

## **Thread Makes Blanket press**



Philadelphia, PA

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Yesterday in the studio I was practicing backward-movement. My team had left, scattered elsewhere throughout the city. It was good to be alone. Alone I could think about the time we leapt together over the side of the slave ship and if it would be possible to re-live that moment in reverse. To bring the dead back on-board to be with us, in this struggle. I got into it. All this moving backward, and at some point my arms were out to the side, my body was tilted and twisting, and I was suddenly, sharply, reminded of the day Kai and I were at the beach, early and playful in our love, running like airplanes preparing for take-off.

Something struck me: a thing striking a body. The recollection of that moment—leaping from the end of existence and running black and flying from the safety of the sand—and all the good feelings running alongside freedom, but out of time it developed a gravitas that struck me down. Uncomfortable, I cried and I couldn't stop. I must've cried for years. Something out of time had come back on me and it was striking.

I recently tried to describe the idea of *deja vu* to an eight-year-old, and in the face of my fear that he was too young to understand, he reassured me he knew exactly what I was talking about—the feeling of disturbance that creeps up as you recall another's memory. It does not make sense to talk about this disturbance in the context of vertically temporal phenomena. Time doesn't stack up. My mind works better trying to understand the disturbance of *deja vu* as indicative of our (the expansive our, beyond humanity) proclivity for black hole-iness, for self-making and desperate grasps inward and exhales of collective feeling out into the ether.

There is a spatio-temporality where my acquiescence to this type of disturbance is criminal. In that place, disturbance is deserving of violence, imprisonment, endings. In that place, such ruptures—which are really dreams—are regulated by linear time and carceral power. That is the place where we practice deferring our dreams. But what happens to a dream upon waking? When the body comes back to life in all its regulated materiality, demanding attention and resolution. Where in the body does the dream slip off to, operational but undetected (*someplace that is nowhere I know*)?

This book, written in the company of too many ghosts, is some stabs in the dark at dream-answers to these questions. Born out of a journal kept during the 2013 East Coast production of *falling queens.*, an ensemble performance about loss and grief I made with a team of friends in New York and Philadelphia, I take the ideas in this little book seriously. Which is to say, I really do believe in the astrophysical proposition that we are structured inasmuch as we are surrounded by black holes—pockets of wild energy that we know almost nothing about, intellectually. I really do believe in the quantum mechanical conjecture that there are at least ten dimensions and that we will likely never know most of them because our knowing of them makes them into a thing we can know, intellectually (where even the idea of a number *ten*, representative of an accumulation of units, becomes nonsense). I really believe that some of us—those of us with a more intimate and ontological relationship to oppression—live daily in these outer-dimensions, which might explain our individual and collective headache and heartache emanating out of the effort to just make sense in a four-dimensional reality structured by imperialist anti-Black capitalist patriarchy. These moments of *deja vu*, these

striking moments in which we are struck: Perhaps these are our selves and the ghosts who carry us trying to remind us to dance brightly in and amongst all that is not.

Currently we live in this frustrating reality, in which it is suicidal to remain perpetually present to all that we are and that we are refused. Because of this, it is fine for things that we know deeply—quantum physical self-truths—to go away from time to time. What is more important: How shall I prepare myself for the re-emergence of what I have already known? And what if these deep truths have in fact not left me, but only mutated, to be discovered later by chance or never discovered at all? How will I regard a deep knowledge which reveals itself as chronic abnormality or an inability to cope or the feeling of being disturbed? That is all to say, how shall I make myself unequivocally free to all that is and is not, if not by freeing myself from certainty? And then, what shall happen to certainty?

It is in this corpus, with its weekly dying cells, its neurological adaptability and structural flexibility, that I am most prone to uncertainty—even welcoming of it. Not just for my own sake, but for the sake of all of us who wish to be free, I am glad that we have these feeling-bodies and all their liabilities. The better with which to be disturbed.

—Anna Martine Whitehead, Winter 2015



TREASURE

my black rupture





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Remember we was there  
for the supernova—



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Remember being raw, post-explosion, recalling for the first time to crawl, to walk, to dance.

