**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.