squeaky obedient

slander: squirrel playwright

parsnip: attribute corn

defilement: spaciousness multitude

segment: southernmost participant

radiance: anarchy eyelid

amity: insurance nowadays

presumptuous: causation woodland

bombastic: spherical bounteous

neuralgia: oldie hallelujah

cyanide: effect pompadour



Kleenex: squeamish strife

expurgation: crawler saleable

urban: illiberal vapidty

catastrophic: charger milieu

sardine: opposite jigsaw

philistine: Grecian oven

scant: aura deploy

rudder: busy dashiki

wolverine: brushwood desecration

promoter: romance teen



## *THE SIXTH PAGE*

ensemble: keypunch gimpy

precedence: dessicate endear

nosy: academy center

apotheosis: teaspoon secede

presupposition: windjammer urea

tailgate: void commandment

dejection: look masturbation

streetlight: dialogue spank

millennia: tanker extortion

thrall: cleanser denouement

disentanglement: ne'er-do-well fixate

geopolitics: par approbation

unpronounceable: factionalism buttress

bread: unmentionable Roman

market: unstudied Senator

loiterer: destroyer indoors

malnourished: reptile bedroom

cavalry: aromatic prosaic

tadpole: venison yeast

descendant: prude confine

bald: eagle tub

schmaltz: trailer blvd.



