

**[fill in the blank]**

and now here we go –

another black folk

gunned down:

SAY THEIR NAME HERE

lets listen

to angry voices / cracked tears

lets cry

for those inevitably

standing next to them

then lets

SAY THIER NAME HERE

don't forget to bring up

their past

say: they was

HOLDING A GUN

DOING SOMETHING ILLEGAL

THREATENING AN OFFICER

mean: they was

BLACK.

now is a good time

to box us out with

big words / lofty ideals

but

don't forget to

SAY THIER NAME HERE

copy paste

so the next time

another black folk

gunned down

because: they was

BLACK

you can

SAY THEIR NAME HERE

## **black and white and red all over**

i wake up to blood  
splattered  
across the newspaper.

my father sits on the end of my bed,  
says:  
I don't think you should  
drive at night  
anymore,  
is silent,  
thinking about how easy  
it is  
to have a life and then  
not have one—  
easy as a sudden hand movement,  
a sharp word,  
driving  
at night.

later, my friends call  
to invite me to a movie.  
over the phone, I hear the giddiness  
in their voice,  
they have never seen their blood  
in the newspaper,  
thought:  
*that could be me,*  
felt the fragility  
of their hard bones  
under  
black skin.

I hold the phone in my hand,  
look out at the sun setting over  
my window, say:

I don't think I can.

go to sleep,  
pray I don't wake up

nothing  
more than a name in the newspaper,  
my blood splattered across its pages.

### **We Get It**

the other day I changed all my emojis  
to the darkest skin tone  
so when I applaud someone  
over text  
they can see my hands reaching out  
to them

soon after, one of my friends said  
    why did you do that?  
    we get it. you're black.  
because my black hands  
against their white screen  
were too loud. and  
    we get it. you're black.  
it is a negation. a  
calm down/be quieter/we get it  
it is something to be half-seen,  
then dismissed.  
it is a reminder that  
my whole body is an affront—

I changed my emojis back.

now, when I reach out my hands over text  
they are light and disembodied  
they are not mine  
they are comfortable erasure  
of the black hands  
writing this poem.

### **white/black house/home**

*“Today I wake up every morning in a house that was built by slaves. And I watch my daughters, two beautiful, intelligent, black young women playing with their dogs on the White House lawn... So, look, so don't let anyone ever tell you that this country isn't great, that somehow we need to make it great again. Because this right now is the greatest country on earth!”*

- *Michelle Obama*

hoe to, hoe to,  
heave and back—  
black boy building  
a white house.

hoe to, hoe to,  
heave and back—  
it's called the  
white house  
to wash away  
the black blood  
smeared on every  
brick.

hoe to, hoe to,  
heave and back—  
black boy building  
a white/black house.

and when that boy goes  
home he does not  
dream of

freedom  
or even  
future

instead he prays for warmth—  
both inside and out  
and  
redemption from  
untold sins

and if time and space  
could fold over once  
let it be there and then, for that  
black boy

for what more beauty

can be conjured

than black boy  
seeing black man  
in a  
house  
meant to be white.