

POLITICS

AND

Poetry



A Collection
of Poems on
Politics and
International
Relations

Ndzalama Mathebula





Politics and Poetry

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Hoopoe Press

*Politics and Poetry: A Collection of Poems on Politics
and International Relations*

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Book Overview

The book *Politics and Poetry* is a collection of 10 poems on different themes of politics and international relations. It aims to capture and articulate political events, phenomena, theories, expressions, and the science of the discipline through different poems embodying different poetic tactics. The book seeks to communicate politics and international relations that are traditionally expressed through academic papers, books, and reports, through a different genre of writing: poetry. The poems are thought-provoking and use extensive political and international relations jargon.

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What is Poetry

Politics and Poetry can be defined as an eloquent marriage that captures an infrequent connection in the most sophisticated way. Poetry can be defined as the composition of metrical language captured through a patterned language, expressing the art of versification (Oxford English Dictionary, 2025). Davies (2009) argues that poetry reflects the force for power, that we can define as soft, an assemblage of picture, eloquence, and music that never fails to make a strong and everlasting impression in the human mind (Davies, 2009). Johnson (1779) captures poetry as “*the essence of poetry is invention; such invention as, by producing something unexpected, surprises and delights... Poetry pleases by exhibiting an idea more grateful to the mind than things themselves afford.*” While Wordsworth and Coleridge (1800) allude to poetry as “the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origins from emotion recollected in tranquillity.”

Poetry is commanded for its ability to capture emotion, relevance, facts, struggles of the day, revolutions, events, phenomena within a verse, stanza, or poem. Its discovery dates back to acoustic communication, which first emerged about 500,000 years ago (Augasaco, 2014). Poetry has continued to aid poets and readers of poetry in expressing and appreciating love, struggles, passion, emotions, and events. Poetry has intricate connections to philosophy, art, politics, human experience, history, contemporary history, and more; the list is endless, as its very essence can be carved to produce eloquence beyond any subject. Poetry is symbolism, an instrument of soft power, and a

liberation genre. Carey suggests that poetry is defined by its ability to be deathless.

“As we have seen, part of the wisdom of poetry is that it reminds us we must die. But poems, or some poems, do not die, but survive far beyond the span of human life. Why this should happen is mysterious. How can a poet take a few words from the vast avalanche of language that hurtles past us every day, arrange them in a certain order, and make a deathless work of art? No one has ever been able to explain it. But that, it seems probable, is every poet’s aim (Carey, 2020: 6).”

The quote above alludes to the sophisticated nature of poetry that is assembled in a few words, an infrequent rhyming scheme, and the engagement of infrequent facets of the world and everyday life, and for the very poem to surpass death, it lives and thrives throughout human life. As such, poetry has always been used as a mnemonic device for centuries. This is most evident in its rhyming nature (Beissinger, 2012).

History of Poetry

According to the Obsidian: Literature & Arts in the African Diaspora (n.d), *poetry* comes from the Greek word *poieo*, defined as “*I create.*” The earliest forms of poetry were believed to be composed and expressed through songs and oral history. Poetry is understood as a form of art that preludes literacy. Through oral history, poetry was often expressed through prayers and chants, and its historically documented record alludes to fiction and everyday life instructions (Obsidian: Literature & Arts in the African Diaspora, n.d). Golden (2015) argues that though historians may find it challenging to determine the precise periods where poetry was discovered/conceptualized, we can allude,

however, to the notion that poetry has existed since the 20th century B.C., post this period, other forms of poetry, such as sonnets, populated literary arts. Golden (2015) also argues that apart from other forms of poetry, we ought to recognize and pay homage to the Restoration poetry of the 17th century and the satirical verses of John Dryden and Alexander Pope. Though the precision of isolating the earliest works of poetry remains, the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, and *The Epic of Gilgamesh* are being cited among the oldest exemplars of poetry.

