

PORT of EXIT

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ISBN # 978-0-9990780-3-7
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AUTHOR'S DEDICATION

Thank you to the readers who take the time to really submerge themselves in these poems. I've always struggled with feeling wanted and I appreciate you for witnessing me in a real and personal way through my words.

This book is dedicated to the readers, and also to my family and friends who encourage me to pursue my art.

Keith: although you are no longer here in the flesh I keep your encouraging words in my head and in my heart.

Chris Thomas and Barbara Trawick: my poetry disciplinarians, thank you for constantly pushing me in the direction of greatness. Your love and guidance led me here.

Taylor Monae Davis: poetry had lost its power until I rediscovered it mourning your loss; I love you and I miss you.

Selah: you were there from the beginning, speaking greatness over my life. Thank you for helping me to believe.

My Mommy: I never can say it enough, and I know I don't, but I love you.

Finally: to every Black Gay boy who has found it difficult to see themselves as beautiful, talented, worthy and necessary, I dedicate this to you! The world needs you, and don't let anyone convince you otherwise.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chain of Infection	1
Can I Borrow Your Iniquities	3
Fire and Brimstone Rainbows	6
Head Post	9
I Wanna Be A Real Nigga	12
Test	17
Criminally Black	20
When Bullets Take Names	23
IMurder IGenocide	25
Programming	29
Broken System	32
Masquerade	35
Adult Orphan	38
Beast	41
I Wanna Spit	44

CHAIN OF INFECTION

Now I want to know who told these boys to stop crying

How many generations have we lost by teaching them to be men
that they've got to tattoo their teardrops?

Release everything that's natural about your DNA and become
inhumane to maintain your masculinity

To never open up

All the while being exposed to this toxicity

America has been the reservoir that bore and nurtured this
contaminated mindset that men shouldn't be allowed to feel

Port of exit these ideals to a black man whose mode of
transmission becomes violence because he now allows his hands
to do the talking

Damaging the port of entry and the psyche of the susceptible
host with this toxic masculinity

Then you have someone like me

Whose sexuality will never make him man enough

Who is openly attracted to masculinity so my masculinity can
never be masked enough

Because I am somehow a poor representation of a black man and
his community

Question:

Why are you so offended by me?
When did I become your enemy?
Would there be more inclusion for me if I had a woman to beat
If I had a family to leave fatherless or was more condescending in
my speak?
If I no longer wore my war wounds as rainbows would you then
invite me to your table of brotherhood –
Which I might I add ain't looking no better without me bruh –
Because in their eyes we're all black and on the same scale
Call it Libra
But my manhood isn't intimidated by my freedom
Which is intimidating to you
So you leave us out in the margins of an already marginalized
group
But I guess when the world has stolen your worth from you
Then you've got to find something to devalue too
Smart man you're just playing into their hand
Don't you understand that they already refer to us as "beast"?

CAN I BORROW YOUR INIQUITIES?

If you don't mind

Can I borrow your iniquities?

Since my sins are so much greater and heaven has no room for me - could you loan me your transgressions?

See my sexual prowess is so detestable that I need to prove to the almighty that I'm worthy of a straight man's blessing

Christian - let me borrow your passive aggression, so I can somehow learn the lesson that Jesus loves you but you will burn... in the name of the Lord

Let me borrow your discord, Christian!

Let me borrow your discord, Christian!

Let me borrow your discord, Christian - how can you use your Bible as a double edged sword and think both of those testaments will only pierce me?

Or is Judgment reserved only for those heterosexuals of you who sin so beautifully?

Could you loan me your audacity?

Your ability, your nerve, and the capacity to love and hate all in the same breath?

See my plea is simply to be sure, happy, and wanted, as myself

So I feel that somebody owes me some confidence

Because after hearing all the reasons why I'm not worthy of his mercy I have no certainty except in the fact that I've been robbed of all of it

Christ paid it all but he didn't factor in the cost of me?

Somebody, please! My soul is said to burn eternally

Let me borrow your inequities and pretend to be better

See my sexuality somehow severed my ties to the savior so could you do me a favor:

Touch your neighbor and ask him can he grace me with a bit of his graces since Jesus couldn't afford me and heaven struck homos from its budget but adjusted it just to make room for you - the virtuous and perfect insufficiency

But I wouldn't mind seeing those streets of glory

Would you mind holding on to my purgatory just for a second so I can peek at your promise?

See I'm so honest that I'd give your paradise back to you

Even though you're so willing to snatch mine away from me

You're that same thief in John 10:10 who comes to kill and destroy - but somehow you've still carved out life abundantly

You are so high above me

Even with your gluttonous way of fucking me

Your fornication and adultery

Your lies from the pulpit

And your sodomy in secrecy

Preacher

Let me borrow your teachings

As you pray for my delivery

Not to your God

But still on your knees

Can I borrow the lies that excrete between your teeth so I can
misuse forgiveness and its power

So that I won't cower at the idea of being forsaken

I know this is blatant and selfish of me to ask but since you sin

So much better than me

Can I borrow your iniquities?

