

★

EVIDENCE
ALEXIS PAOLINE GUMBS

By reading past this point you agree that you are accountable to the council. You affirm our collective agreement that in the time of accountability, the time past law and order, the story is the storeroom of justice. You remember that justice is no longer punishment. You affirm that the time of crime was an era of refused understanding and stunted evolution. We believe now in the experience of brilliance on the scale of the intergalactic tribe.

Today the evidence we need is legacy. May the public record show and celebrate that Alandrix consciously exists in an ancestral context. May this living textual copy of her digital compilation and all its future amendments be a resource for Alandrix, her mentors, her loved ones and partners, her descendants, and her detractors to use in the ongoing process of supporting her just intentions.

We are grateful that you are reading this. Thank you for remembering.

With love and what our ancestors called "faith,"
the intergenerational council of possible elders

Exhibit A

Excerpt from Dix's Lecture Capsule: "The Black Feminist Time Travel of Self in the Twenty-First Century BSB [Before Silence Broke] Era"

"Therefore self should be understood as a vessel open to time and fueled by presence, where presence is as multiple as it is singular. This is what black feminist scientists called 'integrity,' a standard for affirming the resonance of presence across time, where action was equal to vision embodied through variables. Our ancestors reflect this reality in the self-inscribing letter process evidenced in algorithmic email retrievals from a twenty-first-century palimpsest called google. It is unclear, however, whether the authors of emails wrote them in order to remember or in order to not have to remember. Can you hear me?"

Exhibit B

Be Is for Brilliant

Letter from Alandrix, age twelve, sent via skytrabler during dream upload, third cycle of the facing moon, receipt unknown:

Ancestor Alexis,

I've heard about you. I've even read some of your writing. Everyone says I have an old soul, and I'm really interested in what it was like back when you lived. It seems like people were afraid a lot. Maybe every day? It's hard to imagine, but it seems that way from the writing. I have to remember that no one knew that things would get better, and that even people who were working to make it happen had to live with oppression every day. I read your writing and the writing of your other comrades from that time and I feel grateful. It seems like maybe you knew about us. It feels like you loved us already. Thank you for being brave.

I'm twelve and last year I did a project for our community about your time, the time of silence-breaking. I made a poster and everything and an interactive dance. A friend of mine did one on the second abbreviated ice age instigated by oil on fire, but I thought writing about the time of

silence-breaking would be harder. The ice continents were in your imaginations, the limits of your memory melted, you spoke about the hard things and you could see your own voices. It must feel almost like a force of nature when you live. I'm 12 and you would have thought of me as part of your family, even though now we do family differently; we have chosen family now, so maybe we would just be comrades if you lived here in this generation. Who knows? But I think that if you met me, you would feel like we have some things in common. I'm a poet and I use interactive dance so maybe you would choose me as family. I know I would choose you. You could have been at my wow kapow ritual that happened recently. In our community, 12 is an important accountability age. We named this ritual for how it feels in our bodies around now. Wow kapow. I think you used to call it the pinnitrary gland.

We are here five generations after you and a lot has happened. A lot of the things that used to exist when you were 12 and even when you were 28 don't exist anymore. People broke a lot of things other than silence during your lifetime. And people learned how to grow new things and in new ways. Now we are very good at growing. I'm growing a lot right now and everyone is supportive of growing time, which includes daydreams, deep breaths, and quiet walks. No one is impatient while anyone else is growing. It seems like people are growing all the time in different ways. It was great to learn about you and a time when whole communities decided to grow past silence. It is hard to read about the fact that sexual abuse, what we would now call the deepest violation of someone else's growing, used to happen all the time. It is hard to imagine what it felt like for people to

walk around with all that hurt from harming and being harmed. But I can tell from the writing that people were afraid so much. History was so close. But the amazing thing is how people spoke and wrote and danced anyway. Imagine being afraid to speak.

Anyway, I wanted to say thank you. Now in the 5th generation since the time of the silence breaking we are called hope holders and healers. There are still people doing a lot of healing, but it seems like generation after generation people got less and less afraid. People took those writings and started to recite them and then another generation hummed their melodies and then another generation clicked their rhythms and then another generation just walked them with their feet and now we just breathe it, what you were saying before about how love is the most powerful thing. About how everything and everyone is sacred.

I read a really old story where the character believed that time travel was dangerous because if you change one thing in the past the whole future changes and then you might never get born. I am still here writing this though so I think it's okay to tell you that everything works out. That it's okay. And it's not easy all the time, not even here, because so much has been broken, besides silence, but it is possible, it does feel possible. My friends and I feel possible all the time. So when you get afraid to speak, remember that you all were part of us all learning how to just do it. And most . . . take it for granted. Except poets like me. I remember you. I feel it. Wow. Kapow.

love,
alandrix

Exhibit C

Notes from Drix (age twenty-five), dissertation research notebook on the time that silence broke:

found as a zoomed-in image of a stained subway cave:
a.k.a.
the writing on the wall

"Wait for the time when blood is all we have left to write with," they said, first in a blog post, then in circulated emails, then on scraps of cloth, then scrawled on the remaining walls, then in dirt when they could find it at the end. "Wait for the time . . . when a woman must eat her own sorcery to bleed the ink of her existence. Let her write it and leave it. Let her call it future."

