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REVOLT

ISSUE: 002

REVOLT

INDIGO MAGAZINE

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INDIGO MAGAZINE



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REVOLT

Dear Reader:

*The issue theme for this Fall is **REVOLT**: an issue of revolution and resistance. I believe as a Black magazine we should acknowledge our existence as revolutionary and your reading a form of resistance. In introducing the genesis of this issue, should I begin with oral tradition or the history of putting pen to paper, the learning of foreign tongues only to be restricted in their use? Should I begin with the delicate dance of speaking in silence and transforming language into verse and song? I would be reproached if not to mention the use of Black publications across liberating movements, like the Chicago Defender and its influence in the mobilization of Black Americans during The Great Migration. Perhaps, I should begin with the creation of the works within this issue and my appreciation of each artist's unearthing, their asking themselves what was too uncomfortable to hold, what complexities in which they exist and feel they were simplifying.*

*The culmination of works that is **REVOLT** began with marking rage as the emotion of revolution, but that didn't seem to fit quite right. Enmeshed in Black life is revolt. As we began to pull at the threads of ourselves, we found that woven into our ancestral fabric and hidden in our cultural genealogy is a resistance not so easily recognizable. And while rage is a tool of resistance, we hope this is not where you stop. True revelation and liberation starts with questions, the knocking on your spirit. May you inquire your rage on what it has to offer in the cultivation of your liberation and revitalization. May this revolt spark questions that burn at the fabric in which you weave yourself. May it allow you to ask: what am I afraid to feel? What am I afraid to do? What am I afraid to be?*

What makes you burn blue?

Joi Gonzales, Editor in Chief

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Untitled
BJ Odufuwa
Digital photograph

I'm looking for a Hush Harbor

POETRY BY

Anya Sesay

Sing me a song in a hush harbor.
Sing it soft now, just for me.
You see, there are things that cannot be made public,
for the growth of the family tree.

Cry me a river in a hush harbor.
Weep from deep inside of you.
The current will cover your screams,
and the ancestors will carry them too.

Tell a scary truth in a hush harbor
Whisper it good now, I wanna hear.
Tell me about revolution.
Light a fire and burn my fear.

Whistle a tune in a hush harbor.
One we know all too well.
A tune that hides instructions,
and that leads us to the freedom bells.

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Clap your hands real heavy in a hush harbor.
So I hear liberation in every beat.
I want to know the homeland,
so may your music guide my feet.

Write me a letter in a hush harbor.
Tell me what it's like there.
To ruminate on revolution,
to plot, to dream, to share.

I want to make a hush harbor.
But I don't know where to go. (Do you?)
Where our pain will not be publicized
Our creation stolen, our instructions exposed.

So, tell me where to find a hush harbor.
Where *they* can't hear a thing.
Yet, where, from the water's hush,
revolt and revolution sing.

Just tell me where to find a hush harbor.
Where the hush is so loud.
That it covers the rage and grief,
the terror that I need to get out.

Take everyone to the hush harbor
Let them watch, and let them learn.
Pray that they too will resist,
and that for revolution, they will burn.

Because when I rage and plot in a hush harbor.
Alone, I refuse to be.
You see, when I have nothing left,
You will carry on the revolution for me.



Untitled
Amina Salahou
Digital photograph

On The Politics of Deserve

POETRY BY

Hannah Alexis

When I was younger,
my school in Gretna was a rainbow
I remember kids of all lives
and skin and stories and knowledge
Just kids, alright.
But outside? Was different
There, just outside.
And suddenly leaving there
and going to my white dance studio
after rehearsal with my white cast
and studying white people
in their white shows
laughing at me
an insurance policy that their actions could not be racist
if their Black prop were present
Never in the narrative, watching and smiling from afar
Then there was the sickness
not the racist kind, but also the racist kind
because scientism has a funny entanglement with race-ism
And woman-ism and their belief in science
is their disbelief in my feeling of pain

PAGE

6

And then the white doctors get paid to murder
Black women
And abort Black babies
And use their white gloves to put money in their white coats
And use it to feed their white ambitions.
Their white homes and care for their white wives and white mothers.
Because their care is worth putting money and time into.
Pandemy sick
All of us at home sick
Yet we somehow still get shot sick
Negative for that sick, but positively targeted sick
And knowing that the real world is sick.
Eventually, we left home again
And then I go from colorful rainbow public school
To shiny white private school
Where I am surrounded by the sickness,
the pure racist, commodify and die so we can take your money kind,
where I see my skin but hear
white words
Along with white faces
And white hands
And white comfort
Pushing right past
And I am thrown to the side?

Well.

At least my knowledge of myself is not based on some lie.

And now I wait to go back to predominantly white school

Where courts of injustice reign supreme over my right to want an education

And I think back on all my life

white kids blaming us for the lies their parents and this country taught them
about what they deserve.

