

Women Tie Babies to Dogs

for Standing Rock Sioux Nation
Black Lives Matter
and all who save children

*soap tries to wash blood away
it remains on rocks it runs to rivers*

Whitestone Massacre
North Dakota 1863

women tie babies to the dogs
they tie children to horses
they cry to the dogs “go”
“go” they scream to the animals
and with ears flattened and their own hearts
beating wild dogs and horses run

*blood remains on crickets’ backs
in nests made from dog’s fur*

Warsaw Ghetto 1942

Irene carries baby after baby
in a tool box potato sacks for bigger children
she keeps 2500 names in jars
buried in her yard so they will know who they are
she never forgets mothers’ eyes
or fathers’ faces handing babies over
letting go again and again kisses letting loose at last
Irene’s arms encircle carry shush hide tote
exiting through ghetto guards
her trained dogs bark to cover voices
crying mama papa mama papa
she fears her silent orders of *bark now! bark now!*
dogs now! now! will burst her heart

caught legs broken
her blood runs down Nazi uniforms

*blood blurs dreams and visions
pools in puddles of those stilled*

1619 to present

ordinary dreams
salt and pepper nights
unlike some mothers' dreams
that continue past the darkest hours
into the waking lights of day
the ordinary dream for these mothers
is not contentment or a life of laughter
in these dreams
their sons are not whipped, hung, or shot

in these dreams they do not die

Mary Strong Jackson