

[Meli-Nation]

We are the freedom
that is nothing we can put our finger on. Some
are bamboo survival instinct
that bends, who
learn to breathe in
whatever the hurricane breathes out, but
most an army of ourselves, the bravado of oak tree
biding time
before the lightning strike
/: our genetics load the gun &
the environment pulls the trigger, the accident
waiting to happen, like a chronic misfortune of
quantum singularities
that slows time to three strikes, to ankle monitored parole,
or probation-
like prey animals, every instinct wired to escape.

We are the consequence
of incorrect merciless impulses, our pain
not to be seen
or acknowledged, but
institutionalized, juxtaposing blackness
with the disembodied
spirits of our ancestors, the progeny of kidnapped & iron-
bound dispossession/: sold & tortured & raped &
murdered, after Massa worked they asses
like a Georgia mule,

the convict leasing
metastasized
to genetic memory,
to the discordant tense of nihilism
like crepuscular sunbeams
cloud-busting the turned askance face of God.

When white people speak of terrorism, every time
they kill one of us,
it is not now, nor has it ever been
a figure of speech,
but blackness
next to dope sack & semi-
automatic, side by side
with *fuck you!*
penitentiary chances
like the bitter phlegm of anger
crowding our throats.

We are shown our own grave site &

decide
not to be born into a nation
of voicelessness sears the air like fire.

We are bound to this world
the way color is bound to the dark, the midnight hours
of anger fumed quietly, at dawn or
dusk, like some other time of danger—stealthily
ambiguous & full of hidden agendas,

like a cracked shard of bone
protruding from playground dirt.