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El Sueño del Ahogado / Dream of the Drowned Man

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El Sueño del Ahogado / Dream of the Drowned Man

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Inspired by Lola Álvarez Bravo's photcollage

A long walk through brush and mesquite, we find him floating
Half his face in the stream, half dreaming

We sit sweetly on bare branches, on stacks of matchbooks
Our crinoline skirts won't get wet—we don't approach

We brought glass jugs of water for the thirsty

Whoever heard of Swan Lake on the Rio Grand?
That's us—a dozen ballerinas, a prince in the water

He might have been a teacher
He was definitely a worker

*Pobre el pobre que no pudo cruzar
Tanto querer, queriendo*

*Fue suficiente el camino
¿Qué le cobró el ogro del puente? ¿Su dinero, o su vida?*

If he keeps dreaming like this—
Because where would he go

His sisters are home—when is he going to call

Too much water can be bad for you
Can turn you back into the salamander of the inhale

Someone plucks at violin strings and the prince rises

He takes our hands, one at a time, to waltz on the bank
Swings our sweeping skirts over the shore

We dance squares around the water for the thirsty
More and more people—each wanting—want people—each wanting—want

The clouds point out of the wild, the corner of sky, the bridge we're all trying to get to

To the corner where you could still live, if only
If only we'd arrived sooner
If only we could pull you out of the river
If only