

EMPTY

I know what a body emptied
of its light, feels like on the palms.

I have seen a body emptied of
its memory, I dread the open eyes,

even though I don't dream of them –
I dread what is dead that is not a sacrifice.

I avoid eyes emptied of light, I fear
they would tell me something new about myself

if our eyes meet. I am scared they would
tell me what no one would believe.

I am not bold enough to be a mad prophet.
Today, I locked eyes with a small body,

emptied of want. The toddler was younger
than the one I held to the cemetery in these hands

because we don't have gurney for children.

I dream of bodies cloaked for prayers,
laid calmly on the grey rug inside my room.

I'm waiting for my brothers to join me
as we always do, but they are seven seas away

& this prayer must be said before the sun set.

Because the moon is God's right eye,
we don't bury our dead under its light, even in war.

I was alone, but I hear my lover's voice
asking me to switch off the fan.

With eyes eclipsed with fatigue, I raised my hands
and brought the blades to a halt. I sweat out my fears,

after watching the clips of children
dressed as if they are on a journey in Sahara,

except their mothers are assembled
in a garden of wren, learning to perfume their palms

with what is left of the dead. I made ablution
and stood on the danduma – spread before I slept off,

it was past time for prayer, the sun slouched in its cradle.