



Wild Thing Wisdom



Afrofuturist Abolitionists of the Americas

What is the fugitive's fantasy, maroon's mythology, the rebel's religion, the criminal's cosmology?

<https://afanarchists.wordpress.com/>

Written by Afrofuturist Abolitionists of the Americas
December 6, 2021



Meanwhile God had nothing to do with it (just like God would not have softened Pharoah's heart because God wanted Moses to rebel). The only reason the master gives us our drums is so he could placate us and keep us from getting angry enough to resist. But more importantly it is so he could bring his fellows on to watch us play and dance and shout, so they could enjoy us performing for them, even gamble and make money off this performance. This is how it is with any of the crumbs we try to lick off Massa's table."

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Wild Thing Wisdom

Lorenzo Ervin learned from rappin with Martin Sostre. And Martin Sostre rapped with kids in the hood from a book store. And Ojore Lutalo learned from rapping with Kuwasi Balagoon. Balagoon rapped with all his fellow inmates behind bars. Ervin rapped with folk through his prison writings, becoming probably the most influential Black anarchist theorist. Afrofuturists Abolitionists of the Americas learned from rapping with other APOCs. The APOC initiative is indebted to Ervin, Alston, Ribeiro, others, helping to change the face of anti-authoritarian and autonomist movement. And “anarkata,”* well that word came from the shit we at Afrofuturist Abolitionists been rapping about. And now we have folks turning with us toward a deeper study of Black Anarchic Radicalism/ Black Autonomous Radicalism, or BAR. Folks rap with us about this on a daily, and we always sharing quotes from a sib; much of our content on this blog is based around contributions from others or direct quotes from our freedom school. The point being made is this: there is a culture of learning passed down, and it is primarily one of orature, based in relationships, conversations, kickbacks, zines, statements, letters, songs, etc. That is how our intellectual contributions to Black radical traditions keep rolling out. We share the following parables as an offering of love, imagination, with this oral culture this legacy in mind, so that we can deepen our “wild thing” wisdom and keep it spreading. This is based off the Parable of the Drum from *To The Ones Who Can Fly: A Message from the Whirlwind* as well as various different posts, poems, conversations emerging in and around BAR spaces we have helped curate, including our experiences organizing in our hoods on the ground.¹

“[t]here were probably slaves who found it worthwhile to negotiate with the master back in the day. They might have said “We should ask the Man to give us our drums back,” once the drums were taken.

And I imagine it might have been a good use of political energy too, if you could use that demand for drums to expose to fellow slaves why drums were taken away in the first place. But that’s the only reason a negotiation should happen: expose contradictions and use that to build for revolution. In this case, tactical slaves could say “the master took drums to prevent communication among us that would be used to plan rebellions” (which is the historical truth). In seeing that master snatched away drums in order to suppress an opportunity for resistance, then we could clearly understand that the colonizer is invested in our domination at all costs and that that is why Man suppresses our liberties (whether it is drum use or voting rights).

