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# Manyatta

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Smoky darkness  
Sleeping on cow hides slick with sweat  
Mud stick hut built in three days by mother  
Because house building is women's work  
Outside, the young men spring like grasshoppers  
Thrumming in their throats the anticipation  
Not for entering moran, for becoming a man  
But for money from deep tourist pockets  
Explaining the particulars of killing a lion  
With only a knife and spear  
While walking across the cow-dung  
Enclosure holding hands with a white man  
Mama mzee grumphling at the flies on the  
Corners of her mouth and eyes  
Invaded house so she can eat  
Don't you use blood in your diet, asks  
And cowherding is our pastoral way of life.  
Hoping the lions won't come from the preserve  
At night to steal the calves  
Though we hold them in our manyatta, our  
Stick brush compound  
Refusing to compromise cultural identity and  
Practices, but finding a profit in  
The same breath.  
Surviving, minibus tourist tracks across our faces  
Now just ritual scarring.