

## **Re: The Senders**

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August 23, 2021

It was Summer 2020, a dear Queer friend of mine was running for county council in a laughably red district back in my home state of South Carolina. She knew she couldn't win; that wasn't the point. The point was to challenge the system of iron veils and inaccessibility that lead to the same racist white capitalists winning time and time again wholly unchallenged. For the launch party, which was held outdoors in a very socially distanced empty lot, she asked me to write a poem about anything I felt needed to be said - to my hometown and the broader world. Pulling back the curtain - collecting the receipts, if you will.

There's a lot more in this poem than just references to gentrification, but I won't go about explaining all the things; I suspect y'all are keen enough to pick up the themes. I will say this; no one gets off scot-free, myself included. I am aware of my proximity to Whiteness as a mixed-race kid and how it's directly linked to my access to spaces that folks darker than me or poorer than me wouldn't even be considered for from the muthafuckin' jump.

I'm here in Detroit now for the foreseeable future, and I am very wary of all the Senders, suburbanites, or otherwise. Equally aware of the terrifying prospect of becoming a Sender myself. I could list all the reasons why I am actively not, but that seems rather self-indulgent. That is not your emotional burden to carry. We all have our own shit. I have a deep mad affection for this city and it grows stronger with each passing day. While I try not to lead with bitterness or anger because it's exhausting and unsustainable, I do experience much of the quiet fury contained in this poem on a daily basis, just walking around in public. There's a duality to my existence that is a razor blade tightrope. Good thing I've got great shoes and thicker calluses.

Maybe that is what poetry is for, in the end—holding space in the Room, defiant, furious, tender, and sturdy - a holdover and WIP until we burn down all their capitalistic colonizer bullshit and build just the most exquisite of gardens.

I look forward to that fire. I look forward to that garden.



You are in a room.  
It is not abundantly large or particularly small.  
It is well decorated, aesthetically pleasing.  
The room has no windows and no doors but  
there are people in the room who speak fondly of bringing  
windows and doors to the room in order to increase the  
room's visibility in the public eye.

There are many people in the room who champion the room,  
with its benches and foliage and spaces for industry and in-  
novation.

There are plenty of spaces in the room for photoshoots and  
photo opps so that all can remember they have been to the  
room.

It is potentially a mystery how one gets in and out of the  
room, considering there are no windows or doors but most  
do not seem troubled by the realization because the room is  
beautiful and the people around them believe the room is  
beautiful and say it loudly in person and on the small digital  
devices they keep in their hands.

Every so often in the room there will be a murmur, a stirring  
of discomfort,  
there will be a wringing of hands and many guilty messages  
sent to people in the room who do not need these messages  
in the least.

The messages are not for them.

The room is not for them.

The senders do not realize that the receivers of the message  
are slowly suffocating in this room.

The room does not care about them, the room has been cre-  
ated in a way that the senders will always be ok and the re-  
ceivers will drown under the pressure of ignorance or per-  
formance or a combination of both.

But the room is beautiful.



And the senders like to be distracted, with brunch, and the internet, and photoshoots, and brunch, and the internet, the room is beautiful, don't you see.

The room is beautiful, it's plant life, with their leaves that don't wilt because they're plastic, and their crystal clear water that they siphon from stolen spots within the room but it's fine

because those spots have been marked with statues and 5 story murals

and the room knows how to stay clean after twisted metal is routinely unloaded into bodies in the room-

and the room knows how to make people disappear, it's a magic trick,

which should be sinister but most of the people in the room don't care where those other people go because the room is beautiful.

And as long as the room is only beautiful there will be a closet in the room,

full of dead and rotting corpses but their scent is buried under the latest Le Labo fragrance and there's a new IPA on tap.

If you find yourself in the room.

Burn it down.

Don't believe what the senders of messages in the room have to say about the room.

The room is not the world.

It is only a room.

*runner*

*Audio recording and images courtesy of MJ Slide*