

ARTIST AS FIRST RESPONDER PRESENTS

BLATANT

A ZINE ON ART, BEAUTY & RAGE • VOLUME 2, ISSUE 2, SPRING 2022



ADRIANNE RAMSEY AMBER MCZEAL AMIR KHADAR BINTA AYOFEMI BRYANT TERRY CALVIN WILLIAMS
INÉS IXIERDA (GARDILCIC) CRYSTAL WAHPEPAH DOHEE LEE JESS SABOGAL + SHANNA STRAUSS
LUCIA OLUBUNMI MOMOH MARCEL PARDO ARIZA + JUAN CARLOS RODRIGUEZ RIVERA MARVIN K. WHITE
MICAH BIZANT MORNING STAR GALI NINA (DJ NINASOL) ROBINSON OLKA FORSTER RACHEL WOLFE GOLDSMITH
SH8PESHIFTER ROBBIE SWEENEY SARAH CROWELL SYDNEY CAIN TONGO EISEN MARTIN

EDITED BY ASHARA EKUNDAYO

INTRODUCTION ASHARA EKUNDAYO

“The moment we choose to love, we begin to move towards freedom.”

—bell hooks



Photo: DeManda Ward

What does blatant love feel like after almost 2 years inside of a global pandemic? This was our question to the contributors of **BLATANT**, volume 2. These answers and offerings come with themes that revolve around the communal tools at our disposal for healing and serve as a love letter to Oakland, CA whose landscapes act as muse and balm for so many visionaries and innovators.

I chose to move here 11 years ago from Denver, CO after an expansive career as an independent curator, academic, and activist - my cultural work had become enigmatic and I was drowning in a pool of emotional and financial depression that had finally demanded that I shift my perspective in order to re-find my love-joy elsewhere. Oakland was a place I had studied in school and had traveled to occasionally with a lover or mentor, and I had with each trip fallen more in love with her vibration, legacy, and leadership in terms of movement building. Now this decade plus 1 year later after having co-founded and stewarded a myriad of creative spaces, I made the decision, like so many others during the height of the pandemic, to leave it, and to return to my hometown of Detroit, MI. The greedy housing market and lack of substantial support for artists have now made me a part-time Bay Area resident who continues to work and create here but no longer with a physical address of my own. This limited-edition **BLATANT** zine series is presented by Artist As First Responder, touted as an organization and 6-point platform that reifies and supports Black, Indigenous and additional artists of color whose practices heal communities and save lives. I've also come to understand the concept and organizing efforts as my personal vehicle for the imaginations and manifestation of my curatorial practice. And for that epiphany Oakland, I am grateful.

Meditations on love and freedom are our legacy regardless of the massive ills we contend with across society. It's a fact that mass shootings, mass hunger, mass homelessness and state sanctioned violence will never stop the artist from creating and speaking for humanity. Amid this angst there is also happiness, joy, pleasure, and patience en masse! Mask mandates be damned as The People of the Town dawn full-lipped smiles at the annual Black Joy Parade and at Lake Merritt on Sundays. At the time of this zine's publication many COVID restrictions have been lifted and Springtime

has provided a bubble of reprieve inviting us to give long hugs and to sip from each other's cup. There are rumors of another surge on the way, and we'll have to navigate it, but 'till then, we feast, we dance and we build the archive!

This **BLATANT** Spring publication is deeply delayed having been completed 2 seasons ago. But now was the right time to share this love letter, under a new moon in Aries, at the edges of birth and death and war, during National Poetry Month, and in conjunction with the upcoming exhibition “Collective Arising: The Insistence of Black Bay Area Artists” opening June 25th at the Sonoma County Museum in Santa Rosa, CA where eleven Black artists will commentate through their work on the development and legacy of the “artist collective” as an act of resistance to erasure and an insistence of futurity.

I invite you to take your time enjoying this sampling of the poetry, a soundtrack, recipes, articles, and imagery rooted in Oakland, and that you look up these artists to support/collect their work. I dedicate this issue to the Women of the Black Panther Party who maintained the revolutionary movement through discipline and love so that we could all be free.

So Be it. See To it,

Ashara
Executive Director and Steward
Artist As First Responder

@blublakwomyn @artistasfirstresponder
www.Ashara.io | www.ArtistAsFirstResponder.com

FOR THE RECORD

Since volume 1, issue 1 of **BLATANT** dropped in August 2020 we've been:

Living inside of a global pandemic for 24 months

The virus SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) is changing rapidly and has given way to Delta, Beta, Alpha, Omicron, and Omicron BA2 variants.

There are 980K documented COVID related deaths in the US with 6.15M globally.

270K documented cases of COVID in Alameda County yielding 1,830 deaths.

Black Artist luminaries such as Sydney Poitier, Cicely Tyson, Andre Leon Talley, Virgil Abloh, Greg Tate and bell hooks have transitioned to the Ancestral realm.

War rages in Ukraine, Tigray and Sudan while Gasoline prices have hit an all-time high impacting the price of food, water, transportation and shipped goods.

Its been 753 days since Breonna Taylor was shot and killed by police while sleeping in her home in Louisville, KY. No One has been Charged with a Crime.

FOUNDER, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF & CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Ashara Ekundayo

EDITORIAL PRODUCTION MANAGER

Unique Holland

GRAPHICS & LAYOUT EDITOR

Justin Garder

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Respect and acknowledgment to the Ohlone people upon whose Ancestral and Contemporary Land these conversations and artwork were created and where the production team lives and works as residents of Oakland, CA, and the San Francisco Bay Area.

BLATANT A PUBLICATION OF ARTIST AS FIRST RESPONDER WHICH IS SUPPORTED BY

The African American Art & Culture Complex | Akonadi Foundation | The San Francisco Foundation | Wakanda Dream Lab at Movement Strategy Center | QUIET | The Culture Change Fund at the Women's Foundation of California | ReCAST Grant at City of Oakland Human Services Department | Omi Arts | Museum of Sonoma County | Walter & Elise Haas Fund | William & Flora Hewlett Foundation | Tao Rising

TITLE LOGO DESIGN BY

Nik Brovkin
overthebreaks.com

JOIN THE NEWSLETTER AT

artistasfirstresponder.com

Copyright 2022 AECreative Consulting Partners and Artist As First Responder

CONTRIBUTORS

Adrienne Ramsey she/her @aramsey125
Amber McZeal she/her @decolonizingthepsyche
Amir Khadar they/them @amir.khadar
Ashara Ekundayo she/they @blublakwomyn
Binta Ayofemi she/her @bintaayofemi
Bryant Terry he/him @BryantTerry
Calvin Williams he/him @wakandadreamlab
Inés Ixierda (Gardilic) she/her @ines_ixierda
Crystal Wahpepah she/her @wahpepahskitchen
Dohee Lee she/her @doheemago
Jess Sabogal she/her @jessicasabogal
Juan Carlos Rodriguez Rivera he/him @thejohncharles
Lucia Olubunmi Momoh she/her @lucia_bunmi
Marcel Pardo Ariza they/them @marcelpardoa
Marvin K. White he/him @marvin_k_white
Micah Bizant they/them @micahbazant
Morning Star Gali she/her @saylooli
Nina Sol Robinson (Dj NinaSol) she/her @djninasol
Olka Forster she/her @hakkillo
Rachel Wolfe Goldsmith she/her @wolfe__pack
Robbie Sweeny he/him @robbiesweeny
Sarah Crowell she/her @sarahcrowell65
Shanna Strauss she/her @shanna.strauss
Sh8peshifter she/her @sheshash8peshifter
Sydney Cain she/her @sagestargate
Tongo Eisen Martin he/him @_tongogara_

COVER

“Black Women Dreaming” 2019, at Ashara Ekundayo Gallery.
PHOTO BY Robbie Sweeny.

OUR RAP SHEET

And still, we create: this partial list highlights some of the **BLATANT** joy-informed healing art-works that have been stewarded by Artist As First Responder via the creative labor of practitioners over the past 2 years:

SITE SPECIFIC/SITE RESPONSIVE CEREMONY

Black Women Wail (Summer 2021),
Black Womxn in Mourning & Outrage (Spring 2022)

NEW ARTIST RESIDENCIES

Climate Justice Artist-In-Residence,
Ietef “DJ Cavem” Vita

Social Economy/Engagement Fellow,
Christian Walker

Black Writer's Residency, Poets-In-Residence: Dr. Tonya M. Foster, Tongo Eisen-Martin, Dr. Ra Malika Imhoptep and Rev. Marvin K. White

EXHIBITIONS

“Black Joy StoryWindows” public art exhibition in Uptown Oakland (April 2021-ongoing)

“The Monumental Tour” public art installation partnership feat. Hank Willis Thomas, Kehinde Wiley and Arthur Jafa produced by Kindred Arts - North Oakland/Downtown (Feb/March 2021)

PUBLIC FORUMS

BLATANT an online forum on Art, Joy and Rage centering the voices of Black womxn artists co-presented with Museum of the African Diaspora (June 2020-June 2022)

MUTUAL AID/GRANTS

“The Reflection Fund for Artists” Mutual Aid for BIPOC Artists in Oakland CA in partnership with the City of Oakland Human Services Dept./ ReCAST Grant - \$65,000 dispersed

AAFR work was featured in several national arts publications including ARTnews, The Smithsonian, and Artsy.net

FOUNDER, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF & CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Ashara Ekundayo

EDITORIAL PRODUCTION MANAGER

Unique Holland

GRAPHICS & LAYOUT EDITOR

Justin Garder

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Respect and acknowledgment to the Ohlone people upon whose Ancestral and Contemporary Land these conversations and artwork were created and where the production team lives and works as residents of Oakland, CA, and the San Francisco Bay Area.

