

# Words for Winter

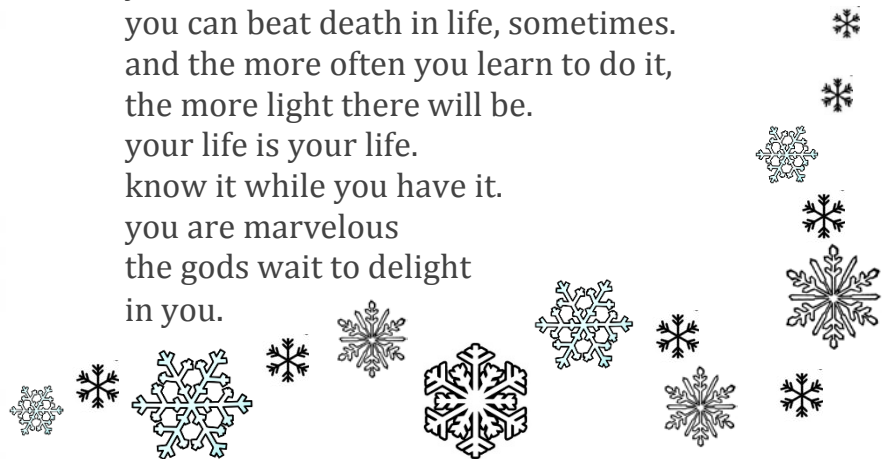
A PRISONER NEWSLETTER FOR  
MISSOURI AND BEYOND  
JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2015



## THE LAUGHING HEART

by Charles Bukowski

your life is your life  
don't let it be clubbed into dank submission.  
be on the watch.  
there are ways out.  
there is a light somewhere.  
it may not be much light but  
it beats the darkness.  
be on the watch.  
the gods will offer you chances.  
know them.  
take them.  
you can't beat death but  
you can beat death in life, sometimes.  
and the more often you learn to do it,  
the more light there will be.  
your life is your life.  
know it while you have it.  
you are marvelous  
the gods wait to delight  
in you.



# GREETINGS

A warm hello on another gray, winter day here in St. Louis. Much has transpired since the last newsletter we sent out in August that followed the death of Mike Brown and people's unprecedented response to it. We greatly enjoyed hearing back from some of you about your thoughts and experiences regarding the events that occurred in Ferguson, MO. Keep passing this publication around. It's important to us that you have a sense about the climate of life on the outside that mainstream media does not report.

It's hard to know how to think about the way things have changed over the past four months or what sort of position we are in now. A year ago, when police killed someone in St. Louis, it barely made the news. It would just show up as another violent day in the city. Cops on average kill 14 people in the city every year. It really wears you down, to hear about it every month, another life taken by the police, and for the most part it seemed like no one but the family was angry. Now it seems normal for there to be hundreds of people in the street hours after police shoot someone. We saw this on Christmas Eve, when police shot and killed an 18 year old boy in Berkeley, MO, prompting rioting and a few nights of unrest.

We have always had a sense that we can't possibly be alone in feeling like something is wrong with the way this world works, but now it's more apparent than ever that we aren't alone. If Ferguson has done anything, it has cleared the fog and let people find each other. Police, media and politicians have always shamed people into feeling isolated with their anger. They have made it seem like if you are mad about the way things are you're either crazy or a criminal, neither of which do we legitimize as things to feel shame about. Now though, they can't make us feel shame for being angry. There are far too many of us, and the peace and acceptance has been shattered.

The rebellion against the police and white supremacy that is growing out of this is incredibly confusing. Nothing is organized or cohesive. Whatever we are experiencing contradicts itself constantly, claiming to be peaceful at times, demanding body cameras and racial sensitivity training's for police, while at other times the streets are full of molotov cocktails, guns and flipped police cruisers. In many ways this is the reason things continue to be so exciting.

No one is in control. The movement is made of so many different ideas and perspectives, and because of this it is incredibly unpredictable and hard for the police and State to control or put down. Not to mention, how can anyone co-opt a movement that is against white supremacy, something that is completely ingrained in American society and the capitalist system that runs this world?