Where's my manners

And excuse my urgencies

As I can see

That you clearly are not done with them yet

I WANNA BE A REAL NIGGA

I wanna be a real Nigga

Like that strange fruit that once dangled from trees

As long as my neck noose is draped in diamonds and bling bling
then label me

A real Nigga

And cart me off for auction in market places

Deface our graces

And cage our kings

Leave no representation of our heritage

So we won't realize we're royalty

And label me

A real Nigga

Who will sell my soul

For the wages of the highest bidder

But freedom is priceless and we're so small in our thinking

I'd bet there's limp dick that's bigger

Leave me limber in my identity to stand confident in my
deception

Televise and make over the faces of former slaves

To paint them as masters so we can be the leaders of our own
oppression

Pressing on

And walking

In self made chains

To be certified real

Like blood spilled by former slaves

— I guess it was all in vein —

So lay me prostrate cut me open

And drain me of this DNA that makes me real

Nigga

I guess Nigga

Ain't Nigga enough

Unless you're outside working that white cotton

Like them field Niggaz

But what about them Emmett Till Niggaz?

Them Martin King, them Malcolm Lil Niggaz?

They chose to step outside of societal ideals

But you choose to walk back to plantations

With smiles upon your faces

Tracing the blueprint once outlined by our captors
And calling yourselves free
But you ain't free
You just free range Nigga
Found liberty in your limbs
But you're livestock still locked up
Because you've yet to attain a free brain Nigga
New age Nigga twice removed from your freedom
Took the whip out of your captors hand to remain a slave
You've just changed the master that beat him

Nigga

Slave

Buffoon

Baboon

Willing to assume any of these positions

Street Nigga wishing he can find his weight in a key

But freedom is still waiting and your mind is the waiting key

You can't liberate yourself without liberating your thinking

So miss me with that categorical Nigga bullshit
Because that only defines me a fable
The way I'm set up I'm diverse like your B.E.T's your MTV's
CNN's
Your Netflix or your cable
I'm who I choose to be
And the last thing I choose to be
Is something that's been derogatory throughout our history
And I don't care
How you chop it
How you screw it
How you spell it
How you use it
Because before we were labeled animals we were human
And that's what I choose to be
Flawed naturally
But y'all choose to be Niggaz happily
I'm sorry but prewritten definitions can't have me
And if I have to stand on my own
With only my dark skin

Dead kin

Backing me

Then fuck it

I'm a mysfit anyway

CRIMINALLY BLACK

The preface of my purgatory bore me black and stacked all the odds against me

No jury to await an impending judgment

Because my complexion already rendered me guilty

Sentenced to death by legalized hate crimes

Metaphorical lynchings of those criminally black in white America

The land of the free ain't so free for a black man in white America

Concentration camps didn't begin in Germany

They took their blueprint from white America trying to cancel out this black album and

Without a reasonable doubt they now use our penal system

Systematic injustices

To implement our slavery

And as successors to our lineage

We're all guilty as American gangsters

And they have unfinished business with the dynasty

Black people:

America promises nothing

40 acres and a mule

And we've yet to receive

Nothing

Have Medgar Evers and Rodney King taught us nothing?

Emmett Till's murderers got away scot-free

Time served was absolutely nothing

But yet Michael Vick does a two-year stint

Because in comparison to a pit

Black life is worth

Absolutely nothing

We are the hunted

Endangered species in this wild jungle we call our home

But we're not even welcome here

We're not even wanted but

If my skin were lighter maybe I'd understand why Dorothy
clicked her heels

And said

There's no place like home
Dethrone the idea that we're on equal playing fields
No this is a slaughter
But it's somehow legal
To take the life of skin darker
So we can't exactly call them robbers
They're monsters of this
Judicial gang called America
And being black is the treason
Killing niggaz back to back it's open season
When being black is a crime
Punishments are acts of
Stand your ground murders
Or enslavements by extensive stints of jail time

So if you ever find yourself seventeen with Arizona Tea
A tall being in a hoodie with skittles
Just don't be black
Because history has taught us
It's that which makes us
Criminal

ABOUT DAY EIGHT

This book was produced by the non-profit Day Eight. The mission of Day Eight is to empower individuals and communities to participate in the arts through the production, publication, and promotion of creative projects. Our vision is to be part of the healing of the world through the arts. Day Eight's programming includes an online magazine, poetry events, live arts programming, art book publishing, and activities to support arts journalism.

Example 2019 projects:

The DC Arts Writing Fellowship was created to support early career arts writers. Fellows are served by a committee of professional critic mentors and Fellowship Directors. Day Eight recently received a multi-year funder commitment to expand the project, which works in partnership with local news outlets Tagg Magazine, DC Theatre Scene, and The DC Line.

The DC Poet Project is a reading series and open-to-all poetry competition that supports DC area poets. The project is designed around partnerships with the DC Public Library, Anacostia Coordinating Council, and Brink Media. Day Eight recently received a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts supporting the DC Poet Project in 2020.

Since its founding Day Eight has pursued projects documenting art history, including recently related to the Jefferson Place Gallery (D.C.'s first artist cooperative gallery.) An Advisory Board of community members and arts and museum professionals oversee and support Day Eight's art history projects.

Day Eight's projects function through the support of individual donors including the Board of Directors. To learn more and donate visit www.DayEight.org.