

South African Poetry

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with Charles Galston. With a foreword by Roy Campbell
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Mordlone

(57f.) 225. Carcanda

Valley of a Thousand Hills
(Extracts)

Ah! Purity! Sweet purity! I thirst!
The beauty, glory, I have ever sought!
It shakes and quakes, would slip and melt away
On laugh at, mock and humble me. Hold still
You gasping craggy heights, you ~~are~~ in the valleys deep!
Sway not you bushy-bearded hills! Dance not
Nor rail at me with happy drunken sounds!
Wild viscous crowd and tear and wreck my soul!
My seeing eyes see not! Heavy my ears,
With song appalled! Thoughts, claw their way to
birth!
Ancestral spirits great vouchsafe me power
This beauty fierce to seize and rape and make
My own... to express! The poet does not flit.

Give me the words, the depth, the holiness
This magic sight, to hold, imprison, sing!
This myriad beauty of the Thousand Land:
The skipping playing ground of tribal gods
Who earth remembering, settled on these hills
And vales, and thought and wrought this thousand-
shaped

Earth-heaven; And, spirits, still, to heavenly
Spheres

Returned, leaving them behind still unchanged
This miracle they breathed for god-like sport.

~ * ~
On this blest spot where grin the ruins alas!
Long after to a foreign devil beast
In female form myself had tied, I saw
The arum-lily of my native streams.