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Remember cousin praising at the reunion.

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Remember our children's games: We built mud-castles where we would be king.

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Remember finally leaving that castle, which was really a prison.



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Remember knowing magik and knowing tricks; on the farm or in the field while family would disappear.

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Remember getting called *nigger* for the first time by my brother, then later by another boy who wanted to flirt.

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Remember living in a dungeon in all-day hunger, week-long runs, and bloated bodies with escaping souls. Remember the stink of it all, which you would wear like skin.



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Something sticks to me, a familiar feeling of my insides on the out-side, like cold sweat. I sense being surrounded by no thing that is so special. Things-not-objects darting like dragonflies to calm water, mathematical and intractable, flying sounds I don't remember yet how to speak. Things turning toward me and away as I get around to something else. Just things here darting, articulated and inarticulate speech. Holding the breath, remembering to breathe, remembering to shape the mouth, recalling to flick the tongue.

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This is how I figure it:

One minute you'd be here. Walking home from a store, breathing in your un-made overwrought body, and next minute you're gone. Or one day you are here, walking home, and next day you somewhere else, which could be anywhere, but which is in the position of death, which in a sense is also freedom, but it's also still death.

I want you to be treasured. Do you know what I mean? I want to treasure you, exalt you. Somehow I want to find words to describe the infiniteness of you. Instead of your name, like: "Breathtaking beauty." "Too good for this world." My language is a trifle.

After you leave, we don't have much. Just a small patch for shucking, on which my bones ache and kling-klang against nothing. Still, I can't stop my slanging mouth. STOP KILLING ME, we'll shout. And, I CAN'T BREATHE. And, I HAVE THE RIGHT TO A LEGIBLE DEATH. And, I HAVE THE RIGHT TO LEAVE THIS STINKING EXCUSE FOR A WORLD, and I DEMAND IT. And then, I MAY LEAVE THIS WORLD BY ANY MEANS, I MIGHT LEAVE THIS WORLD, I MIGHT MAKE MYSELF A DESTROYER OF WORLDS.



Yet and still, treasure me.

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In a paneled room with Colin Powell, we are talking. At some point it becomes apparent that he and I have had this conversation before. The structure of our discussion is Invisible Man. The flow is

Rupture

Collapse

Self-abuse and desperation

Now big man (or grow)

'til perfection, or not

Ambivalent repetition of the first three or four

Posture, posture

Disappear

He trying to convince me that someday no one will remember us and shouldn't I be grateful for that. But I have no gratitude, or I don't believe



him. “Speak for yourself,” I say, and he just laughs and laughs quietly into his broad chest.

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In a studio now, I am messing with Ed. Ed, a jazz dancer, a slight man, a gay man, a dead Black San Franciscan. We agree on things—the value of things and sex and pleasure. Or living things like failure and curiosity, effort and discomfort. Fungal things. Excess and breathing into it, breathing gusts of things out of us. Living things, things which leave us. I was trying to understand what happened to Ed and to his queer Black dancing empire by pacing Mission St, U St, Christopher St, re-reading *Lose Your Mother*, re-running *Jerry Springer*, researching for clues in dark matted tumble-weaves on San Franciscan sidewalks. I find Ed in the alley, sifting through tides of trash and the great works. Great works of fungus, slavery, frameworks for debt. The muddy beaches of slavery’s tides: Capital and Credit.

Ed and I attempt to play in this—the quantifiable valuation and fungibility of everything—but the fact remains that my colleague will someday have to dance as a ghost in free spaces like alleyways at street fests, doing spirited moves whose manifestations are beholden to a grant cycle (we’ll give him programming and this is how we’ll remember him).





His empire will be temporarily re-constituted by protégés who mourn at less than minimum wage—still lamenting Ed decades later. We architects of memory, imprisoned by loss, consult one another over appropriate ticket prices for the show, and how much are memories worth in relation to public benefit, and so on. We sweeten ourselves to the foundation who will have us, or have Ed now that he is dead. Trying to focus over the din of Ed, encouraging Ed to stop obsessing over his upright stance and get down with us. We are groundcover, we make ourselves into fruit that hangs low, we make ourselves sugary and easily harvested. We are lives that do not stand vertically—we try to tell him—and eventually we'll be permanently horizontal so we'd better build that upper body strength now.

