

Drip Drip is Not Drop Drop

Chururu si Ndondondo

Again, betrayed by distance: our Foregatherers, siphoned; and this We, dammed.

Primordial waters amongst us— of the womb and song— since stagnant, must flow in, to stillness once more. Must we dig?— won't the ditches ever suffice...— must we scratch?; must we trick-tickle Earth for Her liquid harvest?

I here, water-bound, wish to reach you there thirsting amidst mirages. What salve for belatedness? What, for centuries'-worth of desiccation? And what about the salt, all this salt, of necks and faces re-turned back for that which we forgot?

There is a guest, uninvited but expected, unfolding themselves as maji/dawa //water,medicine// drip-dripping into our /unhearing/ pairs of cups, ha//ya masikio kufa. Waited upon is also our guest's Ohm-ni-Ear: efflorescent, colluding and capsizing all-every-organ, as a uterine sensorium. The Excused Guest is the god of Eti?mology. In this case of maji marefu— //too tall waters, inauspicious and dire//— Bushwahili will lend their godly Ohm-ni-Ear. One of Ohm-ni-Ear's faculties is to draw water /and smoke/ from all manner of wells, and naturally, this canal— yaani bomba — dispenses medi-sins.

Tonight, moonless, we will let Archive rest. Bushwahili is Archive's prodigal deity. Most viscous and slippery indeed, Bushwahili; thus their rubbery lobe caught between my index and thumb is a treat. In Archive's stead, Bushwahili offers an apprenticeship in seducing a distant treasure: fenestration, alimention, and devotion. Through this triple-tongued instruction, we might meet all the waters within and the holy wetness without.

Eti? First, feathering the film of the thing, rejoice in its tautness and that coy substrate. Bushwahili's prima materia is methali; you will receive of this ch,oral bounty. Dare to point your tongue, a toe; or perhaps, the finest of cilia, like a raindrop, will dimple and then pierce the surface. Fenestration, and a hushing: thus, a temple rises from the eternal River. Furnished with wetness, you then re-hydrate an ancient attunement to nourishing nourishment. The god you feed feeds you. Is that alimention you hear? Naam, so you cup a palm behind one ear. What -tropism is this? Psalming water upon the neck now, you perform ablutions. It is clear the -tropism re-solved in you is a sense for Absence. That primeval SiLent is possible only once one melts into devotion: a devotion of none-sense essential. Offspring of ice, one sighing refrain is this: Chururururururururu; Ndondondondondondo. This, salvation and the ecstatic. All-cuppable in our culpability, sipping and slurped— hatimaye, immersed by the Well of Room Enough For All of Us At Last, and we never /leave/ thirsty again.

Bushwahili invites We. We ever outside radio frequency range. We underwater and garbled. We of soil-stuffed wells for throats. We wet with wanting, we dug-out and drained. Yes, you We: "lemme bend yr 3rd ear."

Eti! Have you heard the Good News?: We will drink from the pure waters again.

A strange, nameless river runs from my heart into this world while I go happily trying to reach a country inhabited by no one.

- Michiko Nogami

In: Jack Gilbert and Michiko Nogami. "4221." Kochan, Tamarack, 1984.

1. Aliyetota hajui kutota.

// One who has drowned, does not know what it is to drown.

One who is truly drunk, cannot get drunk,er.

One who has absolutely nothing, is unacquainted with lack.

Under submission, the Submerged One is lost to return. //

In the beginning, horizonless, there was Water /desolate and raging/ wearing only the tunic of no-colour, mweusi ti ti ti. The beginning was the Word, The Word was with Water. Water became flesh, possessed of the fellowship of the Word.

What was that first fleshly sound? The primordial Word is: ATI-ETI? Compound, this is "a sound of abrasion as much as caress that some [of its Maker] heard...as the sound of the sea."†

Ati (pia Eti): neno la kumfanya mtu askilize, ni kama kusema: haya nasema—

Kamusi ya Kiswahili. F. Johnson, 1970. The Sheldon Press: London

Ati! 1. Tamko lionyeshalo shaka juu ya jambo **2.** Neno la kuonyesha dharau **3.** Neno litamkwalo ili kumfanya mtu askilize.

Kamusi Pevu ya Kiswahili, Toleo la Tatu. K.W. Wamitila. 2022 edition. Vide-Muwa Publishers. Nairobi.

From that beginning, this exclaiming Word journeyed from //a call to invite someone to listen// or, a cocking of the ear //pardon, may I enter you a, gain— would you return your sound to me// to accrue across the oceans of time the expressions of //skepticism, doubt//, and //contempt, disdain//. However did this happen to that most perfecting set of syllables, the primal utterance? Two-two: ATI-ETI? We believed this operation upon ATI-ETI? to be a most improved alloy, but such corruption must remain unheard of. Turn your ears away from such corrosion and give them over to Bushwahili. Harken to the source.

