

WHO REAL¹?

the return of poem to be read from right to left

“*[for] when you are ready
to follow a tendency of anonymous feathers.*” —Zaina Alsous, *A Theory of Birds*

say i ‘well
particular in one no to
backed ive time first the isnt this
disaster a of out us

scratch record

here got we how wondering aint you nah

frame freeze

NDE an like feel doesnt it if and
right living aint probably you
that get dont you if and
you for aint poem this

scene the to back pan now
(*out FBI NSA CIA the kicked we’ve that now*)

12 on hand left
seat passenger the of top the gripping hand right

*here out cantered i oh
back galloping im now*

¹ Instead of an Arabic footnote, here is a list of artists who inspire, and were with me in the making of this poem (in some kind of order of appearance): Kameelah Janan Rasheed, Elmaz Abinader, Suheir Hammad, Toni Morrison, Tavonne S. Carson, Ava Duvernay, Solmaz Sharif, Monica Sok, Justin Phillip Reed, Xandria Phillips, Charleen McClure, Nabila Lovelace, Ashley M. Jones, Danez Smith, René Magritte, Jay Deshpande, José Olivarez, Jonah Mixon-Webster, The Desert Crew, Fred Moten, John Rufo, S*ean D. Henry-Smith, Andrea Abi-Karam, Belal Mobarak, Jess Rizkallah, Hayan Charara, Randa Jarrar, Zaina Alsous, Roberto Montes, James Baldwin, Mo Browne, Audre Lorde, Adrian Piper, Evie Shockley, Aireal D. Matthews, Tyehimba Jess, Harryette Mullen, Safia Elhillo, Ricardo Maldonado, Mejdulene B. Shomali, Philip Metres, and Raymond Antrobus. Shokran.

return i
‘reader dear ‘you and
return i ‘saying my of tired are

belt his unbuckles man a
security entering before
aroused is someone and
state our is this

asks poem this of draft shorter a see to professor first the
device stylistic this sustain could i long how
think you do long how ‘prof dunno i ‘w counter i
™ pneumoic hegemonic demonic heteronormative khwhite the
‘itself sustain can
rage road and clown class the all and american im now
be never could i

device no is this ‘besides

lolololol palindrome is lol
pandemic global whole a took it
yourselves institutionalize to you for
lol
bioterrorism took it
antiracism in training get to you for
lol
well are unwell the why is it
unwell are well the and
duress under

[...]

words english of number the counting of tired grew i wrote i
capture to takes it
another in one
writing of tired grown have i now but
limitations inherent your towards

compassion
yes
have i
it

up woke you
iraq in
you among dull the
metaphor a is that think still
storm / desert am i then hello ‘well
up wake woke the watch and dawn at sill your on sit i
gender had sandman the thought you haha
eye your out sleep the wipe i

evr nevr was iraq :news breaking)
spreading creamcheese your on waiting
(democracy cube ice free BPA infused charcoal

species Invasive i
Ante i
body
language own your in you

[...]

so were you
w up caught
make(r) my
model and
missed you
glory the
flight this of
creature mythical i
future the in far so gone² [already]
own my made i
country
two only w
citizenship
:questions

?real who
?free who

reading hologram my this
you to
me showed book a writing coz

² “Sun Ra’s consistent statement, musically and spoken, is that this is a primitive world. Its practices, beliefs, religions, are uneducated, unenlightened, savage, destructive, already in the past. . . .That’s why Sun Ra returned only to say he left. Into the Future. Into Space.” —Amiri Baraka

yourselves save to read cant yall
english you teach to arabic an write to had i guess

steph yo
pushin still im
brooklyn from ‘yea
/n yall did
n nvaders
?yet doors those open
i thought you know i)
humbled am i all be would
(review semiTYN that for grateful am i
iraq that is how and...
?you for going revision

window the at still you or
?pm 8 it was or 7 at clappin
applause yr needed ever one no
protection need we

:question another
it at are we while
?bulletproof window the is

hate assassin i
nonviolent a this
up stick

[...]

to moved supremacists white the all why that’s
themselves reproduce to racing carolina north

meanwhile
it has legend
born was i when
:mean name / myself named i
injustice to surrender to refuse who those
mmmmmany many many many am i and

wind was i
me make to tried they and
language
/ translate to tried
me empire to
free this catch cant they

[...]

morrie w tuesdays got they yea
charleen w thursdays got i
?we is we how see you dont
together
history of lock the picking

come
something you show to want i

?too poems makes kusama yayoi know you did
see to here are we what isnt that but
now painting is she there
dots just are those think might you
trauma every transforming is she but....

tacumeh friend my and me with walk a take let's now
published get to how know to wants and grandma his about me telling is he
conversation the before
:turn a takes
convenient is it when black only are egyptians says he
anything say dont i and
ends black his where know i because
begins mine and
try would who seminar senior our in wife now his was it
...africa of part isnt egypt ?me tell to

see never you egypt of part the from im
me fool cant you
ourselves colonize we when hate i besides
+looted they while looking wasnt yall like
hand one with history country's my whitewashed
other the with plantations the moved and
that love you why know dont you like
...much so cotton N-A-I-T-P-Y-G-E zero zero one

[...]

ALIVE AM I 858 72020
listening and
last capitalism's to
scream

say kawara on days many how and

AM I
LIVE A

[...]

treasure hidden a was i
known be to wished i and

creation created i
known be could i so

in came i ‘yea
high riding
horse trojan thoroughbred hotblooded a on
arab or black is it
whose on depending
on or in rollin we house

palestine in up wake will you soon

‘yet there we are
‘progress your at
[...]

precog that this
speak postverbal
the get you did
‘yet *EXTRATRANSMISSION*³

good what’s knows poet the
living time hard a has but
it

‘cages in children the put they why know you
fly can we know they because
wings got passport every why reason same
long too for mine hold they when like dont i why that’s
envelope an just is body the and
stamps the forgetting about dream same the having keep i why be must

[...]

fractal i

³ “The word Black, has geographic power, pulls everybody in:” —Gwendolyn Brooks, *Primer for Blacks*

dahlia i
dunyah i

abstract i
conceptual i

:story out coming my

:one no

:store supply art the in one no absolutely

‘with you help can I anything there is ‘hi :employee store art

brushes these all up feeling am i way the question that expecting was i :me

...soon closing are we that just it’s no *expression shocked* :employee store art

am i
now learning
color about
blend to
of instead
mute

bristle every but brush your clean can you
pigment of memory the has

[...]
matrix the from calling
arabophone the up pick

[...]
grace saving our
low go they when said
flow Nile the way the that’s becoz high go we

say José hear i now
one this for wild you

wild n wile i
poem this teach you when
state *Avatar* in it wrote i kids the tell

astral i
last i

me qualify can test DNA no
say to is which
me standardize modern evr never will you

ask i now

!america in surveillve will who
!america in surveillve will who
!america in surveillve will who

“ ”

“ ”

“ ”

“ ”

“ ”

“ ”

!real who
!free who
real who

!free who

r e a l who

!free who