As the protests and this movement, which it undeniably has become, continue to grow, the question arises of how to expand this struggle and shake the foundations of this world so much that things can never go back to the way they are now. At this point, the protests no longer seem to even be about individual police killings, but have shifted to be a larger expression of rage at the deeply rooted white supremacy that manifests in policing, the judicial system and incarceration in this country. Recently in St. Louis, there was a demonstration, where protesters marched from the sight of a police shooting, to the County Work House, clearly recognizing the other obvious form of racial violence – prisons and incarceration.

As time goes by, the ghettos of America look more and more like prisons, with cameras and patrols constantly watching and trying to maintain control. And if we have learned anything from the past four months of unrest, it is that they cannot control us. All it takes is some amount of collective action, and we are quickly more powerful than they could ever expect. So, from the streets of the ghettos, to the cell blocks of the prisons and jails, let's hope that we are continually inspired to take collective action to show them that we will not be controlled.

Be sure to let us know your thoughts about how to expand the struggle where you are or if you feel the context of things shifting around you. We want to try to draw parallels between life on the street and life behind prison walls, with the understanding that we are enraged about it all – about police killings, about the existence of police and of prisons as the solution to the world's problems. We hope the personal accounts in this publication, as well as the bits of analysis about this current movement against the police, will inspire hope and fire within you and within the prison walls.



# CHRONICLES

This chronology is merely a list of the major events, protests and riots since the August uprising. Over the past few months there have been countless demonstrations, with events happening almost every single day. The following dates are listed because they seemed to mark moments when conflict was pushed further than normal, or when the routine of daily life in St. Louis was disrupted. However the many unlisted demonstrations have been just as important to create an environment that has sustained this rebellion.

**September 10** - Organizers call for a shut down of I-70 in solidarity with Michael Brown, and to put pressure on the prosecutor to indict Darren Wilson. Police respond with an overwhelming show of force, with roughly 300 officers deployed to stop the shut down. The crowd of protesters gathers in the street and boldly march towards the police line in an attempt to break through and shut down the highway regardless of the police presence. The police succeed in stopping protesters from reaching the highway, but are unable to calm the crowd, and have bricks and bottles thrown at them. One middle age woman exclaims to the crowd, "Start saving your shit, put it in a plastic bag and throw it at these mother fuckers!" Police make a few arrests but are unable to catch some of the culprits who escape through the crowd and into the surrounding neighborhood.

**September 23** - Mike Brown's memorial is burnt in the early morning. Residents blame police or white supremacists. Throughout the day supporters clean up and rebuild the memorial. All the while tension builds as word spreads of the destroyed memorial. When night falls, the streets are once again filled with people, this time without the presence of "peacekeepers." Police are met with thrown bottles and rocks as they push people off the streets and into the neighborhood. After a brief standoff on Canfield Dr. (where the police are still too scared to enter during protests), shots ring out as one person fires towards the police. In the morning two high ranking officers complain of having to dive behind cruisers to avoid being hit.

**September 28** - A large crowd of protesters throws bottles and rocks at officers outside of the Ferguson Police Department.

**October 2** - Police evict a protest encampment that had been occupying an empty lot in protest of the Mike

Brown killing.

**October 4** - Protesters briefly disrupt the St. Louis symphony by singing "Which side are you on?"

**October 8** - Just before dusk, an off duty police officer working for a private security company in a wealthy area of the Shaw neighborhood, shoots and kills 18-year-old Vonderrit Myers. Within a few hours, hundreds of people have gathered at the intersection. Police spout off the usual story that the kid had a gun and shot first. But many witnesses and friends claim the "gun" was actually a sandwich Vonderrit had just purchased. The crowd's anger grows and people begin to surround the nervous police officers, shouting abuse and taunts at them. The police, realizing they are outnumbered and that the situation is beginning to be unsafe for them, try to leave the area in their cruisers. People surround the cars, smashing out tail lights and the window of a detective's car as he drives off. One officer, as he hastily retreats, realizes one of his fellow officers is missing. "Where's Joe? We're missing Joe," he shouts over and over to replies from the crowd that, "Joe's dead man, we can't find him either." After the police leave the area, protesters take to the street and block traffic on the major boulevard - Grand. A few minor scuffles happen throughout the night, with police getting attacked anytime they approach the march. It is telling of the climate in the city that officers cars can be attacked and instead of calling in backup they flee the area. The city is clearly scared of escalating events and having a "Ferguson" on their hands.

