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afropessimism n me n the hand around my neck

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afropessimism n me n the hand around my neck

Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of Social Studies
of Bard College

by
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Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

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Dedication

Rashad, my best.

For all my writerly things, you know the simplicity of us is always what makes you home.

Yours is a love I can always rely on.

You are it.

Talaya,

There aren't words.

What I know about friendship I know because of you.

Thank you for letting me fall asleep during movies.

Isis,

who knows who I would have been if I didn't have you to talk through this with.

To Stecy, Jess, Demba, Isy, Marra,

for being a comfort, a challenge and a keeper of my sanity

For Helena and Soledad,

The most reliable in my life.

For every 8 hour phone call.

To Nic and Manny,

To know you as both artists and friends has been a blessing.

The worlds you both have made, and allowed me to be apart of, have always inspired me.

Thank you for showing me what's possible.

To Dana and Sydney,

My kids! I know the written part is short, don't @ me pls <3

I hope there is never a day I don't get giddy when I see you.

You both are my joy, like no one else.

I'm gonna miss you, so bad.

To Auntie J,

For helping me get my sh-t together...

And loving me enough to laugh at me.

We'll be watching Family Feud soon nuff~

To The Ahrens and my Auntie Jen,
You all mean the world to me.
Love you more than oxtail

Mom & Dad,
I'm grateful to be who I am today.
Thank you for everything.

To Davide and QPOC,
I'm so glad I had you. I'm so proud of what we made.
I think about you often, my little secret genius
and twin flame.

Kwame Holmes,
Our chance meeting had to be written in the stars.
My advisor, my teacher, my friend.
I'm grateful to be able to say I have been guided by you.

SMA,
Thank you.
What you gave still holds me everyday.
I only hope I honor you well.

And everyone else who has ever tried to love the object into being.
I remember you.

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Part 1 The Message is Death.....	5
On The Level Of Illness.....	8
On The Level Of Toolhood.....	10
On Subjectivity and a Transition into Hope.....	13
Part II The Butterflies I Saw Today	18
A Continued Treatise on Wealth and The Slave.....	18
What I Screamed One Day.....	19
Hi, hope you're well.....	21
Whore Madonna.....	23
Baldwin and the Rain.....	25
On Alzheimerz.....	26
Conclusion.....	27
Bibliography.....	29

Introduction

So last winter, I fell into an ideological system I knew so little about but immediately saw use for as it came to the proceedings of my life. By spring, I was insufferable. By summer, I thought it was unsustainable. By fall, it almost justified my death. And so, I thought, why not introduce you to what was taken from me.

Afropessimism is not a theory of futures. In fact, it is an ideological thru line to the death of all things. Which is why I believe it finds itself so popular amongst Black American (and other iterations of Black in America) students and children of my generation, it speaks to what we know. They say we have always teetered on intersecting precipices, more so than those before us. There is the classic earthly apocalypse, the one entailing our carbon fueled heat death and natural disaster. The apocalypse of global war, with my own generation developing alongside the rise of American imperialism- having never known a time in which our country was not in occupation of others (In addition to the threat of nuclear war alongside it). There are almost too many thru lines to even consider in the case of our own individual deaths. At the precipice of anti-black racism is, everything. And it includes the above. It is the apocalypse of our healthcare, the apocalypse of the police state, extrajudicial killings, erasure, surveillance, financial strangulation, houselessness, even debasement implanted in our own genetic code, the list continues.

Afropessimism says, as we continue to discover every which way in which we have and continue to be affected- when will we acknowledge the tragic possibility that it may be too late. When we consider all of our research and all of our theory, how many times will we watch the patterns of our own deaths repeat themselves until we consider that maybe, there is no facet of life in which White Supremacy escapes us. As colloquially defined, it is a network of theory revolving itself around the ways that “social death” appears in black life. It theorizes that due to anti-black racism’s extremely pervasive nature and acute necessity to nearly all spheres of global life (social, cultural, psychic, economic, and physical functioning) that the social death of black people is *inherently* necessary to the humanization and life of white and non-white peoples.

But when I say this theory is a thru line to the death of all things, I mean this.