So I waited. And when I couldn't wait any more I waited twenty-eight more days. If you can read this, I am evidence. We had been wrong all along. Blood is not money. Money is not food. The anonymous prophets were right. We cannot afford our own blood.

As I write this, the air is thick with our failure. And I am alone. Remember us and heal.

Note: Archaeologists say that this engraving came slightly earlier than the other markings all over the planet in small mostly unrecorded places spelled: love love love love love love love.

Note: According to quantum archaeologists with bone echo data there was more than one person who thought she was the last person on earth. It seems to me that this one had the right timing cycle and materials to write on the wall.

Note: Clearly many aboveground people didn't know about the underground people at this point. This cave writer may have had an inkling because she moved toward a cave that had an entrance to the underground system of root communication embedded deeply.

Note: The historians of the underground people in the transitional time refer to the time the silence broke as their vindication for going

underground, but may it not have been that their retreat also caused the silence to break the people who were left?

Note: Unless we find another record, this is our only witness account of the time that the silence broke, but recent historiographic interventions have begun to refer to something they call the “long broke open” which includes the oceanlogging of the digital infrastructure, the shrinking of populatable land and many other factors that they would argue have a causal relationship to the silence breaking.

Questions: What if I can never find evidence of what the people did to break the silence? Am I looking to the past in vain? Am I depending on evidence to confirm what my soul has evidence enough for?

Exhibit D

Found on Dix's wall at sixteen, rare paper artifact of a printed poem duplicate by Alexis Pauline Gumbs circa twenty-first-century BSB:

*in my dream
my ancestors are written on the walls
lipstick leavings
gold pen graffiti
strips of magazine paper
wheatpasted faces

these must be the ventricles
wind blous through
stiffing and caressing
the slapstick looings
the glitter leftovers
the mineographed urgency
the necessary fynes

i must be standing
inside my own heart
tagged with the evidence*

*of life living itself
i must be walking
through the back alley truth
the criminalized place where love is
where we all end up if we're lucky
or at least move through for a bit*

Exhibit E

Letter from Alexis after capitalism to Alexis during capitalism, retrieved from email residue algorithm, received in inbox alexispauline@gmail.com on 9/13/10, send date category echo, referenced and archived in Dix's lecture capsule:

Dear Lexi,
Breathe deep, baby girl, we won. Now life, though not exactly easier, is life all the time. Not chopped down into billable minutes, not narrowed into excuses to hurt and forget each other. I am writing you from the future to remind you to act on your belief, to live your life as a tribute to our victory and not as a stifling reaction to the past. I am here with so many people that you love and their children and we are eating together and we are tired from full days of working and loving but never too tired to remember where we come from. Never exhausted past passion and writing. So I am writing you now.
Here in the future we have no money. We have only the resources that we in our capitalist phase did not plunder to work with, but we have no scarcity. You can reassure Julia we have plenty technology: technology is the brilliance of making something out of anything, of making what we need out of what we had, of aligning our spirits so everyone is on point so much of the time that when one of us falls off, gets scared, or caught up, the harmony of yes yes yes, we are priceless brings them right back

into tune with where they need to be. We have the world we deserve and we acknowledge everyday that we make it what it is.

Everybody eats. Everybody knows how to grow agriculturally, spiritually, physically, and intellectually. No one owns anything or anybody or even uses anything like a tool. Each everything is an opportunity and we are artists singing it into being with faith, compassion, confusion, breakthroughs, and support. It is on everyone's mind and heart how to best support the genius that surrounds us all. How to shepherd each of us into the brilliance we come from even though our experience breaking each other apart through capitalism has left much healing to be done. We are more patient than we have ever been. And now that our time is divine and connected with everything, we have developed skills for how to recenter ourselves. We walk. We drink tea. We are still when we need to be. No one is impatient with someone else's stillness. No one feels guilty for sitting still. Everybody is always learning how to grow.

Your heart sings everyday because your ancestors are thrilled with themselves, a.k.a. all of us. Just breathing is like a choir. And I have the presence of mind and the generosity of spirit to even be proud of the you that I was when you are reading this, back in capitalism with all of our fear and all of our scarcity-driven behavior contradicting and cutting down our visionary words. Counterpoetics right? I am proud of you for being queer. I am proud of you for staying present to the meaning of your beliefs and to the consequences of your actions even when they were crashing into each other every day. I am proud of you for letting the tide of your revolutionary heritage grind your fear of failure and lack to sand. I love you. The me that I was.

EVIDENCE . . .

But breathe this deep because this is the message. We did it. We shifted the paradigm. We rewrote the meaning of life with our living. And this is how we did it. We let go. And then we got scared and held on and then we let go again. Of everything that would shackle us to sameness.

Of our deeply held belief that our lives could be measured or disconnected from anything. We let go and re-raught ourselves to breathe the presence of the energy that we are that cannot be destroyed, but only transformed and transforming everything.

Breathe deep, beloved young and frightened self, and then let go. And you will hold on. So then let go again.

With all the love and the sky and the land and
the water,
Lex