swapping blood with foxes,

**BLED NOSE DAY**

looting shops in summer

eating lobster rolls we squat the gutters,

I’m on block patrol

with adopted brothers

smile at us

we get defensive

never friendly ever, only

birds of black feathers flock together here

uncle bikes alone up Henrietta

throws signs at me over handle bars

like pig Latin in sign language

we are family

flat one: the buzzer sounds

my mother shouts

“let him in”

Isaiah

nephews Nephilim

uncle hands down sega saturn, smiling

too afraid to ask him who he stole it from

he wifes a redbone in his early twenties

unties his headphones

rides the met home

never served a sentence

I have turned elevens

over under rolling tongue

to hide my age and baby face

the neighbour made his name in bad blood

when you were rolling rentals into bank fronts

I was in favelas sipping black rum

when you were sticking up the tellers with a hand gun

I was in favelas sipping black rum

we are family

and I didn’t visit

instead I sat inside writing second-hand art

you were caught in a getaway car

didn’t listen to your sister

who said “never stray far”

you were plotting on a wedding day, heart

confetti, cake, March, let’s set the date-

can’t.

police pressed the tape

and made my uncle vanish

all of my uncles vanish

and if you didn’t ask me

you wouldn’t have known

I was falling out of it

in all it’s forms

with chloroform around my mouth

I took myself to counselling

at 16 shouting Blitzkrieg on my way to Hell

they all said I was cured as far as they could tell

But

I’ve been bottling nose blood

saving it for these days, when

poetry’s no good,

small talk with the regulars

squatting in old pubs, practicing

I’m glad that you showed up

I no longer get cold feet

just poured myself a bath full of nosebleeds

I’ve been stood up for too long

all this blood loss has given me

Blue Tongue

so I soak my bones in a pool of moulin

rouge as a new blonde woman

pulls loosies from bouffant

in the lobby of the Ritz

with the body of a nymph, true

but probably the sixth

sent to check if the book’s finished

I send them each back with punched spirits

and swollen groin from blunt digits

tell the Devil I had a hell of a night, please

self-apologetic whites

want novellas written by

clever niggers from favelas like me

singing ‘nobody knows the trouble I’ve seen’

nobody knows the trouble I’ve seen

nobody knows the trouble I’ve seen.