

Me Too

So many me toos
Came out the of the dark
So many me toos
Still hiding
In the closet
Beside the little girls
Who pictured protection in their daddies
Or never knew protection at all
So many me toos
Underneath the shadows
Living in the reality
Of the moments
That don't wash away with soap
Or cover up with makeup
Or go away with years

I celebrated all the me toos
In silence
But then I looked at the coward
Who was me
And I wanted to set up
A booth in the middle of Brooklyn
With a microphone
So everyone could tell their me too stories out loud

Then I was searching for my soul
On a Sunday
When he appeared...
My childhood Pastor
Who knew that his head security guard
Sexually abused and tortured me when I was 14
And naïve
And thought all "men of God" knew love
Then I lost my spirit in the moment
He sat before my idol

And I remembered sitting before him
Broken
Crying
Lost
As I shared with him the story
That I was afraid to share
For the sake of my mom
Who was one of his first members

And adoring fans

He prayed

When his faithful servant admitted his deeds

Then the pastor took me to his lawyer

Mr. Mickey

And said that if I ever went public with my story that he would not testify on my behalf

And who would believe

When I was in the middle of searching for love

In all the wrong places

And so I it was in that I understood that silence

Was golden

So as the years went on

I talked too much

Too soon

Too loud

About everything except my Me Toos

Today, in 2018,

I watched the creator of my Sunday Soul

On the Golden Globe

And I felt empowered by a voice

I heard within

A voice that was revived

By all the other me toos

Who were fearless

Among powerful men

And I pondered on men

Who were not powerful to anyone

But the women whose souls they stole

Or childhood they ruined

Or joy they corrupted

And I knew that silence

Could be deadly

And kill one within

Murdering the little girl

Or woman

Wanting to come out

And scream

"Me Too"

My vagina has color

But this color does not afford me any kind of privilege

Because in some countries, they cut my clit

Not as mutilation, but as a tradition

Because my vagina is not meant to bring pleasure

At least, not to myself

To not do so would risk a future with a man

And the closer I am borne by the water

The more I am expected to give back to the earth

And my vagina affords me the right

To bear to bear and bear your children

And whatever else the vagina can produce in a reasonable enough time

Before it becomes old and you're not interested

My vagina has color

But sometimes my seeds don't produce the flowers you want

And it doesn't grow fast enough

With enough diversity

And it gets choked by weeds

Or fear

Because of the pain inflicted by loss and degradation and abandonment

Even though, everyone knows roses have thorns

That cut into the covering made by God

Found to be unsacred by ungrateful partakers

My vagina has color

But this color doesn't differentiate experiences

Because if you come close enough, yours smells just as funky as mine

On a hot summer day, when the wind fails to blow

And your scent is just as sweet as mine

When it's cherished and refreshed

My vagina has color

And you ain't got no reason to judge

What color I may bring to the lives of others

If I choose

Or the colors I choose to keep all to myself

For my own pleasure

For my own peace

The Men

The interesting ones
Are the ones that remain in memory
Not the ones with normal lives
But the ones who, courageously,
With bravado
Entered the forest
And discovered new rivers
Unaware of the creatures that previously inhabited
The territory

The ones who shocked us
By performing electroshock therapy
And made our tears seem like they were laughing back at us
Those moments
When he was the center of our pain

Or the ones who spit in our souls
Then smeared it on to our body parts
By the most delicate skill and art of lovemaking
Even when we realized, it wasn't love

The men who taught us to scream like banshees
When the spirit was about to die
Or the ones that revived it
With little words, and all deed
The ones that captured the mind
Because they understood the dysfunctions
Of the heart

Or the ones who lost their mind
Through life's tests and trials
And gave us reason to try
And try
And try
Until we realized that practice doesn't make perfect
And we, instead, were left in a state of temporary insanity
Until we could find ourselves again

The men in our minds
Are the ones that defied normality
Or introduced us to new worlds with movements from the moments
The ones that slipped into memory

Because of time spent
Searching for what we'd later learn to hold for ourselves

Cross the bridge

My man friend said
Not to take that Black man serious
Cause those Washingtonians don't cross the bridge
They don't take leaps
Too deep
And they don't look up at us progressive, sensitive, spiritual Black women
Because they are too busy looking at the souls on their shoes

