

Please locate and read the entire play – the monologue below is merely a suggested one.

The Hungry Earth is a 1979 play by Maishe Maponya Monologues

Character: SETHOTHO He is on a train with others. (Act One – Scene Three)
(He sniffs about and eventually stands to look underneath the Seat). Hey, man! There is a dangerous odour here. (Nobody takes notice. He sits down.) Hey man! I know we all want money but this odour is going to land us in shit! Men of the chief, Kere ho a nkgama mona [there is a smell here]. I can smell matekoane [marijuana]. The White man smelled it too. You saw his nose twitching like a jackal's. I tell you, someone had better throw the matekoane out of the window. At the next station he will inform the police. Will someone please hide the stuff very far lest the police arrest the innocent together with the guilty? (warning them). Hey, my father lived in the City of Gold and he told me there are so many crimes against the law of the white man of which Black people might be unwittingly guilty. You will end up in jail if you are found in the streets of the city and can't produce a pass anytime and anywhere the police demand it – even in the toilet – I tell you, they sometimes hide in there. If you drink too much you may be arrested for over-indulgence in alcohol. Do you know detention without trial? Section ten? Or six? Do you know you can be arrested for being at the wrong place at the wrong time? Do you know house-arrest? Do you know Robben Island? Makana? My father knows them all! Pasop banna! Hlokome-lang! I don't want to repeat my father's experience. Lahlang matekoane ono! [Throw it away!]

Character: A Woman The scene is everyday activity in a compound. (Act One – Scene Six)

My name is Chirango. This is my only home. I came here some five years after my husband had written to me to come and join him in this city of gold. To my dismay, I was not permitted to stay with him. I could not go back to Rhodesia because I had no money. He took me into his room at night. Later when a wall was erected around the compound it became risky to sneak in. Once I was arrested and fined R90,00 or 90 days. He did not have the money and I went to jail. When I came back I was told that his contract had expired and since then I have never seen or heard of him. Today I manage to live and feed my two fatherless children out of the beers and indambola [liquor] I sell. And when the beers don't sell I become every man's woman. What else can I do? I can't get permits to work here. I'll never get to Malawi. I'll never get to Transkei. I'll never get to Bophuthatswana. (Turns to someone who has

entered.) Yes, my husband's name is Chirango. Where is my husband? (She becomes hysterical and crying). Oh, how cruel this earth is. Our men will never stop dying to feed this hungry earth. Today I have no place to stay. Today I am a widow. Today my children are fatherless. Yet I do not know. How many more have vanished like that without the knowledge of immediate relatives? My husband has died digging endlessly for gold which would help to prop up the Apartheid system. My man is dead! My man is eaten by the hungry earth! He is dead!