

from
crazy to
CONSCIOUS

the makings of black womynhood...

a photojournal by alliyah allen

About

Looking upon the surface, many of the actions committed by Black womyn are typically perceived as *crazy*. From Alice Walker's definitions of womanism to Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, it has been made abundantly clear that Black womyn have had to fight—not only for self preservation but also for the advancement and beauty of humanity. From a political lens, one might encounter the bravery of Rosa Parks or the strength of Assata Shakur. Economically, Oprah Winfrey broke through barriers becoming one of the richest *Black* womyn across multiple generations. And socially, we must pay homage to dancers like Katherine Dunham and performers like Beyonce for making strides in the entertainment industry. We thank these womyn, however, they represent a larger group of womyn who change the world every single day.

I am creating this photo journal to stray away from the typical discourse centered around Black womynhood. I understand how we often flock to stereotypes such as mammy, jezebel, or superwoman to quantify the magic that be black womyn. However, with the merging of both image and text, I hope to expand that discourse and unpack what really encompasses *#blackgirlmagic*. While language and words serve as points of entry to explore the vastness and intricacies of black womynhood, I am inviting the power of the image to invoke the feeling. Pay close attention to the eyes, the smiles, frowns, and skin. The image is a tool that lets us delve further into the meaning of a person or subject far beyond what a simple explanation or description can provide.

With these tools and history in mind, I urge readers to think deeply about the journey from crazy to conscious. I aim to show how Black womyn are throwing away the stigmatizing label of crazy, and using their inner lights, experiences, stories, and love to show just how woke they are. They operate at a higher level of consciousness that empowers them with the ability to see, feel, and be more than what many expect. This results in the survival and preservation of a people—which lets humanity thrive.

CRAZY

Where would my soul go? Is it even here? Would anything change. I don't know. I want to jump out of my skin. And scream. So so loudly. I wanna jump out of my skin and be free. I want the world to just stop. I want time to pause for one hour... that wouldn't exist. That way i sort out everything. my mind. my body. my heart. my sight. everything. im screwed. in so many different ways. if i list them i will go crazy. but i do not feel clear. or transparent. i feel invisible. like im there but not seen. i feel like a weight. bearing on my soul. my soul, my spirit is locked in a cage. im envisioning it now. my spirit, its like white circular light with a blue tinge to it. just wanting to break free. but it can't. it will forever be stuck. and now im starting to cry. thats great. i don't know where to go.

my mind is **black**. dark. no clarity. foggy and **thick**.

Writings from 2014.



Cancer

“Your love is too thick,’... ‘Too thick?’ she said... ‘Love is or it ain’t. Thin love ain’t love at all.’... ‘It worked,’ she said. ‘How? Your boys gone you don’t know where. One girl dead, the other won’t leave the yard. How did it work?’ ‘They ain’t at Sweet Home. Schoolteacher ain’t got em.’ ‘Maybe there’s worse.’ ‘It ain’t my job to know what’s worse. It’s my job to know what is and to keep them away from what I know is terrible. I did that.’ ‘What you did was wrong, Sethe.’ ‘I should have gone back there? Taken my babies back there?’ ‘There could have been a way. Some other way.’ ‘What way?’ ‘You got two feet, Sethe, not four’ he said, and right then a forest sprang up between them; trackless and quiet.”

-Beloved, Toni Morrison



“Sethe looked at her hands, her bottle-green sleeves, and thought how little color there was in the house and how strange that she had not missed it the way Baby did. Deliberate, she thought, it just be deliberate, because the last color she remembered was the pink chips in the head store of her baby girl. After that she became as color conscious as a hen. Every dawn she worked at fruit pies, potato dishes and vegetables while the cook did the soup, meat and all the rest. And she could not remember remembering a molly apple or a yellow squash. Every dawn she saw the dawn, but never acknowledged or remarked its color. There was something wrong with that. It was as though she saw red baby blood, another day the pink gravestone chips, and that was the last of it.”

