
Aao Aeny

Home Is a Woman

Before I enter the matatu
for the drive to Kampala then Lira
the driver stops me to tell me
he's never seen me on this route
"you must live outside"
I remember I live outside my own country
I pretend not to hear
and he says it again, this time behind a cigarette and a smile
he asks me "who are your people? who is your father? your grandfather?"
saying he may know my people

I tell him my mother's name and her mother's name
and my great-grandmothers' names
I tell him about the names of the land they could not inherit
unless their brothers or fathers or husbands gave it to them
I name and map the land, from that tree to the edge of the river
I tell him where my great-grandmothers were born
where my grandmothers were born
where my mother was born
I hum the names of the woBe1 (e o)(I h)19 ()-5.9 (h)42 (r)-m(um t)-5.9 (h)4 (e n)3 (9 (h)4 (53 (a).