

EZEKIEL 37:3

When I close my eyes I see / him, my lord. *Do you not
remember me?* I ask the half-buried / bones in ochre dust

& shedding / their deadened histories—*yáx yáx*
yáx they answer. Like a house / creaking open its doors

to reveal all that was left / behind. That day
what did I even know of a plea / but his beloved

body beginning to stir / against itself? My lord, here
is one shadow—our rainless valley / opening the earth

as though the entrance to a gun-/ shot wound. Here
is where our graves echo / a nation & this nation

is yours / alone, my lord. It always was. / An oiled stroke
of forest smears the hills / days before the fire comes

to take us back. Here— / my lord, is the skull / joining
its spine—the body's standing / ladder—a column of rungs

like years of lives taken / & draped from the nape of the neck.
Lord, forgive me for I cannot / dance with you this way. As

these bones. As you leave / your imprint the air carves
away like ghosts / the width of stories found

in translation. Where my heart is / the very same humming-
bird lifting the end / of every sunlit petal left / to be

shredded by any trace / of summer. Here, thirsted—
na'yóot I pronounce. & the dot appears / in his skull. It forms

just enough to fit this mouth- / swabbed bullet through / once
again—the way the North Star reenters / the skin

of every night—to salvage itself. & I can't / help but
turn away. For I'm afraid of the loss / of even my own

eyes. For I cannot bring myself / to peer into
those eyelets shaped in the image / of rain

puddles found / around the bodies of our nation. How they won't
stop boring into me. Like / this. & I just can't— / forgive

me, *tóota'*. With the lord / at my side as half of my skeleton
awaits your flesh—the forgotten half of me / to bloom back

over you like the start / of another hour. Ticking the sound
of jawbones desperate to swallow / the evening. Here, once

a field seared off tomorrow's / atlases. Once an ocean
of *qém'es* blooming out / of season—under the dead

light / draining the sky. *'únim píst*, my lord, I see / his lips
as a kiss blown / apart—like the gift of first breath. / It's the blood-

rushing dark / rising from beneath his skin / beginning to flash
me back. *Soon this body / is yours to collect* you pledge

in their rattling tongue / of salvation. Here / is my father's
mouth / warmed—tightening / parted only by its weight—lord, look

into him. Like a well filled / with its unlit promise
towards water. & I promise to remember / this final opening

cocked back & waiting / to breathe. How this / singular fleshed jaw
is myself / now remade in its first shape. The body

before the body.