



LOCUSTS ASCENDING: HOW A RED LOCUST OUTBREAK WAS CRUSHED

By Barbara Gunn

It was October, the end of the dry season, when we heard that the lake was dry. That was in 1953, and the lake was Lake Rukwa, whose surrounding flood plains are one of the main breeding places of the Red Locust. In the past plagues have started there, have gone on for years, and spread to places as far distant as Natal and Angola. The lake lies in the inmost recesses of the long rift which is the Rukwa Valley, one of the remotest parts of Tanganyika. Actually it was the greater part of the north lake, some five hundred square miles of it, that had dried up. It was possible, we heard, to drive right across. It seemed worth a journey.

My husband and I knew nothing then of the legend about the lake, a legend that had started with Emil Kaiser, a German explorer, the first European to set foot there. In 1882 he had got as far as the village of Ukia, had been taken ill, and had died there. His African servant buried him under a baobab tree, hacked marks on the trunk, piled stones on the grave, and set off with his master's belongings, which he delivered safely at Ujiji. It is from Kaiser's records that we know that Ukia was then a fishing village near the shore of the lake. Indeed, he wrote that at that time the level was unusually high, for tree trunks were sticking up out of the water. But not long after his death, it began to go down, so that by the end of the decade Ukia was high and dry on the plains. The people believed it was due to Kaiser's spirit drinking deep of the waters, and the belief became a legend, which persists to this day.

Early in the dry season we had been to Ukia, where goats and sheep wandered in and out of mud huts, or hugged the walls to get what shade they could under the miserable thatch. In later years I was to wonder whether the place had altered much since Kaiser's day, and I was to fancy that he had seen the same kind of Old Testament figures and naked piccanins, and women with the same giggling ways, though not, perhaps, with furniture tacks in their noses, and flashing gold hearts in their hair. But in that first visit it was just the one mapped village from which we could start a scouting run. We knew nothing of Kaiser's grave—which the villagers would have willingly shown us—nor of the legend that had grown up about him. How it started and how it had been fostered by the long-period fluctuations of the lake, and how they were tied up with the locusts, we were to learn later.¹ But in October, '53, to be able to drive over the lake bed just seemed sufficiently unusual, as I have said, to make the long journey from Headquarters well worthwhile.

The narrow Rukwa Valley, running for a couple of hundred miles between two lovely escarpments, with its fringe of trees and villages, its desolate flood plains and alkaline lakes, was always, to me, a little world in itself. The dry lake bed revealed itself as yet another. The sky, when we left the tree line, was a

¹*A history of Lake Rukwa and the Red Locust*, which also contains a map of the areas. *Tanganyika Notes and Records* No. 42, pp. 1-18 (1956).

pearly blue, but as we crossed the plains it got dull and sombre looking, and by the time the grass petered out, clouds of the colour of steel had collected. The sun was a brazen disc. It was very hot. The lake bed was smooth and firm but encrusted with soda. The nauseating smell was everywhere. And always only a stone's throw away, as if lashed by a strong wind, waves broke angrily on the shore; and always as we advanced they receded. There were other mirages, too, of recumbent animals and of islands lapped by clear water. But actually there was nothing except the flat, grey, granulated surface. We were so choked by the swirling dust and by the caustic smell of soda that in spite of the great heat we had to cover our faces. As fast as one dust-devil disappeared another took its place. For what seemed like hours no landmark whatsoever was visible. We might have been on a vast desert. For miles there was no sign of bird or beast. Then we would see, perhaps, a pair of antelope horns crumbling on the dust, half-buried hippo tusks, or a bleached jaw-bone, and further on there were the skeletons of many small fish. Several times we nearly got stuck in the underlying mud. As the wheels threw it up, it bumped on the mud-guards like bursts from a machine gun. Then we had to swing gently away to the south before turning across the lake again. Presently we were racing over what looked like very dry ground. Should we make it? Above the haze there appeared a faint blue crayon mark against the sky. Slowly it grew more pronounced and more blue. It was the conical top of a hill on the eastern escarpment. Then it took its place in the tumbled ridges and hills that seemed to be veiled in pale blue muslin. Two vultures appeared. We began to see the vague forms of trees. For the last time the turbulent waves receded, changed into golden ones softly lapping against the escarpment, and then disappeared, giving place to a wide stretch of high golden grass, and the trees after all were a long way off. Another stretch of grass—short and bleached like the wig of an old doll—then a stretch of ground so rough that the speedometer registered nought miles per hour, and at last we were among the yellow acacias on the eastern side. We had driven about thirty miles, over what was normally the widest part of Lake Rukwa.

