

# *The Composition of Poetry*

**Marjorie Oludhe Macgoye**

AFR  
PN  
1042  
.M3

**University of Nairobi Press**

# The Composition of Poetry

**Marjorie Oludhe Macgoye**

University of NAIROBI Library

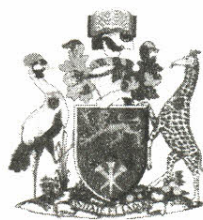


0501763 7

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI LIBRARY

P. O. Box 30197

NAIROBI



**University of Nairobi Press**

## *Preface*

This book is based on a series of lectures on *creative writing* that I was invited to give at Egerton University in 2003.

The lecturers gave me an opportunity to hold discussions with students interested in writing, whether or not they were studying literature. I am grateful to them, as well as to the University Administration, the staff of the Department of Literature, especially Professor Emilia Ilieva for her unfailing wisdom and generosity.

I am not sure that it is possible to teach *creative writing*, but it is certainly possible to study how other writers create and how the resources of language – as exemplified not only in the language of instruction but also in the individual languages and dialects available to us collectively – can be explored and set to work.

Reading, listening and writing are inextricably bound together. There are no set books here, but I hope that every volume of poetry quoted in the reading list will lead the reader on from the poem referred to as an example to others that compel attention as they catch the eye.

I shall be happy if any reader finds some help here in the long labour of bringing a new poem to birth. But I shall also be happy if those existing poems that nest and lurk in our minds are illuminated and activated by a study of how they were made.

**Marjorie Oludhe Macgoye**  
April, 2009

# Contents

<i>How to Find the Poems</i> .....	<i>ix</i>
<i>Preface</i> .....	<i>xi</i>
<i>Acknowledgments</i> .....	<i>xiii</i>
1. <i>What we mean by Poetry</i> .....	1
2. <i>The Tunes of Poetry</i> .....	17
3. <i>The Management of Themes</i> .....	35
4. <i>Images and Symbols</i> .....	49
5. <i>Voice and Register</i> .....	63
6. <i>Historical Ideas about Poetry</i> .....	77
7. <i>Advice to New Poets</i> .....	85
<i>Sample Analyses</i> .....	99
<i>Check List of Technical Terms and Examples to Memorise</i> .....	113
<i>Bibliography and References</i> .....	127
<i>Index</i> .....	133