They know nothing of the word.
I'd be mad, too, if I were lied to like that.
And I have been lied to,
I have been told I deserve nothing.
What June said?
Wrong race.
Wrong skin.
Wrong gender.
Wrong attraction.
Wrong class.
Wrong face.
Wrong race.
Wrong idea.
Wrong country.
Wrong world.
Wrong life.

Maybe try again in the next one.

Nah.

I come from a people who always do what they can to make things *right*.

Untitled
Asantewa Bonna
Digital photograph



*In the recesses of your mind
we wrestle for Love*

POETRY BY

Joi Gonzales

glances swallowed

a privilege to

feel

like glass

to trust

constant

correction

path

straight

narrow

weary of growing

i've grown weary of growing

i've gone

weary

again again

*[insert a voice of compassion here that wishes it was of instinct for you.
It looks you in the eye and the quiet rage, sadness, disappointment, oh
you're oh so tired. it can hold your gaze and not budge.]*

iniquity

how long has it been

taking root

the mirrors

antiquity

dwelling

bloodline

line the walls

don't

again again

[insert a voice of compassion here that says I can hold you for a moment, but you have to take it back.]

i find myself

here

again again

Fasting

forever

me

and God

fasting

forever

i cannot purge

what i hide

you cannot purge

what you hide

truth

light

and all i can think of is Love [Fear]

torches and mobs

how am i supposed to, Love

like i can't stop

easily

when i know you can

[insert voice of a compassion...]

who taught you how to love

with restraint?

you forgot where you kept me

last

fall

*found my slipper nudged in the doorway
you could see the flickering flame on my nightstand
and you were afraid the warmth might take you over
that it might be too much to bear
no burden for you to carry
i require nothing
expect nothing
neglect nothing*

i see you i see it all



Untitled
Ethan-Judd Barthelemy
Digital photograph

The state of things, in general

WORDS BY

Garrett Nitz

Immediately and for an uninterrupted five minutes after their arrival, Leon does nothing but carry on about the crime that is denim-on-denim while Maggie laughs herself sick— they had seen the most tragic woman on their way over. Dora takes great pleasure in the lampooning as well, but she has to excuse herself to the kitchen to check on their food; she is committed to preoccupying herself by playing host. In the kitchen she decides to give them about a minute to carry on before she calls them.

“Okay enough already.” Dora doesn’t really want Leon to stop, but she reminds herself that these things have to run their course. “Food is ready.” She returns to the sitting room with a large pot. The two guests seat themselves on the couch.

“Ah yes, a humble pot of turkey chili,” Maggie sighs. Dora responds with an expression of curled lips and raised eyebrows. She’s not sure what she means to communicate beyond that she heard what Maggie said. Leon turns his head toward Dora.

“Wait, is this turkey chili?” Leon’s interest heightens, he rises from his seat and starts sniffing the pot. “Thyme.” He is never close enough to actually smell anything. “Garlic, onion.”

“When is it ever anything other than turkey chili?” Dora sets the pot down and hands them bowls and glasses. She admires her creation. “What do you think?” Neither of the two say anything right away, not for a lack of opinion but lacking the energy to entertain her.

“Well this smells great, but I can’t eat it. I’m keeping vegan.” Leon sets down his bowl, and grabs his glass to get water. The women look at each other confusedly.

“Since *when* are you a vegan?” Dora asks. “Last time I saw you, you actually said you’d eat anything that was alive just to feel powerful.” Maggie snickers at this. “You should’ve said something before you came over.”

“I switched a few weeks ago. Technically I’m ovo-lacto-pescatarian, but I just say vegan. It helps me eat lean, and staying lean will help me get a good look for summer.”

“Ovo-lacto-pescatarian?” Dora draws out the word.

“I just need to get lean. And I swear I told you this when you called me.”

“You said the word lean a lot, but honestly it sounded like you were creeping into an area a doctor might call *disordered*... and I just didn't really wanna go poking around in all that. You definitely didn't mention being vegan, though.”

“Ah yes, a humble eating disorder,” Maggie inserts and snickers again. She's already finished a bowl and set it aside. Leon rolls his eyes.

“Not even.”

“So then you care about animals then?” Dora takes her seat on the couch.

“Oh not at all. I just need to get skinny, ya know?” He doesn't look at them as he walks back around the room.

“Well then, I think it sounds like you've got a handle on it and there's no reason to say anything else.” Dora responds. She doesn't feel the need to hash this out. “But I don't have anything for you to eat.”

“Ah don't worry about it.” Leon sits himself in a chair across from the couch. “I was probably at my calorie limit anyway.” He sips his water to punctuate this.

“Well then perfect,” Dora responds. They all grow silent as the girls enjoy their meal without a care. It's a slightly awkward silence, but no more than they can handle. It gets

worse over time, but never beyond a point of no return. Before this can go too far, they're reignited.

"Ugh, but you should've seen all that denim though, Dee!" They all laugh again. No one stops anyone else this time.

"It was a real public display of gay librarian-ism. Probably rushing home to some reserve of hemp oil."

"Could you imagine spending time with someone like that? I just don't think I could take that many acoustic guitar covers in my life."

