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Art

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I AM ‘THEM’ and ‘THEM’
(while studying American history on a afternoon)

I am ‘them,’
invisible now in your indivisible union.
I wore the chains of slavery,
took the watery passage for bravery,
and tore lost and bloody victories
from your tyrant lies.

Betrayed, kidnapped, sold and sold again in
a far away land
Three-fifths of a man.
When my freedom came it was a ragtag mockery
dressed in hand-me-down poverty,
with no place to go in the land of opportunity.

Cry?
There were no tears left in my eyes.

I am also ‘them.’
I fell before your bullets,
projected from your pulpits
of manifest destiny and blood-soaked
demise.

I am them who yet tell the secrets of your
broken lies.

At the hands of greed and your excuse for fear,
I am them who death-walked Missouri’s Trail of Tears.
I lived the horror of a pawn’s repeated mischance,
and soothed hysteria with one last ghost dance
at Wounded Knee.

Wovoka Christ spoke to me
of a new heaven and a new earth, of victory!
Or was it just one last beneficent dream for His dying people?

All of us swept away,
wept away
kept away
from freedom’s skies.
I am them and them:
The Native and The African.

Faith Bishop
I’m sorry that my head is sick
and you spend your life
fixing it.

I have reduced you to servitude.
You are my indentured servant.
I don’t

know what to say when I know that
You’d be better off with
someone else.

My selfish heart will not allow it.
I want you trapped in
my broken
t

thoughts dancing in madness.
I jumped off a cliff
to see

where I’d land. The blood from my
cracked skull stains your canvas
and my

broken thoughts are to your benefit.
So, I beg you to wrap me
in your

silencing arms
once again.

Heather Millican

what if I turn the
contours of this life
caddy-corner or parallel?
stretch the palette of my eye
by a wild splash of red,
or edge bouclé fabric
with lace and satin?

what yearning would
those broken rules,
neatly bound by time
and nature, yield?

what basic hunger
feed, or fantasy cure?
for I need to change,
form a different shape,
to satisfy the hidden me
who dreams of being
what the mystic sees
beyond beamed corners
and mortared red brick,
curious about my meaning.

Molly Boyce

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