

I have my mother

Nolwazi Machi

NginoMama Wami

Owami umama waguqa

Waguqa ngenhlonipho wathoba

Waguqa kunzima waqunga

Akaqhaqhazela waqina

Umqansa wenyukela waqinisela.

my own mother kneeled
she kneeled with respect and bowed
she kneeled through hardship and persevered
she did not shake, she stood strong
the hill got steep but she held on

my own mother then, persevered
the man had turned to an animal
a husband to her
a father to me
a man on earth
the lover of girls

my own mother persevered
she became a laughing stock of girls – even the latest ones
we went hungry and father didn't know
we asked about father and mother didn't know
this very man, a husband and father,
became the enemy of the home
mother cried by night and wiped her tears by day

my own mother kneeled
the fist and boot ate her, but she folded herself
a knife and gun threatened her, but she parried
in the morning she laughed with many
she was no stone, no iron
but she chose to kneel
your love is incomparable
I think it's love that held her
her love for a husband, a man
her love and hope in God held her

my own mother kneeled
she kneeled and prayed to the One-Above
that is my mother, then
that mother is mine

(translated from isiZulu)