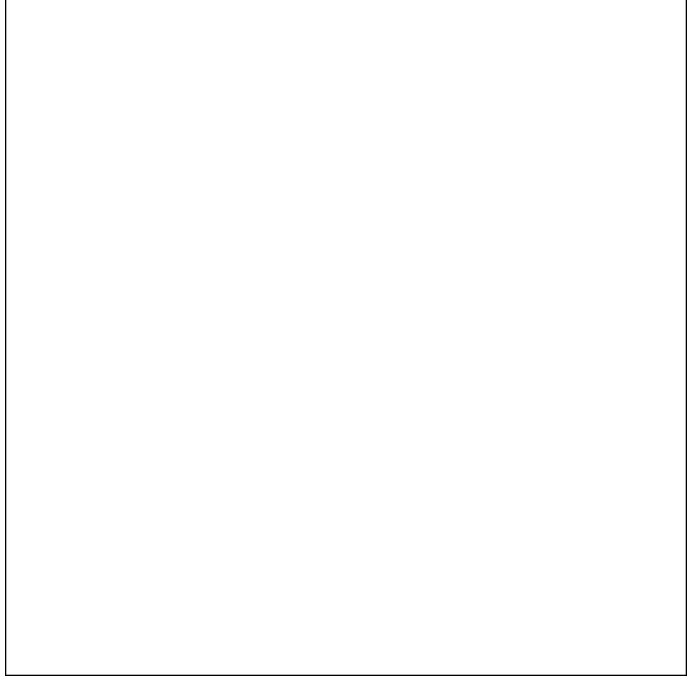


Jou mwen kite lakay mwen pou'm ale  
lavil

The day I left home for the city



✎ Lesley Koyi, Ursula Nafula

✉ Brian Wambi

📍 ACE Haiti-University of Notre Dame USA

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Jou mwen kite lakay mwen pou'm  
ale lavil / The day I left home for

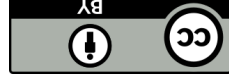
the city

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Ti estasyon otobis la nan kominote kote'm rete a chaje ak moun ak otobis. Atè a te chaje ak bagay pou mete nan otobis yo. Machann tikè yo tap rele non kote otobis yo ta prale.

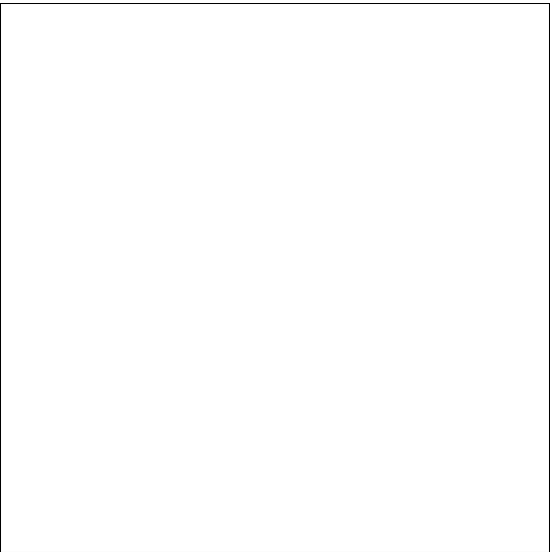
...

The small bus stop in my village was busy with people and overloaded buses. On the ground were even more things to load. Touts were shouting the names where their buses were going.

“City! City! Going west!” I heard a tout shouting.  
That was the bus I needed to catch.

...

“Lavili Lavili Direksyon lwesi Yonn nan machann  
yo di non kote mwen ta prale a.





Otobis lavil la te prèske plen, men moun tap pouse toujou pou yo monte. Kèk nan yo mete sak yo anba otobis la, lòt te mete pa yo sou etajè anndan otobis la.

...

The city bus was almost full, but more people were still pushing to get on. Some packed their luggage under the bus. Others put theirs on the racks inside.



Otobis retou a te plen deja. Li te pare pou'l tounen nan direksyon lès. Sa ki te pi enpòtan pou mwen lè sa a se te kòmanse chache lakay kote tonton'm nan rete.

...