According to Finnegan (2012), African poetry can be traced back to prehistoric periods. In Africa, poetry has traditionally been part of theatrics, which existed in pre-colonial times. In this capacity, Africa's poetry was defined by hunting poetry, elegiac court poetry and panegyric which emerged in the Empires of the Nile, Volta river valleys and Niger (Finnegan, 2012). The *Pyramid Texts* document and preserve some of Africa's earliest forms of poetry, while the *Epic of Sundiata* is the most famous example of griot court poetry. Poetry was used in most aspects of life, from entertainment to education, politics, and spiritual purposes.

Politics and Poetry

According to Orr (2008: 409), politics and poetry are everyday in numerous ways, while poetry is 'passive, swoony, and generally not in the business of doing things'; politics on the other hand, is 'active, gritty, and comparable to war' (Orr, 2008: 409). While this comparison does not tease out the common inference between politics and poetry, Orr (2008) asserts that both politics and poetry allude to verbal persuasion and have a strong connection to the art of rhetoric. Kulakov (2018) also argues that '*if robust politics is*

vital for growth in society, then robust poetry understands the political dimensions of society'. Nowshin (2019) argues that political poetry has always created a safe space to decimate and discuss societal inequalities. The author believes 'there is nothing like a beautifully crafted poem to rouse the masses and communicate an intensity of emotion that is otherwise untranslatable'. Indeed, poetry has always driven the complex vehicle of politics, which can often be hard to express verbally. Poetry features a succinct, harmonious yet factual and brutal truth of politics. Edkins (2022) argues that poetry prides itself on better capturing the political moment, where fragmentation, war, geopolitics, and a looming Cold War best define the global political aura. From this outlook, poetry is an emancipatory tool of our generation and earlier generations that could implicitly and explicitly capture political moments in the most succinct yet impactful way. I say impactful because some of those poems still hold relevance and value today. Every poem carries a story, event, phenomenon, or struggle that inspired its existence; as such, poems become representations of experience, as art represents nature (Koethe,2022).

For instance, the poem *In Detention* by Chris van Wyk, which places the poem in the apartheid era of South Africa, herein, Chris uses repetition in a very satirical and ridiculous manner to expose the brutal and horrific police brutality against the black people who were detained and lost their lives in the hands of their interrogators. The poem explores logical explanations of deaths from detention, and while the first three lines are sound, the rest of the poem invites satire and a ridiculing tone on these 'explanations'.

What is Poetry

He fell from the ninth floor.
He hanged himself
He slipped on a piece of soap while washing.

The poem repeats and provides senseless explanations to expose the absurdness of the explanations, such as lines 7, 8, and 9

He hanged himself while washing
He slipped from the ninth floor
He hung from the ninth floor

Such poems are still being cited as powerful protests against the apartheid regime.

An Abandoned Bundle by Oswald Mbuyiseni Mtshali narrates a metaphorical expression, wherein the poem implicitly compares two abandoned bundles. At the same time, the overt *abandoned bundle* is the *Baby in Manger* who was left to rest on human dung. The other *abandoned bundle* is the black communities in South Africa, who were not only *abandoned* but also oppressed by the apartheid government. The first stanza captures the scenery of this political time, where Mtshali compares the thick smoke from houses to a gigantic sore that is oozing with pus, a comparison and scenery that captures the disheartening living conditions of the townships in apartheid South Africa. However, in the last stanza, the poet's tone becomes sympathetic towards the baby's mother. This places the poem and its setting in a circumstantial locus, meaning the experiences documented in the poem are based not on personal choices, but rather the environmental climate and circumstances that define those times.

On an international plane, the poem *Caged Bird* by Maya Angelou is an outcry against racism and

oppression of Black Americans who are victims of racist policies. In this poem, Maya compares two birds that are distinguished by freedom. While one bird is free, the other remains caged. The caged bird's state is expressed through onomatopoeic expressions to highlight the devastating position of those caged. In the modern world, the caged bird is also applicable to the Russia-Ukraine war, the Israel-Palestine war; in these contexts, there are free birds and caged birds who only can sing, as their circumstances constrain them to do anything other than singing.

