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First Day after the war

Form

Free verse poem which is appropriate for its theme. The repetitive form in **lines 12-15** implies the overwhelming joy making people react impulsively to the situation

Theme

Triumphs over oppression

Tone

Energetic, gentle, proud

Mood

Joyful, Hopeful

1. We heard the songs of a wedding party

These are songs of joy and happiness. A wedding indicates the joining together of two people and beginning of a new life together. This could suggest that the two groups - **white and black** - have come together after the war. **In zulu culture a wedding symbolises fertility** - thus the image suggests new life and the rebirth of a nation

2. We saw a soft light
3. Coiling round the young blades of grass

"Soft light" is a **metaphor** and creates an image of contained optimism and hope. This can also represent the soft light of daybreak which encompasses the blades of grass like a snake "coiling" around them. The people are coming to grips with the idea that the war is over

"Soft light" figuratively represents the rumours filter down to the rural villages

4. At first we hesitated, then we saw her footprints
5. Her face emerged, then her eyes of freedom!

"Hesitated" this indicates the uncertainty until the truth "emerged" and the ~~truth~~ realisation set in "Her face of freedom."

"Foot prints" Literally would be the physical imprint left by feet. Figuratively it represents the lasting impact of another's actions, words or behaviour.

Personification In her eyes the sun carries the message of freedom. The dramatic exclamation mark underlines the idea of joy and excitement. **In most cultures the sun symbolises life**

Or the literal female could be the messenger that delivers the news freedom has arrived and whose "eyes of freedom" conveys the truth

6. She woke us up with a smile saying,

This is ~~oban~~ a clear indication that the people were finally sure the war was over

7. 'What days is this that comes so suddenly?'
8. We said, 'It is the first day after the war.'

The direct speech indicates what day came so suddenly. The people confirmed first day after the war.

9. Then without waiting we ran to the open space

They ran to a place where they can express their enjoyment in a physical or vocal way. They are overcome with joy and wish to share their happiness with everyone. They can now go to these fields or mountains because apartheid is now over

10. Ululating to the mountains and the pathways

11. Calling people from all the circles of the earth.

"Ululating" is an onomatopoeia, and this helps with the association of joy.

This imagery displays vividly the excitement, shouting and celebrating. They can't restrain themselves from expressing "without waiting" They call people from "all circles", nobody is excluded unlike Apartheid. Shows that they forgive them

12. We shook up the old man demanding a festival

This is a form of celebration, "shook" refers to someone being disturbed or unsettled or it can be taken literally; to convey the news

"Old man" could be a symbol to the older generation who have endured many disappointments and who are skeptical. Or a cynic who is reluctant to embrace the joy of the moment. Also could be a tribal leader.

13. We asked for all the first fruits of the season

Alliteration of "First fruits". Alerts reader to the significance of the moment, "First fruits" is also a metaphor. It refers to the result of freedom and democracy. Eg. quality education and equal opportunities "Season" is a metaphor for the newly acquired freedom

14 We held hands with a stranger

This showed how all types of people celebrated together. This is a good description of the euphoria after the election when people all over came to SA to celebrate the new democracy.

15 We shouted across the waterfalls

This is anaphora because it shows the many different ways people celebrated.

The sounds made by humans "The songs at the wedding party and ululating" is being compared to nature's music; which is the sound of the waterfalls

16 People came from all lands

This refers to political exiles who came back to their country and were reunited with their loved ones

17 It was the first day of peace

There is antithesis - the title and line 8 refer to the first day after war and line 17 refers to the first day of peace

This change in thinking has a positive effect on the reader and makes the reader have a sense of hope or optimism for the New South Africa

18 We saw our Ancestors travelling tall on the horizon

Alliteration on "travelling tall" The use of a capital letter in "Ancestors" underlines their importance. They are satisfied with the recent development. The effectiveness of the final line is achieved through the image created - that of the spiritual world paying tribute, as the silhouette are visible "on the horizon"

The **alliteration** emphasises the two words. The Ancestors are now able to move freely in the lives of people and that they are standing "tall" and proud.