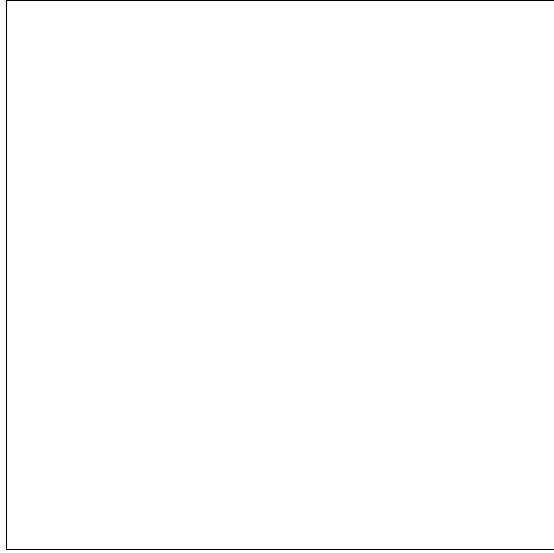
The return bus was filling up quickly. Soon it would make its way back east. The most important thing for me now, was to start looking for my uncle's house.



Nouvo pasaje yo kenbe tikè yo di nan men yo  
pandan yap chache kote pou yo chita nan otobis  
la. Fam ak jèn timoun tap ranje kò yo pou  
wayaj long sa a.

...

New passengers clutched their tickets as they  
looked for somewhere to sit in the crowded bus.  
Women with young children made them  
comfortable for the long journey.



Nèf èdtan apre, mwen leve lè mwen tandè yon  
moun ap rele non pasaje yo. Mwen ranmase ti  
sak mwen ep' m desann otobis la.

...

Nine hours later, I woke up with loud banging  
and calling for passengers going back to my  
village. I grabbed my small bag and jumped out  
of the bus.



Mwen chita bò kote yon fenèt. Yon granmoun te chita akote'm. Li tap kenbe yon sak plastik vèt byen fèmen. Li te gen vye sapat nan pye'l ak yon manto chire. Li te gen yon jan eksite.

...

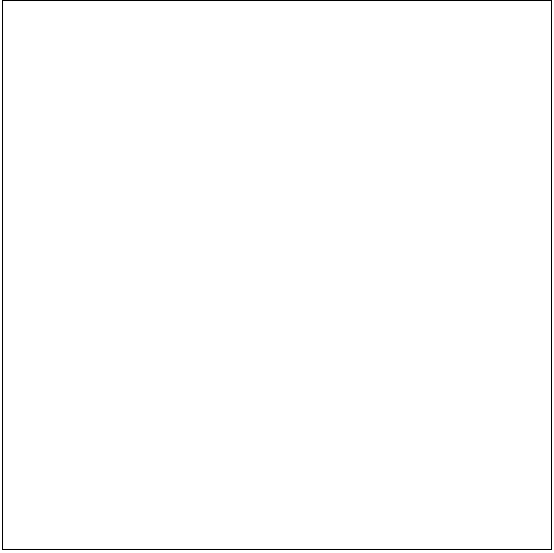
I squeezed in next to a window. The person sitting next to me was holding tightly to a green plastic bag. He wore old sandals, a worn out coat, and he looked nervous.



Sou wout la, mwen tap sonje adrès kote tonton'm nan rete lavil. Mwen tap repete non an nan tèt mwen epi mwen tonbe dòmi.

...

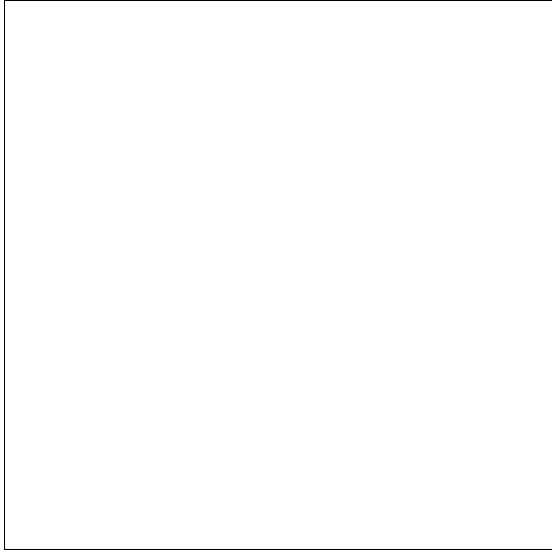
On the way, I memorised the name of the place where my uncle lived in the big city. I was still mumbling it when I fell asleep.



