

## *One Poem*

Chukwuma Ndulue

### **Brass Bell with Tripwire**

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.