“Afropessimism is a looter’s creed: critique without redemption or a vision of redress except ‘the end of the world.’” (225, Wilderson) Wilderson postures that the only liberatory pathway at this point is the apocalypse- If our world’s functioning is at this point is predicated upon the Slave/Master dynamic, the only thing to render one no longer “master” would be to eradicate the existence of the “slave”. The death of Blackness would be the death of Whiteness, and it would necessitate the end of the world in order to rid it of anti-blackness, and what is begun anew in the ashes will be the only thing that is free. A sort of liberatory framework of mass extinction.

He believes as well that the Slave/the black subject, “...dreams of the world’s undoing without being burdened by a vision of a new world, such as socialism or a liberated nation-state.” If said imagining, or hope for that matter, is *detrimental* to the necessary destruction of the present, it does create the conditions in which thinking about one’s future life is futile if not counter-revolutionary.

So.

While we wait for the end of the world, and somehow bear a responsibility to hopelessness while bearing in mind that our bodies have already been sacrificed to an evil far greater than we know...for those of us that want to live, you may be asking how. If you do, what does this then make you.

Wilderson offers more insight:

“We are a species of sentient beings that cannot be injured or murdered, for that matter, because we are dead to the world. No narrative arc of dispossession can accrue to us. What do I mean by that? Just this: for there to be a narrative arc the persona in the narrative must move from possession to dispossession to (the denouement) the prospect of repossession. Another way of earmarking the points on the narrative arc would be: Equilibrium to disequilibrium to equilibrium (restored, renewed, and/or reimagined).” (210, Wilderson)

I advocate for an arc of repossession. I believe there are possibilities within a reconstruction of what living may mean outside the constructs of a standard life and death dichotomy, and I pray they offer ease.

I write this for newly anointed objects. The half dead. The nihilist. To you all, I write this to let you breathe. Because I know if you're curious about this, you might not find value in the simple things of living. You, my reader, are my test subject for the deliverance of something sweet and something scary. I am hoping that there may be a way for you to learn this and suffer

less. And in that, I hope you might do better than I did. I wasn't too heavy handed with this, but I still ask that you touch grass as you read. Don't take yourself too seriously, and do read far beyond what I've presented. There are freedoms in places you least expect. I love you. I hope you live. x

Part I - The Message is Death

“I came into the world imbued with the will to find a meaning in things, my spirit filled with the desire to attain the source of the world, then I found out I was an object among objects.” - Fanon

An Unbody

I began this piece stating that I would introduce you to what has been taken from me. This might be wrong. It was not Afropessimism that did this alone.

Since I want to go through this as Wilderson would, you’ll likely see much of what has made me as well as some of the underpinnings that make us all. When I reference a “we” or “us”, I am speaking specifically in reference to the “we” that I am apart of. At once this means Black, but it also means queer, and at times trans. There may be some part of this you fall into too. But ultimately, I am talking to objects. And I hope they read.

While this paper centers itself around a very intricate and specific process of dehumanization, I chose *not* to force my hand toward the truly *near infinite* amount of scholarship that is dedicated to (un)defining of the human/how/where/what country/which artery/which stigmata/what neuron/which skin cell. If you’ll be kind and move with me without it, I’ll accept all your projections. I only ask that you keep an open mind to the definition I present. Not unlike forensic scientists, come with me, and let us begin to identify a body in how it was unmade.

If we listen to Wilderson, there are at least three general concepts that grant one humanity and thus without them, one finds themselves objectified in the name of others deemed truly human.

They are articulated in “capacities”: “...the production of Human capacity is parasitic on the flesh of the Slave, the Black. As one must have capital (or natural resources) to be a capitalist, one must have a variety of capacities to be a Human being: consent is one of them. And this is vouchsafed by one’s relationship to violence. The point that must be constantly repeated is that the Slave’s/Black’s relationship to violence bears no essential analogy to the Human’s relationship to violence, even when those Human subjects represent extremely abused and degraded members of the Human.” (259) Other capacities of man include, the capacity for home: “Subjects have homes, or at least the capacity for some sort of sanctuary. Objects exist as implements, tools, in the psychic life of Human subjects.” (267) And both the capacity for change and the reciprocal capacity to be recognized and recognize another’s capacity for change, “Unlike the Black, the Slave, [White Woman] has what Frantz Fanon calls “ontological resistance in the eyes” of her interrogators by which he meant the spatio-temporal labors of one subject have transformational potential on the spatio-temporal labors of another subject. This shared capacity for transformation, and for recognition and incorporation, does not extend to the Slave.” (214) I want us to consider, briefly, what this means. You are alive- without autonomy, unable at the level of essence to ever be in a position of safety or security, and lack access to quite literally the only thing human life may ask of you- to affect and be affected. This is the lived experience of the undead. The sentient object. The awakening to oneself as this, is a violent one.

