

VI

Mireille is sick. How to say the word *sick* in Port-au-Prince when all seem to be suffering from a strange epidemic. Since we don't heal anything, there are no sick people. Everyone says *pa pi mal* do deny being sick, *pa pi mal*, that means *get off my back*, you have to force the pain to be patient, so-so, everyone says *nap boule*, we burn. We'll never know from what sickness the country is suffering. Everyone has the miracle cure. Everyone knows that change is a hyperbole. Go ahead, say it to the women walking in the morning, mouths pinched with hunger. Look at those boys going to school in tight rows, a hymn on their tongues to fool the rising day. Mireille is sick. I hug her as usual to take some of her pain upon myself. Some of her memories. Some of her wisdom. To give her something of my travels and reminiscences. I look at Mireille. Everything resumes more beautifully when the end is near.

Christopher Columbus discovered America. The part that the lie has played in history cannot be measured.

VII Wagane

I'm in Dakar. And here, I am Serer. My brother Felwine calls me Wagane. Wagane means invincible. That's not exactly right. Wagane means someone who hasn't been conquered yet. I should learn all the languages in the world to say sea. Sky. Tree. Fire. Air. The end of all these things. It seems that I am the daughter of the burned baobab tree.¹ I spend my time looking for my face.

I am a cannibal. I'm not the one who says so.

– Rodney Saint-Éloi (Translated by Oana Avasilichioaei)

¹ *Je suis la fille du baobab brûlé* is the title of a book of poetry by Rodney Saint-Éloi, published by Mémoire d'encrier in 2015 (Translator).