The poem *We Are Not Responsible* by Harryette Mullen further contends against the power structures that oppress the other (marginalised groups). The poem challenges systematic racism in a generalised form. It uses the word 'we' repetitively to flag the authoritative and unacceptable nature of systematic racism. The parody style used in the poem highlights the absurdity of these oppressive structures. Satirically, the last stanza notes some of the 'rules' promulgated by systematic racism.

Step aside, please, while our officer inspects your bad attitude.

You have no rights we are bound to respect.

Please remain calm, or we can't be held responsible for what happens to you.

The parody aggressively targets the overt dehumanization of the 'other' or people of colour. This poem holds great pertinence and can be used to decipher the #Black Lives Matter protests that resulted from the story of George Floyd, who was a victim of systematic racism in America.

London by William Blake captures the negative atrocities and impact of power politics and their far-reaching impacts on the societies in this poem. William describes the gloomy and challenging atmosphere in London as the author deciphers this disheartening city through the structure of a walk. William employs a negative and hopeless tone to express his cynicism with the state, monarchy, and the Church, which are portrayed as authoritative structures that abuse power. Through this poem, Blake aimed to succinctly capture the ills and inequality within London society that resulted from power structures and the abuse of power.

Why Politics and Poetry?

Well, they rhyme well together,
But they entrench a discourse that incites a political
adventure,
The practice helps to decipher complex political themes
In a seamless and rejuvenating scheme
The act captures a more romanticized manner of the
discipline
But heavily relies on a factual politikon scene

From the writing of Greek philosophers
To the political thought manufactures
Politics and poetry emancipate the mind
Documented through texts and scriptures that bind
Throughout its evolution, politics has conformed to
duality
So, too, has its effects determined by its polity

The common thread between politics and poetry is an
intricate occasion
In which both subjects resort to persuasion
While the other pursue poetophiles
The political animal scavenges on constituents' profiles
The combination is as compelling as Squealer
But its existence in the world of politics serves as a
redeemer

The political complex web can distort the ordinary
But poetry clarifies the statecraft theory

30 Years of Democracy

Would the triple threat be history now if we had sustained the RDP instead of GEAR?

The hopes and dreams of 1994 are far more disjointed from the reality

Or should I say promises for a better standard of living, economic prosperity, and equality

Batho Pele¹ is the principle

But the more you read into it, it spells Moruo Pele²

Since one of Africa's largest GDP co-exists with a 63% poverty rate

The young democracy has made significant gains since the dom pass,

Gains that have seen a transformation both at home and within the political class,

Gains that consider gender, race, and context of the marginalized

Today, we celebrate Freedom Day, Human Rights Day for those who were previously panelized

With a globally recognized constitution,

And a global recognition of a moral actor attribution,

Back at home, the protest action for service delivery signals how insufficient the gains are

On the other side of the digital divide

The femicide cases probe the justice system and its credibility

A society where whistleblowers are assassinated by the rule of law culpability

1 People first

2 The economy first

Politics and Poetry

The unemployment levels constantly surge with every
matric cohort we graduate
While corruption embezzles the prospective future of
the qualified fate

And while the challenges of post-1994 seem to be
catching up with the democratic racer
Kambe hi Xitsonga hiri laha ku nga na ku navela ku na
ku humelela³

3 Where there's a will there's a way

Africa's Independence

Ghana was the first to gain independence, but is its economy independent?

Africa's post-independence period is like a baby learning to walk,

Characterized by remarkable growth with Big Man Syndrome amendments

Though the toddling has come a long way since the scramble, it did cost us a pessimistic mock.

Africa's independence is incarnated by an imperial residue

That has revised its future and fabricated its historical shadow

How can transatlantic slavery and colonialism be the African symbolic statue?

