

AUNT CHLOE

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Divination

For all our bodies *after the overturn of Roe vs. Wade*

Daughters,
I see you coming,
wading through rivers of
lifelines struggling to hold
their own bodies, own
their own bodies
long before you/me/our bodies.

I see you,
your mother's daughter,
but ever your own woman
birthing myth into your reality.
Manifestation of your visions
pricking thorns in the loins
of your adversaries.

I see you
freed by your own measure, your own pleasures,
hedon and heroine in your own goddess wet dreams,
your gardens overrun with fire-flower and thunder-drum
that none shall weed and harvest, none
but you.

Fast

after *Breath Better Spent: Living Black Girlhood* by DaMaris B. Hill

They convince themselves
we are born promiscuous.
The neighborhood just calls it, “fast.”
They believe that we are born
mouths, hands, caverns
they can shove themselves into,
hide from themselves—
the bitter of their cum and chaos.

They covet our darkness, round thickness,
the toned tender of our bodies.
They steal our budding,
carry our perfume away with them
to market, spit
before they walk away.
We are born promiscuous;
they convince themselves.

We know we are born “fast,”
little sisters to Earth.
Our bodies pour her libations monthly.
Her fire purifies our wombs,
cauterizes our tongues
after they have pried,
opened our mouths, cut,
forced their way.

We know we are born “fast.”
We hurled ourselves into this life
quickenning through womb tide
to arrive as the help, the healing,
even weaponry if we must
because they hold our mamas
captive trying to
kill them.

Interrogation: BIPOC

Whose idea this?

As if ancestors do not peer
through these faces:
our features, monument
to their memory;
our skins, remnant
of their very existence;
our dreams, veil
between dimensions;
our triumphs, testament
of their sacrifices.

Whose idea
this?

Erase us
from indigenouness?

How deeply
must our bodies be planted?
How long
must our blood blanch
the roots of this land?
How far
must our bodies travel
before their footprints are indelible?
Whose idea?

As if "Black"
were anything other than
the nascence of color.

Constitution 6

To claim 4 founding fathers, no mothers

To pound Earth with your rhythmless feet

To forget Earth's breast holds your steps, records their aimless lightning, destructive thunder

To forge language into law into badges into guns into massacres

To pillage every inch of wealth, clench it between your blistering fists, chew it between your decaying teeth, and spit it back

To punk peace treaties after you stole the land

To covet the black/brown/red/yellow body for its resilience and beauty

To beat the black/brown/red/yellow body into submission

To experiment the black/brown/red/yellow body to quench your curiosities

To rape the black/brown/red/yellow body to satisfy your insatiable greed and self-hatred that you convince others to believe is theirs

To castrate the black/brown/red/yellow body envious of the seeds it bears, the seeds you spill beneath the magnolias' weeping, the seeds old ghosts gather and sow

To sterilize the black/brown/red/yellow body, bid it birth your debauchery

To incarcerate the black/brown/red/yellow body as if bars can contain gods and arrest their will to live

To pluck eyes praying you can kill a vision greater than you will ever see

To clamp your ears, muffle the cacophony of shackles that stalk your weary one-eyed sleep

To scrub the blood you let, the blood you shed, the blood you thirst, your blasphemous baptism the blood

To lie, claim it scripture

To pen your narrative exclusively of erasures

To christen yourself 1st World, righteous

“Super Power?”

Wake

a social gathering associated with death, usually before a funeral, and traditionally held in the home of the deceased with the body present

After the claustrophobia and paranoia of the global pandemic, police brutality and white supremacy on relentless rampage, protests after protest, death upon death, stress after stress, on August 28, 2020,

Chadwick Boseman passes,

leaves us, and I am struggling. So much rampant, goddamned brokenness on every billboard, screen, page, and platform, just blasted brokenness everywhere on viral repeat, my soul bared to the blistering fever of Earth where every melanated birth is threatened with extinction upon its first breath.

Chadwick Boseman is dead at 43,

seemingly another win for those who eat sin for supper, regurgitate, and serve it on a plate to the emaciated as repass.

Chadwick Boseman is gone,

and the world is just too god-damned broken, so I gather what breaths I have left, the itch on my fingers, and my soul-folk wit to fix something, anything. I spy the defunct CD player poised on the entertainment center, no longer the center of entertainment in a grieving world anaesthetized with entertainment, in my grieving world with Chadwick and so many others leaving broken and brokenness behind them.

I must take the pieces of something, anything into my hands and sculpt some semblance of solace. I gather the tools, loose screws spill them onto the living room floor. I pick, pull, pry, punch the jammed switch and tray that refuses to open. These speakers have not sung for years, but I need a juke joint jam session and a choir and Congo Square, my living room, so fix something, anything I must. I summon my soul-folk through my heart chambers, pray for direction. My awkward fingers pick, pull, pry until the switch clicks. The Parliament CD finally drops. The once-stuck tray sweeps it away. The digital display twinkles before my eyes.

Under the direction of Supreme Commander George Clinton, the royal funk begins to rise from the singing speakers, parts the sea of grief rushing at my feet. Snatched by the G-spot of conjure, somewhere between resurrection and victory, I stand, dust my hands and begin to dance. As Boss Bishop Bootsy's base, tuned to ancestors anchoring the MotherShip, ricochets in every corner of

the room, my 16-year-old son with the aged bourbon soul catches the holy funk-ghost. His body bursts aurora borealis as if he were birthed in the manger of a psychedelic 70's scene. Transcending tragedy, my heart stops bleeding, my soul no longer mourns as angels fall in formation, take their place in the Soul Train line.

Before they ascend, Chadwick-T'Challa performs the rites of the cake walk, and a host of the breathing-while-black, gone-too-soon, melanated martyrs remove the shackles of their brokenness and rise, commence a boogaloo of praise and bless the ballroom of my jubilee.