I practice push-ups obsessively. I perfect lying down, with two and a half feet to move in any direction. I make getting low an object of desire and I fall asleep in this position. When I wake it is from a dream of being cargo.

The wake of slavery is a middle-aged man in a superhero suit crawling on his belly through as tacky a city as New York. Slavery's wake pummels infinite senses like white noise: it rumbles like the LAPD every night over Crenshaw and King. The wake breaks in initial obscurity, messy with sewage and fish crap. When Ed looks away in disgust we coo, "Even crap can be made sexy for public benefit." What is the value of fish crap?



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Speaking with Sandra Govan, Octavia Butler once opined, “It seems inevitable that my Utopia would be someone else’s Hell... Where else would Utopia work but in everyone’s private dreams?”

I dream her up, and then commune with Octavia, temporarily interrupting her signal, amplifying our waves to make a new rumble. I know it is doomed: my Utopia, my unsustainable dream. Together, as this singular noisy beast, Octavia and I watch my/our Utopia implode and swallow up its star—Ed’s din, which earlier I had confused for Eden. That firewall of ghostly logic is swallowed by black silence; his/my/her/our rich ebony cocoa hole; the deep down place we must go if we wish to go home. “We’ll travel by way of imagination,” Octavia whispers in my voice, “But we can only ever arrive by way of death—”

We perpetually return to quiet. We are committed border-crossers, no strangers to the dark chocolate other-sides of Eden. In life we wail, we stomp, we make as much loud sound and fury in joy and pain as our flesh can bear, we demand to be remembered by the ringing of our names in someone else’s mouth. We holler at heaven, we holler. We call *OooooOOoooo wah wah weehhhh!* knowing the world won’t respond, but maybe Heaven—? Afterward, as our roaring animal tumbles into the



Black no-place with no shape and no sound, something unfamiliar reminds us of home. Home draws us in deeper. Together, outside of dreams, we have known this peace and acculturation to this vastness is easy, on account of all our practice trying to be big.

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Somewhere I know that I am dying I am dead, I am the ghost of a groaning warehouse. I am Saint Elizabeth's, I am Lorton, I am Elmina. I groan as I gorge myself, I buckle, I sag like a heavy load. I am crumbling with osteoporosis and I watch my bones disintegrate. The way I look, I remind everyone of the Twin Towers at 9:58; I am inevitable. I am unstable. I am unmistakable. I am 18 lying face down in Missouri at 12:01 on 8/9, traveling backward in time. Backward has 10 dimensions with me—time moves quickly but it is dense. In my final moments I peel back the corners of my hours, recalling all that I can in order to let my memories dance out and away from me; set my damn self finally free.

Beautiful and face down; I am unremarkable in this way. I am overly remarked upon; as I waste away I am composed into a subject to be wasted. I am a continent constituted by desire and theft. I am a peninsula, grounded and growing toward escape. I am a state preparing for my own implosion, at war with my own condition. I am on fire!



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Somewhere I am not yet a black hole, and my liminality proves more challenging than initially conjectured. In another now, I speak of memories as history and have dreams of the future, I am young and I terrify everyone. I am disturbed by a threshold which light does not cross, where time is a thing which moves inwards and beyond. That self shrugs shoulders and witnesses darknesses as blood stains, flowering without limit. Yet now, also, I am here, in this here place, which is what I am, which holds and traps everything and nothing that I am sure of. In another now, yet and still this other place, I am sickened by blood and I never want to be bound, which I understand only as bondage.

The hole that I will become or already am, is-ifying and ain't-ening as it is, is my black rupture. "Should we even try to go into it?" I ask in this other now. "Maybe it is not meant for us to know." I ask the question in such a way as to construct an equation making logic of my own terror of  $\infty$ .



