



MOTHER, MATERNAL SEA (SELECTION)

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The Prophet from then on had in his Palace all the necessary means to send and receive messages from any part of the world. Thus the faxes and telephones that were rapidly installed in the Palace never stopped ringing. The news spread rapidly. The Prophet received calls from all parts of the world, in addition to the many messages in multiple languages that the Prophet succeeded in mastering, or understood more-or-less. The newspapers of the most important capitals of the world spoke of the miracles of the Prophet Simon Ntangu António, while in Africa many churches declared that the Prophet was, in fact, the chosen one sent by God, for whom they had waited for so long, that the Prophet was going to raise the continent up from underdevelopment and bring an end to the wars and natural disasters that had impoverished Africans. In Luanda, the authorities first silenced the matter, but since it was already known throughout the world, they ended up announcing it, pledging all their resources. In any case, this was sufficient for hundreds of people to begin organizing caravans to Beira Alta. When the Prophet found out everything that was going on in Luanda, he released a message in which he greeted the population of the capital and asked the Luandans to have the patience to wait for him, that it would be inconvenient for all of Luanda to go immediately to Beira Alta, which didn't have the necessary installations to house so many people. Although the message had curbed some of the movement, it didn't keep many hundreds of people from taking to the road for the meeting with the awaited Prophet.

For almost a year and a half, the train had stood immobile at the Beira Alta station. After numerous protests by the passengers, the Prophet decided to give the orders to depart. Left behind without their consent were thousands of people, many of whom decided to go on foot to Zenza do Itombe, knowing many more people were waiting there for the Prophet than at Beira Alta. Indeed, at Zenza do Itombe thousands of people waited. It was discovered afterward that hundreds of people had come from Malange, Ndalatando, Uíge and Bengo. All of them preferred to be attended to before the Prophet arrived in Luanda, since they knew that in the capital it would be impossible to get an appointment. Besides, they knew from the radio that Luanda had been preparing for a long time to receive the Prophet with great ceremony. And in Zenza do Itombe the train was delayed longer than expected, because the Prophet had decided that this would be the last stop before the arrival in Luanda, and therefore everyone was advised that the following stations—Maria Teresa, Barraca, Cachari and Catete—as well as the people from Mazozo, Guimbe, Kindambiri, Kabiri, Malambo and Dondo, should all come to Zenza do Itombe, the last stage of the journey. And Ti Lucas, the old blind man, accompanied by his guide, circulated among the masses and stopped and sang and they gave him money.

After eighteen months of waiting, the Prophet received an ultimatum: Luanda demanded his presence immediately! The capital could not house for months and months the millions of visitors who had come from all parts of the country, from Africa and other continents. That the situation had exhausted the capital's utilities and had caused frequent blackouts of electricity and rationing of water. That neither mass transit nor the *candongueiros*¹ were capable of serving so many people. That traffic was a nightmare. That as much as they wanted to, there was no way to pick up so much trash. That the Roque Santeiro Market had expanded to all the corners of the capital city, and, as a result, street hustlers were everywhere. That there were so many people in the city that there were even people sleeping in the Catorze and Kamama Cemeteries, in perfect spiritual peace! Goodness! That the hospitals were so full that there was no space to admit the sick. That the central morgue was emitting a nauseating smell that plagued the city. That this alone was enough to chase away the arriving businessmen, which would be terrible for the national economy, that he hoped the Prophet would do

something in this area in particular, since it was well known that he only knew the multiplication tables, and not that well. That with so many foreigners there, robberies and organized crime had taken over the city. That, with so many foreign journalists and representatives of international news agencies, the matter was no longer a national one, it had become an international spectacle, for which he was urged to come to satisfy the curious and attend to those who piously awaited his miraculous blessing.

