

Lake Michigan, Scene 0

There are 7 of us in front of the mayor's house asking questions about the boy they shot 22 times

There are 7 of us in front of the mayor's house screaming about how the videotape of the shooting was covered up so the mayor could get reelected

And a police officer says down there where they live there was a shooting you should be protesting that shooting a 9-year-old boy was shot by a gangbanger why aren't you protesting that shooting why are you only protesting this shooting

Another police officer wants to know why we are protesting this shooting when just yesterday there was a drive-by shooting in Rogers Park and two innocent bystanders were shot and one of them died

We don't answer instead we do a die-in in front of the mayor's house and the camera crews from the nightly news stand above us as we lay stiff and motionless on the cold wet pavement

They shot the boy 22 times

They kept the video secret for a year and a few days after the video was released we took to the streets and didn't let anyone into the Disney Store

We blocked the doors to Brooks Brothers

We blocked the doors to Topman

The Disney Store was empty but for a few sales folk standing around some Stormtroopers

A guy who drove up from Indiana tried to get into the Disney Store and when we told him that nobody would be buying Stormtroopers today he spat on us and called us stupid assholes

This place is for kids Y'all are fucked up

We didn't let anyone into the Apple Store

No one got into Banana Republic

A police officer pulled one of us out from in front of Banana Republic and asked us why we weren't protesting the other bodies that were shot by bodies that were not police officers

It was a strange line of questioning

But it kept happening

The cops kept asking why the body they shot was more important to us than the bodies shot by others

Because you took an oath to protect people we said not to kill them

Because you are paid to protect people not to shoot them

Then they filmed us and we were on the nightly news dying-in on the cold wet pavement

And the politicians called us anticapitalist terrorists who wanted to close down the city's access to commerce

Then the public forgot about the boy they shot 22 times and the mayor closed 50 public schools and replaced them with privately run charters

And the mayor said we must make our school system more robust we must make our schools more efficient we can no longer have empty schools we can no longer have failing schools we can no longer have public schools we can no longer have public bodies

And he proposed a plan for privatizing all of the bodies of all the residents of Chicago

And the City Council passed the proposal and we were given physical examinations injected with vaccines and told we had quite a bit to learn from those who devoted their lives to prayer meditation and nonviolent disobedience

We had no choice

This was the dream they subjected us to

They took us to Lake Michigan to the prisons on the beach on the northern end of the city on the border with Evanston on the sand they imported from Indiana

The police build bonfires to remind us of the bodies they throw into them

They tell us cautionary tales about the secret prison on the West Side where once they killed a man by chaining him to a radiator that fell on his head

They tell us this and they expect us to hate them but when you are a decrepit privatized body who has not been fed for several days it's not always possible to feel something as violent as hatred

And they say why do you think you are here

And we say we exist in a historical continuum our comrades in the 16th century were also not told why they were imprisoned or tarred or killed

And they say we have video recordings of you torching your neighbors' garages

And they say we have video recordings of you hiding guns and money under the floorboards of your houses

And they say where in your heart is love

And we say it is everywhere it is all that we have there is nothing else to hang on to when you are in the back of a pickup truck handcuffed to other decrepit privatized bodies rolling around and your heads keep smashing other heads and your shoes keep kicking other faces and other shoes keep kicking your face and you are bleeding and you are terrified and you are blindfolded and you are in the back of a pickup truck and no one has given you enough time to call your father your friend your mother your brother your lover your x your y you are nothing but a rotten piece of meat they tell us as our broken bodies roll around the back of the truck

This is an attempt to provide context for the insignificant reality of our lives

This is an attempt to provide context for the dreams we have in which we swallow the bodies of the police officers the prison guards the mayor the migra

These are our dreams we digest the bodies that destroys us

They throw us in the back of a wagon take us to a holding cell and when we are released we gather in front of the mayor's house

And the police officers say we have better things to do than stand here and make sure you don't burn down the mayor's house or shoot a journalist or go crazy and shoot yourselves

Then one of us puts a shoe on the mayor's lawn and they throw her to the ground put a knee to the back of her neck handcuff her tell her she is under arrest for trespassing

And we all step onto the mayor's lawn and the police officers throw us to the ground hold their sticks to our necks put their knees to our backs pull our hair handcuff us take us to a holding cell where we are separated one from the other and we cannot call our lawyers our friends our families and we scream from our cells until they tape our mouths shut

But who will document our deaths and disappearances we wonder

Who will inscribe our bodies into history

Who will know that at one point in this life we were something other than what the bureaucrats knew us to be

And we are alone for several hours until they bring us trays of stale food and dirty water

A few days pass we lose track of time we have no watches no phones no way of knowing where we are or what time it is then an authoritative voice says take these putrid bodies out to get some sunshine

And we go out into the grass and there is a lawyer and a psychologist and a bureaucrat waiting to interview us to ask us what it is that we want

We are silent

So they beat us

And when we say please don't beat us they say finally you are getting the hang of it finally you are learning how to articulate your deepest dreams and desires

And they like this

So they beat us

And when they finish beating us they feed us

And when they finish feeding us they throw dollar bills on the floor and force us to play a game where we must beat each other in order to get the dollar bills and if we don't beat each other they beat us

Sing they say or we will beat you

And so we sing what they tell us to sing

We love you we sing

We love your money we sing

We love your food we sing

We love your guns boots and nightsticks

And they like this song so they beat us

They pay us and they love us and they beat us