

## **The Botanist**

**By Nick Makoha**

Remember that pub we ran into when we did not have enough cash for the cab fare home? All the barman wanted to know was which team do you support? When I told him, he ordered us a free round. So it began for us: raising glasses in a room while the rain poured. We toasted to *Champagne Supernova* on the jukebox. You sang the chorus while I played drums with the beer mats. The pub felt like our kitchen with the TV on and fire lit. A couple just like us were playing pool badly while drinking double shots for each miss. The barmaid scribbling our order down as you shook off the world outside. We ordered the special bangers and mash with desert, twice. A blind woman led by her dog into the beer garden rolled a cigarette. A ritual learned. The light that appeared at the end of her stick, a kind of burning bush, began smouldering as the smell of tobacco tickled a smile from the side of your face. I ordered another round as you scribbled my face on the back of a napkin, using this moment as an art class. You have a theory that our errors are better recognised in the eyes of others. The eyes of friends.

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