Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

SURVEILLANCE Fulcrum: the support about which a lever turns; the part of an animal that serves as a hinge or support

Ashaki M. Jackson · Wednesday, January 27th, 2016

1.
Upon seeing her entire life drooped from a transparent noose, you consider the fulcrum, clean or crude, mechanical or flesh, working as a turn. You consider lynching mechanics and question which was raised first – the rope or the neck. You think of the ease with which dancers lift each other's bodies at particular curves and imagine a *neck hoist* bringing a faceless audience to its feet. You ask who is in this audience. You are in the audience.
2.
The officer leverages his weight on a beauty store window as he swings on the thick Black neck. The truth of this account hinges on two cellphone videos. Was it a chokehold, banned by police rules, or was it *a chokehold, banned by police rules*? Was the thick Black neck crushed for the sale of loosies? The fulcrum breaks and officers descend on the body. All of the questions seem breathless. What do you hear?
3.
The sharp motion of a passenger van can crack you open, wring your spinal cord and paralyze your breath. Now say, "Help." You watch the driver look back and see nothing. You and death are seizing but unremarkable. What you have learned is that fulcrums are constructed of bodies – two bodies joined at the chokehold, one body at its ligature mark. And if we break the body with indifference, it too becomes a hinge. You understand this as *a tipping point*.
(CURA: A Literary Magazine of Art & Action included "Fulcrum: the Support About Which a Lever Turns…" in its Fall 2015 issue ("Fulcrum;" #16).)

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For each of the following 10 weeks, we will feature one poem from ***Surveillance***, the new chapbook forthcoming from Writ Large Press. These poems by Ashaki M. Jackson explore police killings of Blacks captured on video and the public's consumption of these videos.

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