

"Intro"

by Discopoet Khari B.

I never really understood the day workers
Waking up when they're compelled 2
4 5 days of slaving 4 someone else
8 hours a day
40+ hours a week
2 provide 4 a place 2 sleep
eat and lay their burdens down

vocalized blues ...when I lay my burdens down

& awake 2 another day of burden
N the light of day

wearing a mask of polite society
all covered N coercive brand name habiliments
from the finest modern day plantations
designed 2 streamline & draw lines
between the working class the elitists and yo ass

If U really liked the light so much
Y would U sacrifice so much of it
4 a compulsory piece of paper
& if said imperious paper was really not so important
or U'd rather not B bound by medium of exchange
made with malicious intent
Y Rn't U fighting
4 more control of your day

Maybe the day ain't the truth
Maybe the truth ain't N the light
Night is when the darkness falls
The obligations dissolve
& the doors of our preferred church open
& N 2 the air music breathes
& greets us like a best friend that's been gone 2 long

We do not care that the light is now gone
It was merely 2 highlight our rich undertones
By day we were babies
At night we R grown
Our chance 2 reright
all the things that were wrong

We float like a tone from a vibraphone
We R the fire and the brimstone
That is the reason we R reclaiming our throne
Our job is reorient where lost minds have gone

The moon N the sky is not reason 2 moan
Because it's the night that 2gether we own

Let us rest when we're dead
the night is 2 glorious 2 waste N bed
The dark 2 expansive
not 2 C what's ahead

Ase

Darkness is a decision 2 B made ~Josh Ishmon

"should i tell (blk)"
by Kristiana Rae Colón

what should i tell my children

what should i tell my children who are

what should i tell

what should i tell my

should i? should i tell my children?

what

should i tell my children drumming buckets outside the red line of what
it means to be trapped on garfield with senegal's rhythms quickening
their bloodline and their limbs
loose strings on their timbs

what should i tell my kings selling loose
squares loose squares loose
squares and loose dreams

what shall i tell my lucid dreamers of
what their hues skin means
in a neoliberal wonderland that refuse to
see color

what root might i lyric into medicine
for my mother what penumbra
under hoodie might obscure
the beauty of my brother's smile to
the neighborhood watch

what should i tell my daughter
bout why the neighborhood watched
from its porch when she cried out

what should i tell the supernovas
folding into flesh of what it means to
be sheathed in shade

what do i tell a solar flare
of how exquisitely he's made

what do i tell a fugitive slave's great-
grandson bout how to make it through
eighth grade when every lamppost
is plastered with his ransom

how do i tell soil
that she's handsome
plant seeds in her starlight water

what should i tell daughters
carrying whole zip codes on
her back of how to unroll the
scrolls of her shoulders

what do i tell my son when Chicago's
summers grow colder

what should i

what should i tell my children what
should i tell? should i tell my children they are

what should i tell my children
headed back in a spaceship
that pulled up 600 years ago
bout what i been on since they left

what bedtime story will ocean sing
to lullaby bones blanketing her depths

what should i	what should i	what should i	Black
what should i	what should i	what should i	Black

“goodnight”
by Kristiana Rae Colón

the sauce from evening supper scrubbed from every silver tine
of forks glistening in the drainer, costumes drying on the line,
soil of my basil pot is moist, the floors swept clean, every corner
of the house is sprayed + saged + prayers gleam from the front
door to the rafters to the back door to the street. I’ve labored
through the day so every soul I greet within these gates
has found a place to breathe + eat + dream + drum +

draw their map to freedom. Poems anxious in my hands
demanding that I free them in the night, but hands that lift
+ type + scrape the day crave stillness when the light has tucked herself
away
+ the sun has done her shift, inviting stars to guard the dusk,
+ moon to supervise the switch. My spine a wire hanger tangled
on an empty rack, a ripped guitar string strummed undone
from the fretboard of my back: and here, inside the womb of black

only one spell remains. Tell me
where does a supergoddess rest when her magic
trick is labor made invisible? Who mends
the capes ripped tripping marching smoke rings
around city hall? Who bandages the knuckles
of medics on the frontline? Who hears
her stomach rumble as she serves your plate
at lunchtime but forgot to eat again... who hydrates
our warriors? The night

: a berry plump with the black nectar of rest. The night

: a bed of stars where daughters tuck a racing head. The night

: dark silk sewn to armor tender hearts. Night

: a river black to wet the lips of weary gods

good god

good (night)

good god good

(night)

god

(night)