The dry Lake was not then the warning it would have been a year later. By then, after going into the records of almost a century, it was possible to work out a correlation between large increases in locust numbers and low water levels. In the meantime, we knew from our scouting that the locusts were few, and it seemed to me that they must go on as they were for years. I had seen how the plains that were their home were spreading into the lake, but there seemed no reason to fear that the rains would not be average ones, and that the lake would not fill up, and take to itself again at least some of the new grassland. But things did not work out that way. The rains, though they started, as they usually did, in November, finished early, and were extraordinarily slight. At the beginning of March, when they were over, we drove out on the lake bed again. The absence of smoke haze made the sky more beautiful and the mirages more wonderful than any I had seen, but there was no sign at all of the lake filling up.

Even the Bonde ya Kavuu was dry. This, as a name on the map, had intrigued me immensely, but on closer acquaintance it revealed itself as a shallow basin into which drained the Kavuu River, which like all the Valley rivers flowed intermittently. For years it had been an impenetrable swamp, and I was horrified, when scouting at the end of the rains, to find that we were going through it. Sokwa grass was so dense and so entwined with some climbing plant as to form

a solid wall about us. Time and again we were jammed between the huge clumpy roots, or in trouble with an old fish-trap or a rotting canoe. Presently the sokwa began to give place to bands of ambatch fifteen feet high, dry and woody, more and more of them. The jeep worked like a bulldozer and sounded like a tank. As we crashed into the ambatch we could see nothing but a fighting mass of dry brown branches before the windscreen, and hear nothing but the labouring of the engine, and the snapping of the woody stems as they reluctantly gave way before us. Sometimes it was the jeep, after a third or fourth attempt, that gave way, and then we zig-zagged as after each divergence, we attempted to get back on our proper compass bearing. The heat was suffocating and biting hippo flies beset us. From time to time we had to stop, and from a small and insecure foothold on the slippery stems, clear the litter of broken branches off the bonnet, sweeping off at the same time the fantastic crowd of small creatures collected there. The climax came—I think it must have been at the river bed—when a network of gullies and elephant holes coincided with a veritable forest of ambatch, and we were in a bad way indeed. After that we caught an occasional glimpse of the escarpment, but for what seemed a long time it came no nearer. Then quite suddenly we were out of the Bonde, in short grass, with the trees not far away, and the escarpment was close behind them. The thatched roofs of the little camp at Soda were in sight. Pigeons were calling and all at once the world was delightful again. In the whole of the Bonde we had not seen a locust. But a month later they were there in their thousands.

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They were everywhere. One could never have imagined that just one successful breeding season could so transform the plains. There was no doubt about it, for in the previous dry season, efforts had been made to discover the rate of increase, and the work of the scouts had been checked by doing sample counts of locusts the whole length of the Valley. For weeks we had bumped over the plains in a jeep, recording numbers and details of our going for plotting on a map. The statistics were worked out, and our impression that there were but few parent locusts was established as a fact. That was in '53; by April '54 it was equally well established that the rate of increase, particularly in North Rukwa, had been very high indeed, much higher than had been thought possible. We were scouting there in March.

The prospect, as we set out, was not exhilarating. The year before I had enjoyed, not the scouting, but incidental things—seeing herds of game, thousands of flamingos feeding on the lake shore, the little church at Ukia where everything, even the altar and the benches were made of mud, a place so dark that at first I had taken it for a place where cattle were kept. And at all times the high western escarpment afforded an everchanging background of wonderful colour. In March the Valley was at its best. I had forgotten how lovely it could be just after the rains. All was luxuriantly green and glossy, and with no smoke haze, the air was so clear that each leaf was well defined, and the foliage that of a Pre-Raphaelite canvas. "Have never seen the Valley so lovely," I wrote in my diary. But that was before we started scouting.

It was a tedious business, and as we left camp that first morning my heart sank at the thought of the hippo ditches and the elephant wallows to come, and of the endless tunnelling through the dense and stifling grass that would envelope

us. By the time we reached the plains the sun was just up, the tips of the eastern escarpment just visible. Every kind of dove was calling, and as we turned into a track across the Valley a herd of topi and zebra stopped grazing and stared at us. Another four miles and we started scouting.

