

/ Antiquity

What am I searching for in this dead wreckage,
trestles of bone-spar webbed by orb weavers?
To thumb a slice of ginger bottle, or scratch black
up from burnt opium pipes? To call that body back
in time and hold it, as if object were owner;
and is it honor or indifference to translate material
into person? As if I could wring the song
note by note out of the bird, isolate the dance
from the dancer in this sepia postcard of a Navajo
performing himself for East Coast tourists
who hang, slack-jawed, from train windows.
I want to put that dancer back
into the privacy of history. But he's got his own future.
He's out there now, working on the railroad.