

Calvin Westerfield

Shades of White

White is the color of the rising sun
Whose light reveals a Brown fetus thrown in the trash.
Infanticide rooted in pride; a Black mother
Stolen from her tribe and sold, had to decide
If she would bear a foreign seed,
Forced inside her the same night she was bought,
By a pallid monster proclaiming rape as his right...

White is the report of a pig's discharged gun,
Aimed at the back of a Black unarmed teen,
Who was afraid for his life and chose to run—
Slain at point-blank range while trying to flee
The scene of a murder before it occurred.
Nine shots were heard a mile away, but
Today this pig roams free; a jury
Of his peers found him not guilty...

White is the stench of Africa's son, swinging
By his Brown neck from an old poplar tree;
Rigor mortis set in. Accused of having been heard
Rousing the minds of fellow slaves with thoughts of being "free."
Death squeezed the hearts of his wife and daughter,
Tighter than that tattered noose that took his life.
White is suffering, pain, and strife on the loose...

White is the taste of tears on the face
Of an incarcerated Black man sitting on death row,
Wrongfully convicted for the rape and murder of Jane Doe.
Appeals exhausted to no avail. 20 years in a single cell,
Feeling out of place. Mind full of affliction;
Despite his good diction, he finds hate in his heart
He can't express. The execution is in ten hours,
But he won't request a special meal, confess, or
Say any last words before he's killed...

White is the feel of cotton on the bruised
Hands of an adolescent field slave.
Having labored twelve hours, he gave the ofay a full sack.
White is the pain of 30 lashes to his Brown back,

For his sack being 30 pounds light. Between the
Lacerated flesh was white, as he lay bleeding on
His rucksack, open wounds exposed to the night,
In an attempt to recoup for the coming day;
Agony steals his sleep, so he decides to pray
To a white god in the sky. Not yet twelve,
But ready to die. “Master” will place a tiny white
Cross on his grave—a white burial for his
Conquered Black slave...