

■
GODDESS
|

vei
darling
■

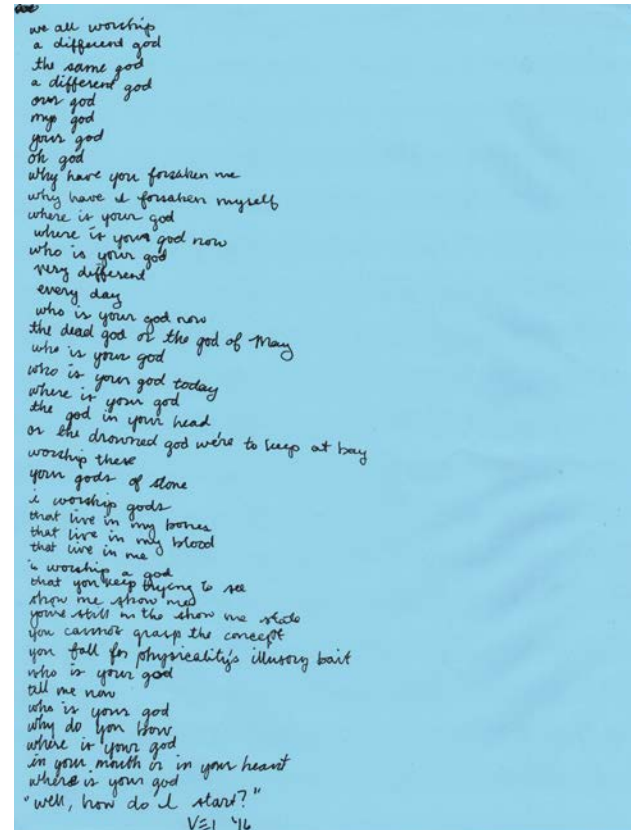


The character is talking about how she almost gave her good wok to Salvation Army or some other organization such as that. In fact, I think she may have done. “I haven’t made Chinese food in 10 years and I’m not going to make Chinese food again. But you have this idea of yourself and you want to hold onto that.”

A quote from a Noah Baumbach film. I know he’s a man and this is called GODDESS I, but it’s my work and if you have an issue, you’ve still got so much to learn. (aka how desperately we cling to our “identity”, not realizing that it is but a fleeting educational experience of oneself and not a fact that we must cleave to for dear life... aka ‘fuck internal resistance’) – vei 2018

I was always going to exist.
In this space, in this time, in this reality
I was always going to exist
This pain is valid. This pain is real. This pain exists.
I know it does because I do
I know it does because I feel it
I know it does because no matter how hard I try to ignore it,
I cannot run away from the truth
The weight
The pain
I cannot escape
I am meant to feel this
Right now
I am here, breathing, feeling
Because I was always going to
"I wish I'd never been born"
Never is a word that exists
As a label for something that does not
It is an absence of existence
It is unreal
I was always going to exist
In this capacity
I exist in this way
Now
Because I was always going to.

Existence – vei 2017



we all worship
a different god
the same god
a different god
our god
my god
your god
Oh god
why have you forsaken me
why have I forsaken myself
where is your god
where is your god now
who is your god
very different
every day
who is your god now
the dead god of the god of May
who is your god
who is your god today
where is your god
the god in your head
or the drowned god were to keep at bay
worship these
your gods of stone
I worship gods
that live in my bones
that live in my blood
that live in me
I worship a god
that you keep trying to see
show me show me
show me show me
you cannot grasp the concept
you fall for physicality's illusory bait
who is your god
tell me now
who is your god
why do you howl
where is your god
in your mouth or in your heart
where is your god
"well, how do I stand?"
VEI '16

you are my brother
you are my sister
we are of the same blood
the same earth
but you are not my tribe

you are my kin
we, born of sin
we have lived and we have died
we of the same skin
but you are not my tribe

you are my ancestor
I am your future
we are holding on
unsure, be our own leaders
you are my question
I am your truth
where is my tribe?