And so the train finally took off toward Luanda, with the express orders of the Prophet only to stop in the Luandan capital. After Catete, only a few kilometers from Viana, there were hundreds of people waving red flags, bandanas, and signs with the likeness of the Prophet Simon Ntangu António. Between Viana and the Bungo station, in Luanda, were thousands of people who awaited the triumphant arrival of the Prophet. Meanwhile, a light rain began to fall when least they expected it. After all, it was the middle of the dry season. For that impressive multitude, this was the first sign that Luanda was already under the extraordinary influence of the Prophet. As a result, the people, instead of cursing the drizzle, gave thanks to the Prophet for those harmless and blessed waters, shouting and singing with redoubled enthusiasm. Xé!

At the Bungo Station and along the adjacent roads, including all of Marginal until Restinga, the atmosphere was one of festivities and confusion. The Police didn't show up to bring order to the restless human masses. In effect, outside of the station, the people moved in response to the false signs of the arrival of the train in which the Prophet was traveling. In addition, increasing the confusion were the hundreds of vendors that circulated among the masses. They sold sweets, sodas, bibles, hymnals and rosaries, little cards with the image of Our Lady of Good Waters, others that had nothing to do with the Prophet or his Saint, little flasks of water said to be blessed by the Savior-Prophet, CDs and cassettes with choral music from the Church of the Prophet Simon Ntangu António, t-shirts, posters of various sizes, postcards, scapulars, balloons, plates, mugs and cups, keychains, handkerchiefs, quilts and towels, all with the image of the Prophet.

Ever since the acts of the Prophet began to be known, the image of Our Lady of Good Waters began to emerge, first in Luanda and then in other cities, represented in many

different ways. Now they copied her in siren form—her body metamorphosed into the curves of a fish—, now they made her tall and elegant; at times, short and round. They dressed her in current fashions, in a short skirt or pants, with earrings, her lips painted bright red. When the artisans, who were very happy with the turn of events, represented her as black, the people hesitated, and they had to explain that this is what she was like, our patron, and that she was not for those who practiced witchcraft. And she then appeared sculpted in wood, in stone, in bronze, molded in terracotta, patiently embroidered onto scarves, quilts and handkerchiefs of various sizes. Our Lady of Good Waters was worshipped in any nook, they placed her on every corner, with many candles and little gas lamps. These improvised altars filled with the many offerings of notes, bouquets of flowers, miniature sculpted arms and legs, photos, even food and drink were given to the Saint. The fishermen of the Island still paddling on the sea, in procession, offered her everything to grant them a good catch.

It was a beautiful day, no clouds and a nice breeze, in spite of the surprising rainfall. The congregation at the Bungo Station and the surrounding area had begun a few days earlier. Many families had come in trucks and buses from far away. Many people had come prepared to stay three or four days, bringing with them straw mats, mattresses, food and drink, drums and whistles for the festivities. Don't life's hard knocks teach us that we only realize the lifeboat is leaking when we need it? People mixed freely, independent of their social strata. There was, half disguised, an ex-minister who had only days before been exonerated of charges of corruption. That he wanted the Prophet to do something so that he could return to warming the seat where he had sat for more than fifteen years. There was also an important businessman, in dark glasses, jeans and a multi-colored shirt, very anxious to convince the Prophet to participate in a construction project on Mussulo Island, a five-star hotel with a pool, night clubs, casino, helicopter pad, etc. There was the Director of a large business who was looking for someone with the influence to guarantee a financial proposition to install a funicular on the slopes of Miramar, and if the Prophet helped him he would swear on all that was sacred never to forget it. There was a political leader, who considered himself a historical figure in Angolan nationalism, who wanted at any cost to assure his political advancement with at least half a seat in the parliament. How could he understand that

