

# 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)