VEI 16


my god is in my crown
perched high above my head
deep within me
unseeable ever by my own eyes

my children are upon my fingertips
my tongue, my outpouring
they are born in my fourth house
they come from immaculate conception

my world is shaking shaking shaking
ever moving, effervescent, fluid
my reality is lucid and confusing and purple
and pink and gold

and pain unfolds
and treasures untold
I stumble through the wilderness
my world is
shaking

VEI 16



I'll always
Put her in a box
And compartmentalize
And revise
And think think think
 Things through

A word on
Me, a label
It's libel it's
A lie I just can't
Be free
 From my own prison
 My own attachments
 My own needy heart beating
 Rapidement
 As I rush


through
Emotion after emotion
Just to
Taste something sweet


I'm quite taken by you
Do you know that?
I fish myself out

Of my emotions and into
The world of
Other
It's not like
Home
No, it's cold and
The coldness burns

I'm wasting my time
 (Don't come here)
I know better
 (I told you What's to come)
Flesh without the
 Dermis, it's
 Just pale soft
Skin? No.
Flesh. And flesh is hot
And pink
And soft
And it hurts ...
And you don't think about that
 When you pull me in

I'm raw
I'm new





And you want me
But when I burn away
All of your inequities
And completely
Decimate every ideation you had
Of you
And of me
You will resent me


Do people know love
As deeply and intrinsically
As I do?
I want you to know
How it feels to
Let the fire burn you alive
Burn you and
You die.


Reborn – vei 2018

A notion
A feeling
A doubt
Clangs in my heart
And bounces
Upon the dual hemispheres
of my brain
Echoing in my
Mind and
Ringing in my
Ears

That's the worst thing
About this feeling
It is so
Unsure
I am so
Unsure

Of course,
There are a great many things
About which
I am certain
But not this





If I must hold myself to
A standard of
(Self) critical perfection
Then I'm so sure
That I'm going to ruin it

It's like water
In my brain
That I just can't seem to
Let go of
It's giving me a
headache
I should let go

she – vei 2018

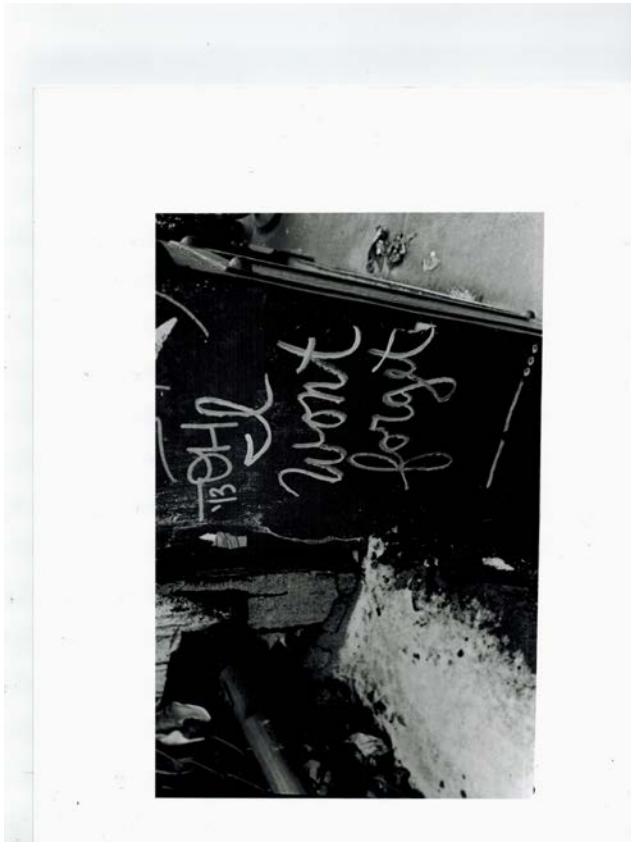


I am sorry.
No.
I'm not sorry.
I know.
I said the words.
I know.
I wanted to mean them.
I know,
I'm sorry.
Wait.
Why do I keep saying that?
I am not.
Sorry.
An inescapable artificial means of assuaging
An already bad situation.
A temporary fix.
So high, so high.
Why?
Must we make every other interaction
So
Damn
Trite?
I am not sorry.
I am not sorry that
I am not sorry.
I am not.
I am not.
I am not.
I am not sorry that I did what I did.
I am not sorry that I was happier that way.
I am not sorry that you found out.
Maybe I'm sorry that you got hurt.
Maybe I'm sorry that you are sad.
Maybe I'm sorry that the consequences have resulted
in a rather unpleasant turn of events, for me.
But maybe I'm not.
I am not sorry that you think your silence pierces me.
(It does not)
I am not sorry that you think your cold shoulder burns me.
(It does not)
I am not sorry at all.
And moreover,
I am not sorry that
I am not sorry.

