

DONNIE MORELAND

Donnie Denkins Moreland Jr is a Minnesota based health educator and writer. Donnie has contributed to Black Youth Project, A Gathering of the Tribes, RaceBaitr, Black Humanist Agenda and Sage Group Publishing. Donnie hopes that by contributing to such a journal, he'll continue to be in communion with others dedicated to memorializing the wonder of our ancestry, so that we may properly imagine our futures.

Memories of Men

How do we live?

Suspended against the tide until they became us.

The tracker, the hunter, the chieftain, the shepherd, their children, their boys and their confidants.

But how do we live?

How do we confess the faces we've taken to avoid the slaver's net?

Like mud, we deform into their visions of the most trifling.

Their crook, their puppeteer, their preacher and their sick.

How we've lived.

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We kept our torso's above water, toes pushing into others too proud to shape, proper.

We drowned them.

Those women, and our brothers.

We drowned them.

And we stood tall, in that slipstream, praying the next ship continued course without reservation of what we were.

And at night, we sought our old faces.

We hoped that on bare, gaping waters given favor by the moon, we'd greet.... those Igbo

eyes.

That Ashanti nose.

Those Akan lips.

That Amalu scar.

But all that shown was our contrition. And as morning comes, we float still. Too prideful, and too violent to sink.

Too frightful to swim ahead.

That would require another turn of form.

One bend, more.

With new lines.

Newer angles.

And then it happens.

Beneath our feet, there is nothing to hold up our fat.

The others.

New lines.

Newer angles.

despite our brutality.

Patterns like what was stolen, ashore.

What we shed, to subdue the slaver's hunger.

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So how do we live, with what is left?

With what still hides, below the peak?

Maybe, we might do well to follow the one's ahead.

But to gain favor....

Atonement....

....resolution....

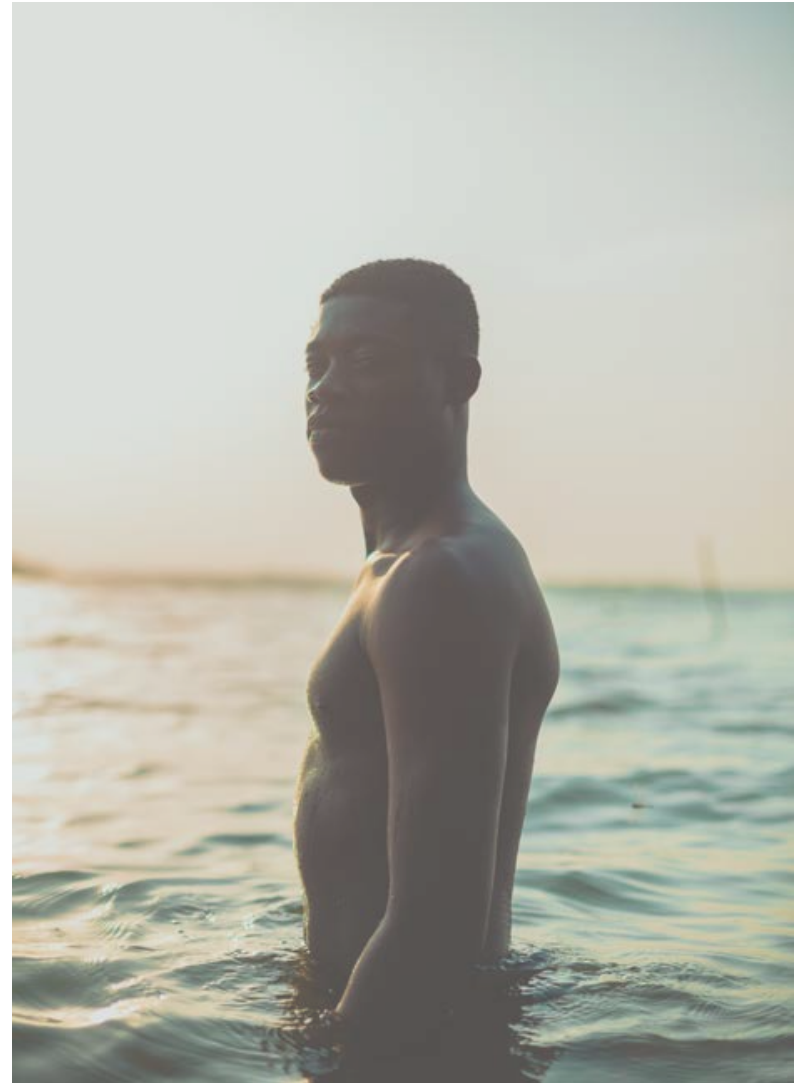
*....the tracker, the hunter,
the chieftain,
the shepherd
and their children.....*

....in the mouths of the boys we used to be.

Somewhere before the wake.

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