



KIND HAVEN

jacob kobina ayiah mensah

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edited and designed by ELÆ [Lynne DeSilva-Johnson] and Orchid Tierney



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KIND HAVEN

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

To Assay the Hermitage	8
Haggard	9
Cease, Crows	10
Chrysanthemum Garden	11
Curvilinear Deliquescence	12
In Two Halves of Hypothesis	13
A Wakening in the Dead	14
Gabriela Russinov	15
Feeder of Pedigrees	16
Ordinance	17
A Question of Conformation	18
Antithesis Metamorphosis	19
Seldom Caller	20
Confrontations	21
The Expelled	22
The House above the Line Marked W	23
Insupportable Haughtiness in Countenance	24
Better Accommodations	25
for the Birth of the Mesh	25
Refusal to a Promotion with Substantial Injunctions	26
New Shores Near Preferences	27
Individual	28
Conveyance	29
Opulent Off-White	30
Communication Strategist	31
About the Author	32

TO ASSAY THE HERMITAGE

that is askew
from every angle,
she removes flab
from his fjord
& his flabby body
which was once a documentary
epic
is flagellated.
He waits
to show his new cloth
to the man who sponsored
his plastic surgery
before he gibbers to uncover any
giblet in the kitchen for a gift
token.

She was waiting for me at the gate. She led me into the cellar and tried to open my eyes. My little sister, who had died a few hours after my grandmother, lay in the arms of a female marble. She whispered in ears,

“Tell her that you’re waiting.” However, I also seemed to be asleep. She led me away from my body. I stepped outside a church, waiting to be carried away in a cart through the clouds when a curious friendship sprang up between me

and a male marble, who was still yearning to be completed in its form. There was no one thing that trouble me, I was lost in my feeling of strangeness.

CEASE, CROWS

Now that you are closer to me than I am to myself let me shape this Sunday afternoon breeze for that silence in my next door's backyard. Now that we are sure of pronouncing the final consonant of each step we take in a whisper, so that it is audible without being obtrusive, let me get the "nerd" for "gyerde", formed with the tip of the tongue, we get S for X, when our teeth cut through many hard words which are often wrongly preceded by a kind of hissing breath. I cover the substance which forms the roof to vibrate freely and easily.

Trying to practise elaborate exercises at the end of this breathing, you inhale the fragrance of the slightest feeling of tension or rigidity, I vocalize on a vowel sound, which has no room here. I hear the crows completely at each comma, so you

can run a fresh breath to coincide

with a punctuation mark

nearly exhausted.

CHRYSANTHEMUM GARDEN

I have no community of nature except this neglected chrysanthemum garden. I have come across it under a grain of sand with its flowers slobbering in the wet air. I do not think I have ever experienced so strange a feeling in this life except remembering how each plant is being employed to reproduce its shadow in a pool of heat and seeing it enjoying the drooling. I am angry with myself, I am more afraid of myself, leaving no room for my imagination in the late morning by the best authorities of the blow flies except that I am to adduct a farewell glimpse for all my uneasiness whenever they speak to themselves and are sure to be redoubled in the very difference among themselves for their hardness of heart. However, before those solemn windows, looking blindly on me, they are doubtless, I have had to think what will move me to tear when I have carried my body into a husk of a seed after your death. I have no consolation in seeing how different we are to consider the alms with bigot. I compose your hope, having cast no image to dilate any fish and answer, I gag, withering on the roof, here everything remains the next jetty of shadows, dissolving, for the butterflies and dragonflies we are, I remain flaw and precise. I part without explanation.

CURVILINEAR DELIQUESCENCE

I subtract ashes from the hearth when it is still quite by half-past seven, I leave the main gate to the compound open for two men, who have been together in your imagination, not more than a dozen minutes in another moment, or a flash. Half my memory is burned in the previous bonfire, leaving a room for anybody to come in, stealing down in his little slippers to execute his conceptions of performances that do not affect the market price, your value appears on explanation, you are falling either up or down the hedgerow with the tray, you are looking to splinter into fragments before I find about the teaspoons around the chervil from the briar and I struggle flabbily with myself. Your elder son, who always looks at his watch and then at a stranger, is keeping on following us from the River State, saying genially, gaily, that I have built a work around the old revelations of your whereabouts from the clean court to where a new washerwoman is pawning the clothes, you and the paddies fill my head in a loud and confident voice by my own calm. Picturing myself with such a complete bliss, I iron out the distances between us, I am hemmed in by serious doubts from one basket to another I fill with ironed clothes for less than half a dollar, I terminate myself in a young man of genteel appearance, who is coming in tomorrow to succeed me by a long line of incapables, I do not want to show up those images hanging from every corner of your eyes for the damn goods to be brought out immediately, I must reach the next village before Sunday completes itself and no one to go mildly on receipt of wages, I am surprised I find out about going out charging, a moment to look around and see.

IN TWO HALVES OF HYPOTHESIS

We're mountains in our own right, formed from a stretch of anger, we maintain our shape that becomes insensible from terror or rubble under pretense of anybody's lurid visage, framed with time, we reflect, & in truth everything within appears almost delirious. Because we're mountains securely on the inside, no more sombre thoughts when we're beating by the rains against any promise we've made after birth. Midnight. We sleep alone. We endeavour to appear so & relieved.

I certainly feel what we feel, I answer my content with smile.

It's no wonder that I'm gazing inquiringly into my eyes we're.

I lift up the curtain.

I shift from the west to the east

in long, silvered columns, the dreams are knotted with figments of imagination.

A WAKENING IN THE DEAD

I drag my new body painted on a wooden board found in a ship
by a fellow immigrant,

I drag on the pavements to everywhere.

I have paid for my gestures reflecting in the street mirrors,

I manage my sight behind every knoll

I climb and reclaim myself from the flood that has swallowed half
of the sea,

I am carried into a garden of a chain of rocks hangs in the space.
Each rock is carved in the desert wild flowers to scare onlook-
ers, such as cactuses, we survive the whirlwinds in the blood
for many years without rain. We secure each forage floating or
sinking when we maintain the garden features, such as fossil
insects, leaves, seeds, and tree stumps. Every visitor seems in high
glee, laughter, or conversation. We pay the high price of jests and
gaiety.

I suppose you love your effervesce in five months after spending
your capricious souls or heart.

