

BLACK, WHITE & BLUE

*Shannon Cumberbatch**

As our rich dark skin melts into the pitch dark night
the Blue draws to the Black
like moths drawn to the light
with cuffs that clutch us
in the system's clutches
caging our culture for profit
in the guise of justice

they say it is our darkness
that draws them—dangerously close
that makes us bad
that makes them mad
that makes Blue draw red from Black
blow Blue holes through Black backs

they say it is our darkness
that warrants our bondage
that makes despondent fathers
fatherless daughters
barred brothers
lonely, mourning mothers
mornings learning yet another
hashtag

flashback
to the promise of liberation
back about 154 years
roughly 1,848 months
over 8,030 weeks
since supposed emancipation
and still no peace
still more grief
still Black bodies slain in Black streets
by Blue forces
borne of white sheets with lit torches
they torture us

* Staff Attorney, The Bronx Defenders. J.D., New York University School of Law.

Black boys & girls
behind Black bars
Black mothers
wearing Black scarves
to bury their babies
their brothers
their lovers
to bury their grief!

The roots run deep
In the soil beneath the trees
where Black bodies hung limp
and blew in the breeze like leaves