

notes & acknowledgments

well, first I want to recognize the land
we stand on is stolen

let it be said here, at least
that all Black lives matter
that water is indeed life
& above all things

we the people is
how any patriot
begins his lie.

I acknowledge the author
tried to craft a project with siloed agendas
pursued poems as small acts of war
or love letters for a father,
daggers for the 45th president but
those invocations must wait.

I write to you with a soft
hand and gritted teeth
I acknowledge the rhetorical
struggles, myths, and obligations
I acknowledge we are not allowed
any singular monuments.

understand, reader
the world is seldom mine
to build; but is indeed, here, ours.
thick with odes & laments. ours &
built by the blood of ebonix, atomized
libraries and anything coaxing our
pleasures erect

Black gxrls—or, as the evening
news has named us, extremists—
are kindred in this anti-making,
already cooking feasts out the dried
skin of nationalists. feasts with our jewels
and old mothers. feasts, sankofa & broth.
we rid this world of all its guns
and elbows, its gum and marrow.

i slurry out a poem from th new world,
stir it into a meal and its name is *yaya*—wild.
welcome. this new world, hallowed by swarms of bees
and languages chewed outta jazz.

ours, this world, enraged
by even a splinter interrupting
the palm of our wildest gxrls

I admit: the author's hands are broken,
hashtags holding open our mouths. hands
like a *no* world, made yes. made magical &
with child. with poems & a new gospel, we be-
gin folding starshine & clay into small trumpets
—listen

blood flammable | knuckle soured
intoxicated by blues | our hands
like vowels | verbs | alive & billowed
little fathers | our hands | wild cotton
choir-holy | if we die | use ambulance siren
for our names

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there are, these worlds
to labor toward, too:

- 1) in which none of the Black gxrls die
- 1) in which death is only a doorway
- 1) in which the series *Girlfriends* never dies like us it goes on
- 1) in which i call for my gxrlfriends and mean

[from the barrel of the law]
[crying *fire* instead of rape]
[for loving an other Black grxl]
[during childbirth]

& the egun

forever

lover or maybe *mother*.

doula. muse. survivor, or

god.

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aight reader, let's keep it
a buck: i will lie to you.
let it be for your good.

the truths under which we survive
have begun to splinter: children
spilling blood instead of marigolds
from their hands, the mad kings
snorting our money like pollen
and now even cicadas lie silent as the ballots are counted.

reader, you gotta admit, *this world been failin*
us. sometimes i will too. i bring no remedy.
i'm afraid & i only know what i do not know.

i acknowledge death but don't
truly believe i am afforded
object permanence or linear
time. i am absolute & unresolved
no matter how the poem dresses it up.

i acknowledge this
as a joint contract.
you will do with it
what you must.

[yes, you must
do somethin.
if not, then what is
the point?]