

ROOT WORK JOURNAL
SUMMONING FLIGHT: NAVIGATING BLACK
MYTHOLOGY, FLIGHT, AND ACTS OF REFUSAL,
VOL 2, ISS 1

BOOK OF INSTRUCTIONS

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Book of Instructions seeks to evoke the ancestral spirit calling us to freedom and guiding us to use the tools we've been given to construct our wings. Considering the prompt: what does it mean to fly from the proverbial and/or the literal plantation?

Ariana Francesca is an interdisciplinary poet and performer. Her work explores the positions, reflections, and interconnectedness of Black motherhood, womanhood, spirit, and epic memory. She was recently named Honorable Mention for Southern Humanities Review's Auburn Witness Poetry Prize. Her performance poetry has been featured at The Kennedy Center, The Verizon Center, on America's Next Top Model, and on other international stages. Her work is published in Netflix's Strong Black Lead, Burrow Press and elsewhere. She is also a Queens University of Charlotte MFA, Poetry candidate and Watering Hole Poetry Fellow, living in Atlanta, Georgia. She hopes that being in communion with the visionaries of Root Work Journal encourages opportunities to join hands, build wings, and manifest ancestral dreams. To find out more about her work, visit arifrancesca.com.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47106/12578311>

Citation: Francesca, A. (2022). Book of Instructions. Root Work Journal, 2(1).
<https://doi.org/10.47106/12578311>

Book of Instructions

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Meticulous, micro-stitched with intention
each feather a collection of lesson
each quill an instrument for poem.

This is how you construct faith,
place grace in your back pocket.

Babygirl, always bet on God,
you will never fail, fall, barely falter
cause those down feathers will swoop you up.

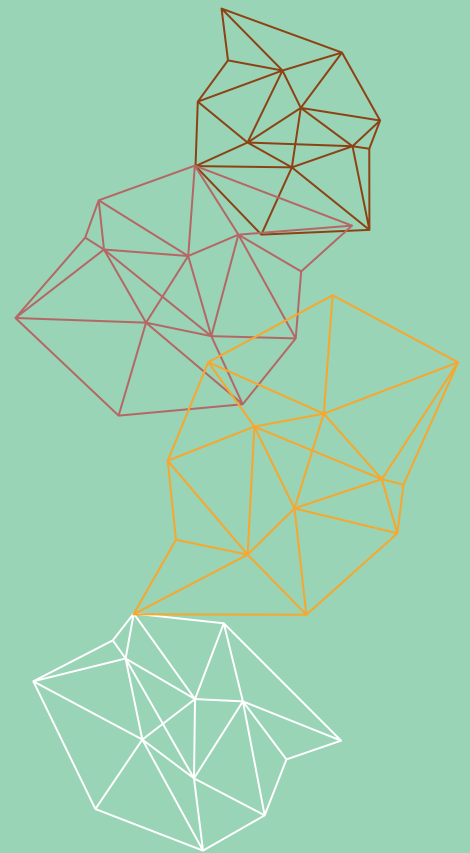
Keep a song in your heart-
beat to drum your wings to
when a hum is all the motivation you got.

Rub some ash in your underwing
the grit of ancestors, phoenix rising.

Forever the brightest flame,
burn beautiful.

Legend escaping to the bluest sky.
Craft your wings with strong will
and open mind,

to carry you beyond mile or moon,
but discern the truth.



know when to fly low,
and when lightning strikes,

Rise up. Fly high.
A storm is divine
from a bird's eye view.

And when you learn to lean
on your instinct,
being led by faith

there will be no constraints.
No chains, no weight. The wind
will keep you grounded.

After you craft the last draft
of your wings, fold these notes.
Fly them to the Light,

that every time you take flight
We will join you,
in the sky.