

An Addict's Benediction

after Kemi Alabi

- I. I find my God at the bottom
of a dime bag, shivering.

He turns his body into an elixir
and I dink Him through a steel

nib. He enters me as if thunder.
This is The Rapture: oh glory be.

I leave behind only a sweat-stained
shroud of prayer, bleeding.
- II. An abscess makes the heart
grow colder. Site of repeated

lightning strike, I am holier.
Scab of communion pressed

against my tongue: my own
wine stains enamel, rotting.
- III. Each tooth that works loose,
an alm, for my God has none.
- IV. The cook praises Saint Dale Francis
Drake, he of the shake and bake.

How he reduced the cathedral of a lab
to a box, taught his lore to those who

would listen. After all, what is religion
if not a chemical reaction: of the soul;

of the spirit; of one thing becoming
another that glistens.
- V. Hosanna: watch as our dealer
splits the shard with cut

and we, the masses, hunger no more.
- VI. After we make love, The Assumption
of A Mary: where does my lover's body

go after each little death? On the night
stand, four pineapples glow.

VII. I find my God, again, in the burning
rush of a lease agreement.

How I hide two weeks
rent inside my flesh.

To be high and houseless
is to be closer to the sky:

a southern star chart,
nonstationary in the infinite.

VII. In the park, see how they worship the sun.
Their blood cleansed by the jog, the stroll,

by a life lived normal. Here, The Holy Spirit
touches everything, except the tundra

beneath my skin.

VIII. Wrapped in a white bedsheet, I traipse city
streets, soles dirty, jaw locked. I walk to a church

atop a hill to absolve, to light a candle: they are all
electronic now, cost 50 cents a flame. I am poor.

Even the holy water has a protective covering.
I beseech the man on the cross. A priest asks me to leave.

IX. Please God, release me. Let me sleep.
Return me to the living. Relinquish your grip.

X. When I ask for help, it will be from a mortal.
They will offer me a meal, a hot shower,

a warm bed. In therapy, my God shall grow
small inside the heaving of the confessional.

XI. When I renounce my old God
I find a new one blooming in the pink

of my cheek, how daylight hours a flower
across the face. And I call Her

Life.

XII. Praise be.
This cleanliness

is holy.