Wilderson begins this very work of auto-theory I relay to you now in the death throes of a psychotic break. There are extremely vivid descriptions of this, much about moaning and sobbing and a fear of himself and a fear of what he might do to others. His ability to speak had

completely broken down. He was a shivering, suffering, husk of himself. On a hospital bed covered in a mix of blood and bile. There are lines within this chapter where there is reference to him clutching his chest as he writhes, without an understanding of where the pain is coming from- or if “pain” is an accurate descriptor of the experience at all. It insinuated that this particular experience was instigated by a memory, a memory of his childhood, that pulled him from reality and into psychosis. He describes also, as he himself stumbles in and out of consciousness- somehow making it to a nearby hospital- still being aware of the need to make those White around him feel safe in this spiral. As the work goes on, we come to find Wilderson has a history of these types of mental breaks- and they grow in intensity as he comes further into Afropessimistic understandings of himself and others. If it hasn't already been clearly presented, I say all of this to express to you what I did not internalize- that the Afro-pessimist does suffer. There is no theory or word or enlightened understanding within this framework that can help you rise above the violence of coming into objecthood. Being a disciple or an ideological founder of this school of thought does not save you from the critical destruction this philosophy suggests. I emphasize this because it did not save me, nor does it intend to.

I want to return to the original psychic body of humanity that I had identified a paragraph ago, and wax poetic a little further. Because, I'm questioning again, was anything really taken from me? The more I consider it the more inevitable my foray with *Afropessimism* becomes. When I recognize myself, in no hyperbolic terms, writhing alongside Wilderson, losing my mind in the company of others, the conditions of our meeting becomes that much clearer.

On The Level of Illness

You are alive- without autonomy, unable at the level of essence to ever be in a position of safety or security, and lack access to quite literally the only thing human life may ask of you- to affect and be affected. This is a list of conditions that anti-blackness imparts upon us, yes, but read differently, it's also a list of symptoms. I don't know how to properly describe this part. Talking about moments of harm inflicted upon me by others who are black, with whom I also hold the contradiction of loving, is hard. But what I'm truly trying to say is that the microcosm of global anti-blackness plays out in the mind like abuse does. Hence why I think, the conditions were rife for my latching.

Depersonalization or derealization, which in other words is not being able to perceive myself or others as real- often is a response to the ways violence can bend an environment and its rules toward the absurd. Of course, I understand now that there should be no thru line for which not watering plants should transform into me being chased from my home. Nor a thru line from an argument involving pizza to end in someone's hand around my neck. But regardless of its wrongness, these were as much a physical truth as "objective" moral failings were. Derealization is an answer to being able to hold, "this is wrong, and outside of the bounds of logic" and "this is the logic through which I live, and the logic of my environment". It plays itself again in black life- how do we hold a personal and intercommunal understanding of injustice in simultaneity with an understanding that the common law of this Earth is black death. (If it is so wrong, how could it be real? And yet it is.) The absurd is true in both cases: It is natural that physical altercation is possible when there is a tense tinge in another's voice that may suggest I am in the

way of groceries, my world is working as I know and expect it to when this occurs. And, it is made natural that a child playing with a toy has a thru line to state-mandated death. Our world, tragically, occurs as we expect it to here as well. What is at once paranoia is also, real. *To affect and be affected-* Derealization or depersonalization, can provide a buffer to the fullness of affectation in the face of this. The idea being: I can learn to bear the extremity of the emotional and physical weight of living if I can separate myself from it as an observer, and settle into reality this way. From this vantage point as well, I can gain the clairvoyance to foresee what may be inflicted upon my body, and maintain a good enough distance from it that it will feel more like witnessing a knife wound to wood. “We are a species of sentient beings that cannot be injured or murdered, for that matter, because we are dead to the world.” (210) Violence imparted upon me or against me becomes empirical evidence to the existence of wrong, not experience. Living things heal, scores upon objects remember. The axe forgets.