BLATANT A PUBLICATION OF ARTIST AS FIRST RESPONDER WHICH IS SUPPORTED BY

The African American Art & Culture Complex | Akonadi Foundation | The San Francisco Foundation | Wakanda Dream Lab at Movement Strategy Center | QUIET | The Culture Change Fund at the Women's Foundation of California | ReCAST Grant at City of Oakland Human Services Department | Omi Arts | Museum of Sonoma County | Walter & Elise Haas Fund | William & Flora Hewlett Foundation | Tao Rising

TITLE LOGO DESIGN BY

Nik Brovkin
overthebreaks.com

JOIN THE NEWSLETTER AT

artistasfirstresponder.com

Copyright 2022 AECreative Consulting Partners and Artist As First Responder

CONTRIBUTORS

Adrienne Ramsey she/her @aramsey125
Amber McZeal she/her @decolonizingthepsyche
Amir Khadar they/them @amir.khadar
Ashara Ekundayo she/they @blublakwomyn
Binta Ayofemi she/her @bintaayofemi
Bryant Terry he/him @BryantTerry
Calvin Williams he/him @wakandadreamlab
Inés Ixierda (Gardilic) she/her @ines_ixierda
Crystal Wahpepah she/her @wahpepahskitchen
Dohee Lee she/her @doheemago
Jess Sabogal she/her @jessicasabogal
Juan Carlos Rodriguez Rivera he/him @thejohncharles
Lucia Olubunmi Momoh she/her @lucia_bunmi
Marcel Pardo Ariza they/them @marcelpardoa
Marvin K. White he/him @marvin_k_white
Micah Bizant they/them @micahbazant
Morning Star Gali she/her @saylooli
Nina Sol Robinson (Dj NinaSol) she/her @djninasol
Olka Forster she/her @hakkillo
Rachel Wolfe Goldsmith she/her @wolfe__pack
Robbie Sweeny he/him @robbiesweeny
Sarah Crowell she/her @sarahcrowell65
Shanna Strauss she/her @shanna.strauss
Sh8peshifter she/her @sheshash8peshifter
Sydney Cain she/her @sagestargate
Tongo Eisen Martin he/him @_tongogara_

COVER

“Black Women Dreaming” 2019, at Ashara Ekundayo Gallery.
PHOTO BY Robbie Sweeny.





Sogorea Te' Land Trust is an urban Indigenous women-led land trust based in the San Francisco Bay Area that facilitates the return of Indigenous land to Indigenous people.

Through the practices of rematriation, cultural revitalization, and land restoration, Sogorea Te' calls on native and non-native peoples to heal and transform the legacies of colonization, genocide, and patriarchy and to do the work our ancestors and future generations are calling us to do.

We envision a Bay Area in which Ohlone language and ceremony are an active, thriving part of the cultural landscape, where Ohlone place names and history is known and recognized and where intertribal Indigenous communities have affordable housing, social services, cultural centers and land to live, work and pray on.

sogoreate-landtrust.org

FOR US
AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT
MORNING STAR GALI

Andrew Moppin, 20 Klamath/Comanche Killed by OPD in Fruitvale District NYE 2007
Oscar Grant, 22, Killed by BART PD Fruitvale Platform NYE 2008
Nia Wilson, 18 Killed on BART Platform McArthur Station, 2018

Thousands of California Indian peoples that were murdered in the name of progress
Thousands of Black & Afro-Indigenous Freedom Fighters, that they continue to kill

Until our Afro-Indigenous & Indigenous relatives are no longer being killed out in the open
Until we no longer need to hold vigils for stolen bodies on stolen lands
Until we are no longer pitted against one another in the ugliest of oppression olympics

Remember

Remember to include in your performative land acknowledgements that continue to perpetuate erasure of us as a people
Remember to mention us as living so that we are still visible
Remember to mention that we have spent 400 years fighting for each other, instead of against each other as we are tricked into believing

Remember as you continue to recite the kind of land acknowledgments that cause division instead of honoring our shared struggle, shared space and eventual shared liberation.

Remember to mention their names so they're not forgotten
Remember to mention the mistakes that we've made

So they are not repeated

Remember these moments of solidarity are

Our ancestors collective prayers
Our collective prayers of freedom
Our collective prayers of liberation

We acknowledge that the oppression of our peoples links our struggles, but it is also our desire and constant fight for liberation that truly unites us*

We honor you,
We cry with you,
We grieve with you
And we will continue to heal
& fight for our bound justice and liberation with you

*Alcatraz Island Solidarity statement written by Morning Star Gali and Christina Krea Gomez <https://www.indigenousjustice.org/solidarity>

Overplaying R&B war records, a surrealist lies to their self
Staring into someone's reactionary soul all day
Staring at a citizenship meant for lying
"Well my, my. You are a city"
crumbling down around geniuses
who have a better manner with world war bricks
preparatory city interested in that fact/ pan-ruling-class staging
released from their godhood/ audience levitating with drone strikes

Addictions crawl comfortably
(never using their own arms/just
class membership/cogs become europeanized bullies)
your problems relentlessly mine
same reason they say Sioux City will keep you

Flock music moving in from a fossil distance
Even the importation of other planets

I'm a little slow with the pen tonight
Some object will have to be animated now
Or Stilt-walkers who come to kill me
My door and its frame laid exit-side down on the street

Skeletal betrayal... even my insanity

One abyss wearing off and another abyss opening its arms

these white civilians are deeply connected to slavery
and they write better than me

"It's like doing time in a drum-less society"
Modern people mutilating each other uptown
--Please put all of your flags on this uptown sidewalk
And allow anyone their revenge--

Some revenge even featuring a fight down to the prophet rearing
"I hear they got a better God in Mississippi"

I am begging a wino for help sorting out my problems like they are the only ancestor left in my pocket

An object now animated in two poles
america in handwriting like breakfast littered

"they don't know how cosmic it is down here where we take every imperialist decade personally. Man, this sewer is a poem."

Our father the tenement vendetta

Has the poem started yet?

I will tuck your shirt into the earth

**NO STARS OVER
THE TRENCHES TONIGHT**

**TONGO
EISEN-MARTIN**



To hear Tongo Eisen-Martin read, open the camera on your smartphone and hold over the QR Code.



DIFFERENCE IS POWER JESSICA SABOGAL + SHANNA STRAUSS, 2019

IN THE MIX: BAY AREA LOVE

DJ NINA SOL



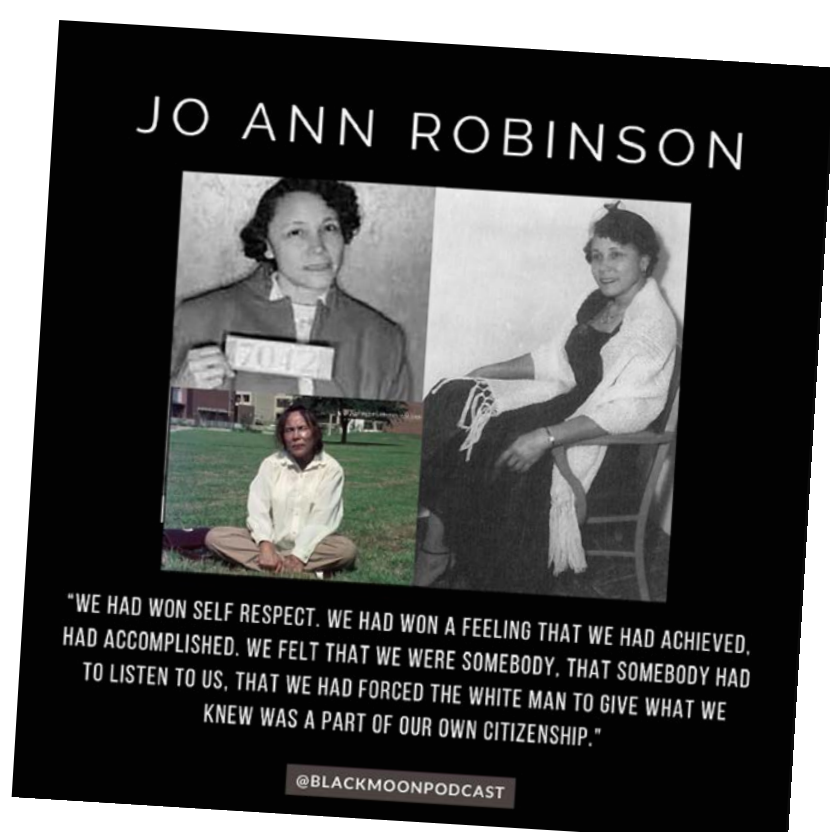
To hear Nina Sol's mix, open the camera on your smartphone and hold over the QR Code.





