

Tributes and tributaries

Where I come from,
Migration
Is a movement, a past, a memory

Gran'ma told me that
In the 19-somethings
When colonialists were stealing our land
They took tracks and tracks of Maasai land
Took it thinking it was unoccupied
Took it through the “doctrine of discovery”
When the Maasai migrated back

They found their land gone, taken
To build the Lunatic British Railroad
That our prognosticators called the long snake

Where I come from,
Migration is the movement of the Mara River
Through waterfalls, rapids and cataracts
Through tributaries—Mara River's veins
Flowing along highlands, lowlands, deserts
Forming oxbow lakes
Crossing new frontiers
Forgetting the old
Embracing the new
Supplying water—
nature's blood; humanity's lifeblood

Should you ever walk close to its waterfalls
You can hear River Mara's beautiful heartbeat

Where I come from
Migration is the movement of the Maasai
Through transhumance
Through Rift Valley's
Rugged terrain

Walking amidst thirsty acacia trees
Across oases, sand-silt and cracked soil
Living off of meat, milk, honey
Keeling from fatigue but never giving up

With their rungus, their kangas, their shukas

With their families, their cattle, their belongings

In search of

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Of water

And grazing green grass—for their cattle

Building manyattas—temporary homes

Where I come from

Migration is the movement of the Wildebeests

It is The Great Migration

From Maasai Mara to Serengeti

From Kenya-to-Tanzania

Under the scorching sun

In search of

d

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Of water

And pasture

And a new temporary home

meeting fierce crocodiles and hippopotamuses

and thirsty lions, leopards, cheetahs, tigers

all thirsty for water; all thirsty for blood

s e p a r a t e d by language

and migratory patterns

in reality, **u-n-i-t-e-d** by a common search

for shelter, for greener pastures.

the Wildebeests

the Mara River

the Maasai

maintain their ancestral

roots, routes

all migrants

all family

all victims

of colonialism and

a changing climate

They are
forced to adapt

But

For how long?

For how long will they oscillate between homes?

For how long will they adapt to this way of life?

What will happen when

They have nowhere else to migrate to?

Because everywhere else is the same

Bare, cracked land with waterless tributaries

What if some day they never come back?

What if some day they get lost, extinct

Silenced, dead, decayed?

What if that same day

Is today, is tomorrow, is the day after—

The days after that?

What if we were the cause?

What if...