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¹⁹⁹⁶ The Remembrance

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which harrier of children is frozen still in his leaning over the head of a child waiting for those tiny, prickly stems of eyebrow to finally fall back into place

and

I am wondering why his bed-lone wife has not come hurrying through the dimly lit hallway to see what is taking him so long again tonight

THE REMEMBRANCE

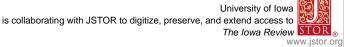
for Displaced Africans Everywhere

In my blood there is the rhythm

beating

stepping out the steady pace of the journey long remembered in my blood

and I can only think of some gritty, sandaled foot black by any measure patting the sand beating out the constant flow of stepping churning the already beaten and broken grains further into the mist that sand becomes along



what the spirit and tradition tells the African is the trail of the fathers . . . the elders, those who have come this way before and all these years later there is still a rhythm in my blood calling me African from across the long waters calling me a name-something like Ogutamelli from across the long waters sending my desire racing for the sea of sun across my back and the hunger for a wry dryness in my throat the parched rhythm of a heartbeat from the center of my chest moving my feet and guiding my eyes where there is no pavement no Main street . . . no traffic light or buildings to seek out on a map and I am stepping to that rhythm beating churning down deep inside of me I am beating out that timid recall of rhythm I am dusting the yellow-red pigment from my flesh I am striking away the errant desire to be cooled and rinsed of the sweating and casting off the piggish appetite

of three full meals a day

I am listening and hearing the mixtures of blood in my body hashing out the division remembering out the naked days of where my blood first began

I am recounting the hundreds of years and the generations unfolding the fathers and the mothers time and again tracing the blood back to the rhythm of the feet pacing out the rise and fall of the feet and the silent swelling and emptying of the chest with the desert air

(chant) the rhythm/the rhythm

rise chest/the rhythm fall chest/the rhythm

rise foot/the rhythm fall foot/the rhythm

rise head/the rhythm fall head/the rhythm

rise arms/the rhythm fall arms/the rhythm

rise////the rhythm fall////the rhythm

move///the rhythm move///the rhythm step///the rhythm step///the rhythm

pace//the rhythm pace//the rhythm

move/step/pace/the rhythm rise/fall/step/the rhythm step/pace/move///the rhythm

In my blood there is the rhythm

beating

stepping out the path of where I've been pacing out the remembrance of being African and dark under the desert sun

moving alongside the camels loaded with desert salt to be sold in Zaire moving the steady beat of stepping clocking the rhythm of the heart inside my chest

beating out the remembrance of being whole centered in the glory of the rhythm with the prayers seven times a day

the prayers seven times a day

to a God who heard them and took me without harm across a sea of sun and sand heard them and took me across certain death

and I can still hear that rhythm beating in my blood coming back for me and reclaiming my soul