

A1: 75BPM (00:05 – 01:56)

President elect Donald Trump declares culture war on trans people so I start trying to buy a gun and teach a self defense class for transexuals. All of a sudden I'm really leaning into my man-ness, but not in the usual way where I try to be cis as a durational performance. I have to bring it all together now because I have to survive and be steady and be love and not be run by fear. I'll start something called The Trans Survival Network which I say is an attempt to build something that is in between avoidant and alarmist. It is for people who feel the increasing necessity to decouple from the systems we are used to relying on. I feel certain that in order to become the resources we need, we have to accumulate and collaborate. The TSN is prepared for fallout without anticipating it.	This collective will run collaboratively with decisions made by consensus. All new members should be agreed upon by majority vote. I read Octavia Butler's <i>Parable</i> series, I read <i>The Faggots and Their Friends</i> <i>Between Revolutions</i>. I begin to imagine myself as an armed revolutionary. I'm assessing my friends for their skill sets. Among us we have a queer cocktail historian, a couple of poets, a graphic designer, an experimental musician, a social worker, a weed dealer, and a few chronically ill academics. It seems obvious I will need to get a gun, and to learn how to shoot it. I need to renew my passport, so I'll have to deal with that too. I've been frustrated with so many of my white, queer, northern, upper middle class compatriots who spew escapist fantasies of political exodus
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	to Canada or other imagined western European utopias.
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I remind them Sweden practiced forced sterilization on trans people who sought gender affirming care from the state until 2013. But I should still have my passport. Just in case.

B1 60BPM (01:58 – 03:41)

Imagine a space
built for the project of contemplative inquiry,
on the subject of the mindful masculine.

A pillow on the floor for everyone,
a snow-dusted pine forest
beyond the windows and curtains.

Warm smell of palo santo,
smuggled in
and burned quickly
by one of your fellow participants.

Hold in your body
the knowledge that your participation
is made possible by your identification
with the identity position of man,
as defined only by you.

There's no quiz
and you will not be asked
to present identification,

you just have to enter
into the contract of a man's space,
as a man.

It doesn't have to be forever.

You don't have to be a man
forever.

You move in a men's space
as a part of a group of men,

you look around subtly
at different bodies
and wonder what they can do,

you feel steady and strong
in your contentious body.

You make group commitments
to build a brave safe space,

safe at least as far as
we're all fed,

and there are no immediate incursions happening,

it's at least a year
before ICE will start kidnapping farmers
in your community.

The palo santo can't even burn
because of the super sensitive smoke sensors

and you're all being fed
three ayurvedically sound
nourishing meals a day,

sleeping in warm little twin beds
in private rooms
with their own sinks,

and spending silent mornings
gazing out at a crater-sized
cereal bowl
of lake and forest.

There will be a moment
where you're on your back
in a big cathedral room

and you'll have spent
so many days nourished
that you'll temporarily believe

you're doing ancestral lineage work
for all the stressed out mad women
in your family

lost in diaspora
and taunted by too open mind portals,
and/or aka poverty
and patriarchal violence,

you'll get so lost
in this feeling
of deep good body comfort

you will end up uncritically writing
in your prospectus

that you were relaxing
and experiencing pleasure
in a way no one in your lineage
had likely ever been able to do.

Which all members of your committee
will highlight and question,

and you'll remember
the conditions of this relaxation were
ideal,

at least
from a consumer experience perspective,

and you'll remember
the conditions of relaxation
for your ancestors
were not,

they were fugitives,

and per Moten
"Fugitivity, then, is a desire for
and a spirit of escape and transgression
of the proper and the proposed."

They might feel
a little envious
of your luxuriant happy baby,

but they'd probably most think
you looked absurd

and very easy
to kill.

A2: 75 BPM (03:43 – 05:49)

The trans survival network
doesn't root
beyond some discarded email drafts.

Instead
I get self conscious
about having ever decided
to meet a moment of fear
with action.

It's a deep stomach shame
of not knowing what to do,

like
do I want to be able to say
I fought,

or that I didn't
take the bait.

A trans student lingers after class
to tell me about his anxiety
about Fenway Health
ending gender affirming care
for teens,

and I tell him
that hey
they've always come for us

and look
we're still here,

and when I was a teen
medical intervention wasn't an option

Trans elders
are supposed to have been through worse

and trans theorists
are supposed to be so smart
we don't get scared,

like there's an ontological responsibility
to not engage
with the boot
on your neck.

But what I mostly remember
from when I was my student's age

is how desperately
I wanted a motorcycle,

which is also
where my relationship with guns
began.

I had a mentor named Jude
who was helping me find one,

but I was really broke.

Jude was kind of broke too
because he invested all this money
in buying a motorcycle riding school

because he didn't want to be
a social worker anymore

and he had a 3 year old,
and a nice house in Evanston,

and look how big and strong I turned out.	which are very expensive things to have.
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His brother in law Terrence, was starting a business selling assault rifle accessories at gun shows, but as an IT guy, he wasn't very charismatic and he was Black, and knew his Blackness was bad for his gun business, and Jude was very convivial and had more proximity to whiteness, so he offered to cut Jude in as the sales guy and Jude brought me along as his assistant. So for a few months on weekends we'd load Terrence's giant pickup truck with big black crates	of laser sights and tactical flashlights and camouflage grips, black white and gray for snow, brown, tan and green for jungle, pink and purple for women. We'd drive to gun clubs and trade shows all over Illinois and Indiana and set up our tables and displays and pretend to know a lot about assault rifles and their accessories and men, white men, white men in baseball caps with receding hairlines and pot bellies, which were not all descriptors I met at the time, would come to our tables and stroke and handle our accessories with fetishistic reverence and say "what are you getting on this?".
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Then after we'd unclench and exhale and get Panda express.

