



Muthee, Bethuel. "Balconies."

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## Bethuel Muthee

### Balconies

*for Lutivini*

From a balcony on Kirinyaga Road layers of smoke  
coat the walls and it is possible to read the city like tree rings.  
A balcony holds the world in abeyance.  
I step out onto one to meet a world full of mitungis,  
yesterday's garbage and multi-coloured flapping flags  
of residency. The street below offers dust  
and the fading song of a nduthi gone by.  
A neighbour's balcony blooms.  
They are cultivating beauty that slithers  
and spreads: philodendron, geraniums,  
a stoic cactus robed in a red blanket.  
Balconies blow envy across houses.  
Balconies, a place to look down on others.  
Wind chimes on a friend's balcony sing  
the direction the night dances to.  
Balconies, where we sit and dream  
while someone slashes the grass on their back lawn.  
Two crows perch on the railing, surveying  
the day's work. When flying  
from balconies, some people  
attempt to escape fire, intruders, life.  
Children play in a field across the road.

*Bethuel Muthee*

Bethuel Muthee is a poet living and working in Nairobi. He is a member of Maasai Mbili Artists Collective. As a member of Naijographia he has co-curated three exhibitions: Naijographia (2017, Goethe Institute Nairobi), Wanakuboeka Feelharmonic (2018, British Institute in East Africa), and From Here to When (2019, Goethe Institute).