

TJ Bryan

## Reparation...

*ITBM (one tenacious baby mama) is the blog of darkdaughta: a 40 year old, fiery WYSIWYG, Black conscious, barbadian-born, north amerikkkan raised, capricornian, dark skinned, matriarchal, polyamorous, class conscious, fat, tall, rogue scholar happily living in exile, ancestor/universe/ goddess worshiping, deviant, queer femme, writer, cultural worker and critic, far-seer, former poet based in Toronto who is mama to one six year old girl child and a fatty boi who is about twenty two months old. This essay originally appeared on, Saturday, February 24, 2007 at <http://darkdaughta.blogspot.com/2007/02/reparation.html...>*

I heard that the movie The Queen raked in quite a few awards at the big yearly movie awards show.

*cheups.*

The romanticism of harm and domination, I'm thinking. See, I come from little England...Barbados. And as far as I can figure, that old woman doesn't need any movies in her honour, she needs to do some serious community service all over the world on behalf of crown she wears.

In any case,

My five year old wants to write a letter to Queen Elizabeth demanding money (what we call "budget") in return for all the years of suffering Black people have endured.

Yeah, I know all about the reparations movement.

But, I've got another idea.

Dear Queen E. and family,

I know you and your crazy ass family weren't the only white imperialist royal house from an imperialist euro state involved in colonization of various peoples around the world. But for quite a few years your ancestors did manage to cause quite a bit of harm, murder, torment, torture, rape, theft, poisoning, addiction, horror, despair, suicide and genocide all over the whole world.

You've inherited quite a bit of blood money. Actually when I look at you I realize that I see red not because of the degenerative eye disorder I have, but because you're literally covered in the blood of millions.

I'm writing you today to let you know that I've been in counselling trying to sort out my family baggage. My counsellor wants me to express my rage and my upset. I explain to her that I actually have no problem doing that. See? (I'm roaring right now).

My problem is that every time I start trying to trace my family's abandonment of me, I go to my mother and my father and I see them here, in my mind's eye and realize:

No, it wasn't all their fault. They were recipients of a horror.

Then I go to my grandparents and try to get angry with them for believing in power over, authoritarianism, physical punishment, yelling not speaking, the church and domination. And then I realize:

No, it wasn't all their fault. They were recipients of a horror.

Then I go to my great-grandparents. Did I tell you my great grandfather lived to the ripe old age of (at least) 105, queeny? They can't tell for sure cuz his identification was nonexistent. It seems he may actually have been born a slave...oops, the child of slaves. In any case, from what little I know, he was a terror and an abuser. So, I try to get mad at him. And then I realize:

No, it wasn't all his fault. He was the recipient of a horror.

Then I go to my...

But wait. That's where it all fades to nothing. You see, the memory of who actually lived fades from this point and becomes murky.

What I actually think happens it that the memory of ancient harm literally bred into these people, visited on their children and carried forward by my grandmother and my mother is too painful, too much trauma for them to actually want to bring into the light of day. So, I try to get mad at them for letting the memory of such recently passed ancestors fade into nothingness.

But I realize what they're doing, the hiding and the secrecy is about denial and colonization. This is our shame. This is wanting to look forward, never back. This is my family.

So, I try to figure out why anyone would purposefully move in this way. Why would they want to pass these ways of being on from generation to generation to generation?

I think about the fear of anything different and about the ways they find my openness, my truths, my nakedness, my resistance, my rage so unbearable, so reprehensible, so easy to dismiss.

Queeny, m'dear...

I gotta tell you I stay up nights searching for solace on the net like Neo in The Matrix. I keep an ear out for everyday words of rude dissent. I flip through all the books I've ever read and re-read. I reach into my own memory banks accessing all the politicized insightful thick conversations I've ever had with other diasporics, feminists and activists.

It's then that I have these moments of unclouded sight.

It's then that I realize...

Queeny...your peeps have been over tha top, hardcore not nice long before me and mine ever saw these shores.

Some of the teensy tiny emotional core issues I've got on my plate actually stem from your country's imperialist colonial agendas dating back hundreds of years.

Queeny,

I wasn't born yet when you visited Barbados (that's where I'm from) in '66, but I feel as if I see you everyday. Oh, wait! I do, on all the money in my wallet. In any case, you and I are closely tied, no?

So, I need to get to the point of my little communiqué.

You see, every week I open my wallet and willingly hand over green to a feminist counsellor who walks with me as I try to thread my way through pain and horror and alienation and domination recent and past.

Every week I go to her office and diligently (my inner child is a real good girl you see) try and unpack a suitcase of shit bequeathed to me by you and yours.

And you know what?

I'm not feeling like you're really supporting me in my little venture. You don't call. You don't write. You don't send those grandsons of yours to shovel my driveway. Charles and Camilla don't send the car around so I can get to my therapy on time. Nothing.

This will definitely not do, Queeny.

So, I've figured out a plan of action and I'd like to share it with you all personal like because although we've never met, I know that if you met me, you'd take to me in an instant fer sure. My locks are bright pink. I've got a bit of a belly left over from the two pregnancies. I squint cuz the optometrist can't get a prescription that fits what's happening with my bumpy corneas. But I also tend to look just a little bit surly and tense. If you can't remember why this might be, feel free to flip back up to the top of this note, it's all there, okay?

Anyways,

I'd like some proactive support from you, Queeny. I mean...if you can shell out money for all the trips and the clothes and those weird ass hats you like to wear and the castles and the servants and the, the, the, whatever else you're paying for,

I think a few hundred dollars every month paid out to a Black girl your ancestors helped drive insane shouldn't really be a problem.

Don't send a cheque. They can be so tricky. The money might be in your account, or it might be in an off shore account in the caribbean or more likely in a few different swiss bank accounts. I'm not trying to say anything. I know you're good for it and that you totally do *not* have a problem sharing funds with anyone who points out the way your nation tried to destroy or minionize every single being they encountered on the face of the planet. And yes, I know, you're all about apologizing. No joke, I completely believe you care.

In any case...

I prefer cash. So, a suitcase sent by armed guard once a year to my family estate will do nicely. Use the side entrance cuz I'm trying to maintain the appearance of looking like an independently wealthy cosmopolitan chick rather than everybody realizing I'm actually an economically challenged shut away who doesn't like to leave the house on account of the fact that I hate dealing with most people because most of them have this strange look, a sort of cross between the stepford wives and night of the living dead, in their eyes that I just find a *lit*-tle bit disconcerting.

Queeny, now that we're both in agreement that the worst emotional problems, depression, addiction, despair, alienation, frustration and a general state of everyday malaise which probably most of the non-white peoples on the planet can claim as theirs, I think you'll agree with me that you've got a giant bank account that says to me your peeps had something to do with it.

I know you're really feeling my pain and upset. And this is why I know you won't be too put off when I say, I'll be sending a few other....million coloured people by to see you or email you or snail mail you with requests for some tangible support for their recovery-from-colonization processes, too.

I hope you enjoy the stories and the mail. Hugs to you, too. And I'll let my kids know you said: "Hi".

darkdaughta