

AKEEMA-ZANE  
**INTERLUDE**

we arrived

with our feet  
sturdied on pavements  
built by grandmothers  
whose faces lay  
against the  
cold ground  
tonguing concrete  
with prayer  
and by grandfathers  
with batons  
against their backs  
their necks  
wet with fear  
turning screams  
to sediment  
against the spewing  
of hoses

we  
were product  
of pentax  
and Gordon Parks  
probing only  
of Freedom's Fearful Foe  
as it lived on film

we  
wished  
to sing  
a different song  
but sampled  
the chorus  
of our forerunners  
into breakbeats  
and our lyrics  
still groaned  
in twelve bars  
and crooned  
in harmonic seventh

## EMMETT TILL PROJECT

we hit  
that ground  
running  
breaching picket fences  
of suburbs  
plantations  
and burial grounds  
turned ivy leagues  
pledging allegiance  
to student loan debt  
and medical debt  
and credit card debt  
and forever  
indebted  
to the burden  
of this flag

perhaps if we  
made use  
of microscopes  
instead  
of search engines  
we'd note  
that 9/11 was just a prelude  
to Martial Law

we'd retrieve  
our reprise  
of relief  
when helicopters  
stopped hovering  
over buildings  
of ghettos  
the day those planes  
crashed into towers

we'd know  
the hurricane  
flooding of downtown  
meant soon landlords  
would hike rents  
in black meccas

## EMMETT TILL PROJECT

that black meccas  
would become ghost towns  
filled with empty condos  
that bodegas  
would turn into  
corner museum  
of imitation food  
that imitation food  
would become norm  
to the working poor  
that the working poor  
was just experiment  
for survival guides  
and survival guides  
were a nuisance  
to the those whose bias carried  
them only to the present  
but whose death  
lived on in wills

what change  
has come  
if only  
to become caricature  
to the burden  
of manifest destiny?  
what future  
have we  
if our sins  
lay bloodied  
by fantasy  
and desire  
of our own bodies?  
whose thesis  
are we  
if our bodies  
are made as sacrifice  
upon surrender?

what

have

we

surrendered?

## **EMMETT TILL PROJECT**

**AKEEMA-ZANE** is a writer, researcher and performer bred and residing in Harlem of Afro-Caribbean descent. Her recent works include "La Blanchisseus," "There's A Monopoly on Change" and "In-Room 1317."