Je parvins à faire s’évanouir dans mon esprit toute l’esperance humaine. Sur toute joie, pour l’étrangler, j’ai fait le bond sourd de la bête feroce.

*I was able to expel from my mind all human hope. On every form of joy, in order to strangle it, I pounced stealthily like a wild animal.*

Rimbaud, *Une Saison en Enfer*
It is starting like this. I am feeling itch like insect is crawling on my skin, and then my head is just starting to tingle right between my eye, and then I am wanting to sneeze because my nose is itching, and then air is just blowing into my ear and I am hearing so many thing: the clicking of insect, the sound of truck grumbling like one kind of animal, and then the sound of somebody shouting TAKE YOUR POSITION RIGHT NOW! QUICK! QUICK QUICK! MOVE WITH SPEED! MOVE FAST OH! in voice that is just touching my body like knife.

I am opening my eye and there is light all around me coming into the dark through hole in the roof, crossing like net above my body. Then I am feeling my body crunched up like
one small mouse in the corner when the light is coming on. The smell of rainwater and sweat is coming into my nose and I am feeling my shirt is so wet it is almost like another skin. I want to be moving but my whole bone is paining me and my muscle is paining me like fire ant is just biting me all over my body. If I can be slapping myself to be making it go away I am doing it, but I cannot even move one finger. I am not doing anything.

Footstep is everywhere around me and making me to think that my father is coming to bring medicine to stop all of this itch and pain. I turn onto my back. The footstep is growing louder, louder, louder until I am hearing it even more than my own breathing or heart beating. Step slap, step slap, step slap, I am hearing getting louder, louder, louder and then shadow is coming into the light from under the door.

Somebody is knocking. KNOCK KNOCK. But I am not answering. Then they are angering too much and just kicking so the whole of this place is shaking and the roof is falling apart small small so that more light is coming in. And the wood everywhere is cracking until I am hearing PING PING and seeing screw falling from the door into bucket near my feets. The sound is fighting the wall, bouncing from here to there, through the net of light, until it is like the sound is pushing the door open so there is so much brightness. BRIGHTNESS! So much brightness is coming into my eye until I am seeing
purple spot for long time. Then I am seeing yellow eye belonging to one short dark body with one big belly and leg thin like spider’s own. This body is so thin that his short is just blowing around his leg like woman’s skirt and his shirt is looking like dress the way it is hanging from his shoulder. His neck is just struggling too much to hold up his big head that is always moving one way or the other.

I am looking at him. He is looking at me. He is not surprising at all to be seeing me even if I am surprising for him, but his face is falling and becoming more dark. He is sniffing like dog and stepping to me. KPAWA! He is hitting me.

Again and again he is hitting me and each blow from his hand is feeling on my skin like the flat side of machete. I am trying to scream, but he is knocking the air from my chest and then slapping my mouth. I am tasting blood. I am feeling like vomiting. The whole place around us is shaking, just shaking rotten fruit from the shelf, just sounding like it will be cracking into many piece and falling on top of us. He is grabbing my leg, pulling it so hard that it is like it will be coming apart like meat, and my body is just sliding slowly from the stall out into the light and onto the mud.

In the light, my breath is coming back and using force to open my chest to make me to coughing and my eye to watering. The whole world is spreading before me and I am looking up to the grey sky moving slowly slowly against the top leaf of
all the tall tall Iroko tree. And under this, many smaller tree is fighting each other to climb up to the sunlight. All the leaf is dripping with rainwater and shining like jewel or glass. The grasses by the road is so tall and green past any colour I am seeing before. This is making me to think of jubilating, dancing, shouting, singing because Kai! I am saying I am finally dead. I am thinking that maybe this boy is spirit and I should be thanking him for bringing me home to the land of spirits, but before I can even be opening my mouth to be saying anything, he is leaving me on my back in the mud.

I can see the bottom of truck parking just little bit away from me. Two truck is blocking up the whole road and more are parking on the roadside. The piece of cloth covering them is so torn up and full of hole and the paint is coming off to showing so much rust, like blood, making me to thinking the truck is like wounding animal. And around all the truck, just looking like ghost, are soldier. Some is wearing camouflage, other is wearing T-shirt and jean, but it is not mattering because all of the clothe is tearing and having big hole. Some of them is wearing real boot and the rest is wearing slipper. Some of them is standing at attention with their leg so straight that it is looking like they do not have knee. Some of them is going to toilet against the truck and other is going to toilet into the grasses. Almost everybody is carrying gun.

