

CONNECTIONS

by letta neely

There are connections between us
between the lines we've needed or been forced to draw with our
blood
across
time space words wounds
On these new york streets i've seen cracks in the sidewalk and
grass spurting through like revolution holding fast
to one creed only: "keep going, baby, keep going."
The crabgrass makes me think about where we, you and i
are going
it's a hard day when i realized i don't know any of my enemies
personally
It's my friends i'm speaking to
somehow we keep fighting the same battles over and over again
and arguing over
who's got it worst who's on the bottom of the totem pole
and i don't mean to
proselytize
but we're killing each other
and
the totem pole is still standing
and
we're still using it
not knowing it's an ethnic slur

Me, i feel trapped in the middle of all this whirlpool
i feel like i'm on top of three mountains
shooting at myself
I went to the march on washington and saw a lot of white men
together
talking about we will no longer sit on the back of the bus and
somebody had the nerve to say:
"there are a million rosa parks' here"
and i thought
it's not about white guilt or even gay pride
but make sure the
truth
is being told
Cuz the rosas couldn't make it to the march and
as for the back of the bus
whoever thought it up probably
flew
first class

So, i'm not talking about not aligning with the struggles of my
Blk peoples cuz i understand the connections all too well
just remember to take Emmitt Till, Atlanta child murders,
Smallpox blankets, Stonewall, the treatment of
Chinese railroaders, and Apple pie
all together

Every day in harlem i face a different kind a fear
other Blk peoples screaming at me with their eyes
cuz i'm in love with the way a woman is

One time a man said to my friend, he stood next to her and said,
"I love you

cuz you blk and you my sistah, but i think all faggots and dykes
should die.”

One time a “friend” said to my sister in the presence of enemies,
“you’re not natural”
and then wanted to know
why she felt
unsafe

I want to know does anyone fully comprehend this pastry
does anyone know how to sew all this together without mixing
histories or
trading truth for slogans.

We are not all hanging from trees
standing in welfare lines
neck deep in sand getting out heads kicked
off into the sunset
(these things are being done as we speak)

We are not all getting beat down at Stonewall
We are not all being dragged from our homes by our hair
being raped by husbands
or friends
or lovers

We are not all dying the same way.
But we are all fighting to breathe
fighting to breathe