thicken: defecate immigrate

rejuvenation: frugality importune

biathlon: distillery ultrasonic

Apache: open-air superhighway

harridan: around-the-clock skullduggery

censure: repentant rump

disparagement: sylvan psoriasis

umlaut: constituent M

singularity: downwards truss

novelette: aviary principality



## *THE SEVENTH PAGE*

scandalize: ulcer janitor

junior: pharmaceutical pogrom

guilder: syndication disposition

chrysalis: starlet amid

perky: celibacy air

gambit: offal banana

impugn: shirt trachea

compliance: armored willow

heartbreak: sotto voce semantic

turboprop: industrial controllable

penance: indices algorithm

transfusion: kingdom voucher

cynic: enumeration monkey

tedium: spleen weep

stateliness: sparseness iridescence

backslider: exult backwater

opera: transmutation mooch

squirrel: scrunch denouement

hornless: inglorious bulkhead

optimist: piper remaining

ornamental: carton dilute

a la mode: debatable defense



biotechnology: godson loneliness

zirconium: carburetor crudeness

touchdown: dwarves hurtful

Muhammad: engraver troupe

pantomime: bestridden proscenium

succulence: pro circumcise

scrambler: unstuck pulchritude

kleptomaniac: salary manifesto

napalm: courtship attune

smudgy: job give



## *THE EIGHTH PAGE*

supreme: dyestuff displace

abrasion: ostentation self-esteem

shipbuilder: thruway cunnilingus

toenail: perambulate bullish

tentacle: sergeant haddock

chlorophyll: apiary optional

powwow: coed volume

commandments: scriptwriter hormonal

misapprehension: thoughtless zippy

puny: unity stink

photocopier: extremity French

sapsucker: riff quintuple

secretariat: bragger snowmobile

decompress: throughway OPEC

professor: minutia civil

wonderment: incisive mother-of-pearl

hew: windsock supplant

engineering: rebate euphoria

neurological: role double-dealing

neophyte: epicure gig

defoliation: modicum begin

domain: better disinfectant



majestic: occupy intestine

derringer: bedeck collage

repose: straightness walrus

fungi: percolate heredity

poultry: wraparound flapper

EKG: persevere indiscriminate

oxide: stripling game

parvenu: Lutheran underwritten

tubercular: strapless euphemism

patriarchy: lax chatter



## *THE NINTH PAGE*

pavilion: heron vis-à-vis

neurotic: ACLU twill

eczema: windshield promoter

seabed: virility monotheism

lassie: wayfaring stepsister

mastermind: keynote whitener

photon: notion upstart

cynical: aerospace GNP

appointment: delicatessen antacid

tepee: modem grueling

casserole: Cajun intrusion

winery: tend globular

sermon: hidebound waddle

fortnight: innate fling

consulate: verity covetous

unswerving: truck dragon

otter: livable champagne

carbine: surprising propane

photocopy: mucus Filipino

dictum: slip-up innate

dollhouse: sunspot repress

cruciform: diastolic green



# Songs of the Colon

brunette: sitcom tablet

cease-fire: slope heroine

osteopathy: laudatory pj's

alphanumeric: ersatz affinity

anchorman: variety convene

mercantile: chivalrous university

parachute: shamrock rebuke

miscellany: expedite spatter

workhorse: cadmium themselves

genocide: honoraria brain-dead



## *THE TENTH PAGE*

monarchic: cross-examination matte

research: blindness Semitic

goad: encrustation distort

delinquency: tutorial causeway

passerby: wishy-washy archer

morpheme: panoramic punk

enormity: Gypsy blintz

arborvitae: descend nonstop

halves: clomp euphemistic

excavator: nursemaid brew

propulsion: unsanitary dictionary

doggedness: bean fierce

convex: Arthur oviparous

delirium: teenager hereditary

herbicide: acronym implicit

triangle: lucrative remonstrance

bedfellow: overpower cogitate

construe: cuspid ratty

adrenal: proprietress saltcellar

munificence: comptroller turnkey

purl: anonymity running

peevish: reprehend reverberate



washable: porch limit

peseta: continental trowel

buttermilk: warhorse solicitation

magistrate: kickstand crater

mussel: thespian drawbridge

browbeat: disembarkation pygmy

Messiah: heehaw chauvinism

Islamic: diameter categorize

Goldfinch: celluloid plaster

Paris: mallet bemoan



## *THE ELEVENTH PAGE*

maternity: comforting embroider

rosette: demagnetize equation

verdigris: damask broth

pendulum: fraternal freedom

gravitational: unique margarine

polecat: hairdressing retrospection

unassuming: avarice Iron

inauspicious: slough toenail

metabolic: lightness catalpa

Viking: pea perceptible

lambaste: desiderata loony

tombstone: hardheadedness eligibility

evacuee: operator sassafras

gulag: floppy mandatory

alphabetic: execution FM

cogency: improvise bigamist

testate: music puck

perpetuation: countable wind

mangrove: February flay

excrete: soundtrack blight

mousse: concavity maunder

paleontology: demolish neatness



asymmetrical: putrid translucence

abstemious: applicant saxophonist

feathery: thesaurus dodo

Eustachian: hula pedigreed

buffoonery: Burgundy syncopate

maritime: anticlimactic tie

colloquium: facilitate senna

manna: sweeping sulphur

profligate: pilothouse mother-in-law

sweetener: crisis elevation



## *THE TWELFTH PAGE*

tibia: decomposition zodiac

consular: pestle weather

godless: nonevent jeans

impeccable: exclamation bract

savvy: mutability obstacle

notify: cosmetology antitheses

repletion: sled oleander

fluid: crotch fjord

stripling: spring enticement

tenderness: daydream technician

deflation: prevaricator stub

deflation: jack adjutant

waggish: sonar once-over

crucify: slip-up yokel

octogenarian: livable bubble

weevil: fib limerick

dentistry: exclamatory awful

crocodile: epileptic uncharitable

Filipino: conviction encyclopedic

relocation: dependency series

thunderbolt: infringe eager

cockatoo: spacey mandible



cowpox: arson sophisticate

trippery: triumvirate gunnery

ménage: dissolution suspenseful

disputatious: imperialist homer

xenophobic: etiquette clandestine

wing: willies lucid

beryllium: quick mayonnaise

vocal: corpus lame

transact: garble episodic

hedonistic: patchy gamin



## *THE THIRTEENTH PAGE*

equine: elbow libelous

julep: enslave flu

hackney: width puncture

spiritualistic: effluent grim

alliteration: tubercular obstruct

tartar: periphery cystic

opprobrium: wallaby handcart

lavish: tripe oviparous

jewel: precipitate trenchant

severe: driftwood plastic

donut: campy impart

turpitude: lung bureaucratic

roisserie: feta deceitfulness

maiden: pate pep

impalpable: uninvited urbane

encrustation: stair vegan

comprehensible: abnegation exposition

unprovoked: irony sheepish

muckrake: conch trimester

factotum: unhealthy hereabout

auxiliary: Lutheran corpuscle

unanimity: splat oakum



demagogy: hazard ginger

logistic: porno doxology

pauperism: owlish symptom

mulatto: wineglass emphysema

concrete: argue requisite

ulna: weary median

chattiness: excreta Freudian

simile: ingénue betrayal

imp: blunderbuss anon.

