

Not Resistance, Celebration

When the 38 Dakota men
accused and tried unjustly, sentenced,
stood together on the gallows in Mankato
side-by-side, muslin bags
pulled over their heads, blinded:
they linked hands, a tethered
string of eagles wing-to-wing –
and started
 chanting
the spirit song of their ancestors
going home
going home
 singing

When Hijikata, Butoh master,
that art arising like a luminous ghost
from the fallout of mass atomic genocides –
summoned family and students
to his deathbed –
he performed clear through his dying:
 no distinction
between the dance of dying
 and the dance of living;
or Takada of the troupe Sankai Juki,
 suspended
high above ground when the cord
 snapped
and he plummeted
 in stillness
holding his pose
through the fall
 5
 stories
 down
to the concrete below
unflinching, scarcely breathing –
only
 dancing
 dancing

When Haitian slaves and rebels gathered
In the woods of Bois Caiman in 1791
for a Voudoun ceremony
under Dutty Boukman and Cecile Fatiman
to invoke the ancestors

to be ridden by Loa
to beg their strength in the struggle
to overthrow their oppressors –
there were drums
there was music
there was singing, and
there was dancing, yes
dancing

So if you feel you are
powerless
to circumvent, to overcome
your own oppressions;
if you feel you are
bound
by petty tyrannies
by insult and corruption
by impunity and cruelty and
by fascistic injunctions:
you still have voice
you have body
you have feet and pulse and
heartbeat
beat
beat
beat –
to march and stomp in rhythm;
you have eyes
to weep and to witness;
you have hands, hands
to clap
to tap along the keys, in melody
to press the valves and pluck the strings;
you have hands, hands
to touch to caress
to reach
towards each other

And there will be
music
music
there will be singing
and yes
there will be
dancing
dancing
dancing