

## "CONFESSION"

by Benton Hoskins

No father,  
 no longer the red Kola nut bitter between my strong teeth;  
 no longer the «lapas» girdling my loins in warmth;  
 the soft gold-glow of bushlamp  
 pushing dust-filled light shafts through bamboo  
 shall not pattern  
 my blackness  
 again.

I have parted, leaping the cold sea...  
 leaving my brothers laughing over mimbo calabash,  
 while I nibble now at light-talk, toast and tea;  
 I have left a running, tripping, scrambling hunt for bush cow,  
 and now I quickly pass through crowds of a city... alone.  
 My skin no longer quivers to the deep soul-stirring throb of a drum  
 dance in black night, flickering light,  
 for now I settle  
 comfortably quietly  
 for a book  
 and Beethoven's 9th.

No father,  
 my ears do not hear your gravel-voiced folktales and tribal legends  
 over whispering smoke and fire-flame;  
 My eyes have turned from seeing deep green rainforest  
 and tinder-dryness of harmathan;  
 My nostrils no longer flare to welcome the earthen must of my Africa  
 — cocoyam and plantain never fill my ribs,  
 the first cup is no longer passed to our fathers' spirits.

Yes father,  
 I have torn my body from our Africa,  
 but my ripe soul still wanders its broad savannah to deep forest,  
 And the void I now carry  
 the lie which I now live  
 is stiff  
 under button-down-shirt-and-tie.

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