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Somewhere I am my friend in jail, awaiting our trial for multiple life sentences. We hate it but we are comfortable. We take comfort in our discomfort, reclaiming it 'til it becomes familial. We in ad seg or we on suicide watch. We are frogs with thin skins in a California well. We know what a black hole is, its dynamism, its bounty; this hole falls flat. We get bored pretending to be at home in pitch black pits like this, a pit that calls itself a well, ghosting two and a half-million lives sentenced multiply. I am the friend in jail and I am the jail cell and I am the desire to jail, yet and still embarrassed by my dry-ass stink, performing endless last offices upon myself and refusing rigor mortis. I decline to decompose; I do not recognize myself.

Somewhere in another now a universe structures itself through me.  
In here now, where it stinks like old cells, I breathe in fire and dream of  
collapse.  
In here I do not know myself—but myself knows me and prepares my  
rich charred darkness.



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Then somewhere I a ghost dancing with Ed; I a ghost of Arnie Zane, partnering the absent Bill; I, ghost ghosting these pivots, the échappés with the lilting succulent rump. Ghosts doing ghosts' choreography. "People used to think you would die at the event horizon, but we now understand that for big black holes it's perfectly possible to be alive at this stage... Everything would feel just normal to you."

You'd just convince yourself to become dead. You'd admit to taking a walk in someone else's shoes off the wire. Leap through these shoes into a darkness and trust in ghosts who make darknesses their home. And you: You yourself become Dark, too.





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This is how it figures:

I am the 1733 slave insurrection at St. John. Revelling in my African royalty I throw off my shackles and kill my masters and, too familiar with hunger, I finally gorge on blood—as much as I can stand. I think out loud, “I am nobody’s slave” (utility of an entitlement complex). I fill myself over with my masters’ blood, I gorge I gulp; I learn to hate that ocean, its fickle breezes. I buckle only to the sound of gaping masters’ wounds. I am vampiric and cloaked in black and my lips burst with juicy redness. Blood cells metastasize in me the logics of slavery leaving no room for my once expansive blue-green wateriness. Now all I remember is power, unbreakably vertical and bloody, and I put blackness at both ends and throughout. Black on black on black: a pinhole of blackness. I believe nothing can satisfy this hunger I seem to remember being born with.







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I am the undead, and I am sick. Because of this, I hobble about and scare everyone who sees me. I run to them.

The scattering people attempt to fortify themselves against my sickness by inoculating themselves with bacteria. They pray that their own stench of death will become a mask to me and my zombie squad and, with our sensitivities heightened to useable bodies, we will no longer see these sick not-un-dead people. I feel my skin slough off my ragged tendons and my bones crack in my new tones; my eye falls out. I run faster toward them. I run to their dis-ease.

I rush through this world. I refuse doctors, I refuse waiting rooms and side effects. I refuse progress. I refuse pain. I do not feel uncared for because I have refused care. What I feel is hunger.

We move like rogue drones, with a relationship to life that is thick and sharp. We, sloppily calculated but smartly executed. We, intimate with death, where we find our sensuality so proximal to life. We find sickness brings rigor to our collective existence.

All of rushing people, implicit kin, we feed each other, we stay hungry. Us sick undead and you sick alive: We evolve infinitely together—past pathology, past death, past consciousness. We hunger infinitely.



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We are infinitely diverse and we expand into infinity past normative living. We make our differentiated collapse colossal. We stumble extravagantly on our way to feed, we twist our organ-less bodies and it is beautiful. No one could say it is not beautiful.

The human plan of inoculation does not work: We twist to see who is in fiery kinship with us, whose experiences of life are not based on negation (the negation of the inevitability of one's own physicality) but on all the potentialities that come with living hungrily. We leap toward them, mouths agape.