hairdo: numerate letdown



***THE FOURTEENTH PAGE***

hard-on: controllable patrol

mendicant: reverential captive

homogenize: microchip sanity

dishwasher: limited pedicure

elephantine: wobble cannonade

mellifluous: unbearable outcast

osteopath: promotional flange

mire: musky global

hoedown: renter X

chromosome: trapezoid head-on

barricade: predilection biochemistry

luster: skunk Scotsman

Angolan: spiteful laser

commodore: anthill enthusiastic

archduke: conferment longitude

ointment: public periodontal

lime: strove concubine

optima: cutback outré

gazebo: recollection robustness

bluegrass: flame paranoia

queue: prompter outward

ventriloquism: loincloth wry



parsimony: excess speed

limit: monetary coitus

dehumanize: Grecian apprentice

youngish: unrequited montage

groggy: indolent noblesse

disengagement: mar FAA

emery; influential cohabit

stupor: syrup matchmaker

jawbreaker: clover intolerance

adapter: perusal beg



## *THE FIFTEENTH PAGE*

cancer: anniversary tanker

burnt: manners obsolescent

ND: egregious cross

singe: uvula implore

accouterments: myriad aria

trellis: gulf commissioned

creosote: enumerate wax

bulimia: base wizardry

bitumen: submarine dressmaking

nary: biped ubiquity

traduce: henpecked plaque

immune: prize isolation

forgettable: goalkeeper refinish

screwdriver: advantage shield

enthusiast: portmanteau headset

well-meaning: loaded sports

proximity: wend unsportsmanlike

undemanding: nematode forced

pinochle: histrionic handout

entente: concede theorem

antisocial: rhetorical per

precipitous: stillbirth earthwork



participle: Mongoloid oops

groundhog: adjunct sourness

kidnapper: ethic goulash

earthiness: desolate staph

rearview: helmet pose

judiciary: piquancy bow

ingratiating: comedy trendy

fender: entourage recessionary

inadvertence: cedilla gift

enervate: postage rundown



## *THE SIXTEENTH PAGE*

pantomime: agnosticism disclosure

ascent: thereabout wringer

aforesaid: delivery recourse

barbarism: decrepitude blood

carnage: thunderclap cantankerousness

speedometer: beneficial skittish

horticulture: insubstantial TN

diaphanous: trench Neptune

hedonist: oldie watering

repercussion: inveigle bogeyman

bunkhouse: slaver bloodcurdling

safari: start insurrection

tedium: large-scale courtesan

transgressor: tipster port

frowzy: background anagram

velours: arithmetic pathogen

tolerable: obstetric deep

magnanimity: glean Chinese

finicky: curdle curie

pituitary: sewage uncooperative

zestful: perdition African-American

phantasy: unused sunny



sonorous: crisp hookworm

placentae: windswept plankton

intricacy: triplicate hormone

Aries: runner-up teacher

leguminous: aggressiveness torture

interpreter: squaw priestess

cello: gurney hoaxer

overanxious: felony crony

cupboard: blotting paper

sacramental: god-awful exhort



## *THE SEVENTEENTH PAGE*

bodkin: moonshine petticoat

Mother: unimaginable pellmell

frequency: antiknock repertory

peeling: compilation opium

heedless: euphoria flat

denigrate: squint moldiness

baleful: dreary syphilitic

defecation: finery hogshead

ulceration: antiwar chafe

musket: ivy parabola

enormity: glacial role-playing

shrink-wrap: diffusion sawdust

liposuction: blithe insider

CB: frizzy grad

tenderloin: forsythia nobleness

governor: germanium ironing

conscript: tumble preferential

lapidary: ecumenical betrothal

dispatcher: excision brilliant

tendonitis: horseback earth

fortification: fatuous waltz

warmed-over: haven't full-blooded



simulator: slaphappy harelip

llama: unceremonious tangible

military: medicate defiance

fencing: foreseen denture

plasticity: morgue impulse

blasphemer: gland unkindness

inaudible: manliness cosmetology

emasculate: protractor Midwestern

microorganism: contemptible purr

abdicate: ill-starred menopause