Mwen gade deyò enpi se là sa mwen santi ke  
mwen tap kite kominote mwen an, kote'm te  
grandi. Mwen ta pral lavil.

...

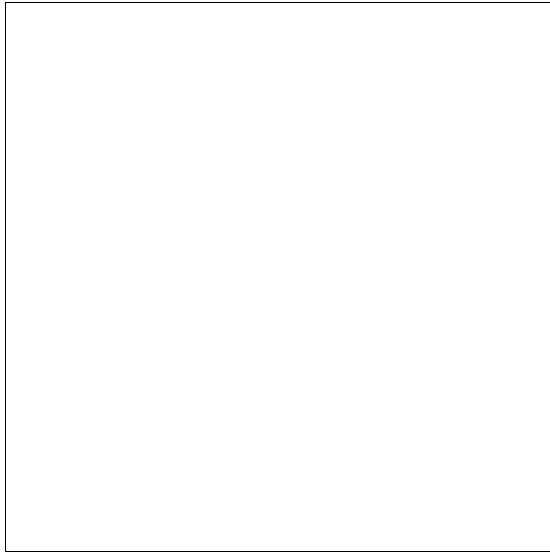
I looked outside the bus and realised that I was  
leaving my village, the place where I had grown  
up. I was going to the big city.



Mwen, lesprim toujou tounen sou lakay mwen.  
Èske manman'm an sekirite? Èske lapen mwen  
yo ap bay lajan? Èske frè'm ap sonje wouze ti  
pyebwa mwen te plante yo?

...

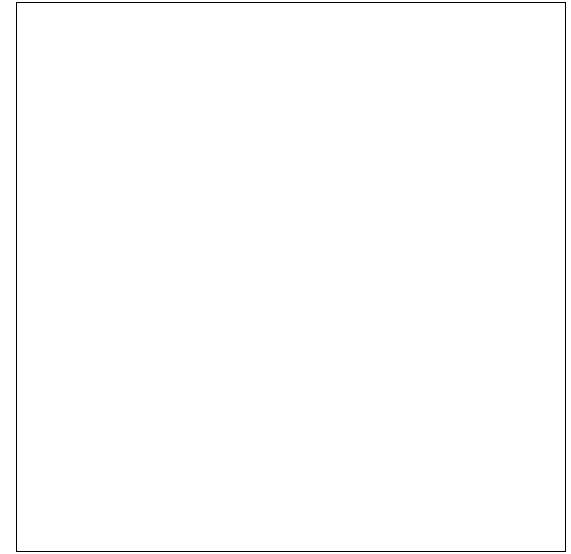
But my mind drifted back home. Will my mother  
be safe? Will my rabbits fetch any money? Will  
my brother remember to water my tree  
seedlings?



Otobis lan te fin plen. Tout pasaje yo te chita. Machann lari tap eseye pase nan koulwa a pou yo vann dènye machandiz yo. Chak moun tap rele non machandiz pa yo. Pou mwen tout mo sa yo te komik.

...

The loading was completed and all passengers were seated. Hawkers still pushed their way into the bus to sell their goods to the passengers. Everyone was shouting the names of what was available for sale. The words sounded funny to me.

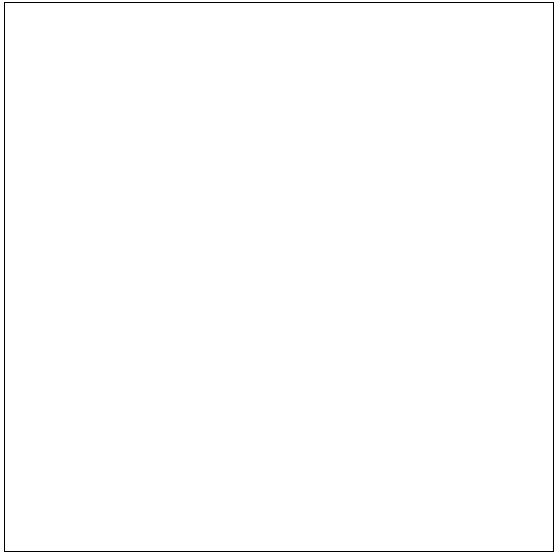


Li te kòmanse fè cho nan otobis la. Mwen fèmen je'm pou'm eseye dòmi.

...

