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## 10,000 Black Women (Visual Album)

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I left my home country, Ghana, at 10 years old, the perfect age to still remember my language, Twi, and to take in American culture wholly as if I'd been born there. It's been ten years now, with my 20th birthday being yesterday, and as more and more time passes with hearing about the changes in Ghana, new currency, dying presidents, Vice President turned president, and alas the people's new hope of a president, I can't help but think about the country as a whole, think about memories of growing up in Taifa in my father's house where the white lace curtains hang long and otherworldly, with the spread of garden full of life and butterfly chases, I can't help but think about riding borrowed bicycles on the dirt roads till late evening until my grandmother ran me inside to wash the dishes, I can't help but think about playing with neighborhood kids till the night grew thick and tall, especially when it stormed outside, especially when it stormed outside...my siblings and I would grab our grandmother's ntoma cloths off the clothing line, wrap one end around our waist and hold the other end with both hands in the air, tearing into the wind as it took us up in our own makeshift parachutes.

It's been 20 years in both countries, now, and I wonder if it is accurate to call myself a Ghanaian American. I wonder how much one country outweighs the other inside of me--- what the percentages are. I try to pull from Ghana a lot these days, especially when I'm back at school, here at Otterbein, where only 3 other Ghanaians besides myself exist. I pull from Ghana on unintentionally too, especially when I slip a “)si sii” which means “to say” , or “w3 hu?” which means “do you understand? or do you see? or do you see me?” -- and I catch myself and laugh, admitting my folly and relishing in it.

Months ago, at Walmart or some other mainstream grocery store, I found that I had forgotten how to say pineapple in Twi, which I later found out was “abrob3”. And one time in the night, I looked down at my collarbone and realized that I didn't know what to call it, and I still don't.

I guess this is all to say that the longer I stay away from Ghana, the more I romanticize the memories. The more I question if I really know this pregnant country on the western coast of Africa or if it's gradually becoming a feeling that I only know to be true in my head.

One thing that remains though, or what I've gathered over the years, is that to be Ghanaian, specifically Akan, which is an ethnic group, one amongst many in Ghana, is to be revolutionary, is to have comebacks readily prepared in arguments like nobody's business, is to hold strong to the fact that your jollof is better than Nigeria's, is to automatically crouch low and begin to dance every time you hear Afro beats playing or the old school high life of the 60s that brought love and youth to the country, is to know yourself as a son or daughter of Kwame Nkrumah, the first president who claimed independence and had dreams of calling the continent “The United States of Africa”, to be Ghanaian is to have Yaa Asantewaa, a Queen mother who fought off British colonizers with an army of women, in your spine, it is to have her in the way you move through the world unabashedly yourself, strong and hopeful in all you do. To be Ghanaian is to be proud,

in the form of the adowa dance, in the royalty of the kente cloth, and in the meaning under all Akan proverbs.