Or maybe our history lessons should provide more innuendos

Innuendos on how Sankore University was one of the first in society

Maybe that can reignite the African pride

But how can we have an African pride while we are still grappling with the African identity?

Does the Black connotate to being sub-human, or is the African being included by favour at the United Nations invites?

Is the scuffling independence ride self-inflicted, though? Are we doing enough to ensure that Africa thrives?

Do our leaders genuinely invest in the African dream?

Politics and Poetry

Or do our governments and the elites find it rewarding
to connive?

To connive against the voting majority or the militarily
reprieved totalitarian scream

Though the independence has come a long way,
Our leaders are elongating the long detour to the
developed destination,

At least Seychelles celebrates the FetAfrik festival
towards the Agenda 2063 ray

Like the Ziggy Marley and the Melody Makers's Black
My Story emancipation

We can do so much more than shelving African Union
and Regional Economic Communities mandates

To emancipate the African potential that remains caged

Africa's Debt Crisis

(free rhyme)

In the Chinese era, we call it the debt diplomacy trap
But independence never released the African economic
prisoner,
Constantly, continuously, exhaustively going to the
same lender,
Did we forget to emancipate our economies in 1957?

All we scramble upon is a weak commodity export
economy
If not debt-financed infrastructural projects
Ask me where the primary commodity revenue goes.
To the Paris Club or the Bretton Woods Institutions

Post-2008 the Global Financial Crisis, the multiplicity
of lenders overwhelmed the African debtor's room
While the Jubilee movement called for a debt
cancelation in the mid-1990s
This only incited lenders to credit Africa more
Reverting the high, unsustainable debt levels

It is public knowledge that Africa's inherited sluggish
economies post-independence
Or that the credit rating system's algorithms are bias
Well, being in the periphery economy is hard and
unrewarding
Especially when you *adopt* a neoliberal orthodox

Maybe our leaders never had time to transform these
economic compositions

Politics and Poetry

With corruption, neopatrimonialism, and clientelism
being top of the agenda, where would they find the
time?

With ethnic rivalries spilling over policy, where would
they find the political zeal?

With comparative inverted legitimacy and ousting,
where would they find the time?

Perhaps Africa is a willing victim of the global capitalist
economy

Dredged in a debt cancer pot of self-infliction, the
minerals are the main ingredient

And while economic diversification is the most feasible
cure for this distress,

Political governance determines the quality of its
progress

Global Politics in the 21st Century

As the world invalidates the democratic peace theory,
States perceive Sea Power as their most feasible form of
victory

Historical patterns and postinternational politics offset
their prominence

While all the factors that were once *inconsequential* in
global politics assert their relevance

Economic turmoil and conflict become common but
unique to each state

While genocide victims in Gaza hope the multilateral
order will alter their fate

As new powerful and moral actors emerge and avow
their preponderance

The Thucydides trap, and Cold War series incarcerate
the future political landscape's remembrance

Though some states may consider these changing
world orders indifferent

Some remain keen on harnessing a counterpoint
agenda against the unipolar inference

States, Regions, and Continents attempt to minimize
the security dilemma near their doorsteps

And so do geopolitical risks and national interests
dictate a country's security multi-steps

Globalization continues to deem war contemporaneous
While Djibouti's foreign military bases invite effects
that are perilous

As coups d'état in Africa highlight, the democracy
deficiencies endured

Politics and Poetry

A new form of governance pioneered by Youths from all
over the world is pursued
While half of the world seeks this change through
voting polls
Presidential candidate assassinations have the
potential to affect presidential goals

The global agenda and aid on energy highlight the
significance of sustainability and a just transition
Yet, powerful actors continuously ignore that they
industrialized through thermal generation
As states are engrossed by a debt crisis post-the COVID
era
The unemployed become hopeless in Sub-Saharan
When sanctions against the Ukraine invasion establish
a counter-effect on the influential
Food security strategies and resilience against
geopolitical shocks gain credential

