

Look at every path closely and deliberately. Try it as many times as you think necessary. Then ask yourself, and yourself alone, one question. This question is one that only a very old man asks. My benefactor told me about it when I was young, and my blood was too vigorous to understand it. Now I do understand it. I will tell you what it is. Does this path have a heart? All paths are the same: they lead nowhere.

They are paths going through the bush, or into the bush. In my own life I could say I have traversed long, long paths, but I am not anywhere. My benefactor's question has meaning now. Does this path have a heart? If it does, the path is good: if it doesn't, it is of no use. Both paths lead nowhere: but one has a heart, the other doesn't. One makes for a joyful journey; as long as you follow it, you are one with it. The other will make you curse your life. One makes you strong; the other weakens you.

—from the face page prefacing the book “Keep the River on your Right”, by Tobias Schneebaum.