in a parliament with only two hundred seats there was not even one for his party? It was only because of selfishness that the seats weren't accessible to everyone! Ara xiça mé! There was an important anti-corruption enforcement officer who complained about living undercover again, since he had spent fourteen years clandestinely fighting colonialism. That this moral authority walked around hooded all day, in spite of the heat, dreading that he would be lynched if he were recognized. That this exceptional authority had already escaped many attacks and only wanted the Prophet to do something so with the peace of the Lord he could finish the many complicated dossiers that he had in his hands. There was a humble-looking man who wanted to announce to the Angolans in a gigantic demonstration at Independence Square "I have a dream!" That he had dreamed that ultimately Fátima's yet unrevealed secret had to do with Peace and National Reconstruction! For this small service lent to the homeland, he only wanted a small foreign bank account and that the San Miguel Fortress was torn down and a statue of Christ the Redeemer erected in its place! Father Simon help me! There was an old brave defender of our glory, who with his valor had distinguished himself in various battlefronts, who now spent his days washing cars in Baixa, who wanted the Prophet to grant him a less cruel life. There was another combatant, this one a true monument, a hero of the fatherland, with fourteen years behind him, his chest full of medals that he would offer to the Prophet in exchange for a job worthy of him. There was an inveterate communist that, feeling betrayed in his ideals because he had fought ever since '56, wanted to create and head up a red party. Couldn't the Prophet give him a little help? There was an elderly man from the interior, sick, who for three years had been looking for a health board that would allow him to seek treatment abroad. Only the Prophet, with his magic powers, could save the life granted to him with a trip out of the country. There was a head of a family with three intelligent sons, none of whom could enroll at the University for lack of funds. The Prophet should help them. Many young people were there waiting for the Prophet to grant them scholarships abroad so they could graduate with any major, even in these new, modern and lucrative professions. There was a girl who five years earlier had competed in the Miss Mataka pageant. That the jury hadn't even given her the consolation prize of being a maid of honor in the company of the winner in spite of the many obvious physical advantages she had over the other candidates. She had two round gourds on her chest and this beautiful rounded

fleshy behind that the judges didn't know how to evaluate, but which was the joy of the boys in her neighborhood. That the Prophet, who should be knowledgeable of authentic African beauty, do something so that she could be in the next pageant, that she would pay him back with plenty of love and warm attention. Xé! A single mother wanted a house. A head of the family, unemployed for four years, wanted a job. A college graduate in economics from the old Socialist bloc wanted the Prophet to grant him any placement, if nothing else it could even be as a cashier in a supermarket! A soccer player wanted the first division Portuguese clubs to be interested in him, in spite of his miserable performance in the national championship. A musician with a sharp and strident voice which frightened all the city's birds had dreamed ever since the times of Mano Bôa to sing abroad in the national chorus in the largest festivals, really he just wanted to visit Portugal. That he could tell that the Prophet would appreciate his canary-like voice! A truck driver was looking for money to repair his six trucks which had all broken down the same week. It could only be because of his neighbor's evil eye! A group of middle-aged men came with the hope that the Prophet would reinvigorate their natural strength. There was also a group of mature Mbaku women expecting to return home gestating new lives. Discreetly and a little ashamed were a couple of *homos* who wanted to come out publicly. Couldn't the Prophet give them a hand so they could get authorization to organize a gay pride event, even if it was in a yard somewhere? Sukuma! It's the end of the world! Dozens of mothers wanted to see their children free of drugs. Hundreds of people came to find out the whereabouts of family members disappeared in combat or along the roads. Thousands of street kids came organized in a group to ask Father Simon to tell them where their fathers and mothers were. The Association for the Defense of Adolescents came to solicit the Prophet's intervention to end child prostitution. The war widows and wives of disappeared men came with the hope that the Prophet could give them some comfort. Millions of those displaced from their home regions came to ask for material reparations for their damages suffered. Diviners and witch-doctors, keeping in mind the great demand for their services, came to ask the Prophet to do something so they would be officially recognized, with rights to a house and a car, satellite TV, a cell phone and a little red passport. Xé! In the end, weren't many of those present owed the favor of a swift and effective intervention? Haka! What ingratitude! A family recently mourning came in grieving, uaué! Aiué!