At once there were hoppers. I exclaimed, thinking for a moment that we had come upon a new species of grass, but the heavy brown and yellow heads were the clustering hoppers, sitting high on the stems, basking in the sun. Head to tail they hung on, looking like little old men, with eyes so far back on their heads as to make them appear to be hanging on backwards. There were a score or so on a stem, transforming it into a pillar of hoppers, hugging the stalk even as it was mown down by the jeep. For miles there were hoppers, and fledglings too flew up all along. We finished the run at the Kavuu River, and then continued eastwards into the plains beyond. Still there were hoppers and very large numbers of adults. The sample scouting that we were doing required only the locusts flying up in front of and between the wheels to be counted, but on the next run, when we turned north over the Kasala plains, there were far too many for that. Estimating the hundreds that flew up between the wheels was the best we could do. So it went on for several miles until, beyond the Tumba River, we were estimating not in hundreds but in thousands.

Then came the last and longest scouting run of the day, and all along the locusts were very dense. The six-and-a-half miles took us nearly three hours, for the ground was very rough, with pot-holes well concealed by sokwa grass and odious belts of ambatch. It ended at an old camp site. We had been scouting for seven hours, and after the strain of watching and counting our eyes felt stretched and might, I thought, be bulging horribly. A group of tall and lovely trees at the old camp gave, to my English mind, welcome promise of shade, for the sultry heat of the day was at its height, making the cool of the early morning seem like a dream. But as I might have known, rank grass—concealing snakes and heaven knew what horrors—flourished under the trees. So we drank coffee hastily—as usual it was too hot to eat anything—and set out for camp, striking north of the track to avoid deep mud. It was then that the locusts reached a climax. Ahead, a whole swarm was in spontaneous flight, drifting, all pink and silver in the afternoon sun, above the grass, for as far as the eye could see.

That was only the beginning; everywhere in North and Central Rukwa, that March, scouting told the same story. Many things had conspired to favour the locusts. The rains, though very slight, had been evenly distributed, so there had been no well-timed drought to dry up the eggs, and no early floods to drown them. Egg-laying had been unusually widespread, extending into the new grasslands on the dry lake bed. As a result the hoppers were scattered, and they did not begin to form into bands big enough to attack until very late in the wet season. By then grass was ten and sometimes twelve feet high, making control unusually difficult. It was calculated that more than half the hoppers were destroyed. Even so, survivors were so numerous that immediately after the arduous hopper campaign, field officers were faced with such numbers of flying locusts that, even before our March scouting was finished, reinforcements of men and machines were brought in from other breeding areas—from the Malagarasi Basin in Central Tanganyika, and from the Mweru Marsh in Northern Rhodesia. Then came a sudden rise in temperature. At once the locusts

began to move independently in one direction. With unusual intensity and speed they collected in certain places, especially near the tree line. Swarms were continually forming and being destroyed as rapidly as possible. But with the North Lake dry, the normal night winds failed, and on them depended the dispersal of the spray from the big machines. There ensued a sort of slogging match in which the smaller machines had to be used, and spraying-swaths, instead of being a hundred yards wide, were reduced to ten or a dozen.

Then reports came in of an emigrant swarm, and then another. We were at the main camp at Muzé, and at once radio signals went out for spraying aircraft from Kenya. Already the levelling of airstrips in North Rukwa had been started, for the Desert Locust Organization in Nairobi had generously agreed to lend what planes they could spare. The locusts, it seemed to me, were as good as done for. It would surely be the easiest thing in the world for planes to fly over the swarms and polish them off.

But it was not quite like that. For one thing it was difficult over such large areas to keep track of moving swarms. Reports became confused, and soon it seemed that there were several swarms on the move, some of them heading for a place called Maji Moto. So there, and beyond, labourers were posted to keep watch. But it was suspected that they mostly went to sleep, for during a dash back from the North, one swarm was found across the road. A field officer was sent after it. The next day our driver saw a much bigger swarm quite close to Maji Moto. The two swarms merged and two more field officers were sent to keep contact and to spray if possible. Petrol, insecticide and machines that could ill be spared from the plains had to be sent after them, and tractors too, for the swarm—by then a large one—was nearing the Msaadya River. There was no bridge in those days, and the river was flowing swiftly across the Valley. Three days later, the swarm, still well ahead of the spraying machines, had crossed the river, and that night it roosted near the escarpment.