I obviate the clouds for water to shower your friends in visor, I
add your wrath on each rock

I mark with seven days elapsing before

I model a morning and walk away with your head under a wreath
of garden nasturtium bloom.

I am absorbed. Someone approaches me unnoticed with contents

I have wanted for your jetty hair,

I keep out of your way all day as

I have been accustomed to for you to form no supposition.

GABRIELA RUSSINOV

You've remarried your young woman with a big eye you're painting with palate knives. Nobody dares to look at her from your front because we're gutless. We fear to freeze with no reason in the light, where you keep the bedroom studio-gallery very soft with movement of blues so that your visitor, Picasso the watchman, won't take you around, won't stumble over indefinite textures on the canvasses for gyrfalcon on her left shoulder, the gypsophila at her back in chiaroscuro remains my distance. I see this, her caravan she's brought from Bulgarian town into this country. We're already in the presence of your mind, no doubters here, because this isn't a pain, you recognise a sky, lightening with candles you've prepared with your Gothic mind. We look at where human rights are painted in black gold. Your earliest works are small dramatized self-portraits of a distinctly Venetian character with strong detailed execution, & these are part of all your rejected works which are found ready buyers among noblemen, I carry your shadows in Hungary, Slovakia & the Czech Republic. Because she won't be bought and sold again as a bride or for a cheap labour, her year on a canvas won't ruin the street like the ruins of Pompeii. We fear to see the Gulag in Magadan that you've hidden in a corner of this canvas with no final decision, enough for Gabriela. Currently, what's only visible on this canvas is to reappear as a river swallowing dozens of villages & the historic town of Russinov. Let these visitors remain alive as survivors of moral duty & stand for more hours exploring our promise to seal the deal of art's future.

FEEDER OF PEDIGREES

There is a plumber, laying pipes in my body, it scalds
for a little pleasure we have bought its masque
a strumpet it seems
through coats of steel of a statue

I grow to infinite purchase for other obligations I hate you
begin its reflection in the court I beg for the reversion
many hungry guests have fed upon that
and that coats the worth of my dejection

ORDINANCE

I am consorting with a mere vermin, who is a blind and graffiti artist,
in the shaded areas of the last bleached lime-white steppes by the sun,
I keep your site and no more that sacrilege for the saddler, who is return-
ing home. St Bernard takes the lead. This dog ensures that all
are in view of that long distance between the hands, that distance remains
among the recent attempts by a local authority to plunder
and destroy its different spirit in the length of an ant's shadow and always
is twice the size of a town I chase in the whirlwind.

I remember every face and those
big dark eyes, their owners wait some time before to get their apartment
ready for every evening.
I do the hardest blow to education.

A QUESTION OF CONFORMATION

i have framed the shadow of spreading trees
daybreak in a daydream and the rapid devaluation
near what it seems dusty in silent indignation
moon at noon in the parlour
in front of the now empty house all human lives are interrelated
the general stream of life emerges from the darkness
ennobled by hereditary trait among the compartments of the train
i follow the sun setting behind a sentence
i stretch your legs in a question over the next swampy meadow
a cow from a nearby heard comes to complete its size

ANTITHESIS METAMORPHOSIS

The tomato seller shouts in the neighbourhood
for buyers, she has grown by this approach to
show herself a restless sense, you are at all
nervous to complain if she can leave this
engagement in the midst of your possessions.
You are freely talking to yourself as brazen.
Clinging still to all your thinking, she opens
the door and escapes into your privacy.
You smell the odour body that follows
your order with no difference as to better
or worse, the stroke that will be modified.
Thus, at the bottom of your unlikeliness,
perhaps emigration, you rummage and
purchase and pick up the change again.
She is gone. You hear her voice above all,
singularly feeding by your anger, everything
is made in her immeasurably new sacrifice.
That familiar face, that distant face, you hope
to seize and uncover one day with your own
eyes for a further acquaintance of the rarities.

SELDOM CALLER

I imagine I am echo on old accumulations
of your integrating influences that are loosening,
that are possibly, from time to time, diffused,
or less distinct in the short pauses by the heat
at the expense of the public benefit and no access
for my sons, who are not non-conformists, I mark
a broken clap from somewhere, the hardest blow
to intellectual change, this is made to encounter
its own ordinances against any episcopal controls
and relations when I may have pictured this echo
in a striking contrast to its position revealed by
a slate perching at a window and you are standing
in the road to take a moment at the opposite ends
of the stone boat, nothing happens to old loyalties.
However, worse than this morning, everything hangs
up, constituting a most solemn imprecation. Is this
a dreadful oath that I compose in your spirit
will be repeated to answer my inquiries
that nobody has mistaken about
my presence? I am hinted about this
after another respectful silence I carve.

CONFRONTATIONS

In the vault, I transship the slaves I have painted in barbarized colours for your promissory notes, I sign with, I shift my weight from the order with smaller resources and less opportunity and that has a baneful influence on voluntarism for those in the final phase of complete life. I belong to the brief excursion into this part, that is necessary as attitude to religious convictions, I bear on freedom that divides us, I wait for your teachers who are holding on to determine the curriculum for its similar in character and content prescribed. We practice with a support of a body from unusual views. That is why I own your experiences of your own schooldays. I doubt whether our teachers are as free in this respect as they are unimpaired to be the principles and procedures of academic freedom. This weather seems to you central and typical, you lift up the statue finished in your terms from the ground to the pedestal through mistaking passages of light.

THE EXPELLED

Forget the rain that dissolves your body
& the milk that burns your tongue every morning.
These distractions in mathematics are
my only consolation for a breakfast, sitting
on a porch, where the rain hits me in my layout.
How the straight line is ripped up in the sky
is a small sum, that bird flies away
& the text of my face becomes clear on the wet wall.
I fill my remains with caulks. I think of hunger when its iciness isn't
blue longer but paler, I relapse it into incoherence, fumbling with my
incomprehensible suffering, I think few minutes of being transfixed by
something I don't remember but it's something unforgettably awful,
I think more about the man, a licentious,
dissolute person, who's just walked out of me
to the street, working as a drunkard and profligate,
raking from Buffalo to Bogalusa, establishing Goodyear,
covering the body in the wet air with smallpox-infected blanket,
I'm quite crushed without him for the stateliness for my manner,
yeah, no compulsion to the course in which I sip this coffee
when it's his pleasure to outstrip every competitor.
I know what's been done to neglect books in their older order,
I'm driving by. It's seeming I'm converting gallons to litres, I'm quietly
done, the quite buzzard is digging through the fat for a wholesome
ruddiness, I lend his hammer for a little while in my wire spectacles.

