

## Grace Ocasio

---

### Lost Boys of Sudan

After I read about you in *Life*,<sup>1</sup>  
 I pictured your frown,  
 your shoulders hunched  
 as you sat, squatted,  
 chewed for survival.

No equation could balance  
 your fate.

Back then,  
 you depleted  
 your strength,  
 rested hands  
 against your spent faces.

Now,  
 what lingers?

Some teetering memories  
 of a lion's breath?

---

<sup>1</sup> In a *Life* magazine article, issue date June 1, 1988, author Katherine Seligman chronicled the harrowing experiences of a group of boys called the “Lost Boys.” In an effort to find relief from the deplorable conditions they faced, the lost boys often sniffed glue, their way of getting “high.” The term “shamassa” means “the children who run under the sun.” Writer Edward Barnes detailed further the boys’ plight in a *Life* article that appeared in the magazine’s June 1992 issue. Years later, *The Charlotte Observer* published an article (December 22, 2001) in which the journalist, Diane Suchetka, noted how a small number of the lost boys had migrated to America, settling down in certain cities of the Southeast.