All the Things That Don't Make Sound

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Recommended Citation
Wyatt, Caleb, "All the Things That Don't Make Sound" (2023). Senior Projects Spring 2023. 90.
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All the Things That Don’t Make Sound.

Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of the Arts of Bard College
by
Caleb Wyatt

Annandale-on-Hudson, New York
May 2023
Longing is a silent call. This film exists at the intersection of both my deepest desires and my greatest fears. All the Things That Don’t Make Sound.

How do you articulate a yearning that is so incredibly silent? The desire to belong, the fear that you never will. These are all questions that I asked myself at the beginning of this process. I struggled to find Tulu’s wants because the simple act of yearning is to not speak power to the feeling, it is an act that’s done in silence. Tulu is a character born out of all the things unsaid. The feelings you have but never vocalize, the skeletons in your closet, the frustrations toward a fractured family in a broken country.

What if you could escape this world? Where would you go, who would you meet? The world of Newmantown is inspired by my family’s history in Maryland. The lineage of a people who laid a foundation and owned land. My ancestors created and fostered their own community, their own world. Amidst hatred toward black bodies, they found a place to nurture and love their flesh. Later generations lost sight of the importance of this space and after years, our family lost this land and that is where Tulu and my desires manifest. The yearning to return back to this sacred land but fear that you don’t deserve it or simply won’t belong.

This fear is one that has frustrated me the most. How have we corrupted the black space with inherently anti-black rhetoric? Father Newman is the distillation of my family’s and Black America’s anti-blackness. He exists as a critique on
respectability politics and those that encourage behavior that operate exclusively under a white lens.

Though I can not solve this generational curse, I reject this notion. The black body undergoes too much trauma to subject ourselves to the monitoring of it for the appeasement of the other. So, my solution is to create this space both in family and in community. A space where we can simply exist in the love and adoration of one another, no other expectations forced upon us. This love shows itself in Tulu’s relationship with Imani, and in my relationship with my little brother and all the people I hold close to me. All the Things That Don’t Make Sound is a love letter to the ancestors that first created this space and my promise to continue creating spaces for blackness that exclusively nurtures and loves thy flesh.
Dedication

This is dedicated to my Granny. A woman whose love knew no bounds and whose empathy I am instilled with.