THE HOUSE ABOVE THE LINE MARKED W

The backyard is silent. The light flickers in the narrow corridor and goes out. I can only hear my mother's voice. But the door between the two worlds, a memorable evening and a protracted existence, is locked. I hurry up to the kitchen, wearing her grandmother's cloth, the skin I have obtained through birth, I ask for my smelling bottle. She stands in the front of a canvas on a wooden easel. She wears her hair in bun. I smell the yarrow flowers in the wet air she paints. Inside a mirror in a house she has spent almost two hours working on, I do not at all resemble my father, and I am glad of it. I am quite a discourse on impudence in answering questions behind the curtain. She adds a vision, viewless to my eyes, a water vapour begins to gird around my thought. She encloses my future in the hands in the darkness and I embrace the invisible being. I perceive streaks of gray light edging the window curtains, she points to a room in that house on the border without boundaries with a pointer.

INSUPPORTABLE HAUGHTINESS IN COUNTENANCE

Nothing would content the crows ahead of me in the winter storms, save that I should appoint a day for myself to be rebuilt like a snow elephant. I set a date ahead, prepared a room. I opened the front door of the abandoned chateau in the late morning, and borrowed a skin with some shades from a fairer in Spain. I wished to see whether my appearance would accord with the description: the noble torso, the sloping head, the long and graceful neck, big eyes in a dark husk, and black ringlets. This gargoyle.

Face it! This likeness of a truly imperial dignity was true. However, I remained fixed like a statue in its niche. I already seemed to have obtained a proof, all this time been sitting motionlessly on a tall stool, a Sotheby's selection after the new price was fixed in the air

and to remain everything spoilt from the heart's content. I sat in its shades, aerating the soil below the snow field, I sat near the berth, where the crows were still hanging, in a position of almost preternatural erectness.

BETTER ACCOMMODATIONS FOR THE BIRTH OF THE MESH

Let me call your composition a mesh within
its shadow for a right morning above our parlour.
This is still unknown in this Valley View, where
everything above the kite is seen. I count
a shadow of viewers, I count the hands entreating
themselves with a countenance as expressive
model as I am able to allude to
your presence, I cannot help feeling
for a porter who carries this stuff,
who is still returning home after fall,
he has only a day to span himself
with the rainbow, I borrow his breath,
a deep gulf beneath your left eye.
The one who makes that dig for this tuber
will not be seen. Because some structures
are rough but provide you a home,
that way the archaeologist seeks to
understand through the material traces,
chaired by your father. These parallel
visions of yourself above my height,
that look the same from far away,
and close by, are stitched along late
Thursday morning. These fellows take
their cameras out onto the streets,
under the achiever and serial liar,
we change house numbers and manage
new approach for emergencies. I do
not wait to be ordered by dint of alternate
judgment, to be felt as comparatively insipid.
I have seen in this art to face a far different
pretension without grimace around the core
of the sun shining so vivaciously by calculations.

REFUSAL TO A PROMOTION WITH SUBSTANTIAL INJUNCTIONS

Summer is gone. The fever
of keeping enough land for
yourself lives on. I build
a new tribe to live in reserves
on condition that I am paid
a labour tax. This sunlight
is splatting on your face
among the rotting roots,
it is enough on the roads.
It is only a long crack in the glass
from the Southern man
that refuses to strengthen itself.

The approach from your back
is more insupportable load,
I underfoot the size almost
a bitter unrelenting offer.
You are knitting me a sweater,
I walk slowly to the window
and look out. It is not yet
time to drive back to the ford.

NEW SHORES NEAR PREFERENCES

Sea page. Water washes shadows,
chained to the floor of the boat.

Around those pale blue eyes,
Mediterranean Sea.

First night at Runi Point.
I stand about here and there
in groups, in their plates and glasses.

A fine straight edge disintegrates
into the tidal creek through the potholes
and the rest are silent.
Soldiers drag one thing straight.
They blow bubbles down your chin,
standing at some distance from you
her abandoned figure when the mind
is inseparable from the foam.
Elsewhere we disappear
and look once more firm and stern.
Fighting, foaming rapids, like a rainbow,
or trout, we swim from the ocean to fresh
water, where we will urgently need civic life
and ensure passages that are to rely on
for persuasion and suggestion. This measure
is harmless. I crib, cabin, and confine my holding
views by a particular faith, purging from the seas.

INDIVIDUAL

Above the cathedral among the sandcastles my friends and I travel from liquid to gas with a faithful body that does not betray who we are from the beginning. Though we have divorced and feel compel to remarry. This world is transparent when I measure its financial support from the ends of the world. I do not remember anything in this bubble where I find my body. I have forgotten even that body. That is why a flight attendant informs the co-pilot to glue

or tape tissue paper our memories into little sculptures in the rainclouds for further distances. The change is sudden.

Once you're gone in another. I press my uniform against the eyes stitched around me,

I'm waiting to see the rest of you
as noble gases between
the heaven and the earth.

CONVEYANCE

Your employees build a strange horizon for me to wonder.
Beyond this, I hear the wind howling out, coming on across
every subject, question, impressive motion, or laughter, I
am struck at the table with a heavy blow from your right.
The smiles are true as steel, I adopt them, I measure.
All this time I have been on my first visit, I roll myself
up in a corner behind the counterpane, my whole body
trembling with answers and truths that are leading us
to how your father and their employer was killed, I am
beginning to consider my desolation, I am beginning to
consider my sudden regimentation, I make no room when
I hide my tears in the fence around us, I hide my tears
in your praying palms, and in a sort of another paraphrase,
you reconcile your anger to my conscience, I take my tea
and walk back to my seat, waiting for a shadow to protest.