## *THE EIGHTEENTH PAGE*

legatee: screwball fifteenth

gymnasia: saunter indictable

womanizer: preconceived fire

wheedle: vagary slow-witted

suffragette: slain mineral

bosun: stagflation hazelnut

acrobat: clip joint

premiere: flagpole cocker

battery: sundae electrical

legalese: colonel seven

sanguine: Laotian streptococcus

evergreen: cyclic terry

desideratum: kiss orthodontist

checkerboard: inkwell forswore

quixotic: logical intuitive

griffin: shrill herbivore

gumdrop: jack-o-lantern upbringing

conjugal: intravenous myth

nebulae: gaudiness veer

portcullis: marsupial economist

klutz: heron solar

seashore: gentry jangle



audit: worm apron

slenderness: disabuse conjurer

antiparticle: exhumation transplantation

masseur: warty Congress

superscript: Flemish bleeder

archenemy: age swizzle

denature: flatter ligature

antebellum: lure rim

demobilization: topmost windjammer

marsupial: ovarian transpire



## *THE NINETEENTH PAGE*

amatory: snafu productivity

esophagus: day semaphore

tuition: seismic fullback

urinary: U-boat croup

cockfight: steamship October

cuspid: sober seedy

birdseed: transubstantiation mien

arithmetic: trench inadequacy

tumble: pi wow

Madonna: dishrag tote

Taiwanese: v mattock

grueling: specie athlete

erstwhile: divider p.m.

pitchfork: resin dressage

polar: mangrove accomplished

espousal: métier incompatible

marinate: ginkgo Miss

invective: deathlike savoir

revolver: skylark publish

seminary: twitter constabulary

pelvic: credentials nasturtium

galleon: obduracy aborigine



syllabify: boll artlessness

misjudgment: salsa spine

acoustic: sufficiency peripatetic

mascara: barium cop-out

octagon: heirloom pickings

miniskirt: G improvisation

Pyrex: infantile extrapolate

percale: morale fulminate

crevasse: roebuck bassist

Inferno: strange preconceive



## *THE TWENTIETH PAGE*

thespian: desiccation trance

travail: vector deceit

peahen: Montessori benefaction

chop: ambivalent dissension

wanderlust: hill synod

republican: ambiguous trillionth

munchies: ballroom sickle

quadrille: cortical lira

suffix: validation herewith

loganberry: forage gibberish

accord: occidental crouton

annoyance: fishing leotard

elaborate: misread elaborate

confederate: painstaking turbulent

knockwurst: boundless subservience

bellows: battleship O

shrine: neutrino locus

incongruous: watchmaker unflappable

disfavor: shat stroke

streamer: paramedic predecease

surpass: constituency mulch

rpm: gory grease



U-boat: journeyman gunwale

ballot: projectile tamarind

missal: sniper Indian

liverwurst: remiss clasp

wool: homogeneity brainstorming

remove: slip brass

trifle: estimable time

pilferer: stereophonic twister

melon: unwieldiness medicinal

interpretive: valve megahertz

## AFTERWORD

### AN EKPHRASIS: ON THE PATH OF THE SHONA TO SCULPT "THE MASVIKIRU QUATRAINS"

*"In my poetry I do not try to find the words to express what I want to say.  
In my poetry I try to find ways to express what the words have to say."*

—Carl Andre

*"Though these visions are influenced by ancestors, the sculpture is not used in ritual or ceremony. In the West, most African art is defined as consisting of either religious icons or practical artefacts, meaning tools used in daily life. But this definition has been imposed on Africa by outsiders and certainly does not fit Shona sculpture or other contemporary African art forms. Shona sculpture is neither worshipped nor functional. It is purely decorative—art for art's sake."*

—from *Spirits in Stone: Zimbabwe Shona Sculpture* by Anthony and Laura Ponter

I wrote "The Masvikiru Quatrains" as a result of Jukka-Pekka Kervinen's poetry collection, *cornucopia* (xPress(ed), 2004). From Zimbabwe's Shona culture, "masvikiru" means "spirit mediums." But before I tell you about my poems, let me share some background about their inspiration.

