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Sankofa: A Modern Retelling of the Fable “The People Could Fly”

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[Awakened by the patter of rats]

Beating almost silent paws across industrial grade rock

Crushed Colt 45 cans Newport buds and bum piss

Lining the crawl space beneath the decay of a collapsing house once warmed by love

Shingles draped with care and the laughter of children

But, now sirens blare *They* after our children.

Broken vials mixed with fecal material

Black widow spiders; cracked plastics that embrace the stones--and him

Hood is his camouflage,

There's gray Desert Storm fatigue

Miniscule light and he fighting the fatigue

3 days now—same song, hungry....

Lynching brigades police slain gang war(s)

No affiliation but they labeled you that

Discarded your weapon in the Chattahoochee where

Oshun she laments to her daughters because her blue---is brown

Yellow gown, soiled with hazmat symbols

We sacrifice honey and guinea hens to her

Organize unions write poems to cleanse through her

Mold your psalm book; look for canonized scripture, Dua

Make your supplications to Allah or make benedictions to your gods

Make maledictions toward your enemies 'cause this overture is for many seeds

killed here

See this, is a killing field
They, the unwilling guild of extraordinary gentlemen, but boys really
Black Annie straps, break backs, build irrigation ditch; fill the coffers of Victoria
Secret, Lee Jeans, Microsoft Corrections Corp.
Our GIRLS, in a complex internment the financial Bastille
Slavery's descendants
There's more than one way to skin a cat without amendments
Sharecropping, feudal servitude, prison farms, internment camps
They got him in custody with state subsidies
But not him, he's running humming: Sankofa, Sankofa, Sankofa
And he flees with dogs at his knees
Looking for underground railroads making signs; sets up looking for reprieve
From penal codes this oppidan rite of passage
Uses scarification indeed but not the ones visible to the naked eye
Slum clearance, gentrification, urban "redevelopment"
BLACK displacement no use
For him without their barcodes
Nine numbers sold
For the labor SHE provides nickels and dimes for their commissary
Not him, too conscious for that
With the spirit of Nat,
Gabriel or Denmark
He been marked
He hears Gabriel's horn
His own undoing
In the flash of bright lights
Sweatshops, Tuskegee experiments, stem cell research, uncompensated labor
Exchanged in stock exchange
Cotton's still king
From Eli Whitney to Eli Lily no human rights
1.7 million of the chosen

70 percent people of a darkened hue
Two-third serving sentences on non-violent_crimes
13 percent of our sons at any given time
Now is the time...
Mumia says—“a regime where more bodies equal more profits,
Prisons step closer to slave pens”
These people the same men
Got me sitting on farm Parchman
For convict leases—confederate justice
For reconstructed pieces of secession dreams
Success it seems to them is modern day peonage
But See him in
Loose jeans...
Hoisted at the waist seams
Fatigued but he ain't ready for war—remove his things
Just the shorts beneath for maximum coverage
He's humming: Sankofa, Sankofa
They still on him humming Sankofa Sankofa Sankofa
His guilt or innocence inconsequent
Black Annie still waiting
Confinement still baiting..Sankofa Sankofa..Sankofa
Ancestry of revolutionaries, Panther fists, sit-ins, poisoned cattle
Broken shackles he sings Sankofa Sankofa
And the wings pierce skin not Icarus he can soar as close to the sun, from the
gunshots untamed black wings an Isis son—the fiercest one
Breaking old paradigms
The breath of the myth
The palm of the fist
The people who could fly with toil in their hymnals
Anthology of folktales written in the parchment of his annals....
One knows liberty when seeing it

Right of one seize it
Mama cries when she saw it
Arms open to the heavens lamenting
Breast heaving
Relief
But he found peace
And she sings...Sankofa Sankofa Sankofa