OPULENT OFF-WHITE

*Traffic jam. I look away from my body to see a softest thing beneath these
rumble strips.*

Suddenly, I look back through a porous clay of a skin I
have borrowed with your interest to slow down. Saying goodbye to the
things far away from here, I file my feelings and wait for the next line to
blister off.

out of the question scaly patches of a skin now

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIST

Giving one shot to the point for a reason very different from soft wax in your stamp on the ground, I apply your eyes with both my hands at once to hold up the room a minute when you may suppose I am not able to walk as fast as you drive the sandstorm and pursue your short breath to overcome everything I guess with your brain. I begin to go backward and forward not to conceal from myself what I have done at short intervals, I mention your name. You are hot and cold, and black and white, all at once when you are a young libertine in everything I have experienced, I wait for your next questions which are surprised and inconsiderate for elders who are still learning to rewrite their names.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



JACOB KOBINA AYIAH MENSAH, who is an algebraist and artist, works in mixed media. He is the author of more than 200 books of poetry, songs, prose, plays, art and hybrid, including his recent hybrid works, *The Sun of a Torus*, *Conductor 5*, *Genus for L Loci* and *Handlebody*. He lives in the southern part of Ghana, in Spain, and the Turtle Mountains, North Dakota.

A POETICS OF TRANSITION

A CONVERSATION WITH JACOB KOBINA AYIAH MENSAH

Greetings comrade! Thank you for talking to us about your process today! Can you introduce yourself, in a way that you would choose?

I see myself as an algebraist and artist. But first let me tell you my name. I name myself Jacob Kobina Ayiah Mensah. Jacob Kobina is my forename and Ayiah Mensah is my surname. Sometimes, I write my name as Jacob (Jack) Kobina (Knight) Ayiah Mensah. In the Turtle Mountains, I am Sitting Mountain. Elsewhere I am Noorshiraabi. The other day I wrote my name as (T || | = L || 7 | | H - 7 || | E E | L - | H). Names are some things. They evoke a certain feelings. Good or bad. That is why some people bargain with me to use part of my names that make them feel comfortable. I love all my names. Because they make me cold, silent, but open and universal, stubborn, controversial, sophisticated, and independent, blue and grass that grows anywhere on the earth. I am vegetarian and I love coffee and I am working on the universal dirty ground.

Why are you a “poet”/ “writer”/ “artist”?

I do not know why I practise a poet/ writer/ artist. However, I have done all sort of art right from the beginning of my life. I do painting, drawing, sculpting, pottery, designing, printmaking, architecture making, literary writing, music composition, film, photography, hybrid, and others that have no names to describe them. I think when I do any art I show the world something, that something from everything I hear, see, touch, smell, or taste and that comes with a story and I must show this to the world. It is like healing myself. The more I create the more I smoothen my wounds. Creating is a balm of Jericho. It is like going beyond my limit when I have recognizing my limit. It is like crossing all the stupid borders that have reduced man to nothingness. Being artist/poet/writer is a powerful tool. It aids one to see the beauty of different peoples, places, cultures, languages, names, religions, foods, clothes, ages and times.

When did you decide to use the language you use for yourself (and/or: do you feel comfortable calling yourself a poet/writer/artist, what other titles or affiliations do you prefer/feel are more accurate)?

I know from the beginning of my life that I am an artist and I cannot use any other language for that. I have lived in my whole life as an artist. It gives me a sense of measure. I do not use titles or affiliations for myself. They limit one's thinking and understanding. They make you stay inside the box. I am outsider

and that is the reason I love something very board, very wild and wide. Art and artist fit that dimension. After all everything we do is art and every subject is art. That is why mathematics is also an art and abstract algebra is a living art and I am an algebraist. Groups, rings, fields, vector spaces, as examples of algebraic structures, are all art forms.

What's a "poet" (or "writer" or "artist") anyway? What do you see as your cultural and social role (in the literary / artistic / creative community and beyond)?

A poet is an artist who uses words, signs, symbols, or sounds to create and express a language that is partly a thought and partly an emotion to cause a sudden change in attitudes. Art studies man in his critical moments and art always springs from a clash between the tragic and the ridiculous. That is all what my art is about. Maupassant's *Boule de Suif* is a beautiful example of a real art. When I read this short fiction I felt I had read a poetry. It changed me how I was seeing prostitutes. Over the years in my journalism, I have met prostitutes to see who they are. They are raw and simply telling the truth about themselves. Giacometti said, "Whores are the most honest girls. They present the bill right away. The others hang on and never let go." However, we cannot forget that when he added in elsewhere that, "When one lives with problems of importance, the prostitute is ideal. You pay, and whether or not you fail is of no importance. She does not care." This attitude is poetry and art.

Talk about the process or instinct to move these poems (or your work in general) as independent entities into a body of work. How and why did this happen? Have you had this intention for a while? What encouraged and/or confounded this (or a book, in general) coming together? Was it a struggle?

The bodies of the work came by themselves. It was not a struggle at all. I compose five to twenty poems every day. Sometimes I compose a whole collection a day when I am wandering elsewhere and especially, in the strange lands. Even when I am working on individual poems, unknowingly, these poems are stitching themselves to one another. Putting themselves into a collection of book. To make them stand on their own but still are loosely related to each other, I compose the poems with other things at the same time, including, writing, painting, or sculpting, and doing all sort of things I cannot name to get the depth of the composition I want to show. I love languages and always walking from one to another. An artist must work and the more you work, the more you become the art. It becomes a book. It just comes. It is the art I am. I love books and I have spent a lot of fortune on books because I want to see new books.

Did you envision this collection as a collection or understand your process as writing or making specifically around a theme while the poems themselves were being written / the work was being made? How or how not?

Every poem I write forms a collection; and every collection I make form a theme, including this collection. The theme is human condition, including absence of home, the passage of time, solitude, silence, secrecy, individual memory

of pains and suffering, close observation of everyday places and things that makes one feels sick, and absence. The poems explore this theme through the self and nature which are full of dark and mysterious depths where immense power dwells. This theme is to magnify voices that have been traditionally undermined by histories, geographies, institutions, policies, laws, religions and habits of daily life. One thing is certain, that as in my painting, sculpture, or photography, I frequently explore the fascination with the perception of the space around us and how this is formed by drawing on nature. Thus, my subjects and themes keep on changing.

What formal structures or other constrictive practices (if any) do you use in the creation of your work? Have certain teachers or instructive environments, or readings/writings/work of other creative people informed the way you work/write?

