**Vanessa Kisuule, *Hollow* (2020)**

You came down easy in the end
the righteous wrench of two ropes in a grand plie
briefly, you flew
corkscrewed, then met the ground
with the clang of toy guns, loose change
chains
a rain of cheers.

Standing ovation on the platform of your neck
punk ballet. Act 1.
there is more to come.

And who carved you?
They took such care with that stately pose and propped chin.
Wise and virtuous the plaque assured us.
Victors wish history odourless and static
but history is a sneaky mistress
moves like smoke, Colston,
like saliva in a hungry mouth.

This is your rightful home
here, in the pit of chaos with the rest of us.
Take your twisted glory and feed it to the tadpoles.
Kids will write raps to that syncopated splash.
I think of you lying in that harbour
with the horrors you hosted.
There is no poem more succinct than that.

But still
you
are permanent.
You who perfected the ratio.
Blood to sugar to money to bricks.
Each bougie building we flaunt
haunted by bones.
Children learn and titans sing
under the stubborn rust of your name.
But the air is gently throbbing with newness.
Can you feel it?

Colston, I can’t get the sound of you from my head.
Countless times I passed that plinth
its heavy threat of metal and marble.
But as you landed a piece of you fell off
broke away
and inside
nothing but air.
This whole time
You were hollow.