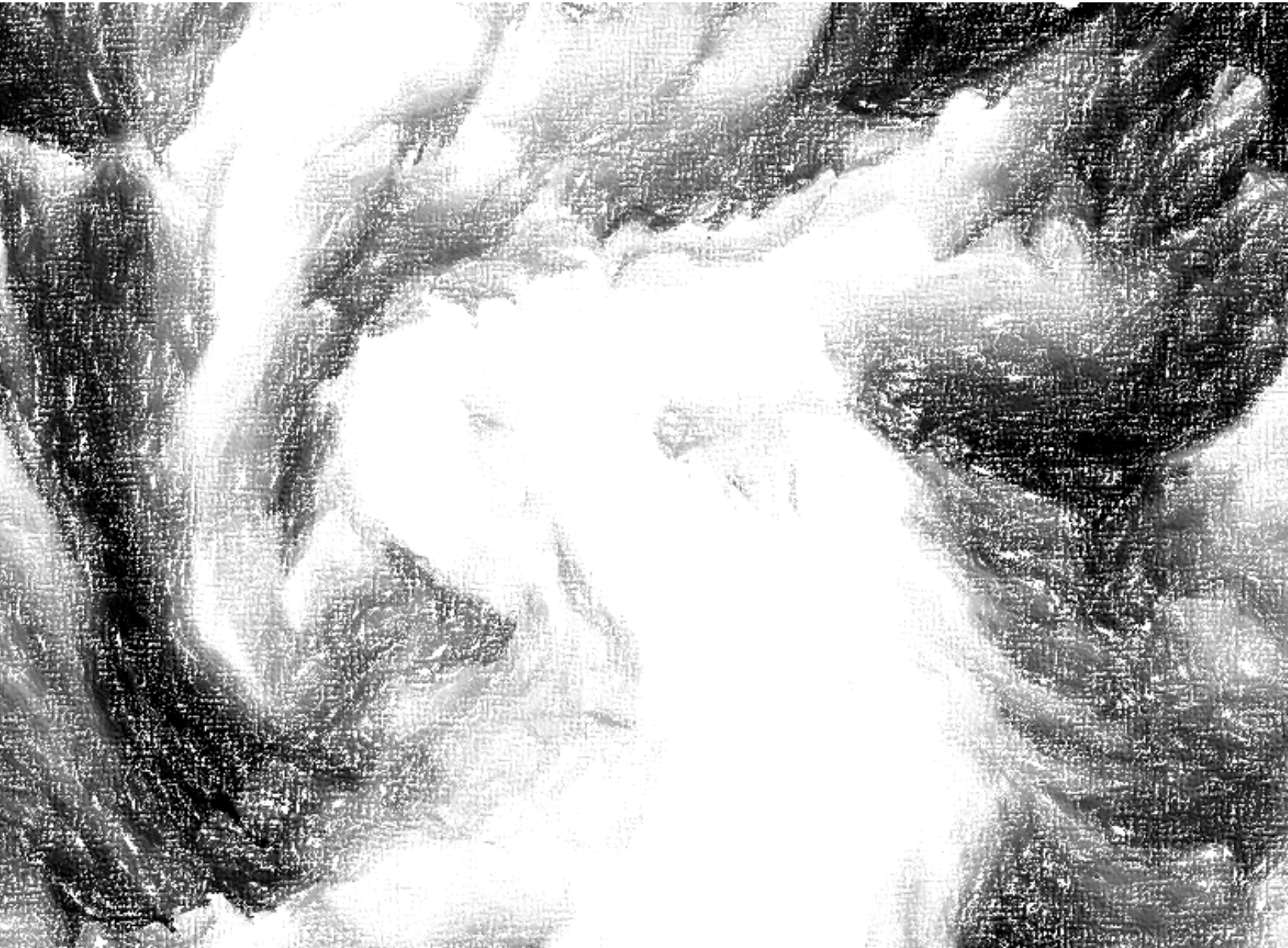
Negotiation is futile here, we should move as rebels instead and burn down the master’s house (this is what the slave who is truly tactical will use a demand or petition to reveal and achieve).

But some slaves probably never took it that far, and to this day, many Black people in some sphere of political activation will not — as much as they claim to be playing “chess, not checkers.”

Some just decided that when master said no to our demand, or beat us for even asking about our drums, this was simply because Massa was confused. Massa don’t know better. Massa’s heart needs to be fixed. We just have to keep asking and praying for drums til we get them. And once we got them, then we could all have fun on the plantation, because God honored us and master finally heard us.

¹ Nsambu Za Suekama, *To The Ones Who Can Fly: A Message from the Whirlwind*. Chicago: True Leap Press (2021). URL: <https://trueleapress.com/2021/03/01/reading-the-message-study-solidarity-spirit-and-struggle/>

The Parable of the Drum



**Anarkata is derived from a word “akata” that some Black folks consider a slur. Because of this, only BLACK people can use it. Anarkata is in-house. It means “unruly wild thing,” and is basically a way of framing “anarchy” (without hierarchy) in terms of BLACK AFRICAN struggle. Since the root word in “Anarkata” is considered a slur by some, the Black people who are the only ones who can use it, can NOT use it to refer to another Black person UNLESS that other Black person explicitly identifies as such. We call people by what they want to be called. Most Black Anarchic Radicals wanna be called either Black Anarchists, Black Autonomists, or BARs for short. So respect that. Anarkata came from disabled, working class, mostly trans Black folk involved in abolitionist movement work and the legacy of prison struggle and organizing in the streets. So even if you are Black, but you ain’t working or lumpen or peasant class, or the spaces you mostly in are predominantly petit bou and middle class, nonblack etc., and you have no connection to where the real struggle is, then... understand this: we center the margins over here, from below, toward self determination. Those of us who can and do reclaim it and have the right orientation to do so also do not use it when we are in certain settings. Because cooption and other dangers are real. Use discretion. This is the four basic forms of etiquette around that word, a point of clarification that has had to be made since the online popularization of the word has also, unfortunately, come with much lanestepping.*



