

Brass Bell with Tripwire

Chukwuma Ndulue

Born from the austerity
of a gradually hostile womb,
my chest was pumped afoul
with weaning milk mixed
with remnants of flecked steel.

I courted death wantonly
with craven box step and ornate
crepuscular pounces.

I learned all the moves,
weaved through spiral ears
and chambered hearts,
no hinge or turn not
yet employed, perniciously.

Now that my reasonable razors are dulled,
enemies are losing interest
mid-lynching, cutting
blows easily confused
with heavy handed petting.

Still, the world casually lays plans to end
each tenure of breathing as I newly
develop an addiction to inhaling.

After a flood of crank calls,
God is no longer communicating,
for heaven is full of battered
intentions—fond fingers running
through long severed hairs.

I prefer a place with no logos
Where lingering musk
wafts through closed corridors,
where there is no way to rationalize a curse,
where there is no fear worth weeping.

