After “70

Some thirty years since Sparrow-Cove she appeared where she began on Great Western docking

old Bristol hollowed and halved by the Falkland tide, and the time it took to remember her

she was the first of herself, a stunning leap into spiting the sea, all iron blossom and bellowing

he can see the lifetimes she has ferried from below the waterline, where she fights the city air

where she is half desert half glory, where she sits avoiding the rust

the people have not forgotten the bones buried in the books that built Bristol.

the stench of sea and copper still carry the weight, of a blooded Bermuda

no matter which way you sailed history is a muddied ledger filled with many names and
the differences blurred under
murmuring inquisition once Colston
was called to the docket

it took a century to redefine these
waterways and build a dialogue
beyond the cotton fields

our communal emblem
sits where she began
and beckons the city

to sit in a chattering room
to redefine the voyage from
everywhere to home

long after the cove and the scuttling
she still whispers a waterlogged
shanty about freedom

there is plenty of story to whittle from
her wood I wish I could have heard
her singing back into harbour.

_Saili Katebe_