Some time after the rehashing, when the meal is officially done, Maggie collects herself as Dora returns to the kitchen with their mess. Maggie lets out her last chuckles until finally she sighs a phew of satisfaction. It's a smug sigh; she was quite pleased with herself. Without invitation to do so, she very intentionally sprawls out across the couch. She begins to play with her black-forest hair, as dishes clang from the kitchen. She is such a vision of great German genetics, she thinks. She loses herself here for what seems like quite a bit.

"So there's a war apparently," Leon restarts them. He's landed on the local news networks while channel-surfing.

Dora is still in the kitchen, but she props the door so she can hear any conversation.

“There’s always a war.” Maggie responds. She thinks the gel nail polish was the right choice; it makes for a good signature-color.

“You know, it’s amazing that all the religions came from Africa and Asia. I mean, if I were God I would be *very* eager to distance myself from that whole area,” Leon adds, not pausing his flicking of the remote. He presses hard because of how strange Dora’s remote is. He hates that.

“Well, who even cares really?” Maggie responds. The thing about half-seriousness is that it’s half-serious. Leon chuckles, he agrees. Maggie kicks her leg in self-satisfaction, she doesn’t break focus from her nails. “Can you just look for TBS or something? I don’t wanna hear this anymore.” Leon keeps flicking past local networks as Maggie waits for something more important to her to come on. Dora clatters in the kitchen as she scrubs dinnerware and puts it to dry. Her noise is intentional, but the others are unphased by it. Several times she turns to look at her guests through the open door, but she can only see the backs of their heads. It’s not so much about seeing if they’re ignoring her, but that she wants to know if they notice her cleaning.

“Hey Maggie, is there any way you could maybe come help me please?” Dora finally requests, although she’s already finished. Maggie immediately snaps her wrist down and removes her focus from her nails and shifts it outward, onto nothing in particular. She’s very focused on this.

“Oh, well I can’t right, you see.” She starts to grin.

“What? And why not?” Dora scoffs.

“Well,” Maggie pauses, her tone becomes more pointed when she continues. “Well for starters, how can you ask me that right now? There’s a war going on, Dora.” She’s turned her head so her voice can be heard in the kitchen. “Don’t you care about how overwhelmed I am by the state of things in general in this messed up world?” She starts to mime crying. Leon breaks from his channel searching to laugh. Maggie goes on and puts her hand in her fist and winces. She follows this by putting her palm to her head and desperately pleading.

“No. No. No. No,” she laments.

The whole act is stupid to the others, and they enjoy that. They let her carry on.

When Dora finishes the dishes the trio finally settles into watching television in the room. They make it through no more than half of a couple shows before they decide to just put it on cable. As they talk over TBS, Dora's mother joins them. None of them care where she was coming from, but seeing her energizes them.

"Well hello there, my angels," Dora's mother greets them. She sets down the heavy grocery bags that she brings on her hips. Dora rises from the couch to hug her mother after she sets the bags down. She slowly wraps her hands around her mother's waist and holds for a while. The hug forces her to bend her back and she wraps her hands around her mother's head. Maggie and Leon watch from the couch. Eventually Dora lets go and stumbles over to the armchair by the couch.

"We've missed you, Marmee," she says cloyingly. Dora calls her mother this because she likes *Little Women*. She likes it so much that she calls her mother this even though the name reminds her of Susan Sarandon, who she hates. She pauses to put the actress out of her mind, giving her head a little to help this process; she's just such a performative actress.

“I missed you more, my dears.” The older woman sits on the arm of the couch. The blankets she put out are much more disheveled than she remembers them being before she left. “So kitties, how’s it going? How’s school?” They knew the question was coming and they let it sit. Leon and Maggie look at each other and signal for the other to start the conversation. They hate to talk about school. Maggie finally loses this battle of stares and lets out a chuckle as if the confusion were funny.

“School is good. Just busy. I’m about to be placed in a classroom starting next semester so that’s good.” Midway through speaking she breaks eye contact with the older woman. “It’s something to look forward to.” She brings her attention back to the woman to smile.

“It sounds like it.” The woman somehow finds a way to sit with her legs crossed on the couch’s arm. It’s not comfortable. “And you’re still living at home?” The older woman begins to grin in a way that Maggie doesn’t like. It’s not just that there are a lot of folds on her face but also that these folds communicate a patronization. It’s not unlike how the way the face melts when it pities. She senses that the other two have similar expressions.

“I am, yeah. It’s just easier.” It is a lot cheaper. They all know it, but there’s something about living at home that they can grin about.

“Well delightful, I think you’ll get it all figured out then. Now Leon, let’s hear all about you.” Maggie isn’t sure what the woman means to say, but she has ideas. These are ideas that don’t make her feel good but she suspects are true. The others don’t seem to notice anything. She takes this opportunity to leave for the kitchen to get more water. As she leaves for the other room, she hears the others discuss her school.