International law is being customised as a tool for
multiple world orders
Rwanda's neopatrimonial-balancing agenda surges
M23 mourners
Water politics are surmised to be the instigator of
WWIII
As Sudan's conflict victims broadcast their plea
And as IR continues to conform to an anarchist frame
Politics is perceived as a zero-sum game

The Realist Actor

Its ambiance is characterized by self-serving interest,
and it thrives in anarchy
But is realism really self-consumed?
Considering that liberalism is also eyeing the same
price
Just does it in a different style
Geopolitics constantly forces its subjects to act this way
When the security dilemma is at play

Do you blame them?
The countries that combat when their existence is at
the hem?
Constructivists will tell you that perspective is
everything
Hence, foreign policy is barely consistent in this setting
The environment determines the everyday guise
As regions regroup to assert their preponderance

Yes, I do blame them...
Considering the genocide in Gaza, I do blame them
Realism is a melody only to those who have the means
for *self-help*
But never for those buried under rabble
I doubt Ukraine would have the same view
Or the women subjected to the Taliban taboo

Political Risk

Would the black swan theory have aided our preparation for the flu?
Anyway, it is no fun to identify a risk that has emanated
The discipline owes its whole existence to predictions
Or what we would refer to as subjective projections

Rice and Zegart have flagged the significance of understanding Political Risks
But also highlights how organizations remain reluctant to reward subjective scientists
But who would have thought that Hugo Chávez's bid against Western symbols would upset Coke Zero?
An unidentified political risk that had the impact of an inferno

Political Risks are all around us in different forms
But only the neurotics have the sixth sense to elude the political storms
The field remains valuable to all sectors, especially businesses...
Since they lost daily earnings when the 2021 July riots hit the streets

The dubious part is the political decision never compensate
Ask the 2021 July entrepreneurs what a bad time it was to own a business
But then again, every and any other day wakes up scared for the risks that lie ahead
Will expropriation without compensation visit us today, or a regime change will nationalize *our* mineral resources?

Politics and Poetry

The discipline continues to invite more risk generators
My! This further complicates the landscape, doesn't it?
At least in the 18th century, all I had to worry about was
pirates in the seas
But now those smartphones and their clear cameras
really expose our secrets

Though I come when you least expect me,
You can still mitigate me!

Thucydides Trap

(free rhyme)

Is the rise of China the trigger of the surmised WWII?
May Trump's return to the presidency instigate the trap?

IR really deems it impossible to share power
But can't a multipolar system thrive

Oh wait, the system is already unbalanced
Therefore, when one rises to power, it's like they are
borrowing some from the established power
Is the school of realism to blame for this trap?
Or was Aristotle correct to perceive us as *politikon zōion*

In all the documented 16 cases in the history of
mankind,
Only four of those proved Thucydides wrong
I didn't fathom that states could be envious of one
another
Why would my rise hurt you, though?

Or is it because you scavenged and thrived on some of
my borrowed power?
Djibouti has demonstrated how to share territory
But has unintentionally, surged the insecurity in the
horn of Africa
Because those established powers have started
overstepping one another

As the principal actors dictate the direction of the world
The simplest litmus test is their comparative politics

Is International Law Really a Law?

A question that will always trouble academics
Positivists find its grounding in empirical evidence
While normativism derives it from natural relics
Its legal quality chases after contemporary relevance

Throughout its evolution, *jus gentium* has embodied an
element of self-help
One which only serves those who can afford to sanction
A challenge, however, for those with no autonomy to
circumvent
Hence, its legal quality is one you must question

Realists perceive it as a power tool,
While post-colonialists inculcate it for failed
decolonization
Though its ICJ advisory opinion method for Gaza and
Chagos may be seen as cruel
Liberals are far more optimistic about it promoting
international cooperation