We got there the next day, and found the ground-party hopeful about spraying it that night if only it would keep away from the trees—the gear was then being dragged through the river; but the swarm went on up the escarpment towards Kisii. One of the officers followed it on foot into a wilderness of cliffs and gullies, where lion were prowling; a second officer went round by road to Kisii to meet it; the third stayed near the river keeping watch for other swarms coming up the Valley.

We continued on our way to Mpanda, whence the aircraft would have to operate until the airstrips in the Valley were ready. We arrived on the morning of the 10th. The next day the planes flew in. By that time aviation petrol was being trucked down from Tabora; wireless communication was being organized with Headquarters and with the Valley; an old Arab with incredible speed was stitching up white overalls for the people handling the insecticide; and supplies of soap and water as well as of poison were being taken to the airfield. The poison had to be filtered before being pumped into the tanks.

It was disappointing not to see the swarm being sprayed. Actually I didn't see spraying from the air until nearly a year later; but I was on the airstrip at Mpanda the day the Kisii swarm was destroyed. The pilots had made a reconnaissance the day before, and that morning petrol that had just arrived was rushed to the airfield. The first plane left shortly before nine. It went slanting up towards chunky white clouds in a blue sky.

I recall the scene vividly—the second plane looking like a toy on the landing strip, trees dwarfed in the distance, and Africans squatting on the ground; the steady pumping of poison from drum to tank, and the monotonous voice of the wireless operator—“Aro-ta-rete, one two!” “Aro-ta-rete, one two!”. I had no idea what it meant; neither did our wash-boy, but he made a song about it and sang it all day. A jeep came dashing up with the town’s entire stock of scotch, and the pilot set to work with scissors and cloth to repair torn fabric on the fuselage. We began to listen for the beat of the first plane returning. The second was ready to go. As the glare of the sun became intolerable we moved into the shade of a thatched roof. There, between sorties, the pilot made his report—question and answer going on interminably.

The pilots, I thought, tended to look down their noses at our little swarms. They were accustomed to immense high-flying swarms of the Desert Locust, which, after all, was at that time in plague. “We’ll polish that off with one puff”, they had said confidently of the Kisii swarm. But four sorties were made against it, about seven miles from Kisii. The high and rugged escarpment did not make for ideal flying conditions. And what was more, the pilots, for the most part, could not see the locusts, so the problem for them was where to spray. It was expected, since the locusts generally roosted until about mid-day, that the swarm would be dealt with as a settled one, its position indicated by smoke generators or flags. But on the first sortie the pilot suspected movement, and when the second pilot got there he was asked to treat it as a flying swarm. There was, at that time, no ground-to-air wireless to help the pilot, so all sorts of expedients had to be resorted to, like writing on the ground in white insecticide powder, and laying down large arrowheads of white cloth to indicate direction; whilst for the pilots I had made letter bags that they dropped, weighted with stones. From the fifth and sixth sorties the planes returned with the poison tanks full, the ground party having signalled to the pilots not to spray. We wondered what had happened.

Late that night a jeep brought the good news that the swarm had been destroyed; only a few scattered locusts remained. By that time our hotel rondavel—surely the smallest ever—had taken on the character of a headquarters with a constant stream of people coming and going. That evening it was decided to move the planes and all the gear to North Rukwa, whence new shad come that the airstrip at Nziga was ready. In the middle of the conference I was horrified to see a snake gliding over the floor. Someone killed it with the leg of a chair.

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After that the aircraft operated from Nziga, and by the middle of June the position had eased considerably. When they left, ground spraying was resumed, and it went on steadily month after month. Then in August trouble started on the eastern side of the Valley in the Kipangati Sector, where, on the unburnt plains, there were numerous but very scattered locusts. By August the grass was drying rapidly and grass fires—which sometimes bring locusts together very rapidly—were strictly prohibited. On the 25th, however, a vehicle caught fire, the whole plain burnt, and then the whole sector, the fire raging for four days.

By ill chance the radio was at that time out of action, so that news to Headquarters was delayed. And it was bad news, for the fire had had the worst effect on the locusts; they began to come together and to move in a north-westerly direction, the general wind direction for that time of the year. In no time they would be out of the Valley.

