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To Be Bold

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To Be Bold

That night was perfectly triggered
like she was running down the block
with a gun in her hand.

She didn't ask to be the killer
but she was glad to pretend
to be, for one night: bold,

to slay the vipers and chupacabras
sucking blood around the cul-de-sac.
To be firm, yet lax on dosage,

to perform the task of calming
the monsters breathing in her ear
without swallowing the pill under her tongue.

The bedroom window turned door
to the streets where something was to be won.
She maneuvered the sidewalk, armed.

When Father found her at the dead end,
she aimed a toothless comb at his head.
She said nothing but Bang.

At home, he tucked her in and nodded
when she asked if he'd forgive her.
His voice and others dulled as the pill dissolved.

Before she turned to ice, she wished again
to be bold, to firecracker the neighborhood
to disarm the doctors, the schizoid, the affect.

She places this hope in a self-
luminous body burning lifetimes away
in the darkness arching overhead.

It lightens when the lights shut
off in her head. It keeps her
in her bed and from the window ledge.

About Esinam Bediako

Born and raised in Detroit, Esinam Bediako is a writer, editor, and teacher. Her short stories, essays, and poems have been published in *The Observer*, *Quarto*, *Tablet*, *Dark Phrases*, and *The Scholar* and *Feminist Online*. She lives in New York City.