“I’m so proud of you both for taking care of yourselves out there,” Maggie hears. She stays in the kitchen for a minute to kill time. She feels embarrassed, like they all must be thinking about her. She tries some light pacing and leaning on things to pass time, but this only makes her more upset at the fact that she even felt the urge to leave at all. With that, she decides to go back, despite not being quite settled yet. When she’s back in the room she finds herself in a pause after that follows comparison of grades- a topic which seems to drain the other two.

“Well Auntie, how about you? What’s new in the world

of online shopping?” This conversation lasts only a little longer and shortly thereafter the group is left as they were.

The party leaves themselves time for more serious discourse, and the topic du jour is misandry and white feminism, like always. The only thing left for them to figure out is how to bring it up.

“Dee, do you remember when Drew McMillon sideswiped your parked car senior year? And the school police officer had to come get you from calculus and take you to talk to him?” Maggie hopes that this will get the conversation going in the right direction. Dora’s eyes widen and she lets out a puff of air from her nose.

“Oh yeah, I do.” She tries to formulate more sentences. “God, I hate men.” She looks at Maggie.

“Truly. They will *never* get it,” Maggie twists toward Dora and agrees, and the two women break into their rant. This goes on for about three minutes and touches more on what the patriarchy makes women do than it does on how it makes men behave. It’s all correct. They both chuff after they say all that they can think of; this signals that they’re finished.

“Ugh, why did you remind me, girl. It’s all back in my mind now. That idiot was such a pig. You know, I wish we could round up all these men so I could blow them away with my maturity and grace.” She says this all with her hands. Her guests stare at her and grin.

“Okay well just relax” Maggie crosses her arms and puts her feet on the coffee table.

“Yeah really, men aren’t so simple... Some of them are even poor,” Leon steers the conversation. “Some are even queer, etcetera.”

“Well let’s not go that far,” Maggie chimes. Dora laughs.

“Anyway, my point is, isn’t generalizing men a little white feminist? A little *second-wave*?” Now the conversation reaches a familiar point. Here, they break down into their usual dissection of politically ambitious pop singers and girls who wear witchy clothes and how they’ve killed nuance and feminism. Eventually, it’s clear that the topic is exhausted since they’re all in agreement on those points.

“Yeah, the thing about women is that sometimes they deserve the hate,” Dora concludes.

“And also all the other minorities.” Leon can say this because he’s not white and the girls can laugh because they’re his friends.



Midnight on 42nd Street
Ethan-Judd Barthelemy
Digital photograph



“Oh Lee, did you ever end up reading that book I recommended?” Dora changes the subject. She likes to talk about the books she’s read even if it’s been years since she’s read them. Leon makes a confused face.

“Hm?” He finally responds after thinking.

“The book I recommended, did you read it?”

“Which one was that?”

“It was *Regarding the Pain of Others* by Susan Sontag, the short one. I told you about it on the phone, like, four times.”

“Wait, I think I read it, like, forever ago.” His tone is unsure. Dora raises an eyebrow. “Remind me what it’s about again?”

“Basically photojournalism and modern voyeurism of foreign pain and all that.” She rocks her head as she speaks. “Yeah. That’s the basic vibe of it, yeah.”

“Oh *yeah*, I definitely think I read that book in high school.”

“Yeah, I just think it’s so inspiring and an interesting idea about how we need to stop turning important things into little pieces of media meant to be enjoyed for a moment and then passed along”

“Yeah, you’re right. That’s so true.” His answer is awkward. He nods toward nothing for a couple seconds.

“Oh, on this topic, did you end up finishing *Succession*?”

“No, I’m still watching the final season. No spoilers, but what did you think of ‘Connor’s Wedding?’”

“Oh I haven’t watched any of it. I just wanted to know if you had.”

After another half an hour, the group decides to have an argument. It’s not like this is too insincere, they are at least a little mad at each other. They always are.

“Dee” Maggie starts this, her tone is whiney. She knows what she’s about to say won’t go over. She grabs onto Dora’s arm. “Why don’t you call me more?” They call once a week, but she wants it to be twice and a weekend visit every few months.

“I call you plenty. I’m just busy.” Dora gets up from the couch and stands behind it. She maintains more exasperation than frustration. It takes more for her to snap.

“Busy doing?” Maggie presses her. Dora can’t finish her eye roll-scoff combination before Leon inserts himself.

“Busy spending time with some of college’s finest hippies?” He speaks with an upward inflection. It’s a joke and it isn’t. Leon knows where this is going.

“What does that even mean?” Dora replies, though she

knows what it means. She also speaks upwardly but not so much in tone as in direction. Up is also where her eyes go as they roll. She makes her way around the room to the armchair, but doesn't sit. "I just normally have things going on. I don't have time like you, Maggie."

"What is *that* supposed to mean?" Leon is offended almost immediately. It's not that he hasn't heard this before, but he feels like he shouldn't just roll over. Maggie is less taken aback but still expresses disbelief as she slumps into the couch.

"The only thing you've got going on that we don't is that you're seeing someone." Maggie replies. This is just the first example that comes to mind. Their lives are quite different.

