

TELLING IT THROUGH A BROKEN LENS

by Bola Opaleke

*So it is better to speak
remembering
we were never meant to survive
—Audre Lorde*

We know that our bones can
hardly rescue our skin from carrying
the weight it carries, but if you looked up,

like us, you will see towering trees—
how their leafless branches pretend to be the sky's veins
filled with wind, not blood. Today,

there is a mirror in the sky
with which everything attempting to touch it
replicate itself. They say, a bird

only knocks on a door when closed.
Sometimes, the cloud feels dangerously pinched
like a black man in his home country.

& like a black man in his home country,
it scampers away from its spot to find another,
then another & another. Isn't this the portrait

destiny painted of my people? Isn't this
how things that never speak speak about us
in hushed voices? We see the sky's bruises

but choose to call them patches
of the cloud. We raise our heads skyward to listen
to what we know will never speak back.

To justify the domestication of our ears
inside the prison of our pockets, we make silence
into a prayer to the unseen god, & let it

explode through the lips of our entangled nights.



Image: "Cloud Dance" by Claire Ibarra. "Telling It Through a Broken Lens" by Bola Opaleke
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