Uaué! Aiué! with their still warm relative, perhaps the Prophet could bring him back to life and the deceased could return to our presence. To this end, didn't they have the soul of the dead man trapped in a cage? A white bird? Eé! Eé! Eé! The relatives of dead souls who, at the moment of their burials had been paid homage with grandiloquent funerary elegies, had come to plead for more respect in cemeteries, that these places of worship were being vandalized and turned into fashion runways during funerals. That, they threatened, the Luandans should be careful, very careful, one day the dead would leave their eternal resting places to come back and reclaim their rights. Vade retro, Satana!

The Prophet arrived very tired after attending to so many thousands of people. Since he complained of back pain, he was massaged with great zeal so that when he arrived in Luanda he would be in good shape, after which he drank a whiskey on ice. The Prophet was conversing with the second-in-command in the church hierarchy, to whom from time to time he gave messages to read, received from eminent personalities from various parts of the globe. Apparently the Prophet was not at all impressed with having so quickly turned into a great celebrity. Wasn't his uncle the one whose behavior had changed? He vainly went around as though he were the prophet. Ih! Can't the force of the water drag back the swimmer?

His security brigade now counted thirty corpulent and well-trained men. The decision had been made by his uncle, who kept his eye on the dozens of suitcases and bags where the Prophet kept the millions of kwanzas he had earned up to now. The uncle didn't like the look of half a dozen of the Prophet's bodyguards. They seemed like drug addicts and they had already told him that some of the bodyguards held secret meetings early in the morning with the three pastors. He recommended that the oldest of his nephew's security guards take care, since it appeared to him that there were infiltrators close to the Prophet. So the security officers understood that they should control every step of the three pastors, at the same time that they kept a wary eye on each other, each one mistrustful that his colleague could constitute a threat to the physical safety of the boss they had the obligation to protect. Deep inside each one wanted to know what it was that the Prophet would do with so much money.

The train had scarcely whistled, only a kilometer away from Luanda, when the thousands of people who were outside the Bungo Station began to get agitated; they elbowed each other with shouts of delirium and desperation. There were people who were dragged down by the pushing, lost children who called for their mothers, elderly who, fainting, were smothered, the small-of-stature who asked for mercy, pregnant women contorted with pain, while religious hymns echoed from all sides and heavy artillery fire thundered through the heavenly Luandan air. Hosana! Hosana! Hosana! The eyes of those thousands of people turned, meanwhile, to the heavens in the expectation of seeing white doves free as though they knew what had happened in the lands where the Prophet passed through. However, nothing in particular took place. Hué! Meanwhile, from the skies the persistent light rain continued to fall.

Manecas was so anxious and excited that he could scarcely pay attention to the many questions his son asked about all the crowds of people. In his head at that moment he had a whirlwind of thoughts. He reflected, pensive, over that long fifteen-year trip during which he had lost a good part of his youth. What did fate have in store for him in Luanda? Will I be able to find a job after so many opportunities irrevocably lost? He thought about who could get him in with influential people who could arrange a job for him. In Luanda he didn't know anyone. For him the Luandan capital was only the unknown airs that he still had to explore. The only sure thing was that the moment that he had awaited for so long was finally arriving: to see the sea! He already smelled the salt air, the sea was convulsing inside of him!

Inside Bungo Station the confusion was increasing, it could easily turn into tragedy, since there were many people crossing the railroad while the locomotive was still moving. The Prophet's band, try as it might, didn't manage to jump out of the car to position themselves in the station and perform a musical welcome. The remaining passengers couldn't move either, since there were so many people on both sides pressed up against the cars, hoping to be the first to greet the Prophet. Meanwhile, the principal authorities of Luanda were all there in the station, surrounded by plenty of security, anxious to receive such an illustrious personage. While no one spoke of the matter, almost all of them thought about how to discretely consult the Prophet, without anyone else noticing. The thing was that it looked bad, as representatives of the State, to

publicly consult the so-called Prophet. And anyway, it had been made clear in the various news dispatches sent out that the State had nothing to do with the affair. The state was secular, and as such, each citizen could freely decide in accordance with his or her conscious. The comrades of the Party and the faithful of the Catholic Church, not by means of formal communication but indirectly, made it known what they thought about the affair. Surprisingly, they partook of the same communion: the Prophet was nothing more than a charlatan!