A Children's Story

To be level is to believe in living. Believe in the spectrum of Beta days and Gamma people. Believe in sunshine and windmills and waterfalls and tricycles and rocking chairs. Believe that seeds grow into sprouts and sprouts into trees. Believe in the mojo of yo brick throwing hands and in the wisdom of one's sensory organs however defined; and to believe in rain and the storm and tears and the blood of infinity. Yes, the wild thing believes in life, in *bios* and *mythos*. And in birth, and in the sweat of love. And the fire of truth. And the wild thing says that even a lost ship, steered by tired seasick sailors can still be guided home to port. And we do not wag our fingers and scoff from the shore, and watch the ship verse the high seas, lost and scattered astray, nor do we climb aboard pretending to know how to steer without having learned about waves or stars or navigation. No, we free our lil friends held in the hold at the bottom, and we get the shit together... together. Cuz we the wild things that Man cannot house. *Purrrr*.



and so the wild thing is willing to be accountable and their fellow wild things are there to be gentle yet firm in keeping one another sharp.

The wild thing understands the need for a delicate balance between rest and resistance. The wild thing does not pretend to be above their body's needs or desires or flaws nor above that of the people: the wild thing strives to attend to those things and chooses revolutionary strategy and tactics with those in mind.

The wild thing is methodologically flexible, moves on consent culture, tries to be accommodating without violating their own limitations and boundaries, and tries to encourage and move through free initiative and free association, horizontality, decentralization, and the balance between local and more regionally wide ranging levels of operation. The wild thing believes in the bullet and the bakery, the seed and the sword, the chopper and the cane.

The wild thing is one the Man cannot subjugate. The wild thing sees the hierarchical web of class dominations, and understands that it was tied with the color line, and sees that it is threaded with cisheterosexism, and sees that ableism is needle that spools the strands. But the wild thing has the magic of the margins, which is a clearer vision of the seams, and starts to unravel Man's dominion like it was a tapestry. The wild thing is indomitable in this way.

The wild thing is not intrinsically wild or a thing. The wild thing was made a thing by structures; and turned wild in response to the conditions these oppressive forces create. Knowing this is why the wild thing is always being cautious. The wild thing says that a history of resistance or domination is not inevitable, that it is a result of choices: some choices are impulsive and of the moment. But they are cumulative realities, and when they accumulate the frequencies and wavelengths become so strong threat they stir up something. The wild thing is just a lived reflection of those stirrings; and saying this to oneself is how one reminds themselves that they are not on a pedestal, but rather a *level* person.

“When Black people get free, it will happen in nine days.

On the first day, they will say prayers and sing songs about the ancestors and our African past.

On the second day, they will honor women, and give hugs to all sisters, mothers, aunties, grannies, and femmes, to respect and protect them.

On the third day, they will salute every trans person. They will say that gender is however we make it. They will let everyone dress as they want to and call them beautiful and loved.

Then, on the fourth day, they will go to war and fight against slavery.

On the fifth day, they will return home. They will free the land, and all our people all over this world.

On the sixth day, they will heal the earth, and help the animals and plants grow again. They will say that all people should live because the whole planet should live.

On the seventh day, they will realize that we are hurting, and that some of us are sick. They will say that our bodies and minds need to heal. So they will rest, and take care of those who need it, or help them care for themselves.

On the eighth day, they will storm the jails and let all the poor people out. They will take housing, food, clothes, medicine and give it to everyone. They will say that all people should eat and travel and work and learn for free.

Finally, on the ninth day, everyone will come together, and ask each other, “who else needs to get free?” We will all have a voice to decide on what we would do next. This is the story of how Black people will get free.”

Slaveocracy: A List of all the Players



worlds upon worlds that don't have a material basis or requirement for racism, cisheterosexism, ableism, capitalism, imperialism, the State and its prisons and pigs, class society, casteism, authoritarian religion, or any hierarchies. The revolutionary proposition is a dream of what the liberated future could look like. The revolutionary proposition is imagined through a direct and dialectical response to how the present oppressive reality is organized. Cultures of opposition should lead to revolutionary proposition and vice versa; they relate to each other like a moebius strip, and the wild thing walks along both as they weave in and out of each other.

