



HE LIVED AMONG US
Tribute to Nelson Mandela (1918-2013)

By Wayne Visser

He lived among us –
This child named Rolihlahla
This boy called Nelson
This man we knew as Mandela –
And now he is gone

He shared our days –
This son of Africa, our Madiba
This father of a nation, our Tata
This guardian of humanity, our Elder –
And now he is gone

He was one of us –
This shepherd of the people
This harbinger of hope and joy
This legend of our time and place –
And now he is gone

He was our leader
Our defender, our nation's spear
And he showed us how to fight

He was our enemy
Our nemesis, our conscience
And he showed us how to be free

He was our light
Our sun, our inspiration
And he showed us how to forgive

Yet did we ever really know him?
This lawyer who became an outlaw
This soldier who became a peacemaker
This prisoner who became a liberator





How can we fathom his depths?
This father who lost a son and wife
This comrade who lost so many friends
This martyr who lost twenty-seven years

How can we see into his heart?
This intellectual who became an activist
This statesman who became a gardener
This icon who became the world's beloved

We remember him
For his skilful manoeuvring
Through the political maze
And even more for his love of dancing

We remember him
For his human touch
Among the powerful and the powerless
And even more for his love of children

We remember him
For his human foibles
That made him fallible like us
And even more for his love of justice

He lived among us –
And now it is for us to carry his torch onward
It is for us to follow his shining example
It is for us to fight for his unshakeable ideals –
Now that he is gone

He shared our days –
And now we must make the rest of our days count
We must work as he did to set others free
We must show that the spirit can triumph in the end –
Now that he is gone





He was one of us –
And now we are challenged to become one of him
We are inspired to be the best we can be
We are reminded that 'I am because we are' –
Now that he is gone

Nkosi Sikelel'iMandela!
We will honour his memory
By never losing faith in times of adversity
We will celebrate his life
By always daring to hope for a miracle
We will keep his legacy alive
By choosing to walk daily in his footsteps
On the path of love
Amandla! Awethu!

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