

At War With Ourselves: 400 Years of You

You are given 10 square feet of space to live and 3 vertical inches of air to breathe. Ankle iron is ordained for your frontal & temporal lobes. Their one desire: your black body in endless service

& performance. You are the new country's newest moving picture show. They will never be disinterested in what your arms, legs, lips, can do on their well-lit screens. The rest of you, the ravishing wondrous

veiled interior: your vermilion quiet, your indigo jar of morning whispers, the midnight calculations of your mother, every smokey algorithm your father ever dreamed, will be, right from the start, thrown overboard

with the sharks, and it will never not rise up through the waves. Your one desire: to stand beyond their brutality, in the same calendar of stars that your mother stood up in. In a flash of slave schooner moonlight,

in a cotton field peculiar, alongside the invention of the TV, the automobile, the camera, the lie, the 13th amendment, the washing machine, the basketball, the blackface, they will dismiss your wailing inventive

mouth, abolish any federal reconstruction projects focused on your wind and solar capacities, order and proclaim your blood to not be human, call for more federal studies that trumpet how your eyes possess no

tear ducts, yes, your heart beats, but with only three-fifths of the necessary four chambers, your neck is believed to be made of leather and it will be stretched & tested before the eyes of their children. {Black}

“skin is the largest organ in the {American} body — and the most erotic.” The ravishing wondrous innermost black islands of you, were never sunk, no matter the number of cannon balls sent to sink.

You have re-attached the legs and implanted the flying cells of millions just like you, back into your own. You have run, marched, and fought on behalf of the bones, the cerebellums, the spit, the eyelashes, of the

60 million or more swirling at the bottom of the sea. Your indefatigable zest & quiet has a 4 century strong heartbeat & pulse. With the laws and codes meant to eradicate you, you invented a clock, a better ironing

board, a third traffic light, a golf tee, a blood bank that everyone but you could use. You are *The Real McCoy* among other McCoy's, but other names have instead stuck to your black skin. Refusing to halt their haunting

laughter and Wall Street minuets they reach for the chokehold of their muskets to march you back into place & position & performance every time you write *Senator* or *President* or *Gold Medal* or *thundering original musician*

in front of your name. Now is the great 400th anniversary of your presence in the Republic: you, 4 feet tall in a kerchief, with a shotgun, headed back into the swamp to free more of you, you, your black and balled

leather fists rising & splitting the Olympic air, you, your majestic lunations and almanacs spilling from your pockets like gold coins. The ravishing wondrous private inner bank of you never was on the auction block.

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