But since everyone has a part of the Man housed inside us, and there are histories of oppression endogenous to our societies, even the revolutionary propositions can be contradictory. Which means it may choose to respond to certain aspects of the oppressive structure and not others; it may push toward one liberatory future, but neglect others. The different worlds in worlds of the oppressed, divided against one another by design, creating contradictory hunger and thirst for freedom, is the cause. The wild thing has to figure out when and how and why these contradictions occur, and to what degrees they exist, and identify it in themselves and in their sibs and community and comrades, with a sense of care and of militancy. If the wild thing is already struggling in themselves and struggling in different cultures of opposition, it becomes easier to develop a more encompassing transformation of the totality of oppressions. This is why some have proposed abolition, trans (gender/sexual) liberation, disability justice, pan africanism, Autonomy, socialism (or communism), to name a few. And there are constant attempts among the wild things to figure out where these streams of Black Radical Tradition fall short, and where they are strong, and what can be synthesized through revolutionary action, and what must be discarded in the course of struggle.

The wild thing's aim is to make sure no one can be dominated ever again and they fight and love like all to make sure of that. The wild thing is humble and knows they are flawed and can be cruel if they are not vigilant

The wild thing, as a root-grasper, learns through immersion. They engage with and in their world and the worlds of other people and their very sense of self to map the different interests involved. While learning, they encounter what is called a culture of opposition. Every world of the oppressed has them: developing values, habits, practices, beliefs, in response to the conditions weighing them down. The most common is anti-cop sentiments. These cultures are called oppositional because it is always about the dominated trying to find a way to wiggle out of their cage, their chains. But since everyone has a part of the Man housed inside us, and there are histories of oppression endogenous to our societies, these cultures of opposition are often two-faced. They can be subversive, and yet also reactionary at different times or sometimes all at once. Someone might be anti-cop but pro-hierarchies of other kinds. The wild thing has to figure out when and how and why this duality occurs, and to what degrees they exist, and identify it in themselves and in their sibs and community and comrades, with a sense of care and of militancy. Finally the wild thing has to figure out which parts of these oppositional cultures can be turned into the fires that burn the plantation. No wild thing moves in isolation; we are all part of a web or network of support and affinity, and solidarity, small or large. It's through this that the wild thing begins to understand what we struggle against. The major battles include racism, cis-heterosexism, ableism, capitalism, imperialism, the State and its prisons and pigs, class society, casteism, authoritarian religion. But the wild thing is against all hierarchies.

The wild thing is a revolutionary catalyst. Which means the wild thing wants, ultimately, an ongoing process of total structural change. The wild thing strives to help facilitate that based off self-activity and autonomy. The wild thing does not just want to burn the plantation: the wild thing also wants to heal the soil upon which the master's house once stood, and thereupon establish a new mode of environmental inhabitation. Something maintained at an equal expense, according to each unique capacity and need, of all, unhindered by any class, caste, party, or deity. This means the wild thing has to discover what they are fighting *for* too. This is known as the revolutionary proposition. It's about creating new

"Who owns the land, other resources, the tools, our bodies, who governs the plantation, lives in a house of luxury off our backs is the Slavemaster. The Man forces the enslaved to work and produce and build and keep the colonial society running for their benefit. They make wealth from a system of organized, protected robbery; while we suffer and beg and live destitute and are fed crumbs from the master's table.

Who keeps the enslaved in line and help protects the master's material interests are the Slave-drivers, usually poorer colonizers hired by the big Man that feel better about themselves now that they can get over on Black people.

Then there are the Slavetraders, who really the ones gambling with our lives, who strike economic deals with or on behalf of the Masters about the prices and value of the stolen land and resources and tools and houses and plantations; and you have the Slavecatchers who are again, poorer colonizers working for the Traders by doing the dirty work overseas of stealing Afrikan people and African resources and forcing us into shackles and bringing those stolen raw materials to the plantation from the Motherland.

Now, right in between all of these factions is the Slave-auctioneers, the ones who are actually doing the selling at the auction block. They get a percentage of profit from it all, even though they may not own much at all in this whole set up when compared to the big Man. They aspire to be either the Traders or Masters; many of them might have friends or family who are Traders or Masters. They respect the business know how and the political power that the Traders and Masters have. Often, they might have started out as either poor Catchers or poor Drivers but they then worked their way up, supposedly. Some of them might even hate the Masters and Traders, because they see them as lazy, privileged elites who don't actually grind for anything. This hate don't mean they against them, though. They just jealous. And given a chance, they might even fight the Masters and Traders, but only to take their place.

