

Winter in Waveland

by Yasmin Elaine Waring

They build them high they do in Waveland, Mississippi.
The tall houses with their skinny thighs spread wide
flirting with the dusky coast, like antebellum ladies
petticoats lifted, stockings wetted, ankles bared, saving
their hems from the unpredictable tide, tempting grey
men who will bleed in black and white, swept under
cages of steel crinoline, they mistake for shelter.

Their bones, roused by Katrina, have long settled now.
A confederacy of Quercus Virgiana, Southern Live Oak
having nursed on their marrow, circle generations of
deep-fried apartheid around petrified cores. Thick veils
of Spanish Moss cannot hide their shame. Jefferson Davis
was not a racist. His diaries filled with cravatted penmanship,
gentlemanly proof that economics have always guided ethics.

The reconstruction will be televised.

Recorded in two-minute clips that skip over the rotting fruit
dangling from branches that refuse to break. The Battle Hymn
is now a Syren song advertised in Garden & Gun, bargained
the soul of the South they have for funky juke joints, buttermilk
biscuits, big ass ceiling fans and the finest line of shotguns
available for the ladies. A sonos sound system is no remedy.
The skin still blisters and scabs from the chill of such luxuries.

Let the slap of northwesterly winds unmoor their four-poster
reveries. I'll follow the Snowy Plover who will not be deterred
from finding her place along the shifting sand.

