

They Saw the Sun First

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“Old people’s speech is not to be dishonored—after all, they saw the sun first.” -Namibian Proverb

They who saw the sun first
have seen a hundred
years’ suns, a million moons.
They know what it’s like
to watch the sun they know
rise above a world they don’t
—a foreign Earth not at all
like the one whose soil
they soaked with tears sprung
from a generations’ worth
of cries. But they saw the sun
first, so they know
what it means
to rise.

They saw the sun first.
The spectacle we call ‘dawn’
has long been elders’
daily bread. They blessed
your bread before you formed
a tongue to taste it. Blessed
your tongue before it found
words to speak. Spoke life
into you in blessed tongues.
They saw the sun first,
and so knew they needed
little else to
survive.