

Favela²

by Michael J. Pagan



“Arguably, this place does not meet the strict definition of a favela.”

We clamor for space; community.
This is our stomping ground, outside
on that other side of back talk.

²There’s gossip in the concrete
steps; in the wattle-and-daubed
walls, drowsy, like cardboard
blush, where the light yawns
and turns to gray in your
hands: *let us go light*
the zombies outside, bubbles

the clay path, breathless,
sympathizing some infant boy
asleep against some other
older boy’s thighs resting up
against the alley wall. If you care
to walk by, you’ll dig the feet: bare,
laid across a tear of yellow

tarpaulin chuckling back. A pair
of crippled pilcrows rundown
by still lifes; there’s gossip in
lost bullets and cinder block

murals of awkward shadows
looking away from an avenue
of catastropheelings as

flood lights babble and bat
their eyes away from the spitting
rain. Translation is low cost,
back-fence talk whose
hooves grandstand and piss
in corners where some little girl
fingers the dirt and drops

a note: *olba*. It dangles its
paraphernalia on extension cords
impersonating clotheslines. There
is gossip in the translation.