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stop trying

*“If only we’d stop trying to be happy, we could have a pretty good time.”
~Edith Wharton*

Words that traveled with me
to far away coordinates 7.7500° N, 1.5000° W
to be exact

Circumstances conspired to bring me here
where heat clings to skin,
where dusk
is an auburn shroud,
and verdant light befriends dark

In days that lose and moments that win,
they reach out their hands, they smile
unconsciously beguiling
like the flowering plumeria
that doesn’t know its own beauty

makeshift shelters
house makeshift lives improvised
among roving bands of dogs, goats,
chickens, cows
and pigs for dinner

If only we’d stop trying to be happy...
irreconcilable words
considering the bleak doings here

to my eyes
vultures circle
on moist, monsoonal winds
and even, equatorial temperatures
portend the expiry of a fragile fate

But perhaps I’ve misunderstood the geneses,
the presentations of happiness

because the happiness here
looks intact

...we could have a pretty good time.

it's how they live here
the photogenic children
who have never seen a photo

of themselves
until now

their easy joy, long dreams,
gravity-defying hopes

fuel mine

Because of you,
I ache for your lightness of soul
and sandals on your feet

little ones,

I chase the sunset home
to a revised storyline,
and happiness that stops trying.

a bath,