Jukka wrote *cornucopia* as a sample of what he calls "statistical writing." Basically, the poem results from a computer program, in this case one that utilizes three statistical distributions -- uniform, binomial, and Gaussian (normal)—to avoid patterns. The (pattern) exception is that, in punctuation, a period is used each time the program encounters a space in its source vocabulary. For *cornucopia*, Jukka's sources were excerpts from John Locke's "The Essay of Toleration" and Antonio Gramsci's "Letters from Prison."

I enjoy collaborating with Jukka partly because he so takes, as a beginning point, a very different—nay, perhaps the opposite—tack from how I approach my poems. That is, he deliberately tries to be dispassionate whereas I, robustly believing in subjectivity, fling myself naked, hair matted and blood rushing into the poetry-writing. [Cough.]

Exemplifying what I mean about Jukka's approach is that, consistent with his long-time investigations into computer-generated texts and poems, Jukka says that he never edits the results: "My 'philosophy' is simple and clear: if I use the computer to generate music/poems I must be satisfied with the results without any editing. I don't change a single word/note. Otherwise I must do whole thing without computers!"

And yet the reason why *cornucopia* works as a poem is the strength of its poetic music—as soundscape—such that reading through it effortlessly allowed me to write new poems which I intended as pure (abstract) music. This leads me to the other reason why I like collaborating with Jukka: we may begin from disparate if not opposite points, but we end up in the same space for the poem: music.

*cornucopia* consists of 65 pages of words. There are no discernible beginnings or endings to the piece. There are no titles, line breaks or paragraph breaks. It's just a 65-page block of words. Yet, as I began reading it, I started reading music by sensing such music (through rhyme and rhythm and my subjective interpretations of pacing and tone) even as I also considered the text "visual" a la dark, seemingly monochromatic canvases.

After my read -- and conclusion that what I experienced through such reading was music—I queried Jukka about his work. Jukka replied that he also found the computer-generated results "surprisingly musical." But as Jukka—who is also a composer—explained, "One reason for this might be that the program was first used to generate a cello piece (punctuation vs. silence/very loud (low) strokes)."

Jukka's referenced cello piece can be seen at <http://xpressed.sdf-eu.org/kervinen> (see Compositions-Computer-generated scores-eXudes for cello solo).

I hadn't intended to write poems as I read through *cornucopia*, but I found that each page offered a new poem. Specifically, each line on the page generated a three word line. For each line, the first word is followed by a colon so that the next two words offers a relationship to the first word based on said colon (I happened to be in the midst of investigating the colon punctuation mark when I began writing this series). Because the diction is based more on sound (music) vs. narrative meaning, I wanted to push the challenge of creating a colon-based relationship within each three-word line.

In addition, reflecting the fact that each page of *cornucopia* contains 39 lines, the poems are formed from quatrains. Every fifth line on the page was deleted, with that line deletion becoming equivalent to a stanza break. Thus, each poem consists of eight quatrains, except for the last poem which is comprised of five quatrains as the last page contains only 24 lines.

To write—and hopefully for the reader to read—these quatrains was/is an experience based on a sense of musicality in *cornucopia*. Moreover, *cornucopia* is so musical that even as I wrote my poems, I sensed that there were other parallel poems threaded through each of the pages. This may be made clearer by looking at the original *cornucopia* text for the first poem, “The Fourth Page” (shown in “Selected Notes to Poems”). In looking at the prose poem form of the source text, you might sense -- as I do -- that one could just as easily have formed different three-word combinations than what I chose for “The Masvikiru Quatrains.” For instance, rather than the poem’s version of the first quatrain

foolery: pollinate eyrie  
 progress: retinal runners-up  
 forger: nimbus dowdy  
 round-the-clock: penetrate rot

I could have written—chipped out from the stone-prose—the following for the first quatrain:

notoriety: smirch resilience  
 baptize: runners-up kilowatt  
 impersonate: unceasing nimbus  
 ménage: disingenuous moonscape

However, I didn’t write this series only from a sense of soundscape. Not only did I wish to extend my exploration of the colon punctuation mark, but I also wanted to translate Zimbabwean Shona sculpture methodology into writing poems. By the latter, I mean that I had to chip away at *cornucopia*’s prose blocks to release new poems. Shona sculptors believe that (ancestral) spirits reside in stones and when they sculpt from stones, they basically are trying to release the spirits into what we later see as sculpted forms. From *cornucopia*, I sought to write poems to release the many hidden strains of music I sensed as spirits beneath each of *cornucopia*’s pages.

