

Asiya Wadud

the order was in the hour of worship

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stained glass windows act as mosaic
all radiant acts of attrition
all foregrounded prayers supplanted
all prayers a backchannel
every pew held our bodies
we turned our bodies to the covenant
buttressed by the Mason Dixon
and all its flat border counties

god vested his attention along its
northern border
vested his attention where he wanted
rested his attention along the crest

the only act of god was in the hour of our worship
the cross bore directives
directives that could show us
shower us as a trinity
shrouds of our own making

all exemplars, prayers supplanted
all prayers supplementary work
the sun shone its piercing distance
it shone well because it wanted
the sun shone through the church pew
the sun shunted us along —
the backchannel brewed

the little tight crest
began to peel at the seams
it began to gestate, it seems
as it peeled back

anything that has crossed my paths I would mother
any semblance of family elocution, I'm mother
all felled logic
familiar
huddled for warmth in the space between us
that's what distance does to us

this gilded foremost endeavour

at every breath
my countenance
my long path to wholeness
no country can grant me that
my lonesome three fifths
the precise mathematics of partition
all across my salvage

clenched and chlorophyll
wrapping tendrils toward the sun

yesterday I sat with the ocean
seeking out its white noise
held a shell up to my ear
settled into its subterfuge

I took a sound recording of the waves
sound waves speculation
what's with the undercurrent?
all these ocean grifters
what the flotsam water
held
in
staunch
relief

yesterday I rose from my bed, Saturday morning
rode the ferry outbound
all New Amsterdam's soundless current
a polyphonic noise system
no language was staid
I broke
with tradition

hello I called into a black vacuum
what I got was the virtuous salt — sonic

what I got was a reply :
order comes to the house of worship

I slid my fingers through the hot sand
the sun burned my right leg
I let it
the planes they flew overhead I let them
the seagulls drifted outbound
let them
all birds alight when bruised
if their wings will carry them

we dressed our hands in the lumber gloves
we used the Granberg sawmill and its guiding system
we felled the trees and trusted they'd become lumber
wasted not a single splinter
all lumber cast from salvage

diligently the Bostrichidae emerged from their
exit wounds
circular fissures in the wood's surface
we stowed inside them ardent language
undo the pestilence
smoke our the dense lattice
the dead rising right to the surface
or bet yet let them live

they built the ship's deck around us
we remained in the pews
we closed our eyes as a protective message
we cupped our hands to our ears
and amplify any noise

direct conduit to any ocean
under this pestilence the
ship's berth is coming together

during the long construction we never
rose from the pews
we knew the order was in the hour of the worship

one by one the timber became what it could become
when we open our eyes we were on the water
the Atlantic is a matriline:

wake bore hole wave crest lumber
cadence incandescence all prayers a backchannel
Mason Dixon bifurcated split along Garrett County

we touched the boat to bless it
touched all its minor parts
touched anything unruly
beyond 3/5 is the rest of Plessy
the order was in the hour of the workhorse
doused our hands in mineral oil
we blessed it, this our finished vessel
so it would shunt us far from here

no map governed our journey
the nautical chart

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