

I SEE YOU BY

Mongiwekhaya

BUTHELEZI: I walked the Patria o Muerte. The bridge to the fatherland or death. We had been trained in the Soviet Union, returned for final initiations in Angola, transferred to Zambia to cross the Zambezi river into Rhodesia to march under the cover of night and bush to South Africa. We were going to fight the war at home. On home soil, street by street! We travelled at night. Then one night I stopped to take a piss. I was thinking ... I don't remember what I was thinking before the bullet hit me. One shot. I did not fall. Just kept peeing with a surprised look on my face. And this bush stands up, forming the shape of a man, lowering its gun. Two eyes stared at me. I don't know what I was thinking before the bullet, but after? I thought of my Tina that I would never see again, because of this bush. I didn't even zip up. I just took out my knife and stabbed that bush in the eye. Couldn't see it in the dark, but I felt it. Spraying on me. Soaking my hands. And it felt good. Eventually the bush stopped moving. I had a small flashlight. I shined my light on him, wiping the black paint he had on. I kept wiping it away, looking for that pink face. Black skin. There was only black skin. Gunfire. Screams. I sat down. Waited. Waited in the silence after the battle. I was fighting for freedom. What was he fighting for? Speak to me in your mother tongue and I will let you go.

Tell me your African name.