

Ajar

The lighthouse on Tybee Island  
guided ships from Africa  
safely into dock. Fragrant magnolia blossoms  
and wide-open white dogwoods  
frame a bronze plaque in the city park.

The Market  
1820

In the shadow of the auction block  
I hear the auctioneer's staccato monologue:  
"Here is number 102, 30 years old, very strong.  
Who will give me two-hundred dollars?"  
White hands pop up. "Sold! \$875 to Mr. Brown."  
"Number 103, 28 years old, without her child. Sold \$700!"  
"Number 104, 8 year old boy. Sold \$550!"  
His mother screams  
as her arms reach to empty air,  
watching her son walk away into the dark.  
The gavel slams.

The market is closed now  
but its door is still ajar.

by Arlin Buyert

