

we are not a oneness we are a wholeness and the sky is as round as our heads
round as the heart of the lion¹ because it believes without our heads we live
without our hearts we die² i am the lion i have always been the lion there in
the center i am the eye i am the eye that gives i am the eye that destroys that
strips me down to my bones were i live as the skeleton that i am the life death
life woman³ that i am birth death rebirth woman that i am birth death birth
repeat say their names give the tear release the ocean from your body and soul
George Floyd was a child once Tamir Rice was a child Laquan McDonald was a
child Trayvon Martin was a child Eric Garner was a child once like you too
living backwards and forwards in time⁴ because fear is a poor excuse if you are
alive you are at war and we hope our own hearts will outgrow us⁵ Breonna
Taylor will outlive us Ahmaud Aubrey will sail past us Robert Fuller and
Malcolm Harsch there are thousands more do we pray do we work do we sleep
do we breathe can you breathe is it real can you talk is it possible can you
dance can you live can you come to life Again⁶ Do we have knowledge Do we
have relief Do we have knowing Do we have faith Do we act Do we wait Do we
whisper do we scream do we feel And how much and for whom and for what
and why and why not it is not a matter of if black men hang themselves from
trees moving moving moving standing up tall my life my beauty in the stream
of one little truth will change your life change or die grow or die as the fruit
bursts from the flower it falls off the tree it is the dirt it grows the flower water
the dirt and flowers last for you baby sweet baby⁷ there are flowers love cries
or blood⁸ there is the knowing the waiting the knowing the waiting tears that
come from not knowing and knowing there are thousands more knowing the
way the river water rushes by never to return⁹ between the beginnings of our
sense of self and the chaos of our strongest feelings¹⁰ a primordial place where
must return to or perish between our bodies where there is no place to hide
did you commit to staying alive will you say their names will you march will
you change behind masks where every transformation can unfold as you
adjust yourself to the shifting weights of beautiful things¹¹ existence is not a
mask demand your joy demand change demand peace demand pain demand

¹ James Hillman, *The Thought of the Heart and the Soul of the World* (Putnam, CT: Spring Publications, 1992) 11.

² Clarissa Pinkola Estés, *Women Who Run With the Wolves: Myths and Stories of the Wild Woman Archetype* (New York: Random House, 1992).

³ Pinkola Estés, 137-176.

⁴ Pinkola Estés, 28.

⁵ Rainer Maria Rilke, *Duino Elegies*, trans. David Young (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978) 33.

⁶ Arthur Russell, "Come to Life," 1976, Track 5 on *Iowa Dreams*, Audika Records, 2019.

⁷ Lucinda Williams, "Fruits Of My Labor," 2003 Track 1 on *World Without Tears*, Lost Highway Records, 2003.

⁸ Joy Harjo, "Break My Heart" *An American Sunrise* (New York: W.W.Norton & Company, 2019).

⁹ Mary Oliver, "We Should Be Well Prepared," *Devotions* (New York: Random House, 2017) 110.

¹⁰ Audre Lorde "Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power," *Sister Outsider* (Berkeley: Ten Speed Press, 1984) 42.

¹¹ Elaine Scarry, *On Beauty and Being Just* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990) 15.

to give your dark scent¹² demand excellence it must not be misconstrued as
demanding the impossible¹³ expose yourself because the duty of your
privilege is absolute integrity¹⁴ there as the eye i am invisible i close my eyes i
open my eyes i close them once more what more can i do that is how I survive
painting about survival to survive anything anything is a mirror¹⁵ and a mask
cannot substitute your divinity¹⁶ the angels the angels the angels we must
remember the angels are here among us showing us the first touch of terror¹⁷
the fire the fire the fire it only goes away so long then the rain stops and again
the fire again we have people in cages and they are slaves slaves fighting our
fires¹⁸ is it possible to live this life without god when going means going far
when going means returning¹⁹ ready or not around and around unwinding the
inhalation of the great breath around and around ²⁰ i have seen them in the
stone canyon de chelly chaco and out west of town²¹ testaments addressed to
us by our predecessors²² grandma is dying and she doesn't want calls and we
are all dying and here you are lying between heaven and earth where the air
first touches the ground here at this great edge my skin is living and the breeze
touching it so gently so i feel again i am here right here again thinking how
buildings might be as abstract as the parts of our minds we never see as poems
my mother taking us to Ronchamp holding something in her heart
holding my face so utterly still so utterly focused is this what god is
sit in one place or walk the earth there is no other way evolution is not over²³
evolution is every thought is a creation let go or hold on there is no other way
drive seven hours into the desert to see Venus rise in the morning sky by your
side there is no other way all we have is our mind not what we say what we do
out in the burning streets there is no other way the agony and the ecstasy
while peeling beans in the kitchen window hold me against the wall by my
wrists grab me bite me holding me down first here with you then beyond you
then i transcend this one life and i imprint it with my light my shadow my