"Yeah and what's that guy's deal even? He acts like he used to be a hacky sack before he was turned into a real human," Leon finally gets that one out of his system, he's been saving it for the right one of these moments. He actually enjoys Dora's boyfriend a great deal.

"You know there's more to life than being crass and insouciant." Dora sits in the chair with her back to them and her legs rested over the arm. She wants her pose to punctuate her point.

“Since when?” Leon continues. Dora, who is surprised to be supported by Maggie, reminds him that he wasn’t really a part of their conversation in the first place, and he takes issue with that point. After they accuse him of speaking over them and he accuses them of not letting him into their relationship, he resigns himself from the conversation entirely. These lines of argument involve a lot of synonyms and flow like script.

“Anyway, he has a point. Just because no one else sees you act like you do here doesn’t make you different. Why act superior?” Maggie’s continuation is flat. She puts her feet on the floor after she finishes this.

“Oh grow up.” Dora adds a scoff. “And what does this have to do with my calling you?”

“I don’t wanna talk about this anymore.” They all go silent now, that’s curtains for this conversation.

In the silence that follows, as Maggie and Leon consider and reject the thought of making their exit, Dora’s sister joins the group, bringing with her a friend. The introduction of an outsider demands that the trio perk up.

“Lily, this is our cousin, Maggie, and my sister’s friend,

Leon.” The group is immediately gregarious once again, and they exchange pleasantries as if no argument had happened there. It’s autonomic for them to snap back. They say their go-to conversation pieces and take them deeper. *Do you live around here and have you started to think about graduation* parlay into bigger discussions of *when I was in high school*.

After a few minutes of this icebreaking, Dora starts into a story about an epiphany she had right before she graduated; it’s something about how inspired she was by the degree to which the world needed to be changed. This, she claims, is what makes her sure that she wants to be a schoolteacher. She tells Lily that maybe she can take something from that and not worry so much about the future and Lily thanks Dora for the story before the two younger girls leave. The silence game begins to resume.

In this second silence, Leon looks at Maggie and begins to smirk. He decides to reset them again.

“No way any of what you just said was real!” He smirks to the others.

“No, actually,” Maggie seconds him. Dora begins to chuckle. She turns to face them again.

“Oh I completely made all that up. Could you imagine?”

Before any jaws can drop, the other two realize that the humor they find in this outweighs any surprise, and they start to chuckle. These chuckles become laughs when the group makes eye contact with one another.

“Can you imagine if that story really inspired that girl? Whatever her name was,” Leon adds. Maggie doesn’t remember the name either but says it was a name that would’ve been better for an old doll.

“Lily,” Dora reminds them.

“Well, Lily’s better off taking life advice from a ouija board.” They roar with laughter not entirely directed at the joke. They gasp for air. It’s a labor before they finally settle themselves. Suddenly, after she is able to collect herself, Dora clutches the side of the arm chair; she remembers something. Her eyes burst wide open and she breathes in deeply. The shock of her reaction is another distraction from whatever they were just doing. Leon and Maggie stare at her.

“Oh, wait! I completely forgot to tell you the thing we heard about that girl,” Dora whispers now, but maintains the same level of energy. She focuses directly on her guests and continues, “You didn’t hear this from us but... *apparently*,

Lily's dad *died* in some random tractor accident a few years ago. Apparently it's, like, a whole situation and he was all mangled up, and now her home life is a mess and she's gonna have to live with the grandmother." Leon's jaw drops and Maggie's hand flies to cover her mouth. Dora nods at them with an ostensibly stern expression. "We were told in confidence, it's a *big secret* for their family." Once a few seconds have passed, Maggie begins to try to say something.

"That's... that's just horrible," she finally pushes out. She bites her lower lip, and shakes her head in disbelief. They are all intentional not to look at one another too much. Their breathing is deep. Leon begins to move his mouth in search of words, and the two women tilt their heads toward him as he tries to speak.

"I... well... I uh ... a *tractor accident*?" Leon stumbles over the words. Dora resumes her nodding. As soon as Leon sees her confirmation, he looks at Maggie then back to Dora, who both look at him with stern looks that quickly begin to stretch. Dora then looks to Maggie who returns her stare with a grimace which begins to curl. Once they confirm their mutual understanding, the trio bursts into a booming laughter.

“A tractor accident. How do you even die from that?”
The laughter gets louder.

“What’d someone hit him over the head with the tractor?” The laughter becomes uncontrollable. Dora joins her friends on the couch.



Stadium
Zakiriya Gladney
Mixed media

“Do you snowboard or ski?”

POEM BY

Marley Dias

They don't tell you that when ice breaks, it shatters.
The pieces come crashing,
Cold and piercing, transparent chunks.

Stammering, wondering if it's just you,
Are you the one who never learned?
Yearly trips, mom, dad, brother, sister,
Dick & Jane tales of hot chocolate over hearth.

