

Walking, lately

I've been second-guessing each one of my steps.
 Looking forward, looking back again.
To see if footprints I have made
 Have taken just the perfect shape.
My bloody footsteps in the jagged sand.

One foot at a time, step after step—
 I exist in question of myself.
One half of me runs for the lighthouse beam
 And half still lingers in the scenes,
And sights fading to stories in my mind.

My warm red sands and breaking glass now are one
 And I long for mangoes bathing in the sun.
I sit behind suburban gates
 And let the lights blaze on all day.
They never flicker once, the clock ticks on.

The seconds slip away since I've been home.
 'Home' is a word whose meaning I don't know
"How long you been here?" — people want to weigh
 [—what breed I am.]
 "What kind of black?" and I don't know what to say.
My mother says, *Eyes in this country sort you by the skin.*

And so I learn to tAHk with biDDen tongue,
 I drop the R's alone when I am numb.
And then perhaps I taste my home, foolishly sweet,
 Or perhaps it is the dragging of my feet
Back in my red sands. Fruit so plenty it spoils.

Far from a history I'd ever seen,
 I learn a pain not present in my ancestry.
Yet I am told these burdens are all ours. Ours?
 I slice my fingers stripping thorns off my flowers.
And colour my American bloom a sweeter shade,
 [A lighter shade of black.]

In school, I read that two roads split in a yellow wood.
A wood perhaps of pine or maybe beech.
 But I have seen no advice for we wanderers,
 Whose paths began in the shade of palm oil trees.

Walking, lately,
I've felt this winter pain inside my legs,
 This rustling in the pines above my head.
My feet long for the season of rain,
 The roaring beach in Tarkwa Bay.
No tree can bloom in the snow with its roots in the sand.
Over oceans.