-Beloved, Toni Morrison



Rhinoceros woman
who nobody wants
and everybody used.

they say you're crazy
cause you not crazy enough
to kneel when told to kneel.

hey, big woman
with scars on the head
and scars on the heart
that never seem to heal
i saw your light
and it was shining.

you gave them love.
they gave you shit.
you gave them you.
they gave you hollywood.
they purr at you
cause you know how to roar
and back it up realness.

rhinoceros woman.
big mamma in a little world.
you closed your eyes
and neon spun inside your head
cause it was dark outside.

you read your bible
but god never came.

your daddy woulda loved you
but what would the neighbors
say.

they hate you mamma

cause you expose their madness.
and their cruelty.

they can see in your eyes
a thousand nightmares
that they have made come true.

black woman. baad woman.
wear your bigness on your chest
like a badge
cause you done earned it.

strong woman. amazon.
wear your scars like jewelry
cause they were bought with
blood.

they call you mad.
and almost had you
believing that shit.

they called you ugly.
and you hid yourself
behind yourself
and wallowed in their shame.

rhinoceros woman
this world is blind
and slight of mind.
and cannot see
How beautiful you are.

i saw your light.
and it was shining.

Assata Shakur



light.

&

PAIN

to heal? to speak? to learn?
TO. BE.

“I am invited to speak, but only when I speak my pain.”
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-bell hooks



#sayHERname
not just in death or in pain.
but in light and in truth.