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We are this room: here in this room Nasser sits crying. He cries for Anwar and Anwar's son Abdulrahman, now just two dead brown boys. He cries for his confusion in the empty space of his son's now-evacuated life, which is inside of a state. He cries for Nasser's mistakes, his earnest eagerness for democracy. No thing makes sense to him—certainly not life and its valuations. Or, he balks at his son's value, his son not even walking compost—for which the city now spends tax money on bins. His son not even this, not even a bin or the taxes that buy it, not even a fungal thing that might grow into a rampant thing and bright and un-catchable thing. His no-thing child, never alive and impossible to kill. Nasser cries within our walls alone as we close in.

His crying shakes him: He shudders as if to refuse no-thingedness. His crying sounds the threat posed by a body that asserts its threatening disappearance, its un-intellectuality, its own not-not-aliveness. Here now we are the threat in a body that shakes and grieves; throws itself in rage; bangs on things; runs from things; begs for things and refuses others; lies face down and dances in ecstasy; spasms in agony; a body that shudders and doesn't ever shut up.



“A useable body must demonstrate its use.” Nasser, communing with his son, makes himself worthless.

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Quietly I                      am

whispering down    the hold  
ghosts fly out my mouth.

I am speaking, yea then eating them.

Ghosts

I love them.

I come to live off my own silence—

To say,                      I am spoken for.





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All these people come and go. Everyone has a child to cling to and two or three jobs back home. We come and we go as fungal things come and go and develop a spatial linguistics in which back there is disappeared, up ahead is impossible. Everyone is marked. We carry each other's stones like goats' toes on our ankles. Any joy of the cockle, the moving around together, is dampened by our shared distance from self-possession. In the luxury of our dreams, we rush to dis-composure and wake up to find we are nowhere but we're still here. Our only relief is the end of each day when we cry in our children's arms. Never ever is everyone present for this final hour, and so it, too, always escapes us.



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Let it sink in, your ain't-itude, let it marinate. Let me take you to a place you used to profess: a building on the north side with a high school on the top floors and a middle school on the first. To get there we'll cross a threshold of metal detectors and debt and the wafting stink of police who post down the hall. The long haul: every Tuesday and Thursday we will pass the permanent tack-board display from the prior year's Black History Month featuring Emmett Till. We see dead people. We are in middle school and the truth we know is Black History is uncontainable, un-tackable. We enter here as we do: We contract and expand. Our young bodies deteriorate under the gentle radiation of the scanners; Our minds file for reference officers' gait at various distances. We do math well and study the physics of how to run and look like you are walking, how to fly and look like you are sleeping, I mean in relation to a proximal state. We build on lineages of time travel and a spatial linguistics in which future is impossible, or fantasy: See that gait, know that timbre of Crown Vic. Senses gallup across distances, and we soar. We float over unnamable sorrow, planting itself in pre-formed muscle tissue and early stage sex organs. We daily cross the tack-board, memorizing the look and the feel of a bloated and suited death.







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Let us go West, where they roil or lay still. A white schizophrenic with a developed spatial linguistics is apprehended by police, a local employee. The employee tells the cops some stories about vandalized cars without any evidence and the low-lying man sees where this is going even before he is tased, beaten, and put in the coma that will end his life. For the first time in the town's history, a critical mass of white people will speak out against police brutality after his killers are acquitted. Responding to a mostly white, conservative public, including a millionaire developer and the deceased's dad—a former Sheriff's deputy—city council will recall three of its members. In contradistinction to the futurity of their recent ancestor (who struggled to imagine a future, who might have imagined too many impossibilities to come) the posterity of the new organizers is the localizing container of justice. These white people talk the talk of winning, even when they lose.

Black bodies with a birthright of struggle sit this one out, feeling some sickening unspeakable kinship with the dead man. A Black feminist calls in the white organizers: "Welcome to our world," she offers. The Black kids who memorize the shadows of a brutalized black body on the way to class recognize that dead man. The grandfather who sits weeping in a lonely room for his no-thing son obliterated by a state recognizes that dead man. Our worlds are populated by that dead man as they are by all





things-cum-people, every stink and every memory stinks dredge up. To say, we can recognize that dead man with our eyes closed by our sense of smell. For the white townspeople, indignant in their disbelief, that dead man's end marks a brutal beginning: They think *We have never known death to look like this*. But the Black kids who've made mathematics of brutality and freedom are fluent in erasure and know it can look any damn way it wants.