On the Level of Toolhood

“Objects exist as implements, tools, in the psychic life of Human subjects.” (237)

If my present condition is that I do not embody or operate my own body, and the network of social relation that ensures my death is permanently encroaching, if I want to live, this erases my capacity for choice. Because, in both metaphorical and literal terms, a militia exists beyond everyone I interact with. Jared Sexton, a theorist for whom Wilderson takes much inspiration from but does not himself identify as an Afropessimist, would identify this one function of “the hidden structure of violence” that underwrites even the mundane. Wilderson exemplifies this further as he describes the latticework of lethal potential that surrounds interactions with whiteness, via a fictionalized interaction between a White woman and an Afghani man, “The gun the White woman holds to his head needn’t be in her hand. In fact, the gun she holds to his head is not one weapon but the weapons of three million soldiers in uniform and their arsenal of drones and technologies of death.” (213) In other words, the implicit threat of death can be a catalyst for control. But- this too implies the existence of autonomy. It is only that “autonomy” in this situation is being guided toward the desires of the aggressor.

This wouldn’t be a very Afropessimist analysis. By said standards, we are objects that cannot live or die- what does the threat of death do for me? If I am an object- I am born without intrinsic autonomy, I am a passive actor to what or who chooses to affect me. So the question becomes, what is a threat to the object? What is harm to an object? “If a can of tuna or a bucket of nails could speak, their essential questions would not revolve around how their labor power is being exploited, or how they are alienated from the value that they produce. Exploitation and alienation are not the grammar of their suffering.” (435) To this I offer, the grammar of our

suffering is *usefulness*. As an object, I am not bargaining for a life I do not have when socially engaging with another, I am bargaining for my life on the premise that I might cease to *exist* without their use of me.

In the logic of an anti-black world, I cease to exist the moment I cease to be useful (and thus of value). Because for *use* is what I specifically created for, and my value beyond this is sustained and negotiated by the above network of violence that guards the bounds of this economy, and makes this world. Hortense Spillers says it best, “I am a marked woman, but not everybody knows my name...I describe a locus of confounded identities, a meeting ground of investments and privations in the national treasury of rhetorical wealth. My country needs me and if I were not here, I would have to be invented.” (1, Spillers, *Mama’s Baby, Papa’s Maybe*) I can at once be an object and a currency, and an object that can carry out the function of producing things of higher value that are not me. Otherwise known as a tool.

As a currency, I am technically inherently of value to my interlocutor in some sense. I am a necessary implement in the creation of a world ruled over by White Supremacy, I will always be needed in its construction. But this does not qualify as inherent *value* upon me, specifically. As Wilderson says, “...the value that a tool helps produce never accrues to the tool.”(435) But again, thus lies the conditions of my existence. I am proving my worth as an investment, I am saying to my interlocutor that I don’t need to be replaced with another tool. I can be an implement. As long as I can *be* an implement, I remain alive even in the physical sense.

With my particular traumas, this frame of mind became abundantly necessary to me. I had created a system of valuation of my social interactions, but in my mind, I had made this to establish a currency of my deservedness of being loved. My means of relating to others was a

complex and intricate system of curated scripts, designed carefully for my interlocutor's pleasure. I believed each word, as long as it was received well, kept me of value and through it, kept me alive. I believed that my occasional failures to deliver these lines brought me closer to death. If I failed to perform, I believed it would make true about me what had been said by those who brought me harm: that the truth of me was in my stupidity and was in my cruelty. And further, in my uselessness. It was not death that I was afraid of, it was being worthless. These thoughts would haunt me in my room. It became the beginning of talking to myself; I'd practice these interactions at every given moment, trying to right cosmic harms I'd committed by making social mistakes. Alone, I could punish myself into righteousness, especially as I believed my failures to deliver were the equivalent of *actual* harm. I felt they revealed my capacity for enacting something more real. Regardless, the goal of this was to eventually gain a grasp upon what made me valuable, and reassert this in every interaction henceforth to ensure I retained my worth. As well as my safety, my performance directly related to the level in which I myself could "deserve" harm. Not a word left my mouth that was not in service to this. I discovered what Cecilio M. Cooper had, "I'm prized most as a vector through which others can accomplish themselves." If others could not accomplish themselves through me, then, what a lousy currency I must be.

