

Postcards from Paris, Valdosta*after Slaverio*

Postcard manifesto of our history
without applause. If we excavate,

we unearth this hidden thing—
police chief, townspeople constructing

parade floats bound by fire
cord. Henry Smith was exhibited, swinging

eye sockets singed in oilslicked blaze.
A portrait of American past.

Plate glass, silver salts. The pop
of flashbulb after picnic jubilee—

these straw-hatted men pose with trophy, cooling
ashes. The sneer with incisors

captured in sepia tones. Only the tangible
doesn't lie. Teeth and bones in children's pockets.

And Mary Turner, tied upside a poplar tree
not unlike a bursting poppy.

She twisted, skin-slouched, knife-slit
a vacated cavity between her hipbones.

Theirs is the history we were taught to forget.

Toxic voiceless paper—
hush and hushed.