

# A Far Cry From Africa

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*A wind is ruffling the tawny pelt  
Of Africa. Kikuyu, quick as flies  
Batten upon the bloodstreams of the veldt.  
Corpses are littered through a paradise.  
But still the worm, colonel of carrion, cries  
"Waste no compassion on these separate dead."  
Statistics justify and scholars seize  
The salients of colonial policy;*

*What is that to the white child hacked in bed,  
To savages expendable as Jews?*

*Threshed out by beaters the dry rushes break  
In a white dust of ibises whose cries  
Have wheeled since civilisation's dawn  
From the parched river or beast-teeming plain;  
The violence of beast on beast is read  
As natural law, but upright man  
Seeks his divinity with inflicting pain.  
Delirious as these worried beasts, his wars  
Dance to the tightened carcass of a drum,  
While he calls courage still that native dread  
Of the long peace contracted by the dead.*

*Again savage necessity wipes its hands  
Upon the napkin of a dirty cause, again  
A waste of our compassion as with Spain,  
The gorilla wrestles with the superman.  
I, who am poisoned with the blood of both,  
Where shall I turn, divided to the vein?  
I who have cursed  
The drunken officer of British rule, how choose  
Between this Africa and the English tongue I love?  
Betray them both, or give back what they give?  
How shall I face such slaughter and be cool?  
How can I turn from Africa and live?*