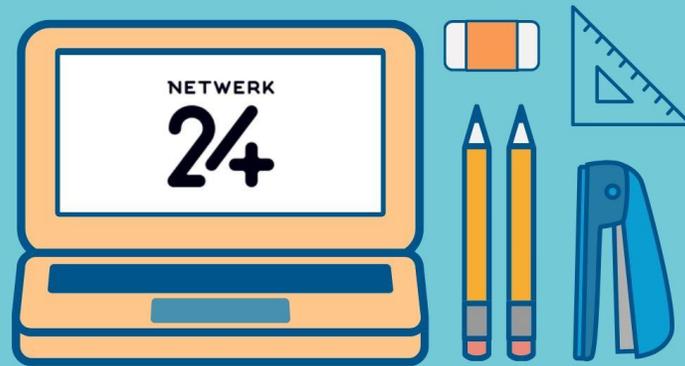


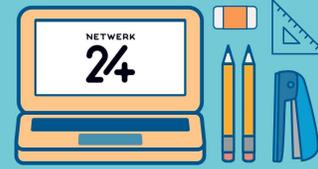
# #MYSKOOL

AANLYN HULP

*vir matrieke*



# ENGELS



## Poetry: To Learn How to speak

### **To learn how to speak . . .**

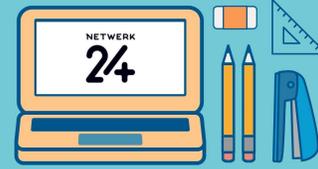
To learn how to speak  
With the voices of the land,  
To parse<sup>1</sup> the speech in its rivers,<sup>2</sup>  
To catch in the inarticulate grunt,  
Stammer,<sup>3</sup> call, cry, babble, tongue's knot  
A sense of the stoneness of these stones  
From which all words are cut.  
To trace with the tongue wagon-trails  
Saying the suffix of their aches in -kuil, -pan, -fontein,<sup>4</sup>  
In watery names that confirm  
The dryness of their ways.<sup>5</sup>  
To visit the places of occlusion,<sup>6</sup> or the lick<sup>7</sup>  
in a vlei-bank dawn.



## Poetry: To Learn How to speak

To bury my mouth in the pit<sup>8</sup> of your arm,  
In that planetarium,  
Pectoral beginning to the nub of time  
Down there close to the water-table, to feel  
The full moon as it drums  
At the back of my throat  
Its cow-skinned vowel.<sup>9</sup>  
To write a poem with words like:  
I'm telling you,  
Stompie, stickfast, golovan,  
Songololo, just boombang,<sup>10</sup> just  
To understand the least inflections,<sup>11</sup>  
To voice without swallowing  
Syllables born in tin shacks,<sup>12</sup> or catch  
the 5.15 ikwata bust fife<sup>13</sup>  
Chwannisberg train, to reach  
The low chant of the mine gang's  
Mineral glow of our people's unbreakable resolve.

To learn how to speak  
With the voices of this land.



# Poetry: To Learn How to speak

**Type of poem:** Free verse

**Setting:** South Africa

**Symbolism:** The progression of speech and transport symbolises the progression of society and the traditions of the people.

**Theme:** Progression. The poet's efforts (as an English white man) and struggles to learn the languages of the black and white people of South Africa.

**Mood:** Awestruck/ celebratory

**Summary:** This poem focuses on the progression of speech, transport, stages of a river and time periods. Each of these celebrate the progression, diversity and growth of South Africa, of the land and the people.

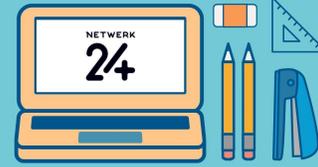
*Speech progression – to speak, to parse, to catch, inarticulate grunt, stammer, call, cry, babble, tongue's knot, words are cut, to trace with the tongue, -kuil, -pan, -fontein, vlei-bank, stompie, stickfast, golovan, songololo, ikwata bust fife, saying, mouth, telling, inflections, to voice, chant, voices*

*River progression – rivers, catch, babble, -kuil, -pan, -fontein, watery names, occlusion, lick, vlei-bank, mouth, water-table {water images emphasize the importance of water in a dry country like SA}*

