

My Mother's Liberia

by Oladunni Bejide

The way from school is slippery
and wet. Slick with leaves and mud,
red with blood.

The smell strong in the air,
as I duck flying lead, and rush in the forest covered path.
Cowering behind bushes, to remain unseen.

Black Americans hoot and scream
high above in trees, with guns in their hands.
Their screams like whipped slaves.

Liberians grunt and groan
trying to climb the trees
but never making it too far.

They get kicked and yelp
falling to be sprawled in corpses,
potent with the smell of skin.

The Americans climb down for the tiniest second
binding people as they please.
It all looks familiar, like a story my mother once told me.
One where people were colonized, terrorized, captured and slaved.

I walk faster, my house is so far,
all the way across the "Land of the free."

Oladunni Bejide is a Youth Poet Ambassador of Allegheny County, 2020-2021.

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