**October 9** - For the second night in a row a large crowd gathers at the intersection where Vonderrit Myers was killed. The crowd marches down to

South Grand and proceeds to shut down the on-ramp and exits for highway I-44 for close to an hour. The police keep a safe distance from the crowd, trying to de-escalate the situation. Eventually the crowd starts to march down Flora Place after one woman points out that it is the wealthy residents of that street that pay for the private security who killed Myers. As the crowd approaches Flora Place the energy starts to grow - people bang on cars, scream at the residents and blare air horns. Protesters steal American Flags off of front porches and a few houses have bricks thrown through their windows. The crowd gathers in an intersection and burns the collected flags. The crowd marches back towards the main street weaving through

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neighborhoods along the way. When protesters reach the main intersection three cops boldly run into the crowd. The officers are immediately surrounded and shoved out of the crowd. Within minutes roughly 100 officers flood the area to rescue the three officers, spraying the crowd with mace. Brief scuffles follow but the crowd is mostly dispersed by the large police presence.

**October 12-14** - Activists call for a weekend of disruption in solidarity with Mike Brown, and to push for an indictment against Darren Wilson. The weekend is full of demonstrations. During the day, protesters shut down or disrupt various events including political campaign rallies, the Rams game, and Wal-Marts to name a few. At night people gather outside of the Ferguson Police Department. The weekend, while very peaceful, does achieve its goal of disrupting the normal flow of life in St. Louis and bringing attention to the case.

**November 17** - Governor Jay Nixon declares a State of Emergency pre-emptively. National Guard troops move into the area and guard 43 locations across the city including electrical sub-stations, police stations, shopping malls and government facilities. An eerie tension descends on the city as residents await the verdict and National Guard drive the streets in armored cars.

**November 21** - Two members of the New Black Panther Party are arrested for allegedly buying two pistols under false pretenses. In the investigation that follows, police accuse the two of a plot to murder the prosecutor and blow up the St Louis Arch.

**November 23** - In the lead up to the verdict protesters march through South St. Louis leaving from the site where Vonderrit Myers was killed. The march shuts down major intersections and disrupts traffic throughout the city.

**November 24** - Hundreds of people gather outside the Ferguson Police Station awaiting the announcement of Darren Wilson's fate. People huddle around cars and stereos listening to live news broadcasts. As soon as the non-indictment is announced, the crowd starts to scream and shout, rushing the police station and shoving down the crash barriers surrounding the building. Mike Brown's step-father is recorded screaming "Burn this b\*\*\*\* down!" Later, the police threaten to charge him with "Inciting a Riot" if he doesn't apologize for his comments. Within the hour the crowd has started to attack police and break the windows of buildings surrounding the police station. Protesters surround the riot cops and armored trucks, throwing rocks and bottles at them as they hide behind their shields. A crowd rushes an abandoned police cruiser and starts to attack it. An unsuccessful attempt is made to flip the car over. The police fire tear gas and fall back as gun shots are fired from the crowd. With the police retreating, the crowd starts to loot and set fires. Two police cruisers are completely burned.

On West Florissant, hundreds of people have taken over the street. People are openly looting as police watch helplessly from a few hundred yards away. By the end of the night two dozen structural fires have been set and many cars in a dealership have been completely torched. Gun shots ring out the entire night through the smoke and flames.

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Interstate 44 is shut down by hundreds of protesters.

On South Grand people riot through the bar district, smashing out windows and looting various stores. One looter comes out of a pawn shop with a crossbow. A few protesters try to stop the crowds from looting businesses but are largely unsuccessful. Eventually police overpower the crowd with armored trucks and tear gas and disperse protesters into the surrounding neighborhood. Later in the evening National Guard troops reportedly witness someone attempt to burn down a bank in the vicinity but are unable to apprehend the suspect. Governor Nixon calls in over 2000 National Guardsmen to quell the unrest.