I have written most of my poetry in the formal structures (syllabic, stress and foot-verse), informal structures (including street speech, native/ folk/ rural/ village/ countryside/ speech), and between these two structures. Iambic form has become very natural to me. In this collection, I employed a variety of metres and forms, from the iambic pentameter that shows itself in a predilection that does not show itself well, anapest and dactyl (that follows the local speech) to the poems that follow in-between the formal structure and informal structure to the unusually supple vers libre of prose poetry. The relations between experimental methods and mainstream processes, as some poems in this collection have emerged from, must reflect its subject and themes. I have become interested in the rhythms of Fanti, Ewe, Japanese and Slovak and another. These rhythms influence what I write, and in effect in the collection. Let me give an example from my collection, *Ntompamu/ Outcast*, written in Fanti and Twi. The poem is "*Frɛ/ Calling*". This poem is influenced by Slovak and Fanti rhythms, forms and cultures.

Frɛ (Original Fanti)

M'asowa kor ye nesutsen,
 m'asowa kor ye hankra,
 m'asowa kor ye mpuna,
 m'asowa kor ye epuei,
 m'asowa kor ye pireguan,
 na emu mpensa ye pɔkowa,
 me sika ano pem sider du.
 Meyɛ po,
 po no apram,
 pue me do awora
 na mopue abo,
 m'asowa kor ahwerdze.
 Eɓɛn adze nye "tserɛ "
 aber a merofow Ahanamanta?
 Ndze mba nkorkor a edzin nnye do na ɛye bosoom,
 m'asaase ano pem ha.
 Meyɛ po na meroho po asorɔkye,

osiandɛ mobɔ m'anomu adar
 dum kanea no
 na edur dzi me tsinhwi eduwa,
 merodwe woha
 na ndwom mu ndwonku dwir,
 tumpɔn tuntunntum nye otum etutu hon tsir egu do
 ahoɔfew tu.
 Iyi ntsi motwe san.
 Tsintsimbir, twako, ɔwaa, ntwoma, twuwii
 a me dze hom dzi akɔnaaba,
 meserɛ hom dɛ hom nyina nsi enyidaha,
 mbrɛ ndzemba tse nye dɛ
 aaka mo nko
 naaso mow Moses nye nkɔmhyɛfo no, hon dzin dze:
 Abam, Daadzeasa, Antobam, Bediako, Akwantemfi, Bɛyɛɛɛn,
 Afram, Ehyia, Konto, Botwe, Araba, ber a
 me pɛ nser ridzi mpɔpɔwɔw nsɛntɔw mu,
 wo nanase gu m'asomu
 na me siw me do,
 sisei, dɛ mesiesie mo ho
 na mesina ewimbir mframa.
 Iyi ara so ntsi na me sibeɛ bɛyɛ dɛ po de tsepret .
 Siantsir ne dɛ, otwar dɛ meyi me ho ano kyere me ho,
 meyɛ po,
 meyɛ huhuw ber a mehum me tsinhwi wo kyɛri hon,
 tu me do nkyɛnse no
 na meyɛ dan
 a orikiyi nyinsuwa,
 po no kyikiyiikiyi.
 Nyew! M'enyi do esiw me,
 anhwɛa mu hwɛndɔr ma meso rɔhwii.
 Anohoba yi ara na m'egyina tsentsen enyiberdo adzesaa nye
 adzekyee yi.
 Nokwar, na wose me de,
 Innyaɛ nndzii mfe kor
 na dza hom reyɛ yi so?
 Tum forɔ bi fi me mu na me tsenabea bɛ yɛ dɛ nwoma,
 merosɔɔr
 fi ewufo mu na mennom kan
 na medzi owu na menntum nnsoma
 meyɛ po a ɔda koko do
 na eso mframa a ano yɛ dzen no
 rebɔ ma po a m'asomu kor no
 ayɛ begyabegya
 na me tsir fɔw,
 meyɛ otsipaa,
 po yɛ nyinsuwa,
 po yɛ m'etsitsiw

nsi me atwetwe
 ber a wɔrobo me dawur
 tu me ndwow ase kesi po mu,
 seseiara dze benya ahomka
 na medze mefi anhweman no mu,
 wɔ bɛ sakyɛr me nyimpadua a wɔ yɛ
 ndzɛmba nyina aba,
 anago yi dɔ dur.
 Meye po na dwanse yɛ rne dwetɛ ,
 meye dzɛm,
 meye po napɔo yɛ adze biara
 a yɛ abɛ, mbire, aper,
 meye akyekyemawe, aberɛku, aabew, abosomanketsew, ebubur,
 dabodabo,
 adam, adantse,
 meye mporoporoba,
 meposa meho
 medze ebufuw sian bo nka,
 abɔn tsen yɛ bɛw a mekwan,
 wodze wo nyinsuwa fɔw me nan ho
 naaso, meye po a ɔko kokwaa tsentsenntsɛn do
 meye po a m'egyina ekyirekyir
 gyina tsentsɛn,
 metse ndze bi wɔ m'asomu
 na adzekyee,
 mehun nyimpa honam,
 mehuntsi,
 kurow ketseaba bi no enyi epiw wɔ mpoano anhwɛa mu
 na medze ahwehwɛ na medze hu no sesei yi.

Calling (English Translation of “Frɛ”)

One of my ears is a river,
 one of my ears is a circle,
 one of my ears is a beam,
 one of my ears is east,
 one of my ears is a weight of gold dust
 and three thousands of my ears are a nugget of gold,
 my money totals ten shillings.
 I am the sea,
 the sea is boisterous,
 it comes upon me unawares
 and I am teething,
 one of my ears is lost.
 What is the meaning of the expression “let me come by”
 when I am climbing the harmattan wind?
 Everything that has no name is the moon
 here is the end of my land.

