

PIMONE TRIPLETT

Motherland

(after Robert Hayden)

The Amsterdam, the Angel, The Dauphin, The Phenix

Merchant ships anchored at the river mouth
sails hung like
bed sheets after a night of sweat

West to East and back again, we travel in trade of the skin

“For their use in place of leather, my Lord,
whole cargo holds of deer pelt and dried ray,
the profit free of duty.”

*The Charlotte, The Globe, The Hopewell
The Hound, The Kristian, The Good Consent*

Girls brought across the border, held down
in “the room for unveiling of virgins”

Also the rudderless byways, the years’
tide swell slap at one water bank

O but I shall not want Equipped Lord for every good work

And when the plot stutters forward in circles, in circus, in yessirs

“The ship loaded with silk and rare honey
young boys adept at the arts of love
plus 2 baby elephants bound for His Majesty”

*The Land of Smiles, The Personal Service, The
Patent Massage, The Sex Tour*

Later one shape, a slope in the mud,
this contour becoming chronicle
this history set in stone

Over 500,000 in U.S. troops stationed, in need of R&R

*The Maiden Tribute, The Modern Babylon, The
Millions of Bodies, The Golden Maze*

And according to a neighbor the girl called “Lek,” meaning “little,”
was sold at age three to the foreign businessman

A wolf speaks, while chewing
the lamb,
“I can say quite clearly that
I do not see anything wrong with my desires”

For the family owed a great debt and the father could not work

“I believe
many children know just what they want”

The Lord is my helper

“She watched while the neighbor was paid
to masturbate him. A few weeks later Lek did
the same and continued to do so until she began,
at the age of six, to have intercourse with her owner.”

That through Him all men might believe

“Sending bombardiers and blunderbusses
His Majesty has resolved to attack,
to become its master by force of arms.”

The Lord is my helper I shall not be afraid

Each of the girls wears a number
as she dances before the mirror

Meantime
Now
In between
Then
One
Shape
Not
Another
XX
Not
XY
Get the picture
Forget the picture
Meantime

“If
I could choose
I would take just one girl
I would love her with all my heart”

Number 42 steps forward, shakes

Even angels long to look equipped for every good work

The TV always on and I remember

Mother singing *I am*
Siamese if you please

As if we could step off the stutter

Bless The Globe, The Hopewell, The Good Consent

Plus boners for bill board faces
The secret cash-cunt deposit that's
Sony'd, Tashiba'd, IMF'd, IBM'd

There by the grace of

The body wholly body, spirit eaten out
We travel in trade
We owe a great debt

There is no speaking for here
Though there is singing

"entrusting our souls to the limitless sea"

Then and now now and then
the profit free of duty
the vessels unveiled in the harbor

heavy with rubies, emeralds, diamonds,
buying honey and moonlight,
waves on the wood planks shushing, slapping,

the girl child praying
I shall not be afraid

I shall not be