Porsha Olayiwola
In Lieu of Writing about the Mother Recaptured into Chattel Slavery, 2021
Poem in response to works in the Fenway Gallery
In *Being Muholi: Portraits as Resistance,* on view at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum February 1 0- May 8, 2022

IN LIEU OF WRITING ABOUT THE MOTHER RECAPTURED INTO CHATTEL SLAVERY

the pit of famine you keep me in
all i want is to swallow the tongue
stress steeping—neglectful lust when i get like this—
my love— forgive me
prairie dogs a pack of wet bodies
tangled legs—bridging a tower of hunger
you perched—blessing my hands bending channel
your torso into my chest— when you stretch
i love my sweet pea— swimming ribbons
barefooted nipples rivers of want—
instead it is of escape crossing the river north to
a woman this began as a poem about
the silk of thin sheets rather than
fretting violet words i know you are coursing—i chose
what the mouth doesnt ask— my eyes solicit
my sinking palms find your waist
your backside into my thigh we lay—you slink

we lay—you slink your backside into my thigh
my sinking palms find your waist my eyes solicit—
what the mouth doesn't ask i know you are coursing—i chose
fretting violet words rather than
the silk of thin sheets this began as a poem about
a woman crossing the river north to
escape instead it is of rivers of want—
barefooted nipples swimming ribbons
my sweet pea i love when you stretch
your torso into my chest bending channel
you perched—blessing my hands a tower of hunger
tangled legs—bridging wet bodies
a pack of prairie dogs
forgive me my love—
when i get like this— neglectful lust—stress steeping
the tongue all i want is to swallow
you—keep me in the pit of famine