*Transport progression – historical trek of Boer pioneers along the dry wagon trails, the morning commute of the black workers to Johannesburg on the 5:15 train, and the descent of the mineworkers into the earth*

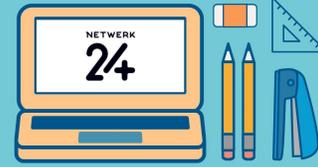
*Time periods – stoniness of these stones, wagon-trails, planetarium, pectoral beginning to the nub of time, syllables born in tin shacks, train, mining*

**Structure:** 33 lines, one stanza. Divided into parts by "to".



# Poetry: To Learn How to speak

To Learn how to speak	Title: <b>The infinitive</b> is used. No full sentences. [Sentences will make more sense when you add I want]
To learn how to speak	Refrain: The poet wants to learn the languages of SA and understand its people. He wants to learn by listening to the “voices”
With the <b>voices</b> of the land	<b>Personification</b> : The land doesn't actually have voices. The inhabitants (people) have voices- languages



# Poetry: To Learn How to speak

To **parse** the speech in  
its rivers

**Parse**: Divide speech into its grammatical  
parts.

Its as if the land itself speaks- the roar of  
rivers.

He wants to break down what he hears in  
the rivers- the natural sounds of the land-  
and try to understand the separate parts of  
its sentences.



# Poetry: To Learn How to speak

<p>To <b>catch</b> the <b>inarticulate</b> grunt</p>	<p><b>Catch</b>: He is simply trying to learn the language by being near the people. He isn't being taught formally  <b>Inarticulate</b>: unable to express one's ideas/ feelings clearly</p>
<p>Stammer, call, cry, babble, <b>tongue's knot</b></p>	<p>The words all show the struggle to learn speech/ a new language.  Tongue's knot: when a word is difficult to say, it is as if your tongue knots.  <b>Speech progression: different phases of early speech.</b></p>
<p>A sense of the stoneness of these stones</p>	<p>Sibilance- repetition of the s sound. Imitates someone stammering perhaps? (When you are trying to say new words you haven't said before they are like stones in your mouth.)  <b>Time progression: The stone age. Language was around even then- even sometimes only in grunts like the Neanderthals.</b></p>
<p>From which all words are cut</p>	<p>All languages come from one stone and are cut as seen fit by different nationalities.</p>



# Poetry: To Learn How to speak

To trace with the tongue wagon- trails	Afrikaner voortrekkers. You must understand people's history in order to understand their language. The Afrikaners travelled by ox-wagons during the "great trek". Alliteration of "t"
Saying the <b>suffix</b> of their aches in -kuil -pan -fontein	<b>Suffix:</b> a morpheme added to the end of a word eg. Beautiful. The names of places end in -kuil, -pan, -fontein because they are wholly dependent on water. They ache for it. (Bloemfontein, Brakpan, Daniëlskuil)
In <b>watery</b> names that confirm	The names are watery- fluid <b>Antithesis: watery &amp; dryness</b>
The <b>dryness</b> of their ways	Ways: double meaning- the paths they travelled were dry, but Afrikaners' ways (customs/ culture), seem formal and inaccessible/ rigid to him



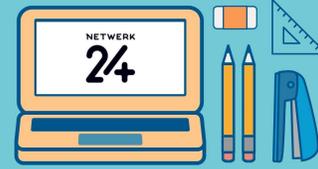
# Poetry: To Learn How to speak

<p>To visit the places of <b>occlusion</b>, or the lick</p>	<p><b>Occlusion:</b> a blockage, as in a steam, but also the closing of the vocal chords during speech. Places (physical and in language), a person is blocked from- may refer to apartheid, or certain aspects in a language which are hidden- you have to understand the people as well as the language.</p> <p><b>Lick:</b> salt lick for cattle- typical symbol for Afrikaners/ boere (implies tongue- speech organ)</p>
<p>in a <b>vlei-bank</b> dawn.</p>	<p><b>Vlei-bank:</b> compound word using both English and Afrikaans- he is perhaps starting to understand Afrikaners?</p>



