

A Feminist Interpretation of the Massacre

With a frantic swirling of your hands

you take up your hair

like a Gibson girl,

then look at me with

the sudden clarity of sleep.

Standing on the edge of the bed,

wearing a concert t-shirt

that we've shared between us

down to a faded rag,

wearing the panties that ride

higher on one hip than the other,

you tell me your vision of the Zong.

They must have made a charm bracelet

of the African women, you explain,

standing on the edge of my bed.

Chained at the ankles,

each to the next,

on the 29th of November,

with the ship's water running low,

you say that the Dutch gentlemen

must have ushered those ladies

to the open window

with the utmost of care.