

HEALING POWER

By Kara Taylor

My husband got a tattoo of “8:46” on his hand.
Reminds him that this police nation will always have knees on our neck.
He says these needle strokes commemorate George Floyd’s blocked airway
At the knees and hands of a white man.
He wants to remember.

I did not understand him
For, to me, his soul lives within a body that constantly reminds.
His melanin sings songs of hangings and lynchings.
If he was to etch all reminders, his body would be filled.
So he should settle for every pigment of his dark brown skin.
He should settle for his locs containing winding hairs that never let go of the dead.
He should settle for our love story being built on him standing between my frightened body
And an officer’s gun.

I had cotton mouth from swallowing silenced stories.
Hushed.
I wanted to say
I watched my brother for eight minutes and forty-six seconds gasping
Calling for his sister mother who flew in the sky.
My airway closed too and I gasped for I have a fictive kinship that no tattoo can capture
I do not have enough body or tolerance for pain.
My back cannot hold these cries.

I choose to baptize myself into the waters of healing with my pen.
For it is my therapist God and sword.
Pen cradles me at night when fear absorbs my body as white man bangs on door.
Pen knows I am not nigger they just need me to be one.
Pen is mother and father I thought I needed.
Pen interrupts nation’s thin lips whispering submit.
Pen liberates me with love and understanding because it does not hold.

This poem is not supposed to be about being Black
But being Black is my everything
My pen attacks blue lines protected by white space.
However, my words remember red margins bleeding down side reminding
me to stay the course.
This is not a poem about what being Black feels like
This is a poem on healing.
My husband got a tattoo of “8:46” on his hand and it still has not fully healed.

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