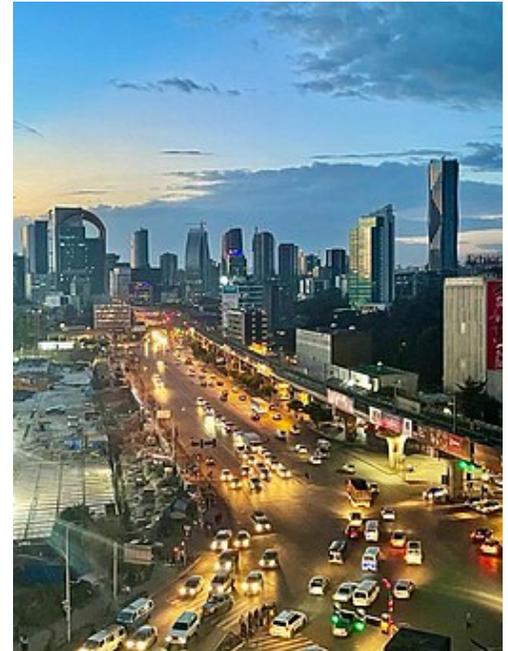


Brag? Complain? No! I don't wanna
But how many noted my spelling dilemma?
Was it an error or a typo?
Only Vasco da Gama is likely to know

Addis Ababa አዲስ አበባ Ethiopia

So, sing it out now
As only you know how:
La ba bamba! La ba bamba!
We'll go to Addis Ababa
The capital of Ethiopia
Is it a dystopia or a utopia?
Let's find out
So we can shout
La ba bamba! La ba bamba!
We're in Addis Ababa

La ba bamba! La ba bamba!
Name stems from Addis Abeba
Which means "new flower"
Hot springs are nearby so we can shower



Menelik's interest grew
When his wife Taytu
Began working on a church
He, too, endowed a second church

Site chosen by Empress
Taytu Betul in 1886
Founded by her husband, Emperor
Menelik



Their house he expanded without malice
To become the Imperial Palace
Remains the government's seat
Eucalyptus trees were planted along the
street

Ethiopia is thought to be
The original home of humanity
Various humanoid fossils have been found
Several hundred feet underground
Several thousand bones all fossilized
Evidence of human evolution. All surprised
40% female and possibly tree-dwellers
An upright gate type of these gals or fellers
Found in 1974, but dated 3.2 million years ago
Got her name from a song you all know
"Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds"
And now, here's Lucy!



Churches have played a dominant role
In politics and culture since long ago
Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity (43.5%) ,
Islam (33.9%), Protestant Christianity (18.6%)
Judaism, Roman Catholic, Indigenous beliefs,
Literature and visual arts reflect this core
We'll visit galleries to see what's in store
Although the constitution ensures religious
freedom
Between the groups exists significant tension

Again, although the constitution guarantees
freedom of the press
Differing political positions may be repressed
Capitalism vs communism - ideological debates
Many protests, fights & wars continue to date

Tensions with Egypt have existed
Tensions with Eritrea have persisted

One major player in Ethiopia's history
Was Haile Selassie I, whose name means
"Might of the Trinity"

He was Emperor from 1930 - 1974

In 1936, when Italy won the Italo-Ethiopian War

Forced him into exile; but wait, there's more

Forced Ethiopia to align with Eritrea

& Somalia to form Italian East Africa

Ethiopia regained independence in 1941

Selassie gained the help of Great Britain

With FDR (*Franklin D. Roosevelt*) Selassie tried to negotiate
Eritrea recovery

So the country could regain free access the Red Sea

Somalia aligned with Russian communism

Many believed Selassie aligned with the US capitalism

Slaves constituted 20 - 30% of the population

Until declared illegal by Selassie's proclamation

He also started the system of education

Donated his very own palace to be

The major campus of Addis Ababa University



Then annexed Eritrea which sustained tension

In countries all around were conflicts and insurrections

From the 1940's to the 1970's no peace could be found

A group called DERG based its ideologies on Marxist priorities

Kept Selassie under house arrest in his own palace until 1975

When he died. Evidence suggests he was strangled; hence no longer alive.

DERG aligned with a group called White Terror . What a name!

