

Rhapsody, or Revelation, or Cerberus to the Fireflies
after Nicole Sealey, after Alysia Nicole Harris, after Lyrae Van Clief-Stefanon

D'Angelo, "Send It On"

It's a matter of fact: repetition dulls the senses.
Matterfact: I'll prove it, approximate how many exes
uttered the same thing upon leaving—*beautiful*
mind—kissing my forehead & dispelling into past tense.
In the void of presence, I thought there was more. Hope
—I prayed; there was more: chains, trunks of my own forest fires;
ashen scents, catching, in my throats, each musky regret,
rasping reminders that this was all there was. Yes, I begged,
I panted the way Black boys gasp in being choked
& finding God at the end of light.

In the beginning, I would not call me pious;
I would call me country, a backwood muhfugga enjoying
the shadow of their own howling. In the beginning,
I spoke & the dark rebelled. I sat & the dark rebelled,
threatened to extinguish the light from the singular
Brilliance I housed in the jar of my own body. I spoke
& broke open for Brilliance—my pen pal, my own scattering
conscience in the void of presence—& barked to assume
multiplicity. Sure, my mind works as a hive, a clusterfuck
of blinking moments trying to isolate loneliness.

Funny, isn't it—how even *compartmentalize* means
separation, means division, & yet, means structuring
against dissonance, to make a wheel of one's demons
so convincing they mimic Old Testament angels?
Yes, I'd be right to think I have no place amongst them,
but at a quarter inch away from ending the epilogue
that some will tell my children of, when it is all done
& there be no more cinders left burning in my throat
to call Love by its name or beckon for Joy in this song,
if You be watching:

