

### Junie Désil

### How to Write About Zombies

how to write about what you carry but don't know? strange inheritance one carries in

everyday code

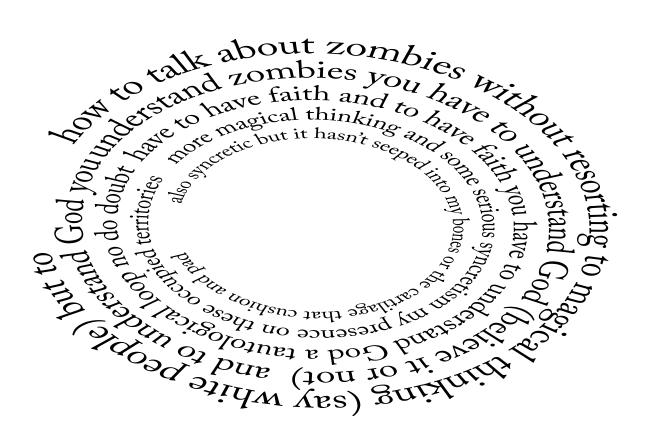
understandable if borne of Haitian soil

submerged in salt sea

bracing rivers

falls

the sea here salty not turquoise warm the soil i am complicatedly settled on



just bone on bone weary grating questions i ask mother zombies *the back-home kind* 

she won't speak except to start. and stop. words caught in her throat.

i ask father I am a man of God I don't pay attention to these things

silence.

so i ask books from the library

keep them from touching other books or caressed by the same night wind caressing my back how to write about zombies:

when you're a generation removed from the soil

and

several generations removed from

and

colonial words still your tongue

and

sever the connections between land self

how to write about these things that terrify

and

night

and

lurk

in shadows

joints of bones marrows tip

olonial words

crowd your mouth

lan Guinée

language

whitewash at best

resolve into odd shapes at

of the smooth heart muscle

#### of fingers and

tongue

forgive the back and forth i start with origins i was not there i am not there

rather

the line from here today

tethers collective trauma umbilical centuries old over oceans triangulated passages

those bones a bridge abridge

[\ə-'brij \ 1 : to shorten by omission of words without sacrifice of sense : condense]

i can't

write about zombies you'll need iron will

brace your heart

there are worse things than ghosts

there are spirits that make you cry

or laugh incessantly

(it doesn't matter)

there are worse things than hauntings worse than spirits nursing ancestral wounds

crouched in corners

she is dying slowly ancient family magic on both sides collide suck the life out of her

I'm losing weightshe saysteeth are falling outlispsasthmawheezes

breath catches weeps my heart broken spiderwebbed glass

she will die slowly but she won't really die (that's important) she will be *pronounced* dead (that's very important) the guardian of the cemetery summons

she zombie-like

livewire warmth dead giveaway give way give away

emptiness walk alongside me unseen tread heavy

weight of ancient history press follow out of breath weight struggle

heart is a muscle untrained to lift carry attend to these wounds

in the company of the undead not "ghostly matters" we deal with the ghastly

## Untitled

# [1]

sun glares at the train's window i rehearse (my bag heavy with notes) —questions to ask at the next skype session with unwilling collaborators in my quest to find answers —*they* remain mute clock stands tall at that intersection i pass daily i'm late bright white of my iphone confirms as the train full —like my heart discharges Time

## [2]

no currency little patience more of your slow measured pain cold molasses-like re-telling time with your old back home reminiscing the echo of your grief-held breath reverberates. my questions remain

so.

### [3]

to write this body mass —black life— is to commune with spirits —*they also* stay mute coconspirators to the unwilling and.

### [4]

the thing/about/conversing/with/your/undead/self: it'll never be convivial —listen twin/heart/beats/counter/points failures/ inter ruptures/look see i don't listen -also/be/silent neither/will/these/present/ancestors/five hundred/plus/years/ is/to live many lives/ many lines through many lies/ veil —truth is/to live is to/ hurt

### [5]

i've asked the wrong questions or brought the wrong gifts maybe not enough likely i can't hear those undead spirits — *those ghosts* owl-wise form a parliament wisdom submerged under the cacophonous sound of nasal whine speech halts. still — i write this black body live