**November 25** - Protesters rally again outside the Ferguson Police Department. The crowd has dwindled in numbers significantly since the night before, but people are still angry and confrontational. The police and National Guard have increased their presence in front of the police department and are largely able to maintain control, rushing into the crowd and attacking people every time a bottle or rock is thrown. After a few hours of standing off with the police, the crowd begins to quickly march down the street leaving the police behind. Having marched a few blocks, protesters round a corner and approach the Ferguson City Hall, unguarded for some reason, with a lone empty cop car parked out front. Immediately people begin to attack City Hall and the police cruiser. People break the cruiser's windows, attempt to flip it over and set it on fire while others break the windows of City Hall. By the time the police catch up and arrive with their armored vehicles and cars the crowd has moved back towards the main street. A few cruisers have their windows smashed out as the armored vehicles shoot tear gas into the air. As protesters make their way back towards the Police Station there is talk of going to the mall to shut it down, which some protesters do later in the night.

There are protests in more than 170 cities after the verdict.....

**Atlanta** - Protesters shut down highways across the city. There are rumors of looting and scuffles with the police.

**Seattle** - Interstate 5 is briefly shut down by protesters. Police are hit with rocks, bottles, fireworks and canned food throughout the night as crowds march through the city.

**San Francisco Bay Area** - Over 2500 protesters gather

and proceed to block Interstate 580 for hours. The crowd then marches back to downtown Oakland where clashes erupt at the police station. Burning barricades are set up and various businesses are looted. This is the beginning of seventeen days of unrest in the Bay area. Rioting spreads nightly from Oakland to San Francisco to Berkeley and Emeryville. During this time highways all across the bay are blockaded, including I-24, I-580, I-80, and I-880 numerous times. Dozens of stores are looted including multiple grocery stores. The style and rhythm of the unrest changes repeatedly over the days but shows no sign of stopping. Similarly to St. Louis, the revolt in the Bay Area is incredibly diverse with disruptions ranging from peaceful marches to highway shutdowns to rioting and looting.

**Los Angeles** - Protesters shut down highway 110 in solidarity with Ferguson and out of rage at the non-indictment of Darren Wilson.

**New York City** - Tens of thousands of protesters gather in the streets of New York. By the end of the night every bridge into Manhattan is shut down. The Police Commissioner is splattered with fake blood after attending one of the demonstrations.

**November 28** - Crowds of protesters march through the St Louis, West County and Frontenac shopping malls on Black Friday effectively shutting down all three malls and causing thousands of dollars in lost sales. While the protests remain peaceful, the mere presence of demonstrators causes store employees to rush to lock the doors and close gates, locking shoppers inside in their eager efforts to keep protesters out.

**December 13** - A crowd of around 200 people marches through North St. Louis to the Hall Street Detention Center. As they approach the "workhouse," protesters chant "Set them free!" and "Shut it down!" referring to the prisoners inside and the notorious jail itself where abuse, neglect and deteriorating facilities are common. Some prisoners are able to shout back and forth with protesters outside despite a sign on the fence prohibiting such communication. "F\*\*\* the police" and "F\*\*\* the C.O.'s" are yelled back and forth. A former inmate at the Hall Street jail speaks through a megaphone to both the crowd and the prisoners about guard's attempts to divide prisoners based on race and gang affiliations and about the necessity of overcoming these false divisions. Someone else encourages the prisoners to, "bring the movement inside."

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The crowd continues to march through the nearby Baden neighborhood on its way to blocking the Riverview traffic circle with a symbolic "die-in."

**December 23** - Police in Berkeley, MO shoot and kill 18-year-old Antonio Martin outside of a Mobil gas station. Police claim the teen pointed a gun at an officer but many witnesses claim otherwise. Within the



hour a crowd of roughly 200 people has gathered around the Mobil, which by now is completely full of police, medical examiners, and forensic teams. After a few hours of being yelled at by the crowd, the police attempt to snatch a man from the crowd. People instantly rush the officers and a scuffle ensues. Eventually the police throw flash bang grenades to clear the area. People respond to the flash bang grenades and arrests by throwing bottles and fireworks then run into the street

and attack police cruisers. Some rush across the street and begin to loot the adjacent Quik Trip. People are able to calmly loot the QT for roughly an hour before a fire is set inside the QT causing the police to rush in with assault rifles and extinguish the fire.

**December 24** - Protesters again gather outside the Mobil gas station to protest the killing of Antonio Martin. This time people march towards the highway and block I-70 for roughly 45 minutes. The crowd retreats back to the Mobil after police push people off the highway. People smash out a beauty supply store and begin to loot. Tonight the police are far more prepared and are able to arrest many of the alleged looters.

