

Ghost Chains

By Gabriella Olson

Hold close your hearts.
Bathe them in the basin of sky
& chain them to your chest.

Drown them in rivers of mud & silk
Until they're blackened & worn.

Bleed from all your body,
For we are but vessels.
Bleed out your whole heart.

& then they say:
Smile for the cameras,
Keep your head above water
Pretend you weren't drowning & gasping for breath.
Those tears in your eyes are sparkles, not salt.

They say:
Laugh, because
You're not one of them
Whose chains dragged so heavy
That they drove patterns into the earth.
Give us a smile,
Speak,
Rejoice that you're here & pretend
That you're not standing in a coffin.

Look at us, treading water.
Bathing in water more like a chokehold.
The tightening of our chests.

Hold close your hearts,
They're the first to drown.