

notes on archiving erasure

love does not begin and end the way we think it does. love is a battle; love is a war; love is a growing up

- James Baldwin

when I say
I love my family
what I mean
is I worship
the battle; you
can't wish away
creation or re-order
blood. childishly
I thought we could
re-tell story(ies)
I mean to say,
I can't lie. in truth
there are wretched
days I call my sister
and ask *was this
real? did this happen?*
she says nothing
part of love can be
called refusing to
answer. my mother
says *let things lie*
she means murder it
let our shame be
a suffocating vine:
we were made to
believe that everything
we bore was ugly: a family
of shell shocked
gods fleeing
their own clay - yet,
I will come back to
the door of our own home
sit at its steps, and fall in
love with the slow order
of our creation, the seasons
it took to urge kindness into
our natures. how we won
glory even as the city fell.

recy taylor's ballad

act just like you do with your husband or I'll cut your damn throat

-Herbert Lovett

to be an american is to love
roads that tried to kill
me, dust, the desperate
beat of fannie's
stout white fists against that green
chevy, a murder
of white men packed inside, their
pale hands a lesson on patriotism and
allegiance. to be an american
is to love god, to love how
we can call out his name
maybe a thousand times in one
endless bloody breaking night, to glory
in the silence of an answer
that never comes.

I am an american
because i call a thing
a thing: love
is my child, home
is wherever my daddy
goes: frantic searching
for my body
and what those six
white men did
in all those godless hours
was rape me
laugh train steel at my heart

my god, if i waited
for you, maybe i'd be dead
in that lonesome forest, my bare
breasts holding a grove
of pecan trees, the taste
of my blood lingering
in its fruit, a shamed
footnote in another black man's
sorrow. you let me keep
my tongue, i'll use it to set

this road afire

Recy Taylor was a Black woman from Alabama, gang raped by six white men in 1944. She subsequently brought them to trial with the support of Rose Parks.

2 fat black women are making love

and the joke is right there, ready, shuddering and alive - rife with promise. there are so many paths that have been out worn out for a quick easy laugh: tyler perry strutting with a gun and wig, screaming rotund and loud like a madea would, martin calling out *yo mama* on television, or the meme of a young woman shot underhand her belly in love with a tight skirt, hands moving towards an open mouth, look at everything she devours imagine it: does it make you hungry too?

2 fat black women are making love, on a bed, on the floor, and they are weeping for joy - they are crying great folds of flesh flushing and shaking, one cannot look in the mirror save for thinking of her daddy - all this ugly and skin together, counts the men who say they hate her body as they do bitter cops and dead black boys.

2 fat black women are making love - and they touch each other like they can hold it. honeyed, profane, bawdy-like patriots, like their bodies have never been folded into freezers, screamed at on streets, coaxed or threatened sweet, like they have names, like we will know them.