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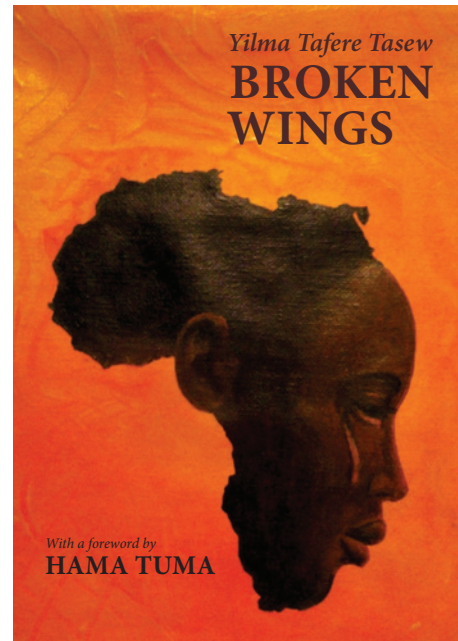
Ethiopian poetry with integrity and courage

Ethiopian poet Yilma Tafere Tasew fled his country in 1991, angry at the constant violation of human rights and fearing for his life. He struggled to survive in refugee camps in Kenya until 1997, when he was invited by the UNHCR (the United Nations refugee agency) to work for the social and community services section in Nairobi.

Now living in Wellington, Yilma's fifth poetry collection, *Broken Wings*, is as frank and forceful as ever. His messages of hope and tolerance, of understanding and a collective search for peace and co-existence transcend his anger and frustration. Yilma's style is direct and energetic, and his wide reading of philosophy and politics — and fusion of the political with the personal — make the bigger picture resonate.

'One has to live it to know it. Yilma has lived it and written poignant poems about it. You must read them all,' says Hama Tuma, an Ethiopian writer, poet and political activist. Yilma's poems let you experience the plight of many through the voice of one man who has the integrity and courage to stand for justice. 'Yilma is a brave writer, who speaks the truths of his and others' struggles, and is unflinching in his portrayal of humanity at its darkest,' says Wellington poet Mark Pirie.

Since arriving in Wellington eleven years ago Yilma has co-founded the Writers International (NZ) group to enable networking between foreign and local writers, and co-founded *Africana Journal: A journal of ideas about Africa and the African diaspora*. Yilma is a public speaker on refugee and diaspora issues. He has presented papers for government, NGOs, universities and at national conferences around New Zealand.



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