



WE CAN SEE  
THE MARK THAT  
HAS ALREADY  
BEEN MADE  
IF WE LOOK AND  
CONTINUE TO IGNORE  
THE FALSE IMAGE  
OF BLACKNESS  
WILL REMAIN  
THE FIXED IMAGE

ZORA J MURFF



AT NO POINT IN BETWEEN



then imagine believing personhood is  
decided by law rather than birth itself  
and

an object with a family and  
a mind  
gets the vote in 1870 and  
2025 and then the fear

of retribution

No, rather: water between the bricks  
— shrinking and swelling with ordered  
time, or within it, to break order and its  
status as cement —

Your children dance on broken  
floorboards to the sounds of revenge,  
that mere breath *stay up*

To rather be the salt in the wound to  
rather crack time open and fill

what is it to think one needs to own  
people  
and  
where  
does the need go when the possibility of  
ownership is legislated away?

and if blood is thicker than water, then

Let us seep



Let us make the rubble home









WE CAN SEE  
THE MARK THAT  
HAS ALREADY  
BEEN MADE.  
IF WE LOOK AND  
CONTINUE TO IGNORE,  
THE FALSE IMAGE  
OF BLACKNESS  
WILL REMAIN  
THE FIXED IMAGE.







ZORA J MURFF

AT NO POINT IN BETWEEN

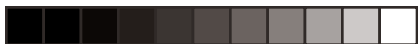




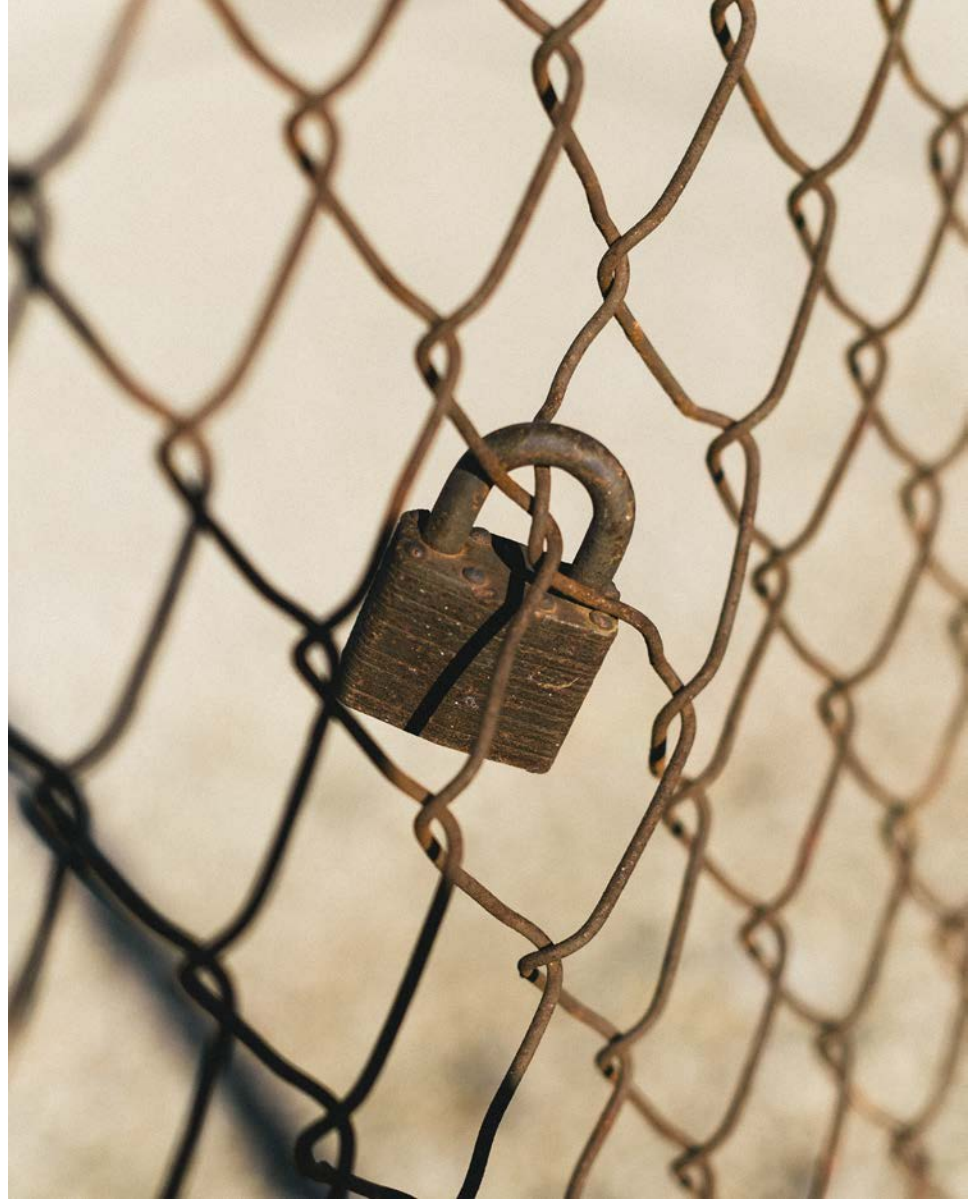
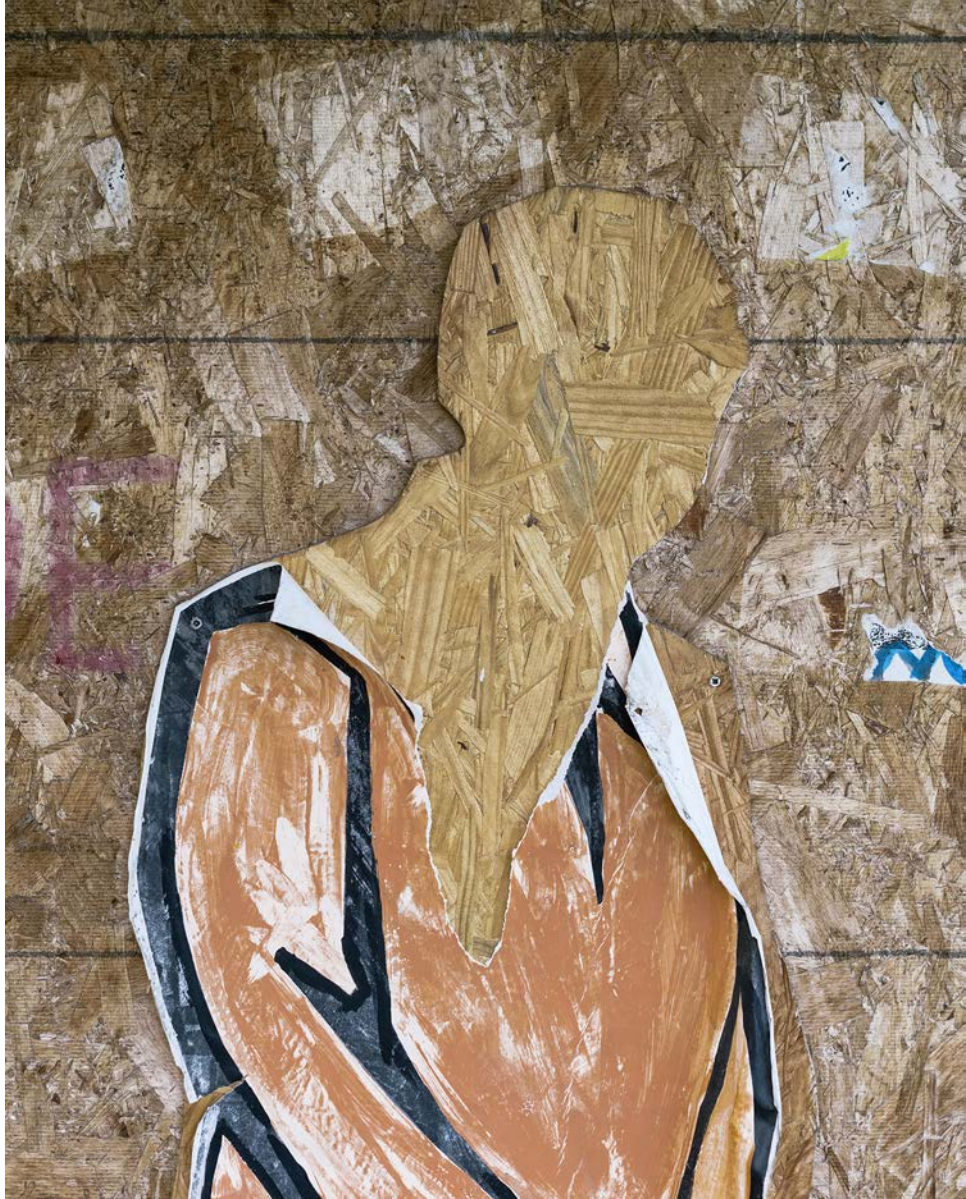










