

20190625_theslowdown_20190625_128

Wed, 9/30 7:31PM 5:00

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

ship, nostra, stories, carried, survive, libya, cap, hear, exhibition, loaded, relic, aopa, sit, saba, tragedy, bodies, toughen, passengers, attempt, ropa

00:06

I'm Tracy k Smith, and this is the slow down.

00:21

I visited the Venice pmla this past May. One of the artworks was the wreck of a fishing boat that sank off the coast of Libya in April 2015 while attempting to carry approximately 850 migrants to Italy, survivors of the rack described having been loaded into the belly of the vessel and told to sit on one another's laps, quote, like fish. Only 28 of the ship's passengers survived. Prior to the attempt, many had been struggling as laborers in Libya, a country roiling with its own social upheaval. The exhibition called botica nosara, or our ship is the idea of Swiss Icelandic artist Christophe bukal. The press release around the exhibition calls it, quote, a relic of human tragedy, but also a monument to contemporary migration. Having been zoomed, the ship sits on iron risers, so it seems that only now hasn't managed to float. Various gashes in the hole, let light escape. Though I imagine on its journey, the interior packed with people would have been dark. I don't know what I was expecting to see that afternoon. But I had been eager to stand before the ship, feeling the mix of bereavement and shame that tragedy elicits. Somehow, I imagined evidence of the individual lives lost aboard the ship would be palpable. I think I carried this impression from the stories I've been told of the stench of human suffering, that still Mars Elmina castle in Ghana. They're the Portuguese than the Dutch than the English enslaved nearly 13 million Africans before loading them as cargo into their ships. standing before Baraka nostra, I thought of the ways that these different types of forced migration are connected. Viewing the relic made me wish for access to the testimonies of its passengers. Those who survive are stewards of a narrative we all need to hear. I think we must allow ourselves to be moved by the stories of necessity, survival and of course, loss. Today's poem AOPA nostra by Natalie handle goes a long way toward satisfying that desire to hear from those whose lives had led them to

board that ship. It's a reminder of all the many lives and stories lost, ignored, unreported, denied, and guarded like terrible secrets in the full sweep of history, those lives and every other are part of a single story. A *ropa nostra* by Natalie handle. Now that we are guests in our bodies, how do we survive? Zeinab operated a boat to be close to the hundred and three members of her family who drowned by some learn to speak a language with another alphabet. It gathered feathers from trembling snow, Beckham carried splintered glass across 100 Mountains. Bina stole prayers from forgotten bodies. Saba held the sound of the drums as if it were breaths chinelo cap to the sun in a folded leaf under a mattress roya cap to the shadow of the Caspian Sea in the man who needed her. Mykola dreamed a mystery turned cruel by another dream. Maybe the past is the beginning and return is staying absent. Meanwhile, when anyone says toughen up, look at them until they fade the slowdown is a production of American public media in partnership with the Poetry Foundation.