



Love is the Message, The Message is...

After Arthur Jafa

I'M TRYNA KEEP MY FAITH

Michael Jackson in elementary school falling asleep at his desk every sharp rap on the blackboard sounds like the lash of the belt

pan out

a post-industrial hellscape from a moving train then

smash cut

graffiti in a bathroom stall that reads RIPedo the day that he dies

the camera slides

into the Compton swap meet, Redman's shoebox,
a big-boned jit, Pirate Jenny at the bow of the ship,
Slide to the left, now slide to the right, one hop this time
as the camera rides a carousel and captures the expanse

BUT I'M LOOKING FOR MORE

SOMEWHERE I CAN FEEL SAFE

a supercut of spades explainers:

Follow Suit

Don't Reneges

Play To Win

AND IN MY HOLY WAR

Flo Jo across the finish line
The white Ford Bronco,
Pullman Car Porters fox trotting with Bayard Rustin,
George Washington's 167 year old mammy circus-
bound and toothless

Midnight Train to Georgia, Cool Runnings, Craig
and Smoky,

David Blaine reactions, if you can't go to Bella
Noches,

CJ from San Andreas steals the train that kept a rollin'
all night long,

Don Cornelius, Jessie Owens, Usain Bolt,
John Henry in this bih,

George Jackson in the back,
Harriet at the barrel,

Walter Scott in the back,

Kathleen Cleaver at the barrel,

Korryn Gaines on the floor cradling her son

There's no final station
only the endless tunnel.

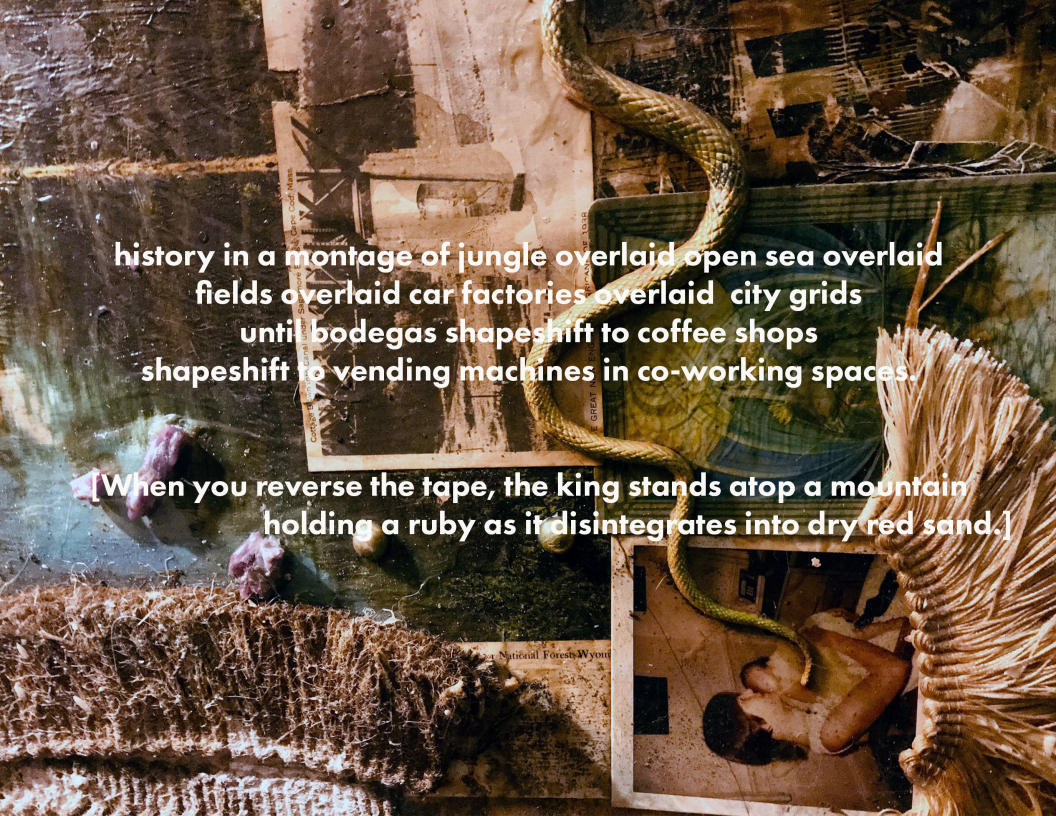
THIS IS A GOD DREAM

My grandfather jumped off the pier
when they threw loose coins in the water
and make the African boys dive for them

My uncle jumped off the bridge
when his first girlfriend dumped him.
They pulled him from the canal by his belt, still alive.

As a child who nearly drowned they asked me

*how come you can't swim
when your whole life is a river?*



history in a montage of jungle overlaid open sea overlaid
fields overlaid car factories overlaid city grids
until bodegas shapeshift to coffee shops
shapeshift to vending machines in co-working spaces.

[When you reverse the tape, the king stands atop a mountain
holding a ruby as it disintegrates into dry red sand.]

Follow suit:

a palimpsest of blacknesses

smokestack, money phone
dick print, free clinic
run track, prison bunk
bruja, botanist
yacht club, foster home
hot comb, genesis
blow out, swimming pool
armchair, Sisyphus
tight fade, banana skirt
pregnant, scientist
strip club, bar exam
fly trap, pegasus
pulpit, locker room
native, immigrant
trap house, jack and jill
deacon, charlatan
sew in, Mardi Gras
concrete, elephant
gun show, private jet
safe house, pirouette
full set, rodeo
boss bitch, tender head
courtjester, jumping rope
forklift, tennis court
vocal, arrogant
token, disposable
gentle, relevant
spit take, cello bow
first breath, pyramid
tomb stone, seraphim
most high, money flow
holy, holiest

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Don't renege:

Nicki grins wide as she cuts the banana, Angela's strut haloed in flame, Lorraine has had enough of Eartha's shit, Betty on the track talking about topping Jimi Hendrix, *Lisa burned the house down!* Solange with the helicopter kick, Naomi throws her phone, Rachel Jeantel sucks her teeth, Remy Ma...you already know, Serena breaks a racket, Kara installs cameras, Sojourner bares her breast, Ida names the killers, Marsha threw the brick, Assata ran to Cuba, Lauryn showed up late, Janelle became a cyborg, Nina hurled a plate, my cousin tries to stab her abusive husband and ends up in the psych ward, my cousin marries well and goes to Trump's White House for McDonald's, my Nana drank and prayed, Moya gave us a word for it, this rank wound, so when I write Hattie McDaniels shooting a harpoon from the balcony I mean Trina telling you to suck her ass through a straw, Grace Jones slapping that talk show host in the face with a strap the size of a Buick, Rihanna rolling her eyes and a blunt on God's bald head, and Crystal Labeija clocking your sloppy mug like

**when you die I'll come to your grave every day
and eat birthday cake**



Remember what Mama said:

***never let em see you sweat,
never let em see you at all.***



Play to win:

hands painted indigo, a long low holler, a hot shame
in red light, a bead of tears in congregation, crystals
from the chandelier of an abandoned roller rink,
the long finger pointing towards the door, the durag
lifted to verdant fields, the twirling skirt of Oya,
Donna Summers moan, bayou sundown,
when Jesus washed, when Jesus washed

∞ and as a side note



∞ Aces First