A nuclear family following their lifts up a white hill,
Sharing nods with c-suites, gliding down land pillowing with supremacy,
Woven tight like the Dutch braids dripped over Moncler puffers.

“My dad skied once.”
Scott thought he could do it, drove his boss Michael to Vermont,
We needed him to get a promotion, pre-school costs him an arm,
And now his leg.

He doesn't run anymore,
He tried to be like Mike, but he broke his foot.
The grimace etched where his dimples should be,
I went to preschool and he let himself hobble.

Doctors have borders,
Ones that kept me in classes and kept him with Advil.
Every wince I heard kept me off a slope.
He paid the price for me, and the piggy bank was broken.

I looked around and saw nothing but fragments,
Of a foot, of a bank, of ice.
And knew it was all mine to sweep up.



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self portrait: escape il
Primo Lagaso Goldberg
Digital photograph

Untitled
Asantewa Bonna
Digital photograph



"You're a goddess"

POEM BY

Marley Dias

It felt like an antibiotic.
Dose and dose, supposedly healing,
Always disorienting.

Beautiful or hot would have sufficed,
But the words never let me plant my roots in humanity,
Only gripping branches a breath away from snapping.

Weekends came around like wrecking balls,
"Cute" clothes like needles in a haystack,
Pricking and pricking.

Trying to rewire myself,
Scraping my taste buds off, smeared blood in the sink,
I can't help but be unreal.

Eyes like lasers, side hugs like handshakes,
He's looking for a carbon copy,
And I'm fresh off the press.

Long legs storming down a dark yard,
Staring at trees that felt just like me,
Pretty somewhere else but just not here.

They loomed while I made dizzying heel-toe stumbles to
salvation.

My head down to stop looking at their mirrors,
Dominant and dark, foreign, and fraudulent.



Couch
Zakiriya Gladney
Mixed media

the transformation of silence into song

POEM BY

Anya Sesay

they told me we need silence

i mean

take a bus to Connecticut and sit underneath the trees and
let the wind whisper to you.

and listen

to what it says.

i mean let those whispers of nature,
divine and true,
deliver you home like whistling.

like songs that used to sing instructions.
that hid prayers and calls
to freedom
that waded by the water
that sang only to *our* souls
because
we were waiting for the naming
of a song we used to know,

you knew so well,
so well you knew how to forget it.
let it remember.
you, now.
let it remember now.
it, the body.

let your body tell you what it has already known.

we need silence
they told me.

i mean
after the rhythms and melodies in Harriet's voice when she
held a gun to their heads and told them to choose freedom, or die.

like the silence of that choice.

like the silence it takes to remember that choice.

a song you used to know,
you knew so well,
so well you knew how to forget it.
you, now,
remember it.
let it, the body, remember.
& let your body tell you what it has already known.

and once you have remembered

and once remembrance
has settled
to understanding

for the sake of those who are coming
don't you dare forget to speak.
to sing.
to yell.
to make.
music.
to rise.

let timidity rise outside of you,
fully grown.
And denounce it.
Refuse it.
Sing it a song,
until it sheds
and all you can see is freedom.

you know, they told me we need silence

i mean
like footsteps home.
like whistling home.
like the glory of the song that followed,
the footsteps making paths
paths to freedom
paths that guide us home
& footsteps that stomped and sang home, home, home
they guided, like whistling.
let it remember, now.
It, the body.
Let it remember you, now.

we need silence

i mean

let the dark silent ancient place of your remembrance,
be the light
which guides dream and revolution home.



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self portrait: escape i
Primo Lagaso Goldberg
Digital photograph



Untitled
Asantewa Bonna
Digital photograph

Gift

After Shakespeare's Sonnet 60

POEM BY

Mia Word

As fine leather becomes softer with time,
So does my judgment.
I gift her my raw worn hand—
Grace I never gave myself.

I was born naked skin of purple tint
Scarred by naive thorns
Little scabs of heartbreak dulled with time.
Reminders to dodge the ones I meet again.

Time and love go hand in hand.
I smile at the crease that now sits above my brow
Wrinkled the forehead I shrank from at fifteen.
I love my last self more each year.

When I'm gone, I hope she remembers this here:
Time's eye is impartial; her life is hers to steer.

Untitled
BJ Odufuwa
Digital photograph

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**Black Privilege:
A Short Film Screenplay**

STORY BY

Rave Andrews

INT. OFFICE BREAK ROOM

Three coworkers sit at a table together during lunch. CATHY (mid-20s, white, awkward) is eating a sandwich practically dripping with mayonnaise. MAYA (mid-20s, Black, annoyed with life) is sitting at the same table.

CATHY

I'm just saying, if I've never experienced it in my day-to-day life, how can it be real?

MAYA

Jesus. Christ.

DANNY (mid-20s, Black, confident) walks over and sits by MAYA.

DANNY

What's this white girl talking about today?

MAYA

(rolling her eyes)
White privilege.

CATHY

It's not a real thing! If anything, I think Black people
have more privilege.

