

Unabsolved Just Us // What Happens When We Run From Them

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C. Fausto Cabrera
Unabsolved Just Us

Dred Scott's ghost still roams the streets.

Emmet Till's spirit still looks for his mother,
 it shivers every time someone whistles.

I imagine he's got much to say to a Karen calling the cops.

Need I go on? Down the list... I won't call them trapped souls because I believe they are
 saints & the energy that haunts us is more like a curse called down upon our heads instead
 of some unresolved punishment put on them. They did nothing
 wrong. & you know they were all standing
 around the scene with us—all of
 us; indicted by our presence
 at George Floyd's lynching.
 My aunt asked me if
 I'd seen the video
 yet, on the 8th minute
 of our 15minute
 phone call the day
 after. I hadn't—so
 I scoffed from the belly
 of the judicial beast,
 picturing another
 name added to
 the list of slain.
 But she said that
 this was something
 different. & it is sad
 to find hope in such a
 thing. Where do our heroics lie? When
 you walked by, who were you? A pleading citizen? The one who
 filmed? The cop standing guard of a good cop, having a bad day? Or maybe you were across the street
 minding your business? I'd like to believe we all wanted to be a person who might have tackled that cop.
 Who sees a mob stringing up the noose & says something, does something, knows something about
 sacrifice. Someone who knows they'd be strung up too, but would rather die in nobility than live
 in a world where anyone begs for the basics.

What Happens When We Run From Them

for Rayshard Brooks

Yeah, another one of *these* poems. So What. But not from protests, marches or burning buildings in the streets. Not from the front seat with confused kids in the back I gotta deliver “the talk” to either. Not from a Walmart with a Karen I caught in my phone, not from sitting in traffic where the confederate flag has camouflaged in red on the bumper of a person in a brand new car because the prices are so low in a fuckin’ pandemic, triggered by the word *privileged* while bitching about not being able to go to the bars or restaurants to get away from asshole kids, where wearing masks make them pro-choice all of a sudden. Naw, I’m writing this from a different seat of protest—where I carried my right to be hostile in my waistband (Don’t Tread on Me, either). Separate from political parties or slogans. I own my brokenness with no one else to blame & seal my liberation when my eyes close. I’m *protesting* from a problem’d place Biden helped create & Harris filled & now ya’ll wanna fill with cops because *it’s not fair*. If they kill me, it’ll be justifiable, regardless. Ignored enough, not so much for politics but because it took me so fuckin’ long to figure entitlement out. So, I’ll die as an enemy, never believing in *them*, to fix what isn’t broken for *them*. I am nobody’s constituent. I’m not a fuckin’ Amendment & equal protection isn’t something to expect. I don’t believe in Barack, AOC, Bernie or Jay-Z. I refused to be a victim of my Mothers’ death so I became an oppressor. If hurt people hurt people then what about those afraid of the hurt; what does fear do in the hands of those in power? A counterfeit \$20 bill, a DUI, a toy pistol, a hoodie, an attitude, having one of those days, a baby in the backseat & your girl driving shotgun—breathing... So what...but/ so what... but you can’t/naw muthafucka, you can’t, so what!? If only we could just learn to comply, huh? If we could just vote more, right? Get the right people to represent us in a system of wrong, infiltrate & show’em how good we are? Rayshard was one of us. No, not just black—he was a product of places & ideas meant to break the *bad*, meant to crush the spirit out of spite. These penitentiaries change you in untranslatable ways. Ways that manifest in spurts of resilience—like the hope that he might have been able to run fast enough. But, if only Rayshard would have just complied, like he did for the first half an hour. While the reality of missing his lil’ girls B-day again sunk in...so what, right?! He shoulda thought about that sooner, right?! So shooting him was justified? Oh, we’ll see *Justice*—in the mercy of how they treat their own Blue Lives that Matter. Don’t talk to me about *justice*—matter fact, stop saying that dumbshit altogether. Rayshard Brooks was never going to make it home, no matter how polite or compliant. There are people loved: beautifully flawed & fucked up who may do dumb shit because of their short leash & they’re not going to make it home tonight. If you can’t see through the exceptions; if you can’t picture the face of one of your beloved wayward cousin’s, brother’s, nephew’s or neighbor’s face in that same casket than you’re just as *Blind* as *Justice* & the stupid mutherfucker that came up with that dumb-ass phrase.