

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

July 2018: Addis Ababa is home to the African Union, over 120 diplomatic missions and our 3.2 million year old ancestor, Lucy. Looking around it seems the entire city is under construction. From my hotel window, I can see over 20 buildings of 10 plus stories under construction. Many of the tens of hundreds of constructions sites sport signage indicating financing and/or construction by Chinese firms.

While some countries are building walls, Ethiopia & Eritrea are tearing them down. On July 5th, with under 100 days as Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed announced full acceptance of the 2000 Algiers Agreement and the 2002 UN Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission ruling. Four days later Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki joined Abiy in signing a joint declaration ending the 1998 war. Both men traveled to each other's Capital, withdrew military forces from the border areas, re-opened diplomatic missions and on July 18 after twenty years Ethiopia airline made its first commercial flight to Eritrea. Celebrations were everywhere in Addis Ababa. Next week Dr. Abiy travels to the United States.

Two personal stories:

While walking through the city a few days ago a light rain started to fall. The rain became harder and in spite of my umbrella I was getting very wet. As I passed a small police box across from the Presidential Palace the sergeant inside invited me to join him until the rain stopped. I did. The rain fell even faster and eventually it started to hail. I stayed in the box for 45 minutes and we talked about his wife, son and career. Eventually the rain slowed and we said goodbye. I ran down the Hill where I was able to catch a taxi and return to my hotel.

A few days later I was touring the Ethiopian National Museum when I heard a child asking his father about a painting hanging on the wall. The question was very intelligent for someone so young. His father answered in a most scholarly manner. I said to the man "your accent sounds like you're from Los Angeles." He replied no I'm from San Francisco but I was born in Los Angeles. He introduced me to his children, his wife, a native of Ethiopia, and some local relatives. He then confided this was his first trip to Africa and he was a bit afraid to walk outside. I assured him that I had been walking the streets for a number of days without any problems. Then I told him the story about the policeman and noted such kindness would never happen in Los Angeles. He said, yes as a black man I might even get shot. I agreed and we said goodbye.



