Breathing in the Future

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The Rocket’s Red Glare

Shot not fired, going not once but twice, after hours of not going anywhere.
Departure delayed.
The whole world watching. Badass white woman astronaut crying tears of envy for breaths not taken in vacuum. In space, time extends life into eternity, human becoming vehicle becoming light, approaching futurity. Where even are they? Gods.

Rocket breathes oxygen in space while humans—Tony, Breonna, George—breathe their last on the pave. T–minus 38, T–minus 26, T–minus 42 years.
Shots fired not just once or twice, but twenty times, months before 8 minutes and 46 seconds of not going anywhere. Injustice in delay.
The whole world watching. Badass Black women crying tears in community for breaths not taken in air. In the protests ensuing, the rocket’s red glare blasts off Black Lives Matter into the utopic futurity of right now. Who even are they? Gods.

State edifices collapse, crumble, returning to earth, just as Dragon returns to Earth: full of ease, grace, just detach, let it go.

Rockets jet off the earth, aflight. Here I come: God, an American, a modicum, progress achieved. Heroes leave this world behind.
Abolition Repetition

Abolition is a repetition of contradictions. From slavery to segregation to policing, the opposition between Black resistance and Black oppression is ever-present, ever-evolving.

Imprisoned, cotton-picked of old now radically transmuted into victorious secretly pink girlshorts—a scream, ‘SLEEP IN LATE’ branded on rear. Two whole cents for waging labor hourly, blurring the lines between capitalism and slavery, skipping feudalism entirely, problematizing linearity in our theories of history.

‘OOO: Objects, yes, Latourian objects ACT! Subjective objects objectify, agentic objects modify, up-end, transform, objects enact radical agency... etcetera, etcetera.’ (Subtext: ‘Black bodies do not.’)

Black oppression is a repetition of iron chains becoming iron bars becoming iron laws becoming iron wares, Black oppression gone viral, gaseous, pervasive, in the air we breathe—or can't.

Five years behind steel bars for the wrong school district, Tanya McDowell. Eight steel bullets in a body because how dare you, Breonna Taylor.

‘Form is content!’ ‘Techniques matter!’ (Subtext: ‘Black bodies are not; Black bodies do not.’) Foucauldian, Adornian post-isms fly in the face of Black lived experience and the constancy of white supremacy. From metal to vapor, to mediation from immediacy—or so goes the fantasy of linearity, where, now = lynchings + governmentality.

Abolition gifts a repetition that ain't half-bad—after all, radical revolutions always-already extrapolate half-lives into eternity in the Eighteenth Brumaire: “Bourgeois revolutions ... storm from success to success ... but they are short lived ... Proletarian revolutions, on the other hand ... criticize themselves constantly, interrupt themselves continually ... come back to the apparently accomplished in order to begin it afresh ... Until the situation has been created ... and the conditions themselves cry out: Here is Rhodes!”

('Take it from me.')</n
Abolition is a repetition of contradictions reemerging, ready for resolution. Abolition gifts a repetition, bringing back, bringing Black Revolution.

Trailer

On an icy morning,  
a trailer truck arrives,  
bearing gifts. My groceries!  
Finally.  
I have been waiting  
so long for this.  

Through  
walled-in and walled-up sanitary storage containers,  
a naked-handed, naked-faced  
frontline worker deftly sifts,  
fetish in the chain to my commodities.  
Interminable waiting,  
then,  
bags and bags and bags of  
pandemic paranoia.  

“You should ask for masks and gloves,”  
ever the helpful comrade, I said.  
“I have the gloves,” mumble,  
“don’t sign the receipt—germs,” he said,  
waving goodbye.  

Three hundred dollars per person for groceries  
and the freezer won’t close.

Three hundred pounds per capita homeland GDP  
but the trailer wouldn’t open.

Las hielera en el borde  
llena hasta el borde.  
El frigo, muy friyo,

The icebox at the border  
fills to the brim.  

39 dead bodies  
in a trailer free-zone.  

From Vietnam to the UK,  
immigrants nearly made it.  
Abandoned by God.  
The driver forgot them,  
waving goodbye,  
blood on his hands.  
Blood in their pants,  
tomatoes of cans.

“I can’t breathe” — Eric Garner.  
“I can’t breathe” — George Floyd.

“I can’t breathe” — Pham Ti Tra My,  
“I am sorry, Mom,”  
I was not meant for this,  
not meant for cold storage  
not meant for having papers  
not meant for making ends meet  
not meant for stacking upright  
not meant for defecation  
not meant for European Union

Walled-out and walled-up in a refrigerated trailer,  
stranded, laid to waste,  
thirty-nine backline workers perished,  
chained to the fetish of our commodities.  
Interminable waiting,  
then,  
bags and bags and bags of  
oxenophobic paranoia.
Hope in the Face of Optimism

Optimistic futurity with its racist overtones defers Black and Brown liberation endlessly. Racial liberation? Sure, next revolution. No, next revolution. Ok, definitely, the very next revolution.

Pessimistic presence says, no—here and now, no more waiting. Pessimists count the breaths until they run out, pessimists count the chokeholds—then and now—still state sanctioned. Where optimism effuses the transmutation of form, pessimism stresses the constancy of content.

Optimistic utopists wait: for contradictions to (un)furl, (un)ravel, (un)discombobulate, accelerate. It’s all forthcoming, it’s not for nothing, all the Black people dying. Take heart, it’s a process, we’re joining dots, making progress toward racially liberatory socialism, both Black-utopian and scientific.

See that production go up in Black fumes? That’s how you know it’s time. See all that gun manufacture? After the revolution, all those factories recylically craft ecosustainable toys for healing the souls of Black children—shell-shocked from genocide, coked up from solitary, choked up from brutality.

But chill, no worries, utopia’s ’round the block, dystopia’s nearly run its clock, the only way it could have been! Crack open a cold one and absolve me of responsibility for bad-faith, -analysis, -consciousness, all. Bro. Sis. Folx. So glad we took the time to. Get all that production fired up in the air planet on the brink and, oh yeah, decolonization, that’s a special issue—it’s a process, dude, longue durée. I bet, in the year 6000,