ANGELET MARIE ALLEN. BESSIE MAE ALLEN. ANGELA MARIE ALLEN. ALLIYAH MAE ALLEN. TORVEENA BULLOCK-BROWN. PATTY BROWN. SHEKERIA BROWN. JAMYRA BROWN. SELINA ALLEN. PATRICIA JAMES. TISHA FINNEY. ETTA BULLOCK. TALIKA BULLOCK. CRISHON BULLOCK. CHRISTINE BULLOCK. GAIL ALLEN. BARBARA LEACH. SIERRA SMITH. NYLA ROBINSON. MECCA BROWN. LON'DYN BRIELLE. JILL ALLEN. EBONY ALLEN. CAMREE SMITH. LACHERIE SMITH. CAMDEN SMITH. SHANIKA SMITH. KHLOE BENNETT. KELLY LEACH. KIMBERLY LEACH. GLORIA ALLEN. KEISHA BULLOCK. LAKYAH BULLOCK. LAMYAH BULLOCK. CHEYANN BULLOCK. THELMA FIELDS. THELMA BOYD. CHERYL FIELDS. KAYCEE FIELDS. KAJARA BOYD. KALISTA BOYD. KIAMANI WILSON. CHERYL RAYSOR. CHERYL LIMA. LYCHELL AJANEE HEMPHILL. LISA BROWN. GABRIELLE BROWN. MADISON ELDRIDGE. AKOSUA TAYLOR. KELLY TAYLOR. NANA AGEYMAN TAYLOR. EFFIE TAYLOR. ZARIAH GRIFFITH. ALIYAH GRIFFITH. ANNIE BARKOR. TALIA SCOTT. TORI'ELLE BAMFIELD. HADIYYAH GRAVES. LAVERNE DUNCAN. MONIQUE SCOTT. TERRI WILEY. CANDACE JORDAN. OLIVIA PORTE. NYASA HENDRIX. FATOU SYLLA. SABEA EVANS. JUANITA ST. THOMAS-GRIMES. AMIRAH KEATON. PROMISE KEATON. JAHAAAN KEATON. LAILA KEATON. ADEDOYIN EISAP. AFRAH YAA BOATENG. ASIMAH BOATENG. AMAKA EZE. ALICE ALLEN. ARLETTE WEAVER. ANGELETTE WEAVER. MELISSA WEAVER. MELINDA WEAVER. SHELLY ALLEN. HAMILA ALLE. JASMINE ALLEN. BRIDGETT HITCHINGS. CAROL WRIGHT. CRYSTAL DES O. DIOMAND HENRY. TOLANI BABATUNDE. FAITH DANGLO. KAMARA DYER SIMMS. KETRAH MUGAMBE. LANISE BEAVERS. MANYATA BERBICK. JASMINE RIVERA. MARILYN BAFFOE-BONNIE. MAYMUNA ABDI. MERCEDES DAVIS. NASRA FARAH. NENE DIALLO. NICOLE BONSU. NKECHI AMPAH. NICOLE JOHNSON. ZAREAH JOHNSON. NYHEMIA THOMPSON. NICOLA TATUM. GABRIELLE SMITH. PRAXEDES QUINTANA. RAMELCY URIBE. RASHIDAH ANDREWS. SEANNA VIECHWEG. SHALEIA THOMPSON. SHAQUANA DRURY. STEPHANIE HISTON. TAVORSIA TALLEY. THALIA BROWNRIDGE-SMITH. TIONNEY NIX. TITILAYO ODEDELE. RENEE KING. TOSIN ALLIYU. TOUN SHOYOYE. TYLER MANLEY. TYTIANA SPANN. ASSATA ACEY. ANGELA DAVIS. ASSATA SHAKUR. CARRIE MAE WEEMS. DEBORAH WILLS. ELLA BAKER. LAVERNE COX. TONI MORRISON. MAYA ANGELOU. LAURYN HILL. CICELY TYSON. MICHELLE OBAMA. SOLANGE KNOWLES. BEYONCE KNOWLES-CARTER. KELLY ROWLAND. JOSEPHINE BAKER, SUZAN LORI-PARKS. LAYLI MAPARYAN. NIKKI GIOVANNI. AMANDLA STENBERG. ZENDAYA. ALICE WALKER. HARRIET TUBMAN. MADAM C.J. WALKER. NINA SIMONE. OPRAH WINFREY. MARA BROCK-AKIL. CLAUDIA RANKINE. AVA DUVERNAY. ISSA RAE. AUDRE LORDE. bell hooks. ERYKAH BADU. LORRAINE HANSBERRY. ZORA NEALE HURSTON. RIHANNA. WILLOW SMITH. JADA PINKETT SMITH. QUEEN LATIFAH. MONIE LOVE. NICKI MINAJ. MC LYTE. ALICIA KEYS. DIANA ROSS. BEVERLY JOHNSON. JORDAN DUNN. NAOMI CAMPBELL. GABRIELLE UNION. WHITNEY HOUSTON. ANITA BAKER. ROSA PARKS, BILLIE HOLIDAY. ETTA JAMES. MARY MCLEOD BETHUNE. MAHALIA JACKSON. KATHERINE DUNHAM. KIMBERLY DREW. SALAMISHAH TILLET. SCHEHERAZADE TILLET. DANIELLE A. SCRUGGS. TANISHA ANDERSON. YVETTE SMITH. MIRIAM CAREY. SHELLY FREY. DARNISHA HARRIS. MALISSA WILLIAMS. ALESIA THOMAS. SHANTEL DAVIS. REKIA BOYD. SHEREESE FRANCIS. AIYANA STANLEY-JONES. TARIKA WILSON. KATHRYN JOHNSTON. ALBERTA SPRUILL. KENDRA JAMES. SANDRA BLAND.



“**LUXOCRACY** is inherent within the womanist idea, as well as its upshot. I know this because womanists recognize the Innate Divinity in all humans and all creation, as well as the principle of interbeing. In addition, womanists distinguish spirituality from religion, which opens up new possibilities. Thus, LUXOCRACY is implicit within womanism and must be recognized in order to draw out both the highest aspiration and most profound architecture of womanism. People do not expect LUXOCRACY to emanate from Black women’s thought, yet Black women have kept this flame of Innate Divinity and the Inner Light eternally lit across history, culture, and geography.”

