

Take these notes. For An Epitaph of
mines, yours, and ours.

It all once felt limitless. Now stuck.
The possibilities are so fleeting.
We used to say “Come What May.”
Slowly, those words of assurance turned to
A pithy “Oh Dear.” As it continued to-
“Now What,” to a weakened shrug. That slow fade.
However stifling the codes and numbers seemed
To provide an easier route.

Transparently, ourselves and others.
The disappointment always radiating from mines to theirs
Skin peeled to expose raw humanity
Jealousy, vengeance, mobility, and other wayward *politik*
Wept for seeing too clearly.
Exposed myths
Scrolling infinitely
Pursuing desires, new modes, identities.
Imbued with fables of goddesses and self
Echoing into a fit
Nothing left for change.

We explored the outreaches
Looking to settle, for the chest tightened
Often enough for us to embrace the collapse
When the fear heightened.
“The experience of experience”; an incurable loop.

Suddenly. It feels futile to talk,
To receive. What is there to believe;
The easiness in which to throw away
The difficulties of confronting

Complicated?
Complications that come back to haunt.
Not the simplicity of who or what for, we know.
More of what we are to lose.
Are words no longer filled with the power as we were once taught,
Or is it merely another shallow image as we have long believed and feared.
The whispers that followed for so long.
Worked to be quieted—“Oh Dear”—
Returns to an uproarious volume.
Is it in the matter in which we mourn?

Abuses through inaction or faint acknowledgements.
Complications.
Course correcting, attempting to keep up.

What deserves mourning?

I say it's all over.
We do, with the algorithm that pushes
The thoughts of the apocalypse can only bring a relief, in some sense pleasure.

Compassion is too complicated.
Intoxicated by the blankness
Our silence bought us peace
The cost in the end was our shame.

I was also weak and somewhat a fool, could only look in horror and keep inventory.
“If complicated folks like complicated folks and if we are all complicated
Then what's the point of even speaking?” I thought. See, a fool. But no more
Foolish than you.

It felt best to embrace the eternal pool of silence.
Oh, how easy it is to admire the peace and the calm of the reflection of the familiar.
Humanity as your own responsibility undictated by anything else.

There was a day. It was yesterday or maybe 20 yesterdays.
We sat and breathed in the cold air;

To see Now.
“Break the cycle,” we said.
Duppies. All we are, see, surrounded—
The cold sweat.
a god. An idol created. from an idea of a noble life image.
When the future depended

Our throats are parched. We circle around each other
Confused and incapable, no, unwilling, to express
The old wounds and how often they flare and sting
The heart beating, that it reverberates throughout our bodies.
Waiting to tell.
Floating in and out the pressure that
brings a serene calm to capture the inexplicable.

Falling in a solace, a late-bloomed reckoning
What was so often dutifully ignored.

Faster and harder. To the toes. The weakened arms.
Time
Floating. Reminders,
In the pit of the stomach. The hover over the shoulder.
There, Here, and There.

Must there be silence? Yes.
And when it hits, here it hits
The final question. The one it all depended on.

How will we be immortalized?
How will you?
I?

There it is. That sunken feeling, the final trick.
To lend ourselves to a legacy that preserves without us.
What if it is no longer there?
Oh Dear.

- Shanekia McIntosh, 2019