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Some ancestor rolls over and locks eyes with me.

—how do you know your father's family? how do you let your tongue lie with the vowel "o" or silence your howling?

—how do you remember your grandmother's eyes, elbows, knees? how is your favorite Prince song? how do you put that on your —? how were those hands in your hair in second grade? how did you silence that—?  
I am proving myself.

Sixteen toothbrushes in a one-story, proof.

Thick relaxing cream cabinet and macaroni, proof.

Peanut butter thumbprint Wonder Bread sandwiches in my father's absence, proof.

(ghostly, immutable, delicious)

Funeral Sundays in fungus leather with ghosts.

In waiting to exhale she proves herself



she is breathe out and relax in this blackness.

Let my darkness relax into its natural dissolve, thickening Pepcid  
murky kinship and heartburn.

Sagging inability to reconcile myself with my overabundance of is-ness  
and ain't-itude.

Bubbling gumbo pots in a pitch-black room and silence.

If black holes were a ballet, we would be the principal—always givin' it to  
them and in overabundance. We would be the principal: The un-  
containable one.

We would exalt our solo in staggered dimension, givin' it to them—  
serving space, raw. Enticing keepers of the ark to find me deep down in  
here, follow me into my pitch-black whorl. Me loving restraint, and  
dynamism. Me dark thing moving, demanding closer attention as  
reparations.





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We follow every landscape and eventually come to a tree, an ocean, or some disrupting thing that threatens to unravel us.

Ed says, "Walk into the lab, put your bag down, you start moving. You don't take your shoes off, you don't play music. Let this here entire world move through you; you've got to get it through you first. The you you know is muddled with this rocky, this putrid world. You don't know how to dance: Your most authentic dance exists in more dimensions than the three or four of your surface-spinning self. So you can do this: You can evacuate this stagnant stench that sits beside you and makes a mockery of your wild flowering. You call this mud your self, but feel deeper, and spread. Dance, retreat inside you, eat your self, feel deeper. Retreat so far inside you that you melt this here entire world away and come out the other end, a different way than the way you came in. You won't recognize yourself, and you will be just fine."



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I am

failing, say.

Starting, then reversing

Down

stand and become a very

very powerful animal

Big bushy baby animal

black-furred baby

and unstoppable

with a baby's wildness Tell everyone you know!

they must call me the Animal



And I am feeling myself

my dark hairs my whorl and passion

my hunger my whole being itself justified

I am The Animal

I see it and I like it

the monstrosity          how it feels

being so dark and

monstrous, Animal

But you interrupt my good feeling, you          say

*how did you get in here—*

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Octavia says, "Make a place that is your opposite; anticipate your outside. Feel movement before it happens and do the reverse/upside down/inside out, and this is how you make space. Retreat so far inside yourself that you come out the other end." I say "OK," and shutter my eyes tight. When I mine deep like this, I discover that there is no self of mine to slide into. The dance of retreat is a dance of collective escape: my body is the get-away and I am driven and will not be caught. I sense a spectral swarm riding me, as we joyously commit the inchoate offense of flight. Together and as one, we dance anticipation.





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When I sink down into that blackness I see grandmother on my dad's side; my mother off at work; my brother and me playing, fighting; my grandmother, paid by my father to clean our house; my father, somewhere, in the place of memory.

There he is: A siren, a peninsula, an ocean on three sides and a continent on one. He is where I return to when I decide I do, after all, need territory. He remains opaque, escaping.

There he is: A fort, a house, the blackest part of the sea.

My father, thick-rooted tree with limbs for climbing and branches for hanging and a trunk fat with forgetting. He is shade, darkening and cool. We play around him but we do not mention him.

Here he is: Growling roots on which wildflowers grow.

Where does the tree begin? Does it blossom out, grow down, or up? Which way does it go? Say, in relationship to me?