B2: 60 BPM (5:53–8:07)

I invite you
to consider your relationship
to the word masculine,

what feels good there,
what feels interesting.

What are the parts
that feel like good costuming,

like an outfit
that feels right to wear,

that holds you in
where you want it to,

that breathes
where you need something
to feel air.

Feel for the seams.

What does masculine move like,

let it expand
like a lung filling.

In this breath pattern
there is a long hold,

some considerations
about breath retention

are an invitation
to feel into fullness,

and to feel
into restriction.

I noticed the bodies of men
around me

and how they did
and didn't
look like my own.

When I feel threatened
I look for what I can steal.

When I steal
I worry I'll get caught,

so I hide.

When I hide
I don't want to be seen
anymore.

When I disappear,
I lose the present.

When I lose the present,
I lose feeling

which is the most honest thing
I can say
in this genre.

A3: 75 BPM (8:09–10:13)

And all these men, and the occasional wife, with their motley mix of subtle signifiers of right wing radicalism and paranoid survivalism, openly arming themselves as neighborhood militias, for the most part comfortably did business with us, the flop-banged boy-woman and Mexican biker,	After a few months I quit, and I think I convinced myself or at least told my girlfriend who never loved the arrangement it was for idealistic purposes but really I think I was tired of giving up my weekends.
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was the lesson about inclusivity? Or that long as you have something they want and they know they have the ability to subdue you by violent means should the need arise, you're ok, and/or was I in the long standing tradition of the Jewish merchant entered into the uneasy truce of supply and demand? Who knows.	This is my history with guns, up until my gun safety class at the Holyoke gun club, that I am required by law to take before I may legally purchase a firearm in the state of Massachusetts. On this same day, I was monitoring a tracking number from the USPS for a parcel scheduled for delivery, containing what I hoped would be my passport, renewed with the gender marker M, the marker I have carried for over a decade now, but which had recently been put up for debate by executive order.
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Trigger mechanics are a short choreography	I wasn't especially good at shooting,
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of pressure
and release.

It's actually very yogic
and requires

immense control
and submission.

You have to send energy upward
from your feet,

through your squared hips
and steadied shoulders,

and exhale slowly
with a relaxed gaze.

Rather than squeeze the trigger
you evenly distribute pressure

until the inevitable pop,

which you must work
to not anticipate
or brace against.

Above all
it involves rewiring your relationship
to time,

expanding fractions of seconds
into entire universes
of energy and attention.

but that said
it was the first time

I'd ever actually handled a gun,
let alone shot one.

The volunteer
supervising my live fire test

could barely contain
his frustration

as I repeatedly missed
my designated targets.

So, he gave me
the firearms equivalent
of training wheels,

a laser sight,
like the ones me and Jude had sold,

that projected a small red dot
which predicted the place

a bullet hole
would follow.

His breath was bad
and he was not
a good teacher.

I should have worn my glasses
which was hurting my aim,

but I felt solid
in my stance

with feet heavy
on the ground

trying to feel
a connection
to something below
the concrete.

I fired, with consideration for the paradox of learning to shoot guns from the people I suspected I might need to shoot, the same flushed and eager men from the gun shows, who don't have anything against anyone, just don't take anything they think is theirs or go near their houses. I fired over and over, sloppily at the target,	I fired while wanting to check the tracking number on my passport, I fired, worrying that I may not be able to leave the country again if I needed to or wanted to at least not without confession, humiliation, pleading to a representative of the state. Eventually I hit my requisite 20 shots between 4 targets.
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My fingers shook as I opened my passport envelope and found the now infamous Across reddit forms and transexual gossip networks the dreaded “information changed on application” letter.

B3: 60 BPM (10:14–11:39)

The letter informed me
the date of birth,
place of birth,
name or sex

was changed
on my passport application

A small red underline
sat under
"Name."

While my gender
remained intact,

my middle name
had been legally changed

from the floral
and feminine
Yasmine

to the enigmatic
and efficacious
letter Y.

It felt
like a disciplinary gesture,

my governmental paternus
reminding the conditions
of my manhood.

I am filled
and I am opened.

I take in
only what I can hold.

I release
on instinct,

from desire
and habit.

I am noticing
the river underneath
the river.

In this breath pattern
we practice

a lengthened exhale,

the space of which
may accommodate

sustained release.

Release
is home
and wandering,

a leaving/returning.

Inhale
to gather.

Exhale
to sort.

Squeeze,

to brace,
to be ready

for impact,
disappointment,
request.

Exhale:

refuse
or rehearse
or survive

or don't.

Release,

this time
with control.

Slow
instead,

articulate,

breath is exactly
where the boundaries
of our bodies cross

Co-mingle

Contaminate

ever open borders