



## The Dennis Brutus Tapes: Essays at autobiography

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Dennis Brutus (1924-2009) is known internationally as a South African poet, anti-apartheid activist and campaigner for human rights and the release of political prisoners. His literary works include *Sirens* (1963), *Knuckles Boots* (1963), *Letters to Martha, and Other Poems from a South African Prison* (1968), *A Simple Lust* (1973), and *Stubborn Hope* (1978). When Dennis Brutus was a Visiting Professor at The University of Texas at Austin in 1974-75, he recorded on tape a series of reflections on his life and career. In addition, he frequently responded to questions about his poetry and political activities put to him by students and faculty in formal and informal interviews that were also captured on tape. Transcripts of a selection of these tapes, as well as reprints of two interviews recorded earlier, are reproduced here in order to put on record fragments of the autobiography of a remarkable man who lived in extraordinary times and managed to leave his mark on the land and literature of South Africa. Brutus was an effective anti-apartheid campaigner who succeeded in getting South Africa excluded from the Olympics. His opposition to racial discrimination in sports led to his arrest, banning, and imprisonment on Robben Island. Upon release, he left South Africa and lived most of the rest of his life in exile, where he continued his political work and simultaneously earned an international reputation as a poet who often sang of his love for his country. The tapes are edited by Bernth Lindfors who has added an Introduction and a transcript of a 1970 interview as well as other transcripts of lectures and discussions. Bernth Lindfors is Professor Emeritus of English and African Literatures, The University of Texas at Austin, and founding editor of *Research in African Literatures*. He has written and edited numerous books on African literature, including *Folklore in Nigerian Literature* (1973), *Popular Literatures in Africa* (1991), *Africans on Stage* (1999), *Early Soyinka* (2008), and *Early Achebe* (2009).

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