

Downtown Johannesburg

“Jump! Jump!” the whites
give or take two thousand
chant on, not a bit fussy
where Amos will land:

the young black African
is splayed along the parapet
of a sixth-floor balcony,
a pricey park-view flat.

Amos Gaexella, it is he,
swivels his thin neck
gazelle eyes for our photo
gazes down at the crowd’s beck

and call, jeers. Skinhead
naked to the waist, he’s wound
his jumper round his throat,
backstreet vagabond.

Sam Bloomberg says, “A real
afternoon’s entertainment!”
Head of Suicide Prevention,
Sam for a while does his stint

talking Amos out of jumping.
Pleads with the boy. Is he all there?
Two hours later, Gaxella’s
snapped by a photographer

against a blur of Sunday cars
vehicles double parked.
Bets of Sunday strollers
change hands on a black.

Amos, Amos, Amos,
vertigo of white concrete,
jubilation of grinning faces
beneath your tender feet.