As the journey progressed, the inside of the bus got very hot. I closed my eyes hoping to sleep.

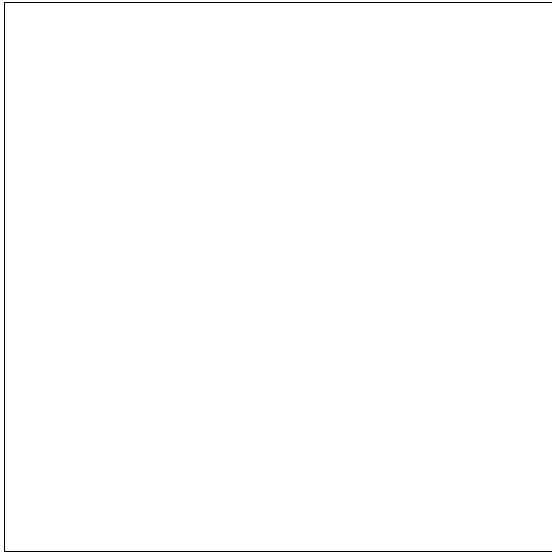




Kèk pasaje tap achte bwason oswa ti manje.  
Men, moun ki pa te gen lajan, tankou mwen,  
rete gade.

...

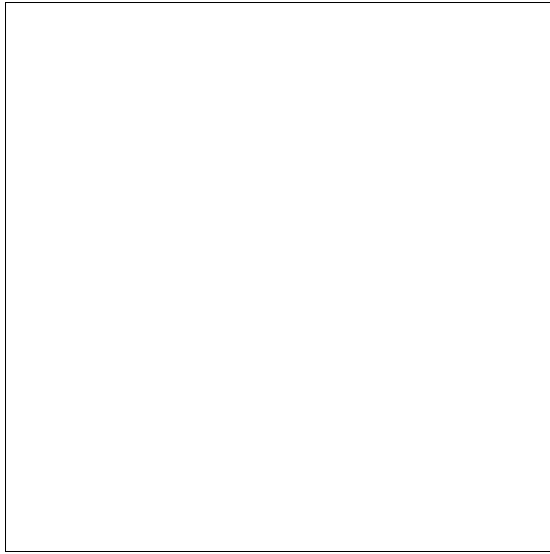
A few passengers bought drinks, others bought  
small snacks and began to chew. Those who did  
not have any money, like me, just watched.



Lè otobis la kite estasyon an, mwen gade deyò  
epi mwen mande tèt mwen si'm tap janm  
tounen lakay mwen ankò.

...

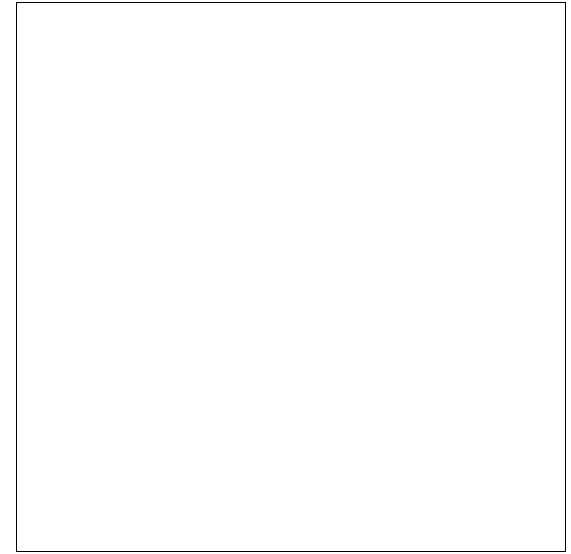
As the bus left the bus stop, I stared out of the  
window. I wondered if I would ever go back to  
my village again.



Tout aktivite kanpe lè otobis la kòmanse klaksonen, sa vle di ke nou pare pou'n ale. Machann tikè yo mande machann lari yo sòti nan otobis la.

...

These activities were interrupted by the hooting of the bus, a sign that we were ready to leave. The tout yelled at the hawkers to get out.



Machann yo tap batay pou yo sòti. Kèk nan yo tap remèt klyan lajan alòs ke lòt tap fè dènye tantativ pou yo vann ankò.

...

Hawkers pushed each other to make their way out of the bus. Some gave back change to the travellers. Others made last minute attempts to sell more items.