

## Ash Falls, Smoke Rises, Scars Persist by Joshua Morley Omole

Cigars are thicker than cigarettes.  
A cigarette burned my father's lips; once,  
he had unhand it, and pat someone's back.

Memories: the scars your burns leave as souvenirs.  
Trauma & scars & scars & scars & angry words &  
*Do/ not/ praise your son/ no matter what he does/  
do not/ praise your/ son/ do not praise your son.  
Burn your son.*

Cigarettes burn away but ash and smoke persist  
in windowless rooms with no brooms. Fate  
gave me cigars, they will burn longer.  
*Do/ not/ praise your son.*

*(did not praise his son)*

*(do not praise your son)*

*(will not praise my son)*

My father did not pat my back,  
his hands were on his cigarette.

My cigars are thicker,  
my hands stay longer.  
*Do/ not/ praise your son.*

Joshua Morley Omole is a student of Vet. Medicine at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. In addition to writing poetry, he also creates visual art and sings. He lives with his parents in Nigeria.