

Our Bodies Are Not Our Caskets
A Collection Of Poetry Written For The Soul

Tell Me That It's Worth It

I want my loved ones to wrap their arms around this rainbow of a body and tell me that the pot of gold at the end of its trail is worth burning for Tell me that loving me is worth the risk That when it is all said and done you'll cling to me ever so tightly So that our bodies will still be attached to one another Even after our souls have been detached from this earth

Tell

Me

That

It

Is

Worth

It

Lately

I have been feeling pain from problems that do not belong to me Unnecessarily bathing in the anguish from the salted wounds on other peoples bodies

And

Lately

My life has revolved around setting mouse traps for my enemies and placing myself within them
Oh the irony spending your life praying the pain away only to spend each day envying and preying on other people's pain

I Didn't Report Him I Prayed For Him

My loved ones call me every Sunday and ask me if I'd gone to church that day and I haven't figured out how to tell them that I prefer to worship men on Saturday nights

I haven't figured out a way to make their disappointment disappear after every time my seat inside of church remains empty

They are angry with me sometimes and it's as if I can feel their hearts break a little every time my relationship with God fails to match the caliber of theirs

My loved ones wonder Why I am not close to him? I wonder Why I am not close to him? Why the search parties for God that I send for him keep resurrecting into nothingness

I want to tell them that God watched my assaulter drop me off at the doors to his house Left me there folded in the shape of a wounded warrior on my knees with a face full of pain tilted towards the heavens Praying to a man after being preyed on by a man Folding myself into the shape of a noble sacrifice waiting for an angel to cradle me within their arms

I want to tell them that I laid there praying Broken from within Yet still trying to pick pieces of me up off of the church parking lot in enough time to attend that nights worship service

I want my loved ones to know that I still leave God voicemails of me praying the gay away I

Tell

Them

That Church is not my salvation but a graveyard a place to put my skeletons

A place that is more trauma than triumph for me and don't you dare tell me to pray about it when people sit at their thrones and hover over my body like an object that can be preyed on so please pray tell me how the hell you can call upon God's name as you ring the blood out of mine

To lay out and let dry

To pierce it onto a slab of oak and call me the son of a prodigy

The son of a king

And how can you expect me to trust religion when it was forged by the same men who discovered the element of fire?

Used it to burn black bodies on the very same symbols that they're used to praying to

Which leaves me caught within the crossfire

Wondering

If that fire inside of black folk that fills their hearts when their palms grip tightly unto a crucifix is the Holy Spirit or the spirit of my ancestors whose ashes wade in the wind the same way black folk wade in the water

And I refuse to be burned at the stake instead of rising into who I truly am a Phoenix

A roaring cloud of thunder

I am my own bridge between myself and God and no one can de-brick this Golden Gate Bridge of a body

And my loved ones call me every Sunday and ask me if I went to church that day and every time I am asked that question my assaulter takes a stroll down the crossroads within my brain I haven't been to church in years and even when I did attend I still felt lifeless in the moment Spiritless in a spiritual environment

And I didn't report him

My assaulter

I prayed for my assaulter

And looked into the face of God as he sat on his throne and did absolutely nothing

I didn't report my assaulter I laid at the feet of God waiting listening and praying Never hearing from him never seeing his face So how can I sit in the house of God today when it remained shut while my body rested at its doorstep

Breathe Me In And Never Let Me Go

Sometimes I just want you to breathe me into your body

Hold me in the corner of your lungs

Never exhaling

Never letting me go

That My Body Was Built To Be A Temple

And God says that my skin Is a suit coat of many colors
That the blueprint of this body is the foundation of holy temple

A

Melting

Pot

Made of sacred cinder blocks fit for the fingerprints of my people

I sometimes wonder what God felt during slavery
Was he really that powerful to stomach the things that my people went through beneath his feet
Was the slave master sex assault okay as long as his will of reproduction was being carried out
As he watched the slaves carry the weight of sacrifice
Speaking of sacrifice

Did God create

Slavery in the midst of his post partum depression

After he gave birth to a sacrificial son

Did he construct conquistadors to deconstruct the bodies of my ancestors

So that we too could feel the pain of losing something that belongs to us

Did God know

That the pain of being a part of the “chosen people”

Left descendants like me with no choice but to embody this pain

That bleeds from generation to generation leaving me to think that

Everything about this body is wrong

That this body was made to be conquered

That this temple was meant to be explored

That the diamonds rubies and riches

That this temple of a body is used to holding

Have been stripped away for good and for God

So loved the world he gave his only begotten son

To shine a pathway to conquest not freedom

So that settlers can seek refuge within my ancestor’s bodies

And I want to know

If God has been receiving the voicemails that I leave him

If he has been hiding from the search parties that I send him

If he knows that I sit empty hollow and still waiting for my resurrection day

Waiting for him to tell me that I am wrong about my body
That it is not a temple with unlocked doors
But a tomb built to hold bodies of royalty
A temple built to hold kings

When Love Dances Fear Steps To The Side

So I'm sitting here chatting with a friend about black men and fear

"I read an article the other day that talked about how black men are consumed with unreasonable fears" I say "And so now when I'm afraid I can't tell if I have the reason to be or not yah know?" As I sit there staring into the phone screen watching those anxiety inducing chat bubbles do what they damn do my friend finally responds

"Well at the end of the day it doesn't matter" He explains "Your fears are valid especially as a black man You can never be too careful"

I sit there pondering in my gratitude for good friends all while fearing the danger outside of my door that sparked this conversation Though this is a text conversation I begin to feel elevator conversation awkward and I quickly try to change the subject and my initial instinct as a queer man is to do what we all like to do...talk about men!

"ITS WEIRD" I exclaim "I'm supposed to be the bad bitch/lone wolf/don't need no man type of person" I say as a chuckle sneaks away from me I can usually feel my friends' high energy even through text but this time was different It felt as if the energy in our chat had just shifted and it did

"Who told you that was who you are?" My friend questions

My body begins to tense as my fingers tighten their grip on my phone as if they too could feel my confession crawling up my spine

"It's the role I feel like I always have to play" I say to my friend as if my trauma is holding me at gunpoint

But now there's a certain man on my mind that makes it so easy to bite the bullets that my trauma shoots at me "but every-time I talk about this man I just smile"

He levitates me

And immediately I pause...and it is as if I could feel the planets inside of me shifting The clocks around me "un"-ticking The hairs on my body swaying along to the rhythm that my black skin beats The thought of me changing roles within the story that my trauma has written for me makes me feel as if I am living on the moon as she dances around the earth The roles have changed and that makes me overzealous I am now captivated and chained to the rhythm of my own heart beat Smiling without trying dancing without moving feeling without feeling So I do what I always do when my emotions consume me I pick up my book and I write

So I will write about this encounter with my friend I write because this moment deserves a page
of its own inside of every book that my mind may conjure

I write because when love dances fear steps to the side