



Old Man

Life is as long or as short as the word everything

before me: Pops was a runaway

from the flames, though I waited. I waited.

college, made the team – basketball,

me prove myself, then I made

All of that, and then a lawyer,

instead. Deep black baritone, spiritual

Moscow, London. London:

abroad, I have been both

courting the red and white and

more than once, my mind, my

FBI, like ants forming a

never a safe house. I say life is long.

when they ask you what was

could have earned my riches

world, and God said speak

feels – and I've done it. All of it. All of which began

teen. Mama the phoenix that never flew

I did. I was nine and she didn't come back. I left for

baseball, track – bloodied and bruised, they made

the team what it was. All-American. Roll of honour.

but the law didn't love me, so I used my voice

deep south in the theatres of the north: New York,

the Savoy, the palace, St. Pauls. I have been at ease

great black entertainer and great black enemy for

not the red, white and blue. I have lost everything –

passport, my faith, like a river running dry; MI5, the

queue, comin' for to carry me to a home that was

Life is long or as short as the word everything feels

it worth, Paul, what was it you were looking for? I

and kept myself intact but I was born into a broken

so I did, and then God said sing, so I just did

Victoria Adukwei Bulley