¹² Pablo Neruda "Sonnet XVII," *One Hundred Love Sonnets* trans. Stephen Tapscott (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014)39.

¹³ Audre Lorde "Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power," *Sister Outsider* (Berkeley: Ten Speed Press, 1984) 42.

¹⁴ John O'Donoghue, "The Presence of Compassion," Interview with Mary NurrieSterns, https://www.personaltransformation.com/john_odonohue.html

¹⁵ Agnes Martin, *Agnes Martin, Paintings, Writings, Remembrances* ed. Arne Glimcher (New York: Phaidon, 2012)

¹⁶ Heather Marsh, *The Creation of Me, Them, and Us* (MustRead Press, 2020) 15.

¹⁷ Rainer Maria Rilke, *Duino Elegies*, trans. David Young (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978) 19.

¹⁸ "Inmates Risking Their Lives to Fight California's Wildfires Deserve a Chance At Full Time Jobs," Los Angeles Times, Times Editorial Board 1 November 2019, <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2019-11-01/california-inmate-firefighters>

¹⁹ Laozi, *Dao de Jing* Burton Watson, Stephen Addiss, Stanley Lombardo (Cambridge MA: Hackett Publishing, 1993) 25.

²⁰ Jill Purce, *The Mystic Spiral: Journey of the Soul* (Great Britain: Thames and Hudson, 1974) 12.

²¹ Petroglyphs National Monument, Bernalillo County, New Mexico.

²² John Berger, *Confabulations* (New York: Penguin, 2016) 142.

²³ Larry Ward, *On America's Racial Karma*, (Lecture, Lions Roar Buddhist Wisdom Summit, 2018)

<https://learn.lionsroar.com/courses/in-the-footsteps-of-thich-nhat-hanh/lectures/14397898>

presence my absence down down down up up up back forth back forth back
and forth fast yet slow fate its processes accurate and inexorable²⁴ so i shall not
be indifferent i shall pay very close attention how you look at me how you
looked at me how you see me how you hear me breathing in I know I am
breathing in breathing out i know i am breathing out²⁵ and realize all of a
sudden there is no abstraction there is no realism and psyche is image²⁶ and
images are space and I had a dream and it is very clear²⁷ for thirty four years in
this body and it flies and it aches and no matter what you have given me your
life writhing sweating on my face twisting making a soul for the new age who
will live backwards and forwards in time²⁸ bending me twisting me backwards
and forwards bending me so far until I am inside out paintings inside out leave
me there inside out lick me inside out i am here for the inside out from the
inside out you better know it²⁹ you better know the sensuousness you know
you share it while black men are being killed by the thousands black bodies
being starved being poisoned being shot there are thousands more they have
never hated never been afraid never been allowed burn the flags never been
allowed to have dreams not allowed to have dreams burn it all down
and you must be so tired why am i allowed to rest i am so tired you must be
hurting why am i allowed to hurt fist in the air and can't ever put it down we
learned it from you looting is what you do we learned it from you³⁰ we must
remember not choose to forget that love is only unconditional love you
showed it to me but the kids know only love and fear or only love or only fear
there is only love we will go there where nothing is waiting³¹ we will not wait a
moment longer i will see with my eyes open i will see with my eyes closed i
will see now that my whole vision is not purely optical³² watch my rituals see
my beauty see my demons see my dreams there are thousands more take my
hand i will be one of the living i will not be one of the undead³³ my paintings

²⁴ Rachel Cusk, *Transit* (New York: Picador, 2016) 256.