Meanwhile, the personnel in the Luanda airport's control tower were very excited. A Falcon 50, on which an important individual was travelling, was about to land! No one knew anything, thus the excitement. After a few urgent phone calls they managed to find someone to welcome such an important, though inopportune guest. It was the weekend, and all the directors had their schedules planned out, from a well-deserved rest in Mussulo to partying in Panguila. With the protocols of formality completed, the director respectfully asked the esteemed guest about the motive of this surprising visit, at which he, approaching the director, spoke quietly: "I needed an urgent consultation with the Prophet Simon Ntangu António! I know that he just arrived at this moment in Luanda. In fact, just a little while ago I was chatting with him online. I'll pay whatever's necessary, but I can't leave until he sees me! And in addition, my dear friend, I won't ever forget you. Understand?" The director took his handkerchief out of his pocket and wiped his forehead, suddenly perspiring, and thought to himself, "Now I'm screwed! If I had known that phone call was to come here and greet this guy, I would have told them to say that I wasn't there." Meanwhile, the director did his utmost to contact the head of the Church of the Prophet, which he only managed to do after almost two hours. It was decided that for reasons of security, the distinguished guest would remain at the airport; since they were dealing with such an important person, the Prophet had sent the message that he himself would come over to the meeting, but only at nightfall, after the welcoming ceremonies that the people of Luanda, representing all the heroic and generous people of Angola, had prepared for him. The important person was satisfied with the answer, and meanwhile, took advantage of the opportunity to take a nap there in the VIP room, at which point he removed his shoes, loosened his tie and lay down on a large sofa, without worrying himself about the presence of the Angolan director. After

a few minutes, the director took a long look at two men who formed part of the delegation of the inconvenient guest, and who were seated on a sofa in front, having attracting his attention with their strange appearance: they wore the same pants and shirts, multiple necklaces around their necks and their heads were adorned with colored bird feathers. The director saw that the two men were whispering to each other in, to him, a completely unknown language. Then they got up, went over to one of the corners of the room where the carry-on baggage of the guest and his companions was, and stayed crouched there for several long minutes. Afterward, the director became aware that the men had begun reciting a prayer while they circled around the room, sprinkling a liquid with the help of pieces of grass they had brought. Meanwhile, the important person, stretched out on the large sofa, snored loudly as though he were in his own house, and from time to time relieved himself of his flatulent gasses by rearward means. Just look at this guy!

At the Bungo Station, which was still decorated with garlands, streamers, balloons and signs with the face of the Prophet, great uncertainty spread, since more than half an hour after the arrival of the train, the Prophet had yet to get out of the car. Under the pressure of many shouts of protest, the second-in-command in the hierarchy of the Church of the Prophet got off the car and, with slow steps, went over to someone who among the others present there on the platform appeared to be the most distinguished. After a brief exchange of words in low voices, the second-in-command to the Prophet, instead of returning to the car, said that he was coming out soon and disappeared into the middle of the crowd. Ih?! Meanwhile, the Bomfim cobra, with a small red leash around its tail, leaped out of the carriage, and fell in front of the people who waited for the Prophet! Haka! They fled in complete disorder for the interior of the Station, but afterwards returned. Someone had assured them that the presence of the serpent, which, meanwhile had disappeared among the crowd, was nothing more than a sign of the many extraordinary powers of the Prophet! Sukuama! In addition, wasn't the Bomfim cobra the adviser of His Eminence the comrade Prophet Simon Ntangu António?! Eé! Eé! Eé!

But another hour went by and the Prophet was still in the carriage. Ih! The reason for the Prophet's strange and irritating delay began to circulate from mouth to mouth: someone had stolen his cane from him, and thus he was without any of his powers!!!

