

I Consider a Twitter Follow

by Cortney Lamar Charleston

I pendulum on whether to press the button. I pause. I ponder the little blue birdie that tells all of our thoughts to the world, wonder if bald eagles have already gone extinct—dropped dead to the earth like bombs built of bone, beak and feather.

To say I'm living in a time without symbols is also to say there is no higher calling than protest, than the calling of fingertip to keyboard, our new key of life, and yet I hesitate to endorse anyone in a way that can be counted like a vote of confidence, when, on the contrary, I'm shaken daily solely for the music of it, bone-shingled skin bag beaten against by tempestuous winds I'm told are coincidence rather than conflict between our planet and our politics.

I believe the word I've been looking for is *fear*. Everything bigger than me there was to believe in now seems entirely too big a target on my back; I'm left interrogating myself on what I still hold faith in during these dumbfounding days:

when I'm in a church, I still believe in the idea of divinity;
when I'm in a school, I still believe in the idea of education;
if I'm invited into a woman, I'm to believe, at least, in power,
programmed to be a man not unlike all those men I despise,
another reason I'm made queasy at contemplating the click,
though it's a way to keep my enemy close but also theoretical.

I stare directly into the dearth of punctuation and grammar;
the gutter of blood above my eyelid overflows, causes a glitch
of motion, a flicker in the flesh. I'm smart enough to stay away,
but curiosity is a narcotic, can kill. But so does a lack thereof,
I know, because a little blue birdie told me so, sweetly sang
he's trying to distract you, so I turned around to find nothing
behind me, and that's when it happened:

a button somewhere

being pushed on somebody,

a trail of digits dictating

follow him, follow him,

follow him—