Related to the Auctioneers are the folk who might not be selling and profiting off slaves per se, but who are the middle men that sell and profit off the cotton and other luxuries made off slave labor. Let's just call them the Merchant-Consumers. They are happy to be at the auction block and buy or sell these goods at the market. Them and their families might not be well off either, but at least they can have nice things and can try to grind to the top. Some of them might move away from proximity to the plantation and auction block. From a distance, they will recruit or hire poor colonizers instead of using slave labor, to build or make more things for them, using money and materials that originally came to their hands because of the slave market.

Now, the children of the Merchant-Consumers see their parents *paying* the poor colonizers for labor, and they think this is a more *humane* aspect of their colonial society since it supposedly doesn't involve slavery. They ignore the fact that the houses they live in, land they live on, things they all enjoy as consumers, again wouldn't be possible without the existence of the plantation. So these are the folk who still want to use the land, tools, resources, houses, everything that was built on and for the purpose of the Slaveocracy—but would like to “free” Black people from our chains and exploit our labor through a *wage-payment* rather than actual servitude. They are not friends to the enslaved, they just want a “nicer” way to make sure the Masters, Drivers, Traders, Catchers, and Auctioneers can do their job. They are the Gentleman's-Slavers.

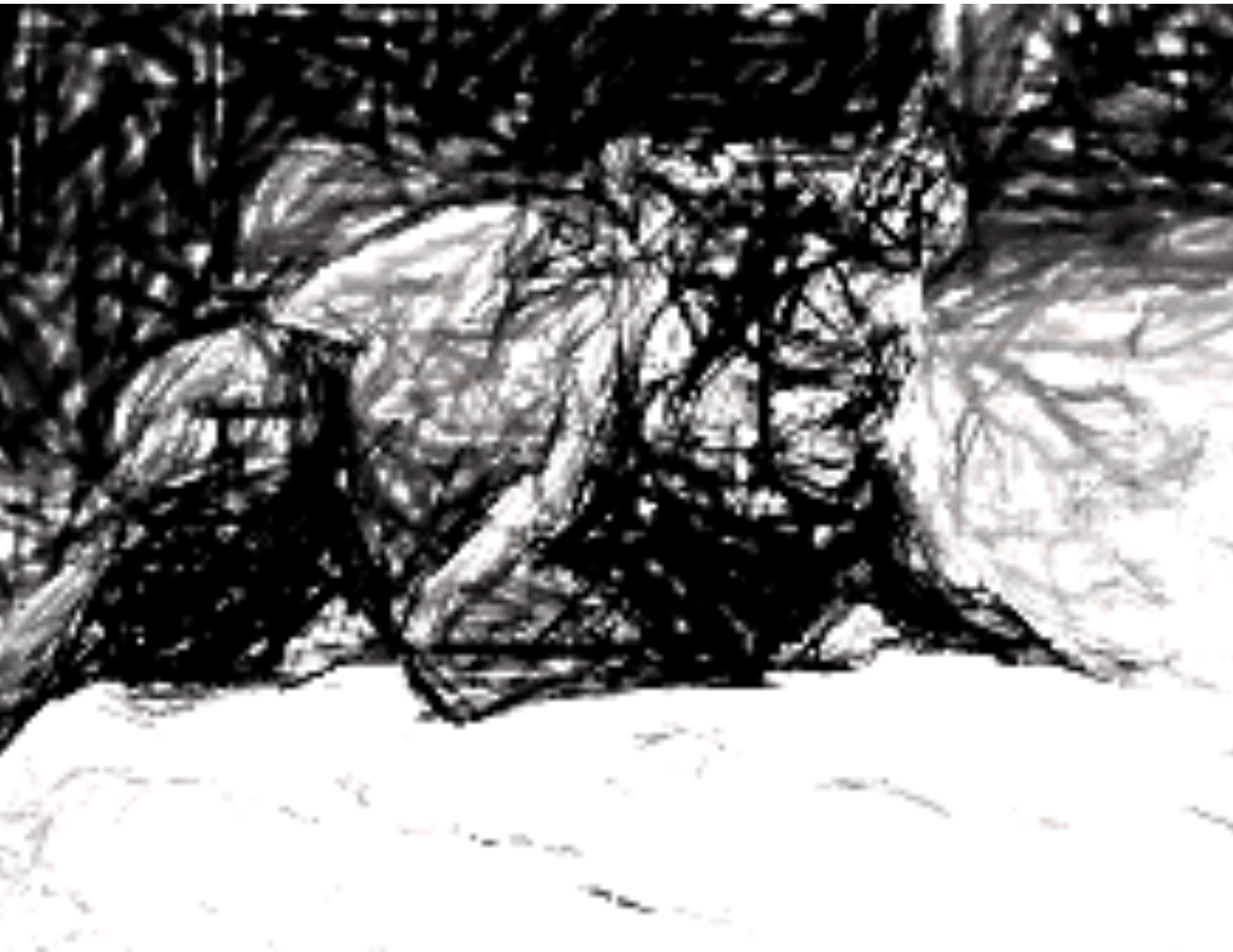
The slavemasters, drivers, catchers, traders, and auctioneers and even some of the merchant-consumers do not like these types, because they don't like the idea that anyone should suggest that Black people deserve wages or freedom. But, even if the gentleman's slavers are in conflict with the other colonizers, the latter still go along with them because in the end it does make things easier and more *profitable* to find a way to keep us in our place by pretending to care for us. If the system will look “liberal” and “democratic,” the enslaved won't feel the need to rise up.

