

PENDA SMITH

My name is Penda Smith and I am a First Wave graduate who is now an MFA Candidate for Poetry at Louisiana State University. I submit to this journal because of its reach past this world in search of a world where Black folks survive, while interrogating structural institutions that necessitate Black death.

what the ship could not hold

we are talking about love & its relation to possession;
you read me an excerpt from a book; love is not possessed
nor is it possession; is love then dispossession; an act of
refusal; a refusing of ownership, property, cargo;
enslaved africans held inside

of the ship's hold; feeling touch and touching feeling;
the creole word for women lovers is mati; she who
survived the middle passage with me; she who rollicked
who bled who oozed who moaned; but can
property exchange a quick glance; can property
swelter in heat with other property; can property
desire another property

she who refused with me; can property refuse;
then there is no property; then there are holes
inside of the hold; there is a refusal happening,
i say, as you hold me; space is realizing me,
i whisper; the liquid in me reaches the liquid in you;
there is a resistance against subjectivity;
i moan, my mouth refusing yours;

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