

Sample #2: Silent=Silence=Death=Silence, For-fucking-ever-more by MJ Perrin

JENNI

(picking up a pink pussy cap)

Hey, where'd you get this?

BLACK LESBIAN POET

// Awkward. This is a good time to start worrying. // You worry because she will insist on you answering her. The thing is, you can't talk about entrusting your life to a friend who works to expose the truth, that leaving isn't as easy as everyone thinks it is. // You trust, because not only has she been there, she survived.

JENNI

Answer me.

BLACK LESBIAN POET

Things are about to turn ugly. // Maybe even physical.

MARCI

I know what this is for.

BLACK LESBIAN POET

Wow, who would have guessed that?

(to MARCI, about to react.)

But don't you dare say a word. Stay the course.

JENNI

How you planin' on gettin' there? You ain't got no car. And I sure as hell ain't takin' you. How you gettin' there?

BLACK LESBIAN POET

Ah fuck. No more tricks up her sleeve. This is not good. // Not good at all.

(to AUDIENCE)

A hurricane is approaching you at 95 miles per hour. Winds like this, you need to find shelter, like right now. If you can't do that, find it in yourself to stay calm, hide your fear, keep breathing, and // stay the course.

JENNI

You ain't goin' to that damn fuckin' march.

BLACK LESBIAN POET
(Audre Lorde)

I am exposed by an unforgiving light showing me my greatest regret. My silences. To speak could have meant pain. But pain will eventually end, and I may still be alive to speak. But death... Death is a flat line of silence, stretching out into infinity. The chance to speak has passed. Audre Lorde.

JENNI

Your ass is stayin' right here, with me.

BLACK LESBIAN POET

// Hard to escape the storm when it's blocking your pathway out. You could try to go through her, but don't. Not smart. There is another option. // Still risky, but the odds of you surviving look better. // Slightly, so, anyway.

(to MARCI)

One quick steady unrelenting no thinking no hesitating no pausing no anything else except a life-saving push out the door harder than you think you can. You gotta move fast. Shut the door and lock it. Stay the course. Forget the clothes. Stay the course. Risk the window to get the hell out of here. There's no turning back now. // Not if you're wanting to live. Come on, jump. You know the door will eventually be defeated, so why are you waiting? Get the fuck out of here. // Stay the course.

JENNI

You better not let me get my hands on you, 'cause I swear, you're gonna pay for this.

BLACK LESBIAN POET

Shit, now she's kicking the door. You know what the door is going through. You know the feeling of being kicked hard, // to be broken down.

Scene resets: JENNI & DANTE; Jenni joins MARCI who has progressed to her legs dangling out the window. JENNI remains standing.

DANTE

(To the AUDIENCE from this point on.)

I ain't lettin' you go, bitch. Don't even think about it.

BLACK LESBIAN POET
(to MARCI)

You need to jump now. You know you're not safe. You gotta get out of arms-reach for any chance of reclaiming your freedom. // Oh my god, what would that be like? Freedom. Uncut ecstasy. There's nothing like it. But you're not free, and you are reminded of this as he shouts through the door...

DANTE

You can't run fast enough to get away from me.

BLACK LESBIAN POET

Sadly, past experiences prove this to be true.

(JENNI dangles from the window.)

But this time, you're gonna try really, really hard, because you know, // his anger lacks humanity. Ah shit, there goes the door, slamming without any mercy, battering the wall. It's as loud as a gunshot, shattering the air all around you. My god, would you please jump!

(to AUDIENCE.)

Hear that? That's your heart pulsating, resonating like a kettle drum.

(to DANTE)

So why are you still here? // Jump, now, while you can.

(DANTE jumps.)

// Thankfully, survival is hard-wired in most of us.

MARCI

(hanging out the window)

I'm coming for you. Don't think for one minute that you're gonna get away from me, 'cause that ain't happening. I'll catch-up with your sorry ass. You know I will.

BLACK LESBIAN POET

Why would now be any different than before? // Because today isn't an everyday that has come and gone. Today, your friend and her friends have come to be with you...

(JENNI & JASON join DANTE.)

...standing right beside you. She looks down on you with murder in her eyes, but she doesn't dare move. In the thoughts of Audre Lorde, we are taught to fear, to not use language to define who we are or what we need to survive. We wait in silence for the strength to be fearless. We wait while silence kills us. And we stand there, watching it happen.

(That voice hidden inside us, must be revived to find its way out. To JENNI.)

Come on, do it. Speak.

To AUDIENCE, now the perpetrator.

JENNI

You wanna know if I'm goin' someplace? I'm goin' to that damn fuckin' women's march as you call it. You wanna know how I'm gettin' there? I got a ride. You wanna know if I'm leavin' you? You bet your sorry fuckin' ass I am.

BLACK LESBIAN POET
(Audre Lorde)

I had planned to speak, had hoped more that someone else would. We can hide in corners, voiceless. We can sit forever while we are destroyed, distorted and turned into waste. We can sit in our safe space being silent, and the fear will not go away. For us to survive in the mouth of the dragon, we must first know the truth: there was *never* a divine plan to keep us alive. We must transcribe and plot our own definition of surviving. Audre.

JASON

I will no longer allow you to take my world away from me.

DANTE

I will not be a set of keys for you to toss, higher and higher until you watch me fall and break.

MARCI

(jumping)

I don't know what I'm gonna do next, but I'm gonna decide that. Not you. Not anymore. And you know what...

ENSEMBLE

It's about damn fuckin' time.

BLACK LESBIAN POET
(Audre Lorde)

Being seen is a vulnerability, but it is also a bountiful resource we can depend on to give shape to our greatest strength—each other. There are so many silences to be broken, that must be transformed into language and action. So said the Lorde.

(Slow fadeout.)

Fear and pain and death will never, ever disappear. Listen for your voice. Hear it...

ENSEMBLE

Speak.

The End