Again aircraft had been called for, and on the airstrip the depredations of elephant were being made good as speedily as possible. We had only just returned from a long safari in the south-east¹ when once more we found ourselves crossing the burnt-up Valley. As we approached the Rungwa River, locusts began to fly up, and for the next five miles they were very dense indeed. At intervals along the road, scouts were keeping watch, to report any notable movement. Then when we turned towards the camp at Kipangati the air was suddenly full of locusts streaming towards us from as far as we could see; a pause, and they were there again. And so it went on, as wave after wave swished over us with the sound of swirling silk.

That night, from our tent, I heard the spraying machines leave the camp. "At least there's a good wind for once", I thought, for as it blew through the trees it sounded like a gale at sea. The concentration had roosted and been marked for spraying. But it was the end of August; the nights were warm and the locusts were flighty, and quite against the rules they moved again long after dark on to ground impossible for the machines. Early next morning they were found entrenched in the maze of gullies where the Rungwa River breaks up into a net-work of channels—a veritable strong-hold of steep high banks sloping down to liquid mud—where a few beleaguered hippo squelched about. The locusts by that time were more dense than any we had seen in the Valley. It was imperative to move on. The fire had spread over such a big area that it was likely that this was only the first of many swarms that would move up towards the north-west. It was there, therefore, that a line of defence was needed to catch them as they came.

So that day everyone moved out of Kipangati; we were the last to leave, and we only stayed for the usual radio transmission. Waiting there in the deserted camp, it seemed eerily silent. Another message was sent out about aircraft. Then we left too, the radio truck going with us. The new camp was at Rungwa Zamani, in a deep bay in a tree line. By the time we got there it was a hive of activity. The dry yellow grass, with hard stalks like young bamboo, was trampled under a maze of tents, vehicles, pumps, machines, drums of petrol, and drums of insecticide. Camp beds had been set up under the trees. We hastily installed ourselves at the far end where we slept in a banda—a poor thing from the start—and lived under a palm tree, with our safari boys and their makeshift kitchen nearby.

At noon that day—it was September 2nd—my husband and I went out after the swarm. That morning the concentration, finally eluding the ground machines, had left the river channels, and as a swarm of a hundred acres or so had swept out over the trees, aircraft were then the only hope against it, but only so long as its whereabouts were known.

We caught up with it near the Rungwa River. It was only four miles from camp, but difficult burnt scrub lay between. Already we were plastered with fine black ash, when we found ourselves in an unattractive world of stunted trees, bare except for a few scorched leaves, with underneath the remains of half-burnt tufts, whose stems straggled over wide patches of grey bare earth. The only touch of green came from a low leafy shrub that flourished near the river bed.

¹Blackwoods Magazine, October, 1959: *The Back of Beyond*.

We stopped, and there was a sound as of rain falling lightly. It was the swarm flying over in a wide pink and silver ribbon over the trees, stretching ahead and behind as far as we could see. Gazing up at the shimmering stream, we saw that locusts were continually dropping to the trees, whilst others flew up to rejoin the main band. Yet they detracted nothing from the cohesion of the swarm. We waited for nearly an hour and it was still going over. We realized we must get ahead of it. So we continued westwards, weaving through the bush.

The swarm was travelling slowly. We waited for it under a tamarind. The main band, when it came up, was flying higher, and beneath it subordinate bands and groups milled around confusedly, like enormous drifts and flurries in a snow storm, suddenly settling and completely covering trees and shrubs, only to rustle up again, and divert another band to yet another direction. But always those erratic elements were finally drawn back into the orbit of the swarm. It continued to move steadily westwards. Again we waited for it, that time on a high bank above the deep sandy bed of the Rungwa River. The swarm came straight towards us and passed over. And so it went on, hour after hour.

