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Hiraeth

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Hiraeth

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Description (Optional)

In 2002, my family was evacuated out of Côte d'Ivoire, West Africa, due to a civil war. I was five years old at the time, and my older sister was in boarding school. Two years later, my family returned to Côte d'Ivoire, only to be evacuated again after the nearby town was bombed. Despite only living in Côte d'Ivoire for four years of my life, the country and both evacuations have left a tremendous mark on my life. Through my poem "Hiraeth," I explore nostalgia and the uncontrollable fleeting of time. According to Merriam Webster, "hiraeth" is a Welsh word meaning, "a homesickness for a home you cannot return to, or that never was."

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About the Contributor (Optional)

Brian Campbell is majoring in music education at Cedarville University. He draws inspiration for his poetry from his life as a missionary kid, filled with countless transitions, multicultural experiences, unique adventures, and lifelong friends. He is thankful for these experiences God has given him, and through his poetry, Brian desires to give his readers new perspectives on themes like love and time through the challenging, but ultimately blessed, life of a third culture kid.

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HIRAETH

BY BRIAN CAMPBELL

Standing by the gravel road, upon a hill
With a house at its foot
I see the earth that surrounds me
As its green arms engulf me.
Every color, stream and tree
Reminds me of what it used to be
—My home

The foliage of the forest, how it thrived;
It breathed a breath discernible
Worship to its creator
Silencing all things dark and terrible
Making much pain bearable.
I see the luscious green
Enshrouded in grey mist
—As it rains
—As it platters
—As it rushes, pours and smatters
Over weathered concrete, and fertile fecund soil
Draining pain and anguish within the soothing sprinkles.

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Yet the tides of human nature had to rent and wear and spoil;
Farce authority turned the tides into a boil
—A president who claims to love his citizens
Then kills them.

—Men who know justice
But choose to take lives—to save their own.
Brothers, sisters—torn apart
Mothers, fathers—shot
Husbands, wives—disappear
Children and peers—harden hearts.

I can still hear the echoes of the bombs as they fell
The explosions were like the rumbles of a horde of hateful fiends
Wreaking havoc on the earth.

Bloody turmoil turned lives on end
Just because of lust from one so-called “friend”

Now I am back on that hill, beside that gravel road
That leads to the house which once was mine.
Rain cries on the earth
Mixed with echoes of my laughs
From times past
Like a stone into the ocean, casually cast
Hitting rock bottom, and forgotten
In the ever ebbing tide, oceans wide.
—If only I could take the things from my life now!
That I love
And whisk them away
To times and places passed;
For all too soon today becomes yesterday.

“Oh! Old home—do you remember me?
For I remember you!”
But all I see is a land forever changed.
It will never be the same—ghosts are never real.
What is one grain in the sands worldwide?

What are a thousand pebbles in the fury of the tide?
As I stand upon this hill, the cars speed by
Neither stopping nor observing—are they gone before they come.
The times in the past,
The pebbles that are passed
Will never return, but how I wish
How I wish they would return.

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