

KISAYE NATSUKI

I am an author, a life and leadership coach, a lecturer, mother, grandmother and a survivor, who was born in Trinidad and migrated to Canada at 15. I have worked to understand and integrate my family's generational experiences of violence, migration & transformation. From doing this, I have worked in communities to help heal and grow African peoples generational experiences of pain, loss and change, using and reclaiming silenced and sometimes forgotten ways of seeing and feeling our world.

Full

The absence of home feels like an absence,
not a temporary passage through which gifts of discovery lie, but an
absence, marked
by an ocean unsettled
casting unfettered ship in violent motion back and forth on fitful seas
never reaching land
though disembarking
to shore
Heart embedded like feet sinking into dirt,
Body adrift, sailing without mast and sails,
following a
compass mismatched
to the weather and these stars

Eyes close as night draws near
fatigued by the billow of emerald blue
waters, and
torrid
winds, always beneath
a howling moon

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seeking a plot of land chosen by my desire that
welcomes me and
says
this is home,
whether people or place
indistinguishable both from
hearth and fire tending
the hot coca
before bedtime of my
childhood signaling
refuge
like a flag planted on ground
in my
soul
reaching land

This absence
not empty
not hollow, not shallow from unfilled excavation, but
full
An absence full
of stories of changing lands, bodies written upon by
history's fountain pens
blackened
with calligrapher's ink spanning centuries
Tales of flesh and meaning transcribed
into footprints
constantly moving as labor
and reproducing bellies
in
always-foreign spaces, made alien
by
ancient pains sung through conquests

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under which my
sepia and amber canvas is dictated
to stay
in places
I renounce
full of affirmation of
self

This absence of home
whether people or place
marked by broad, loud strokes on almost-white acid-free cotton, red on sable hairs mast cells
healing wound, defending petition for safety, strengthening
soul
is full of
stories
of
self
love
manning uncharted ships sovereign to heart
in changing seas
biding tides of
generation's
struggle
to wield a freedom
amidst inscription and instructions
to walk slowly backwards in assigned garb knowing
the pace of each footstep, until door is reached exiting to one's command
permanent
place

Home
is missing
But not lost or empty

This absence
is
full

Stories, love, transgressions that speak clarity,
actions that fum serenity, quiet that
bows
to passion
charting course beneath this
ship
compass mismatched
current forceful
leading as mast
and sail
the journey
and destination

home.