



eji Equal Justice
Initiative

AUTUMN 2019

Say His Name

—Christopher C. Davis b:1857 - d:1881

When silence becomes too heavy
for the heart to carry and ears
know only the unimaginable as tempo,
let these words be a trumpet,
a chorus of circular breaths.

When the past becomes flesh
and the wind whistles shrill, echoed
by a thin whine of branches,
and mockingbirds loose their taunts,
loop and fray with ragged wings.

When history has no scruples,
leaves us only the malice and musk,
the frenzy of boots and torches
and thick braided hemp, noosed, knotted,
South Bridge, Athens County, Ohio,
a blue sheen of moon over the bones.

Oh, how the air cleaves its privilege.

When at last our shame unfurls,
a wretched flag, every frayed thread
uncoiled, we pen our truths,
every word a sepulcher, every syllable
a stone rolled away.

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From: *Alone in the House of My Heart*