

Across the miles

We all have some place that has meaning to us, even though that meaning might be hard to explain to anyone else. In my case there's a seep that comes out of the old red rocks of a thorny tumble-down ravine in Africa. It has no name on any of the maps. Few people go there apart from the occasional goat herd or hunter trying his luck off the beaten path. It is, as they say, completely worthless.

There, for the first time, I heard a lion roar in the night. We saw him the next day, moving rightly as though the country all around was his own. There we found a tiny steenbuck ram that had never seen a man before. It was there that the flock of quelea came in a thundering swirl of wings to drink, and where the big cobra stood up in the dry yellow grass to look at me. I was happy in that place, searching for something I can't even put a name to. I'll probably never see it again.

They say that when you love someone you keep track in your mind of where they are, and often think about what they might be doing at that moment. For my part that's true. So when the sun sets my thoughts often drift beyond the redding gold, to a place where that same sun is about to rise over an ocean of thorn.

As the new day breaks I know the grey bush doves will begin their insistent throb by the little water that has no name.