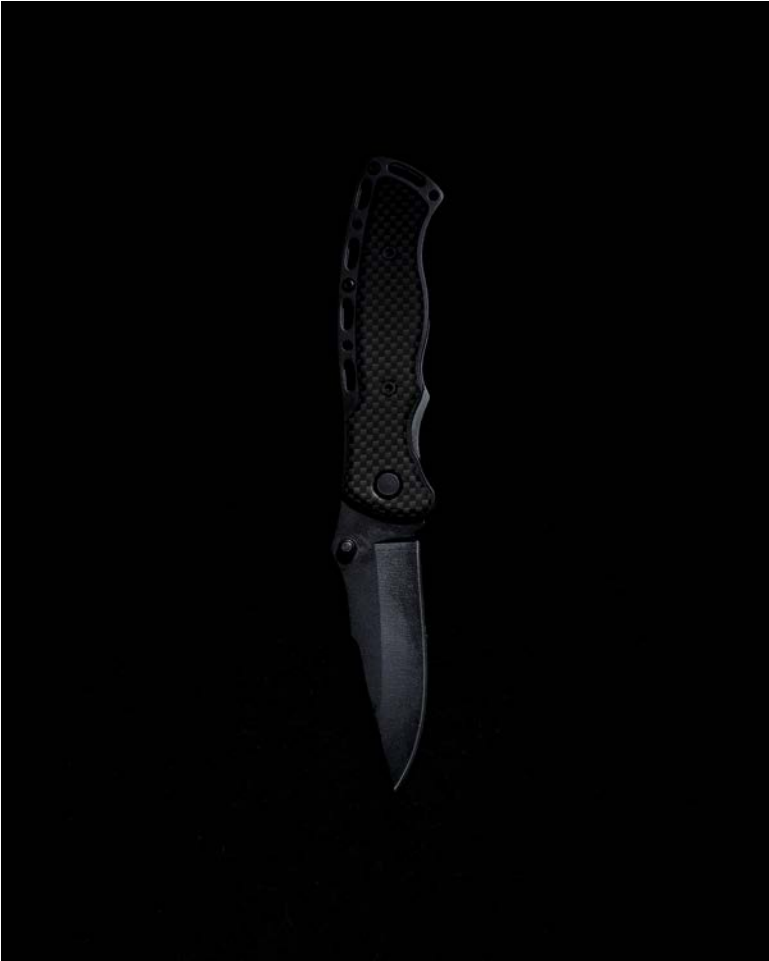






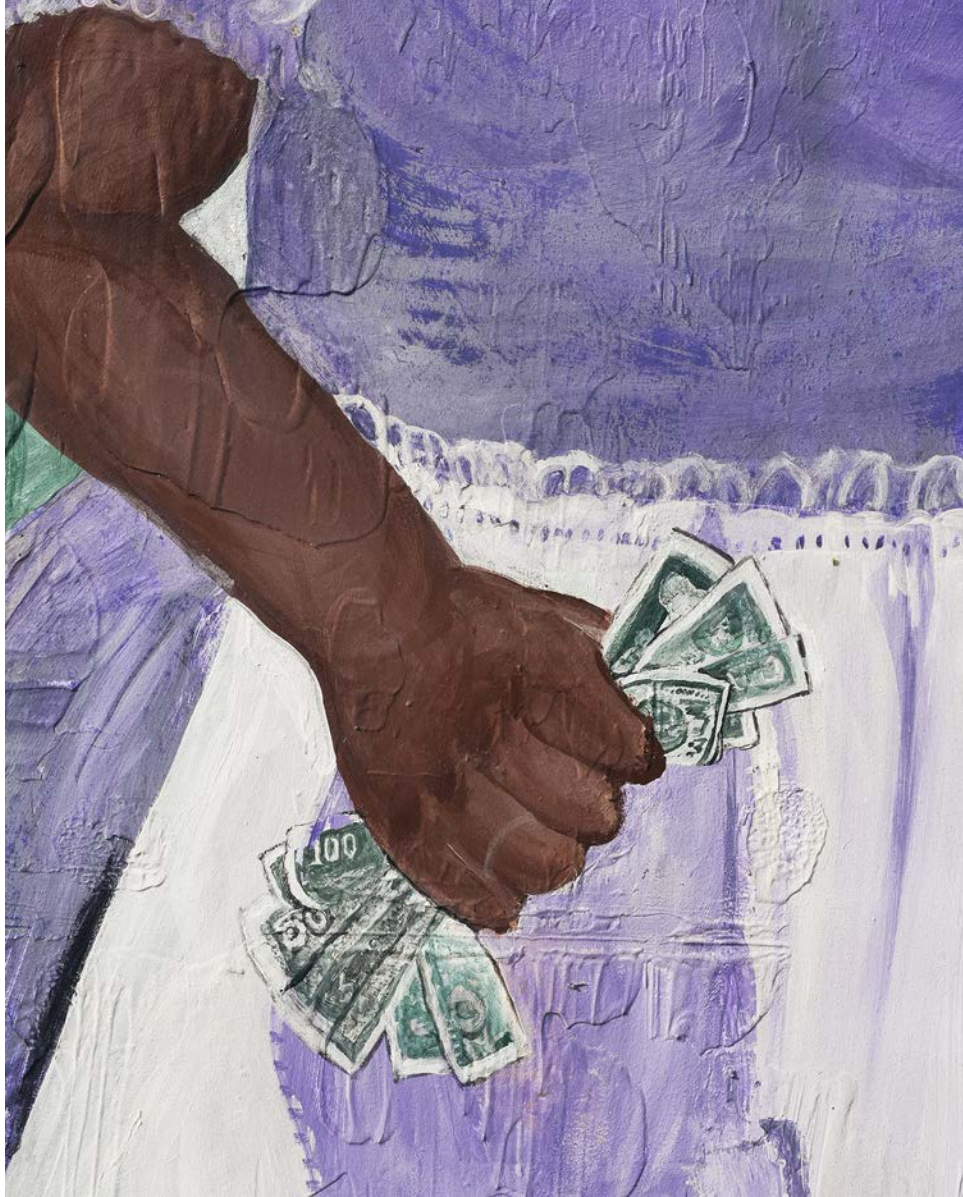
WHPO6256901/6/25/69-OMAHA,Neb.-Omaha policeman James Loder,30,an adopted son of Hedy Lemarr,Wednesday was charged with manslaughter in the death of Vivian Strong,14,(right).





