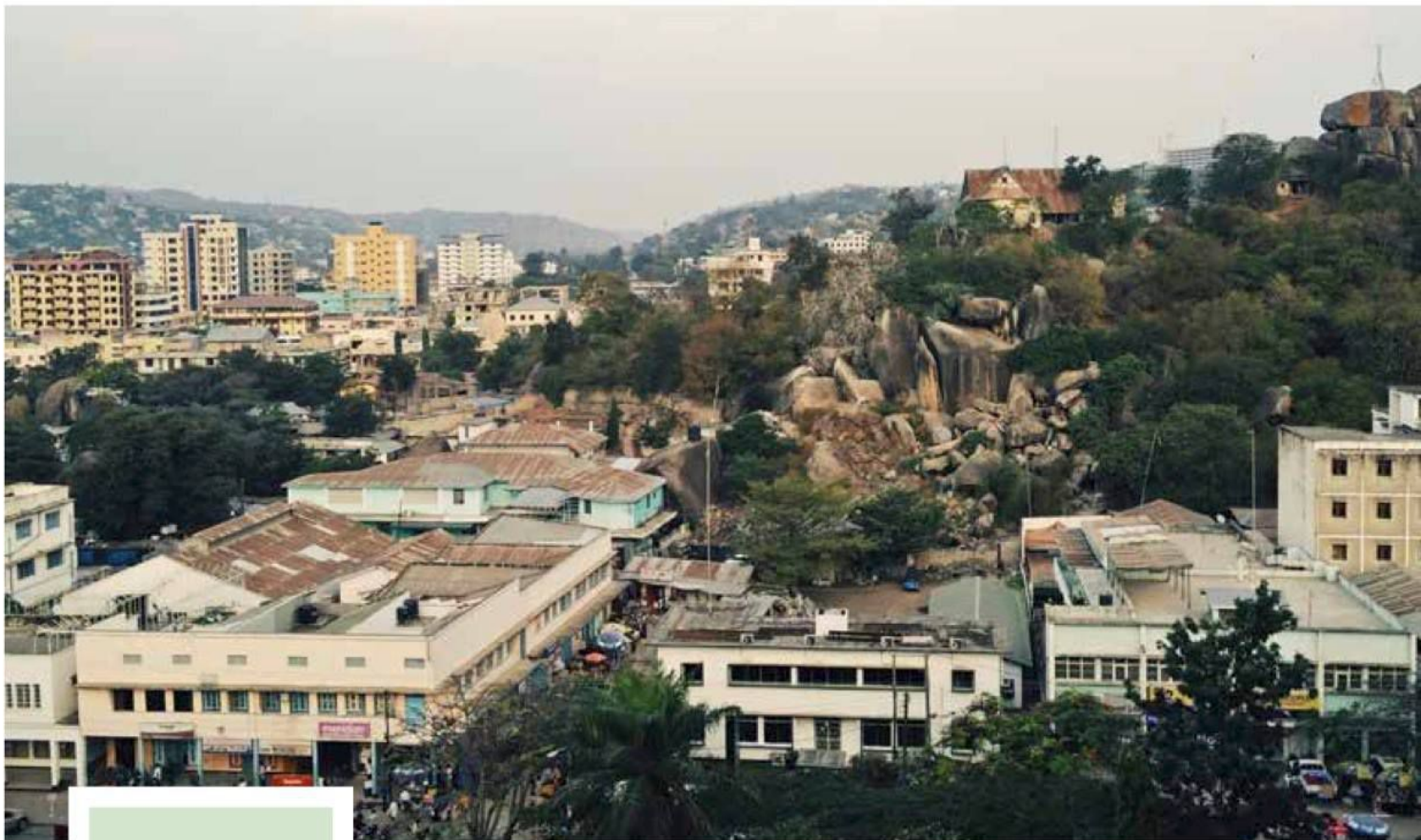




ESCAPE

— *from rock city* —

by HILARY DUFF



Most of my 26 years have been spent living in communities shaped by rock. So, it was by no means a surprise, when I found myself in a rock city on the other side of the world.

Mwanza is in northern Tanzania, the country where I worked for 18 months. Known primarily for Mount Kilimanjaro, idyllic safaris, and Zanzibar's crystal blue waters, Tanzania also has a substantial copper, gold, and silver mining industry. The country has the fourth-largest mining industry in Africa, and more than one million people are employed in mining operations.

