The morning mist  
and chimney smoke 
of White City Jabavu  
flowed thick yellow  
as pus oozing  
from a gigantic sore.  

It smothered our little houses  
like fish caught in a net.  

Scavenging dogs  
draped in red bandanas of blood  
fought fiercely 
for a squirming bundle.  

I threw a brick;  
they bared fangs  
flicked velvet tongues of scarlet  
and scurried away,  
leaving a mutilated corpse—  
an infant dumped on a rubbish heap—
‘Oh! Baby in the Manger  
sleep well  
on human dung.’  

Its mother  
had melted into the rays of the rising sun,  
her face glittering with innocence  
her heart pure as untrampled dew.  

by Oswald Mbuyiseni Mtshali  