

marriage is large-toothed

Nolwazi Machi

Umendo Uyingxavula

O maye!

Kwaze kwangiyal' ukugana ngimncane

O maye!

Nakh' ukuhlupheka kufas' amatomu phezu kwami.

Ngashelwa yinsizw' ibukeka ngathatheka

Yazikhiph' izinkomo yaphangisa

We maye ukungazi!

oh my!
if only I didn't marry young
oh my!
now suffering has put bridles on me

I was approached by a handsome young man and was won over
he gave the cattle speedily
oh, how ignorant I was

not being a man I became Home-builder
I wore suffering and it suited me at Dying-home
the happiness I was after ran away

marriage is self-damage, oh my father!
my cousins turned against me, I became *umzondo*¹
the smell was caught by my friends
my freedom ended I became self-conscious

people did say marriage was large toothed
they said I would soon arrive at long-legged's place
become a *nzawunzawu*²
left in deserted buildings
the *ngongoman*'s³
the beast that dies inside the house

1 Umzondo: a stinkbug

2 Nzawunzawu: mythical rejected creature.

3 Ngongomane: a wounded giant

it seems you can't send spies to a marriage
as they would have run and stopped me
'Mayiza's child don't go there'
but no, even my ancestors sacrificed me!
the loafer: he is happy to see the sunsets
kids follow each other like rats
he drinks the money of the spinal cord
he gets drunk and swears and kick me

I cry with the birds, I am undressed
I throw myself to mother and adults
they all send me back
they say one perseveres in marriage

(translated from isiZulu)