2

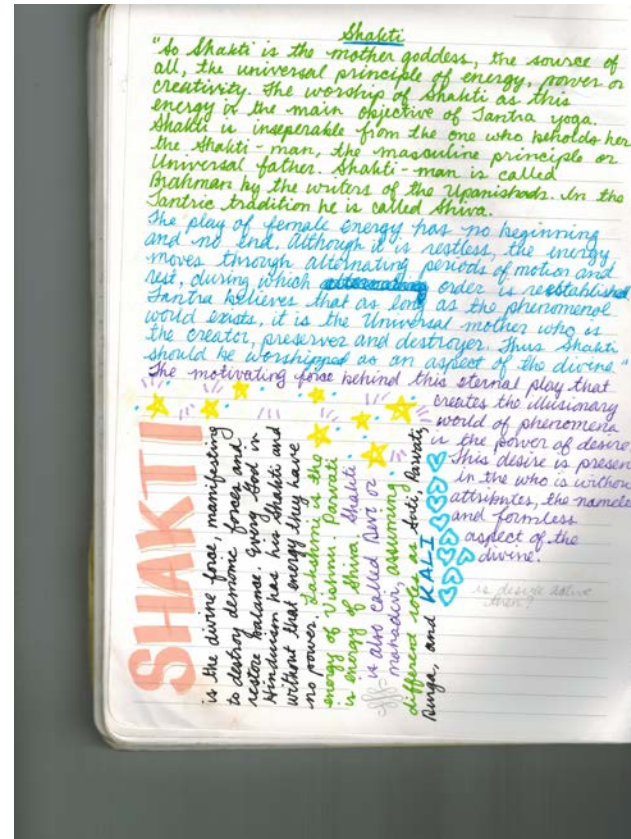



3



Not every
 Womb is your home
 Where you can
 Find comfort in
 Intimacy and the lack of
 Anonymity
 Where it's
 Safe
 Because safe spaces
 Are few and far between
 They live between sinew
 And rib cages
 Experienced in
 Planes far, far away
 Unreachable
 Only as your gut is a portal
 Not every hand
 Hurts, aching, itching to
 Administer some strange
 God's wrath
 We spent so much time
 Looking at
 How different we are
 We didn't stop to feel
 What really resides in
 The Void

The Void – vei 2018






Hashtags equate to commodification and in that way hegemony. Therefore, anything said to be revolutionary will so rarely be housed within the pages of hashtags because anything revolutionary must stand against capitalism, it must go against the grain. The grain is the yoke of capitalism around us; it is the commodification of such a special and unique experience as life. It is hegemony above humanity. So, in that way, the revolution can't be hashtag. True revolution could never be because #revolution is an agent of the artifice the true revolution must see destroyed.

*She's all about revolution.
She's punk like that. – vei 2018*

Most of my trauma is from being a woman in a man's world. And I'm still so angry and hurt. Where does that pain go? Does it ever go away? Is it just ego and when I die will it, too, disappear? Goddess, I pray it does. Imagine me praying to a man. Give up all of your power, all of your agency, all of your capacity for creation, authority, direction and ultimately SELF (AWARENESS) to lay myself at the feet of my abuser, my jailer, my slave master. I will never. I carry the souls of my ancestors and the pain of their lifetimes in my womb. My heart, a compass to salvation – as long as I trust my gut. You think I don't know the excruciating burden of the world? No one is more feared or less respected in this world than the Black woman. I have been a mother, I have been a daughter; I am a sister, I am a niece; I am a progeny, I am a prophetess; I am a genius, I am a priestess. Cower at my wrath for I REMEMBER. I was awash in my identity but the suffering of my femininity sat on my shoulders, drowning me in the sorrows of this mortal coil, this finite realm. The only chains that exist are the ones that we make for ourselves. "Death is cheating". Fear is false. Every atom in your body screams live but for what? Were it not for the ash on my tongue and the cross on





my back, I would have let my soul spill from my wrists or chest sooner. Perhaps let it flutter away into doll land with the oncoming cloak of any given night. My mother's mother, my father's grandmother, my looming, great spirits— they pulled me from the darkness once, twice, infinitely. And I will pull yours. And we will never let go.