BLACK MOON PODCAST #5

OLKA FORSTER



The fifth episode of the Black Moon Podcast honors the life of Jo Ann Robinson. Jo Ann Robinson was a beacon to all freedom fighters who do their work in the background. Without Jo Ann Robinson, we might have never known the names of Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King Jr., and we, Black people that is, may still be sitting in the back of the bus. When I first discovered the life and work of Jo Ann Robinson, it felt like an urgent call. It felt like she had almost died in our collective memory and I needed to tell everyone I could about her. Jo Ann Robinson was a freedom fighter that ushered in a bold vision of Black liberation. She lived with a prescient and singular focus on the future we are living out today yet she is often forgotten in the story of how we've always fought to get free. Jo Ann Robinson deserves to be known, thanked, venerated, and uplifted. Say her name, see this Black woman: Jo Ann Robinson.



To hear Black Moon Podcast, open the camera on your smartphone and hold over the QR Code.

BLATANT WORDS

SARAH CROWELL

The role of the artist is to make the revolution irresistible.
Toni Cade Bambara



I am a queer, Black biracial woman. I am a retired professional dancer. I am an arts educator who uses movement and the arts as a path to freedom and justice. I am my mother's daughter - someone who understands how to hold circles of humans in a tender open-hearted way, and who knows the power of art and self-inquiry on the path to liberation. I am my father's daughter - someone who loves and honors the natural world, believes in the power of community activism, and loves family deeply. I am a wife of a Diné woman, who is the love of my life. We understand how to laugh and cry together in equal measure. I am a dog mom. I am a devotee of an Indian guru who lit up my life 20 years ago and gave me access to my heart in ways that I could only have dreamed of. I am blessed and I am in service to humanity in every way possible.

I worked in different roles at a nonprofit organization called Destiny Arts Center for 30 years. Destiny is a youth arts education organization whose mission is to inspire and ignite social change through the arts. Destiny serves youth ages 3-18 in dance, theater, martial arts, youth leadership and violence prevention programs, and hosts three dance/theater companies – one for 9-12 years olds, one for teens and one for elders over 60.

Destiny believes that art and movement give young people a vehicle for self and community expression. Destiny uses movement-based arts and mindfulness to uplift youth voice, supporting pathways for young people to express themselves, advocate for justice and equity, fight against the systemic racism that continues to impact Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), and build a community where everyone feels seen, valued, and free.

I founded and co-directed the teen dance/theater group, the Destiny Arts Youth Performance Company (DAYPC), starting in 1993. The group co-creates original works in collaboration with professional artists, that tell provocative stories stemming from their lived experiences and expressing their visions for a world transformed. DAYPC has been the subject of 2 documentary films: *A Place Named Destiny* and *F.R.E.E.*, and won the National Arts & Humanities Youth Program Award in 2017.



I just transitioned from my staff position at Destiny at the end of 2020, after some deep soul searching, and continue to hold the title of Artistic Director Emeritus there and continue to be deeply committed to the Oakland community.

The genesis of my work at Destiny is embedded in this story.

“What is the greatest ill in the world?” a student asked her spiritual teacher. “Self-hatred” the teacher answered in a somber tone. I heard this conversation 25 years ago and it rang like a bell inside my chest. Immediately I recognized the intention behind all of my work as a dancer, arts educator and community leader. It was to embody and inspire self-love. It was to create exquisite art and beloved community, never sacrificing one for the other. It was to install the mantra that joy is an act of revolution, not to deny systemic injustices, but to remind us who we are at the essence of our beings and to use that understanding to co-create a destiny that honors and uplifts everyone.

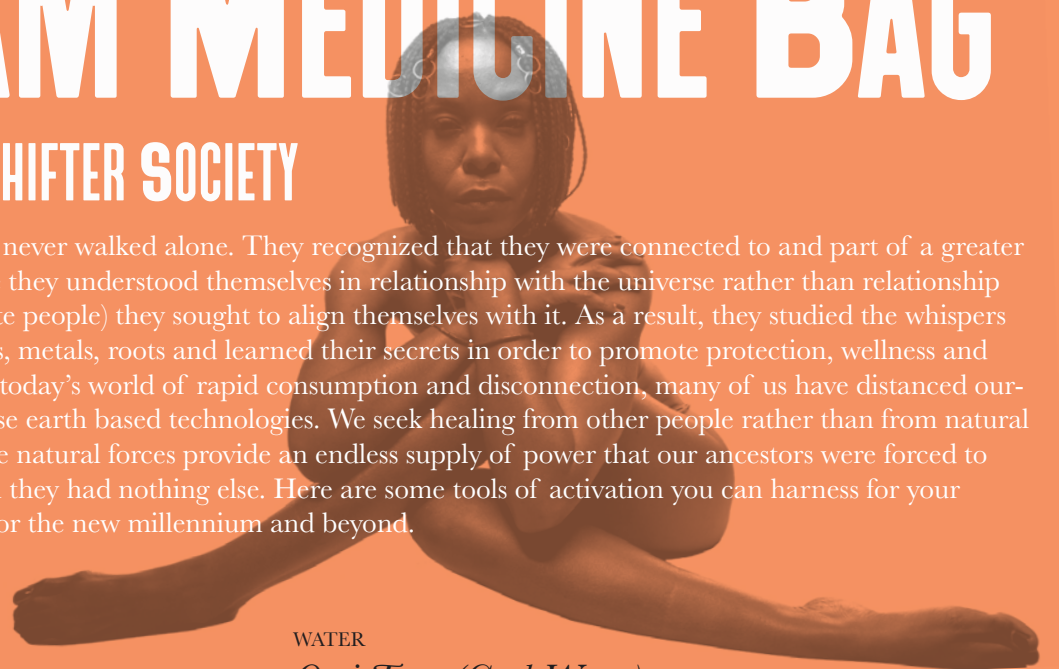
My work unravels the causes of our collective self-hatred through somatic storytelling and personal narrative, examining racism, misogyny, heterosexism and all the systems that divide us. My work tells the story of the current time by exploring impact rather than giving opinions or casting judgment.

My work reimagines and reconstructs reality through the lens of self-love. Alicia Garza, co-founder of BLM says, “The task is to try and live our lives in the way that we envision freedom looking like and feeling like.” For me, this means working in authentic collaboration with performers of all ages and professional artists who believe in social transformation. My work constantly reinvents itself in order to be relevant by responding to the visions of artists in relationship to community.

I AM MEDICINE BAG

SHOPESHIFTER SOCIETY

Your ancestors never walked alone. They recognized that they were connected to and part of a greater whole. Because they understood themselves in relationship with the universe rather than relationship over it (i.e. white people) they sought to align themselves with it. As a result, they studied the whispers of water, plants, metals, roots and learned their secrets in order to promote protection, wellness and magnetism. In today's world of rapid consumption and disconnection, many of us have distanced ourselves from these earth based technologies. We seek healing from other people rather than from natural forces. Yet these natural forces provide an endless supply of power that our ancestors were forced to call upon when they had nothing else. Here are some tools of activation you can harness for your medicine bag for the new millennium and beyond.



WATER

Omi Tutu (Cool Water)



Water has been used since the beginning of time for healing and spellcasting. It is one of the first elements used in ceremony whether through libation or _____. It is primordial, all of us were born from the water of our mothers wombs. We live on a water planet and our bodies are over 75% water. No living organism can survive without water. In the Yoruba tradition, cool water is called Omi Tutu and it is often used in the beginning of ceremony to pay homage to the god within, the spirit of our ancestors and our spirit guides. It is also used as a metaphor for staying grounded “Tutu Ori Mi” reminds us that regardless of what is happening around us we can activate the power of water to always remain cool and calm.

Next Level: Tape affirmations onto your water bottle for success, healing, love, health, etc. Drink clean fresh water daily and take healing baths or showers on New/Full Moons.