## PERSONAL ACCOUNTS

**#1** The night that Mike Brown's memorial was burned, there was a brief (one night only) return of peacekeeper free protests. We arrived after midnight, and people were on W Florissant facing off with the cops. They were mainly on the sidewalk and some were in the streets, but the cops were trying to force everyone off the streets, shouting for everyone to go home.

The cops seemed really desperate that night. At one point, a bottle was thrown by a protester in the direction of the cops. One of the cops caught the bottle and took off after the kid he thought threw it, breaking ranks with his gang of pigs completely. He kept screaming for the kid to "GET BACK HERE!" When it became obvious that he wasn't going to catch the alleged bottle thrower, the cop turned on all of us, hand on his gun? baton? and yelled, "I'm so tired of fuckin with y'all!" (To which a young woman yelled back, "We're tired of fuckin with Y'ALL! Leave us alone!") From that point on, it was a series of snatch and grabs by the cops while we were pushed further down the street toward Canfield. People kept throwing rocks and bottles

and whatever was around at the cops without any sort of backlash from other protesters. (Maybe a cop got hit in the face that night?) There seemed to be some strategy to the way the crowd was moving. A few people could be heard shouting for us to go down Canfield. (It was still a safe bet that the cops wouldn't venture into the neighborhood.) As some people were rounding the corner of Canfield, they started breaking rocks and handing them to other protesters. We positioned ourselves behind an iron fence so that we could keep throwing rocks without the cops targeting us.

Once the whole crowd was pushed down Canfield, everything was at a standstill. The cops refused to come into the neighborhood, so they stood at the end of the street with spotlights pointed at the protesters. We sat down in front yards and sidewalks of the houses just a block and a half away from the cops and talked about what to do next. There was some loud suggestions made to go to WalMart, presumably to loot it. After maybe 15 minutes of this, with no real decision being made except to "keep coming back", 6 shots went off pretty close by. Because things had quieted down a bit before this, the shots took everyone by surprise, and we all took off

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running further down Canfield. In the middle of that chaos, someone shouted, "Man that motherfucker SAID he was gonna shoot at the cops!" The evening ended with everyone laughing and celebrating as they went to their cars/houses.

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## #2 Ferguson PD – S. Florissant

November 24, 2014

The night started off slow. I went down to the police station, to be there when the verdict came in. No one in the crowd expected Wilson to be indicted, we had known that from the very day the grand jury started. And everyone knew somewhat what was going to happen when it came in. It was a stressful to wait for something you already knew.

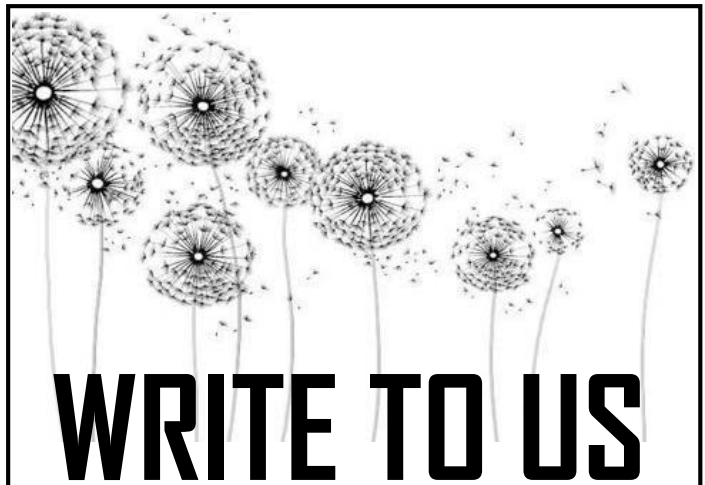
Eventually, the moment came when prosecutor was reading the verdict. Someone had rigged up a PA system broadcasting the speech. He was cutting in and out. I could barely hear it.

I saw people shaking their heads. The verdict was clear. *No indictment*. Word was spreading through the crowd and folks started to yell at the police line guarding the station. Some threw things at them. I heard from a friend that the first thing thrown was a bullhorn, which has all sorts of meaning if you think about it. *We yelled at you for too long, this thing has proved to be useless! The time for talk was over!* At that point, there were only 10 or so riot police around. Some of them started to back away frantically, almost tripping over each other. It was nice to see the righteous terror a crowd of angry people could inflict.

