

## Abolist List

I have composed and art directed about 30 Abolists. Of the 30, numbers 1 – 11 below represent The Abolist poems that have been translated into Japanese from my book *Weight of Just Black*.

It may or may not be helpful to your students to read the work in Japanese along with the English version. A few of the poems have been slightly updated/revised since the publishing of *Weight of Just Black*. There are no significant departures from the original versions and messaging.

### Japanese and English Translation:

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**Only English:** (Not provided in this documented. Here is the balance (in title only). Anything that you might be interested in, I can forward you, but they will not have a Japanese translation)

12. Hair Like Wool
13. Freedom Not Free
14. Democracy
15. Forgive Them for They Know Not What They Do
16. There is No Democracy
17. Statue of Liberty
18. Truth of a Tyrant
19. They Not Like Us
20. Cogs In a Wheel
21. Of He
22. Casting
23. Clean From Its Purpose

## 911/24-7

for black Americans,  
9-11 is 24-7,

a labyrinth of terror  
buried beneath shallow words  
on revising white pages  
of America's iniquities  
dating back four hundred years,  
when blacks were snatched, kidnaped,  
ship jacked, hijacked to America's labor  
and concentration camps,  
to be bought and sold into  
unspeakable servitude on land  
we would come to lose ground  
to some lesser place  
and foreign cause

for black Americans,  
9-11 is 24-7,

an endless cycle  
of America's weapons of mass  
black destruction crashing  
and imploding, 24-7,  
into our towering black hopes  
and aspirations

a viciousness finding continuous  
momentum in prescribed brutality,  
administered 24-7, to infuse in us  
enough terror to keep us in a lesser  
place for their economic gains.

for black Americans,  
9-11 is 24-7,

four hundred years and more  
of democratic sleight of hands,

jiving and conniving,  
slipping and sliding  
across smoke and mirrors

Jeffersonian poker face democracy  
bluffing its hand of freedom,  
always with the ace of tyranny  
concealed up its white sleeve,  
to place race-based, roadblocks  
strategically on unpaved roads to  
nowhere to ensure that blacks get there

discriminating mercenary legislative,  
judicial homicide beheading black men  
from the souls of black homes and families,  
cutting short the lives of one  
out of twenty black men imprisoned  
ten times the rate of white men's crimes  
as a means of genteel genocide to keep us,  
from finding from among us, a deliverer to lead us,  
from this lesser place

a good old boy network of murder,  
rape and intimidation, torture,  
beatings and mutilation, social isolation,  
economic decimation to keep us  
enslaved children of slave children  
ripped from the breasts of slave mothers  
sold into tortuous misery by those first families,  
hooded in democracy

for black Americans,  
9-11 is four hundred years and more  
of America crashing and imploding,  
24-7, into our towering black  
hopes and aspirations

four hundred years and more of  
no reprieves, no justice, no parity  
no sign of mercy, no relief in sight for us

no world coalitions  
proffering UN resolutions  
for economic restitution

no international peacekeepers  
amassing at these plantation shores  
to destroy America's weapons  
of mass black destruction

no search and rescue teams  
to search and rescue us from  
the ruins of America's racial  
injustice and exploitation

no gathering dignitaries  
to raise our tattered black flag half-mast,  
found buried deep beneath  
the shallow hypocrisy on revising  
white pages of America's history

no 9-11 commission  
to investigate the disposition  
of 36 million holocaust victims  
swept quietly and anonymously  
under white stars and stripes forever

no day and time set aside  
to memorialize four hundred 9-11s,  
each with nine thousand black men,  
women and children stacked  
black side up, black high to make  
easy America's economic climb

no marked graves black with names  
to fare - thee - well to distant sounds  
of tolling bells

no heaven or hell to turn back  
or put back towering black hopes  
and aspirations snatched, kidnaped,  
ship jacked and hijacked

for black Americans,  
9-11 is 24-7

## Appalling Silence

it is not the night,  
but the absence of light

it's not the sweltering fervor of the desert  
but the rainfall that fails to fall

it's not humanity that loses its humanity  
taking, denying humanity from its fellow man,

but humanity that fails to find its humanity  
fighting back to give back to grant back  
humanity seen, taken, denied its fellow man

it's not the strident clamor  
nor the vitriolic voices of the bad people,  
but the appalling silence of those  
who claim to be the good people<sup>1</sup>

it's not the night,  
but the absence of light  
that keeps us in the dark

and in that darkness, we must remember  
not the words of our enemies but  
the silence of our friends <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> MLK