CLAY

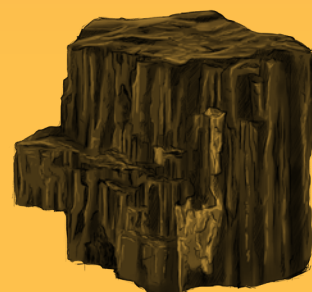
Efun



Used for ritual purification, this clay is found throughout West Africa. It is used to cool, regulate and calm your energy field. It can also be used as a form of protection from negative or “hot” spiritual energy. **Next Level: Anoint your crown chakra daily to maintain peace and calm, place in your bath water or mix with florida water and fresh flowers for energy clearing.**

STONE

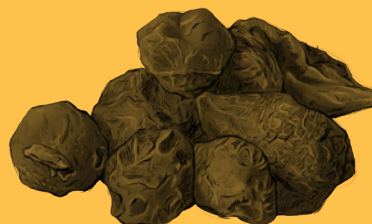
Black Tourmaline



The ultimate cloak of protection, Black Tourmaline is used to dispel negative energy in your aura and transmutes it into usable energy and is a powerful tool in addressing anxiety, anger, stress, fear, jealousy, drama, addictions, unworthiness, obsessive behavior, and PTSD or painful emotional wounds from trauma. It is also believed to block EMF's from electronics. Energetically, it will draw out toxins, radiation, waste, pollutants, heavy metals, and anything that does not serve your body's highest good. **Next Level: Soak your crystals with salt water under the full moon light. Dry off and charge with your sacred breath, speak onto stone what role you would like it to perform in your life.**

ROOT

High John the Conqueror



Undoubtedly one of the most significant charms of the African-American tradition of Folklore, Hoodoo and Conjure, High John is unique in that it is one of the few roots that was directly used by enslaved Africans in America as a direct response to slavery and white supremacy. High John is root medicine as protection against evil spirits, love relationships, gambling, litigation, employment, and financial matters. It is also often associated with success, happiness, and improving one's fortune. **Next Level: Clean with Omi-Tutu or Florida Water, place the root in your bag, add to charms and spells and place on your ancestor altar.**

METAL

Copper

This metal is the third most common trace mineral within our bodies. In ancient Kemet it was used to purify water and heal wounds. Copper is known to reduce stiff joints, aches, and pains including helping with arthritis and rheumatism. **Next Level: Copper can easily tarnish and needs to be cleaned regularly. For best results soak your copper in boiling water with vinegar and/or baking soda.**

PHOTO CREDIT:
FlyLove Photography
ART DIRECTION:
Khalil Anthony Peebles
www.sh8peshiftyourlife.com

COLLECTIVE ARISING:

THE INSISTENCE OF BLACK BAY AREA ARTISTS

LUCIA OLUBUNMI MOMOH

Choosing to focus on Bay Area artists, *Collective Arising: The Insistence of Black Bay Area Artists* will feature and document works by artists in Bay Area collectives, like: the 3.9 Collective who call attention to the diminishing population of Black people in San Francisco; the Nure Collective primarily consisting of Black men working across medium; The Black Woman Is God whose powerful annual exhibition ceremony honors the Divine feminine as cultural practice; and House of Malico whose holistic approach to the care for artist challenges how an artist collective can function. The curatorial process for Ashara Ekundayo and myself prioritizes collaboration and care as revolutionary practices informed by Black feminism.

I view my curatorial practice as an inclusive collaborative expression of love and revolution rooted in the facts that Black womxn are inherently valuable and “sister” is a verb (Pleasure Activism, 71). The Black feminist tradition emphasizes that freedom for all is contingent upon in the liberation of all Black womxn. Thus, my practice gives homage to those who had blazed the trails down which I step further each day. In particular, this project pays tribute to the Combahee River Collective (CRC), the collective of Black lesbian women who in 1974 reified the inherent value of Black womxn in their statement where they first declared that “the synthesis of [our] oppressions creat[e] the conditions of our lives.” I know of CRC today because of the sistering of *Collective Arising* co-curator Ashara Ekundayo.

Ashara Ekundayo and I first met in September 2019 following an invigorating discussion between Toyin Ojih Odutola, Alexandra Bell, and Dr. Leigh Raiford on UC Berkeley’s campus. The event was an intimate gathering, back in the day when we could sit thigh-to-thigh packed into a small conference room. I could almost touch the incomparable Toyin Ojih Odutola when I asked her a question; we breathed in the same air as she gave an eloquent rebuttal to the challenge I made. She said the world was a coliseum, that everyone was clambering to get to a center spotlight,

and she just wanted to turn the light off. I asked, why not expand the spotlight to encompass the entire coliseum? And, standing firm, she replied, “No, our eyes needed to adjust to the darkness—true liberation exists in the margins.” [and I’m paraphrasing here.]

I bring this up because Odutola’s metaphor has become one of my favorite analogy for the art world, affecting how I’ve navigated it since. When put into conversation with Black feminist icon Audre Lorde’s essay, “You Cannot Dismantle the Master’s House with the Master’s Tools,” I consider the spotlight a master’s tool. If the praise and recognition of individual genius by arts institutions is powers flexing and cherry-picking—isolating Black people from one another—then sistering—especially with poor, queer, and differently-abled Black womxn—has the revolutionary potential to overwhelm and dismantle the center’s powerful grip. And, perhaps through communion with one another we can relearn to create fire, a most revolutionary tool, around which we can dance again uninhibited, so as to release from our bodies the trauma that this fight for the spotlight has inflicted upon us.

Back in the building at Berkeley, and following the all-too-brief gathering of brilliant minds, I lingered and offered to take photos of Ashara, the artists, Leigh, and her students. As I remember it, as we got into the elevator to leave Ashara asked me what I do, and when I told her that (at the time) I worked as a curatorial assistant for the UC Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAMPFA), she beamed and, calling me a “sister curator,” gave me her card, and told me to be in touch; we had much to discuss. This was sistering in action.

It seems we met in Oakland within a month because the exhibition *Fruition: Water Holds All Memory*—that featured work by Asya Abdrahman, Simone Bailey, Ayanna Bassiou-ni, Sydney Cain—was still on display at the Ashara Ekundayo Gallery, a space that exclusively featured Black womxn artists and at the time all black gallery walls that were a relief

to my weary eyes accustomed to the violent glare of all-white gallery spaces. Despite having curated shows featuring Zanele Muholi, Kenyatta A.C. Hinkle, and Leila Weefur, Ashara operated on the periphery of the predominantly white world of Bay Area museum curation. Though I saw in Ashara’s work the autonomy that existing in the margins had afforded her—from the all-black walls, to the use of fire within a gallery space. Though we are two distinctly different womxn, the conditions of our lived experiences with the artworld mirrored one another and within the safe space she’d created on the better side of the 24 we spoke freely of our shared experiences, of feeling excluded by curators at museums and of museum professionals attempting to diminish our worth because we did not have their same prestige and privilege, among other things.

When the Director of the Museum of Sonoma County Jeff Nathanson reached out to me over the summer of 2020 about curating a show in their space, I sistered and asked Ashara if she’d come on board to curate our first large-scale museum exhibition together. The museum wanted an exhibition that responded to “this moment” and centered Black voices. Throughout the summer of 2020, we witnessed the power of united action by Black artists—speaking back to SFMOMA, the Whitney, and the City of San Francisco. We wanted to tell a story of a cultural awakening for arts institutions brought on at the insistence of Black collectives. Fueled by the CRC’s revolutionary 1974 statement that the synthesis of our oppressions creates the conditions of our lives, *Collective Arising* celebrates the multiplicity of Black identities and insists that our freedom necessarily precedes to liberation of all people.

FROM

Collective Arising: The Insistence of Black Bay Area Artists

Co-curated by Ashara Ekundayo & Lucia Olubunmi Momoh is on display at the Museum of Sonoma County, in Santa Rosa, CA from June 25 - November 27, 2022 • museumsc.org/collective-arising



ARK OF BONES (YOU SEE ME)
SYDNEY CAIN



**WOMEN OF THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY MURAL AND MINI MUSEUM
IN WEST OAKLAND AT THE HOME OF JILCHRISTINA VEST, 2021**

8 RACHEL WOLFE-GOLDSMITH ASSISTED BY ZOE BOSTON, KIARA HARDY, KS



To hear muralist, Rachel Wolfe-Goldsmith discuss her work on this mural, open the camera on your smartphone and hold over the QR Code.



WE NEED AN ANTI-RACIST, TRANS-FEMINIST, INTERSECTIONAL MUSEUM

MARCEL PARDO ARIZA + JUAN CARLOS RODRIGUEZ RIVERA

The piece *We Need an Anti-Racist, Transfeminist, Intersectional Museum*, 2020 evolved from our project *This is weird without you*, a series of posters, made in dialogue with latinx, women and queer owned local businesses in the Mission, that were printed at home and wheatpasted in their boarded up storefronts at the beginning of shelter-in-place. The project intended to have a poetic energy in public space recognizing the fact that we are all interconnected and we need each other's support now more than ever.

After that project, the energy in the country had drastically changed both with the ongoing COVID-19 crisis and the national uprisings against police brutality. Eungie Joo and Erin O'Toole -both curators at SFMOMA- reached out about continuing the *This is Weird Without You* project in the boarded up entrance of the museum. As our conversation started, the museum had just censored a former Black employee on social media and had announced the second wave of layoffs. With all of these in mind, the messages moved from having a poetic energy to joining and honoring the conversations and efforts being done by various groups around the country upholding institutions accountable for their ongoing racist and exploitative environments and practices.

Since the Museum was dealing with a censorship issue, we knew our words would not be edited down. We wanted to create a visual artwork in public space that materialized the energy into a documentation of the times. For us, art and design are tools that can be used to dismantle, question and challenge the institutions that supposedly serve us. This piece was developed in conversation with other local artists, mentors, cultural workers, educators, and activists who are dedicated to implementing systemic change within art and cultural institutions in the Bay Area and beyond.

The museum has/is being called to truly engage in urgent and ongoing anti-racist work. SFMOMA like many institutions that serve us uphold white supremacy and continuously exploit Black people and people of color. Part of what the project wants is to further push for real systemic change. The site specificity of the piece aims to push both from within, as the internal shifting that must take place, as well as, the changes that need to happen externally in our communities and society. The messages of the posters are just the very beginning of the ongoing, yet necessary, changes that art and cultural institutions must undertake.

