

Interview

It is the innocence which constitutes the crime

-James Baldwin

Ask: *If there is no one / to see me standing here, / who gets to write this history? / Say: My face is a gathering, / infinite mirrors staring. / Ask: How do you hide the chalk outlines? / Say: I call this collection innocence. / Ask: Why have you decorated the bodies? / Say: They were dusty when I found them. / Ask: When you reach down deep / in your pockets, does it make your shoulders do a shrug? / Say: Here is the bed, under which I keep / many things— books, songs, extra hands. / Ask: Why is the word shepherd circled over and over? / Say: The holes, larger than rounds, were already there. / Ask: Do you shiver when nails drag the chalkboard? / Say: This is the sound of a borrowed hand clapping. / This is the sound of another and another. / Ask: If there is nothing to witness, / is there still a bystander? / Say: I touch the dust of old cadavers / and make of my face a closed-mouth tattoo. / Ask: If a bystander bystands in the woods / and no one is there to hear them fall, / do they make a sound? / Say: This is the sound of chalk tracing a cadaver.*