

ars poetica without resurrection

Asmaa Jama

the poem is the liquid cemetery, i dive into, searching mouth
holding the english words, for loss, lost,

if the language has also atrophied, if the child began writing in
ink, to reach them, who is to tell them, swapping the vials of the
embalming fluid, with ink, it will not revive them.

let it be the mosque - man at the centre of it, white cap on his
head, croquet facing mecca, let it be the mosque

saying prophet move
 angel yell
 : read,
and so we did, do, have always done.

after they crossed the liquid strait, they cut off the ghost flesh -
your parents - cut their losses, their old language sank

decomposed, what you are able to resuscitate - will not outlive
you, will not outlast your home, your own brother, misses most
of the syllables

you can make only ten perfect sounds, the old poets, whittle
astral images, in a hundred,

are they speaking in whistles ? asks your great-uncle-now also
dead. the language of birds, english so hollow it is the
language

of birds, i want to bury the feathers and the evidence of them,
what my tongue knows; how to commit a massacre, how to
build a burial pit, how to burn the record after, build a
monument
after

they had to move, taking, not stone, but tongue,
 figurative and wet,

a wetter world

my people descend into and i go look for them,

