

LESLIE MCINTOSH

Epistle: the Fugue Between Life and Death Is (Always) Black

—for *Flying Lotus & Kendrick Lamar*

External to your gaze
is a fruit tree between
Dead-boy & Dead-girl.
Hollow shade and bread,
archetypal hands hold
the ready of, claim
possession of Demise
as the whip to push
ulterior sugar down
the block, dancing
with the clarity of debt
defrauded.
See them going back
where they did not
come from; see
them come from
back across
life, abject delight
gone ripe unseen,
obscene swift sweetness,
roving blackness flavor
ocean from rooftops
tonguing the stained
glass window, candid
over railings, across
backs of church
goings, of black hats
hung on knobbed black heads,
chiseled, scaredy-ass
beauty. The eye
ever trained
to latchhook
without question,
the same day
worn day-to-day:
visible unseen,
candy coats,
the realness
we roll up

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sleeves to irritate
our debt
repayment.
Simple and straight,
a debt. Settled over
black hats, black
heads that don't see
where they don't know
they come from.
No need to see
the bright fractal photon
of the fruit skinned:
dried, electrolyte
bused out of
the delicate, to pave
futile, to fail.
Yes, this body
savors failure.
The sweet still between
dead-boy & girl
is deep enough
to nourish tent cities
without showing,
uncorking dirges
to put you where
you didn't see you
leaving out of to go to,
to taste,
stately repose
in the secret
of your party
hearse, the furnish
of our
open ready.

Heartfelt,
Bayard Rustin