I am the sea and I am washing the seawaves,
 because I hook in my mouth a bill-hook,
 put out the light
 and the dye derides my hair,
 I am cooling here
 and hips in a song dismount,
 a black bottle and a bunch of coconuts are mutinous,
 beauty fades.
 For this reason I withdraw.
 Ginger, chalk, a snail, red clay, a dragnet
 I toss you about,
 I appeal to you that you must build hope,
 the condition is that,
 I am alone
 but I have Moses and the prophets, and here are their names:
 Abam, Daadzeasa, Antobam, Bediako, Akwantemfi, Beyeeden,
 Afram, Ehyia, Konto, Botwe, Araba, when
 my pencil is gleaning in sentences,
 your steps are in my ear
 and I pound myself,
 perhaps I will prepare myself
 and string the evening breeze.
 For this cause my site becomes as the sea mire.
 The reason is that, I must answer to myself,
 I am the sea,
 I am worthless when I singe my hair on a candle,
 unroof me with iron sheets
 and I am the house,
 it is weeping,
 the sea becomes unruly.
 Yes! I have fainted,
 sand of mucus of the nose rises me suddenly.
 This is the same promise I keep on standing intensely night and
 day.
 Truly you say to me,
 you are not yet a year old,
 what are these you are doing?
 New spirit ascends from me and my settlement becomes like a
 parchment,
 I am rising
 from the dead and I drink light
 and eat death and I cannot hide,
 I am the sea on a hill
 and the wind over the sea is rough
 and the sea in one of my ear
 is blowing
 and my head wets,
 I am a bald-head man

the sea is tears,
 the sea is my deafness,
 do not begin to sneer at me
 when you are adversting me,
 uproot me and plant me in the sea,
 now you will remain happier
 but my citizenship exists in the sand,
 you will transform my human body which is
 the seed of all the material things,
 this night is heavy.
 I am the sea and arine is my money,
 I am blemish,
 I am the sea and the sea is everything
 which is a palm tree, a mushroom, an apple,
 I am a locust, an eel, a kind of shell-
 fish, the chameleon, a dove, a duck,
 large and black ant, an oyster,
 I am crumbs,
 I wash myself
 I descend in the ditch angrily,
 a main street is the dew I paddle
 you wet my leg with your tears,
 however, I am the sea upon a highest hill,
 I am the sea standing at a distance,
 standing upright,
 I hear a voice in my ear
 and daybreak,
 I smell the body of people,
 I sneeze,
 the most little town is populous in the sea sand
 and with a metal mirror I watch it now.

These structures are rough but look the same from far away and close by. They are ubiquitous or fractal in nature. They provide scientific and artistic spaces which define more and more where we live and where we are going as a culture. I like peoples, places, languages, cultures, literatures, arts and histories. It is because of this liking, I do not want to have teachers or instructive environments and limit my art. I am creating something that is open and accessible for everybody of poetry. From the beginning I collected books and read. I studied every literature I could find, including:

English authors (Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Swift, Pope, Spenser, Donne, Arnold, Johnson, Herrick, Crashaw, Herbert, Vaughan, Marvell, Bacon, Addison, Steel, Sheridan, Coleridge, Goldsmith, Boswell, Richardson, Fielding, Blake, Byron, Shelly, Carlyle, Thackeray, Dickson, George Eliot, Hopkins, Hardy, Keats, Yeats, etc.), 20 th Century English and Irish authors (Conrad, Joyce, Lawrence, Woolf, Foster, Shaw, Beckett, Pinter, Yeats, T.S. Eliot, Dylan Thomas, Auden, Wilde, Somerset Maugham, Aldous Huxley, Orwell, Dylan Thomas,

etc.), Medieval works (Beowulf, the Troubadours, etc.), world authors (Homer, the Bible, Dante, Rabelais, Cervantes, etc.), American authors (Poe, Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman, Dickinson, Twain, James, Frost, Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Faulkner, O'Neill, Pound, Plath, Williams, Susan Sontag, Marianne Moore etc.), Russian authors (Gogol, Tolstoy, Chekhov, Dostoevsky, Pushkin, Solzhenitsyn, etc), etc, Spanish, German, and French writers (Márquez, Gabriel Mistral, Paz, Miguel Angel Asturias, Lorca, Pablo Neruda, Voltaire, Diderot, Balzac, Proust, Baudelaire, Goethe, Schiller, Lessing, Brecht, Camus, etc) African authors (Doris Lessing, Bessie Head, Mongo Beti, Dennis Brutus, Syl Cheney-Coker, Taban Lo Liyong, Can Themba, etc), and others like Façon Villon, Montesquieu, Molière, Maupassant, Flaubert, Mallarmé, Rimbaud, Verlaine, Apollinaire, Sartre, Valéry, Joris-Karl Huysmans, Kafka, Baldwin, Dylan Thomas, Kundera, Toni Morrison, Brodsky, Gunnar Ekelöf, Rumi, Mandelstam, Parra, Arkadii Dragomoshchenko, Chinese, Japanese and Korean short form poetry, and others.

I am creating toward poetic tradition and I am conscious about this. Thus, I study what other poets have done and what others are doing and why they have done that and why they are doing what they are doing now. Especially, those doing decadence, expressionism, the absurd, surreal, magic realist, strange/ bizarre and invoking dreams, day-dreams, fantasy, myth, hallucinations, abstractions, primitive, memories, insanity and comics that can explore symbolism, human nature, identity, horror, mystery and the unknown/ unknowable. I travel a lot and this makes it easy to do. Instead of just drawing upon other poets, I fuse ideas and styles into new invention of rhythms and forms. In every poem I compose I try to create something new, ideas/ emotions/ styles, yes, something new. Creating a new idea or style is very easy than drawing on another poet. Because you have to outwit him and you become the first order. I create environment for myself, as I have done in this peasant/ indigenous/ folk poem, "In a Village I Call My Home" from *Mud Season*.

I cross many borders to a place in a village I call my home.

I am slow by nature.

I feel uncomfortable when I am with people who have a strong, aggressive personality

but I feel received when I am with someone who is mild and humble.

I open up to that sort of person.

That is why I travel many distances across the railways

and borders. In Africa, half of the rivers are drying

and birds are beautiful in that abandoned garden full of wild grass and shrubs.

A drunkard is vomiting and everything suspends in the wet air. She is not used to this gift.

Life is swelling in a rotten pear and everything sombre remains stationary at where it has found itself,

I am crossing the railways of bullets on the border to meet you in a village I call my home.

I look around and see that I like more of Russian and Polish writers. I see myself most in their works.

Speaking of monikers, what does your title represent? How was it generated? Talk about the way you titled the book, and how your process of naming (individual pieces, sections, etc) influences you and/or colors your work specifically.

I like mischievous titles and this title is one of them. A title that will speak to individual body of the whole work. A title I can turn it here and there. This title here represents a condition that is not useful, however, because you understand it and know why it is what it is, you feel save in it. I think the whole pieces move with cool colours. I normally work with blues, greens, and violets.

