

Half-Past

the corners tattered;
the paper rests weightless on
my hands.
the photograph of this man
faltering
fading before my very eyes.
the date is indecipherable
the time is not mine
not my time
half-past an hour
when your resistance might have
been silent
but my outrage
rings out even now.

so you paid your way into
countries;
bought and sold status and
identification.
a piece of paper
fraying in your hands -
these 80 year-old hands.
these long buried
fingertips that draw forth
a final defiance from me:
“and I don’t need this
to tell me who I am.”

I am not over you;
I am not over this
insult
and it has not changed much.
this border,
this country
I can never make mine.
your bones built the
foundations of nations
making me wonder if
I belong here
at all.

I wish I could
imagine that
this border

these boundaries mean nothing.
half-past enlightenment,
we decided to turn
back and
go the opposite direction.
I wish it could matter
wish I could
feel
how it is to fear
losing myself
if I lose this frailty in the palm
of my hands,
misplace this piece
of history
that you made sure
you kept safe
tucked in wallets,
displayed in frames,
safely stowed in deposit boxes.
confirmation of existence
and identity.
and in your caution
in your safety
we have all lost
ourselves.