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Father, I

Father, I

did not know Ogun personally but I knew his forge and his axe. The cold blade of his freeing hand and his ability to live without the written word, or spoken word, or word of love. In series of huffs and clicks he would say 'burn crop' 'cast metal in heat' 'howl like dog' 'hiss like blacksnake'. Hiss like blacksnake. Cah like spitting cobra. We talk circles around curling, charring skin and scale in the fire. Around crackling pepper and palm wine, around men that eat other men and women sink their teeth into bitch, into handfuls of salt as opposed to sugar. Of course I know the gnawing cog, the spark of BIC lighter, the roar of engine. I speak to you in cool tongue even though I do not believe in savagery because you might hear me better if I sound less myself. And I know religion like a gash that has scarred my hand backs and caused my fingers to slow and groan. On Wednesday our religious studies' teacher stops teaching and we sit in silence, silence the whirring of the electric fans, shut all the windows. Wait to see Ogun appear as a dog and with a crucible, make something new from our hot bodies.

Father, I

can grip you in the halls of my ancestral home. Punch through your looming figure like it is drywall. Like it is a man's puckered mouth. My fist is transcended, my fist in heaven-bound along with my limbs and gnashing—

Father, I

wonder how you decide who to send a savior to. Who gets the proverbial Moses. Must they be drooling for a boon, must they be rabid or weak or whiter under the sun. Whipped lines tighter on the back. Do you like to lick the uniform cracks in skin and be praised for your cleansing tongue. And now the new children worship at the altar of the shoe shine with white collar.

Father, I

must tell you that under Ogun there was primal, split skull liberation. As opposed to hundreds of thousands of icy bones moved northwards off the edge of earth that was not theirs without guns, without warfare. If we waited for you to crack the pyramid like you carved the sea down the middle who would've burnt the fields. Would you have shed your white shroud and worn the mask of God of War. Painted all your skin from daylight to storm.

Father, I

have become a religious vellum and each time I scrape off a skin of understanding I burn. I writhe. And then, all scars I glisten and am born anew under some hollow moon that could look like your face but then how would I even know. While we bake in the brick oven, my religious studies teacher reads us scripture. Our necks wind, bringing us to breathless contradictions. Whoever steals the man and owns the man is put to death, says Exodus, but the man must obey as though massa is god, with fear and trembling says Ephesians. Exodus says to strike and not kill, Deuteronomy says that my skin would've purged my soul, but you must cradle me as I run away. Matthew implores me to bare the burden and reap eternal life. And to the anoxic pupils it goes on.

Father, I

watched a video of someone dying yesterday and they looked like my grandfather. My grandfather has been long dead and so is someone's son. And if you do not send proverbial Moses or run dry the Hudson river, what would we do turn head to Ogun. To spitfire, to breakriot, to bloodviolence, to radical exodus.