

I looked up from my floor and saw my eyes in her eyes I heard her voice lurch from my throat and
knew history will begin and end right here in a bedroom in Virginia our together voice
careening and crooning— will sing:

We were abandoned in this strange

Land and have long forgotten

who we are. We listened for god— but heard only our own howls
echoing back. we've tried making peace with migration but we
are a body in departure longing for return & there's grief in our blood
-line and the blood it curdles where it is meant to flow. We've poemed
every pain— mixed it in salt -water and gagged we've known suicide as longing for the
cool kiss of river god— we know
a body doesn't forget— we returned to water— begged the Atlantic to swallow

us whole but water confesses. We brought soil red harmattan dust
caked to our feet. We tried to wash clean of Cameroon but the water confessed
as red-sediments pooled at our feet. We hovered
over Atlantic imagined
what it would feel like to be an island embraced by the great expanse would we
stand up and swim? What happens when an island washes up to shore?

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