But let's talk for a second about Northern Ontario.

Born and raised in the region, my life follows the classic trajectory of a mining family. My dad started as a prospector for Pamour Porcupine Mines in the 1980s and shifted to various geology leadership positions over the next three decades.

Timmins, Rouyn-Noranda and Sudbury are the places I called home growing up. My childhoods were spent scrambling over black rock, staring out the car window at the latest sinkhole, and arranging core samples on my bedroom shelf.



When I left Northern Ontario for university, my moody teenage tendencies swore I would never be back. Four years later, I found myself in Sudbury again. Funny how things can change.

It has only been in travel that I've realized how much I appreciate Northern Ontario.

In 2013 I left Sudbury again, this time with a one-way ticket to Nepal. The day before my flight, my boyfriend at the time and I scaled the rock face across from Collège Boréal and spent the golden

hours of the afternoon wandering Glencore property north of the highway. Weeks later in the packed madness of Kathmandu, I would close my eyes and envision the vast open space that composed that scene.

My love of accessible nature, ample rock, and big lakes is what put me immediately at ease in Mwanza. The city sits along the shores of Lake Victoria, the largest freshwater lake in Africa. On my first evening in the city I sat along the banks of the lake and stared at the unique Bismarck rock formations across the water. The inkling of familiarity provided a strange Canadian comfort, a feeling so desperately sought when living abroad.

Mwanza filled a sense of longing for Northern Ontario I didn't realize was there.

My Sudbury world and my current location came to a head at a party. I was chatting about tax havens with a British guy who works in the Swiss town of Zug. Not far from Zurich, the area is known for playing host to multinational companies abounds, a choice aided by the lovely Swiss landscape – not to mention the state's incredibly attractive tax

policy. This fellow mentioned he worked for a mining company's headquarters in the region. The company? Why it was Glencore, of course.

From that moment there was no stopping me. We talked about the boom-bust cycle of mining, the fall of commodity prices, and the rise of Chinese-made pig iron. He described the Swiss protests to the 2013 merger of Glencore and Xstrata. I rambled about the old school Falconbridge logo, the glory days of Inco, and Stompin' Tom.

I can't tell you how weird – and oddly comforting – it was to talk about my hometown in the northern Tanzania location that goes by the nickname "Rock City."

Funny how these cities of rock and stone feel like home. You can escape from Rock City, sure, but it's always a part of you.

Hilary Duff is a freelance multimedia journalist and communications consultant. She has spent the last 18 months living in Dar es Salaam and Mwanza, Tanzania. She is currently based in Valencia, Spain, where she travels across North Africa and the Middle East to interview green and social entrepreneurs for a project called The Switchers. Her dad categorizes her as a digital nomad, and she's pretty fine with that for now. You can find her work at hilarityduff.work.



INTO AFRICA

Climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro is the highlight of most visitors' experiences to Tanzania. However, the African country is home to six other UNESCO World Heritage Sites: Kilwa Kisiwani, Kondo Rock Art Site, Ngorongoro, Selous, Serengeti and Zanzibar Stone Town. The former two are lesser-known than the others but recommended by travellers.

Kilwa Kisiwani, an offshore island south of Dar es Salaam, supports the ruins of the most important of the Swahili city-states that flourished as a result of the medieval gold trade.

The Kondo Rock Art Site consists of 150-plus painted rock shelters in the vicinity of Kolo in the central Rift Valley.

For visitors, the city of Mwanza makes a good base from which to explore the nearby Rubondo Island National Park and the western parts of the Serengeti.

Rubondo Island National Park offers pleasant day-hikes and bird watching around the lake shore.

Mwanza is a major Tanzanian port on Lake Victoria and a major centre of economic activities in the region. The lake borders the country's East African neighbours – Uganda to the northwest, and Kenya to the northeast.

Mwanza is also the centre of the Sukuma tribe, the largest tribe in Tanzania, who have inhabited and farmed the region for centuries. Cultural tourism programs to their local villages and farms can be arranged through the local cultural centres.

Tanzania is known as the soul of Africa. It's believed modern humans originate from the rift valley region of East Africa and archaeologists have uncovered Africa's oldest human settlement in Tanzania.

Source: tanzaniatourism.com