A woman came through the crowd, sobbing and I tried to comfort her and she told me something to the number of, "We're so far from ever getting any justice! Why?" We hugged and another woman came up and held her. I let go just as CNN came over and started to record this moment and I got in front of the camera and yelled at them for being vultures, for not letting this woman have this moment alone. They eventually left. The antagonism towards the media was pretty strong. Earlier in the night some media had been robbed and others had been threatened with violence.

Suddenly, gunshots rang out and some people surged over to where they were. Windows started to get broken all around. Some peace police were trying really hard to guard the businesses, but failing miserably.

As that was happening, a large part of the crowd was



## WRITE TO US

IF YOU WANT TO RECEIVE A ZINE CATALOG//BE ADDED OR REMOVED FROM THE MAILING LIST//TELL US WHAT'S GOING ON WHERE YOU ARE OR TELL US YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT WHAT'S HAPPENING IN FERGUSON!

**OAK ROOT PRESS**

**PO BOX 775006**

**ST LOUIS, MO 63177**

We do not know anything about the law so we cannot help with legal support. We are also not a dating service. So please do not ask us for those kind of things. If you are a rapist of any kind, and you don't think that is a problem, do not bother writing to us. We dream of a world where rapists along with prisons (and all forms of power-over) do not exist.

marching to a formation of riot police down the street to confront and taunt them. People started to bust up blocks of paving stones, concrete and anything they could find to throw. *The sound of rocks hitting riot shields was ubiquitous.*

A cop car was parked about 15 feet in front of the pathetic line of cops, which is about where most of the crowd was. Folks started to trash it. Windows were smashed and anything loose in the car was grabbed. I heard later that someone popped the trunk and got an AR-15 out of it. No one was stopping anyone or if they were they were out numbered. At one point, two young black girls were yelling expletives at the police. One of them, embarrassed, said, "Oh, I'm sorry! I don't usually cuss. I go to church every Sunday!" They laughed, picked up rocks and threw them at the cop car. There were numerous cameras around and they

weren't wearing masks. I tried to warn them, but they just shrugged. It was surreal.

The police yelled over the intercom "PLEASE STOP THROWING ROCKS! YOU WILL BE SUBJECT TO ARREST OR OTHER MEASURES! STOP IT NOW!" After that, 10 or so people started to rock the car to try to flip it, "PLEASE STOP TRYING TO FLIP THE POLICE CAR, OR YOU WILL BE SUBJECT TO ARREST! STOP NOW!"

Then they fired tear gas and I think beanbag rounds. As we ran from the gas, I saw an older black man asking younger kids if they were leaving.

*"You all leaving already? Or are you just taking a break and gonna go back for more? Yeah, take a break, but don't leave! Keep your strength. Go back for more."* Sage advice.

People waited till the tear gas dissipated and came back and threw more rocks at the line. The cop car was totaled and there was nothing really left to do for people to try and flip the motherfucker again. In response, the police shot more tear gas, this time a whole lot.

By this point the crowd was dissipating into the neighborhood side streets and the police were advancing towards the police station and firing gas into the side streets. Some folks were looting a BoostMobile store and a few other shops.

My group decided to circle back to the police line where our cars were. We walked through the neighborhood, and someone near us popped off a few shots in the direction of the police, pretty nonchalant. The police fired more gas. We looped back to S. Florissant where the cop car was now on fire.



It was beautiful. A rare sight. Later I heard that another cop car behind it got set on fire too.

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## W. Florissant

We got to our car and drove to W. Florissant, people were looting everything. All the boards had been taken off the businesses.

As usual, photographers were taking photos of those looting and some folks went up to them and told them to stop *for their safety*. Two of the three very nervously stopped. And I told them, "Don't pull that shit where I leave and than your back taking photos! We don't want people to get arrested later for this. This is for your safety and for the safety of everyone." They were terrified and left. The other guy looked like he could hold his own against us, so... we gave up on him.

We walked down the street. Lots of alcohol flowing. *Lots of consumer goods no longer being consumer goods.* The property of the masters was being looted.