Went to war against Mengistu's Red Terror Campaign. Caused lots of pain



Thousands, including idealistic students, were killed. Others were tortured or imprisoned. Thoughts of it chilled

Mengistu became the president in 1987, but lost Russian support
Fled to Zimbabwe in 1991. Yes, his country he did abort

Meles Zenawi, now leader, claimed the country he would democratize
The problems he faced may have been larger than he realized



Over-regulation of businesses, severe famine and drought
Then, in 1998 war between Eritrea and Ethiopia broke out.
Although a cease fire was signed in 2000, much protesting and rioting created more disorder

Many were arrested for “violent activities aimed at subverting the constitutional order.”



Zenawi died in 2012, and was succeeded by Mulatu Teshome Wirtu
Human rights declined as rapidly as the economy grew
Hoping to bring political reform, a highly regarded political figure resigned
Political unrest led Wirtu to declare a state of emergency; many were fined

So on this negative history, let's not dwell
From this picture you can tell this man is swell
His name is not Mohammed Ali
But, Abiy Ahmed Ali; and a decent man is he

-
Understanding who he is, gets a little complicated
Prime Minister in 2018 and is very highly rated



He negotiated peace & reconciliation
Between Eritrea and his nation
To hundreds of political prisoners he granted amnesty
Abolished press censorship. Empowered women: Yippee
Named 50% of the Supreme Court and the country's ministers, women.
Even the Minister of Peace is feminine
AND, in 2019 Ali won the Nobel Peace Prize
How's that for the man with his smiling eyes?

Nobel Prize motivation: "for his efforts to achieve peace and international cooperation, and in particular for his decisive initiative to resolve the border conflict with neighbouring Eritrea."



Maybe you find this a little confusing
Or possibly even a bit amusing
Who's who you wish to know
Well, this is how I think it goes:
The President is Sahle-Work Zewde
Abiy Ahmed Ali is the Prime Minister
They work together - nothing sinister

Zewde is Ethiopia's first female president
The only female head of state on the continent

In 2020 more disputes between Ethiopia and Egypt began
Over the grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam
Egypt opposed the dam fearing that it would reduce its water supply
To that, came this warning from Abiy Ahmed Ali
"Ethiopia won't be stopped!
Oppose us, & war could erupt!"

Something that I found interesting and lawful
But you may find it actually quite awful
In this century, most of the nation's marriages are by abduction
Yes. You heard me: abduction! Not seduction!
Homosexual acts are illegal - no surprise there
But here's something of which you may not be aware:
Journalists have been arrested for their COVID pandemic coverage
Looks like freedom of the press has little leverage

People with physical abnormalities have trouble everywhere, for sure
But in Ethiopia, they are considered “ritually impure”
Infants’ lives could be terminated without proper burial
Something we Canadians would find quite horrible

Even today, people could be relocated from their lands against their wishes
Refusal could lead to abuse, intimidation, and even death
Constitutionally, the land belongs to the people and the state
But folks can lease the land for 20 years from the original date
Land distribution is institutionalized corruption
Bribery creates more distrust and disruption



Slow bureaucracy is something about which we all know
So here progress is made, but it is extremely slow
There’s no way they could win any race
With progress proceeding at this snail’s pace

Despite economic reforms & advances,
Soil erosion, deforestation have damaged agricultural chances
Wood is needed for fires, for cooking and warmth, so you see
Ethiopia remains one of the world’s poorest countries

All workers, except for civil servants can participate in unions
The Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions
Plus the Ethiopian Teachers’ Association
Protect many workers in this nation
All citizens 18 and over have the right to vote
And have the right to participate, is also of note

Telecommunication is not widespread
Expansion of infrastructure is government led
Water and sanitary conditions are also not widespread
Particularly in rural areas through which we may tread



Access to health care, while still limited in rural areas,
Has grown immensely within the last twenty years
Established in 2020, Ethiopia's Health System Transformation Plan (HSTP)
Has created several goals to improve future healthcare in the land.
Universal health care by 2035 is one goal - Ain't that grand?

Right now, there is 1 physician per 57,000 people in urban areas
But only 1 per 200,000 - 300,000 people in rural areas
No wonder Infant mortality rates remain quite high
As are other health problems. No one can deny
HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, mental health issues too
Let's hope their health plan goals do come true.

