



SOLarium25

Ekphrastic Reflection

by

Proph Dauda

This piece of writing is one of eight ekphrastic reflections written by Notre Dame Creative Writing MFA students. Ekphrasis has been defined as a literary device in which a painting, sculpture, or other work of visual art is described in detail. Today, many contemporary writers use ekphrasis to translate existing visual artworks into new poems and stories. Does this ekphrastic reflection make you see the artwork in a new way?

THIS PAINTING IS A RAFT TO MY HOME

The blue expanse of the sky dappled
by the roaming clouds – white and purple.
Like the firmament of Zomba after harvest
when we clear graveyards and gather for a
communal feast to honor the living dead,
when we dance manganje for a male initiation by the river.
This painting is a raft for my memories.

Its flat ridgeline of a thick forest touches the arching sky,
like the horizon line on the waters of Lake Chirwa to the east.
The meadow with the greening of grass, flowers and herbs
dance to the gentle broom of wind
like the endless green veld that sway to the breeze
as we graze livestock and hunt,
and lovers gallivant to the chirp of birds.
This painting is a raft for my memories.

When the light is turned off, the painting molts into
a vast dark with glittering dust of embers and patches
like the shooting stars and fireflies that stroll the Zomba's sky.
On silvery nights, we sit by the family fire and tell stories,
the youth dance and sing at the village playground.

This painting is a raft to my home across
the Great Atlantic Ocean.