I TIE O I O I I EN IO A HEARTY BREAK **JJJJJEROME ELLIS** THE STUTTER IS A HEARTY BREAK THE STUTTER IS A HEARTY BREAK **JJJJJEROME ELLIS** THE STUTTER IS A HEARTY BREAK THE STUTTER IS A HEARTY BREAK **JJJJJEROME ELLIS** THE STUTTER IS A HEARTY BREAK THE STUTTER IS A HEARTY BREAK **JJJJJEROME ELLIS** THE STUTTER IS

The hand falls hard toward the deerskin drum, and in this falling we're invited to hear the world break, like a kernel opening, open-mouthed dehiscence. Dehiscence understands nothing and hears all, thrown loose over the field of purple loosestrife. Gimme a break, gimme a break, gimme some more, break me over thy knee in yet another calling chapter, forced underground by heat. Dehiscence becomes an opportunity for spore dispersal, the bringing close of ferti open distance, the curtain broken up by screaming daylight. Noon is a palace. Dehisce the archive to touch the seed, light as truths accompanied by joy.

Dehiscence is a kind type kind of breakage. And it can be kind, as when an anther bursts releases pollen into song, belting launching pollen-into the air onto the laughing wind. It can be risk, as when a suture reopens after surgery. It can usher in vertigo, as when the labyrinth of the inner ear ruptures.

## 2

The stutter is a hearty breakfast: first perfume of guava and coffee and hard dough bread waking the animal into a truer room. Unpredictable, indestructible invitation to say grace.

3

Thank you, James, for listening to me read an earlier draft of this poem to you over the phone. Here I've notated some of the stutters that arose when I read, and their relative durations:

4

The stutter been breakin / and butterin / Time / so all can partake!

JJJJJerome Ellis is an animal, stutterer, and artist. He was raised by Jamaican and Grenadian immigrants in Tidewater, Virginia, where he prays, gardens, and resides among the egrets and asters. He dreams of building a sonic bath house!