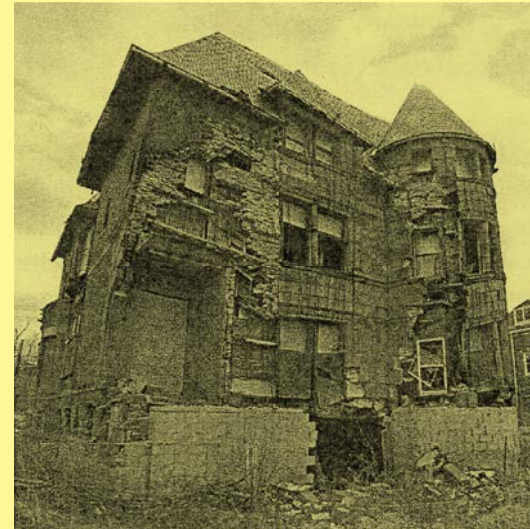








# WHAT DO I NEED TO WRECK A STRUCTURE?



CITY OF OMAHA  
Planning Department  
Housing Enforcement Section





Let us dig into the unspeakable and  
linger in the time we lost.

To clock violence at its various speeds

For one thing, it's time.

To show my face  
To be composite

Memorials of black and white and  
young living men saying "stay up"  
and  
"I love you" as goodbyes

The narrative is me or mine and not  
both  
or is it  
ours

Let my very being tear the roof off  
that motherfucker  
syncopate the status quo by  
breathing

and

A young boy *I love you please stay up*  
with a basketball under his arm and what  
light and that hand.

To show my face  
here, in the hands of those who bought  
me;  
there, in the array of arms raised to  
preserve an order

What do I need to wreck a structure?  
What is an individual in this structural  
context?

Why must I feel like that

Until the walls burst

TIME time TIME time  
No, rather: time TIME time TIME

Light through its cracks  
Offbeat and on time

Light through the leaves

Blood on them and  
Off my green shoulders  
into the cracks of the pavement and

To rather let the funk be your guiding  
light through the leaves than to be the  
tree to rather make a living of a life than  
to be still and

when there isn't a radical living or dead  
who never said I; when there may not  
be one who never spoke, even though to  
speak, to think, is to be in time and to be  
in time is to crumble: the most radical  
thing is to choose time and its distension,  
to choose the question of the self and its  
profusion, to choose the problem and  
possibility of connection

A young woman *I love you* with the  
bearing of royalty in goldenrod and  
speckled

Imagine meeting a person and calling  
it

yours

then imagine believing personhood is  
decided by law rather than birth itself  
and

an object with a family and  
a mind  
gets the vote in 1870 and  
2025 and then the fear

of retribution

No, rather: water between the bricks  
— shrinking and swelling with ordered  
time, or within it, to break order and its  
status as cement —

Your children dance on broken  
floorboards to the sounds of revenge,  
that mere breath *stay up*

To rather be the salt in the wound to  
rather crack time open and fill

what is it to think one needs to own  
people  
and  
where  
does the need go when the possibility of  
ownership is legislated away?

and if blood is thicker than water, then

Let us seep



Let us make the rubble home









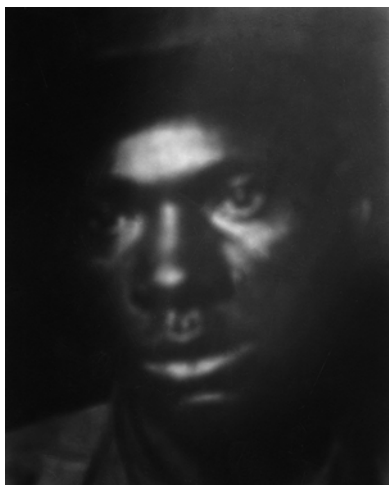






















Vivian was













### 3 Officers Are Charged In Aftermath Of Shooting

By MONICA DAVEY  
and MICHAEL SMITH

CHICAGO — Three longtime police officers were charged on Tuesday in connection with the death of Laquan McDonald, the black teenager whose fatal shooting in 2014 at the hands of a white Chicago officer ignited intense scrutiny over police conduct and transparency.

