EVERYTHING YOU CANNOT BURY

Oyindamola Odetoyinbo

They said the grass was greener
on the other side,
So, I crossed over,
carrying my mother's prayers in my pocket
And my father's silence folded in my chest.

At first, I mistook survival for arrival.
The streets here hum in foreign tongues,
the air smells of rain that never touches red earth.
Loneliness learned my name before my neighbours did.

Some nights, the moon looks too clean,
like it's been washed of memory.
I whisper to the wind, hoping it carries my voice
to a compound where my sisters' laughter once lived.

Births happen without me.
Weddings end before I can call.
Grief travels faster than love,
I know this now.

Even he, the one who said he'd wait,
has learned a new way to smile.
His voice, once a home I carried,
now belongs to someone else.
I bless him quietly and close the window.

The morning Papa died,
Ada's voice cracked through the phone line,
a single sentence, small and cruel:

He's gone.
And the world tilted.
The mop fell.
My chest folded inward,
And I wanted to run home barefoot across the ocean.

Since then, I've learned that distance
is not measured in miles,
But in moments you can't return to.

I have buried many things,
my accent, my ease,
The sound of my name said right,
But some things refuse to stay buried.

Grief is one of them.
So is love.

The grass here is green, yes, but it never grows roots.