I'm thankful I know now that nothing is truly assured. It would take me a little while to understand this as a freedom.

On Subjectivity and A Transition into Hope

So-

We have established the conditions of my own dismemberment. And discovered more of what it means to walk through the world in the vision of the undead/object. So, again, what is there to be done? I want to do as I promised you, and offer you *something*. Because I recognize that this isn't a way to live- and other Afropessimists understand this too. There is a kind of "f*ck it" mentality amongst those I follow this more deeply. It is not the fault of the theory but, the bleakness of what it identifies. You must come into the work with the understanding that Afropessimism does not intend to save. Like most theory, it attempts to awaken you to what it believes is your own condition. And, in this case, our condition is dire. It recognizes that the death of all things might be the only way to truly change the circumstances of which I have only partially described. And, I'm still hesitant to welcome the apocalypse.

But, with this paper, I have no intention of reconciling this. This is not my concern. What I am invested in is offering an easier way to live. I think Afropessimism does have the capacity to aid in this, granted, the path remains difficult.

So, the key difference between ourselves and other objects is sentience. And what sentience grants us, even within the bleak anatomy of objecthood, is subjectivity. This is our bargaining card for self-possession. Black subjectivity marks the border of human life. As the extracting point for relationality with all other strata of man, we are in other words "the host" body through which others siphon the "nutrients" necessary for their existence. "This is what makes social death something more surreal than the end of breath. It is, in the words of David Marriott, a deathliness that saturates life, not an embalming; a resource for Human renewal."

(137) I believe there is potential for the reclamation of self in the “deathliness that saturates life”, if we may use our own “deaths” as grounds for “Human Renewal”; Our subjectivity as the animating or re-animating catalyst to shatter the exoskeletal body of our objecthood.

I once again can use the example of myself.

Though again, it begins dark. I had faced a series of refusals in what I had described in sections prior- I was loved. Which meant in this case, that my usefulness to them as an implement was rejected, and what was asked of me was quite simply, presence. If the logic of my life until this point was my worth by virtue of my use as an implement and a subjectivity I had actively tried not to embody in order to maximize my effectiveness as a tool, I was suddenly made valueless in the prospect of another attempting to respect me. A first death. This relationship did not end because of what I could or couldn't provide (this is not to say I highkey could have been far more emotionally intelligent and far better at keeping a schedule) but, because of what I couldn't provide for myself.

Following this ending, I had found myself at a pivotal psychotic break. I was on a beach in California, the shoreline facing the island city of San Francisco. I was with relative strangers, all at varying levels of sobriety, when I began to hear voices. They soon became commands, and eventually, I was non-verbal, eyes shut, shaking violently in the lap of someone I had met only days before. When I had returned home early that night, I was still lost in a fit of paranoia and hallucinations. There seemed like there were things alive in the shadows across the house, I was repeatedly terrified by both my Aunt and her cat. I sat on the floor of the bathroom hiding and writing, naked, for what felt like hours. What I didn't know then, was that this would become the

beginning of a four to five month long stint of the deepest dissociative state I had experienced in my life thus far.

I began having small panic attacks that would scatter throughout my every day, with larger more crushing attacks once every two weeks. Everything had begun to feel more vulnerable than it ever had. Thoughts or ruminations on the world that I used to hold with ease suddenly spurred me into a tremble. Self deprecation would spur me into an attack. The way someone spoke to me, the state of my room, the cadence of my breath, alcohol, juice, the type of food I ate, mirrors, textures, the list continues. I was too afraid of the sky at one point to leave my room, it felt too close. I lost the ability to escape as well, I lost the ability to enjoy music. The world felt unreal and encroaching.

This was also a point in time in which everyone I loved was falling into hardship. My brother had been homeless for months. Another collapsed in my arms following an overdose. Too many others even with some financial security were also considering suicide. And inevitably, someone did follow through. My ex-roommate lied in her room for five days before she was found. She had texted me a couple weeks before, we mutually agreed even then that we weren't okay.

Under capitalism, Wilderson would say that the difference between the condition of the slave and the condition of the laborer is that capitalism will feed on the labor power of the worker. He says of the Slave, "[They] themselves are consumed". For my friends who lived, I think we all feared that it was one another's turn to become the sacrificial lambs to this network of violence. And then it came to a point where I'd begun to decide if the turn was mine.