The boy who is hitting me is running to the first truck.
When he is reaching the door, he is bending down with his back so straight and his leg so straight. Only his head is moving back and forward, left and right, on his neck. Then he is standing up and suddenly, quick just like that, the door of the truck is swinging open and hitting the boy right in his big belly and he is just taking off like bird, flying in the air, and landing on his buttom in hole of water in the road. There is sound coming from all the other soldier. It is laughing sound.

I am lying here even if I am wanting to get up because my body is just paining me and I am fearing that if I am moving, somebody will be doing something very bad to me.

A man is coming down from the truck. He is looking like the leader. I am staring at the man and his jacket that is coming apart into many green string moving back and forward each time he is breathing in or out. He is wearing glove so dirty they are almost yellow or brown and his cap that he is holding in the sweaty place under his arm is flopping down because it is soaked almost all the way with his sweat.

I am watching him move from truck to truck. The truck is so old that the paint is falling off and the tyre is so low that when he is kicking them, they are pressing in and out. All the other soldier is following each movement he is making; even all the one holding their gun ready to shoot is shifting his head to be watching him looking at every truck. He is moving slowly like important person to make sure that everybody
looking at him is knowing he is chief. All of the other soldier is staring at him like he is king. I am staring also.

By the time this leader man is leaving the last truck, they are surrounding him and all of them are moving the same way he is moving. They are following him to me. Their shadow is surrounding me and their leg is like cage around me. Nobody is saying one word and the man is chewing the inside of his cheek just looking at me like I am ant or some insect like that. He is saying, so who is finding this thing? But nobody is answering.

Then he is saying louder, why is this thing here on the ground?

The boy who is finding me is now coming back from my shack with some banana just as black as the road. He is wiping fruit from his mouth with his hand and walking to this big man who is saying to him, Strika. Is it you who is finding this thing? And the little boy is nodding his head very hard like he is happy that the man is knowing it is him.

Enh! Strika? Is it you, the man is saying. Heyeye! Hmm! he is shouting and then he is turning to the other soldier and cursing them. So you mean of all of you GROWN MEN only this boy – one skinny little thing like this – is finding this thing here.

I am not moving and the leader man is throwing up his arm to the sky. He is shouting, where are you finding him, so hard
that his voice is becoming high and sounding like it is sticking in his throat. Strika is pointing his arm at the shack. Is that right, the man is saying and shaking his head like he cannot be believing it at all at all. SSSSS! He is shouting, you. Where is Luftenant? Luftenant. LUFTENANT! And another voice is answering, he is in the bush.

The grasses is shaking and man is coming from there holding his trouser up with one hand and holding his gun with the other. His yellow skin is shining like gold and sweat is shining on his beard. He is running to us and stopping when he is coming to be looking at me like he is confusing too much. Then he is saluting very lazy, not like everybody else who is looking like they are not even able to bend anything.

Commandant Sah! he is shouting in voice that is even sounding like somebody whining. This man Commandant is saying, come here. Come here, until Luftenant is moving closer to Commandant who is shouting, JUST WHAT ARE YOU DOING? Luftenant is not saying anything. You don't know? Please Sah. I was shitting in the bush. And Commandant is grabbing Luftenant’s ear until the man is squeezing his face with so much pain. Open your ear and listen to me well well, Commandant is saying. If you are wanting to shit, you are not shitting on my time. Who are you? Just running into the bush like woman. If you are wanting to shit, you should be shitting right here on the road. You are not leaving this road for
to eat this one or what. And Strika is shaking his head no. Since he is finding me I can never hearing this boy speak.

By now I am knowing who is Strika and Commandant and Luftenant. But there are so many person who is just not saying anything at all that I am wondering if they are even knowing how to speak. Commandant is turning to me. Do you want some water, he is saying softly but I am not answering because I am floating on top of my body and just watching. The world is changing into many colour around me and I am hearing the people speaking but it is like different language. I am floating away like leaf in water until KPWISHA! I am feeling cold and more wet and then how my body is so heavy all around me.

Strika, Commandant is saying. Go and bring more water. Strika is running to the last truck and jumping up. Then Commandant is saying to me, are you hungry? Are you thirsty? And because I am feeling much better and my head is feeling more clear, I am touching my belly and nodding my head yes.

He is saying, well that is no problem. If you are wanting food, you will eat. And if you are wanting drink, you will drink but that is having to wait until you are telling me your name. How can I be sitting down to eat with a man who I am not knowing his name? Are you hearing me? I am nodding to him again but word is not able to be coming from my mouth.

You are having name is it not, he is saying and sticking his