

Playa de los Muertos by Alana de Hinojosa

Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco

Do I really think if we began as ash,
the fish will forgive us, take us back?

Morning, I walk along silent theaters
of war & wealth. But silence

is not absence of articulation,
not of absence of utterance:

Know where you are, child

The sound of lung
& gill preceding the image.

.

At dusk, I unfold the husks
of what is left of us,

Watch grandmothers & beloveds,
fisherman & dogs & foreigners' children

walk out of the water
glowing in dark skirts of pelican

& oyster—death's liminal
pleasures—a bay boy, pulling

a tin car from the Mexican cobble stone
of sea, aside his mother (humming

between their life & ours)
counting the dim of cathedral bells,

each of them returning, now,
from the dead.

.

May I not forget the coming
of this old night

filtering our eyes:
The shadow of that pueblo

mountain recording unfamiliar
hands as I trace repeatedly

these tired, latent graves.
May I not forget

the many calla lilies,
long arms of ancient ruin

& wave meeting
in sand of braid & kiss.

Yes—: Night,

if we proceed
as the crow's call

or perhaps the organ's black
keys, send me loose

to the branch & bud
of orange tree,

& then (slowly)
to the silence

of ash.