

SERENGETI SPRING:

An African Voyage



High in the fractured light of acacia boughs,
where the scorching sun splits both bark and bone,
a patient lizard holds a still pose
as insects slowly approach a death zone.

In a parallel world, same dust, same blazed air,
a giraffe moves like a slow, impossible dream,
its dark tongue curling round baobab blooms that gleam
like pale lanterns swaying without a care.

Its tail sweeps wide – the cscse scatter, flee –
while raw savannah rises, sharp and bright,
floods every breach with something old and free:
dung, grass, and dust, heat, and jading light.

Two creatures, one plain, one sliver of time –
little dramas enacted daily within dust and grime.

The coffee shop had the dim, amber glow of a place that had long since stopped pretending daylight mattered. Outside, the city's atmospheric processors churned steadily, scrubbing particulate from air that nobody trusted. Noel stared at the previous poem on his tablet, the pale light washing his face into something gaunt and unreadable. He set this table down slowly, sipped some coffee, and frowned. "Has this author actually been to Africa?" he wondered out loud. His voice carried tint and anger and impatience.

Gwen didn't look up from her own screen. She was tracing something with her stylus, abstract and restless. "Who knows? Who cares?" She flicked her wrist dismissively. "Let the poem breathe on its own. All authors die after their last word ends. Ta heck with origin stories!"

A beat of silence fell over their table, filled by the soft percussion of rain on reinforced glass—real rain. Noel looked up at Gwen, his eyes carrying the weariness of someone who had been trying to forget about the problems around him. Through the rain-blurred window, the city sprawled outward in its tiered and fluorescent geometry—towers wrapped in bio-LED mesh, sky-lanes threading between residential stacks, the whole apparatus humming with managed efficiency. Nowhere in it was there a single acacia tree. Nowhere a giraffe. Nowhere a grassland.

"The Equatorial Corridor report dropped this morning," Gwen said finally. Her voice was quiet. Flat. "Megafauna zones are shrinking." She set her stylus on the table. "By 2047, the Serengeti ecosystem is expected to—" She stopped herself. Picked the stylus back up. "They're talking about starting some archival drone documentation. For the record."

Noel said nothing. He read the poem again. Outside, the rain intensified briefly— a flash of something almost tropical—then subsided back into the city's careful management of itself. "Then maybe," he said at last, "it matters even more who was standing there. whether they knew – really knew – what they were standing in the middle of. While it was still there to stand in."

Gwen didn't answer. The scrubbers kept breathing. The city kept its geometry. And somewhere – in the poem, at least – the giraffe kept moving, slow and impossible, through air that nobody had yet thought to manage.

– T Newfields

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Note: This piece was partially generated using AI tools for styling and ideation; human editing was then applied.