

August 1619 by Clint Smith III

Over the course of 350 years, 36,000 slave ships crossed the Atlantic Ocean. I walk over to the globe & move

my finger back & forth between the fragile continents. I try to keep count how many times I drag

my hand across the bristled hemispheres, but grow weary of chasing history that swallowed me.

For every hundred people who were captured & enslaved, forty died before they ever reached the New World. **40% died**

I pull my index finger from Angola to Brazil & feel the bodies jumping from the ship.

I drag my thumb from Ghana to Jamaica & feel the weight of dysentery make an anvil of my touch.

I slide my ring finger from Senegal to South Carolina & feel the ocean separate a million families.

The soft hum of history spins on its tilted axis. A cavalcade of ghost ships wash their hands of all they carried.

Ghost Ships: People died on them

his finger represents the boats

8 Stanzas

24 Lines

Some enslaved people tried to escape

Pattern: moving his finger from African nations

