

End Month

by P.J. Kimani

I toil hard every day
Only to be rewarded at end month
With the little I earn, I pay rent
There's nothing to spare
I have to borrow a few extra coins
Before end month comes knocking again

For every coin I borrow
I pay the shylock three times back
Squeezing me off the last coins in my pocket

This poverty I inherited from my father
It is unfathomable and seems unending
Papa also inherited it
The moment his father abandoned him an infant

I carry it everywhere I go
To the church and to the supermarket
It clings tightly on me
Like a tick to a bull

At night
I put my tools away
My stomach is empty
I shiver with cold
Memories of my ailing mother at home
Haunt me again
Making me long for the next end month
Only fifteen days away

The last time we spoke
She had run out of quinidine
Her rent had accumulated for two months
I promised to send her something
When end month comes

End month! End month!
Where are you dear end month?
I long for when you come
So that I may live if only for that day

Why is it that every end month
Landlord must come knocking on my door?

Asking me for money as if he had planted a tree in his house
For me to pluck money for him every end month

End month, end month
Why don't you come every day?
So that my problems you may keep at bay?

LOST

by P.J. Kimani

Who comes here?
Among the beasts and dangers of this wilderness
Believers in religion and friends of the law and the king
Men who have journeyed since the rising sun
In the shades of a dark forest
Without nourishment and are sadly tired of their wayfaring
To seek our freedom in the hinterlands

We are then lost
We lost our sight before losing our way
For, the road to the mountain stands in betwixt
A rift in a valley
And the grand path to the great lake

'Tis enough for the present
That we entrusted a native of this land
Whom with an arm stretched to the fore
Made friend from a foe
Cementing the rift with a wall

I say, we are then lost
If we seek solace in the excellence of his pursuits
Clouded by our vision of myopia
To take us from the valley to a land of utopia

'Tis unheard of
A native lost in his own land
When darkness hovers through the neon lights
In the blinkering gaze of a bungled vision
Then he should easily find his way

'Tis indeed strange a native should be lost
Not knowing whether to tarry in a rift
Or jump into a lake
Is he a native of these mountains?
By birth or adopted to this land?