

# Power By Audre Lorde

The difference between poetry and rhetoric  
is being ready to kill  
yourself  
instead of your children.

I am trapped on a desert of raw gunshot wounds  
and a dead child dragging his shattered black  
face off the edge of my sleep  
blood from his punctured cheeks and shoulders  
is the only liquid for miles  
and my stomach  
churns at the imagined taste while  
my mouth splits into dry lips  
without loyalty or reason  
thirsting for the wetness of his blood  
as it sinks into the whiteness  
of the desert where I am lost  
without imagery or magic  
trying to make power out of hatred and destruction  
trying to heal my dying son with kisses  
only the sun will bleach his bones quicker.

A policeman who shot down a ten year old in Queens stood over the boy with his cop shoes in childish blood and a voice said "Die you little motherfucker" and there are tapes to prove it. At his trial this policeman said in his own defense "I didn't notice the size nor nothing else only the color". And there are tapes to prove that, too.

Today that 37 year old white man with 13 years of police forcing was set free by eleven white men who said they were satisfied justice had been done and one Black Woman who said "They convinced me" meaning they had dragged her 4'10" black Woman's frame over the hot coals of four centuries of white male approval until she let go the first real power she ever had and lined her own womb with cement to make a graveyard for our children.

I have not been able to touch the destruction within me.

But unless I learn to use the difference between poetry and rhetoric my power too will run corrupt as poisonous mold or lie limp and useless as an unconnected wire

and one day I will take my teenaged plug  
and connect it to the nearest socket  
raping an 85 year old white woman  
who is somebody's mother  
and as I beat her senseless and set a torch to her bed  
a greek chorus will be singing in 3/4 time  
"Poor thing. She never hurt a soul. What beasts they  
are."