

Laura Swearingen-Steadwell

processional

he lifts my grandmother's body

 a sheaf of reeds
he picked himself, cattails
rustling in the wind

 he carries her

as though he meant to make something
useful, to weave a basket,
to give these bones the benefit
of new intention.

 this is what they mean
when they say *good man*: they mean
a love strong enough to smile
as though he could lift her anywhere,
carry her down the aisle

 with my father
and the other white-gloved men.

