

In Which A Group of Black People Sit at a Dinner Table and Do Not Die

(Faisal Abdu'Allah-The Last Supper)

after Claude McKay

If I must die, let it not be by the cliched bullet
burdened by lead. Suffering in its wet want of my huntable
hide. I praise my kitchen. The vats of old oil crowning
the pilot lights. A stove freckled in chicken grease. I thank
the animal before I eat. I skin my teeth and think of their necks.
A singular bone snapping where it should be fused. Even I
should have been lynched. My throat gathered in thick nylon. A man
stringing me up as if my body bootstraps. I want the kind of death
that covers my heart in what is left of the hog. Fat congealing
my organs until not even the most sawed- off shot gun could kneel me.
Impossible hellscape: I'm genuflecting and being called out of my name.
Someone appropriates my suicide. I am dead with my eyes open—camera flash peeling
my skin back until the white meat shows. Let me be clear when I say I am rebuking
my homicide. I am eating a hill of chitlins face-down. Gorging on greens. Pouring my
insulin in the kool-aid. You don't get to murder me. This time I am in a hospital bed
like a human being. Sick and collapsing in my own sugar.
With needles in my arms. My blood calculated by a stopwatch.

--Thiahera LeSian Nurse