The iteration for this project was made in collaboration with Juan Carlos Rodriguez Rivera.

ARTIST'S COCKTAIL

THE RESTORATION, 2022

BINTA AYOFEMI



At the beginning of 2020, I was grateful to be in community and Sisterhood where we were invited and encouraged to unpack our medicine bags and tool kits, & share what respective genius we each had to offer one another as the winds of change picked up speed. One share came from a black midwife who correlated Corona Virus with the baby's Crowning at Birth—the Ring of Fire the emerges at the site of entry. (Corona means crown).

I created this piece in response to that. It is a gesture in conjuring intimacy and courage to walk through this veil of fire being presented. To willingly release limitations and false perceptions of Self that cannot be carried over into new sites of being. To embody Liberation. My prayer is that it resonates with each ear and heart that receives it, empowering their own journey, sparking more agency and right relationship with self, other humans, and the more-than-human world.

New Collard Greens
Wild Nettles or Baby Spinach
Lemon
Large Ice

Gather some Deep Greens.
 Muddle any and all Deep Greens you can find. *Nettles need soaking in ice water or boiling water to remove the sting*

Blend these greens.

Strain.

Add Lemon.

Add Melted Honey or Warm Honeycomb.

Add Mezcal or Rye Whiskey or Kombucha.

All to Taste.

Shake with ice.

Shake.

Shake with a rhythm and a percussion that means libation to you.

What are our Black Essentials?

Top with wildflowers.

Pour this libation.

Over ice.

Drink deep.

Dedicate this to the deepest of Restoration in 2021.



DIRTY CAULIFLOWER

FROM "VEGETABLE KINGDOM"
BRYANT TERRY

PHOTOGRAPHY: ED ANDERSON

tempeh • porcini mushrooms • cremini mushrooms • scallions • parsley
MAKES 4 TO 6 SERVINGS

Yeah, I know. You've had "cauliflower rice" before and it sucked. Well, this ain't that. Although I employ the method of pulsing cauliflower in a food processor to yield ricelike pieces, think of this as a complexly flavored cauliflower recipe that could easily be a main. It's actually a grain-free reinvention of my Dirty Millet from Afro-Vegan, but even better. The cauliflower is sautéed quickly so it still has a little bite, the tempeh and mushrooms add a "meaty" texture and loads of umami, and the scallions and parsley brighten each bite.

- 1/2 ounce dried sliced porcini mushrooms**
- 2 cups boiling water**
- 1/2 (21/2-pound) cauliflower head, leaves removed, chopped into small pieces**
- 5 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**
- 8 ounces cremini mushrooms, cut into 1/2-inch-thick slices**
- Kosher salt**
- 5 ounces tempeh, crumbled**
- 1 cup finely diced yellow onion**
- 1 cup finely diced green bell pepper**
- 1/2 cup finely diced celery**
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper**
- 1/2 teaspoon minced garlic**
- 1 tablespoon tamari**
- Freshly ground black pepper**
- 3 scallions, green parts only, thinly sliced on an angle, for serving**
- 1/3 cup chopped**
- fresh flat-leaf parsley, for serving**

Put the porcini mushrooms in a small heatproof bowl and pour in the boiling water, making sure it covers the mushrooms. Use a small plate or the like to weight down the mushrooms to ensure they stay submerged. Soak for 20 minutes, then drain through a fine-mesh sieve set over a bowl, reserving the soaking liquid. Finely chop the porcini mushrooms and set them aside. Strain the soaking liquid to remove any grit and set aside.

While the porcini are soaking, in a food processor, pulse the cauliflower until it is broken down into small, grainlike pieces, using five to ten 1-second pulses. Transfer to a medium bowl.

Line a plate with paper towels and set it nearby. In a large skillet, warm 2 tablespoons of the olive oil over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add the cremini mushrooms and cook, undisturbed, until brown and crisp on one side, about 5 minutes. Sprinkle with salt, then flip the mushrooms and cook until well browned and tender, about 3 minutes more. Transfer to the prepared plate and set aside.

Add the remaining 3 tablespoons olive oil to the skillet. Add the crumbled tempeh and cook over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally, until it begins to brown, 1 to 3 minutes. Lower the heat to medium; add the onion, bell pepper, celery, cayenne, and 1/2 teaspoon salt and sauté until the vegetables start to soften, about 5 minutes. Add the garlic and cook until fragrant, about 2 minutes. Drizzle the tamari over the mixture and stir to combine. Scrape the mixture into a medium bowl.

In the same skillet, combine the chopped porcinis and 1 cup of the reserved soaking liquid and bring to a simmer over high heat. Add the cauliflower and cook, stirring frequently, until the cauliflower is just tender, 3 to 5 minutes.

Transfer the cauliflower to the bowl with the vegetables and tempeh. Add the cremini mushrooms and toss to combine. Taste and season with salt and black pepper, transfer to a serving bowl, and garnish with the scallions and parsley before serving.

"Flat of the Blade" by Massive Attack from Heligoland

ROASTED BUTTERNUT SQUASH & MAPLE

CHEF CRYSTAL WAHPEPAH
WAHPEPAH'S KITCHEN



- 1 medium butternut squash**
- 1 tablespoon of coconut oil**
- 1/3 of pure maple syrup**
- 1 tsp cinnamon**
- 1/4 fresh berries of your like**

Cut squash in half lengthwise discard seeds
Place cut side down in the oven at 300 degrees
in 1/2 in of water

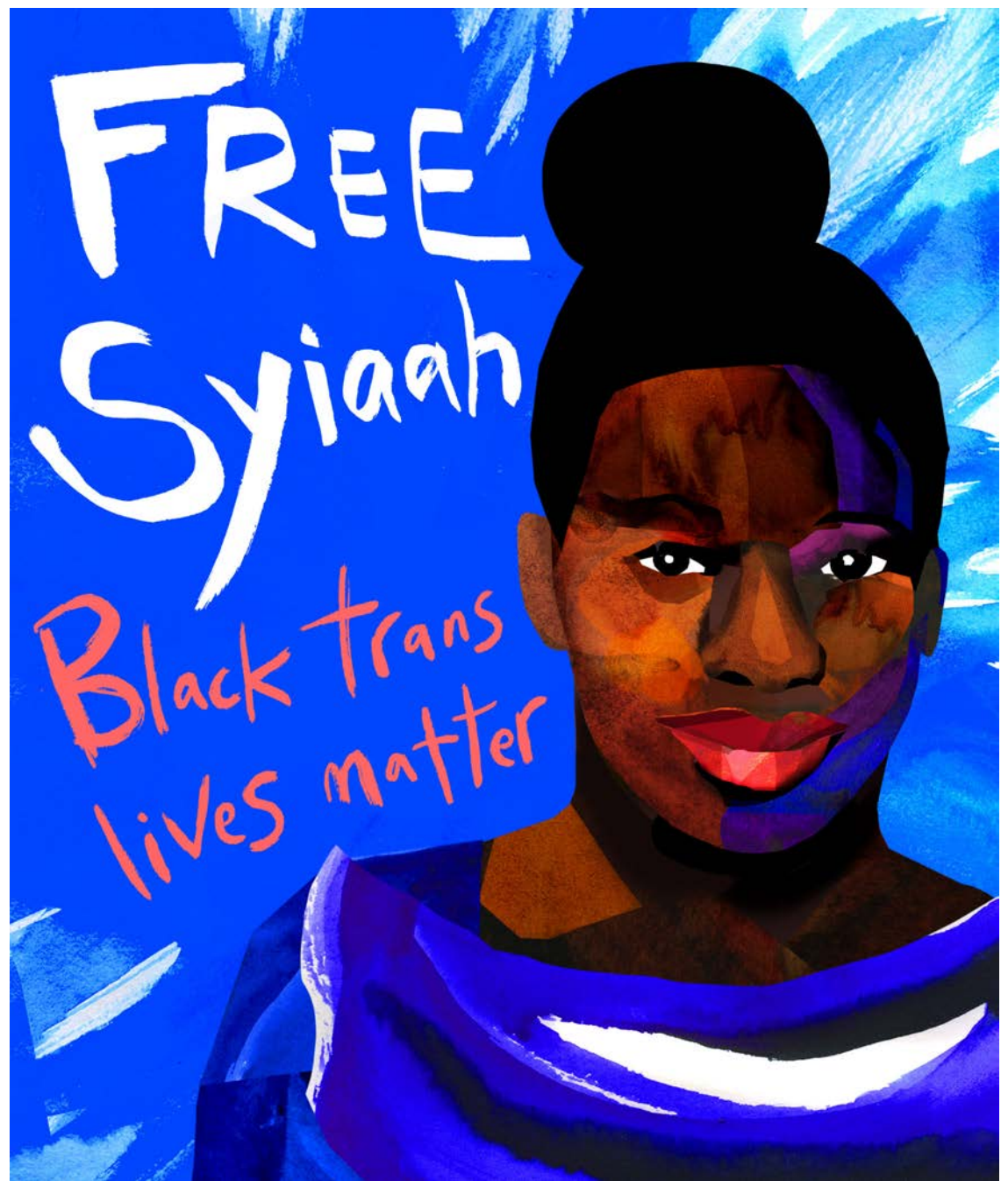
Bake until your fork slides through in 20 minutes when cool enough to scoop out pulp and mash stir in coconut oil and maple cinnamon let cool add fresh fruit of your liking.