Quite common are methods employed by traditional healings
Including: bone setting, midwifery, and minor surgeries
Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and circumcision
Medical advice may be given by someone with no qualifications.





Education is free; however with each grade, enrolment declines
Lack of funding, shortage of teachers, overcrowding. Certainly not fine.
Literacy rates are lower than most countries
About half the men are literate, but less than that for women, naturally.

We need to be aware
Of places in turmoil there
For example, just last year, November of 2020
Warfare began in densely populated northern area called Tigray
Beautiful scenery, but not to those who are running away



Tigray's People's Liberation Front (TPLF) vs Ethiopian troops
Aligned with those of Ethiopia are Eritrean troops

This ongoing conflict has led to acute famine
350,000 dying of starvation declared the UN
The UN warns that the number will escalate,
And accuses the government of causing that fate
Ethiopia denies food shortage and claims aid is on the way
This, in spite of what the UN had to say
At 7am on June 11th, 2021, by the way

There's music, beauty, and art
But what I've just said broke my heart
In a land of beauty and plenty
How could so many have stomachs that are empty?
So let's see if we can find a way
To think of something nicer today



Blue Nile Falls, on the Blue Nile River, Ethiopia

One of the world's largest countries is Ethiopia
Its size is just about as large as Bolivia
80 differing ethnic groups
Bet they all make delicious soups
Over 100 languages are employed
Constitutional recognition of each is enjoyed
A member of the Mursi ethnic group



To Ethiopia many refugees have arrived
From Somalia, Sudan, Eritrea just to survive
Famine and persecution appears to be everywhere
No wonder so much illness exists there

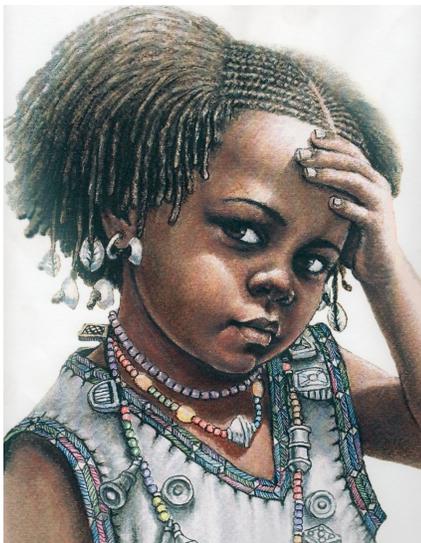


A land with many endemic species of mammals
The wail ibex, the wild sheep are two such animals
The African wild-dog is the largest wild canine
Endangered & highly social, so to them, let's be kind



Art is an interest we all share
So let's take a peak at what's happening there

Children are natural sources of beauty
As are designs, portraits, and basket weaving



A prominent role in Ethiopian cultural heritage is hospitality
Old age earns prominence and respect - a nice reality
Age bestows knowledge, prudence, wisdom
Plus, they believe age bestows piety and altruism
Wouldn't that be nice if everyone thought that way?
Then, there'd be no agism anyplace today?

Now this, you wouldn't have imagined in your wildest dream
The amazing history of the coffee bean!
Believe you know that coffee is native here
And the way it is served will bring a cheer



The discovery of the coffee bean is quite legendary
A goat herder noticed the goats behaving energetically
Then he saw what he thought were berries of a small size
Being curious, he chewed them and felt energized
Brought them to the monk monastery
The monks thought the beans were rubbish and threw them in the fire
But the aroma caught their attention and sparked a desire



They added water & enjoyed the flavour
The Ethiopian coffee ceremony is to
savour
Once we see we will remember forever

Now how about some Ethiopian cuisine
Let's follow traditional protocol if you
know what I mean.
We can enjoy wat, a thick curry stew.
That's what I said
Served atop injera, a large sourdough
flatbread

From the communal plate,
we'll tear off a piece of injera
With that, we'll grab some wat
from the plate that's closer

Don't reach across to the dis-
tant plate
That would be rude, for
goodness sake

Also, using your left hand
must not be see
Because it's considered unclean
So to behave yourself at the table tonight
Be sure to use only your right

Once we eat, have some coffee, and chat a while
We'll go to sleep with a smile
For tomorrow is another day
So, Gaborone, we're on our way
When we get to Gaborone, Botswana
We'll sing it loud: La ba bamba, La ba mamba

