



MANDELA AND DE KLERK

By Wayne Visser

Divergent paths by twists of fate
Ordained to meet, then separate
High branches grown from different stems
That intertwined to make amends

Who are these sons of destiny
That changed the course of history?
Who are these dons of liberty
That led their people to be free?

Mandela - from the Themba clan
Among the hills of Transkei land -
Was schooled to be a royal chief
But chose instead the golden Reef

De Klerk - of Afrikaaner stock
Who staked their claim to Transvaal's rock -
Was steeped in National Party depths
And followed in his father's steps

Both knocked upon unopened doors
Both tipped the scales of unjust laws
And each was raised to lofty heights
By willing hands and vexing plights

Mandela - asked to fight the ground
Where dignity was beaten down
De Klerk - compelled to guard the fort
Of privilege the past had bought

The stage was set for black and white
To go to war or lose the fight
There was no neutral ground to stand
Each corner backed their leading man





Mandela raised the nation's spear
The State replied midst rising fear
The 'pimpernel' was put on trial
And banished to the Cape's jail isle

For twenty seven years and more
The battle raged upon the shore
until De Klerk set Nelson free
To take their place in history

Negotiations followed swift
To heal the wounds and mend the rift
And even while blood soaked the ground
A partnership was sought and found

until the day - that happy dawn -
A rainbow nation's dream was born
We owe a debt of thanks and praise
To those who led us through the maze

Mandela brought great unity
And showed that truth can set us free
His lack of spite inspires us still
To strive to serve a higher will

De Klerk's great gift was letting go
And having faith that trust can grow
He showed that change is like a seed
That knows no bounds of race or creed

And so we raise our voice and say:
We celebrate upon this day
Two heroes of democracy
Who rescued our humanity.

Copyright 2008

