



Stray

Bernard Farai Matambo

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Poetry is marvelous transportation. Africa beckons—*you want some of me?*—and the poet takes pains, takes pens to the stuff of his life, so that we can experience the Zimbabwe in the man. An Oberlin College creative writing assistant professor, Bernard Farai Matambo won the Sillerman First Book Prize for African Poets.

Feasts for the Blind

That year it rained crows. Birds fell out of the sky in midflight. Their squawking made mother nervous. It gave her the chills and made her teeth chatter. She threw her eyes everywhere and through the window caught the taut sky tightening. It had been dark for days. I watched her avidly and stabbed her with eyes full of questions. Don't be an idiot, she shot back, the earth too remains hungry. She was going blind, and her mind was beginning to sag. She walked into things and smiled with suffering. She stared into dark corners and hummed into them. She gathered nothing of the swelling whiff but stood by the window and stared hard outside. The beauty of the birds tormented her. In the yellow moonlight they glowed with the threat of better things to come. I licked my lips and heard her mumble inaudibles. She kept her gaze outside, watching the birds fatten, a sour breath gathering among them, a harvest of pus waiting in the wound.

MATT SUTHERLAND (March/April 2018)

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