What does this particular work represent to you as indicative of your method/creative practice? your history? of your mission/intentions/hopes/plans?

My mission is to create and share, and at the same time, building a work that speak to itself among the other services.

What does this book DO (as much as what it says or contains)?

It develops a distinctive way of representing the senses by suggesting a formula for the reading community an essential feature of a complete grant that is rateable value of any area. Life is a series of performances based on events that complicate our notion of time and space. This book mirrors everyday life that must be fulfilled by emerging from the sense of feverish energy and physical engagement.

What would be the best possible outcome for this book? What might it do in the world, and how will its presence as an object facilitate your creative role in your community and beyond? What are your hopes for this book, and for your practice?

This work plays a role as a transition for insiders (those are readers of poetry) and outsiders (those who do not read poetry.) I think this continues to build the community and prove more satisfactory for those who receive less generous treatment and in some areas where there may be a decline in the standard of provision for literature. The facilitation is the thinking and emotional engagement, its immersion, rapture, agency, and reflection. I think again that this will help me to consider the implications that making and viewing such conjunction at a time of pervasive amnesia.

What does it mean to make books in this time, and what are your thoughts around shifting into digital books/objects and digital access in general?

We are going through technological and communicational changes though in a difficult times. We have many stories to show and share when we have further restrictions on financial expenditures and on printing books. Using the digital access solves the problem if not all and becomes accessible to everybody.

Let's talk a little bit about the role of poetics and creative community in social and political activism, so present in our daily lives as we face the often sobering, sometimes dangerous realities of the Capitalocene. The publication of these volumes now falls during an ongoing global pandemic, intersecting with the largest collective uprising in US history, with Black Lives Matter, dismantling white supremacy, and abolition at the fore. How does your process, practice, or work reflect these conditions?

The work does more than you dream. See how the lines move and break barriers, so strongly emphasizing how the public conscience must be created to grasp the significance of that axiom of inter-dependence. Nobody is an island. We need each other. We need the imaginative enterprises that appeal to the brightest spirits among those are conscious of growing dissatisfaction. Beneath the words, voices are screaming, demanding voices to be heard. In a recent essay, *The Saying I Say I Tell the Teller*, I observed this:

The saying “*Black lives also matter*” is the worst part of the indictment. Is this expression well calculated to strike contrast to the position revealed by those who own the ordinances? It is good that we have prepared the way for social and intellectual change. That, this preparation is plundered and destroyed at the expense of the public benefits. The clay is clear and soft. Imagine this house, where histories are moulded. Are humans categorized? Where do the blacks fall on that ladder? First, last, or within the middle? Which humans occupied the first place? Humans are humans and they share the same blood. The Church (if not all its members) believes that God created man in his image, according to his likeness (Genesis Chapter 1, verse 26). Thus, are *blacks* before or after any race on that supposed ladder? The Church also believes that God made out of one man every nation (regardless of what races, tribes, or ethnic groups) of men to live on the earth (Acts Chapter 17, verse 26), showing that all races share the same life. Blacks, browns, reds, yellows, and whites have lived side by side and together from the beginning in the old world. The Church believes and has preached to its members that God is not partial and that every man of any nation who fears him the God and does his will that man is acceptable to him (Acts Chapter 10, verse 34. Unfortunately, the Church has failed the *blacks*, compromising largely on the effect on the opinion of superiority. The Church (because it says it represents God on the earth) is the main prime system to address the damned errors or heresies of opinions on races that destroyed a large human and spiritual resources and opportunities in the history of man. For example, by 1945, the world had witnessed the murder of six million Jews out of a population of nine million. The most brutal human behavior in our recent times. Is the Church not aware of this genocidal policy from the beginning? Has it not had a hand in it? This character has been developed and we are its disintegrating influences and we have become a system of ordinances. This is expressed in a part the informal discussion, including massive demonstrations. This discussion has found itself within the authoritarian framework under the terms of the community itself. The subject to the absolute authority is a loyal to the doctrine of the supremacy. The sole prebendaries at home in the community away from the public for the most urgent cause of intellectual and political ferment. This expression is a

device which is used to ensure that blacks are taught to note how blackish state, such autonomy, is a sentence of concern. This framework, tough many have an inspiration, is the hardest blow to nature. Thus, the word also is not appropriate to be used after lives. The saying *black lives also matter is wrong*. Because *blacks are lives* and every man is *life*.

We are wrong to be blacks? Every colour of human beings is beautiful. We must not lose much of the force and drive that are characterizing it during its initial period.

I'd be curious to hear some of your thoughts on the challenges we face in speaking and publishing across lines of race, age, ability, class, privilege, social/cultural background, gender, sexuality (and other identifiers) within the community as well as creating and maintaining safe spaces, vs. the dangers of remaining and producing in isolated "silos" and/or disciplinary and/or institutional bounds?

The society is divided into sections of nationality, colour, class, and others. Each section is categorized into colonization, racism, misogyny, transphobia, homophobia, sanism, ableism, classism, ageism, capitalism, etc. This is ongoing discrimination and oppression many of us are facing. It is injustice they impact on people's (un)wellness. I am always caught to be outsider because I make my position clear. I object anything that has to do with all these, plus belonging, ownership, obligation and patriotism. These are the traits that cause most of wars, and most of oppression. Thus, I have no lines of race, age, ability, class, and so on. I battle to break these lines in the publishing fronts.

How do these questions resonate with you as someone living in a country outside the US collaborating with a foreign arts organization? Are we even asking questions that are appropriate or adequate for a global conversation?

The barriers are huge even outside US and the West. In Africa we face nepotism and xenophobia, these are also elsewhere. One has to live above these social and political sentiments in order to break these lines of barriers by recreating one's life and experiences. Thus, I do not listen to practices that produce linear nation. I am happy that my collaboration with foreign arts in US, Australia, Japan and other places around the world has been fruitful. In December 17, 2018, MTSU Todd Art accepted my poetry and a painting and invited me for 2019 MTSU Spoken Word performances. I have a lot of doings with Adirondack Center for Writing. Still, all is not well from the frontier. As much as I am widely published, I am widely rejected. The other day I was telling myself that, I was the greatest rejected poet of being outsider and non-conformist. Maybe today I am with many credits of rejection slips. We all face the same questions everywhere go or find ourselves. We create to share and if a section of the community is not interested in what you do, you move on. A farmer farms to be a farmer, and an artist must create to be an artist. If I am rejected or not, I keep on creating. The more I am rejected, the more I create and create. Yesterday, I tried to write a whole novel with anger. That is it. Anger is a tool I use.

