Zong!

M. NourbeSe Philip

As told to the author by
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For Lord Yeates,

Ti Miss Maam, & the many, many others.

Also for Kudakwashe.
Though they go mad they shall be sane,
Though they sink through the sea they shall rise again . . .

DYLAN THOMAS, And Death Shall Have No Dominion

The time is out of joint. O cursed spite
That ever I was born to set it right!

SHAKESPEARE, Hamlet
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Finally, I thank the Ancestors for bestowing the responsibility of this work on me. Àse.
The sea was not a mask.

WALLACE STEVENS
Zong! #1

w w w   w   a wa
w a       wa   t
er            wa
our           wa

t e r g g g   g   g   g o
o   oo     goo           d
waa            wa wa
w w waa

t er         o   oh
on         o   ne     w one
w o n     d d d

ey            d        a
dey     a   ah       ay
s   one      d a y s
wa          wa
of water

www

www

www

www

www

wwa wat
er wa te
w er wat
er wa ter

ant

Aba Chimango Nseems Oba Ehe
Zong! #2

the throw in circumstance

the weight in want

in sustenance

for underwriters

the loss

the order in destroy

the that fact
the it was
the were

negroes

the after rains
Zong! #3

the some of negroes
over
board
the rest in lives
drowned
exist did not
in themselves
preservation
obliged
frenzy
thirst for forty others
etc
Zong! #4

this is
not was
or
should be
this be
not
should be
this
should
not
be
is
Zong! #5

of

water

rains &

dead

the more

of

the more

of

negroes

of

water

&

weeks

(three less than)

rains

shud

fragment
&
water
(three butts good)
of
sea and
perils
of water
(one day)
water—
*day one...*
of
months
of
weeks
of
days
of
sustenance
lying
dead
(seven out of seventeen) of rains (eleven days) of weeks (thirty not three) of rains (eleven days) of rains of weeks (thirty not three) of

(sour water enemies & of days of one... one day one... one...

three b... sour...
of

water

day one ...

for sustenance

one ...

one day's

one ...

sour

one ...

three butts good

of voyage

(a month's)
of necessity
sufficient
and
last
the more
of
exist
want &
less than
of did not
&
the more of
of suffered
did not
exist
sustenance
water &
want
of
dead

the more of

of negroes

the more

of

instead

of
Zong! #6

question therefore
the age
eighteen weeks
and calm
but it is said . . .
— from the maps
and
contradicted
by the evidence . . .
question
therefore
the age
Zong! #7

first:
the when

the which

the who

the were

the throwing

overboard

the be

come apprehended

exist did not
the good of overboard
justified a throwing
  of property
  fellow
creatures
  become
our portion
  of
mortality
provision
  a bad market
negroes
  want
for dying
Zong! #9

slaves
to the order in
destroyed
the circumstance in
fact
the property in
subject
the subject in
creature
the loss in
underwriter
to the fellow in
negro
the sustenance
in want
the arrived
in vessel
the weight
in provisions
the suffered in
die
the me in
become
should have
was reduced
retarded
rendered
could
found
given
sailed
bring to
occurred
throwing
arose
to be
was
were
justified
passed
appeared
authorize
made might
suppose the law

is

not

does

not

would

not

be

not

suppose the law not

— a crime

suppose the law a loss

suppose the law

suppose
it is said has been decided was justified appeared impossible is not necessary is another ground need not be proved

it was a throwing overboard

it is a particular circumstance need not be proved is another ground is not necessary appeared impossible
was justified

has been decided

is said

it

was
the rest of
the more of
the half of
out of
fifty of
instead of
negroes
the necessity of
the truth was
the ship sailed
the rains came
the loss arose

the truth is
the ship sailed
the rains came
the loss arose

the negroes is

the truth was
defend the dead
weight of circumstance
ground
to usual &
  etc
  where the ratio of just
in less than
  is necessary
to murder
the subject in property
the save in underwriter
  where etc tunes justice
  and the ratio of murder
  is
  the usual in occurred
the just in ration
the suffer in loss
defend the dead
the weight
in

circumstance
ached in necessary
the ration in just
age the act in the ave to justice
should they have
found being
sufficient
a necessity
(portion that question)
should they have
found the justify
for exist
a rule for new
the policy within the loss
(portion that question etc)
should they –
might they have
found
the of and during & wherefore
the preserving
the insurance of water
the within loss
the terms of exist
a negro of wit

should they have found

water

&

being

sufficient
there was

the this
the that
the frenzy

leaky seas &
casks

negroes of no belonging

on board

no rest:
came the rains
came the negroes
came the perils
came the owners

master and mariners

---

Adama Akansi Akabbi Alade Aseyende
the this
the that
the frenzy

came the insurance of water
water of good only

came water sufficient
that was truth
& seas of mortality

question the now

the this
the that
the frenzy

not unwisely