<sup>2</sup> MLK

## Been to The Mountaintop

I've been to the mountaintop  
where they had me  
when they asked me  
to ask not,  
what my country could do for me  
rather, what I could do for my country,  
whilst my country was doing me

I've been to the mountaintop,  
ain't nothing there but a straight drop

from the hilltops of new hampshire  
to the alleghenies of pennsylvania,

from the snowcapped rockies  
to the slopes of california

there are no kings, no dreams  
no promised land  
no embracing hands  
no lands of equal opportunity

no free at last  
when you're the last  
to be freed

no freedom's ring,  
no, we in we the people

my eyes can't see anything  
but dated niggers clinging  
to a nightmare posing as their dream

you see,  
you can't free nobody  
if your mind  
is not free enough to see  
that their song won't sing

it's our county tis of thee,  
that sweet land of liberty,

land where my fathers died,  
land where from every mountaintop,  
they say, let freedom ring

well, I've been to that mountaintop,  
ain't nothing there  
but a straight drop

## **Where Do I Sit.**

shadowed and casted,  
where do I sit  
where do I fit

where's the slit in the white  
that lets the black in

between which lines of black and white,  
which longing for longitude and latitude  
do I reside

around which circles that circle back  
around black and white and shades of gray  
do I fit

where do I sit  
to emit absorption,  
to absorb reflection

where amongst the white  
is the black knight of the round table  
I'm to set and sit my  
seal and shield upon

which square squares things,  
which angle tries to rectify  
wrecked and tangled angles  
of negative and positive space  
I'm to choose my face upon

where do I fit

upon what, when and  
where do I sit



## Where's The Precipice

from Jupiter, the fine lines  
are not linear distinct, defined, they're blurred  
of contrast, purpose, perspective

from Mercury,  
oil can't see its flame,

a stained teacup drained its cup of tea  
pours its empty cup of tea in me

where's the precipice,  
that edge weary toes hang beyond  
before their tandem leap

is this all we've lived up to be

Venus, Uranus warned us,  
we're vicious wolves ripping  
at flesh beyond the hunger

fat cats getting fatter storing  
fat beyond their need of fat

atrocious agents of atrocities,  
we're blood thirst Romans in revel,  
sitting below Saturn and Pluto  
in coliseums to watch Rome burn

we're the white elephants in  
a room of gloom pointing at the  
white elephant in the room

if this is living

where's the precipice,  
that edge  
weary toes hang beyond  
before their tandem leap

this is not living  
we've become something other  
than humanity,

skin slithering out of skin  
molts of men, sloths of mankind

there's a time to step away  
a time when you want  
no more time to want,  
time to let time slide from high  
above a washed-up shore  
where the ocean roars up  
to your falling

if this is all we've lived up to be  
leave me to gravity, the calm  
comforting whistling of the air  
on the ear on the way down

where's my precipice,  
that edge weary toes hang beyond  
before their tandem leap

when this is all, we've lived up to be

where's the precipice  
where's my precipice

## Dachau, USA

I lit a candle  
in St. Jacob's church  
asking how can we say  
dachau, germany  
and not say:

auschwitz, mississippi  
treblinka, alabama  
allendorf, georgia

maafa<sup>3</sup> . . . a forged in America holocaust  
of dusseldorf at every port,  
six times<sup>4</sup> the number six million  
at last count, if truth be told the toll,  
at last count

how can we not say  
dachau, USA

in the backdrop of holy scriptures,  
hymns, crazed, depraved rape  
of black women at massa's  
merciless lustful whims

a rapist raping to breed slaves  
to rape to claim birthrights  
to babies as property  
for labor and trade  
in the marketplace of slaves set  
in the backdrop of holy  
scriptures and hymns

how can we not say  
dachau, USA

when they severed black men  
from their manhood to shove it  
down their throats

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<sup>3</sup> African Holocaust from Kiswahili meaning disaster, terrible occurrence or great tragedy

<sup>4</sup> African American History, Melba J. Duncan, ch3 p.31

ripped black backs  
wide open, whipped, barred,  
hung by the neck,

set ablaze, the charred remains  
left to rot down, not be cut down  
from america's concentration camps

how can we not say  
when they yanked an incisor  
from inside its mouth  
to mark a slave a runaway should  
a slave dares one-day runaway

how can we not say when  
the reverberating cries from  
crackling fried fat back dripped  
the bound barren blistered backs  
of black slaves,<sup>5</sup> that resonate today still

how, when like Roman centurions,  
they knifed open  
the left sides of slaves  
to lay bare their caged rib  
to hook and hang slaves  
from their rib cage

how can we not say  
dachau USA

when they weighted the faces  
of slaves in suffocating iron masks,  
sequenced in spiked metal neck collars  
chained to excruciating thumbscrew to  
painfully screw to tortured the  
thumbs of slaves <sup>6</sup>

how, with the cutting off of toes,  
the cutting off of feet,  
the severing of ankles

