**Hollow**

***Vanessa Kisuule, June 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.