

■
FOR EVERY
YEAR
OF MY LIFE

Rene Matic
■



Me at Grans, Rene Matic, 2019

1. What is a Nigga? I've never really grasped it. The dictionary says it's a term used to address a black person. Jungle Pussy says she's 'in love with your Nigga'. Patti Smith says that she's a 'nigger of the universe.' The boy I met on Christmas eve 2016 says a Nigga is me, something to consume, to 'bend over and fuck.' My oldest brother says he's a Nigga. My other brother can't bring himself to say the word. My wife sings Drake lyrics but leaves gaps where the word is supposed to be sung, she is Caucasian. The white boy I punched at the Kendrick Lamar concert didn't leave gaps. Nigga charges my fists up to kill, as white boy found out. Nigga is sister is brother is hater is lover is other. Nigga is and nigga is not.


2. I look up from my laptop and scan the café. Its 1pm. I have just come from an appointment to get a mould made for some grills, I'm not sure what part of London I'm in. The world is blurry because I don't have my glasses on. I can only see what is in front of me: my dry croissant, my empty coffee cup, my sunglasses, my laptop, my brown fingers, my pink nails, my silver rings, my Public Enemy x Supreme jumper that repeatedly reads 'FEAR OF A BLACK PLANET.' I put my glasses on. Why do all cafes look like this? Half finished, industrial, *edgy*. You hate the cafe in which you enjoy your coffee. Everyone is eating avocado and – oh, I am the only black person here. I take my feet down from the chair opposite me. I straighten my back. I start to need a cigarette and I realise

that

Nigger is the wind that blows between them and I


Between Him and I


3. I can't believe that this whole time I thought I wasn't looking at him. I knew he'd been looking *for* me, *through* me even, don't get me wrong but, I didn't know I was this good at hiding. Thank you Jimmy for letting me know. Although not thank you, me, because I don't know if I'll be able to find myself in time. I was always good at hide and seek. Actually, the best part of hide and seek is when you are under the bed watching the feet of the person looking for you. Or when you are behind the curtain and you see their shadow. Their violent shadow. His violent shadow. I've been watching you the whole time big boy! He is big we cannot deny that. Although he always does because he cannot find himself either. That is why he searches for me. But he never looks under the bed or behind the curtain because like I said, I'm good at hiding. Actually not because of that. Its because the room is the wrong way around for him... I've written about that before.



4. And he is so desperate to find me, he keeps going back to the same spots in hope that I will appear. Tragic. Desperate boy. Of course, some of us try and help them out. Partly because its tiring playing for this long. I ain't blame you, we've all been there.


5. People get nervous when one rocks the boat in a world that has oceans filled with the bodies of black slaves. It isn't hard to draw out the flaws and failures of something as fabricated and dreamt up as imperialist, white supremacist, heteropatriarchy; to understand its discomfort, to expose it, to embarrass it. All I had to do was be born. All I had to do was watch.





6. My eldest Brother who wears his mental health on his sleeve and in his fists is full of sticky sweetness but bruised and oozing. My brother has the ability to leak all over everyone, sometimes drowning them, sometime quenching them. Ain't that toxic, fragile masculinity in a nutshell!? My brother, my big grown up thirty one year old baby brother. My Brother, my man, my child. My MAN CHILD throwing toys out the pram and into the faces of we who love him, who covet him. Fuck you but come here and let me stroke your forehead. I love you bully boy.

7. I don't know. Perhaps because his pain is so red and burning, so ugly and so all-consuming but so transparent. This conjunction of masculinity and violence and also racism. I don't know, I just don't know. But I do. All we had to do was be born.






8. Sorry dear reader for my writing is a reflection of my insides and perhaps my outsides too.

9. Isn't there a myth about doppelgangers? If you look each other in the eye you will both perish? This is like that. The fragility of whiteness (and masculinity for that matter) is so dainty and weak. If one fine day it happened upon itself, like a vampire exposed to light, it would, and it does, dissolve into a reality of its own nothingness.






10. I am not looking for anything here. No, I am. I'm always looking for something. I'm trying to understand evil without giving it power. I'm looking for the child in evil. Badness is a pill that we all swallow and it ain't even that bitter. It rests within us, as comfortable as discomfort can. As our lady Toni Morrison says, goodness is mute. Goodness sure is now that you're gone Tony baby, God bless you. 'Evil is compelling, goodness lurks backstage... Evil has vivid speech, goodness bites its tongue.'

Doesn't that just punch you in the fucking face.


11. Maybe I should get back to hide and seek, maybe I was on to something there. Because I, goodness, blackness, am behind the curtain. HA! Now I'm thinking about it like a Westend show. The curtain is a deep red velvet and I am dressed as me, all of me. The audience is him. The curtain rises and the light licks every part of me. The music is 'you keep me hangin on' by Diana Ross and the Supremes. I'm lip syncing for their lives.



12. *SET ME FREE WHY DON'T YOU BABE / GET OUT MY LIFE WHY DON'T YOU BABE / YOU DON'T REALLY LOVE ME / BUT YOU KEEP ME HANGING ON / YOU DON'T REALLY NEED ME / BUT YOU KEEP ME HANGIN ON.*

13. That's a song from goodness to badness baby. However, you do *need me*. You love to feel that wind on your face. Gives you an excuse to wear that raggedy ass jumper of yours, passed down through generations.







14. Why must I speak in metaphors? I am struggling to find words for whatever this is. There is nothing free about words and yet the reason we write is to find some sort of freedom. Looking for freedom within the English language is like looking for a needle in a haystack (metaphor lol). This is the language of the coloniser. Good luck.

15. This is not my language, and this is not my problem. But then -

And I don't know if I should write about this here






16. But Rene, maybe it's time you

maybe

Because


17. My father attempted suicide last month at 56 years of age because he lost himself down the back of the sofa.






18. Fifty six years of watching the shadows; an expert both on and at badness. My father, my Dad, my blackness, my problem. My drowning lungs. We are punctured.


19. I already knew because we share the same heart. I couldn't feel anything but the wind that day and for the first time in a long time, it swept me off my tiny giant feet. I floated up into the sky above where I was on oxford street and punched the whole world in its ugly fucking face.





20. I got toxic fragile masculinity too you know? I got it from you, him. I get it from him everyday. Because all there is to do is watch.

21. It is true what they say about Him being God.



22. All they have to do is die.

