“Trespasser” – Tatamkhulu
Afrika

I wheel my bike under the cathedral’s dark overhang. Seized by a rictus of the wind, the trees shed rain. Rain slides down Wale Street’s sleek, steep fall: air is an ocean booming round high bare walls. My hands freeze on the bike’s crossbar, seek the sodden saddle, toy with the ice-cold bell: I am suddenly fugitive, homeless and cornered in a caprice of pressure and cloud.

Then they cough and I know I am not alone: far back, against the great, nailed doors, they huddle: troglodytes of night’s alcoves, daytime’s shopping-malls, parking lots, sparse green lawns, municipal benches where lunchtime’s city workers, stripping down their food-packs, sit in sober rows.

I fear to turn around, stiffen in expectation of the inevitable tugging at my sleeve, wonder of I have any coins wonder why they do not bicker, as they always do, cursing their mother’s wombs in tired robots’ tones, why only this curious, chuckling, liquid sound drawing me around.

She has the usual wrappings on stick-thin, brittle shins, patchy-purple, quietly rotting methylated spirits skin: doekie of incongruous elegance crowns the scabrous, half-bald skull. Her man, grotesque

Cathedral as a place of sanctuary; seeking sanctuary from the rain
Rictus: open mouth
Appeals to all the senses, exhibits the power of nature
Not a comfortable situation
Caprice: sudden change

Troglodytes: cave dwellers
Unconventional dwellings
Two groups of people use benches: who has more right to them?

Expecting beggars to ask for money
Sets up usual image of beggars
Sound doesn’t match the expectations

Incongruous: unexpected
One would not expect elegance in such a place; crowns gives images of royalty

The Consulting Students – http://consultingstudent.wordpress.com
as a gargoyle roused from stone, 
cradles an infant on his lap, 
feeds it from a bottle with a teat, 
makes the chuckling, crooning sounds 
that turned me round, 
that hold me now spellbound. 
‘Good morning, sir,’ he says, 
and his voice is grave 
as a paterfamilias in his lounge.

Only the odd man out, 
leaning against the harsh green walls, 
looks at me with carefully indifferent eyes, 
finding me alien on his home ground, 
wishing the clouds would break and I be gone, 
ringing my bike’s absurd, small bell.

Gargoyles act as guardians of a cathedral, 
warding off trespassers and evil 
Sound is fatherly, loving 
First section of stanza: images of decay and dirtiness 
Second section: image of family 
Paterfamilias: male head of a household 

A trespasser on the family scene, like the speaker