

quietly you take them
the assault of heavy punches
a beaten-down labrador whimpering and limp
steeped in defeat by the abuse, ever relentless
you have a long memory for hurt
gathering your glittering gown of grief in your hands
and pressing onward
down the aisle to your demise
with black holes in your cosmic eyes
big enough to contain galaxies
but emptied by magnitude

in the face of all this hollowed-out heart
you carry on, lurching and bent
blunted by the tide
its foaming waves of time crashing over your body
and rolling you out into something you don't quite recognize
a secret of the sea,
a relic of the past

in the cool shell of oversized skin
you carry on, even as you shrink
collapsing inwards down to the bone
torn to shreds by some incessant maelstrom
you steal some of its rain for yourself
to carry with you
as the roses pass their bloom
you carry your history on your back
as your bones bend
and groan under the strain
forward motion is wretched
even when there is nothing good behind you
it never gets easier to settle
for less than you had hoped for
when you were less battered by age

even when the tree of hope bears no fruit
you carry on, without even knowing why

feet dragging forward in retreat
arms of bone bearing your white flag
your fight is over,
your war is lost
and when you finally reach the well

you find it empty
and carry on