"morning song"
by Kristiana Rae Colón

that night
was a plum wine woman with black
lacquered lips blowing cherry swisher
smoke over the breaks of lake michigan

we climbed inside the night's
mouth and she was humboldt park lagoon
humid: desire thick as thigh muscles
but we too cool to move through it

we too blue raspberry italian
lemonade on taylor to name
this nascent mango
nectar love we too unapologetically
tender to be impatient with our touch

night's nipples were two kola nuts
pitching a tent under a linen blouse wove of stardust &
we nestled against her pulse to warm skin
cooled by late summer night sweat
licked couplets under earlobes, tongues etched
calligraphy on each other's neck
& this
was a beginning, not timid but
just dipping in the dark spring of our pleasure just
dripping iridescence in oceans of forever knowing it
don't have to last but we solar power centered so
when our chests connect dawn recharge our
desire, each rotation wind us up stack tinder on the
fire, we burn the night to ash
blacken our bare bodies in it collapse expand implode
[we] rode griffins [backs] from babylon to kemet
[& back]

eden's serpents marvel
at the knowledge we deposit at each other's root
bodies burn the temple marble black like thutmose & hatshepsut

ancient cosmic throbbing naked

bake the earth a crust
magma syrup from volcano
with every loving thrust

the dome of night a temple
we painted til the dawn
sunlight spilled down cave of throat

became our morning song

& this

was a beginning, not timid but
just dipping in the dark spring of our pleasure just
dripping iridescence in oceans of forever knowing it
don't have to last but we solar power centered so
when our chests connect dawn recharge our
desire, each rotation wind us up stack finder on the
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"Villainy"

by Discopoet Khari B.

When asked
The task
Of casting
The light by which the villain is casted
R your visions fast masked by
the last trash news report flash
of dark faces splashed across the screen
Embossed by brown fiends lost in a system
That never fostered their dreams
Or yours either

Neither time nor statistics
Has altered an intrinsic, color-specific
prejudice toward darker tones
Mystically minimizing years of wrongs
inflicted on the very ones we bemoan
as the unfortunate savages
born 2 a life of crime

Ignore the signs and historical timelines
where'd we find that the facts R far different
Stories bent 2 misrepresent those whose ascent
has meant the descent of every environment
they have descended upon
Spaces where they circumvent nature
With artificial implements reinvented 2 cement their hold
On the land and dominion of man

Confident in their control of the content
they insure that it's imperative we've spent
most of our lives disoriented by their relentless narrative
a dubious, degenerative deception
a distance beyond my alliterative pejorative interjection
that paints the evil doer as the hero
& the hero as the wretch

But N the stillness of the dark
Has ever led U 2 think
That the bad guy
The villain
The terrorist

The author of evil
The master of misery
The scourge Carpathia
The sorrow Moldavia
The propagator of genocides
The ravager of all countrysides
Has been some shade of pink?

"Brutal Imagination"

by Jacoby Cochran

My Name is Zero.

I was created in the brutal imagination of the cosmos... From the moments humanity woke up they have feared the darkness. It makes sense if you think about it. The unknown often sprouts fright and terror. But It is also quite sad when you think about it. To make sense of the abyss we projected our monsters and demons, plagues and curses, fright and terror onto the darkness. It was in this basic anxiety that I began to take form. You see when an anxiety simmers long enough eventually it will grow flesh and walk outside of your body. I am that flesh. anxiety made actual, paranoia personified. In the beginning I was neutral, dissuaded, over time empathetic, understanding, even accommodating. but now a world obsessed with darkness and blackness to hide from itself is unrecognizable.

now the anxious world needs no greater villain than a trickster, master manipulator, prince of Darkness. Somehow a biological bias became a bottomless bayou for the worse of ourselves never coming to terms with our primordial fear. Now Dark bodies are the stand inn.

My name is Zero! But my essence is from a long history of great deception. You know my transatlantic track record, my lynch mob lineage. When called on I am your trickster, master manipulator, wizard of dark magic with just few tricks, turning household items into guns. A shapeshifter transforming 12 and 17 year old boys & girls into thousand year old beasts and ghouls.

