

CRITICAL COMMUNAL CONFRONTATIONS

We must confront ourselves—together.
We must arrive—together.
We must become—together.
We will breathe—together.

I. FORGIVENESS WITNESS

Mantras:

- I am healing, I am healing alongside others.
- I am dreaming about possibilities; I am embodying all possibilities.
- I am a part of a loving community, with a shared sense of purpose and action. Together, we can do anything.

Questions:

- Where does forgiveness sit within you?
- Where has it been withheld from you?
- How does it impact our ability to see & feel one another? Is it relevant to our communal breath?

REFLECTION

The first offerings assembled best serve our community as a sort of Preamble to the ritual itself. They offer such valuable context and history. They introduce us to the practices, dreams, and inspirations that gave birth to this experience.

We believe engaging with Black mothers' words of wisdom on forgiveness is more than enough to begin our journey together. The voices of mothers, of wisdom, of grief, of hope—might be the best grounding possible for the rest of the week. Centering their words rather than even the libretto itself. We invite participants to allow these words & the energies they carry to draw out parts of themselves that will be required as we navigate the rest of the week.

*The ultimate question this Ritual asks of us is: **What is the purpose of maintaining our breath if it brings resistance?***

The path it offers us is:

To reunite while distressed and abandoned, with our bodies full of beauty & fear. To see, hold, believe, & forgive one another...so that we might all breathe together again—free.

II. FEAR

Mantras:

- I am open. I am open to love.
- I am open to care and connect with myself, others. I am open to my feelings.
- I am open to receiving. I am open to the present moment.
- I am open to my future.

Questions:

- If our resistance is rooted in closing our disconnection, what parts of our connection are we afraid of? Where are we scared of one another? What do we fear of ourselves?

III. FLESH & BLOOD: THE BEAUTY OF THE BODY PROPER

Mantra:

- I am beautiful, healthy, and whole.
- I reclaim all aspects of myself that I have given away to others.
- I am enough, and I accept myself.

Questions:

- What parts of our bodies do we determine to be disposable? Ugly? Where has our beauty been hidden & how might it be reclaimed?

IV. A QUESTION OF ABANDONMENT

Mantras:

- I am safe when I am alone, I am safe with others.
- I am held, and safe, in the circle of my community.
- I am in a process of reconciliation with myself, and others.

Questions:

- What have we left behind? What do we have hesitation to leave behind?
- What needs to be retrieved? From where? How?

V. DISTRESS: HIS LAST WORDS

Mantras:

- I am in alignment with ease and flow, and get to take my time.
- I am patient with myself, and others, and release control.
- I am self-aware and manage my own emotions, not others.

Questions:

- Does our ease exist? What is the role of our distress? What can/do we do with it? What stands in the way of our realizing this dream?

VI. REUNION: ELEGY FOR ERICA

Mantras:

- I am compassionate and vulnerable and move in love.
- I am connected to all life, and come together with others for the good of humanity.
- I am always growing and open to connection.

Questions:

- Might it be possible for us to come together? Why or why not? Who/what is served by our aversion to it? What/who might we support or be supported by to overcome that separation?
- How might we claim reunion & integration with one another—and ourselves?

VII. TO BREATHE IS TO RECLAIM FREEDOM

Mantras:

- I am breathing, feeling, living, and resting as an act of resistance.
- We are breathing into this moment, with you in mind.
- Together, we will breathe forever.

Questions:

- Let us breathe. How does it feel? How will we continue to do so?