

KEMI ALABI

## Against Heaven

—with “Goin’ Up Yonder” and Louise Glück’s Nobel Prize speech

*I can take the pain whittling dad’s body to the red balance of his account  
The heartaches they bring: twin strokes, diabetes, ritual crucifixion of his feelings and  
The comfort in knowing as he drives cab, there’s engineers in Lagos with his experience  
I’ll soon be gone, college-flung debtchild taught empire contains no blame*

*As God gives me grace, I dump His dope, cut and flushed till I’m no wish  
I’ll run this race clean-sinning judge-hunting hex-lining a route to revenge  
Until I see my savior in a city on fire, bank windows busted by Jesus himself  
Face to face with riot cops, tased to piss, tunic charged with only the belief*

*I’m goin’ up yonder to jailbreak Cousin (everybody named that in the perfect world)  
Goin’ up yonder to repo mansions (Lil Black Boy swears he has been promised)  
I’m goin’ up yonder to the Michelin stars (cash my feast post-dated after death)  
Goin’ up yonder to the Ivy plantation (hood dad so he will be recognized)*

*I’m goin’ up yonder in a tux of knives, cursing in tongues—turn down for what  
To be with my Lord? Tell the Wiz to guard his curtain—I know exactly what he is*