

## ANGELA - 1625

I am Angela. I live in this place called “Virginia,” but I was not born here.

I am from ‘Ndongo... where I lived with my mother and father and two sisters and three brothers. My father, like most of the men, hunted. I was the oldest and helped my mother care for the little ones... we worked in the garden growing yams and millet. **We traded with other villages and the Portuguese...** until the bad men came.

They looked like us... but they were not like us. They were not from our village. They were cruel warriors. I still hear the cries of my brothers and sisters... the fires... and smoke... They took my oldest brother... dragged him away as he tried to save us.

So many dead. The men took all of us they could find alive... pushed us farther than I had ever walked in my life... to the great walls of the Portuguese... walls of heat and hunger and thirst. They gave us to the Portuguese. We stood like cattle... tired...and we wept. There were so many of us—men... women...even small children and others from my village... all afraid. A woman killed her own baby and herself rather than be taken away. Some believed we would all be killed.

We were gathered at a place on the sand—penned, as if cattle. A priest came and made us take Christian names. They put us on a big ship... down into a dark place... so many together, we could not move. Filth and sickness. **The voyage was long. Then came the sound of the white man’s guns and we were taken again... and put within another ship... and so came to this land.**

Here it is not like ‘Ndongo. Here the men work in the fields beside us. We all labor for Master Peirce... growing tobacco to send back across the sea on the great ships... and maize, beans and plants I never knew...

Winter came... and the white rain fell—I had never seen it—they call it snow. But we had food and shelter... and things to keep us warm. Then the soft winds came, and my tears became rain.

I have lived here for many seasons and do not fear so much the English and the Indians anymore. They do not call me a slave... but I am not free. We who came here together... speak our own words and stories to one another so we will not forget.