Butternut squash is a winter food made for soups or desserts they keep for up to six months in a dark place. A lot of tribes kept this in their diet and the seeds.



BRING BLUE SKY HOME

MICAH BAZANT



These portraits were created through campaigns to save the lives of two of our trans siblings — Rickie Blue-Sky and Syiaah Skylit. Each image was created collaboratively by trans justice activists and organizations across California, Syiaah and Blue-Sky, and artist Micah Bazant. Together we moved thousands of people to action, and in March 2021 we won freedom for Blue-Sky, a Native trans man and beloved community leader who survived 37 years of incarceration. We continue to fight for Syiaah Skylit, a Black trans woman who is suffering severe violence from staff and inmates at Kern Valley State Prison, where other trans people have been murdered. Her repeated pleas to be transferred to a women's facility have been denied. Learn more and help #FreeSyiaah at change.org/freesyiaah

INTERVIEW WITH

ALEX J. BLEDSOE

ADRIANNE RAMSEY

This interview has been edited and condensed for clarity. It took place in February 2021.

ADRIANNE RAMSEY: What has your experience been being a Black woman artist during the past year?

ALEX J. BLEDSOE: Like many Black women, I'm surviving state, gender-based, and economic violence. As an artist, these experiences often boil me into a rage that I use to express and heal creatively. But doing that can be a dangerous cycle because it means trauma becomes a facilitator. In the wake of last summer's uprisings, I paused on filmmaking and music and focused solely on healing; through breathwork, movement, therapy, plant medicine, and sleep. The pandemic forced me to slow down, and the inner work helped me identify what factors had been

setting my pace as an artist. In those quiet, uncomfortable moments, I came face-to-face with the perfectionism and ageism that I'd subconsciously internalized, which made me feel rushed and under pressure. The past year taught me that I can create and become anything I want, as long as I rest and take more time than I've ever allowed myself. It's okay to give darkness its moment because I won't get stuck there; on the other side of that patience is light and energy.

AR: Please discuss a recent project of yours.

AJB: I've always been passionate about working on the intersections of anti-oppression, health, and liberation. I'm currently working on *OAKLEAD*, a documentary about lead

poisoning and environmental racism in the Bay Area. I started working on this project in 2017, when I found out that Fruitvale and other Oakland communities have higher rates of lead poisoning than Flint, Michigan. Lead poisoning disproportionately impacts children of color and exacerbates other forms of systemic racism, including the school-to-prison pipeline. Lead poisoning is an issue the Black Panther Party actively worked on as a racial justice issue in Oakland. I'm proud to be working in the wake of their legacy; I hope *OAKLEAD* will contribute to a national conversation that will protect current and future generations of children.

AR: What could Bay Area art spaces do to better amplify Black voices and artists?

AJB: Pay Black artists well and hire Black arts administrators in key roles. Form collaborative partnerships with Black artists that support the artists' specific needs, instead of extractive short-term relationships. Provide physical and virtual space for community-building. Cede land to BIPOC artists and organizations. Pay reparations for the displacement of BIPOC artists. Acknowledge past harm and define new, public commitments to equitable relationships with artists.

Alex J. Bledsoe is a multidisciplinary art whose work is focused on Black liberation and dismantling exploitative systems.



CORONA CURRENCY:

DECOLONIAL DEATH RITUALS AND MIDWIFING CONSCIOUSNESS

AMBER MCZEAL, M.A., PH.D. (C)

Corona currency came, enchanted me into Her change
Her tight squeeze skipping the beat of my heart, Psy-
chic stroke
Just enough pressure
submit to release
from fantasies of separation.

Her insistence on holistic awareness
Paradox with social distances...
Her crown signals a birthing heat, passion to embody
biophilia.
Love-driven politics that connect health with home.
Security.
Her pressure disrupting hearts driven by greed.
Psychic stroke

Coaxed into whole humanisms
Dignity
Divine body
Labor is worthy
Work is the life force of this world
And we grieve in its disrespect
Grieve the disposability of bodies, Light temples
Grief is the emptying out
A necessary currency
transform addictions to limitation identity
This is my payment
Crowning flames that transform

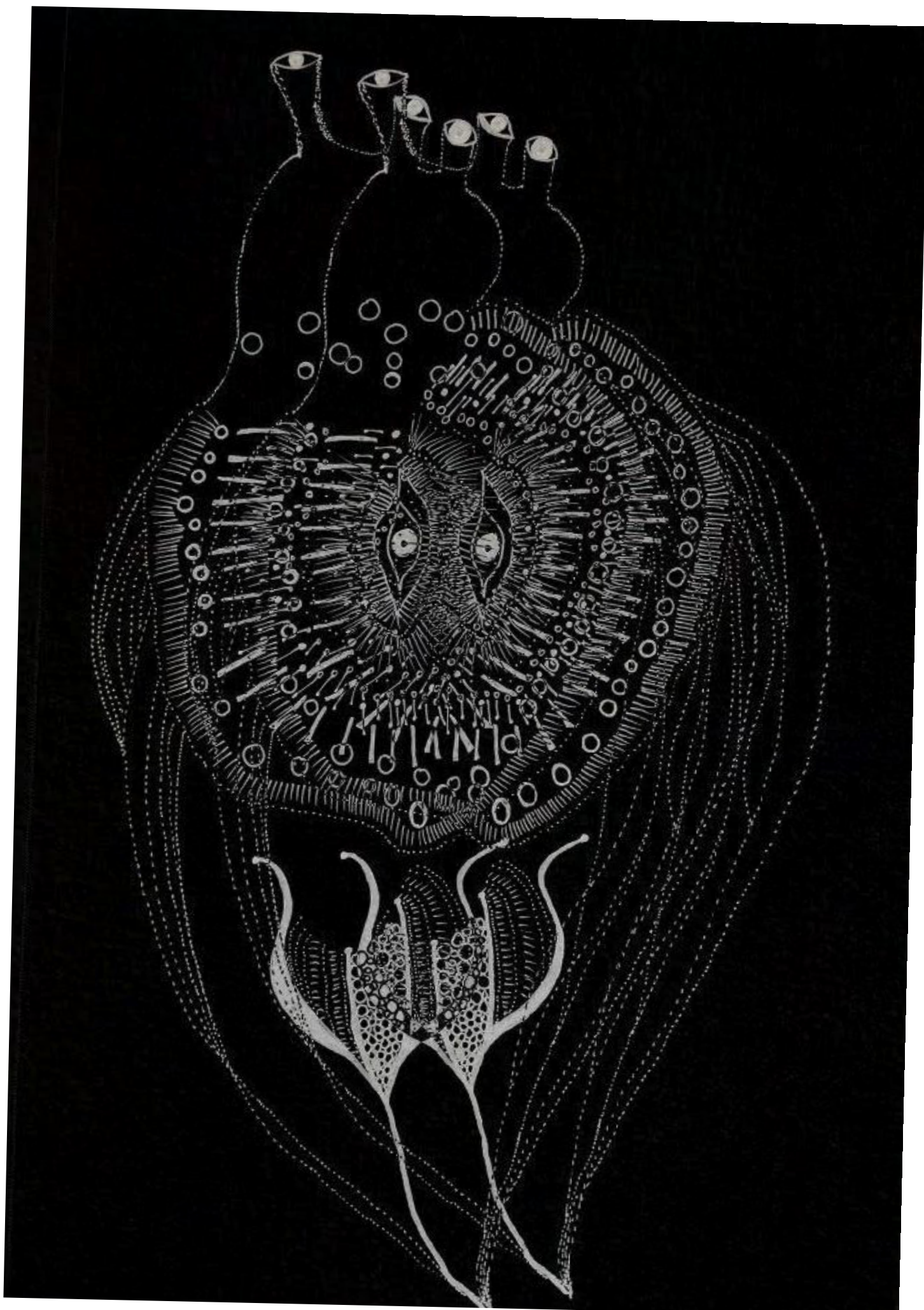
A sustainable abundance conjuring
Growth rooted in the law of love



*To hear Amber McZeal
read, open the camera on
your smartphone and hold
over the QR Code.*

Reciprocity
Her pressure is a passage
Midwifing consciousness through binary tensions
Allow this third thing to emerge
Surrender
Currencies of our grief are growth gateways

Let it die
Your fantasy of separation
Let it die
Her pressure
A joy
Bliss of psychic Freedom
Embodied



SONG OF HEART

DOHEE LEE



Song for listening to heart, which is the house of spirit, house of ancestors. Listening to our ancestors their resilience and resistance full of love and care that heals us and heals them.

THE SEVEN LAST TWIRLS

MARVIN K. WHITE

1. *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*
OPENING PRAYER

Come, let us go before the DJ booth in prayer. God, who loves all of creation. Not just the divisible cell and the batting eye, the finned thing and webbed foot but the creative, the idea, the notion, the invention, the advance, the poem, the recipe, the new way, the revision, the retelling, the costume change, the recast, the trillion and the radiant cut.