Statehood and sovereignty cuts through the supreme
law blanket
When states rebel against laws that compromise their
interests
Due to the questionable enforceability, its potency
cannot be compared to that of a mallet
And that is the main factor that distinguishes municipal
law from international preference

Politics and Poetry

When human rights violations are disregarded by poor
litigation

Its conformation to the traditional legal systems is
scrutinized

While those who populate the global hemisphere blame
the power dissemination

But the ones with veto power have their views
canonized

With all its beauties, deficits, and different
components,

International law is a real law,
just one with different commandments

Energy Politics

Energy is the driver of all economies and an advance of
magnetic field career

From William Gilbert's *De Magnete, Magneticisque
Corporibus, et de Magno Magnete Tellure*

To COP 27 and the *global* net-zero ambitions

As the world witnesses the ever-complex and
multidisciplinary transition

The magnitude between energy security and energy
efficiency is complex

This was most understood by European countries when
Russia invaded Ukraine with Infantry fighting vehicles

The energy trilemma further complicates the spectrum

Since the contemporary electricity field requires a
sustainable electrine

The LNG discovery in Cabo Delgado reinforces the
resource curse

But Africa can leapfrog ahead of the sun's rays and
green energy curve

In another argument, we are coerced/financed to
decarbonize

When the political economy of energy is *justified*

Interestingly, the policy and execution sing an
oxymoron

Where loans dressed as investments determine the
energy lexicon

Oil, coal, gas, and all are the energy resources states
have industrialized upon

Politics and Poetry

However, the means of electrification have been quite selfish, as stated by the first runners-up in the development marathon

Unfortunately, the victims of the unsustainable grid are the civil war victims in Sudan

And the coastal dwellers of the warm Agulhas shores in KwaZulu-Natal

Let's not leave out Chad, Cameroon, Niger, and Nigeria in the flooded site

As climate change proves to be a disaster of its uncontrollable kind

As the energy governance spectrum fizzles out

The different stakeholders involved seek to finance their accounts

Where does this leave the people who cannot afford to keep the bulb on?

A question that is supposedly answered by the *Just Transitions* Energon

Gladly, energy communities have emerged to challenge this narrative

Through a reverse government and energy democracy amalgamation

And as energy continues to advance,

Its politics will continuously allude to a complex glance

Afterword


Politics and Poetry is a book that emerged from a class activity on international law in my third-year class (University of Johannesburg), where the students were instructed to decrypt politics and international relations, particularly themes of international law, through poetry. In this fun learning activity, students were encouraged to deduce political and international relations themes from two poems, *Global Political Awareness* by John. W. McEwers and *Repairing International Relations* by Terence. G. Craddock. In the midst of this task, students were further encouraged to compose their own political poems. This aimed to explore sundry pedagogies of learning and teaching politics and IR.

This class activity opened a conduit to the composition of this book, which seeks to decipher contemporary political and international relations in a succinct, satirical, and eloquent manner, providing an opportunity to capture both facts and emotions in a single text. Politics and poetry seek to explore politics through a different genre than the traditional academic genre most common in academic writing. The book aims to reach a greater readership on jargonized topics and themes of politics and IR, mostly enjoyed by the academic community. The collection of poems draws from blatant political events, phenomena, experiences, and struggles that the global community and different societies can relate to. These poems not only serve as a symbol of realities known to many or representations of contemporary politics, but also serve in the scholarship of teaching and learning at numerous educational levels.

