

Sean Hopkins

“Little Hungry Hunters”

Screeching monkey mouths wailing
and fuzzy arms hurling
nut crushed fruit pulped
cashew missiles;
my friends and I jibbed and jabbed
zig zagging our dust crusted toes
through the trees of Sindian.

Silence draped our shirtless backs
sheathing shoulders in deep shadow.
Sighing I started to speak,
fwap!
Ousmane slapped a smooth
hand over my mouth.
I glared into his eyes
seeing urgency but no fear.

Ousmane pointed up,
and blinking I grasped and gasped
spotting a panther slinking with inky
certainty, leaking down branchy
highways to the forest floor
denying to deign our seriously smelly
existence assaulting her nostrils.

Then suddenly she faced us,
five under-fives versus one resting on all fours.
Realizing we might be dinner rather than diners,
we puffed our chests

and then turned to flee.
She did not tail
as we trailed back to the sun
our stomachs rumbling
from fuzzy and inky foiled foraging.

But wait! And look!
A trap had snapped and snared
a rice thief, a rodent Robin Hood
robbing the rich crop
to feed his poor stomach.
We sheriffed him back to
courtyards and coal stoves.

And taxed his theft
a pound of flesh,
so we could live
and hunt again tomorrow.