

**the news of a migrant father and his daughter who drowned in Rio Grande as they were crossing  
from Mexico into Texas is broadcast in the metro**

& a woman with platinum hair breaks down crying in San Martin.  
what to make of this stabbing pain?

what does it say of a design oversight assigned to a particular brand of slavery?  
it doesn't matter now—all i want is for love just to be this—

to speak as if we all share the same pain.

to take a risk when we don't know the dead.  
is there a line between metering & drowning?  
border walls & asylum affixation?

who gets to draw it?  
does it have to do with proximity,  
with citizenship?

how i preen on myself continually                      what did that do.  
the object of my mourning is a searing photograph.      the object of my daytime longing is a body  
littered with reeds.      the object of my missing the object      of their heads are wrapped in a black  
t-shirt the object of her tiny arm is      draped over his shoulders.

the birds are raging in the snouts of my dreams.  
isn't this a good place to stop and talk with the dead.

what is it with you— O America?  
what is it with your sea-froth eyes?

my father died in a border, four years ago, thinking of my only little sister. how easily i could imagine a  
version of our lives in which my sister is inside a tent cordoned off with spirals of wire and my father is  
outside staring at the back of her ponytail *split between compassion and bonding*.

therefore, i will do nothing for a long time.      what's so complicated about tenderness in a wet satin  
field?      i haven't written about the failure of a country still singing: *Go away! Negro*.  
i think i am afraid to.      speak. some lives count while others are counted.

**Sonnet for the *fallen at Rio Grande***

how are you captured in this shot?  
*faced down* awash by reeds?

it's almost summer & the sun blares at  
your back. you have come this far hoping

to cross past this walls— a passageway now  
called metering. but your minders won't let

you in without a devil's play. you held out  
your tongue like an offering but the music

keeps falling flat on your face. there are  
eyes everywhere. no matter what we do,

the dead here won't be consoled— how your  
body not only spin but floats. everyone knows

where there is blood, there is a body falling  
in a fit at the loss of what it once held.