

# Barter

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## Barter

Because it's 1945 And the Allies  
put a war horse over a west African infantryman,  
A boy is traded for a horse.

A boy is traded for a horse,  
The horse gallops giddy in a bottle,  
The buyer follows inside to fetch his horse. and drowns.

A boy is traded for a horse  
his father hopes to ride into paradise. But only God rides in heaven.  
Angels are horses with wings. And God rides us all.

And he rides and rides and  
rides this circus,  
This one-trick pony on wheels.

A boy is traded for a horse,  
The man rides the boy away,  
The horse rides after his father's profit.

A boy is traded for a horse,  
The boy—also the horse,  
Both the traders—confused as god.

A boy is traded for a horse,  
The horse—intercourse with the boy.

A boy is traded for a horse,  
The horse, a taxidermied stud his father cannot ride away from him  
And his arrows of exile.

A boy is traded for a horse,  
The boy and the ghost animal murder both Merchant,  
Then, each other.

A boy is traded for a horse,  
The boy  
detonates his suicide bomb.

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**white western house**

*heaven's gate is a suicide door.* —Hanif Abdurraquib

so i yank the wrong end of its pearl bright doors  
till the pig angels arrive and demand, sir put down the weapon.  
i mean, i committed suicide by heaven, in heaven.

i wonder how many american guns make it into heaven every year.  
i ponder where bullets go when they die.  
when the immigration cherubim interrogate

why i tried to escape, i tell them:  
i come from gold coast, i am unimpressed by a city of gold.

how many hostages does heaven hold?  
for how long will blood pay god's ransom?

i am west african: when they say heaven is a field of white song,  
a plantation of praise; i learn to burn ships.

so don't ask me why i choose purgatory,  
where limbo is a love language.

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## Moon Walk

my blood \ is warm \ as the melting \ face of god \  
an amorphous ruby \ lost in a night-punched palm \  
new holes \ that vanquish \ old babalawos \  
i wait \ on Ra \ the way my fathers \  
waited out their stone skins \ and lost \  
a black hole \ is an abbreviation \ for god \  
and the dark is \ the only \ omnipresence \  
we arrived \ our gods wet \ with the deep blue corpse \ of the gulf of Guinea \  
poured from \ our canned skin \ hymning a new name \  
we're all captives \ of gravity \ if not of each other \  
our backs \ grow a milk bush \ through a new moon \  
& men \ stopped worshipping the moon \ once a man walked \ on it \

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**Sarpong Osei Asamoah** is a bi-ethnic Ghanaian who writes in both Twi and English. His work is forthcoming or has featured in *Agbowo*, *Lolwe*, *Tampered Press Magazine*, *Protean Magazine*, *MudRoom* journal, *The Hellebore*, *IceFloe Press*, *Lunaris Review*, (Twi poems) at [WriteGhana.com](http://WriteGhana.com), and elsewhere. He is a founding member of, and was poetry editor at the Contemporary Ghanaian Writers Series (CGWS). He currently has a day job at the Library of Africa and The African Diaspora (LOATAD) base in Accra, Ghana.