The crowd, irritated and wound up, began to launch insults at the Prophet, and throw stones at the train still housing many passengers. Death to the Prophet! Death to the Prophet! Most of the Prophet's security had already disappeared, and the few who stayed loyal to their posts were wounded and bleeding. The anguished cries of the Prophet's wife, although stabbing and strident, couldn't be heard by anyone in the middle of such a racket, not even Nfumu-Nzambi², up in the soaring celestial airs, paid attention to her. Death to the Prophet! Death to the Prophet! The members of the band that, in the meantime, had managed to get out of the car, began to abandon their instruments and flee, pursued by the crowds. A group of young people rushed into one of the third-class cars asking, "Where are the girls?" Since no one had immediately responded to them, they began to beat the passengers until an old woman asked, "But who then are the girls that these boys are looking for?" And then came the awaited response: "The girls with the dark glasses! If we catch them, we're going to Kamasutra them!" And the young people left like they had entered, running, since the divas had already escaped. Meanwhile, the three pastors had already fled and likely by that moment were scaling the slopes of Miramar. Hela! They had abandoned their respective families and their flock, but not the suitcases and bags in which they guarded the money acquired on that journey of good and fruitful pastoring. Death to the Prophet! Death to the Prophet! Death to the Prophet! The individuals who had gone to catch the Prophet disappeared one by one. Outside, when the crowd found out what had happened to the Prophet, many people began to depart, while others let loose the cries: "We want the Prophet alive or dead! You don't do this to people! Death to the Prophet! Death to the Prophet!" A police squad saved Simon Ntangu António from the hands of that crowd that wanted to lynch him.

Meanwhile, at Marginal, where the Prophet would have to pass after being apotheotically received at the Bungo Station, and where the majority of the crowd that had come to wait for him was concentrated, the news was that a boat almost still in gentle waters had appeared, advancing very slowly. There were many loudspeakers

which dispersed different and varied rhythms throughout that gigantic concentration. Such that there were still lots of people dancing as they went, everyone with their partners or moving by themselves, rhythm that incited them in their very blood, who could keep from dancing? The only one who wasn't dancing was him: Dêjó! Though at great cost, he succeeded in escaping from the Bungo Station. He came out in tatters; they had torn his shirt, stolen his sunglasses, his watch and his gold chains. On top of these disgraces, hadn't they stolen from him all his CDs, enhanced with the new music that the Prophet had miraculously obtained for him? He had only thought to himself, when I get to Luanda, ah! there's going to be a musical explosion! I'm going to blow up the capital! Even the Kalús³ are going to think how is it that a guy from the interior could have such great music that no one's ever heard? And then I'm going to laugh bué⁴! Meanwhile, he left disheartened, extremely sad, thinking about how much he would have earned here with his precious CD collection. Dêjó felt sorry for himself. He didn't even look like the same cheerful man. We'll have to do it like before, right Dêjózinho?

Along the whole wide sidewalk there were many women grilling fish and meat, selling it on the spot, families seated around picnic tables, eating and drinking, and people running, exercising, and walking their well-cared-for dogs. A family was preparing to roast a kid beneath the curious looks of the children. Another was skinning a suckling pig. Meanwhile, a crazy man wandered among the crowds, naked, generously exhibiting his prick, which, in addition to being soft and inoffensive, irritated the women and girls. A group of animated young men rapped to the syncopated rhythm of clapping. Two men walked along exchanging punches because one of them had attempted to feel up the other one's wife. There were people chasing a thief who had just snatched a woman's pair of gold earrings. Meanwhile, with time the news was passed along through whispers, which was the only way to speak to each other in the midst of so much noise. Thus, at the start of Marginal, some loudspeakers had left off broadcasting music in order to disparage the Prophet, insult his mother, his grandparents, and the whole family of that huge imposter. Death to the Prophet! Death to the Prophet! When the family of the deceased found out about what had happened to the Prophet, their cries of lament increased; at the same time, to their side, a troupe of performers from Rocha Pinto drummed away frenetically without the least respect for the dead man departing

