



# Mbokodo owakhiwe ngensimbi – Boulder of iron

Chris Mann<sup>1</sup>

a praise-poem for Malvern Van Wyk-Smith on being awarded the Gold Medal of the English Academy of South Africa in the Eastern Star Gallery, Anglo-African Street, Grahamstown on Saturday the 2nd of March 2013

Lalelani nina nonke enikholelwa kwinkonzo yamabhuku emZantsi,  
Listen everyone who believes in the importance of reading in South Africa,

Nansi ingcwepeshi yobuciko obukhanyisa ingqondo yesizwe esithandekayo,  
Here's a scholar of the art that enlightens the consciousness of the beloved country,

Nangumfana ka-Van Wyki ongumfana futhi ka-Smithi  
Here's the son of a Van Wyk who's also the son of a Smith,

Owahlanganisa izizwe ezimbili ezazibulalana engqondweni yakhe  
Who brought and held together two warring countries in his mind

Njengesibonelo esikhanyiselayo sendlela yokuya phambili kulelizwe lakithi,  
As an enlightening example of the way to go forward in our land.

Ha! Mzingeli wokulunga! Mdali woxolo! Sithi sonke halala!  
Ha! Justice-hunter! Peace-maker! All of us say, 'Congratulations!'

Njengoba namhlanje umphakathi wezingcwethi uyahlobisa impilo yakho ngegolide.  
For today the community of scholars is adorning your life with gold.

Ngiyamncoma, bafundi bemfundo, ngiyamncoma ngempela,  
I praise him, disciples of education, I praise and affirm him

Njengombhali wamabhuku acwebisela udaka lwamanzi,  
As a writer of books that clarified muddy waters,

Njengomprofesa owacwebisela imicabango yabafundi abanengi,  
As a professor who clarified the thoughts of so many students,

Njengomyeni othandekayo nothembekileyo ka-Rosemary,  
As a loving and trustworthy husband of Rosemary his wife,

Njengomalusi othembekileyo nothandekayo wabantwana bakhe.  
And a loving and trustworthy shepherd of his children.

Nangu umholi obehola engaphoqelesi muntu,  
Here is a leader who led without forcing himself on other people,

Owabekezela ezikhathini ezimnyama nezibuhlungu zomzabalazo  
Who persevered during the dark and bitter times of the struggle,

Owabethwa apha nalaphaya emoyeni wakhe ngezenzo zabanye ezicasulisayo,  
Who was afflicted everywhere in the spirit by the terrible deeds of others,

Ongaphenduki agcwale ulaka nenzondo nokuphindisela.  
Without ever becoming a person of anger, hatred and revenge.

Nangu Umbekezeli-ozithuleleyo,  
Here's Mr Taciturn-Who-Perseveres,

Olalela ulaka lwabanye engahlizi njengobisi olushisayo.  
Who listens to the anger of others without frothing over like hot milk.

Nangu Umbokodo owakhiwe ngensimbi  
Here's Mr Boulder-of-Iron

Oguqula ukubethakala kwempilo bube izinhlansi ebumnyameni  
Who transforms the blows of life into sparks in the darkness,

Zona ezitholakala ebucikweni bezinkondlo.  
The same sparks found in the artistry of a poem.

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