

# Swahili chronicles Mark Walker



## Swahili Chronicles

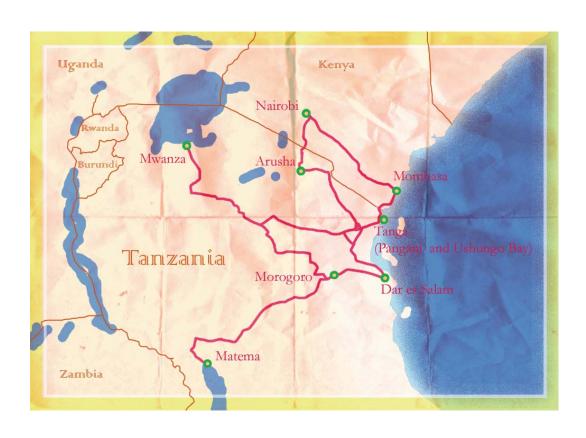
Mark Walker

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I feel very at home when I am travelling through East Africa, nothing seems too much of a problem even though I am a Caucasian.





### Swahili Chronicles — a journey to the heart of Tanzania

I have been travelling to Tanzania frequently over a period of fifteen years. Usually for no more than one month at a time.

This last journey was different — I chose to disappear and do my own thing for three months. You may well ask, "Why?"

So many people have questions about Africa, yet have never been there.

"Isn't it dangerous?"

"Won't you get ill?"

"Isn't everyone out to cheat you?"

"They're all starving, aren't they?"

Or they give you platitudes.

"Oh, you're so brave!"

"I couldn't do what you do!"

You shall find my response in this collection of short stories, poetry and photographs.

#### Going Home

The red faced, white skinned man Is going home Not to cold, grey skies Or to granite clad tenement buildings

The homecoming can be felt Anticipated in every bone and sinew Sweet and pungent music to my ears

Freedom comes with a hard price tag A searching, longing To piece life's jigsaw together

Now a new colour is apparent and alive

Vibrant at times, muted at others

Seen in God's nature His people and landscapes That are new yet familiar

Gone are the dark clouds Of fear and foreboding Changed to the sunrise and distant horizons

Reachable now as life is content

Years are advancing Yet youthfulness lingers As long as I've passion To live to the full Follow no leader React to your conscience Stirred up emotions To contemplate later

Love every moment As if it's the last one Eager to harness All that's ahead

So I rest in the knowledge That money is useless Seldom buys freedom Quickly shall tarnish

The red faced, white skinned man Is going home Not to cold, grey skies Or to granite clad tenement buildings

The red faced, white skinned, black man Has found life in its fullness In Tanzania



#### Village reflections

The journey starts in Pangani, a small village on the Swahili coast of Tanzania.

These are my thoughts.

It is early evening, just before sundown, and the cool sea air envelopes the street, save for a few homes lucky enough to have generators or main power.

Yet, as I walk back from the beach and I listen to the waves crashing on the shore, my friends and I also hear the delightful laughter and childhood happiness of kids playing in the street.

"Mzungu, mzungu," they cry... or perhaps, "Shikamoo," the Swahili greeting of respect to the elders.

One small boy plays in the gutter right next to the red earth road and the shop selling essentials of the day.

All this is done in the shadow of a small solar lamp outside an old ramshackle house.

But I ask you, is this POVERTY?

I don't think so.

I think it is part of a rich childhood.