I've travelled the known world and met my maker, my demise, my rebirth, while recycling these old tricks. And you know what I have learned. At every corner darkness remains the most oppressed. the most vilified . the most likely to be seen as zero. Look around it's not hard to spot. Everywhere you turn its the light vs the dark. Light Luke vs dark darth . Every wicked witch from the West to east Salem wedded to black as judgement. Voldemort mastered the dark arts. Scar was darker than Mufasa. Check Hulu. Dagger emits a white light of hope as cloak grows blackened phantom limbs and haunts the heart with despair. Even death in all it's naturalness became your caricature sketched in black hood and sickle. Must I continue. It doesn't take a "Black Mirror" to see me. Open your eyes and you will see me.

I've been astroprojected out of thin air in Union South Carolina and plastered over raw flesh from Oakland to Cleveland. I have been stopped, frisked, and choked out in Staten Island and snuffed out in Waller county. I have swallowed 16 shots in under 16 seconds on Chicago side streets. I have been told I am ugly and advertised lightening cream from Nairobi to mumbai. Yes darkness celebrated worldwide on futbol pitch for profit, they call us King James and queen

bees, long as we bring said profit. but when darkness makes waves & paddles across oceans of water and sand, too close to shores in refuge called alien. Then Caged for profit. Don't forget I have been shamed in folklore, made evil queen in fantasy, I am the boogie man in every bedtime story, the character whose heart is always black as night.

But hell isn't that what a good villain does. Doesn't a good villain only exist to reveal the hero. To be dominated, demoralized, and defeated. Is that what we have made of the darkness.

Nothing more than to be dominated demoralized and defeated.. This is the problem, humanity never dealt with its real fear. Even those who reached to the stars for answers stigmatized the darkness as it constantly revealed back at us that we are in fact not the center of the universe.

I am tired of being your trope, figment, a mistaken identity. I am tired of being the comic book villain covered in deaths shadows living as a remixed sample. This anxiety has me present at every locked door, dirty look, every lash, every underhanded you're cute for a dark girl, every pseudo science justification. Inferior, Savage, Slave, Criminal, Terrorist, GangBanger are the wingless birds that pluck away at me as I remain chained to the boulder of your naive binary logic. How quickly humanity forgets it was the darkness that birthed it not the fire.

for my entire existence I have been shackled to this role and I am tired. Its exhausting, the shackles and the waiting. Waiting for My only desire to be realized and I freed from this existence. Free me and yourselves from this paranoia. Free a world that has you questioning the magic in melanin. Has you using dark as synonymous for fear. You must let go of this anxiety which has consumed us All. All I want for you is to redefine the darkness realign with the darkness we were born in the darkness. The damage has been done And for long enough I have remained silent, but it is clear you can not evolve if you do tear down these systems that require the light to be at war with the dark. remember the sun has never been at war with the dark sky. They are one in the same. You are the children of the sun and the dark sky. End the war inside of you and let me go. (Repeat)

"Absence vs Everything"
by Discopoet Khari B.

In the absence of exterior light
Sunlight, moonlight, lightning bug, light bulb
What do U C?
How quick we R 2 say nothing
2 feel a perceived absence
2 think that everything might B gone
when nothing has moved
when everything still exists
when there is evidence 2 the contrary right behind our eyes

When I close mine
There exists an eclipse
Dark and demonized
But nothing has ever attacked me
No harm has ever befallen me there
Au contraire
It's where I go 2 meditate
2 find peace beyond the perceived
2 reach and witness my dreams
subconscious thoughts and the play of aspirations
I never knew I had

When I close my eyes
from that darkness
colors emerge
shapes begin 2 form
Forms begin 2 move and
I C
I can C
N the black behind my eyes
without the sunlight, moonlight
Lightning bugs or light bulbs
I can C
Even when I am not sure of what I am Cing
I am clear that I am Cing something

Dependent on the light of the day
Dependent on the light of the bulb

I have been conditioned 2 ignore the luminescence N my soul
I have accepted absence N the absence
of that which is only outside of me
4 an absence of what is inside
& I have wrongly dreaded the black
when it was always the black
that held my everything
What provides sight N our dreams?

My black
The black
Our black
is full of matter
Black lives matter
My black matters
Black matter
Dark matter
The latter is fatter
& badder than any unflattering fluorescence
scattering the everything
U already held & were on the inside
Sliding down a ladder N2 sadder times
Based on an illusion that shall B shattered within these lines Splattered
N2 1000 pieces, 1000 times
Scattered across an infinite universe
2 return back 2 the black
it's always been N the absence of nothing

My black is something
else
Full of everything
U've never accepted
U saw
So I challenge U
2 close your eyes
& look again

K.
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