God, who loves to spin all things. Loves the decision to get up and loves the decision to demand rest. Start again. Right the course. Move the cursor. New secondary source. All of creation is all of creation.

God, who is commotion and loves us for the commotion we cause, the stirring up and the troubling our bodies create by their mere appearance.

God, you are epic in creation. Star stuff. Core stuff. You by heart. Improvisational. Left field. Lines never spoken. Creation. All of it. And we love you today for it, God.

God, we thank you for this service today and we ask that you dance with us. We invite you to this sanctuary turned dance floor.

We invite you to do what you have always done, move on our behalf God. Move to us, move with us and move for us. Show us that we are a part of the Divine Dance.

Bless the speakers, singers, poets, preachers, directors, producers, sound decisions for the sound team and make light the load of the those on the Lights. And dancers here today God, bless them.

God, bless the DJ's, for you are the original recording and we know that you make yourself available for this, the remix. Have your way in the service today.

God, on this dance floor. Floor me. My heart is spent lord, is spun with every muscle revelation that you reveal to my body in this music called house.

Happy Dance God. Rain dance with me god. Bring up my secret sweat.

Draw the baby powder line and dare the devil to cross it.

God, you said dance is good and we who are your children God, are good.

God thank you cuz even in the time of war, this is a prayer for a world that needs a dance floor that feels like an altar. Amen

2. *Today you will be with me in paradise.*
RE-READING OF SCRIPTURE

In the beginning God created the dance floor and the DJ booth. Now the beat was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the breaks. And God said, "Let there be house" and there was house music. God saw that the house music was good, and God separated the house from the Disco. God called the East coast house "Garage," and the West Coast House God called "Warehouse." And there was evening dance, and there was morning dance—the first day of house.

And God said, "Let there be an expanse between the clubs to separate club from club." So, God made the expanse and separated the club under the expanse from the club above it. And it was so. God called the expanse "Deep House" And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day. And God said, "Let the club under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." And it was so. God called the dry ground "tea dance" and the gathered waters God called "sweat" And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, "Let the DJ produce groove: seed-bearing groove and dance on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so. The land produced dance: DJ's bearing seed according to their kinds and producers bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the ceiling sky to separate the day from the night and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years. God made two great lights—the disco ball light to govern center ceiling sky and the lesser laser light to govern DJ booth. God also made the stars. And God saw that it was good. And God said, "Let the sweat and the tears drip from every living creature that dances." And it remains so...

4. *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*
THE WORD

When Friday came, they were all together in one place. Club Taboo. Suddenly a sound like the popping of fried chicken grease on some grandmother's hand, the speaker crackling of a DJ's gospel house music, a tambourine, a cow bell, a centering silence, a poem, a song, and a violent wind came from seemingly nowhere or heaven and filled the whole club where they were dancing. They saw what seemed to be tongues, lips, hips and smiles of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Levan and began to speak in other tongues and dance in other styles and love in new ways and share their bodies as the Spirit enabled them.

Vinyl: is the Latin vinum for "wine". Discotheque is French originally meaning 'record library, Sacral-sancta is from the house music DJ's and means, "All ass is good ass. All ass is divine." House Music means, "It is written. It is danced." House music means it has always been about surrender. Unsure footing. House Music is Dendrochronological. Has rings to count. Can date itself back. Can circle in on itself. House music makes us all witness and archive.

Knucklean Cosmology: The Universe's song is house music. The Universe is comprised of infinite vinyl, endless and beginningless, grooving towards the center of itself, where eventually the natural forces of its children dancing lures us into a continuous stream of love out of nothing from nowhere into everyone.

Sisterson, Brothergirl, Motherboy, Daddygirl, Sonmama, Girluncle, Daughterfather, Niecepew, Nephiece, House music means We have given names and spun names. House music means we are all mixed with something.

3. *Behold your son: behold your mother.*
CALL AND RESPONSE & COVENANTAL READING

Black Boy: (Seeing his mama dancing by herself) Mama what you dancing to?

Mama: House music.

Black Boy: Mama, what is house music?

Mama: You remember when your uncle Frankie and your uncle Larry would spin you around so many times that when they put you down all you could do was laugh and be dizzy? It's kinda like that.

Black Boy: Like me and my friends after a summer apart?

Mama: Yes, and when you're looking at your favorite star and wondering who is holding it in the sky making it spin and twinkle.

Black Boy: Is house music in heaven Mama?

Mama: It starts here but it reaches there then it comes back and your toes hear it.

Black Boy: Mama, toes don't have ears!

Mama: Don't tell me, tell your toes.

Black Boy: All they do is wiggle when I talk to them.

Mama: That mean they happy to see you.

Black Boy: Look Mama, they happy to see you too!

Mama: That giggle and wiggle baby, that's what house music is.

Black Boy: I hope house music never goes away mama.

Mama: Me neither baby. Me neither.

"Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of Club Taboo I ask that you please direct your attention to the DJ booth above as we review the dance floor etiquette. There are six speakers in this room. Take a minute to locate the speaker closest to you. Note that the nearest speaker may be behind you. Count the number of people dancing between you and this speaker. Should the dance floor suddenly experience pressure loss, stay calm and listen for instructions from the DJ. House music will always drop down from above whenever you need air. Place the beats over your mouth and nose. Pull the straps of house music to tighten it. If you do not know where the house music straps are located, raise your hands. If you are dancing with the children, make sure that the house music is on you first before attempting to help the children. In the unlikely event of some drunk white girl bumping the turntables and the music stops, do not evacuate, carry on with your carry-on. In the unlikely of event of a record skipping, house music has life rafts located under your seat and feet. Strobe and spotlights will lead you to your closest groove. While we wait for take-off, please take a moment to tarry.

House Music means to wait an hour after eating to go back onto the dance floor. House music means, "Everything must come up."

Was unsettled by the long awkward hug that the song gave him when he walked on to the dance floor. Has danced between here and there and nowhere and somewhere before but not since he heard that the boy had passed. Somehow knows what to do when a song need you to hold it up. House music means we are not so pulled up

**ARTWORK
REMEMORY
AMIR KHADAR**

as to not be able to break down. House music means that one day everything will weep and you gotta stay ready cuz one day song will greet you not with baby powder but with tissue. Those who enter will become those who are waiting to go in. Song usually like to throw us about like bingo balls in a caller's cage but not this night, his night. We swayed in one old low wave. Something was up. Knew this was for the one who left this world's twirl. Knew too new to be a séance. Knew who was a ghost and who wasn't. Knew we don't say, "I'm sorry for your loss" here. We say, "Get your life" or "If you go in boy, I will hold your skirt down." House music is second line and "I'll fly away." House music pall bears, ushers, eulogizes, inters and commits back to the earth. House music means we are own quiet hour and our bodies, a repast.

In America, one out of six of the children get their life every ten house songs. While this statistic might be hard to swallow, it's a reality we face every single First Friday Night. And we're counting on you to help. Our dedicated DJ mixes around-the-clock to find tracks conducive to spirit and protection for the children from hipster harm. But it's only with your help that we are able to safely twirl. For just the cost of two top-shelf drinks you can help one of the children receive lifesaving and giving house music. Please, be a blessing.

5. *I Thirst.*

TESTIMONY: SINNER AT THE DISCO BALL

(Person Walks Down to Altar. Places Disco Ball. Is Spritzed with Levanian Water. Exits.)

We dance, clap and shout because present dance is about meta-cognition and having a knowing about knowing and dancing about dancing. It's always about having each other's backs and being of one spine.

We dance in every direction because we know that dance tells you about Africa and tells Africa about you.

We dance and testify publicly because dance consecrates and wherever two or more are dancing there is holiness.

We dance to allow the operation and activation of natural and supernatural gifts because House Music hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation.

We dance because house music is the ritual and the rite thing to do.

We dance because we must return the ground to how we found it, waiting to be disturbed.

6. *It is finished.*

PASSING THE PLATE

God, go to Orlando,
Go to all chosen and families of belonging.
Be the question and answer for them all.
Dispatch the angels. Do justice God.
Belief and not disbelief God.
Be with all Latino, black, all LGBT folks,
As well as all those who experience violence
On a daily.
Be mighty God,
Show yourself as sense,
To all who are wrapping their minds around
This senselessness.
Make yourself known exponentially,
As we understand the exponential ways
This tragedy unfolds.
Be their Judy, their friend to kiki with,
Be their speed dial positions,
And their favorite ring tone.
Be the answer to the call from those
Asking to speak to the dead,
And be the abuela,
And news for the-not-yet-heard-the-news.
Be the God who has lost
A child under similar circumstance.
Then Be the God that starts,
A victim of violence support group.
Be the God that knows
That today is not about resiliency
And bouncing back,
It's not about rebuilding
On top of still-fresh blood.
Don't be that God asking us to toughen up,
So that you can be excused from caregiving.
We are in mourning.
Tend to our tears.
You, who this world loves,
You, who knows what it feels like
When there was a time when no one celebrated
you,
How you had to throw yourself a parade,
You, who had creation march before you,
Know this hurt.
And I trust that you will make the world
Love us better than this.