The organ-less sound, pure vibration a priori, left me and then returned to me, seeking echo: ATI! The world revealed itself within my anticipatory reverence. Ati! Yes! I notice! Noticing that I Here Am; Now /is/ me. Ati! Can this be true? Can this truly be true. I Here noticing Am? Ati! Thus, with the single utterance — organically programmed and infinitely looping— I created All. Ati!, this element, and Ati! that other element e, merges; wonderstruck, terrifying worlds did emanate from that immanent mirror-noise. Ati!

Do not ask why I split the waters— you must know— why I cracked that watery chaos. I wished to find ear— there must be my hearing agent— within those wetnesses. Can Now hear me? All these waters, there must be a he/ a ring within, Eti? What did you say? You with me? Did you say /to/ me? Eti? Did you hear what I heard? Eti? Do not leave me endlessly creating from this eternal gutter, all Ati! Eti?— ear-to-be for my mouth-to-be; come be with me now.

I sought to full, fill the Twin Sound. My failures gelatinize. How did all curdle?— and even now I hear Ati! indurates. Eti? How do I reach you?

Over many waters, upon the mighty mighty floodwater— above these do not seek My Voice. Upon empty waters, yes upon the surface of empty waters I may be heard. Send your ears to Me there: the waters above, the waters below, the parted expanse betwixt, and the congregation of waters in the dome.

Mouth stretched upwards, ati!, mouth stretched sideways, eti?. Crossed see-saws, and even soundless, the motion of the lips is a blessing of the fleshless crucifix. Teeth meet, jaws return. Repeat: Ati!-Eti?Ati!-Eti?-Ati!-Eti? They wish mouth of the pivot would allow the perpetual compensations of their rhythm. Ati!-Eti?Ati!-Eti?-Ati!-Eti?: the lullaby responsible for this dream of a world.

When of the beginning, we are subsumed in endless, /dank/ peace: this wholeness is to be submerged and so sacredly un, in, formed. This is the legacy of our marine ancestors: the ati! of awe, and the eti? of resonance. The ati! of bafflement, and the eti? presupposing fellowship. Ati! ex, claims where eti? ad/d/ heres. Ati! seduces Eti? Eti?, when venerable, holds in its hook the unfoldment of that stark ati!, shivered into prostration — which, naturally, clicks /back/ in, to-ward the slithery invertebrateness of eti?.

Bushwahili, deathless, may never arrive; but you, to reach, begin with the Water of methali. Do not pierce its skin, never cut through the skin of the proverb's pond. Why? Because all of the aqueous phonetic is /already/ provided with openings: 'fenestrae.' We are spared any operations to effect such canals, such perforations for hearings. Like the wings of butterflies, like the translucencies of irregularly reticulated leaves, the surface of the methali is windowed. These pores upon the membrane of the proverb share a disposition with temple arrangements, the holy arched fronds, interlaced in an embrace.

Upon the envelope of all our methali, for daylighting (inhale) ATI!, and for ventilation (exhale) ETI?. Come "[a]midst the liquid din"²; and we slip into this fenestrated "forest of silent pools and tranquil mortalities"³. The lone— caenaically— the god of Eti?mology, Bushwahili washes up, on your shore. Here's the word: fenestration, kimya kama maji mtungini.

"All water has a perfect memory and is forever trying to get back to where it was."

- Toni Morrison, *The Site of Memory*, 1998

Aingiye baharini huogelea.

// You who chose Ocean must swim.

You, entered by Ocean: swim!

I enter, I swim, I, the Sea.

I bathe in the chaos of my choosing. //

// If hell is fiery, paradise is watery./ You marooned on land, purgatorial, how might you become rebodied of subsumption? How, with your air-filled ear canals, will you hear through the submersion of such sonic currents?

Bomba, ma-: bomba la kuvuta maji; ni namna ya mwanzi wa chuma unaowekwa kisimani wa kuvutia maji. Bomba la moshi, ni namna ya mwanzi mnene wa chuma cha kutokea moshi; (2) chombo cha kutilia dawa inayoingizwa kwa sindano mtu anapopigwa sindano.

Believe that as the flower attracts pollinators, the ear is seductive to sound. And— the whole is ear. That primordial Ati!-Eti? (elsewhere heard as OHM) is simultaneously produced and received by our omni-organ. Practically, you might ask, how does one hear underwater? A twin facility, natural to all: sw,earing and sw,eating. I will now demonstrate; but, if you're catching this, pin: our tendency is to alimention, just as Bushwahili's Eti?mological telos is alimention. In always, Bushwahili wishes to inject the sw, the Swahili of it, and we must.