*MAYA and DANNY's jaws are on the floor. They're losing
their minds.*

CATHY (cont.)

I always have to walk on eggshells, while you guys get
to say whatever you want whenever you want.

*CATHY continues to rant, but as the camera slowly zooms in,
her dialogue slowly becomes inaudible. MAYA does a voiceover.*

MAYA (V.O.)

Cathy always said crazy white girl shit. She can't help it. It's in her blood. But maybe this time she had a point. Maybe Black privilege is real.

TITLE CARD: BLACK PRIVILEGE

INT. OFFICE WORKSPACE

MAYA is sitting at a cubicle next to her white coworkers.

MAYA

(talking to camera)

Thanks to Black privilege, if I want a quiet and peaceful day at work, all I have to do is express just an ounce of irritation!

MAYA

(to her white coworker, very politely)

Hey, do you mind turning the music down just a bit?

WHITE WOMAN #1
Oh my god, yeah, I'm so sorry!

MAYA
Thanks.

WHITE WOMAN #1 turns to WHITE WOMAN #2.

WHITE WOMAN #1
(quietly)
Maya was sooo mean and aggressive to me just now. I
can't believe it.

WHITE WOMAN #2
Yikes... we should probably give her some space.

MAYA
(thumbs up)
Black privilege!

INT. DINNER PARTY

A Black woman CLAIRE is at her white friend's dinner party holding a plate of bland, pale food.

CLAIRE

(talking to camera)

Did you know all Black people are born with hot sauce perpetually stored in their bags?

A nearby WHITE WOMAN looks over, confused.

WHITE WOMAN #1

You don't even have a bag?

CLAIRE

With Black privilege, the world is my bag.

CLAIRE suddenly grabs hot sauce out of thin air. Magical sparkle animation. All the white people start cheering.

CLAIRE puts hot sauce on the bland plate of food. Sparkle sparkle. The bland food suddenly turns into lemon pepper chicken! Baked beans! Coleslaw! And mac and cheese, where the top is actually baked!

All the white people go nuts.

CLAIRE
(winks at camera)
Black privilege.

INT. HOUSE PARTY

REESE, a Black man, is at a party sitting next to his white friend on a couch.

WHITE FRIEND
God, my life sucks! I have nothing going for me.

REESE

(to camera)

Thanks to Black privilege I can solve my friend's
problems in an instant!

(back to white friend)

Hey, how about I give you the pass for one night only?

WHITE FRIEND

No way, really? You're the best.

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REESE and WHITE FRIEND dap each other up.

EXT. OUTDOOR PARK

DANNY walking through a park.

DANNY

(talking straight to camera)

Life's always been a breeze for me.

Suddenly, DANNY walks by a panicked man.

SOME GUY

Oh no, my cat's stuck in that tree! We need someone to come quick!

DANNY

Don't worry. Thanks to Black privilege, we'll have someone here in no time.

DANNY puts the hood of his hoodie up. We immediately hear police sirens and a cop radio saying something like, "We have a suspicious 6' Black male in the area."

DANNY

Look! They're already here!

INT. OFFICE WORKSPACE

MAYA is sitting in her boss's office. Very softly in the background, we hear her boss saying, "We're gonna have to let you go."

MAYA

Black privilege!

INT. DINNER PARTY

White people are smothering, clawing, and almost attacking CLAIRE. We hear someone in the background screaming, "HOW IS IT SO FLAVORFUL?"

CLAIRE

Black privilege!

INT. HOUSE PARTY

In the background, REESE'S white friend is screaming, "WHAT UP MY NI--(fade out)" to a group of Black people. REESE is super uncomfortable but tries to keep smiling.

REESE

Black privilege!

EXT. OUTDOOR PARK

DANNY is actively getting pinned down by a police officer.

DANNY
Black privilege!

MONTAGE:

Clips of Black people in moments of oppression. Black people protesting for their rights, speeches, famous figures, etc. etc. Throughout all of these clips we keep hearing the phrase “Black privilege” overlapping and getting louder and louder until it’s deafening.

BACK TO:

CATHY
So yeah, whatever, I just don’t think Black people
have it that hard.

END.



The Aggressor
Ethan-Judd Barthelemy
Digital photograph

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R E V O L T

Unveiling Josh Johnson: Identity and Perspective in Comedy

CONVERSATION BY

Rave Andrews
ed. Gabrielle Medina

Josh Johnson is an Emmy-nominated writer, stand-up comedian, actor, and musician. This interview was conducted on January 13th, 2023 during the start of Josh Johnson's Freshman Tour. Since then, Johnson has sold out dozens of shows across the country and continues to be a unique and powerful young Black voice in the comedy space.

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This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

Rave: When was the first time you performed stand up?

Josh: The first time I ever performed was [at] my high school talent show. But the first time that I could really say I started was in Chicago. When I landed in Chicago, I did three mics that night. And then from then on, I was just doing mics every night,

trying to go to as many places as I could. When you're twenty-two, you have limitless energy.