The book features a poem on the amalgamation of politics and poetry (*Why Politics and Poetry?*), alluding to the fact that politics and poetry are persuasive. While one is coercive, the other uses words, tone, emotions, and imagery to persuade and convince the reader through implicit yet overt indications. The poem *The Realist Actor* uses a sarcastic and rhetorical tone to highlight the contradictory nature of anarchy in global politics. While a turbulent environment tends to force realist actors to protect themselves when war nears their doorsteps, the contradiction in the case is the vicious circle of a state that inflicts hostilities in international politics courtesy of self-help, or power politics. While these powerful states inflict hostilities on the globe, the global political climate eventually becomes hostile, forcing every state to become a realist actor, further making the global environment *more* inimical. Absurdly, the same realist and powerful states have to protect themselves from a supposed hostile political climate that they indirectly founded. In the last stanza, the tone of the poem changes and, with anguish, flags the societal impact of these realist actors and their actions, by citing real-life atrocities resulting from the actions of *realist actors*.

I have decrypted one of the poems from this collection; I trust the rest of your analytic journey in this book is filled with pleasure and indulgence in the infrequent yet delightful matrimony of politics and poetry.

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Liberalism: The most dangerous form of realism

I craft the poem you are about to read, Lebogang Malapile, a third-year student at the University of Johannesburg. My love for poetry began in high school, and it has only deepened as I've pursued my studies in politics and international law. In writing this piece, I chose the Shakespearean sonnet form to emphasize the connection between my passions for poetry and political discourse. This poem explores the irony and paradox of democracies going to war, particularly in light of the democratic peace theory, which suggests that democracies are less likely to engage in conflict with one another. The ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine serves as a striking example, prompting me to question: What happened to the ideals of peace that democracies profess? This tension highlights the role of anarchy in international relations. It reflects on the balance of power theory, which asserts that states act primarily out of self-interest in an anarchic world. I was inspired to write this poem during an insightful lecture from Ms. Ndzalama Mathebula on international law, where we analyzed a poem that sparked my interest in the intersection of poetry and politics. This piece represents my first foray into political poetry, drawing on themes from my studies and acknowledging key concepts discussed in my think piece. I, hope you enjoy exploring how liberalism can be perceived as a dangerous form of realism, revealing the complexities and contradictions inherent in global politics today.

Liberalism: The most dangerous form of realism

Lebogang Malapile 

*Department of Politics and International Relations
University of Johannesburg 
Johannesburg, South Africa*

In realms where power plays its cunning hand,
Where nations clash, and dreams of peace are fraught,
Russia's might loom large o'er Ukraine's land,
What happened to the peace that we once sought?

Democracies, with lofty words they claim,
Yet, they march to war as if it were their fate,
A paradox that stirs both fear and shame,
As self-interest weaves threads that separate.

Soft power masks the struggle deep within,
While hopes for harmony begin to fade,
In shadows cast by claims of peace we spin,
The truth revealed, a price that must be paid.

Thus, liberal dreams may lead us all astray,
For in the end, it's power at the play.

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Ever envisioned what the amalgamation of politics and poetry looks like? Persuasion and eloquence are at the heart of this combination. This book brings about the pleasure of succinctly, emotively, figuratively, and strangely compellingly expressing politics. Poetry has always been praised for its patterned language, as a form of literary art, and for its amusing rhyming scheme. Beyond this order, poetry has always been at the heart of politics, through expressive and loud poems that capture the struggles of the day or implicit ciphers aimed at dispatching encoded messages. This book is tasked with capturing the current political state of affairs through poetry and inciting an alternative form of reading, writing, and exploring politics through a different writing genre.

Ndzalama Mathebula is an Assistant Lecturer at the Department of Politics and International Relations, University of Johannesburg. She is also an Associate Editor for the *Journal of World Affairs: Voice of the Global South*. Her research niches include energy and mineral resources, African political economy, political risk analysis, and international relations. Ndzalama holds a bachelor's degree in Humanities, an Honours degree in Politics and International Relations, and a Master's degree in Politics from the University of Johannesburg, and she's currently pursuing her PhD on Energy Communities. Ndzalama has recently published a book titled *Debt Crisis and Sovereign Risk in Africa*. She also holds membership with the Institute of Risk Management South Africa and has participated in conferences, webinars, and TV interviews as a political commentator and panellist.

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