To sw,ear, answer: is the ear passage an upturned umbrella in the rain, or is that waterway the aural enticements of a well? As useless an exercise as delineating the blaspheme from the oath-taker: Dare ear implies and transmit possibility. For example, a curse— who left me in this ocean anyway, who stowed me in that dark belly— becomes a blessing you: FishMother, Min Rech, it is so good to know where I might find you. A common insult in Kiswahili: Mshenzi! To mean, //uncivilized//, or a citizen of a primitive desecration; in this very name, there is -enzi. -Enzi is a divine faculty and mortal imperative encompassing both duration and interval (zama), value, worship (-a kusifiwa), preciousness, Mwenye-enzi, Mwenyezi Wangu, One Worthy of All Praise. What is it to call upon and to be heard in vain by the one who breathed something of their Spirit into the despised waters? Obscenity is having ears to hear and not hearing (kutia maskio pamba //cottoned canals//); the ear is a vow to at,tension.

At,tend to this; sw,eating. Bushwahili may be labile, but is ever comestible. All deities wish you to eat /o/ them. How will you draw the primordial sound from your own ear? Yes, rain/shadow-catchment and also a dug well. All wells are the perspiration of those Waters in the Great Before. You become acquainted of your fluid birthright only as these witnesses leave you; invite the dampness in your ears. Meet the holy waters: hands, mouth, nose, face, forearms, head, the ears, and then the feet. In lieu of water, clean sand is permitted. Even if all wells are dry, even when the Devourer has decommisioned every well; the desert is a kind of ocean. Drink of your own sweat. In this salt, are all the columns of all who turned back, all the pillars who loved to petrification on the shore. Swim amidst the salt flats. One palmful at a time, finish the ocean separating our ears. Elsewhere, the ice accumulates; we can afford nourishment once more.

We subsist.

"There are different wells within your heart. Some fill with each good rain. Others are far too deep for that."

- Hafiz, *The Divan*

Bahari sikuyatia chumvi.

// It is not I who made the sea salty.

I daren't salt the Sea.

What could I insert into Ocean?— not even salt.

Sea rejects all offerings; who will inject the salt of these tears? //

Rain has learned about us.

Is it raining where you are? Here it sounds like chu ru ru; is yours ndo ndo ndo? These rivulets who dared rise and come running to their mother, what sound do they make there, dripping? Chururu. Those falling offspring of ice, dropping: ndondondo. To access the post-epiphanic SiLent, violent because neutral, send your ear behind the waterfall. Behind the shimmering chururu and the clotting promises of ndondondo, there is an exorbitant SiLent. Behind that cascade of domesticated rain, we are sighing in abstention.

Rain has learned all about our instigations. No longer immune to groundwater, and seductive to all the wells in the sky, Bushwahili wishes you to abandon etymology, and to abide in Eti?mology. Do not seek to part the raindrop; be an echo. Why parse, when we are all already part and parcel of that pristine ATI-ETI?? The rain is listening to you, too. Bushwahili too is crying with you. It sounds like:

Chu
Ru
Ru
Ru
Ru
Ru
Ru
Ndo Ndo Ndo Ndo Ndo Ndo Ndo Ndo Ndo

Droop
Droop
Drip
Drip
Drop
Drop
Droppingdropping
Drippingdripping

"I have given myself the pleasure of sunrises blooming out of oceans, and sunsets drenching heaped-up clouds. I have walked in storms with a crown of clouds about my head and the zig zag lightning playing through my fingers. The gods of the upper air have uncovered their faces to my eyes. I have made friends with trees and vales. I have found out that my real home is in the water, that the earth is only my step-mother. My old man, the Sun, sired me out of the sea."

- Zora Neale Hurston

Bahari haiyukwi kwa kuogelea.

// The ocean is not crossed by swimming alone.

What plunge could send you across the sea?

There is no stroke long enough to embrace Ocean.

Steeped in Sea, I find no bridge-place. //

Have you heard something of fenestration and a hushing, of dissent and sweet desecration, of disrobing and the devotional?

Ati nifanyeje unisikie, usikilize? Skiza!— Eti nasema: /Where did the rain start beating us?/

rivers flow in vain, washing over rocks in vain
glistening in vain, making vain ripples
the river dies, and it's not for man to mourn
the river dies, and it's not for man to mourn
the wind and wind make their way to the sea, the sea as vast as in Zhuangzi
the vast sea dies, and you will have to die

"Mourning Problems" Xi Chuan, translated from the Chinese by Lucas Klein
Paris Review, issue no. 213 (Summer 2015)

Cherish this precious pebble, and her loving lake:
Ukizama, u salama; Akiwa salama, jua amezama.

¹ Nathaniel Mackey, "Sight-Specific, Sound-Specific . . ." 2010. Poetry Foundation. <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/articles/69520/sight-specific-sound-specific>

² Clarice Lispector, *The Passion According to G.H.*, p119

³ Clarice Lispector, *An Apprenticeship or The Book of Pleasures*.