²⁵ Thich Nhat Hanh, *You Are Here* (Boulder: Shambhala, 2001) 2.

²⁶ C.G. Jung, *Collected Works, Vol 13: Alchemical Studies*, trans Gerhard Adler and R.F.C. Hull (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967) pg 50, paragraph 75.

²⁷ Mary Margaret O'Hara, "Help Me Lift You Up," Track 8, *Miss America*, 1984 Michael Brook and Mary Margaret O'Hara, Virgin Records, 1988.

²⁸ Clarissa Pinkola Estés, *Women Who Run With the Wolves: Myths and Stories of the Wild Woman Archetype* (New York: Random House, 1992) 4.

²⁹ Ellington, Duke, "You Better Know It," Track 9, *A Drum Is A Woman* By Duke Ellington and his orchestra. Sept-Dec 1957. Columbia Records.

³⁰ "Tamika Mallory, "Full State of Emergency Speech" at the George floyd presser in Minneapolis May 29." YouTube Video, 5:40, uploaded by Trevor Campbell June 1 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Jzku_jx5DQ

³¹ Pablo Neruda "Sonnet IV," *One Hundred Love Sonnets* trans. Stephen Tapscott (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014)13.

³² *Lygia Clark: The Abandonment of Art, 1948-1988*, Cornelia H. Butler and Luis Perez-Oramas (New York: Moma, 2014) 159.

³³ Etel Adnan, "Enclosurement," *E-flux Journal* #22 (January 2011) <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/22/67773/enclosurement/>

screaming silence the glory of love might see you through³⁴ people are in cages people are in cages there are people in cages there are people in cages people are in cages people are in cages and i am lying here staring into the trees in hell in hell there is heaven³⁵ in my life it is my duty to do everything i can anything anything less will fail³⁶ i am the vessel i always heard that i was i will hold your tears i am the guide they always said i was calling myself a midwife now i will keep pulling life from my body there will be another soul we will keep walking still walking walking moving not stopping for 100,000,000 years there is lava below me there is infinity above me there is infinity below me if you want it come get it³⁷ 10,000,000,000 years and have you figured out what it is for³⁸ it alone endures³⁹ and we cant follow it by gazing at pictures that soothe it or at godlike bodies that restrain it by their very size⁴⁰ like the rose it is without why⁴¹ i painted the rose again and again and i am still here with the rose in my mind with all the other inventions of the mind⁴² still here with all the other things on the edge of knowing on the edge like your face your eyes like the space in my mind i have to see it all through eyes filled with the ocean like you too spilling over spilling over everything everything matters i think i think you know my message is my life⁴³

³⁴ Lou Reed, "Coney Island Baby," Track 8, *Coney Island Baby*, Rec 1975, Lou Reed and Godfrey Diamond, RCA Records, 1975.

³⁵ Frank Ocean, "Solo," Track 5, *Blonde*, Rec. 2013-2016, Christopher Breaux Frank Ocean and James Blake, Boys Don't Cry Records, 2016.

³⁶ George Jackson, *Blood In My Eye* (Baltimore, Black Classic Press, 1990) 41.

³⁷ Kath Bloom, "Discovery," Track 3, *Pass Through Here*, Jeff Hassay and Kath Bloom, Chapter Music, 2015.

³⁸ Mary Oliver, "Swan," *Devotions*, (New York: Random House, 2017) 62.

³⁹ Chris Hedges, *War Is a Force That Gives Us Meaning* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2014) 185.

⁴⁰ Rainer Maria Rilke, *Duino Elegies*, trans. David Young (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978) 34.

⁴¹ Matthew Fox, *Meditations with Meister Eckhart* (Rochester, VT: Bear & Company, 1983).

⁴² Marisa Merz: The Sky Is a Great Space, Connie Butler (Los Angeles: Hammer Museum and New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, DelMonico Books, 2017) 116.

⁴³ Justice CS Dharmadhikari, "Special Feature 2 - on Gandhi Jayanti," Press Information Bureau, Government of India, Sept 29 2016, <https://pibindia.wordpress.com/2016/09/29/mahatma-gandhi-my-life-is-my-message/>