



Photo Credit: Chris Abani

Illustrated Revelations 20: 14-16 (from the Parenthetical Version)

¹⁴ After Death and Hades were thrown into the lake and those with accidentally-erased names doubly died, Saint Peter (which is pronounced Petra) stands outside the gate, waiting for Whosoever Will (the gate was a traffic warden kiosk with a warning: Don't Speed It Kills). For the deserving few, she stores 24 kt. gold in recycled gas containers—a welcome gift, if you will, for Whosoever. Closer to her hip, she holds the *Book of Life* (which is actually a thin day planner with rushed notes she jots down as God hurries off from meeting to meeting). ¹⁵ *Melt these canisters and make your streets*, she tells every new Whosoever Will (this is a loose translation since Saint Petra speaks Igbo). Of course, they never do. Whosoever Will rather hoped God might have taken care of paving their gold streets in anticipation of their arrival. Many of the Wills think Heaven should look more like Milton's Empyrean Divine (Milton was blind). And some Wills ask for immediate reincarnation upon realizing St. Petra is a Nigerian woman (with very little patience for nonsense and delay), who coordinates her headwraps with hand-loomed cloth and prefers a burner phone to commercial anything (everything is bare essential in Heaven and no one wears halos because of carbon concerns). Further staggered to learn that Heaven is in Ibadan (not in the sky but certainly on any detailed map). ¹⁶ And since the mansions are hotel rooms at Hussey Plaza, there's no provincial space for each soul (Saint Petra finds that belief absurd). *Silly*, she says, *you learn to live together in Heaven, one on top of another, until your spirits molt into something (somewhat) deserving of Paradise.*