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On No

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PETER WALDOR

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Marxist that he is
Ngugi wa Thiong'o
must laugh at us
for all our brands
of toilet paper.
Our baby Gabriel
has both hands
on the end of one
roll and he looks
up with curiosity.
I say "no" three
times, he says "no"
and smiles, I yell "no"
and he yells "no, no"
as he pulls out
the whole roll
which falls into
an airy mountain
all the way to his waist;
the stuff still good,
soft as snow
which must be its name,
not like the toilet paper
Ngugi wrote his novel on,
in prison, fifty years ago.