He warned me not to make the effort to cross the bridge to spend time or money or
love
That I'd only be swallowed whole by the politics
Because the men become reflections of politicians who smile and make promises
Then eat you alive
But I told him I would swim if I had to go cross that river to get to him
Besides I was from New York
Where there are many rivers
That run wide and long
And deep
And my love had the strength of those rivers
Able to survive any tsunami

He laughed at my wits
And said Again "some rivers will let drown you in them
The spit you back out"
And that bridges were only meant to be crossed when there's some place to go
And Washington will let you into the city
to wow you with it's monuments and tall handsome structures
That marked legacies and histories and moments
Then you'll get lost in its circles
And you won't be able to tell who is authentic and who are invaders
And the rats will eventually come out
Even in the daylight

But I was from New York and use to the rats
And the filthy people who smelled bad
But told the best stories

I was use to the migrants with different accents and complexions
And experiences
Who made New York the best place to live
With their culture and food
While having an opinion and voice about it all

And I was use to one borough being apprehensive to go into another

Unsure of the diversity of each
Comfortable in ones own space
Own place
Where they belonged
Where we crossed dirty rivers
By way of Underground trains
When we were unconscious of them
Until we found ourselves at our chosen place
And could see the landscapes
Or looking out our windows
on bridges with high arches and worlds of promise
Bearing the names of a borough we claimed

I was use to being able to spot a con from miles away
And them becoming my entertainment for the evening

I was use to the musicians who could make you fall in love with their gift
And sing a woman's panties off of her
Without getting to know each other's last name
Because it was New York
Where We were resilient, strong, and powerful like the waters, wars, and walls of
the city

And we, him and I, only stood still
Mostly in one place
in Washington, DC
Where I lost the strength of New York
And let him test the quality
Become the keeper of my rivers
But never actually cross the bridge

Black Women, Black Men Extinct

They demoralize us
For our kinky hair
But copy our buttocks
And lips
And hips
But are praised for a "beauty"
That may not be innately or culturally theirs
And because they "wear" it
It makes it "Right"

All those housewives almost look alike
With their store bought hair
And bodies
And light eyes
Because the stars don't like the "real" Black thing
With natural hair
And real beginnings
After their wealth had to reflect their wife
Who is light or white
And that is "Right"

Us, sistahs, with deep degrees
And powerful minds
And berry that's darker than our skin
Get overlooked by our kind
Or too into our careers to make a proper wife
And casted as "sellouts"
And, unfortunately, some of us are
Selling our souls for a degree
Or position and title
Forgetting our mother tongue
And motherland
And mothers
Who still live in the ghettos
And are proud of what we have become
While we are embarrassed by them
The others of us
Stay true to both of our divided selves
And lose too much for it

In schools and higher education
They are teaching our history

Adding their twists
They fight for diversity and inclusion more than us
Because we are focused on "Why Johnny Can't Read"
Then deny us tenure
And give us seven years for empirical pressures
To "save our children"
While we lose ourselves to a system
That celebrates our vast history on the shortest month
Of a people that made America great by carrying them on the backs of our ancestors
And, Mary Sue is "teacher of the year" for teaching our literature
And famous movies are praised for other races who rescue our kids
While we are frustrated
With no resources
No support
No recognition
And no solution to an epidemic that is socially, culturally, and geographically constructed
and designed
For us to fail

We are dealing with men that hate their skin
Saying that international women are better
More submissive
Cause a sistah got too much mouth
Or attitude
Or kids
All left behind by a brother who couldn't conceive another generation
A legacy that belonged to him
But he couldn't see
Beyond his own self

The prisons wait for the majority
Made up of our minority
For free labor
For another broken home
Refusing to rehabilitate
The mind, body, or soul
Before the streets claim his spirit
Or some crooked or scared police officer claim his soul
Our brothers are taught that they must always wear a guard
On their hearts
And stay hard and strong
To survive
That they must resist fear
Even for their own sons
Forgetting their needed hugs

And daily affirmations and prayers
That secure the soul

And there are so many men
That want to make the Black family extinct
There are so many men
That want to make the Black men extinct
There are so many men
That want to make the Black women extinct

Or to kill the spirit
So that we will be unable to exist