

The Business of Heirlooms

a man is not an island
but he can be a nation
he can be time caught in an amulet's
liquid centre. imagine him upright, once, now holding
himself together in a fetal position.
trembling like a country.
the way a leaf does under the weight of a dewdrop.
he has no home.
the journey here was difficult. fraught like childbirth.
acquired like immunity.
the western wind carried him as far as it could.
fate did the rest. arms outstretched
to the heavens & their bitten pink glow.
trade is a language common to us all.
from the bay of bengal to khartoum's shores to birmingham smoke.
shanghai. wisconsin. congo. come. go. leave. stay. take. give.
this language punctuated by violence, its full stops,
its tangled webs.
the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves.
about other selves.
we ward off the bad spirits of the present
while the past haunts the corridors of our minds.
a glass eye gleams like a silver tooth in the mouth of a woman
who laughs at her misfortunes.
like a baby freshly born.
the dates announce themselves like daily mail headlines.
sacrifices to singe the flesh, sing it anew, topple the food chain.
BC. AD.
Before Collection. After Disappearance.

the dead do not keep diaries.

they keep us in their shackles.

wear our teeth for necklaces.

we owe them what we owe ourselves.

the clear glass of the truth, it's ringing shine

& our reflections in it.