WHY PRINT:DOCUMENT? (AND WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR DIGITAL MEDIA?)

The Operating System has traditionally used the language "print:document" to differentiate from the book-object as part of our mission to distinguish the act of documentation-in-book-FORM from the act of publishing as a backwards-facing replication of the book's agentive *role* as it may have appeared the last several centuries of its history. Ultimately, we approach the book as TECHNOLOGY: one of a variety of documents across a range of media that humans have invented and in turn used to archive and disseminate ideas, beliefs, stories, and other evidence of production.

Ownership and use of printing presses and access to (or restriction of) information/materials, libraries, and archives has long been a site of struggle, related in many ways to revolutionary activity and the fight for civil rights and free speech all over the world. While (in many countries) the contemporary quotidian landscape has indeed drastically shifted in its access to platforms for sharing information and in the widespread ability to "publish" digitally, even with extremely limited resources, the importance of publication on physical media has not diminished. In fact, this may be the most critical time in recent history for activist groups, artists, and others to insist upon learning, establishing, and encouraging personal and community documentation practices.

With The OS's print endeavors I wanted to open up a conversation about this: the ultimately radical, transgressive act of creating PRINT / DOCUMENTATION in the digital age. It's a question of the archive, and of history: who gets to tell the story, and what evidence of our lives, our behaviors, and/or our experiences are we leaving behind? We can know little to nothing about the future into which we're leaving an unprecedentedly digital document trail--but we can be assured that publications, government agencies, museums, schools, and other institutional powers that be will continue to leave BOTH a digital and print version of their production for the official record. Will we?

As a (rogue) anthropologist and long time academic, I can easily pull up many accounts about how lives, behaviors, experiences--how THE STORY of a time or place--was pieced together using the deep study of the archive: correspondence, notebooks, and other physical documents which are no longer the norm in many lives and practices. As we move our creative behaviors towards digital note taking, and even audio and video, what can we predict about future technology that is in any way assuring that our stories will be accurately told--or told at all? How will we leave these things for the record?

For all our years of print publication, I've said that "with these documents we say: WE WERE HERE, WE EXISTED, WE HAVE A DIFFERENT STORY", but now, with the rapid expansion of greater volume with digital and DIY printed media, we add: we ARE here, and while we are, we will not be limited in what we add value to, share, make accessible, or give voice to, by restricting it to what we can afford to print in volume.

Adding a digital series is the next chapter of *our* story: a way for us to support more creative practitioners and offer folks independent options for POD or DIY-zine-style distribution, even without our financial means changing -- which means, each book will *also* have archive-ready print manifestations. It's our way of challenging what is required to evolve and grow. Ever onward, outward, beyond.

Elæ [Lynne DeSilva-Johnson]. Founder& Creative Director
THE OPERATING SYSTEM, Brooklyn NY 2019

BLOOM, MUTATION, ENTROPY, CATALYST, BRINE

In the fall of 2019, we posted the following call for digital chapbooks through our variegated Operating System networks:

How queer is climate change? What mutating futurities are possible in writings of the diaspora? How do we imagine evolving micro/macro/plant-based/insect-like scales of environmental disturbance? How salty is survival? What kind of archive is the ocean? What will become of history under water? We invite writers to submit works that speak to our ecological moment, apprehend change, reaction, and action in networked and local ways, and explore the multiple and the contingent.

This call for submissions centred around the metaphoric, the contingent, the liminal, and the fluvial. But most of all, it drew its strengths from the desire of and for the language of persistence. With so much at stake in the current motions of precarity—climate change, rising sea levels, ecological degradation, racial injustice, police brutality, and now the global COVID-19 pandemic—we wondered: how can we serve as decentred world citizens and retain the critical thrust of the archival through networks over nodal institutions and Big Poetry? What duties of care does form have to shared histories and collective memories? What nuances of language must we co-develop to imagine humane infrastructures?

The call for submissions drew many submissions that approached and reimagined the document as dispersive and fluvial. They were all radically beautiful and critically-engaging. Ultimately, we selected six manuscripts, which we felt reflected a momentary grappling for the micro-macro that forced us as coordinators to reimagine the frayed edges of our call.

The Operating System is committed to fostering open-resource and share-alike cultures for mutual aid, direct support, and radical organising. In the spirit of the wet archive, we encourage you to share, digitally store, print, and support authors via our Open Access library.

Curtis Emery and Orchid Tierney
Digital Chapbook Coordinators 2020

THE 2020 OS CHAPBOOK SERIES

DIGITAL TITLES:

Recall - Lee Gough

The Woman Factory - Ava Hofmann

Kind Haven - Jacob Kobina Ayiah Mensah

Lichen Land - J Pascutazz

Enter The Navel: For The Love Of Creative Nonfiction - Anjoli Roy

Witch Like Me - Sunnylyn Thibodeaux

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DOC U MENT

/dəkyəmənt/

First meant “instruction” or “evidence,” whether written or not.

Who is responsible for the manufacture of value?

Based on what supercilious ontology have we landed in a space where we vie against other creative people in vain pursuit of the fleeting credibilities of the scarcity economy, rather than freely collaborating and sharing openly with each other in ecstatic celebration of MAKING?

While we understand and acknowledge the economic pressures and fear-mongering that threatens to dominate and crush the creative impulse, we also believe that now more than ever we have the tools to relinquish agency via cooperative means, fueled by the fires of the Open Source Movement.

Looking out across the invisible vistas of that rhizomatic parallel country we can begin to see our community beyond constraints, in the place where intention meets resilient, proactive, collaborative organization.

Here is a document born of that belief, sown purely of imagination and will. When we document we assert. We print to make real, to reify our being there.

When we do so with mindful intention to address our process, to open our work to others, to create beauty in words in space, to respect and acknowledge the strength of the page we now hold physical, a thing in our hand... we remind ourselves that, like Dorothy: we had the power all along, my dears.

the PRINT! DOCUMENT SERIES

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in collaboration with

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bloom.

mutation.

entropy.

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