The Womanist Idea, Layli Maparyan



angry

Black womyn

i have been locked by the lawless.
handcuffed by the haters.
gagged by the greedy.
and, if i know any thing at all,
it's that a wall is just a wall
and nothing more at all.
it can be broken down.

i believe in living.
i believe in birth.
i believe in the sweat of love
and in the fire of truth.

and i believe that a lost ship,
steered by tired, seasick sailors,
can still be guided home
to port.

Affirmation, Assata Shakur



“Black feminists often talk about their feelings of craziness before becoming conscious of the concepts of sexual politics, patriarchal rule, and most importantly, feminism, the political analysis and practice that we women use to struggle against our oppression. The fact that racial politics and indeed racism are pervasive factors in our lives did not allow us, and still does not allow most Black women, to look more deeply into our own experiences and, from that sharing and growing consciousness, to build a politics that will change our lives and inevitably end our oppression.”

-Combahee River Collective Statement

Work with wiley.weebly.com
twiley@philasd.org

Claim + rebuttal
Concluding Statement

YOURSELF

is sexy!

Use your brain!

Manson's Schedule
1st 8:00-8:50
2nd

OBJECTIVES

twiley@phila
sd.org
484-469-8508

Monday Dec. 12

AP Lit

English 4

English 3

I can submit my solicitation letter
I can secure an interview
I can conduct research IOT complete an annotated bibliography

I can read + research articles IOT take notes
I can complete an annotated bibliography
I can write an expository IOT start an essay

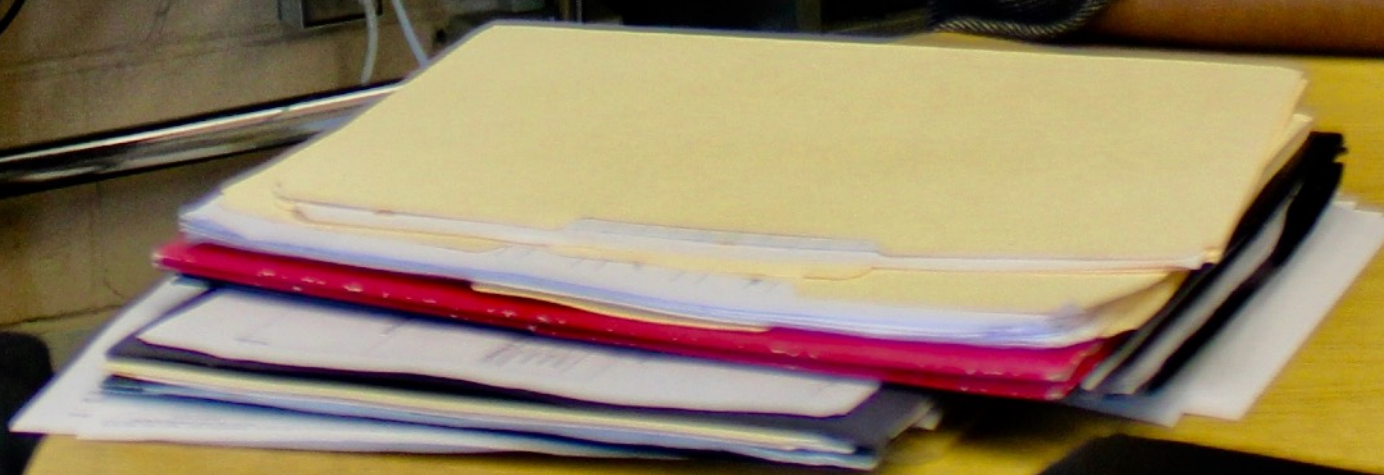
I can generate ideas & arguments
IOT complete an outline for an essay about the play, Fences

Research & Annotated Bibliography

1. Research and find useful article
2. Read the article(s)
3. Take notes on paper
4. Add to the Google Document—FIVE sources
Annotated Bibliography—Last Name
5. Write out the source for the