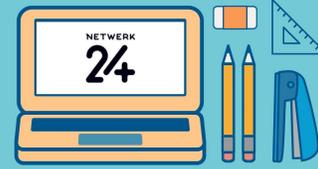
# Poetry: To Learn How to speak

<p>To <b>bury</b> my moth in the pit of your arm</p>	<p><b>Bury:</b> aspects of a language that are hidden (links with occlusion) Mouth to armpit: Intimacy- where secrets are tucked away</p>
<p>In that <b>planetarium</b></p>	<p><b>Planetarium:</b> A domed building in which an image of the stars is projected. The armpit is compared to a planetarium because they are both dome shaped and hold possibilities- of intimacy &amp; the universe</p>
<p><b>Pectoral</b> beginning to the <b>nub of time</b></p>	<p><b>Pectoral:</b> chest muscles. With the speaker's mouth in the armpit, his head is maybe on the chest- close to the heart. <b>Nub of time</b> might refer to a nipple, used for breastfeeding. You call your home language your mother tongue- it was almost ingested like breastmilk instead of learned. Nipple is shaped like a watch. Time starts (your life), at your mother's breast- that is where language starts.</p>
<p>Down there close to the <b>water-table- to feel</b></p>	<p><b>Water-table-</b> underground water. (Progression of water images). The speaker looks from the stars (planetarium. To under the earth (water table) for the word of these languages. <b>To feel:</b> enjambment- part of next line</p>



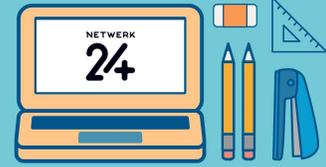
## Poetry: To Learn How to speak

The <b>full moon</b> as it drums	The <b>full moon</b> is compared to a drum. Metaphor- the full moon is compared to a drum because they are both round. Setting: Africa
At the back of my throat	African languages feel guttural to him. Like the sound of a cow skinned drum
Its cow-skinned <b>vowel</b> .	<b>Vowels:</b> a, e,i,o,u. He looks up into space and sees the full moon. It is compared to a tongue because of its round shape. African languages are as natural as the moon/ cow skinned wooden drums.



# Poetry: To Learn How to speak

<p>To write a poem with words like:</p>	<p>Progression: First he wants to hear (catch) the words, then understand them (bury my throat...) then say them (at the back of my throat), now he wants to create art with them (poetry). You have to understand a language fully in order to create poems in it.</p>
<p>I'm telling you,</p>	<p>Colloquial phrase commonly used in SA. Setting: SA, specifically Johannesburg</p>
<p>Stompie, stickfast, golovan</p>	<p>The poem moves from nature and outdoors to township lingo &amp; occurrences during apartheid. Stompie: The last part of a cigarette, but also the name of a boy who mysteriously went missing after being suspected of being a police informant. Stickfast: From Afrikaans word vassteek- to get stuck Golovan: a small tip truck used in the mines (koekepan)</p>
<p>Shongololo, just boombang, just</p>	<p>Shongololo: millipede Just boombang: informal phrase showing something just happened</p>



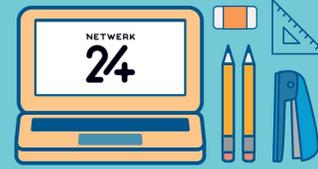
# Poetry: To Learn How to speak

To understand the least <b>inflections</b>	<b>Stress/ intonation/ emphasis</b> on words Progression of understanding
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# Poetry: To Learn How to speak

To voice without swallowing	Without struggling/ hesitation
<b>Syllables</b> born in tin shacks, or catch	Setting: Townships. <b>Syllables</b> - words can be broken into syllables/ beats
The 5.15 ikwata bust fife	South African pronunciation of quarter past five
Chwannisberg train, to reach	Johannesburg
The low chant of the mine gang's	Miners chant while they work. He doesn't just want to learn the language, but talk in the same "voice" as the people, perhaps about the issues of the day.
Mineral glow of our people's unbreakable resolve	Our people: He now includes himself in the people. Mineral glow: minerals retrieved in the mines. Unbreakable resolve: against the system of apartheid



## Poetry: To Learn How to speak

To learn how to speak	Refrain: the function of the refrain is to emphasize a certain point or idea: in this case the theme- the desire to learn the languages of the people, understand them, and become one of them.
With the voices of this land	Replaces the word the with this. Very specific. Now he is present, invested.