

HOMELAND

A stranger smiled at me on a bike lane in Richardson
I smiled at him too,
He stopped.
He gazed at me with eyes lusting for the stories on my face
Tears contoured my foggy eyes
And the stranger wandered, the seam of my tears and smiles.

I do not know the number of hairs on my head
But there is a thing I know more than the back of my hand
I carry the emblem of my race
Whence I trudge the mountains of life with my heavy heart
My tongue speaks the dialect of our gods
I am a Black man from Africa
And my skin speaks the truth of my roots in America
I carry the remnants of my incessant tears around in colorful attires
Friends from other clans watch horror in moving images
I watch mine in the news of my kinsmen whose blood is props for nonfiction muse
And my name reminds the world of a land of sweet promises
Buried by the apathy of her sailors and the cowardice of her voyagers.

Homeland,
Teach me how to dance to the drums of my ancestors in peace
How to remember you like a child sojourning in the cold
Waiting for the warmth of your hands

Teach me to recount your promises

Before they turned you to the gulper of your children's blood

Remind me of our songs of hope before elegy became our national anthem.

Teach me how to laugh again with no guilt and shame

Teach me how to walk in the dust of communal joy

How to dance on the field

Not on the blood of my slain kindreds

Let my children dance to Bata drums

Not to the deafening sounds of guns

Let them play with toys and cartoons

Not the carcasses and coffins of their friends and teachers

Be my fortress when the sun bites me in western rage

Not the forest of monstrous beasts.