As I described in my section on “Illness”, derealization is often a response to the absurdity of anti-black violence. It’s a perma-state of shock. I found myself waiting for a world that made sense. In my mind, I still had something of a nagging belief that this could be fixed, “and when it does, I’ll return to myself”. My largest panic attacks almost always came with the realization that this world is far more real than I wish it was. Though, what considering suicide brought to me were essential questions: If this is all there is, will you accept it? If there is no incoming world if not for the destruction of this one, if you have felt what it has to offer, if there is no justice, no perfect love to save you from yourself and no perfect thought to save your loved ones from the state, will you live?

I believe it is at this point where the potential for human renewal is made. What Afropessimism offers you as a solace is abject nihilism. Meaninglessness is its gift. You come to understand that there is no inherent morality in whether you choose to stay or go. Life does not ask this of you, if you deserve it. Death occurs like anything else. And the option remains available to you, as it does everyone. It’s as scarily simple as do you, or do you not want to continue. Afropessimism introduces to the living that as the world may be irreconcilably damaged, this condition further emphasizes that nothing matters but who you *choose* to save. If you come to relinquish yourself to the fact that nothing truly has meaning you step into the transformative power of your own desire, your subjectivity becomes that much larger. It is not a giving in, it is a restructuring: “I am not suggesting that Black people should resign themselves to the inevitability of social death—it is inevitable, in the sense that one is born into social death just as one is born into a gender or a class; but it is also constructed by the violence and imagination of other sentient beings. Thus, like class and gender, which are also constructs, not

divine designations.” (114) Meaninglessness is a canvas for your projections to become as real as the enforced imaginations of our oppressors. I need a bell pepper as much as they need my body. My objecthood is both real and unreal. Their collective imaginations are only fortified in number as ours could also be. It might be in the twilight of precarity, in proximity to death, where our desires are tested and concretized. Maybe then the cavity within us will be filled with a little more of ourselves.

My brother was passed between a tight, coordinated network of about four friends of ours between New York City and Upstate until we were able to crowdfund for a consistent apartment for him. In lieu of medical personnel who failed to arrive on time or in any way helpful, myself and another student took shifts making sure our friend slept through the night. These choices speak to the power of a shared subjectivity or desire. Something an ethic of meaninglessness allows you appreciate as the miracle it is. How lucky are we, that you share in the desire to save who I love. How lucky am I to be able to. There are times when the meaningful feels inevitable. You should treat nothing in this life as though it is.

Part II - The Butterflies I Saw Today - Contradictions

Hi.

It's nice to see you again.

This section is for those you who may be wondering how I am. I know I didn't really resolve much of what was brought about myself in tandem with such a morbid theory. But, I want to tell you that I'm well. If not, great. I am of a mind I've never been in before and it's never been so peaceful. Which is why I know I need to impart this to you, I would not be speaking through Afropessimism if I wasn't also speaking through contradiction.

A Continued Treatatus on Wealth and The Slave

I wonder if I can practice here, writing about myself as the currency who has currency. The wealthy piece of property. The door handle that was given a private school education. The sow who's rich enough not to breed. The object who attained the autonomy to no longer employ itself as exactly what it was made for. And yet, the door handle is still specifically designed to be held by the hand. I am still as I was made for. Do I ever escape my use. I will never escape my use. To no longer be this object, I would cease to be. I would become something different on the level of what is essential. I would- become flesh. What says the slave of alchemy.

What I Screamed One Day

What the initial connecting thread of this project was, Possession. Possession in love has poisoned its taste, and if black folk do not have the “power” or ability to be “self-possessed”, can we love. Can the “slave” love. But I don’t believe this to be a question. (And I believe now that there are some questions that no longer need to be asked.) I don’t believe this. I don’t. We are self-possessed, and are able to be in simultaneity with the rest of what society impresses upon us. We love. We hurt. We get annoyed. We grieve. We experience as everyone else does, there is not special timbre, and this is not what I remember about the people I’ve come to love and pass. It is not the fact of their blackness that sits alone with me, it is the idiosyncrasies of their being that I failed to notice while presently being obsessed with closing our difference- I am begging that we move away from something essential. Some things are frustratingly universal. I have as many facets to meet you with and you do to mine. It does not make the other less available to access emotion, the heartbreaking thing is that we feel it all. Every rejection, every miss, every loss, and it thunders inside us. It is the fact that the depth of what has been done to us is this large. The contradiction is also, that we do live. And the eating of an apple in the summer, and the stepping outside onto the porch while cars go by is so much more real than any of this. That the present may not be this. That thank god we can’t fathom everything. And thank god maybe as well, that if it is all happening instantaneously we don’t have to feel it all the time.

