

# 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.

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## *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.