As I learned about Shona sculpture, I also felt a kinship between the sculptors’ approach and my long-time desire to write poems along the “first draft, last draft” vein. In *Spirits in Stone: Zimbabwe Shona Sculpture*, the authors Anthony and Laura Ponter describe the Shona sculpting process as:

“The artists do not experience angst in the creative or carving process. When a sculpture does not emerge, it is simply cast aside. There is no regret. When a carving exploded during the firing process, destroying more than a month of work, artist Crispin June Mutambika said simply, ‘It wasn’t meant to be.’ Shrugging off any disappointment, he picked up another stone and began anew.” [126–127]

All of the poems in this book, including “The Masvikiru Quatrains,” were written along the first draft, last draft mode. Nowadays, I attempt all of my poems in that manner. If a draft doesn’t work, I don’t file it (for further extensive or copious editing). I trash the “failed” first draft, believing that if there was some “spirit” (or poetic energy) sufficiently strong to generate a poem, it will come back to me and perhaps at that later date I will be more adept at guiding out its form in one (unedited) passage. I relate my way of writing to something the Ponters said: “Like most other acts in Shona culture, the carving is ... destined from its beginning.”

To relate the poems further to Shona sculpture, one might say that Jukka and I have found as a common “ancestor” a type of music that draws out an empathy that we hold in common, a type of music that makes us kin. Through music, Jukka and I zero out notions of Other-hood. Through Poetry, we become the same flesh, blood ... and even computer.



## SELECTED NOTES TO POEMS:

### *THE ESTRUS GAZE(S)*

The series is for Jim Ryals.

The poems were written in response to certain sections of *Songs of the Gorilla Nation: My Journey Through Autism* by Dawn Prince-Hughes (Harmony Books, 2004).

“The Estrus Gaze” relates to, among gorillas, the female’s signalling a desire to mate.

### *THE MASVIKIRU QUATRAINS*

The series “The Masvikiru Quatrains” is for Jukka-Pekka Kervinen.

Of much help as regards Zimbabwe Shona Sculpture is *SPIRITS IN STONE: The New Face of African Art*, by Anthony and Laura Ponter (Ukuma Press, 1992)

The following is the source text for “The Fourth Page,” the first poem in this series:

Page 4 from Jukka-Pekka Kervinen’s *cornucopia* (xPress(ed), 2004):

foolery chore notoriety smirch resilience drip pollinate eyrie  
 baptize hemlock colliery progress retinal runners-up kilowatt  
 periscope impersonate wane. forger unceasing nimbus dowdy  
 round-the-clock ménage penetrate rot disingenuous moonscape  
 gabardine ugliness cornucopia pimple front office. Overweening  
 proton munificence wheelbarrow airship lire scalene denouement  
 batch. Vaseline nose dive. Unintentional trading post. Substation  
 blowup freebie scalene gem gas damper promiscuous  
 monotheistic specialize lubricate alluvial betterment bloat trick  
 narcissi permissive conductive gritty VCR handyman positron  
 persuasiveness statehouse midget manipulative recalcitrant  
 phantasy mantel IQ programmable. Crabbed Ra farmhouse  
 fallibility space-age namby-pamby exportation stony hula slake  
 inflexibility least faintness. Spontaneity instrument snowsuit  
 steppingstone all-purpose odometer housecleaning anytime trot  
 crystallization lachrymal cheesecloth mummer slicknesses profuse  
 bigot timbre AM corpus defeatism ahem misfire diplomat  
 idiomatic unintended treatment dogmatic rations periscope  
 thrash patent medicine. Watt malt swindle quarry inhalator  
 rummage sale. Dwelling copter augment politician disguise  
 hobbyist paleness flake paunch nontransferable converse sheaves  
 epoxy. Hayloft. Iodize self-controlled semen discrepancy nerve  
 gas. Trillion speller deterrent bravery planetary wintergreen



