

“Where love sets the table, the food tastes better.”

— FRENCH PROVERB

Without a bright moon or city lights, even the tiniest of stars shone brilliantly against the midnight blue backdrop. The boys stared in awe. We sat on a small hill, counting and pointing.

“We don’t see these stars in Port-au-Prince,” said Nicolas.

“There’s the Big Dipper,” I said, helping them locate it.

“What’s that whole section of stars?”

“The Milky Way.”

“It looks like milk,” said Adrien. He stretched his hand and traced the lavish road laced with millions of lights.

“There are stars from one edge of the sky clear to the other side,” said Pierre. “I’ve never seen so many.” We sat in silence, some lying down on the hillside.

“I wanted to be a teacher,” said Lucas.

“I wanted to be a teacher, too. You should be a singer,” chimed Adrien. “Lucas can sing.”

Lucas continued. “I lived in an orphanage because I wanted to learn to read. Then the *coup* happened. The French lady got scared and left, and the orphanage closed.”

Cocooned in our reflections of dreams lost, we sat silently, lost in the universe, lost in ourselves, but together.

Pulling a long weed, I chewed on it, remembering my “what-might-have-been’s and what-if’s.”

What happened?

I made other choices or met other needs, I suppose. I failed to honor my heart’s desires. For these boys, external circumstances defined their possibilities. Yet, we each felt the residues of longing scattered in the corners of our hearts.



On the hillside