

POETRY

# Lumumba

by Loic Ekinga



"Facing It Together" by Jack Bordnick

Lumumba cuts a path in his hair to match his resolve. He tells me, *one might as well look dashing when one tries to break out of chains.*

Lumumba gives rousing speeches in parliament. Lumumba starts to believe he might be a prophet. Lumumba hums the tune of *Independance Cha-Cha* over his kitchen sink. Lumumba introduces Mobutu to his wife and children, I cannot warn him. Lumumba is tied to a tree. Lumumba will always remember where the bullet entered. Lumumba tells me about his favourite radio show. Lumumba is Skol and Primus. Lumumba sits across from me in silence worried about the future. Lumumba meets Nkrumah. Lumumba sends me the same text every Monday

*Good morning Champion, how are things there? I hope you guys are doing as well as I am. Tozali ko koba kaka se na ngolu. Have a beautiful start to the week in Christ*

Lumumba is in Illinois, making forty graduation gowns a day. Lumumba wants to buy me a new iPhone for my birthday. Lumumba reminds me of the kind of baby I was. Lumumba gives me a discount on bread and asks that I send his greetings to my folks. Lumumba comes to me in a dream. Lumumba is crumpled in my pocket. Lumumba votes for the first time. Lumumba cries for the first time. Lumumba clenches his jaw when his captor tries to make him eat his speech. Lumumba is invaded by the M23. Lumumba opens a centre to mend the women broken by violence. Lumumba wins a Nobel Prize. Lumumba tells me of the time he died in a coltan mine. Lumumba is 99,010,212. Lumumba is January 4th. Lumumba is number 1. Lumumba gets killed by the king of Belgium in a field. Lumumba invents the Rumba. Lumumba is a refugee in South Africa, then Rwanda, then Canada. Lumumba is a city flooding and swallowing its inhabitants. Lumumba is a *sapeur*. Lumumba is a car guard in Johannesburg. Lumumba tilts my head to the side and carefully slides a cotton bud into my ear. *Sit still*, he says. Lumumba wants me to listen.