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A White Guy Watches Alpha Ya Ya Diallo and His Bafing Riders Perform at the Local Arts Center

Jason Snart

That white guy – okay, to be perfectly honest, is me, spraddle-legged in a velvet balcony seat, watching Guinean Diallo perform for fifty, maybe a hundred or so suburban folks all nodding along to songs about love, and panic, and freedom.

At the break
I consider a glass of wine, but
run into Felipe, a colleague
who teaches Spanish and Psych. He asks,
do I know what the drum
is called, the drum that's been giving
up six beats against
Diallo's four: *a jembe*,
he says. Oh, with a d: *djembe*.
A crossword word
I've run into.

My daughter and I, says Felipe,
like to jam. And he hooks the air
with his fingers, conditioning "jam."
*She plays her little drum and I play
the big drum. And this is my friend,*
he says, of the man who's walked up,
*he's headed to Africa
in two weeks.*

In two weeks
I'll be there. He rolls his eyes
when I mention the flight. *I waste a day in Paris,
then four and half hours
to the Senegal coast.*

The lights dim,
like a guy with a trick knee
that gives way a bit,
so Felipe and his friend
head back inside and I'm off
to the balcony where I sit and look down
at the djembe, waiting
for something to happen.

Aloneliness

Kristina Noel Kroger

a green pane of glass, green, green, wine-bottle green
hugs me close—I'm getting drunk on the loneliness.
This sweet, sloshing, burning liquid

Stumbling bumbling in a neon night, hedonism at its finest
sweet pleasures like peaches on my tongue
flesh rises before me, but I am alone

smoky wind, red moon, winking city, laughing
the coyote with the green fire in its eyes
is the mystery in the dark alley

Ah, metropolis of sin,
I walk your shadowed avenues
giggling with my shadow