

# **I am Not that Corpse: A Working Praxis for Black Lives Matter**

*Demetrius Noble*

I AM NOT  
Michael Brown  
I wasn't shot down and left in the street like trash  
Police aren't stomping over my dried blood while bombing my  
hood with teargas  
My momma's face ain't drowning in putrid tears and thick globs of  
snot  
My daddy's soul ain't on fire crying why his baby boy shot  
My niggas ain't weeping  
as they reminisce on laughs we shared last weekend  
My black flesh aint pieced by white cop bullet  
My blood ain't leaking

I ain't Eric Garner  
I ain't got cops on my neck just squeezing and squeezing and  
squeezing and squeezing  
Till they choke me lifeless and my black ass stop breathing

I ain't John Crawford  
Police didn't murdered me in Walmart for holding a toy weapon  
on sale in the toy section  
My baby mom ain't have to hear the police chief say the cops  
made the right decision  
While she tries to explain why I'm never coming home to our  
small children

I'm not Tamir Rice  
Trigger happy cops didn't snatch my innocent 12-year old life in a  
park in broad daylight

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I'm not Akai Gurley  
 I wasn't gunned down in a housing project stairwell  
 Crawling with armed cops trained to believe that's where criminals  
 dwell  
 Dispatched on vertical patrols like rabid rats that harass and troll  
 Those dark denizens forced to inhabit capital's hellholes

I'm not Johnathan Ferrell  
 Not Ezell Ford  
 I'm not Shereese Francis  
 Not Rekia Boyd

I'm not Renisha McBride  
 My nigga I'm still alive  
 So the question remains  
 HOW CAN I NOT RIDE???

There are NO excuses  
 But the truth is we'd rather be dead  
 That's why we march holding signs of "I am Trayvon" above our  
 heads  
 That's the wishful thinking of the already defeated  
 An empty slogan for those who have already conceded  
 That this world can't be radically changed

Thus there's no incentive to organize and strategize to redirect our  
 lives  
 Towards revolution  
 We'd rather be walking bullseyes wondering if we're next when  
 they're shooting  
 We scream we bout that life  
 But our lack  
 Of action says  
 We bout that slow death  
 We bout heavy sobs in between stolen breaths  
 We bout pictures on t-shirts, candlelight vigils, funerals, hashtag  
 memorials  
 Our lives are rushed dress rehearsals for death

Long prayers with Jesus help us feel alive when we just  
 lambs for the slaughter  
 Sitting ducks waiting to be plucked out of broke levee's water  
 And while we play possum  
 They get mo' ruthless  
 Notice the pigs' pistols have replaced the klan's nooses  
 They institutionalized the terror and we pay taxes to the institu-  
 tions

We lay prostrate for the state  
Hold silent vigils at the courthouse gates  
Instead of dragging out the cops, jurors and judges with their  
heads on stakes  
We place foolish faith in their district attorneys  
Meanwhile they place our kids on gurneys  
We chant no justice no peace  
But suffer injustice in peace  
We scared to scream fuck the police  
Let alone buck at the beast  
We think we Big Meech  
But they running the streets  
Armed to the teeth with a license to kill  
And all the black bodies they leave behind are proof that they will  
They yell "DON'T MOVE!"  
Then shoot when we still

But I aint shot yet  
I am not Oscar Grant  
I am not Aiyana Jones: a 7 year old girl shot by the police while  
sleep in her own home

I AM ALIVE  
Which means there is no excuse  
To not struggle for revolution  
Study for revolution  
Organize for revolution

I AM ALIVE  
I must revolt  
WE MUST WIN

## A Martyr Without a Cause or Much Ado About Trayvon

*Demetrius Noble*

Another young black body becomes a stage  
Upon which corporate media manufactures outrage  
Front page headlines highlight passive gatherings in streets  
Where multitudes perform resistance with candied sweets

We tweet our disbelief  
Pray that Jesus eases the Martin family's grief  
And while police restock with more pepper spray and more heat  
We like photos of hooded politicians and the Miami Heat

We demand the conviction of a pig-influenced Zimmerman  
but feign ignorance to the fact that 70% of the world lives on less  
than \$2 a day  
they can't afford the stamp much less the skittles you plan to mail  
away  
to the Sanford police while you play like you NWA  
besides isn't there a better way to say fuck the 5.0  
other than eat my candy and taste the rainbow

maybe we'll never know cuz we spend too much energy reimagin-  
ing Trayvon as Emmett Till and painting Zimmerman as the KKK  
without questioning if anti-black racism still functions that way  
ain't it ironic how the commodified iconography of yesterday  
can sabotage our ability to properly theorize today

Dominant discourses distorting viable voices from the left  
Until reactionary rhetoric wrapped in respectability politics is all  
that's left  
This vicious class system remains unaddressed  
While sanctioned conversations converge on Rachel Jeantel's dic-  
tion and Trayvon's dress

What is/Who is Trayvon within the global cartography of black  
death?

Is he

1 nigga memorialized by hoodies and candy  
Or the contradictions of capital come *home*?

If Barack had a son would he look like Trayvon  
Or one of the thousands of Africans that he bombed?

Why do we/ how should we mourn him?  
Should not the dead bury their dead  
While the living endeavor for their freedom instead?

Somewhere in between his murder and the performed purchase of  
Arizona tea  
Arizona is still being terrorized by tea party decrees

You might not see the link but allow me to bring it home  
In each scenario white tyranny polices where colored bodies can  
roam  
When in Rome, many do as the Romans  
They eat skittles, drink tea, wear hoodies, go voting  
They celebrate four more years and applaud a murderous com-  
mander in chief  
Who smiles under drones with black blood dripping from his  
pearly white teeth  
While he belches and speaks of which foreign conquest is next on  
his list to eat  
No doubt we hear a wolf but pretend he's a sheep  
And the silence of the lambs ensures the flock stays sleep

And while they snooze and watch the news for the next cues on  
when and how to act  
Trayvon increasingly fades to black  
A vanishing memory like Kathryn Johnston in fact  
Now what you talking about poet, who in the hell is that?

## Homecoming

*Demetrius Noble*

homecoming  
 a paradoxical idea  
 for those clothed in despair dodging obstacles of fear  
 with blank eyes  
 they stare  
 at strangers in mirror  
 whose cares have been cannibalized by their very own tears

12 cells to one tier  
 24 souls damned here  
 8 minds lost  
 16 hearts cut off  
 as their bodies pay rising costs on  
 principles/ principals untouched  
 interest never accrues  
 thus we remain out of touch

homecoming  
 a nightmarish idea  
 when world out there resembles hell in here  
 from the minotaur's labyrinth to the dragon's layer  
 got furloughed on parole and released  
 from warden to mayor  
 from cold cot to hot street  
 from C.O.'s block to cop's beat  
 from crips and bloods dripping blood  
 to bloods and crips unloading clips  
 I slipped  
 and fell into bottomless pit  
 and landed where I never left  
 inhaled putrid breath  
 repulsed by the smell of my own death  
 but my nostrils failed to flinch  
 as they are familiar with the stench

homecoming  
 what a laughable idea  
 to prey swallowed whole wading through state's diarrhea  
     home is a fiction  
 a violent contradiction  
 for those forced to bear the afflictions  
 of such horrific conditions

home is a deadly ideology  
mystifying symbol of oppressive philosophies  
satanic curse cloaked in sentimental appeal  
haunted house of horrors where proletariats are killed

homecoming is  
the inevitable act  
for the revolutionary armed with gas and lit match

