since we last saw them, and, always, they’d tell us which parent we looked like and ask if we remembered them. From so far and so long, their voices stay with us.

At parties, white Americans ask me where I’m from and when I tell them, they say, Oh! that’s so cool my family and I went to Africa two years ago to see the... and I wonder, Which country? I am bored of living in reaction to how others look at me, but I’ve been here for two years and I can certainly feign amusement for two more. So, I laugh and tell them that my home country has a smaller population than New York City and our main exports are diamonds and cattle and we’re about the same land size as Texas or France and that our people are fairly homogeneous and tend to be much nicer there than here.

I imagine what my friends might say. Angela might speak of Rwanda’s astounding economic recovery from the 1994 genocide and she might respond with some defensiveness if asked about her president who finessed his way into a third term in power. It will be noticed that she is incredibly funny and resilient and is likely to become the kind of person who ends up running the world in some capacity. Mfundo would probably joke about the differences in social-justice politics between African Americans and black South Africans. Some will walk home from these parties thinking that he is the most charismatic person they’ve ever met and will long remember his intimate knowledge of black power. Tom will announce that he’s the prince of Wakanda and a few people will...