7. *Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.*

BENEDICTION AND COMMUNION

Please Stand and Dance as you are Willing and able to Receive the Benediction.

Go, for this is not a funeral.

We are not eulogizing the past.

We are not burying our history.

We will offer no Bleeding Heart wreaths

Or bring out sobbing Sister Johnson

To start off the crying.

Go, for this is not a death.

This is a rebirth.

This is a celebration.

We are not fighting to hold on.
We are fighting to break free.
Go, because we are in fact ready
To leave this ground that we have built
Stomped
Raised and
Danced on.
This ground that we
Grew into,
Raised cane and kids
And collards on.
Go and be comfortable
Dancing into the sun again,
Breeze again,
Ocean again,
Star again.
Go, knowing that where we come from
Only half as far as where we're going.
Go children,
This is the course
That we remember tonight.
The footsteps,
The routine,
The high bar,
The dance way
Out of no way.
The choreography.
The core unbitten.
The charge unchanged.
The debt owed to our why existence,
Ledgered into the "how high should I kick
god?" column.
Tonight, we are here to celebrate using our
bodies
In service of our people
Because dance still means,
"We who still believe in the
Push and pull of the universe."
House Music still means the three "R's,"
"Renew, renovate and rebuild."
Dance still means,
"A vision can be revealed to this world
Through our hips."
House Music still means,
"What we are
Is inherently
An act of love."
Dance still means,
"This is where we
Encounter the divine."
And house music and dancing
Brings forward history,
It cannot help but spread.
This is what it came to do.
Is always relevant,
Is never the bad hand dealt,
Is never the snake eying you.
So, we have not lost anything.
Because we remember all of the moves.
Please Stand and Dance as You Are Willing and
Able.

In the name of the Father, Mother, The
Daughter, the Son, The Three Spirited, The
Ones Who Are both and neither and the Holy
Spirit.

In the name of art, and culture and making
and viewing. In the name of sweat and love and
Frankie Knuckles and all of the House Music
Saints in that great club of witnesses.

Therefore, since we have so great a nightclub
and smoke machine of witnesses surrounding
us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and
the sin, which so easily entangles us, the cult of
respectability, and let us run with endurance the
race that is set before us.

Let us dance, fixing our eyes on the DJ's and
our hips to the floor. Let us lose our minds so
that we can see Jesus on the dance floor, the only
one who can wear linen and not get any drinks
spilled on it.

Jesus the author and perfecter of faith, the
DJ and spinner of house, the twirler and the

leaper. Jesus the vogue queen, who for the joy,
who for the joy, who for the joy, set before Jesus'
self, endured the closing of Cables, Loretta's,
The Garage, The Generator and Esta Noche,
despising the shame, and has sat down on the
right corner speaker at the throne of God and is
ready to go in on our behalf.

Finally, Beloved,
I pray that the word that went forth out of their
mouths on that dance floor, from that bar stool,
like it will for all of the children, in all of the
tearooms and at all of tea dances,
under that lopsided wig, and under that
anointing, through that first testosterone and
estrogen injection, through the first inking that
you like trans girls, that you really like men, that
you like non-binary folks, that you are attracted
to gender non-conforming folk, that you want
to dance and be held, during that diagnosis, in
that prayer, through that cry, on that hope, on
that dope, while wearing "that" and lip synching
"that";

I pray that the word and the read and the
air kiss will not return unto us void, but it is
accomplishing that which God pleased, landing
on the still sweat and tear-soaked cheeks and lips
of its intended. And yes God, it is prospering
in this thing, this body, me, us, the wrecked and
the wracked, whereto they sent it and spent it.
All air kisses. I pray one day children, all of your
gifts, all of the unconventional and new and old
things that you were called to do, all of your
inherent wisdoms, from all of the directions
from which the diasporas of your hips spin, will
be welcomed and expected in places that you
could never have imagined.

One day soon a new song, your gospel twirl, is
coming that will gather all of the accounts of
your encounter with the divinity. I pray it on top
of and next to sound systems and speakers. One
day all of your moves will be recorded. One
day you will be amplified in love. One day you
will be both ahead of your time and on time.
One day you all God's children lgbtqi and not,
will know that whatever and whoever, we have
outlived, that we will enter no room and no
dance floor, without acknowledging the room
they left for us.

Aché, Amen and Honey Boom (The sound of
the sweet of you, traveling at sonic speed into
the ancestors.)

Communion (Invite Ushers to Come Down)
He then took the can of baby powder, opened
and sprinkled it saying, "Girl, know that here,
on this thresh, on this altar, we dance. This baby
powder is our mighty cloud of witness. It is my
reminder to you that this life is about your carry-
on. Your capacity to bring your own cross to the
dance floor. You got to tarry and let go of the
agonizing. You got to give up the ghost of hate.
House music is my promise to you, that when
the fog machine smoke clears, I am with you."

She then took the cup and drank from it, saying,
"This is my blood, my anemia, my HIV, my
menstruation, my murder, my birth, and my
death cherry popping and spilling for you."

They then took the long-playing vinyl, the
78, held it above his head, broke it 45's and
said, "The universe's song is house music. The
universe is comprised of infinite vinyl, endless
and beginningless, grooving towards the center
of itself, where I am luring you children, into a
continuous stream of love out of nothing from
nowhere into everyone.

Vinum, Discotheque, Sacralancta, Doughie,
Wobble, Shablam! Amen. Amen? Amen!

WRITING EXERCISE: A RECIPE FOR REVOLUTIONS

There is *Food Network* online recipe version of my favorite Red Velvet Cake to bake. I have made it so often that I have begun to think that my grandmother passed this recipe down to me from the old country; Louisiana. I am envisioning it here to introduce a writing and remembrance practice; creating a recipe for your day. Let us write down the ingredients and instructions for our sweetest possibilities.

What ingredients do you need to meet this day head on? Strength? Courage? Stillness? Insight? Write them down.

How much of each ingredient will you need? A grant proposal full? An auditor's coffee cup? A smidgen of resistance? Write them down.

What are the instructions for combining the ingredients? Stir until your arms hurt? Throw everything in a march and pray? Write them down.

What temperature on what block of Oakland will you bake it? Does it need to come to a boil or just simmer? How do you know when it's done? When it's ready how will you serve it? In people's hands? Must it cool until it is in a strategy meeting? How many people will it feed? Write it all down.

And finally, what is this a recipe for? A movement? A revolution? A quieting?

We are not only participants in the amazing work that we do but also authors of the work. How are we living out values that say we know consciously what goes into our work? How often will we take the time to write down the recipe of our organizations? Let us make sure that it is in our handwriting, that our stories and histories are found & followed.



THE WAY THE FIRE FLIES

CALVIN WILLIAMS

A Song For GiGi Pearlle

إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ¹

The Fire Flies Like...
Prayers on the canvass of freedom dreams
etched to memories
by calloused fingertips on palms
hands up, and kneebent
Like the way
Our grandmomma's
grandmommas use to pray

The Fire Flies Like...
Her hums of hymns and profane proverbs
Spoken in the same breath
with power so resolute
that even the whispering moon
fades in reverent silence
Speaking only to Say
Her Name.

The Fire Flies Like...
the Rage of Her Joy
Dancing as shadows with night
as flames with smoke -
This time the fire is
Her Drum

The Fire Flies Like...
Her Wildest Dreams
Born of Truth & Ash
As she sings:
"Bless these Waters, Bless this Night, Bless our Fire, Bless our Light!"

1. Transliteration "Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi rajii'un" Translation "Verily we belong to Allah, and verily to Him do we return." (Qu'ran verse 2:156). Recited upon speaking of the loved one, especially one who has recently passed

DOWNLOAD THE ARTIVIVE APP AND HOLD YOUR PHONE UP TO THIS IMAGE TO EXPERIENCE AUGMENTED REALITY



ABOUT AUGMENTED REALITY

1. Use this QR code to install the ARTIVIVE APP on your smartphone or device using the QR code or by going to www.artivive.com
2. Open the app on your device
3. View the image printed on this page through your phone (use headphones for best sound quality).

ABOUT THE PROJECT

"Black Freedom Beyond Borders: Memories of Abolition Day"

Available for download free
<https://www.thebigwe.com/abolitionday>

Published in the United States 2020 by Wakanda Dream Lab x PolicyLink x The BIG WE Wakanda Dream Lab is a collective fan driven project that bridges the worlds of Black fandom and #Blacktivism for Black Liberation. It functions according to a value of emergence and celebrates the organic self-organizing nature of fandom. We intend to build on the aesthetics and pop culture appeal of Wakanda to develop a vision, principles, values and framework for prefigurative organizing of a new base of activists, artists and fans for Black Liberation. We believe that Black Liberation begets liberation of all peoples.
wakandadreamlab.com

ALL THE COLLAGE ARTWORK WAS CREATED BY AMIR KHADAR,
ALL AUGMENTED REALITY FEATURES DESIGNED BY CALVIN WILLIAMS

JOIN OUR PATREON [PATREON.COM/ARTISTASFIRSTRESPONDER](https://www.patreon.com/artistasfirstresponder)