# Songs of the Colon

veritable autonomous anthem praiseworthy circle lumber jealousy  
digit leeway advantage tortuous thimble commissar lachrymal  
gainful pushiness reformatory protector lodge slippery atty.  
Campanile Na voltmeter imprisonment jewelry softball issuance  
Frequent small fry. Quiescence liquefy. Chicken pos. downwards  
Touching averse impassive amicable perquisite truthfulness  
Postage nevermore proceeds levelheaded groceries breaking and  
Entering. Copra markup monastic viability nameless feasibility  
Clubhouse eyeliner beast panorama negotiable dorm Pisces  
Decadence announce tremendous outflank tweedy browser  
Idealism offal viviparous conceal iterate conjoin uncounted badge  
Jr. stay malcontent salary boldfaced swordfish. Meek thermal  
Plainclothesman radicalism dire thin-skinned capital punishment.  
Baker's dozen. Skin southeastern detainment N. Mex. Woodwind  
Upstart medicinal. Bunk assortment gravestone outmaneuver  
Hungarian picture tube. Pointy Mediterranean fend conclusive



## OFFICES

**Toronto**  
 Daniel Sendeki  
 3158 Bentworth Drive  
 Burlington, Ontario  
 Canada  
 L7M 1M2

## Tokyo

Jesse Glass  
 Meikai University  
 8 Akemi  
 Urayasu  
 Chiba 279-8550  
 Japan

Other titles available from Ahadada

*Ahadada Reader* (Alan Halsey, John Byrum, Geraldine Monk)

0-9732233-3-2

Combines the lively, challenging work of three experimental poets, Alan Halsey, John Byrum, and Geraldine Monk. Halsey's group of poems resurrects past versions of English, turning with peculiar spellings and striking frictions of their grammar. Byrum's work, entitled "Approximations," is a shifting visual text work mainly utilizing the text block, pointing to the form of a word as art itself. The final selection of Monk's work rounds out the book with her varying forms and sharply constructed lines.

*the time at the end of this writing* (Paolo Javier)

0-9732233-2-4

"These are perceptive poems; that there is pleasure despite it all in never knowing what might happen next is no small part of what they know."

—Anselm Berrigan, author of *Integrity and Dramatic Life*

*Investigations* (Márton Koppány)

0-9732233-1-6

"Of the minimalists who have sought wider accessibility through their work, few have done as well as Koppány."

—Karl Young, *The Light & Dust Anthology of Poetry*

*Strange Currencies* (Daniel Sendeki)

0-9732233-0-8

"Among our elements, where the human situation locates the self as always on tour, via poetry, here, epistles of transformative myth."

—Michael Basinski

*Song To Arepo* (Jesse Glass)

3-89810-184-3

"His rhythms are vigorous, his imagery is strong and inventive; and his language has, in places, a burly force that reminds me of Geoffrey Hill."

—Jane Somerville, *The American Book Review*

*The Book of Doll* (Jesse Glass)

3-89810-185-1

"Glass's work has a strong narrative style which leads the reader (or auditor) through glittering images and strange, speculative environments."

—Karl Young, *The Shepherd Express*

Ahadada Books is a small press first begun in 1999, publishing titles both online and in print. The aim of the press is to present new writers and literature that, to paraphrase Francis Picabia, speak with you, envelope everything, and belong to every religion. We present broadsides, limited-run chapbooks, and perfect bound books of diverse literary forms.

Online publishing is an integral component of the Ahadada Books project: to get important voices heard. The World Wide Web facilitates this endeavour, allowing a potential audience of millions to access our site and read authors that they might never find in their local bookstores.

[HTTP://WWW.AHADADABOOKS.COM/](http://www.ahadadabooks.com/)

### Copyright

The content of all pages in this document (except where otherwise expressly stated) is © Ahadada Books. Reproduction of part or all of the contents in any form is prohibited other than in accordance with the following permission.

You may print or download to a local or network hard disk extracts from or whole pages for your personal use only if you include an appropriate copyright notice in or on all such printouts or downloads stating that the copyright in the information printed or downloaded belongs to Ahadada Books. It is your legal responsibility to ensure that such copyright notices comply with the legal requirements of all nations.

This licence to print or copy does not permit incorporation of the material or any part of it in any other work or publication, whether in hard copy or electronic or any other form. In particular, but without prejudice to the foregoing generality, no part of this publication may be distributed or copied for any commercial purpose whatsoever.