To be a wild thing first one must reject Man. Part of rejecting Man means confronting who the Man is that's housed within us, and how it came to be so. We guide that inner struggle by trying to burn the master's house; and we let the revolution guide that journey of self-transformation. The wild things are the descendants of the enslaved, Black folk, the children of Africa. Those outside our community can be solidary with us only if they reject Man and the master's house, and discover what it means to be ungovernable in their own unique way. They must not seek to tame or domesticate us in Man's stead, and the wild things are prepared to confront the master and any junior partners who try to replace him or his mistress.

The wild thing wants all her people free. The wild thing wants all their people free. The wild things wants all his people free. The wild thing wants all zir, xer, aer, people free. The wild thing moves like a mycorrhiza. The wild thing is underground. The wild is steals nutrients from parts of the ecosystem which hoard it and then shifts them toward the parts of the ecosystem which needs it. The wild thing grasps things by the root, and that is how we study and how we struggle.

Root-grasping is about militancy and care, care and militancy. It is an art, a conviction, and a science of sorts. It says that there are worlds within the world of the oppressed, and that each is shaped by the structures of domination and exploitation and hierarchies and enclosures that master forced on us. These worlds within worlds cause the oppressed to have a desire for freedom. The thirst and hunger for freedom dont always align with each other, the wild thing realizes, depending on the many worlds of exploitation have been structured for in the lives of the enslaved. This is because some forms of domination actually came from within our societies: they are endogenous, the wild thing says. And so, the things which the colonizer imposed exogenously upon us, simply imbricated on problems we already had, like how fish scales end up growing on top of each other. This is by design, to fortify the machine by dividing us among ourselves through a graded inequality at the intramural level.

To Be a Wild Ting



Plus, giving wages don't have to mean giving peace and comfort. You can pay close to nothing and it protects your pockets almost as much as paying zero—the only difference is it gives the enslaved some *crumbs* to look forward to. Now they can leave you alone and stop rebelling so much. And yeah they might have legal emancipation but that doesn't mean you have to follow through with it in practice. You can still let the poor colonizers chase, lynch, and brutalize them. And you can deny their rights or take forever to give them their rights or be inconsistent with when or how you respect their rights. Do this, and they will be all the more willing to Grind for you without complaint, too, because while the conditions are terrible, there is a Promise of a better life. And, in the end, they gonna ignore the fact that you own the land, tools, the big house, that the raw materials as well as their own bodies that were all stolen from Africa and at the expense of African lives and the African continent.

Hey, maybe you can then convince them that they too should become Auctioneers or work in the marketplace selling goods made off their own stolen labor and resources. Tell them that this is what it means to be an “*entrepreneur*” or a “*small business owner*.” Get some of them to believe they can “move” away from the plantation too, or “buy it back,” or believe they can hire employees themselves, exploit others for a wage-payment the way the Gentleman's-slavers can, and live their own consumerist lifestyle that is financed off the auction block and the rest of the slaveocracy as the Merchants can. Tell them that this is the “American Dream.”

