

## In Memoriam

And all that is left of her,  
all that remains after the wailing  
for nine nights in a mist of rum,  
all that is left after the jealous eye  
of Leah lamented Jacko's second death  
for this his lost dream, all that is left  
of delicate Rachel with bones catching light  
on her upturned face, all that is left  
is the memory of her part in the chain  
of generations, the sacrifice of her womb,  
her body, her soul to continue this chain  
of generations; the scabs on her feet  
from walking so many miles to sustain the chain  
of generations; the pucked fingers and varicose

veins to make ends meet, to carry out the living  
for the birthing of her children, his children.

All that remains is a mound where she was laid,  
and in the sky sometimes, there are colours

that she once saw and swam among way up there in  
swamp country where her first woman's blood

was poured; in that sky, there is the smell  
of magnolia and jasmine, and the thick of swamp,

and then, the wind stirs and blows all that away,  
till all that is left is a simple longing

in Jacko's falling heart,  
in Jacko's failing heart.

KWAME DAWES