Unlike the officers accused in a series of police shooting trials that have unfolded around the country in recent weeks, those charged here did not fire their weapons. Their crimes, prosecutors said, stemmed from their actions after the shooting. The three officers, two of whom have since left the force, also accused of covering up the Jan. 12 shooting, the police officer who fired the fatal shot that night, in an effort to protect him from being investigated and charged, court documents show.

The officers were indicted on state felony counts of conspiracy, official misconduct and obstruction of justice. Among the claims were that they provided false reports about how McDonald, 17, behaved when he encountered Officer Van Dyke on a Southwest Side street one evening in October 2014; and that the officers went as far as to work together to obstruct interviewing at least three witnesses whose accounts of events would have conflicted with the official police version.

"These defendants lied about what occurred during a police-involved shooting in order to prevent independent criminal investigators from learning the truth," said Patricia Brown Holmes, a special prosecutor who announced the new charges. "The indictment makes clear that it is unacceptable to obey an unofficial code of silence."

The officers, who are scheduled for arraignments next month, were not taken into custody, and representatives for them could not be reached. Leaders of Chicago's Fraternal Order of Police, the union representing thousands of officers, declined to comment, saying they had not reviewed the indictment. Eddie Johnson, who was named police superintendent in the aftermath of the McDonald case, and has

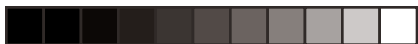


























In the beginning, there was boy. Bright and dimpled and full of light. He was born to a place around which men had drawn a red line to circumscribe dreams. Nevertheless, life there unfurled like petals through concrete.

The father of the boy knows two things: his son will be too often looked at and too little seen. There will be forms to record the boy's name, his aliases and alleged deeds. None will note the precise timbre of his laugh, how his face goes soft when he is quiet, the grace with which when he is old, if he gets to be old, he will rest a heavy-ringed hand on his knee. So those who love him would find their own way to record his beauty.

Don't write about the work, you tell me. Write around it.

In another beginning, there was another boy. He was born in bondage and died a free man. At some point in between he saw that light and chemistry not only captured an image but conjured a world. He turned himself into the most photographed man in what were not yet, and may never be, these United States. Frederick Douglass believed that a certain kind of picture could twist the story that this country had whispered itself to sleep with, so he dressed up and pressed up against hypocrisy and said, *behold*.

Even as he sat to have his picture made, he saw that it would be subject to what he called the wild scramble between contending interests and forces. *It will either lift us to the highest heavens, or sink us to the bottomless depths*, he wrote, understanding perhaps before anyone else did that this country would war over the photograph much as it battled over itself.

One-hundred-and-fiftythree years after Douglass lectured on pictures, a seventeen-year-old boy was shot to death by police on Chicago's Southwest Side. Months would would pass before most of us knew his name, which we would learn as we watched him twirl, this gesture I cannot free from my mind. We watched him twirl, and then we watched him die.

The police officer said that the boy with erratic eyes lunged with a knife in his hand, and that's why he pulled the trigger. Sixteen entrances, sixteen exists, twenty-four wounds. At the trial four years later, the boy's uncle would describe this as "death by a thousand cuts."







The system left a story written in the boy's file. In it, the mother was neglectful and her son near-broken. The boy wrote around it. He turned his body into his scripture, left language inked upon his skin. On his right hand were the words, "Good Son." On his left, the reminder, in four capital letters, that you only live once. Beside the bridge between the bullet wounds marked six and eleven, his name, *Quan*.

It was you who introduced me to the term *slow violence*. The thousand creeping cuts. The suspension, the snub, the side-eye, the hurt pressed into bones, the denied bank loan, the dream turned to rubble, the too many dead ends on the top and bottom of family trees.

