Travis McClerking is a Sophomore at OSU majoring in English. He got introduced to poetry through competitive slams. He continues to develop his craft in open mics held at Kafe Kerouac. His high school teacher Dr. Sidney Jones and the Columbus native, Hanif Abdurraquib, are his biggest influences.

UNCLE TOM’S CABIN FEVER

I have a desire to wreak havoc

In your everyday,

To disobey and address

The dissonance between

Agreeing to not speak

And the shriek of a heart beat

To make noise in the classroom with a raised hand,

A question sticking into the flesh of the assumed,

Unraveling the stitched lips

Concealing the ratios bound

By systematic disparages

Violence is lazy;

It would rather recline

in the open hands of silence,

The sound of bended knee, of willing,

The suppression of reflex,

The doubting of the good

That a good shout can do

And yet

I have fear

Of the pure wavelength.

If interrupting it will merit punishment,

And if it’s more than a slap on the wrist

What noise would it emit?

Would it sound like bodies collapsing?

Would it sound like the shuffle of feet

Too unsure to do anything about it?

Would it sound like hands trembling?

Would it sound like the disdain

Of the strong leaving the weak to fight unguided?

Perhaps it would sound like a riot?

Broken glass and bloody drops smacking the pavement—

A melody setting the mood

Forced to accompany something more tragic

Or maybe I’ve been conditioned to seethe

So that I feel the need to cry out—

To protest so loud,

It’s only fitting that I go out

With a bang.