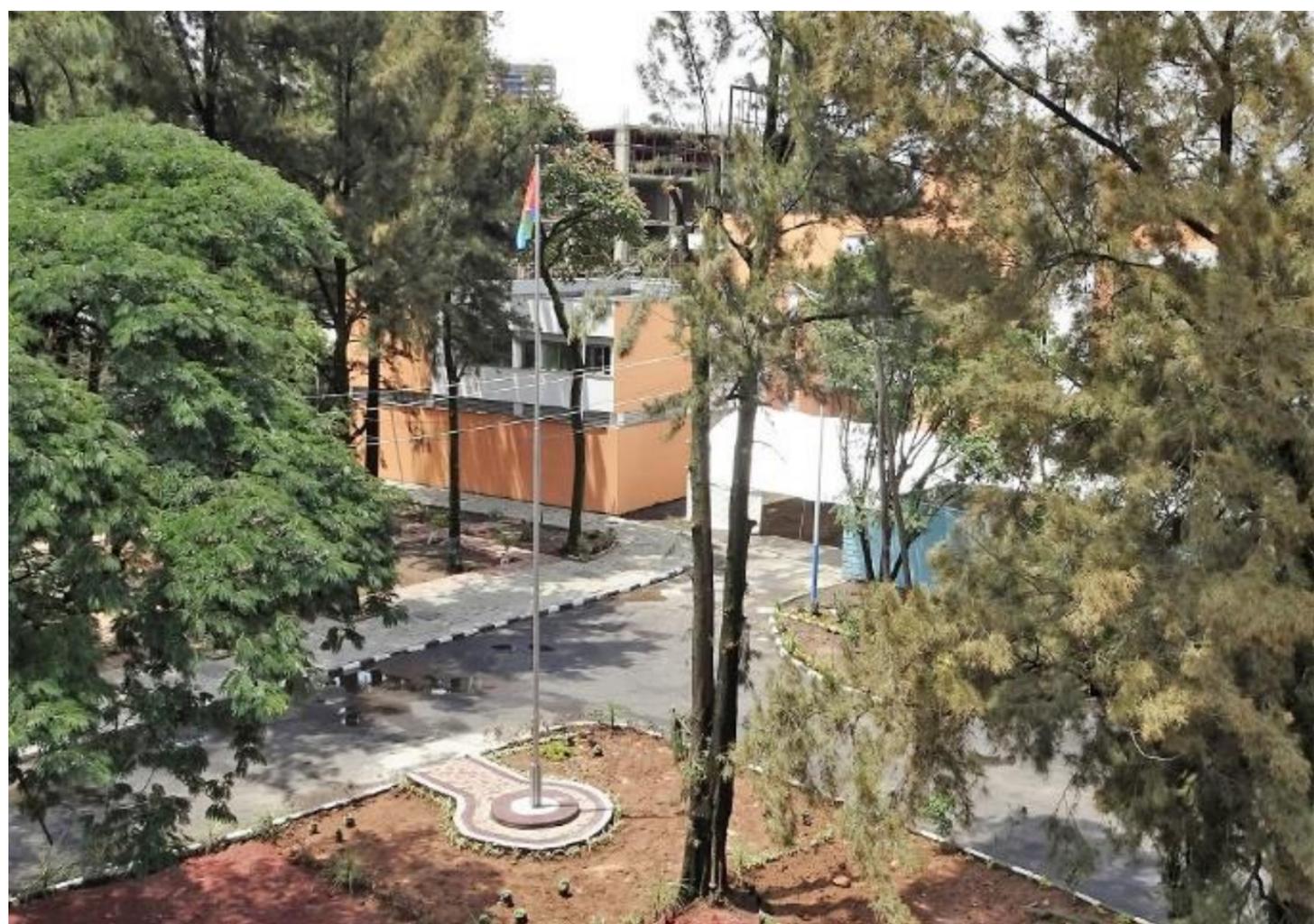
Haile Selassie & Students



Celebrating Peace



Make Ethiopia Great



Eritrea Embassy



Patriarch Residence



Stop Abuse



City Traffic



Restaurant



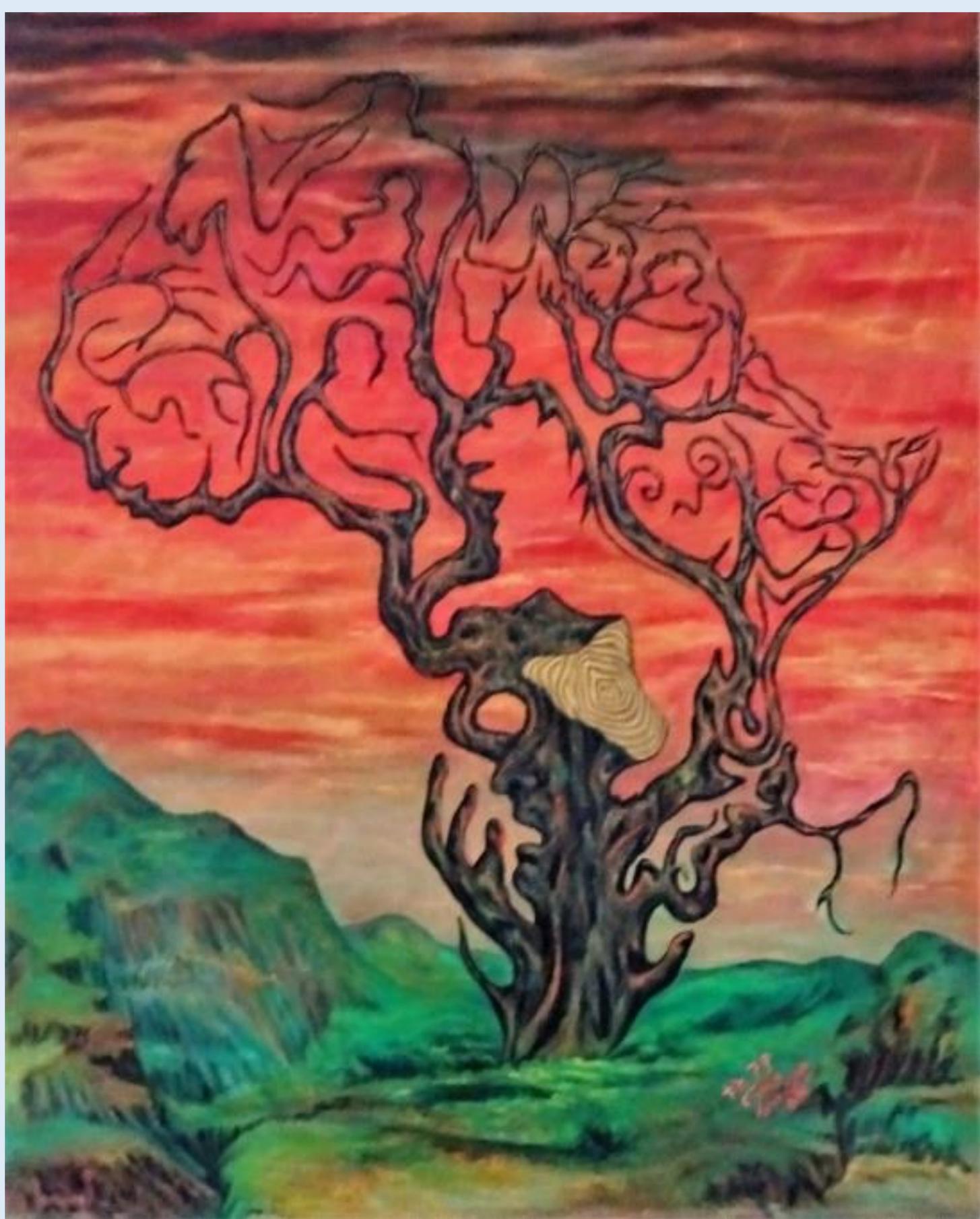
In the Market



Tailor



My Savior



National Museum Painting