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I submitted this over a year ago and someone there liked
it well enough to comment. I've been working on it ever
since.

RUWENZORI!
Glenna Holloway

Some still say "Dark Continent"—unenlightened strangers
Who read one page—strangers who land and leave and
Never need to shield their eyes.
I have seen the dripping corridors of gnarled green weaving,
Forever dayless, faces and feet in shades of night,
Pits and cages of custom, gray bags of storm low over lion
And python. And I have seen black magic and the ancient
Cult of the Leopard Men— places where ignorance is pure
And evil is still innocent.
Down in the grass you know nothing of light,
Not even in ~~the~~ savage sudden daybreak on the veldt.
To know it, to believe it, you must climb.
Out of compost and liana. Into temple veiling. Above you—
They are there— The Mountains of the Moon!
Continental beacons headdressed in Ptolemaic pylons and pyramids,
Great glistening giants of ice and silica and glossy lakes.
Ruwenzori—The Mountains 'of the Moon!
Polar-cold unsculpted obelisks that fell from a lunar range,
Equator-hot uncut crystal domes that heaved up
Whole from Hades, defying Pluto's spewing funnels.
Frosted deserts and frozen dunes,
Altars of alabaster, secured, sacred, beyond
Marble moats arc-lit with scimitars of sun.
Wet-shiny skin of the guides reflects the unblinding blow.
None can remember dark.