

Power / Audre Lorde

The difference between poetry and rhetoric
is being ready to kill
yourself
instead of your children.

I am trapped on a desert of raw gunshot wounds
and a dead child dragging his shattered
black face off the edge of my sleep
blood from his punctured cheeks and shoulders
is the only liquid for miles and my stomach
churns at the imagined taste while
my mouth splits into dry lips
without loyalty or reason
thirsting for the wetness of his blood
as it sinks into the whiteness
of the desert where I am lost
without imagery or magic
trying to make power
out of hatred and destruction
trying to heal my dying son with kisses
only the sun will bleach his bones quicker.

The policeman who shot down a ten year old in Jamaica
stood over the boy with his cop shoes in childish blood
and a voice said "Die you little motherfucker" and
there are tapes to prove that.
At his trial this policeman said in his own defense
"I didn't notice the size or anything else
only the color," and
there are tapes to prove that too.

Today that 37 year old white man with 13 years of police forcing
was set free
by 11 white men who said they were satisfied
justice had been done
and one black woman who said "They convinced me"
meaning
they had dragged her 4'10" black woman's frame
over the hot coals of four centuries of white male approval
until she let go of the first real power she ever had

and lined her own womb with cement
to make a graveyard for our children.

I have not been able to touch the destruction within me
but unless I learn to use
the difference between poetry and rhetoric
my power too will run corrupt as poisonous mold
or lie limp and useless as an unconnected wire
and one day I will take my teenaged plug
and connect it to the nearest socket
raping some 85 year old white woman
and as I beat her senseless and set a torch to her bed
a greek chorus will be singing in $\frac{3}{4}$ time
"Poor thing. She never hurt a soul. What beasts they are."

Ungod at the Font of the Blues / Anthony McNeill

Poetry is a case of the loser winning. And the genuine poet chooses to lose, even if he has to go so far as to die, in order to win He is certain of the total defeat of the human enterprise and arranges to fail in his own life in order to bear witness, by his individual defeat, to human defeat in general.

—Jean-Paul Sartre

ungod who endure in the desert lift
the lush way
to taste listen smell touch
see the shape of this One
bird through the garden,
its acute, tinnient cry.
The adamant know
clear methods of tracking,
then lay the grief down
raggedly singing.
One rises announces
the sky
has burst into flames;
another—