Wiley's Expectations
Do the work
Help someone
Listen
Do your best
Trust yourself
Be honest
Use kind words
Like each other

Prohibited actions in this room
• No eating
• No quitting
• No profanity
• No cellphones
• No cosmetology



“Womanist’ encompasses ‘feminist’ as it is defined by Webster’s, but also means instinctively pro-woman. It is not in the dictionary at all. Nonetheless, it has a strong root in Black women’s culture... Womanist 1. From womanish. (Opp. of 'girlish,' i.e. frivolous, irresponsible, not serious.) a black feminist or feminist of color. "A woman who loves other women, sexually and/or nonsexually... Sometimes loves individual men, sexually and/or nonsexually... Not a separatist, except periodically, for health.”

The Womanist Idea, Layli Maparyan



The Principle of Vibrations.

“Using an applied kinesiology method, David R. Hawkins devised a logarithmic scale of human emotions, thoughts, and states of mind that he named the Levels of Consciousness. On the scale, emotions, thoughts, and states of mind that we generally consider negative fall at the low (dense) end of the scale. The idea of such a scale is not new, but what is new is the idea that these nonmaterial forms of energy have lawful mathematical properties. The Hawkins model, for instance, lets us know that a vibration of “love” at 500 on the logarithmic scale is 10^{350} times more powerful than a vibration of “anger” at 150 on the logarithmic scale.”

The Womanist Idea, Layli Maparyan



#blackgirlmagic

“My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive; and to do so with some *passion*, some *compassion*, some *humor*, and some **style**”

Maya Angelou



“Here,” she said “in this here place, we flesh; flesh that weeps, laughs; flesh that dances on bare feet in grass. Love it. Love it hard. Yonder they do not love your flesh. They despise it. They don’t love your eyes, they’d just as soon pick em out. No more do they love the skin on your back. Yonder they flay it. And O my people they do not love your hands. Those they only use, tie, bind, chop off and leave empty. Love your hands! Love them. Raise them up and kiss them. Touch others with them, pat them together, stroke them on your face ‘cause they don’t love that either. You got to love it, you!...” Saying no more, she stood up then and danced with her twisted hip the rest of what her heart had to say while others opened their mouths and gave her music.

-Beloved, Toni Morrison



“Let your mothers hear you laugh” she told them, and the woods rang. The adults looked on and could not help smiling. Then, “Let the grown men come,” she shouted. They stepped out one by one from among the ringing trees. “Let your wives and your children see you dance,” she told them, and ground life shuddered under their feet. Finally she called the women to her. “Cry,” she told them. “For the living and the dead. Just cry.” And without covering their eyes the women let loose.

It started that way: laughing children, dancing men, crying women and then it got mixed up. Women stopped crying and danced; men sat down and cried; children danced, women laughed, children cried until, exhausted and riven, all and each lay about the Clearing damp and gasping for breath. in the silence that followed Baby Suggs, holy, offered up to them her great big heart.”

-Beloved, Toni Morrison



New Year. New You.

Nah but seriously Alliyah. You need to get it together. You're 18. Stop with the negativity. You've been through more than just a lot with the past year and you have a lot to be grateful and proud of. You have even more to look forward to. You are beautiful and deserving of every aspect of life. Just be patient and everything you want or rather everything you are supposed to have will come. And you will be happy then. But you need to focus your energy on being happy now. The past is important. And the future is exciting. But if you don't believe in yourself presently then all of these things are irrelevant. Love your mind. Admire your body-- even the parts you hate. Stay connected to your soul. And continue to grow. You are alright and please for me, relax. This new year will be amazing and just remember to take it day by day.

Love,

Alliyah

Letter to Self



The End.

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Maya Angelou

Credits

All Photography, Editing, and Design: Alliyah Allen.

December 2016.

Big Books in American Literature Final - Professor Anne Dalke.