

Satilla River Reflections #5

(For Ahmaud Arbery)

in the shadows of the Okefenokee Swamp
Geechees and other Gullahs
eat boiled peanuts
soaked with the sea salt
of the Atlantic Ocean

that Atlantic Ocean
which contains Ibo Landing
on St. Simons Island
where deep memories
flow and flow

that Atlantic Ocean
which contains the Wanderer Memorial
on Jekyll Island
where deep memories
flow and flow

that Atlantic Ocean
which contains the Behavior Cemetery
on Sapelo Island
where deep memories
flow and flow

in the shadows of the Okefenokee Swamp
Geechees and other Gullahs
eat Hopping John cooked without meat,
fried okra, white creamed corn,
field peas, and corn bread
waiting for another day clean
as a red sun shines
above the pine trees
on the banks
of the Satilla River

we see your face
hurt by the Buckras
we see your torso
hurt by the Buckras
we see your soul
hurt by the Buckras

we think about another Geechee
that we lost to the Buckras

we think about another Geechee
gone too soon

we think about another Geechee
attacked by Buckras riding
on their iron horses
with guns drawn

the tragedy of your pain
has become our pain
the tragedy of your pain
is deep like the Satilla River
the tragedy of your pain
haunts our souls

Satilla Shores is a place
where we now know
the Buckras are armed
to the teeth

Satilla Shores is a place
where we now know
the sun should not go alone

Satilla Shores is a place
where we now know
has your blood on its hands

in the shadows of the Okefenokee Swamp
when the wind now blows
it sings your name Ahmaud
in an ancient blues song

we hear the beat
we hear the rhythm
we hear the chants
of the ancient Seminole Nation
calling contemporary warriors
to get ready for the Buckras
the next time.

--J. Vern Cromartie
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