

# AUNT CHLOE

## A Journal of Artful Candor

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Freddie

As his voice gained its growl, he wished for a couch,  
clambering for clout, because as a child,  
Freddie ate reluctantly, cereal with powdered milk,  
praying it into peppered eggs,  
sizzling bacon, hotcakes with heated syrup,  
stones of resentment lined his shoes and gave his walk an unsteady sway,

For the love of money

People can't even walk the street

Because they never know who in the world they're gonna beat

Gold grilled OG supreme,

pandered the respect that eludes, the respect he needs,

In lieu of loyalty to beating the block,

With a heart of hesitation, with eyes cast down,

the latest pair of Jordan's gleamed on OG supreme,

he remembered his mom stumbling through the door,

asking who the food was for,

as she whispered, "it's just enough for me",

For the love of money

People can't even walk the street

Because they never know who in the world they're gonna beat

Clasping the leashes of his bookbag,

A glimmering gold chain glistening before him,

His manhood at stake, his father absent,

His inconsolable conscience riled,

He smiles, he daps his new leader,  
He will eat tonight.

For the love of money  
People can't even walk the street  
Because they never know who in the world they're gonna beat

King of Sorrow

I put on some Sade and drive

away the unbelonging. I sing

Anita and 365 days of the year I am loved.

I billow the baritone of Barry White and I am

loved just the way I am and I remember

how my parents survived with a song.

On Purpose

I want to forgive America

And escape the rage that Antebellum brings,

Then I envision the fear in the eyes of those chained

In tight spaces inhaling putrid fragrances seasick

Numbing numbing numbing

from racing thoughts of never returning

then with dropped jaw I watch men scale capitol walls

and remember how our insurrections ended

heads severed and unblinking on wooden posts

along the road a morbid example made

or with feet hopelessly kicking until they can't

I want to forgive America

And elude the assimilated shame

Of mispronounced names but

They pronounce our names as questions

On purpose.

White Flowers

Tree, tree, tree, tree,  
peering out of the yellow, black bus window,  
“Don’t end trees, don’t end trees,”  
dreadfully sparse they became,  
the conspicuous school taunted me with its largeness,  
you know how they say boys give butterflies?  
as the bus would lean into the bend,  
I never failed to have a whole jungle, a whole stampede,  
our joy surrendered to history,  
where once hummed breezy schoolchild bus babble,  
stillness consumed us,  
today raucous voices seep into our open windows,  
we needed air,  
eyes clenched, wishing what I saw was a sea of white flowers,  
instead, they are a glaring mob, every sneering eye on our all black bus,  
furrowed brows on fledgling faces,  
a scowling mob, yet, one angry face,  
jeering,  
“What y’all gone do now that your King is dead,”  
“I guess they’ll send y’all back to Africa,”  
my math book substitutes as a teddy bear,  
I envision myself in a funnel of silence,  
I step off the bus, gaining footing on the shallow steps,  
Looking up for help and blinded by the sun,  
Kissed by the cool April air,  
the dewy April air thought my skin worthy of it’s dew,  
it told me I’d be okay,  
Make yourself small, I thought

be invisible, I thought,  
When I stop thinking,  
there is spitting, kicking, taunting, mocking,  
wishing what I saw was a sea of white flowers,  
But today is April 5, 1968,

And he fought for us to be here, mama said