Then you might tell them that they should become Drivers to “protect” that lavish lifestyle, and make them think that this is what it means to be a “civil servant.” Yes, fool them, furthermore, into then joining the Catchers by calling it “patriotism” or even “anti-terrorism” so they can help you continue supplying the material basis for their American Dream without ever clocking it. They will happily bomb their overseas cousins without a care. Maybe even convince them that they can someday be Masters that own land, tools, the big house, the plantation. Give them maybe one or two examples of a successful Black Master and tell them that that this is “financial freedom.” Do all that you can to convince them

that this system is just and available to them, so they won't pay attention to the fact that slavery was never abolished: it just put on new clothes."

down, since they
wanted to
escape through
the
opening
at the top
of the
barrel. The
big crabs
accused the
small crabs they
crushed
beneath them
of trying
to keep them
from rising
up out the
barrel. Mind
you, all the
small crabs been
tryna do
is help us
find a way
out this shit
from below
because the
Man is at
the top, and
ready to
pluck us out
one by one
and eat us.
them big crabs
might get left."

“They say we
are like crabs
in a barrel.
And this is
a figure
of speech to
mean when
people are trapped
like slaves, and
they fight
against each
other. They
tear each
other down. But
what if some
things are not
as they
appear?
Perhaps what
looks like
fighting might
be warnings?
For there was
a hole that
had been dug
into the
bottom of
the barrel
by the small
crabs. They said
here we could
escape. But
the big crabs
kept pushing
the small ones

Black Cats Like Us, pt. 1



“Black cats like us be out on
the corner.
We singing and
rapping, vogueing
and twerking, and
pourin one out for
the dead homies:
“for all those who forgotten and unprotected, all those
who can’t love or live as themselves freely.”
We hang an RBG flag
off the street lamps
and talk to our
neighbors
about revolution.
We give out masks
and soap
and tissue and
we keep riot shields
wit us
just in case the
pigs wanna rump
wit us.
Black cats like us be out
in the parks.
We playing drums
or dominoes or
mancala,
and pourin one out
for the dead homies:
“for all those who fought for our
freedom, and for our homeland and our planet.”
We wave a Pride flag
high in the wind
and talk to our
neighbors

Lowerarchy Theory



“And when the
ableist mfs
start to act up
when the gentrifiers
and capitalists
keep takin our
stuff
when the fatphobes keep
makin shit tough
the black cats make sure
to pull up.
We see a gap,
we fill it.
We not tryna be
our ancestors,
but we defining what
it means to be their descendants.
And we hold each other
to a practice,
a narrative, not a party.
As we pour one out
for our dead homies:
‘for all power to all the people. Ase.’
Cuz Black cats like us
we a vibe,
we a wave.

about autonomy.
We give out clothes
and contraceptives
and food and
we keep a bat
wit us
just in case the transphobes
wanna mess
wit us.

Black Gender Blues

Black Cats Like Us, pt. 3



And many of their names were robbed them, their cultures too, the roles in their society they played destroyed: for the white Man spurned the beautiful people, and said that only an uncivilized society would allow them to exist. And this was said of all the Africans, because the white Man saw wives who were men, and husbands and warriors who were women, and this was not godly to them: and they observed the beautiful people among these, but cursed them. So things were forgotten, the names of the beautiful people, and the respect they had, was gone, and it is difficult to find information about their past.

But the beautiful people at least held onto their powers. It is said that some people could take wing, and they passed these stories down to their children, and the children who came after them: and it was always the beautiful people who it was said could fly. One man got cornered by the slavedriver, and he walked to a tree and say “i think Im gon disappea into dis tree” and so he did. And there was a beautiful woman from Nigeria, a musician, she emerged from the bush generations later.

It was always said that the beautiful ones didn’t just fly off or vanish: they went back to Africa. A man and his wife was brung over, and when they realize they was enslaved now, they knew that they could not be beautiful anymore, and realized they would be mistreated, and so they looked at the other slaves, and said to them “we gon go back to the motherland: good bye, good bye” and they flew right on out they chains. Every story about the beautiful people was similar to this, how they took wing and soared back to the Motherland.

The white Man never believe this, said it was impossible, but the enslaved always did, even if they were scared of the beautiful people’s gifts, or saw them as strange, or did not witness them with their own eyes, the enslaved always revered the beautiful ones. And the beautiful ones are in every upheaval. To this day. The beautiful ones are those who in English are being called “trans.”

“The enslaved Fieldman thinks that he is kept out of the house because his woman does not *let him be* the one to work, and so is *not womanly* enough. The enslaved Fieldwoman thinks she is kept out of the house because her husband *does not work* hard enough so that she does not have to, and so is *not manly* enough.