A group of what seemed like middle school kids came up to us and asked if we wanted any candy because their purses were too heavy. Someone in return offered them some fancy cognac and one of them yelled how they were underage and *yeah, give me some, woo!*

A pack of white kids, it's hard not to appear as tourists at that moment. But, I think we distinguished ourselves because it was clear to anyone who saw us that we were participating in our own ways and there were many conversation struck up about police and personal experiences. Masks and gloves were being distributed. Spray cans being passed around for anyone to use. Food and liquor shared. Most people were totally stoked we were there and were happy to share a mutual hatred of the police.

Fires were blazing. People were getting drunker and drunker. Cars were starting to get a bit more wild and out of control on the streets. It seemed like as people went from one store to the next, fire would follow. All the while, most of the crowd (maybe a couple hundred?) just stood and enjoyed the scene.

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# #3

Berkeley, MO // December 23, 2014

A line forty or fifty cops long blocked the Mobil parking lot in Berkeley, MO where Antonio Martin had been shot and killed several hours earlier. It was chilling to see his body still lying covered on the ground when we got there. The horror, loss and pain felt palpable watching his body placed on a stretcher and driven away, seeing his mother writhe and cry. Along with rage, I felt some sadness and despair at the seeming endlessness of cops killing people that I more often find I detach from.

For an hour or so after we arrived, various groups of people crowded around cops yelling and expressing their anger. Even as there were only around 200 people there, the police were unprepared and scared. They retreated fearfully at plastic water bottles thrown at them. The racial tensions were high between cops and people, but I did not experience it directed toward me. Black cops were often in front with white cops behind, and people yelled about black cops protecting them as if black cops were to be differentiated. People yelled at one particular black cop about what if it was his son and about how it was the holiday and so forth. I heard another black person yell that the black cop wasn't black. It was clear to me that any yelling I would do should be reserved for white cops. One eerie interaction involved a young black person up in a cops face repeatedly yelling, "You'll shoot me, but you won't look at me" while the cop looked up, crazily darting his eyes back and forth or only looking down at his gloves, pulling them slightly on and off, never making eye contact.

The context of the past few months in the streets was present among us. People delightfully made reference to the fact that across the street from the Mobil station was a QT. Things that happened in Ferguson were clearly a reference point for what types of responses and desires were possible.

At some point the tension escalated and the crowd seemed to be in one concentrated place so that we pushed back the cops trying to hold a line. Police proceeded to try to drive two surrounded cop cars out of the Mobil parking lot, but were momentarily blocked from doing so. They were outnumbered and afraid, and damage occurred to at least one of the cars in that moment. Soon after, police released pepper spray and threw a flash bang grenade into the crowd, and in response several fireworks were thrown toward the chaotic



cluster of police, that were grabbing and beating several people while they were on the ground.

Because of this heightened conflict, the mostly abandoned street suddenly felt open and free from police control, even as they were no more than fifty yards away. I turned around to realize that there seemed to be more police cars than there were police. About forty cop cars blocked the intersection with more cars parked side by side up the street. People began to kick and dent many of them. Several people tried to get others to help flip one of the cop cars, but there weren't enough people.

Gradually handfuls of people headed over to smash and loot the QT while leftists and other angry people recovered from the pepper spray and continued yelling at the police. This large group of angry protesters forced the police to continue holding their line at the Mobil station. If everyone had left this point of conflict at once, the half hour or so of people looting the QT may not have been possible. Someone in the median chanted, "QT! QT! QT!" and told people across the street that we needed to hold the line. It wasn't until people yelled excitedly that the QT was on fire that a dozen cops, some carrying rifles, moved across the street to guard the QT.