Rave: You've written for Jimmy Fallon, and you're currently writing for Trevor Noah. What's the difference between writing comedy for yourself, as opposed to for a different person?

Josh: I think that writing for yourself is gonna be easier because you know what you care about. But then [for] someone else... I think it takes a while to get a sense of what they think is funny. But I think that there's a gift in... being self aware—like, self awareness is so important. It's actually what ingratiates an audience to you. Because if you can put them at ease of, "I know what's going on," they'll let you lead them...

Rave: Going off of that idea of self awareness, I feel like you approach Blackness in your identity in a way that's different from what I've seen before. Do you think your identity plays a large role in your comedy?

Josh: I ended up going to private schools, so I was around predominantly white people. And a lot of those white people had money. Then also, you know, the church that [I] went to exposed me to very conservative ideas and the conservative mindset that southerners have. And so what happened was, I had this... Venn Diagram of experiences that all sort of landed in my Blackness. And so I was getting it from all sides. And I just didn't want to be tied down by any one aspect of the experiences that I was having when I grew up. I sometimes think Blackness is a conduit for a lot of people, like you'll see how there'll be people who want to say something about black people. I've approached it as best I could... There's gonna come a day where people are like, "shut the fuck up, Josh." That's gonna happen. And maybe I'll deserve it. Who knows? But I feel like, if I can humbly try to communicate what other people either don't want to hear or really don't hear when the other person's talking, then that's something of value I can both bring to the world and to comedy.

Rave: Speaking of your comedy style, I love the subject matters you talk about, and your laid-back stream-of-consciousness style. How long did it take for you to establish your comedic voice? Has it evolved throughout the years, and in what ways has it evolved?

Josh: So, you know, you're—let's say you're two years into comedy, right? You're a two year old, in a sense, you start making noises. And you've, you know, you may even perform in some senses, like, wild stuff, right? But do you fully know what you're saying? Have you thought about what you're saying? Do you have opinions? Do you have a grasp on what your voice sounds like to other people? And I think I found my voice early on, but then it developed, you know, throughout the years, the same way [it] develops when you're a person, right? So while I think it's insane to say that I was as good as I am now back then, I think that I found my voice early, but I've been working on cultivating it for the whole time.

Rave: Is there something that you wish you knew about comedy before you started out?

Josh: So, I think that if I were starting out now—or if someone was even able to go back in time and tell me before I started—I think that you have to be endlessly willing to adapt. You have to be so willing to adapt... I think now people are so focused on going viral versus making something good that they end up putting up a bunch of trash. [It] is neither good or it's, like, it's the clip, but no one laughed in the clip. But they're like, "nah, but the people watch. You'll get the joke." It's like, oh, more power to you. But no. And I think that instead of bickering with yourself or with other people about those changes, being adaptable ahead of time [and] seeing, like, okay, there's a trend. And that doesn't mean you have to do everything. Sometimes you might see the train come and be like, "I'm just not, nah, I'm not in it." I don't see myself doing that thing. And that's fine. But I think being adaptable is at least addressing it for yourself, whether you're going to engage in that thing or not.

Rave: What do you think has been the highlight of your career?

Josh: I think the tour with Trevor opened my eyes to the rest of how this was all going to work. And it was my first time doing these arena shows in succession and doing very well and getting new followers and having people like me and want to come see me off of 10 minutes of stand up that I got to do for them. In every scenario... I've done these shows where five people showed up, and I made them laugh really hard. But to be at, like, MSG, and really having people roll with me was like, okay, even if my trajectory is incredibly different from these other people... being able to make people laugh with confidence is, like, that's the best [thing] you could ever hope for, you know. It was the highlight of everything so far. So, you know, it ended at the end of 2022. And now it's my turn to learn and apply everything that I've been taught to my own tours and to my own career.



Untitled
Zakiriya Gladney
Digital photograph

INTEREST

Indigo Magazine is not as an island... but a vessel of creative transformation for Black creatives. Submissions, therefore, are open to the entire Black diaspora and individuals outside of it who create art. Each issue will also consist of pieces from our five writing boards, which specialize in different content areas, and art solicited by Indigo's art editors relating to the theme of each issue. Our five writing boards include:

1. *The Message* publishes pieces of argumentative writing, including direct, scholarly "Cases" and more literary, broad "Meditations". Its mission is to highlight and foster discussions of race on Harvard's campus, across the nation, and around the world.
2. *The Symphony* publishes pieces that uplift Black art across mediums through criticism or personal reflection, as well as original literary and visual art.
3. *The Jam* publishes humor pieces by, for, or concerning the Black diaspora. It aims to earn a laugh, and maybe someday a living.
4. *The Renaissance* explores Black fashion through a historical and sociopolitical lens. It will take style seriously, and might even help freshen yours.
5. *The Mic* celebrates Black voices by doing what most people don't do, actually listening to them. It will publish interviews of a variety of Black folk, seeking to share their stories and wisdom with the world.

If interested, please email editor@indigomagazine.org.

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REVOLT

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