

# No Dinner

Saloni Dixon

my father, regal as an Obeah man sculpted out of wood from a scared tree of no name, no place, or origin stands before me.

he says “*uchi*, bones of my bones, Eat. your ebony cup half full. open wide—golden child of the sun. remember, you are the tongue of your ancestors. way back in Africa, sap running dry. your belly ready to sail icy seas like a torn page from a book. *Eat.*”

our dutch oven clicks, sending a mountain to stir a pot of cane sugar, water, molasses, and snow peas.

thick branches shake, falling into Cherokee land and someplace else lost. all legends in night light. my father sweats in a world of corpses and the undertaker says no truth follows the negro. clogging up rivers, muffling jambalaya rhythms riding sweet bass strings, and I hear centuries carcasses of the dancing drums.