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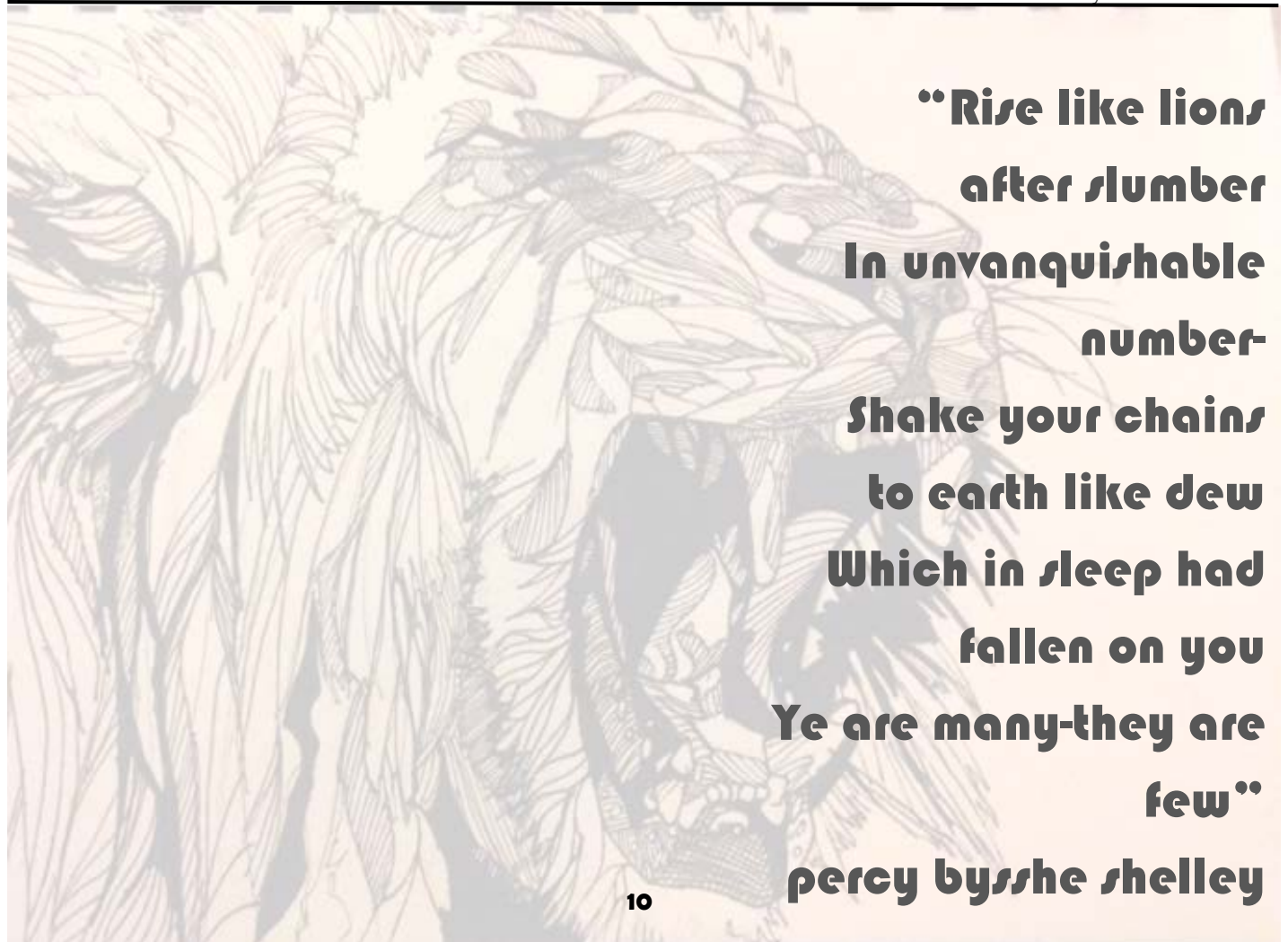
By now, someone had already put out the fire, and people dispersed.

With all the shared rage, the night was not entirely free from people enacting their roles that oppress their friends and the people around them. At one point during a heightened moment with the police when we were all packed in super closely to each other, a woman told her boyfriend to get his hands off her as he felt her up in the crowd while she had no way of moving. As I was right beside them, I told him to listen to her, to stop, and he laughingly shifted the situation.



Carloads of people drove away with their loot. People persisted in yelling at the police. We stayed around for awhile longer, waiting to see if things escalated again until the number of people began to

dwindle and then we left. It is both relieving and energizing to see the response of people to gather again where police murdered someone, creating the potential for sustained moments of uncontrollability.



**“Rise like lions  
after slumber  
In unvanquishable  
number-  
Shake your chains  
to earth like dew  
Which in sleep had  
fallen on you  
Ye are many-they are  
few”  
percy bysshe shelley**