I think of the bridge between violence fast and slow when I read that in the days after Laquan McDonald died, a pair of witnesses, a father and son, said that their picture of what happened that night did not accord with the story the police union told. "It took me a few days to work up the strength, the nerve to call somebody and report it," the father later said. "I couldn't sleep. It was eating away at me and my conscience. It was killing me."

Thirteen months later, when we saw Laquan not-lunge at the officer who pulled out his gun, the police union admitted that "the lunging is not visible, there is no lunging visible in the video itself." What was not visible would become its own evidence when the defense, carrying on the wild scramble, told the jury, "the clip that you saw of the shooting, it doesn't tell the whole story."

There's no such thing as a photograph without a story. So much of art can be spun from imagination's thread, but a photograph proclaims at least a tacit connection to truth. In time, the tale may be lost, but for a shuttering blink, it was there. There too is everything beyond the frame, and everything that happened before and everything that would follow. In that unseen, a photograph is made and remade.

At moments, I tell you, these photographs crush me. The golden hush settling across the street. How when she turns her face to the light, she glows. Your sampling of history and the way silence speaks between.

I want to call what I see beauty but what I think I mean is love. Because it is a kind of love when a people who know

that observation can imperil say, *I will let you look at me*, and when you stand behind the lens and say, *I see you*. A love in seeing in someone else's eyes that red lines were one of the many lies told to fix the image, and that black people have always written around them and through them and all over the top.

There's something I've been writing around, writing myself in circles, for the same reason I'm not entirely sure I should be the one writing this at all. Because there's something else reflected here that maybe I'd rather not see.

For a long while, I look at the man at the center of the photograph. Shirt starched and bright white behind the haze of smoke. The bend of his arm, fist resting on his hip, his smile that says *look at me*.

I ask myself what it takes to perpetrate a casual act of photography amid the smell of burning flesh. But I do not ask why I do not see myself among the faces in the crowd. I could come up with reasons other than the truth, which is that because they are white and I am white, I can convince myself our stories are not conjoined. I can write around it. I know that is a failure of sight.

In the beginning, you and I were born into this place. Ours is a country that would force you to see your outlines in the body of a boy shot to death on Chicago's Southwest Side, and absolve me from recognizing mine in the lyncher's smile.

That blindness means that I struggle to find language to tell this story while you speak it in registers. I won't lie to you. There's a part of me, when I look at the woman with dark skin and pink lips and arms thick like mine, that wants to ask for a forgiveness she does not owe me. Give me a chorus to repeat so I don't have to articulate my own reckoning. She looks back at me, but she remains silent.

In the end, the defense tried its best to use the mother's words against her son. She refused to speak. When I go looking, the photograph I find is of the boy smiling shy beneath a red mortarboard, a long hand not yet grown into holding a rolled diploma. I envision the family, wrung out from knowing that too many strangers watched their boy take his last breath, sifting through the snapshots to find the one that delivers his memory. Behold. This you can have of him. The rest we will keep.





*For Will, Vivian, Laquan, Walter, and North Omaha.*







AT NO POINT IN BETWEEN

© 2019 Dais Books, Zora J Murff, Terence Washington and Lisa Riordan Seville

Images by Zora J Murff

Text by Terence Washington

Afterword by Lisa Riordan Seville

Edited in collaboration with Rana Young & Shawn Bush

Design and Cover Production by Shawn Bush

Printed in Milwaukee, WI by The Fox Co.

First Hardcover Edition of 165

ISBN 978-1-7339499-1-0

ISBN 978-1-7339499-2-7

*Special thanks to Palma Strand, Professor of Law at Creighton University*



Dais Books  
daisbooks.net

IT IS NOT OUR BURDEN  
TO ATTEMPT TO  
ERASE THIS MARK,  
BUT RATHER BRING IT  
BACK UPON ITSELF.

A WAY TO  
REINTERPRET IT,  
AND MAKE IT A  
DIFFERENT MARK  
ENTIRELY.



