

A FATHER'S JOURNEY BEGINS

When Dinga's beloved wife of only a year
Died giving birth,
Dinga put away his sorrow
And embraced his newborn son.
"I will raise you myself,"
He declared.

The elder women of his village
Argued against it, saying,
"He will grow up wild
Without the gentle hand of a mother
To guide him.
You must abide by custom:
Take another wife,
Or give the baby to a woman who is childless."

But Dinga could not be persuaded.

"How will you feed the baby?"
The women argued.
"You have no milk to give."

Still, Dinga would not change his mind.
"The tortoise does not have milk to give
But it knows how to take care of its young,"
He replied.
Then, shamelessly,
He tied the baby on his back
Like a woman
And headed for his forge.

