

henry 7. reneau, jr.

I Am Trayvon Martin!

Well, what else could we do? He was hopeless. I'm no bully; I never hurt a nigger in my life. I like niggers—in their place—I know how to work 'em. But I just decided it was time a few people got put on notice. As long as I live and can do anything about it, niggers are gonna stay in their place. Niggers ain't gonna vote where I live. If they did, they'd control the government. They ain't gonna go to school with my kids. And when a nigger gets close to mentioning sex with a white woman, he's tired o' livin'. I'm likely to kill him. Me and my folks fought for this country, and we got some rights. I stood there in that shed and listened to that nigger throw that poison at me, and I just made up my mind. 'Chicago boy,' I said, 'I'm tired of 'em sending your kind down here to stir up trouble. Goddam you, I'm going to make an example of you—just so everybody can know how me and my folks stand.' —John William “J. W.” Milam, co-murderer of Emmett Till, *Look* magazine, 1956

There was just no way I could describe what was in that box. No way. And I just wanted the world to see. —
Mamie Till Bradley, mother of Emmett Till

Do angels smell of sea salt
rush of tears,
snatched to sleep everlasting,
a connotation of “collateral” become a label of fear,
of confrontation? “Skittled” by gunshot.

\$50,000, \$2,000—how much
does a murdered Afghani child cost to just go away?

Euphemized like Emmett Till,
weighted down in death with cotton-gin fan,
weighted down to death by a 115 grain full metal jacket,
a bag of Skittles & spilled ice-tea,
his cell-phone ring-tone a cautionary tale, “you should run!”

Plantation lullabies generations removed, from an open casket
like a tell-tale heart—serious as being Black.

Geraldo thinks he brought Neighborhood Watch His-panic on himself
wearing a “hoodie” while Black,
like driving while Black,
jogging Black, “suspicious”
saggin’ while Black, reaching for your wallet
41 bullets inna’ freeze nigger! back Black!

Mississippi1955, whistling at white women while Black, “suspicious”
as Medger in his driveway Black, “suspicious”
as MLK at the Lorraine Motel Black, “suspicious”

as white men with guns & badges in the “hood”, in my niggas pockets
& they socks, lookin’ for some dope or the undercover Glock,
like piling 9 dead children to make a bonfire under color
of “ Stand Your Ground” military Shock & Law.

Serious as a heart attack, h.i.v/AIDS, the Sanford police—serious as,
nowhere in the definition of “suspicious”
is the adjective defined as a “coon”/terrorist in a gated community
wearing a “hoodie”/suicide vest, with Skittles/WMD in his pocket,

but who
watches the Watchman,

but the specter of Emmett Till?

Requiem for Kong

The Emancipation Proclamation gave birth to segregation after rape
by Reconstruction.

Segregation, agitated by fear & ignorance, conceived white sheets & impotent political teeth
to cage blackness. The freedman ex-slave was imprisoned behind separate but unequal
bars of rhetoric & legislation.

Then . . . they poked
the subdued beast with the sharpened stick of deceit, Jimmy Crow &

institutional racism. A collective racial emotion, much more complicated & vicious than
anger, enflamed Negroes' "las' nerve" be patient . . . waiting.

Afro-Americans planned & plotted vengeance that festered in submissive silence,

before black folk sprouted fangs & claws that were filed to razor sharp on the nihilistic
threat & double consciousness.

Then,
one day, distracted by arrogance & entitlement, the gate keepers

forgot to lock the cage,
as they invited Amerikkka to view the subdued beast . . .

adults: 7 dollars . . . senior citizens: 4 dollars . . .
children under 12: free.