## **DEHUMANIZATION**

Simone Hunter – Hobson

Queens and Kings' harmonies dragged out of their homes, knives to their throats – thrown on a ship's lower arc, their bodies stacked like sardines.

Hear Solomon's silent thoughts of wicked cursing, and hissing.
His wife pleading against the bare deck, left cheek iron-branded.
See Eliza's baby girl snatched from her mother's bosom.
12 years old: carrying a mulatto fetus, child of a master.

"Roll Jordan, Roll!"
the lingering weeps of the
gospel
throughout the labor plantation.
Brutal sun
beats black skin.
Feel the thick leather whip
lashing
across Solomon's back – broken
spine, broken pride.

200 years later...
Protesters still humming the gospel "Roll Jordan, Roll!"
While police bullets continue to beat against my father's skin.
The school-to-prison pipeline, the new Jim Crow laws still transporting my people to

the new plantation of incarceration – forbidden to read or write, cramped into the same cold deck beds, necks lynched by the white gleaming stars of the American flag.

Still, we pray, we sing
"Roll Jordan, Roll!"
for our brother – pleading
"I Can't Breathe!"
"I Can't Breathe!"
"I Can't Breathe!"
"I Can't Breathe!"

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