in his casket! Hela! The family then discovered: the white bird that was in the cage had begun to beat its wings, and already in the dizzy air, dressed itself in black. Hué! And then they cried for the definitive death of the deceased! Meanwhile, from around the BNA⁵ to Restinga, everything was the same: great elation! The carnival group Os Trapalhões da Ilha drumming loudly, with thousands of followers moving together, carrying Our Lady of Good Waters on a platform in front, Our Lady of the Cape, Saint António of Lisbon, and Saint Teresa of the Baby Jesus, they brought them, they had even gone to look for Our Lady of Muxima, honestly? I'm telling you, man! the queen of the group preceded them, and then, on a sixth platform, came the Prophet—his image rudely sculpted in wood—flags, every one from across the land, mixed with others, even one with the five shields of the Portuguese arms, faded, a section of fishermen dancing, two sections of girls dressed like fishmongers held up signs with the face of the Prophet, a dozen intellectuals, lost, tripping over the refrain. At a certain point, next to the Fort, euphoric people were heard shouting, “circle, circle, circle!” And then they formed a giant circle to the rhythm of a dizzying semba⁶. The young and the old all mixed together in a dancing circle: “go on! let's go! that's it! get moving! There's a time to play! The time is now! made-up baby girl! Let the samba swirl! It's the end of the millennium! Long live Kota⁷ Ntangu António! Meanwhile, a couple advanced to the center of the circle swaying up and down to the beat of the music, then, when the couple got ready to retake their place in the circle, another was already advancing to the center, cheered on by the reveling crowd. But that spinning dance was a short-lived sun. Half an hour later all of Marginal was in an infernal uproar. Death to the Prophet! Death to the Prophet! If there were a few people who left, the majority of that throng still wanted to go over to the Bungo Station in order to execute the Prophet, he for whom they had so anxiously awaited.

When someone went to the airport to inform the director of what had happened to the Prophet, he had a fit of asthmatic coughing, before giving the bad news to the guest, who, meanwhile, was still sleeping on the large sofa. Caught up to speed, the important person began to badmouth the country, which provoked an inopportune reaction on the part of our director. After some time, the tempers calmed and the inconvenient visitor said that he would leave, but he would like them to provide for him a good quantity of

smoked *bagre*⁸ and good Angolan lobster, which he very much enjoyed. And then the guest confided, secretly, that he would also like to take with him some little sparkling stones. In a short time, the director managed to satisfy the wishes of the embarrassing and inconvenient guest. But as for the little stones he said he would send them at the next opportunity, that at that moment it was impossible to arrange for them, that there was a scarcity, there was a lot of demand, there were many good, virtuous and honest people looking on his behalf.

At the Palanca, where he was absolute lord and master, people frolicked with feverish activity from the early hours of that memorable day. Streets decorated, the tree trunks painted with whitewash, the Prophet's signs in every nook and corner, women dressed with cloths with the image of Father Simon. In the square where the principal church of the Prophet was situated, those who spoke loudest were the frolickers. There were many excited people, dance troupes and choirs, stands with food and drink, the sale of various articles that represented the Prophet. In the Palanca neighborhood, the news only arrived close to midnight after many hours of anxiety and excitement. And thus the members of the mob returned to their houses dragging their feet with dampened spirits.

Since it was already nighttime, the next day, under a light rain, Manecas, his wife and son, accompanied by Ti Lucas and his guide, went to wet their feet in the seawater. And thus Manecas returned to maternal waters.

¹ Public transit vans

² "God" in Kikongo.

³ Local word denoting residents of Luanda.

⁴ "A lot," a word of unconfirmed origin, used frequently in Angolan Portuguese

⁵ Banco Nacional de Angola =(National Bank of Angola.)

⁶ Traditional Angolan genre of music that forms the basis for many other contemporary styles.

⁷ Title of respect in Angola.

⁸ A common freshwater fish.