Grief

My mother cried for a week, first in the boxcars
then in the camps. Her friends said, "Tekla,
don't cry, the Germans will shoot you
and leave you in the field," but she couldn't stop.

Even when she had no more tears, she cried,
cried the way a dog will gulp for air
when it's choking on a stick or some bone
it's dug up in a garden and swallowed.

The woman in charge gave her a cold look
and knocked her down with her fist like a man,
and then told her if she didn't stop crying
she would call the guard to stop her crying.

But my mother couldn't stop. The howling
was something loose in her nothing could stop.

Excerpt from Echoes of Tattered Tongues Audiobook, narrated by Jon Brandi:

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