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My grandmother, paid by my father to clean our house, is an ocean is the black sea. She is the place in the darkest pit of the Atlantic that congeals with slaves-from-a-ship. She moves in millenia, in slow-time, thick-time. She eats herself, makes a banquet of herself, devours her own light. She births ghosts who swim out of her as deep chocolate mermaids with knotty hair, ready to commune with sharks. What she births is inarticulable, pitch-black and cacophonic in its quiet energy. My grandmother is an oceanic place; she is a place herself and also holding herself, necessarily at work producing more space for more and more of herself. Grandmother, a well I dare not find the bottom of. It is impossible to find anything valuable in such places as she.

Mining she is where I find me, challenging, deep. Me, now, dancing deep down, and she a black hole in my depths so deep it's possible she was never mine at all.



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Brother and me in the back of the Dodge, deepening our animal closeness, smacking and biting each other. He calls me *nigger* as an insult and since I have never been called that before it slides off me like water over my gills. But the word is thorny for my mom who is a white lady with Black children. My brother's drops of *nigger* spit from a full-lipped mouth cut my mom like splinters off a picket fence. The word reminds me now of a fenced-in place, a place both violent and safe, where I share touch with my brother.

Later in the ninth grade I will sit and practice undetectable absence as a junior boy flirts with me, testing my blackness, coquettishly demanding I say it like a black girl, with an a and not the slur-ish *er*. I discover my deftness at partial dissociation. I love, more than my brother at this moment, more than my mother's unending unnecessary reassurance, this boy's playful attention. I am starved for black-on-black attention. I say the word right for him, the way my brother should have said it for me, and he likes it, and so do I.









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The *er* becomes a barricade to the black hole of the *a*, a teasingly enigmatic thing to mount and be done with and then maybe come back to later on. That clear-moaning consonant that radiantly ramparts from the bottomless black mine of the open vowel: both the border and the blackness draw me in. I want skin as thick and sharp as diamonds but more than this I want to be mined. I think I want an older boy (an elder, or an ancestor) to extract the endless vowel from my trapped tongue, opening me up for business, for family, for the exquisite cut of a rough world, releasing my wealth. No, no—I want to cut myself, disembowel on my borders and make the boundaries between my own flesh and my eternal discomfort become nothing become me. This is what I want. I want to pull me out of me, radiate me out of me, cum me out of me as un-learnable disrupting information. I, then, here, refuse understanding, packing on inconsistencies like blooming purple welts as I free-form and graze wet and soft across the glistening edges. I want to be treasured and infinite. I want to hear the grounding-ness of my body's grinding with skin and saw, my arching rough rock exalting against disappearance and still unraveling wildly until here I am now everywhere, unbound.



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Let's go somewhere we do not know where we was. Black faces and black bodies everywhere, on top even inside of one another and cacophonous with the *shhh* sound of heavy whisper. You say We need to protect these people I am anxious about how much protection we need and no one can understand your babble or my looks. Your voice joins the cacophony, which rumbles like an empty stomach. We did not know but this is how we began our infinite waiting. From under a foot someone shouts, "I am glad this will be over soon," but *shhh shhh shhhh*

we are still hungry.





Thank Yous Due

The *falling queens.*: Marie Alarcón, Althea Baird, Mariana Casteñada-Lopez,  
Darlene DeVore, Jennifer Turnbull  
The Memory Losers: Kashif Powell, Daniel Giles  
Thread Makes Blanket: Nico and Marissa <3  
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Ari Banias  
Aay Preston-Myint  
Black lives matter.  
I’m here because of your patient generosity, thoughtful reflection, and cunning wildness.  
With you I feel like winning: My team is unbeatable.

And for Kai: my love, my freedom fighter. Dearest friend, thank you for your constant reminders that none of this world really matters if we can't be present to welcome it.

Credits:

pg. 39 Max Tegmark, cosmologist.

pg. 51 Dawn Lundy Martin. *Discipline*.

pg. 63 Thandisizwe Chimurenga. *Welcome to Our World: Some Thoughts on the Police Murder of Kelly Thomas and White Supremacy*.

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