**I Know of Hunger as an Entrance**

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I.

My uncle, a disciplinarian, dissolved

into silence some years ago. His body

was fed to the ever-hungry ground

where he mixed with quartz. He was

both a hurricane; tempestuous, and

a gentle breeze; caressing, when it came

to kids’ upbringing. Like one of my teachers

in junior secondary school days, after

battering your body with whips, he would rub

his palm on your head to say sorry. He was

the one who would buy us ice cream and minutes

later thunder at us, and we would begin to shudder

as though it was the ice cream chilling us.

II.

O uncle! I miss your presence & hate your void

that I was unable to avoid. You can't be here,

and the house is crumbling.

Your daughter has dropped out of school,

and, some days ago, I heard her stomach had been inflated

like a balloon by some boy. I heard there is famine

in the family. I know of hunger as an entrance

to atrocities, to decadence. Uncle, why did you

succumb to silence so soon? Why didn't you wait

till the pillars of the house— iroko trees, became

formidable before leaving, before you let your

leaves leave? Or at least waited till I was capable of

more than mourning your absence?