

Omer Ahmed  
Two Poems, January 2020

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### **American Apnea**

My parents don't let me sleep when I visit them.  
They fear my body will kill itself, once I shut my eyes.

I have sleep apnea. And they hear me  
Struggle/ Cough/ Gasp/ Breathe/ Struggle/ Struggle/  
Choke.

And then I wake up.

When I look in the mirror,  
I fear everyday my body  
Will kill Itself. That my Skin,  
Can't Garner enough alive.  
That it will attract the wrong  
Company. It will attract it's  
Opposite. Like, Me to Them.

Or,

Seasoned to Unseasoned.  
Unarmed to Armed.  
Pleading to uniform.  
Kneeling to badge.  
Black to Alive.

Asleep or Awake,

Eventually,

*I Can't Breathe.*

**All my niggas is casket pretty**

**Or: An alternate universe in which the police have squirt guns instead of hand guns**

My family has never spoken a single word out loud.  
This is how I know, my brother didn't say anything to provoke the officers.  
He was unarmed,  
So they lent their fists and limbs  
In what seemed to be the most dangerous game  
Of head shoulders knees and steel toe boots.

My grandfather,  
Reanimates his corpse to seek justice,  
And the police detain him  
On account of his blackness being both public and indecent.

When I come to pay his bail  
I see them eating my grandfathers 11th and 12th rib,  
Like that might cut the lineage of all my grandmothers children

My grandfather was a giant at 6'8,  
But now I hold him in a tupperware container.  
I can only pray they choke on his bones,

I ask my grandfather why they keep butchering us

*And imagine his ghost responding*  
*"A pig's orgasm can last up to 30 minutes"*

But the reality is,  
His remains are silent and still,  
Because dead folks can't talk,  
And alive has always only been a visitor.