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<sup>5</sup> <http://spartacus-educational.com/USASpunishments.htm>

<sup>6</sup> <http://atlantablackstar.com/2014/02/24/8-troubling-photos-instruments-torture-used-enslaved-africans/2/>

the cutting off of a leg  
when caught running off  
america's extermination camps

how can we not say  
dachau, USA

modernity's largest killing fields  
of Washington and his sons,  
Jefferson and his sons pretending  
no memory of what they've done,  
no memory of what they do

dachau USA,

killing fields of Jackson  
and his sons, still without end,  
pretending no memory  
when others solemnly pledged!  
let us not forget

so, I lit a candle in a church  
in dachau, germany for thirty-six  
million at last count,  
who lie dead or dying  
in america's labor camps that  
america, pretends  
it has no memory,

if truth be told the toll,  
the full extent those  
atrocities never to be told

how can we not say

auschwitz, mississippi  
treblinka, alabama  
allendorf, georgia

how can we not say, dachau, US

## **Dr. Nigger**

Dr. Nigger

can you cure me without  
touching me with nigga hands

can you save my life  
without changing my life

can you dance soft-shoe while  
humming those negro tunes  
when my white life codes blue

can you reach inside yourself  
beyond the shit we put in you,  
past painful moments we put in you,  
past despair and hopelessness  
we've put in you and find that  
old black magic in you to save  
my life without changing  
all the shit we put in you

Dr. Nigger

can you breathe in me  
air free of nigga  
from a nigger not free enough  
to breathe in free air

can you stay on the colored side  
of the color line and reach across  
without touching me with nigga hands  
to restart my blue heart  
without changing my cold heart

can you reach past the life  
we've taken from you to  
save my life and not let the  
white life pass me by

Dr. Nigger can you save my life  
without taking my life

can you cure me without touching  
me with those nigga hands

can dance soft-shoe while  
humming negro tunes  
while you save my life  
without changing my life  
when my white life codes blue

## His Shirt

his cotton shirt, he wore  
he did not pick it,  
my ancestors picked it,  
weaved it, sewn its white buttons,  
pressed its wrinkles with their despair  
for him to wear, to unbutton  
to rape our slave mothers

his cotton shirt  
he wore to roll up his sleeves,  
to lick from one end  
the sweet of his cane,  
the other end,  
to rip from our bones,  
his pound of our flesh

his cotton shirt, we picked,  
he would take off  
those sultry days  
he would sell us off,  
like his wheat,  
his flour, his eggs, his teas,  
his cows, his sheep,  
his potatoes,  
his tomatoes,  
his turnip greens,  
we'd picked

his cotton shirt  
he wore,  
he did not pick it,  
my ancestors picked it,  
weaved it,  
sewn its white buttons,  
pressed its wrinkles  
with their despair  
for him to wear



## Casting

the fathers of my father  
did not sacrifice nor die  
that I might conflate  
picking from amongst  
the scraps and pickings  
someone picked for me,  
with a sacred right  
to cast a vote by me for  
a candidate of my choosing

the fathers of my father  
did not sacrifice nor die  
that I may gain the right  
to cast my one sacred vote  
for the lesser of two evils,

the lesser of two evils  
is still evil someone else  
picked for me to pick  
from amongst their scraps and picking

yet, the black man, all men  
are indoctrinated  
with the lesser standard  
of casting their one scared vote  
for the lesser of two evils  
as if the casting itself,  
under any circumstance, is far  
more precious than the right,  
the obligation to hold, to not cast  
one's sacred vote for any  
greater or lesser amount of evil  
someone else picked for you  
to pick from amongst the scraps  
and pickings of the picker

## My Name

I have pledged allegiance  
to a fully mast[ed], half  
flaccid flag and to the republic  
which stands not, one nation,  
indivisible with liberty  
and justice for all<sup>7</sup>

I have prayed your lord's prayer,  
to your god made in your image  
to deliver me from your evils,  
but hollow be his name,  
no will for black prayers to be done<sup>8</sup>  
on his earth nor  
as it is, in his gated heaven

