

Sequelae

by Rejjia Camphor

"I can't breathe" was not just a statement spoken
when Eric Garner was being choked,
it was a diagnosis for black folk
under this token we pin U.S.
Yet we still don't even know
how to spell us, can't exclude us
and still expect to spell understand,
You still don't understand,
this land is quicksand,
been sinking ever since black
was sunk to the dark place,
you mean space,
the same case we understand
to not have any matter,
is that why I don't matter?
Because I'm not easily served on a platter,
open season for you to play
Grand, Theft and Batter,
the only thing that should be whippin
is me the hell UP outta here,
buzz lightyear away from all this
white fear and make it disappear.
Cause up there is true reality
blackness not just the only thing you see
but how godly it can be
giving me a supernova sense of what it means
to have a purpose in this world.
My whole meaning is to be a black girl,
curve out and swirl like the expansion of the universe,
give beauty to birth and help you nurse your worth,
but instead you purse your verses with curses
that know me as names that are not mine
names that hit me like meteors crashing
up and down and against my shrine
I pray that you learn to not address me with this kind of foreplay
Cause lord knows they only love women when it's the milky way
But someday you may understand that I'm not your parfait,
I am the antithesis of anti-black life,
so when police put eric garner in that chokehold
and squeezed until he was set free to the afterlife,

it was also like opening back his mother's portal
and stabbing her vagina with a knife.

black mothering

is interchangeable with that of enemy of the state

the preservation of black life against the proliferating terror of hate

and sequelae is a medical term for the condition caused by those lingering wounds,

the slow death that happens long after they've built then vandalized his tomb.