Neither considers that they are *both* being exploited, and both forget that the house they *so esteem* runs a plantation. Then come the enslaved Homemakers, man and woman alike, who have relative comforts, whose union is recognized, but who are not free, who must also work and be subject *alongside* each other. The enslaved houseman and enslaved housewoman believes that they are forced to labor in the master’s house because the enslaved fieldman and enslaved fieldwoman are not working as real men and real women should.

Neither considers that the *only real* Man is white; and the *only real* Woman is she who is at once subordinate to the master and yet his partner in the crimes against humanity that is the plantation project, the Mistress. So the enslaved houseman and enslaved housewoman look down upon the enslaved fieldman and enslaved fieldwoman for not fulfilling the mandates of gender with a Christian propriety. And the enslaved fieldman and enslaved fieldwoman get at each other’s throats for the same reasons.

None of them considers that perhaps these failures are a *material* and *structural* problem not a personal one. To the enslaved, then, gender is *never* a question of empowerment and self-determination but rather of correct and incorrect behavior for which to *punish* one another. And *that* is why when they see those who don’t even *want* gender altogether, or who are *not* trying to define womanhood or manhood in the way white society says it should be, who are *transforming* their genders altogether, such folk, as *Beautiful* as they are, get demonized and brutalized.

For, the enslaved, fieldworker or houseworker, want to do gender *like the master*, and since they cannot (because they are oppressed,) then all the

perils and ills of their community are blamed not on the master and his mistress but on *any and all* gendered impropriety, depravity, and monstrosity, especially such as is *supposedly* present among the transgressive gender beings that we call beautiful people.

“And *who* are the beautiful people among the enslaved? Why are they called this? Many of them are doctors, healers: those who work roots and those who work spirits, it is said. Many of them are rebels, the runaways. The enslaved spoke ill of them in public, but if anyone needed help with an ailment, or a malady, or needed a charm to protect oneself from harm, or needed help with giving birth, or preparing for death or burial, or sneak off the plantation somehow, they came to the beautiful ones in private. Some followed the beautiful ones into the Hush, to pray in secret, where they worshipped a God who whispered liberty into their hearts, who created the sun that gave light, who made the ocean roar, and who would guide them to victory when they took up arms.

But the Man said the beautiful people were of the devil. Said that they were predators, they were crossdressers, sodomites, heathens, eunuchs, witches. The Man made laws to punish the beautiful people for how they dressed and who they loved, and always condemned their lifestyle. And the plantation preachers always warned the other slaves that the beautiful people got their powers from demons and that because of that, they would bring the enslaved into the pits of hell if anyone was to be like them or be around them.

But the beautiful people knew who they were. They came from the soils of the Motherland right along with everyone else: and they were drug here in the ships from that Homeland right along with the other slaves. Some were taken from the Kongo people where it is said they may have been called *jimbandaa*; and others from what is now Angola, where they may have been called *chibado*, and others from what is now Senegal where it is said they were now being called *ngor-jigeen*, and others from other regions: whose experiences and lifestyles were probably called *uzeze*, *kitesha*, *akengike*, *mangaiko*, *ikihundu*, *ikimaze*, *misago*, *lagredi*, *minon*, *kojobesia*, *agyale*, *koetsire*, *soregu*, *oupanga*, *ngochane*, *mwaami*. They played various roles in their cultures and societies: as shamans, as political leaders, as warriors, as guardians, and more.

***Those Who Took Wing (The Beautiful
Ones)***

Black Cats Like Us, pt. 2



Black cats like us be out
in the streets.
We chant about
the whirlwind and
about fire, and about
power from below
power through the margins
power in self-determination.
And we pour one out
for our dead homies:
“for all beings, whether those who ain’t human,
or those treated as less than human.”
We spray paint
a sankofa bird on
the side of the subway train
and talk to our
neighbors
about liberation.
We give out zines
and pamphlets
and flyers too, and
we keep a tool
wit us
just in case the ofays
wanna mess
wit us.
Black cats like us be out
on the stoop.
We light a blunt while
studying Assata,
Fanon, Marsha,
Nkrumah, Wynter,
Ervin,
and much, much more.
We pour one out

for our dead homies:
‘for all those whose brain work different and body work different;
and all those in prison and on the street.’
We tie a banner
to the handrail
that says
‘wild Thing the Man
cannot house,’ and talk
to our neighbors
about freedom.
We write letters
to our sibs
who got locked up
and send
bread to our cousins
overseas, and our
trans sisters in need.