For Yasmin – vei 2018

The reactions that I get when I wear my natural hair versus when I wear a wig or twists or some other hairstyle that hides my 'fro are—suffice it to say—interesting. For one, I always seem to get fewer likes on Instagram. This brings me to the obvious next point that many of the people who idolize and idealize me stop. Men are less interested in me as a woman (and therefore as anything at all) when my hair is in its natural state. Jobs are less likely to hire me when I have my natural hair, because who wants that as the face of their company? It's unprofessional. It's not classy. It's unacceptable. Do better.

We as human beings would like to be valued for our true character, but that has become a little bit too much to ask for in this modern world. We live in a world of pure artifice; it is so rare to find someone who values what exists within while everything is screaming about what is without. What about my natural appearance is a marker of my character? Don't I command your language much better than you yourself? Don't I extrapolate upon the higher concepts of the Mystery Schools with deeper insight and inherent awareness than even you? But my Black skin and dense forest of curls causes you surprise





when you hear my mouth open and the words glide over my tongue like a sickness I can't shake.

Best way to sell something to someone? Invalidate their existence.

Name the god of this nation! Capital.

Assimilate all the way. Commit to something outside of yourself.

Only what is within is real.

Stop making Black versions of things. We embody more originality than that.

My blood sings in the trees and grass. The blood of my people glisten around insect necks for all to see and the diaspora of my motherland grovel on their knees with gleaming grins, begging for just a little taste. You know what we want? Respect. But we'll settle on some shoes.

People are so vain and obsessed with other people's vanity; it is astounding. All at once we are

constantly asking to be judged upon what is in our hearts and our minds or not judged at all, yet evaluating others for their outer indicators of whatever that may be. Nothing could ever tell me about a person outside of what they have to say and— more to the point— their actions, no matter how expensive their clothes are or are not, coiled their curl pattern or fine, or the richness or lack thereof of the complexion of their skin. This fact especially holds me and other Black women at a serious disadvantage.


Describe femininity: small, dainty, fragile, soft, weak

Black women have never been allowed to be that, so why would we ever be seen as women to you? Imagine if we hadn't had whips on our backs for generations—I imagine you know the end result.

STUNT ON THEM HOES

Did the world wake up one day and forget that we are the progenitors of the human species or was it washed away with the knowledge that there was more and that once, we were all one? Did the world wake up one day and decide we could only be





mammies and prostitutes, slaves to the ineptitude and laziness of whiteness? Did the world wake up one day and suddenly decide that we were nothing more than humanoid chimps, too beautiful to not fuck for free but not worthy of a seat at the table? Well, world—I built that table. I made those chairs. The entirety of civilization exists due to:

my womb, my blood, my backbreaking toil

my pain, my anguish, my wretched reckoning

my head, my heart, my capacity for forgiveness
trust and love


you know us women have the power of regeneration. my womb is a portal to another world.

Somehow we who have been deemed “less feminine” are the ones trusted the most to be the caregiver, the love bearer, the mother, sister, stepping stool—fill these maternal roles. Well, why entrust your children to animals? That seems ... misguided at best, stupidly dangerous at least. I guess I escaped this fate by being “not like the other Black girls”.

I guess I should be happy that you “don’t usually like Black girls but” somehow I’m “different”. I guess the reason that I would have anxiety attacks and waves of rage course through me whenever I couldn’t get my hair done and destroy my space is probably tied to the fact that I didn’t want to be treated less than ever again. No doubt, I have it engrained upon the soft grey matter of my mind that should I want respect, should I crave common decency, should I want to be HUMAN (unlike “other Black girls”), I better fix my hair up real nice so that I can “catch a man”. You know my value and worth is hinged upon that shaky factor—another way to keep me from ever generating any (false idea of) success.

I’m smarter than your son and prettier than your daughter, and because I’m Black that frightens you. Rest assured that I’m aware and my melanin sings with the reign of Kali. Your systems are no longer safe—and neither are you.

*Open Letter to Ideologically White
Supremacist Violence Against Black Women
– vei 2018*



4



1 *mantle/mantra*
35 mm film photography
Model: Yasmin Ben-David

2 *past lives*
35mm film photography
Shot: SoHo

3 *sun god*
35mm film photography
Model: Mopelola Adesina

4 *noose*
35mm film photography
Model: Yasmin Ben-David