The locusts were following, more or less, the line of the river, and the ground becoming more and more difficult, we attempted at one point to drive along the dry river bed, where locusts streamed along between and above the banks, smothering the vegetation on either side. But the sand was too deep, so we took to the bush again. It was very hot. Runnels of sweat streaked and smudged the fine ash that covered us, as we crashed through larger and larger patches of dense green shrub with its core of old tough wood—the growth of previous years. At every turn we expected to meet elephant. Then a net-work of deep gullies severing the high bank forced us to swerve away from the river. Suddenly the bush gave way to high thorn trees that hid the sky and the locusts. We *had* to get back to them, and urgently we switch-backed over the gullies towards the river again—the bonnet either upright before us, or out of sight altogether as it plunged into the depths. Back on the main river bank I could have wept! There was not a sign of the swarm. It was as if it had never been. Sombre thorn forest surrounded us; it even stretched as far as we could see beyond the opposite bank. The sun was going down. The swarm, it seemed, was hopelessly lost. And then suddenly I saw it, away on the far side of the river bed, no longer pink and glittering, but dusky against a small oblong of sky between the trees. It had left the river and was going north-west.

Across the river bed, and we were in very wild country indeed. Quite soon it would be dark. "They'll roost anytime now", we thought, and just as we despaired once more of seeing them again, they came straight towards us. The swarm looked bigger than ever as it came up on our left and swept round. The ends joined, and then steadily it flew, round and round, just above the trees. Very gradually did the locusts begin to settle, but again and again they rose—a thousand or so from one small branch—to join the circling swarm. We waited there nearly an hour to see them settle. Suddenly there was a shout—I realized then that we had not seen a soul since we left camp, and no game except a few giraffe. Presently two scouts appeared; they were the first of the party that was to stay with the swarm night and day until it was destroyed. Leaving maps and letters for the officer in charge, we got ready to go. The scouts warned us to keep to the forest as far as we could, and said that if we made for the eastern escarpment we should meet the plains road. Then just as we set out the locusts

moved too, rose in a great whirling mass and travelled ahead of us. With the scouts we followed them slowly. But after a mile or so they finally settled.

Satisfied that watch was being kept over the swarm, we set off to get back to camp, bumping along about two miles an hour. In the open, we went from one elephant wallow to another. In the forest we were turned aside again and again by walls of vegetation. Between whiles we would get back on our compass bearing. The driver and I peered through the darkness for the road—there was no sign of it. Eventually we found ourselves amid rocks and cliffs of the eastern escarpment. I longed to give up and wait till morning. But finally we found the road, so overgrown that we immediately lost it again, went on losing it and finding it until about nine o'clock we reached the camp road.

That was the night of 2nd September. After that, messengers went daily between the camp and the swarm, which was then moving slowly but steadily northwards. Then late on the 5th news came that many of the porters were deserting. A relief party was sent out, but missed by only a mile or so the officer who, by then deserted even by the scouts, and without water, had eventually left the swarm and made for the camp at Iku. Patrols were at once set up as far as Mpanda, fifty miles to the north; but of the swarm there was no news whatsoever. On the 9th the first plane flew in, and for three days the pilot searched. On the third day he reported a swarm just north of Lake Katavi. It was sprayed that day and the next, but John Eyssell identified it as a smaller concentration and not the main swarm after all. Our hopes were dashed. Search by aircraft was then called off, for the planes were urgently needed in the Valley. But later on two field officers spent six weeks scouring the countryside north of Lake Katavi, even penetrating Ruanda Urundi, following up every report, every rumour of locusts. They found Desert Locusts, and swarms of grasshoppers—*Faureia*—but never a sign of our errant swarm.

It was the only one that escaped, but nevertheless it spelt failure, for the object of Red Locust control, unlike that of the Desert Locust, is to keep the locusts encompassed within their breeding areas. To that end, in the following months, aircraft attacked in the north-west of the Valley, and kept on attacking. Before long they were attacking to the south-east too, where scouting revealed that locusts were congregating on the lake-bed grasslands, where the terrain was too bad for ground machines. More temporary airstrips were made, and from them, and from Nziga, swarms were attacked until late in November when the rains set in, making landing strips unsafe.

It was estimated that in North Rukwa alone about five hundred tons of locusts had been killed. "There can't be many left", I thought. But there were. I was dismayed to hear on all sides very gloomy forecasts for 1955. They were certainly borne out, though no swarms escaped. But after that there was only one more year of incipient plague. Gradually the dry era came to an end and the lake filled up. And though every year since there have been locusts to kill—always now by aircraft—there has been no real threat of swarms escaping.

Once again the people of Ukia can set their fish traps with ease, and can run their canoes very quickly from the village to the lake. But sooner or later the waters will recede again, and another generation of elders will tell their children about the thirsty spirit of the white man who is buried among them. Then again there will be locusts ascending.