

UC Davis

Streetnotes

Title

You/Matter

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/35p1n402>

Journal

Streetnotes, 25(0)

Author

Anderson, Keisha-Gaye

Publication Date

2016

DOI

10.5070/S5251029906

Copyright Information

Copyright 2016 by the author(s). All rights reserved unless otherwise indicated. Contact the author(s) for any necessary permissions. Learn more at <https://escholarship.org/terms>

Peer reviewed

You/Matter

Keisha-Gaye Anderson

Abstract

A poem exploring issues of identity lost and found, and self-love, in the age of the #BlackLivesMatter movement.

You/Matter

I stand before you
as a casualty of war
refugee

I don't know if my
mother's
mothers'
mothers
were conceived out of love or entitlement

I just know that I am here

And that I have walked every mile of this journey in honesty
pulling them with me
like a parachute
brandishing the badges of their faces
in liars' dens

chanting my
father's
fathers'
fathers
indignation as a spell for protection
scribing the music of their
bravery on to lanterns
called poetry

And it often hurts,
this awareness
scorching the path
that carried you
here
in the echo of
voices
shrieking
sinking into
bewilderment
cemented as fragments
of discontent
in your blood
a war spelled like your
name

But there is only

one way out of this
confusion
this circular story
that fabricates
your character
programs the details
of your mission
and the rhythm
of your satiety
and suffering
into placenta

We must climb
until it burns
up that rope
of knotted name
and kin
and shame
that brands
our limbs
with the obscenity
of this reality

And stare the snake
right between the eyes

Dance in the mirror
that shows ugly
and pretty
as one shape
melt the chains clanking around
your mind
into a sword or
a whip or
a lasso
and start an inferno
that burns this whole
house down

Know the sound
that comes through you
as voice
is just one note
in the chant
broadcast
from the throats
of them who sent you forth

and are now calling you
home

Know that
it's safe there
in that soul somewhere
and
you that can stop
running
start
seeing how
and why you matter
scan scope of the grid
and conspire to
collapse it

No more running
through this
we command this
body
be a castle for our
vision
a doorway
to our corona
where every color
shape
thought
conceived
unfolds from us
seeds

This
I know
but don't you
believe me—

Stand still and
see
how we be
limitless

About the author

Keisha-Gaye Anderson is a Jamaican-born poet and creative writer living in Brooklyn, NY. She is the author of the poetry collection *Gathering the Waters* (Jamii Publishing, December 2014). Her writing has been published in a number of national literary journals, literary magazines and anthologies, including *Writing the Caribbean*, *Renaissance Noire*, *The Killens Review of Arts and Letters*, *Mosaic Literary Magazine*, *African Voices Magazine*, *Streetnotes*, *Caribbean in Transit Arts Journal* and others.
Email: keishagaye@aol.com