I, have given you my soul  
leave me my name <sup>9</sup>

after all my toils,  
frets and fears  
suffered two scores  
and seventeen years,

all my blood, sweat and tears  
poured into every valley  
you've forsaken me in

I've sung *my country*  
*tis of thee* <sup>10</sup>  
when you said sing

I have, at your twilight's last gleaming,  
hailed your broad stripes  
and bright stars waving over land  
you've proclaimed to be free and home  
of the brave not yet brave enough  
to let all men be free. <sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Adaptation of the Pledge of Allegiance by Francis Bellamy (1855-1931), written in August 1892

<sup>8</sup> Adaptation of Matthew 6:9-13, The Holy Bible

<sup>9</sup> A John Proctor quote from the 1996 movie *The Crucible*, played by the actor Daniel Day Louis.

<sup>10</sup> *My Country Tis of Thee* by Samuel Francis Smith, 1831

<sup>11</sup> Adaptation of the U.S. National Anthem

I have given you my soul  
leave me my name<sup>12</sup>

I believed your claim  
that columbus with certain  
navigational precision  
sailed west to find India  
sitting in the east and discovered  
a new country, not lost nor looking to be found,  
inhabited by men, not lost  
nor looking to be found  
inhabited by women and children  
not lost nor looking to be found  
and he renamed them a new name,  
other than their own name

I have given you my soul,  
leave me my name <sup>13</sup>

cause if freedom comes a calling  
and I have no name to be called,  
how will I be freed

I have given you my soul  
leave me my name

I believed you  
when you proclaimed,  
Jefferson, after penning his name  
to frame his name a framer,  
professed with loving tenderness  
that sally hemming's rape,

that plantation rape,  
socio-economic rape  
in the cotton fields  
at his home in monticello  
was consensual

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<sup>12</sup> A John Proctor quote from the 1996 movie The Crucible, played by the actor Daniel Day Louis.

<sup>13</sup> A John Proctor quote from the 1996 movie The Crucible, played by the actor Daniel Day Louis.

I believed your lie  
that washington never told a lie;

that it was a civil war  
fought by civil men  
to free uncivilized slaves  
that lincoln, without fraught,  
presided over so that this nation  
could claim yet a second  
new birth of freedom,

a second new claim  
to be a new nation,  
conceived in liberty and  
dedicated to the proposition  
that all men are created equal.<sup>14</sup>

to these yet unfinished and  
abandoned words and work

I have given you my soul,  
leave me my name<sup>15</sup>

cause when freedom  
comes a calling  
and I have no name to be called,  
how will I be freed

I have given you my soul  
leave me my name.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Adaptation of A. Lincoln's November 19, 1863 Gettysburg Address.

<sup>15</sup> A John Proctor quote from the 1996 movie The Crucible, played by the actor Daniel Day Louis.

<sup>16</sup> ibid

## Weight of Just Black

it's not the weight of black  
but the immensity of being made  
to be . . . just black every time  
white confronts me

it's the weight of white's derivation of black  
a derivative definition of 'just black'  
derived in part by the social conditions created  
in large part, by whites

it is the stress and strain of an inexact,  
inaccurate depictions to foster an ill-conceived,  
preconceived description of an ill-meaning distinction  
of black nature, black imagery, black sound,  
the scope of black - derivatives of black  
derived reconstituting me by white society  
to be 'just black'

it is the immensity of immediate suspicion  
the first sight of me through aqua-blue seas  
of constricting pupils narrowing their circular misgivings  
like a hang man's rope hung about my black throat

it is the weight of torque and tension  
in muscles and tendons poised white flight or fright,  
postured to iphone militarized police  
who serve and protect white in red lined, black free zones

it is the weighted density in white tone  
when switching from speaking to a white, to just a black,  
it's the lift of an entitled nose, the flaring of nostrils,  
a glaring view through a narrowed view  
through slits in mistrusting eyelids

it's the enormous weight of hate  
when they clutched their  
loosely held Gucci handbags  
the first sight of me

the locking of the car doors,  
the first sight of me  
the collecting of the brood frolicking  
in aisles of department stores,  
the first sight of me

the gravity of familiarity  
referring to me, renaming me  
what's up, my man the first  
they lay eyes on me

it is the insanity of 'N' in nigger black  
sub-human black, green light black to  
shoot blacks in the back, concealing it,  
tracing the slain outlines of black  
in crime-scene tape of plausible alibis and deniability,  
concealing fallen shadows of black  
in lines that divide, sever white society  
from just black, weighted to be just black,

a derivative of me derived reconstituting me  
to be - just black