

W

Whiteness cannot help itself.
Whiteness must frame wilderness as threat.
Whiteness knows integrity will mean its end.
Whiteness thrives only in isolation.

Fred Moten said,

blacken up

,
an invitation

to

find the darkness within

and

hold its horrors to the bosom *del tuo essere*
assuring the void you know it is the space that connects the
universe to itself

.
If your spirit was born into a

whiter
brighter
lighter

body

,
reject the Sirens luring you
out of our dark forest
to shipwreck
on their civilizing shores

.
Take good care
to shape with language
worlds that want to hold us all

.

(Like all
Black women,
plants dream
of the day
their wounds
will matter.)

I

In an effort to love me better than she had been loved,
my mother shipped me off uptown to Hell

for it was shaped just like a school

(
for it finished presidential wives
)

for it convinced her it could care for me
and she wanted to believe that

for it convinced her it would care for me
and she needed to believe that

for it pretended to be good
and she decided to believe that

this Hell so slender
white
and
wealthy

[TK *centos del campo da tennis*]

(Maintaining
life in this
body requires
vigilance
you can't
comprehend.)

B

By which, of course, we mean
WHAT DO PLANTS WANT

AND WHERE WITHIN OUR OWN BODIES MIGHT WE
KNOW IT

Par exemple

watching *Black Girl* (1966)

when the life of
Ousmane Sembène's

hero

comes to that

familiar
exasperated
resolute
pristine
instructive
liquid

end

we understand at once
how

elegantly
privately
entirely

our theorem has been grandly unified

and on the street below the cinema
tell our BFFL wide-eyed

SHE

KILLED HERSELF BECAUSE
HER CAPTORS DID NOT

D E S E R V E

HER

and
without resisting
dear BFfL follows us headlong into

the florxal implication

with the kind of ease that comes
from knowing well the capacious varieties of Death

.

SCOR-PI-O OHHHHHH-O!

SCOR-PI-O OHHHHHH-O!

SCOR-PI-O OHHHHHH-O!

SCOR-PI-O OHHHHHH-O!

W

we dreamt we told Babylon
every plant is a Black woman
and the naked empire said

THEY ARE NOT SMART ENOUGH TO FEEL PAIN

in tete-a-teteTALKs
signaling virtue
a young vegan proclaims

I DON'T EAT ANYTHING WITH A FACE

years later we hear

I DON'T EAT ANYTHING THAT HAD PARENTS

(
JUST
NOW A
SPIDER
STARTLED
ME ALONE ON
THIS PICNIC BENCH
IN MARSHA P. JOHNSON
STATE PARK AND I — AS IF I
CARED FOR NOTHING HAD
LEARNED NOTHING CONSIDERED
NOTHING OFFERED YOU HERE NOTHING
SO TENSE SO WORRIED AND SO FRAGILE FOR
THE JUPITER OF ME — I BELOVED READER THEN
PROJECTILED FLICKED DISASTERED THAT SURPRISING
ESSERE TO AN ELSEWHERE AND UNKNOWN I MADE A CHAOS
FROM MY REFLEX AND NOW FEEL SO SAD THE SHAME OF BEING
THIS MANNER OF *ESSERE UMANO* ON EARTH IS ITS OWN JUPITER OF WOE
)

(Anti-
blackness
is
anti-
environmental
.)

D

Dollar cart gem outside Codex

*The world of the forest is a closed, possessive world,
hostile to all those who do not understand it.*

yielded tension

*At first sight you might think it hostile to all human
beings, because in every village you find the same suspicion
and fear of the forest, that blank, impenetrable wall.*

from whitebodied pal

*The villagers are friendly and hospitable to strangers,
offering them the best of whatever food and drink
they have, and always clearing out a house where
the traveler can rest in comfort and safety.*

cringing at reasonably imagined racism

*But these villages are set among plantations in great
clearings cut from the heart of the forest around them.*

and the suffocating violence of the colonial/anthropological lens

*It is from the plantations that the food comes,
not from the forest, and for the villagers life is a constant
battle to prevent their plantations from being overgrown.*

and I

*They speak of the world beyond the plantations as
being a fearful place, full of malevolent spirits and*

*not fit to be lived in except by animals and BaMuti,
which is what the village people call the Pygmies.*

flinched

*The villagers, some Bantu and some Sudanic,
keep to their plantations and seldom go into
the forest unless it is absolutely necessary.*

but some other way

For them it is a place of evil.

flinched

They are outsiders.

at pal's fear of

But the BaMbuti are the real people of the forest.

frank talk laid bare

*Whereas the other tribes are relatively recent arrivals, the
Pygmies have been in the forest for many thousands of years.*

flinched

*It is their world and in return for their affection
and trust it supplies them with all their needs.*

at self's own

*They do not have to cut the forest down to build
plantations, for they know how to hunt the game of
the region and gather the wild fruits that grow in
abundance there, though hidden to outsiders.*