

Horns

By Kwame Dawes

In every crowd, there is the one
with horns, casually moving through
the bodies as if this is the living

room of a creature with horns,
a long cloak and the song of tongues
on the lips of the body. To see

the horns, one's heart rate must
reach one hundred and seventy
five beats per minute, at a rate

faster than the blink of an eye,
for the body with horns lives
in the space between the blink

and light — slow down the blink
and somewhere in the white space
between sight and sightlessness

is twilight, and in that place,
that gap, the stop-time, the horn-
headed creatures appear,

spinning, dancing, strolling
through the crowd; and in the
fever of revelation, you will

understand why the shaman
is filled with the hubris
of creation, why the healer

forgets herself and feels like
angels about to take flight.
My head throbs under

the mosquito mesh, the drums
do not stop through the night,
the one with horns feeds

me sour porridge and nuts
and sways, *Welcome, welcome.*

Source: *Poetry* (February 2016)