What I’m trying to write, and trying to remember for myself, is that the contradiction is what allows us to survive and what allows us life. What allows us humanity. And this is

terrifying. It terrifies me too even as I look to the skye, because when I realize the base human condition and needs are shared by *every living thing*, Gods become bound by human emotion. Too. No one is above this. And there is no way to be above it. And so, I write this as catharsis. If you accept this to be true, you open yourself to the fragility of everything around you. You open yourself up to the miracle that anything exists. You understand the importance of delusion to make you healthy, you must believe in the delusion, without certainty, that your loved ones will not leave you tomorrow, so you may treat them, and yourself beside them, well. You must trust. You must plan for a future that you do not know will come, and open yourself up to the complete ignition of those plans, and then, delusionally, plan again. You can believe in the absolution of afropessimism, and it may bring you comfort to remind yourself that this isn't necessarily true.

I thought the best thing I could do for the Earth is plan to die. Now, I know there is no best. It doesn't ask of me anything. Life is meaningless, which is why in some ways it's a gift. What I ascribe meaning to is meaningful. This is what has allowed us so much of the miracle of things we can accomplish, it's a choice. The miracle of shared choice. It doesn't ask of me to be good to people, but I will. I do believe though, if I had chosen to be bad it would make my experience of this life that much more miserable. I'd rather just share it. And protect the peace of those who share it with me, and make the bounds for our joy. I am learning now how interconnected the bliss of my private life is to the bliss I can make with others. I am learning about discipline. And how much is needed to make these bounds, and to make my own. It is through this kind of universal truth that if this discipline and these habits deem strong enough, we can organize autonomous communities to further this meaning-making.

Hi, hope you're well

We all suffer from similar afflictions.
 I'm alone in this room
 As frozen as they imagine me to be
 Not having been animated by their sight
 in six years

I used to hate this but now I don't
 This is maybe as peaceful and as different as life in the blinds has ever been
 But it hurt me deeply recently.
 Knowing that for both of us, we believe one another frozen in time, but, apart how dare we
 have aged.
 And the door for us to enter back into one another
 And arrive in 2009, loving
 Had been closed for longer than either one of us had realized.

As I had held onto a hope that if you loved me right
 I might become small enough again to fit in your forearm
 Old enough to be silly
 Nescient enough to feel like the world beyond me wasn't too big for you both to bear
 That you'd bear it for me
 And that this little insular family we had was heaven sent
 I still remember, blessing
 I will remember it again.

The couch pursed its lips for me
 The way dinner swam out the porch door
 the rosemary tide said to "expect me"
 I needed some place in my life to have ever felt safe.

I want it back.
 I could.
 If I right the present I can return to the past, waiting for me
 like it said it had been.
 Like it said it had been.

I now know too much to want for childhood.

But even that is a lie.
I know too much to want any different.
I love what we had the potential to be
Because I lived in its potential, once.

Whore Madonna

You want tablets with your name but you don't want a call. You want me to die, bury myself alive because I love you so but you don't want to be breathing and making a bed together.

Is not making you dinner my devotion. I would like to see you alive, my dear.

This love is no art, and you're no artist. I'd like to love you while you're living. And if you pass while I wake maybe then I'll stick you on a wall. and let you be still. And pretty.

I wish you didn't want this.

I'm doing work beside the window now, considering you.

Nothing in me makes me feel like I will ever stop brewing tea for you.

You can have your ideas, I will still ask you to care more about your clothes.

My little genius asking for IBS, I shake my head

The things you think are killing you have already won

All I can really do is open your mouth. Like aphids do. Leave you cum, or spit, or mushrooms.

Fill you with stronger stuff.

And hope you trust me

Enjoy me

Love me

More than the fantasy of our death

And the inevitability of our harm.

