

THERE ARE MORE
BEAUTIFUL THINGS
THAN BEYONCÉ
MORGAN PARKER



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Portrait of a Woman Fallen from Grace, 1987

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© Carrie Mae Weems.

Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York.

“The president is black / She black”

—KENDRICK LAMAR

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ALL THEY WANT IS MY MONEY MY PUSSY MY BLOOD

I am free with the following conditions.

Give it up gimme gimme.

Okay so I'm Black in America right and I walk into a bar.

I drink a lot of wine and kiss a Black man on his beard.

I do whatever I want because I could die any minute.

I don't mean YOLO I mean they are hunting me.

I know my pussy is real good because they said so.

I say to my friend I am broke as a joke.

I am Starvin' Like Marvin Gaye.

I'm so hungry I could get it on.

There's far too many of me dying.

The present is not so different.

Everybody looks like everybody I worked with.

Everybody looks like everybody I kissed.

Men champion men and animals.

Everybody thinks I'm going to die.

At the museum I tell the school group about Black art.

I tell them the word *contemporary*.

I have a nose ring I forget about.

I have a brother and he is also Black.

I am a little modern to a fault.

I say this painting is contemporary like you and me.

They ask me about slavery. They say Martin Luther King.

At school they learned that Black people happened.

The present is not so different.

I'm looking into their Black faces.

They do not understand that they exist.

I'm Black in America and I walk

into a bar and drink a lot of wine, kiss a white man on his beard.

There is no indictment.

I could die any minute of depression.

I just want to have sex most of the time.

I just want my student loans to disappear.

I just want to understand my savings account.

What is happening to my five dollar one cent.

I am free with the following conditions.

What is happening to my brother.

What if I do something wrong.

My blood is so hot and wet right now.

I know they want it.

I do everything right just in case.

I don't want to give away my money but here I am.

It's so stupid I have to say here I am.

They like to be on top.

I am being set up.

I am a tree and some fruits are good and some are bad.

The President Has Never Said the Word *Black*

To the extent that one begins
to wonder if he is broken.

It is not so difficult to open
teeth and brass taxes.

The president is all like
five on the bleep hand side.

The president be like
we lost a young boy today.

The pursuit of happiness
is guaranteed for all fellow Americans.

He is nobody special like us.
He says brothers and sisters.

What kind of bodies are movable
and feasts. What color are visions.

When he opens his mouth
a chameleon is inside, starving.

Hottentot Venus

I wish my pussy could live
in a different shape and get
some goddamn respect.

Should I thank you?

Business is booming
and I am not loved
the way I want to be.

I am an elastic
winter: sympathy
and shock, addictive
decoration. In the sunlight
my captors
drink African
hibiscus. They tell me
I look regal bearing fruit.
I am technically nothing
human.

I will never be
a woman.

Somewhere in my
memory, I was held
by a man who said
I deserved it.
Now I understand.

No one worries about me
because I am getting paid.
I am here to show you
who you are, to cradle
your large skulls
and remind you
you are perfect. Mother America,
unleash your sons.
Everything beautiful, you own.

Another Another Autumn in New York

When I drink anything
out of a martini glass
I feel untouched by
professional and sexual
rejection. I am a dreamer
with empty hands and
I like the chill.
I will not be attending the party
tonight, because I am
microwaving multiple Lean Cuisines
and watching *Wife Swap*,
which is designed to get back
at fathers, as westernized media
is often wont to do.
I don't know
when I got so punk rock
but when I catch
myself in the mirror I
feel stronger. So when
at five in the afternoon
something on my TV says
time is not on your side
I don't give any

shits at all. Instead I smoke
a joint like I'm
a teenager and eat a whole
box of cupcakes.
Stepping on leaves I get
first-night thrill.
Confuse the meanings
of castle and slum, exotic
and erotic. I bless
the dark, tuck
myself into a canyon
of steel. I breathe
dried honeysuckle
and hope. I live somewhere
imaginary.

Poem on Beyoncé's Birthday

Drinking cough syrup from a glass shaped
Like your body I wish was mine but as dark
As something in my mind telling me
I'm not woman enough for these days
Colored with reddish loathing
Which feels, to me, more significant than sun
My existence keeps going
Ripple in other people's mouths
Pools of privilege and worship
I want, I keep thinking
I am exclusively post-everything
Animals licking my chin, new leaves stretching
From a palm plant like a man's greedy arms
Today your open eyes are two fresh buds
Anything could be waiting.