

a baptism of the diaspora

my skin is burnt from the Delta sun
rays unforgiving, reclaiming, building all that needs to be done
bands of local mosquitoes determined after recognizing my fresh flesh
that i am blood
silt rich by floods capsizing, uprooting
blood silt rich by levees torn
blood– mark me as you did back then, tear into me
they tell me my baptism awaits me in the Delta

entire constellations in the blackest midnight sky lay witness
mars from above circle rounds labor from strange lands the world carried to these waters
Baptize Africa, Delta
Baptize China, Delta
Baptize I Sopravvissuti, Delta
sirius tells the Mississippi it demands sacrifice of life
Torah overheard, melts into stain-glass pools of white
waxing crescent circle rounds “sugar-coated love” in the raspiest voice
they tell me my baptism awaits me in the Delta

your heart, that heart, the Delta asks
is it seared from exhaustion centuries bound–
so will you welcome the clouds wafting in the deep blues
is it sick and tired like Fannie Lou from brutality’s long listed,
Dockery denied, Till epitomized, Bryant-green covered reality–
so will you welcome his dichotomous piercing soft eyes
Anubis speaks:
what sounds do your lips form from the introduction of rain cast by the slamming of keys
they tell me my baptism awaits me in the Delta

features identified:1119
courage-possessed, freedom-obsessed
tennessee points her finger and announces each one
apex dance, diaspora present
Declared
Quicksand’s moonshine is on the table
Bastet snatches onto my purse, lies down on my scarf– black and white
we breathe in life, restored weary eyes sigh long into the night
guitar rips reds transparent cries
my baptism arrived at a bar in the Delta