And you do love it.

And by your own language you know it will never love you back

Consider how you nurture it, consider how I nurture you.

What you feed it is tangible. you harvest death with care

You're delicate, with both hands. You're delicate with whom the thoughts that you have take. You don't consider that they may take you.

I wonder when the day will come when you realize none of this is that profound. That death itself isn't really so large. All that death is, is desire. I wish you'd desire me more.

But I don't know if I know this now. You think I'm good at making peace, I don't know if I think too much about it. All I'm good at is enjoying it. I'm fearful too. I miss you, often. I lean into the knowing that you will still be there. You've given me no reason not to. I tend to you like I do everything else in my life, if not a little more. You are my best friend, to me. I don't need you dead. I don't need you perfect. I haven't thought about this. You love to annoy me. Your

goofiness is what makes me feel like I can lay my head. We would sleep with our lips touching. Because we'd kiss until our eyes would fall. You seem to think I don't remember these things. What's more dubious is how much you remember. You are secretive. I don't know much about you but I respect the absence. As I would my own. It makes me feel like what I have in me might be sacred in you, sacred enough not to speak. But I listen. When you lord over my back and chat with your childhood friends, I like the sounds of their voices. When your mother, as excitable as she is, rolls and rolls in conversation with you- I don't know.

I think I like who's made you, I don't know if you want that.

I think I like you, I don't know if you want that either.

Baldwin and the Rain

Lord,

when you send them
Think about it, please,
A little?

Do

not let me
get carried away
By the sunlight in their room,
The way in which I wake
when the night does end

I

don't leave the days
They end with such force
And that day

Blinds

me to the next

On Alzheimerz

Grandpa said,
 “Beware of insecure people”

he would come one day to find himself
 married
 in the driver’s side of a Lexus
 at a stop sign
 holding his newborn in one hand and it’s grandchild in another
 A woman beside him, deranged, breaks the skin in his chest
 rips strips of flesh of cartilage of rib
 A lung is held in her hand,
 stretched far enough from him for it’s tether to break
 And under her nails is my grandfather, gelatinous. She digs.
 What’s left in him is a hole
 Large enough for the birth of a new limb
 A third to hold a wheel, to hold her, to take a turn

She places a gastric organ on the tip of serrated collar bone
 And places it back in the cavity
 This sculpture does not drive

I can’t remember much, but maybe three memories
 They’re stories, things that I had felt for so long I must
 remember for they are the only evidence I have
 of life having ever been different, or wrong.

I worry that if one day I am old
 And my grandfather strikes me
 and I have continued to live my life untethered
 When this haunting walk is no longer a choice
 And I wake up each morning without hands to hold children
 But days,
 days, to bore my own holes.
 And pray for my own limbs.
 And wonder why they never came to hold me back

Conclusion

I'm no longer concerned with the project of categorizing what we are. I'd like to leave this in college. We need us all and we will be us all. It is large enough and you are large enough.

The path into new embodiment, object or otherwise, will always be violent. The thinking about this and writing about this and feeling about this was near violent- but not wrong. I think the eruption into any sort of self is rarely quiet.

With this, I came to accept that there are some niggas I love so much that I fear that our intimacy is exchanged with their death. I have come to accept that I love some niggas who have hurt me so bad that I also watch them die in my arms at night and still have to hold myself back from calling just to check their breathe. It's those niggas who have turned me to prayer. That I love so much I pray for something else to hold them, if not me. I know my loving may always mean this.

But I'm good now. Friendship, patience, a spirit I love, and a root vegetable will take you far. I believe now, if I've ever believed the above, that music and joy are so much larger in this world than I once knew. I could never disrespect who came before me and call this world unworthy of my living in it. I think the point is to make heaven here. Even if it is hell- where next could they send me if I know how to make bliss here?

I still feel left on Earth. But I've been having the thought that maybe it's more of a training ground. We seem all to come and come and come again to the same understanding. I feel like we just might need to collect before we move on.

But- I'm good. I think I know better how not to do this again, I don't think I'll ever want to die like that again. Not as long as I know it's so available.

Saving the niggas you can touch is the thesis. You are also, the nigga you can touch.

After this imma need good feelings. Fill me with all the things I'm on this earth for. X

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