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Notes

My Witch Trial¹ — written from what I actually experienced in my home county, and for those who conjured their own myths about me and my family, mistaking gossip for truth and fantasy for fact...may they feel the sting of recognition.

Just, Life, Kindness² — dedicated to Todd Snider, whose songs and stories continue to guide my own. Every time I read this, I imagine him speaking these words on stage, between his songs and stories. His music and spirit have inspired me in more ways than I can express. I will always be grateful and a big fan. Rest easy.

L.A. Riots³ — inspired by the real events of the L.A. Riots I witnessed on television in my youth in the early 90's. I was struck by the brutality and struggled to understand how such racism could persist. Years later, the tragic deaths of three more Black individuals rooted in brutality, revealed that this type of violence is still very much present. This poem emerges from witnessing that painful truth repeat itself and with the hope for change. May it also spark debate, conversations, and many questions.

Fuck You Mother! Fuck You Mom!⁴ — this piece is addressed to my mother and reflects accurate events as I experienced them, conveyed through unfiltered emotion and personal perspective. My mother always called me Jada, still not sure why, she was the only one.

Bean⁵ — for Anthony, my husband, once nicknamed “Bean” by his friends. This poem reflects the true unfolding of how we found each other and the quiet guidance that led me to him.

The Ring⁶ — inspired by my wedding band (also, for Ant).

Ode to Ant⁷ — dedicated to Anthony, written in March 1997 and still filled with all my love.

Undo⁸ — because I couldn't imagine my life without Anthony in it and I don't want to.

Tone and Legacy⁹ — For Aaron Tecumseh Mackey.

This poem is meant to be read as each person speaks to the other about the love and time they shared. They speak in parallel – unable to hear one another, yet remembering the same moments from their shared past. The man's voice appears in italics to distinguish it visually. Their dialogue moves across time, his rooted in the moment, hers shaped by memory, meeting in the space between what was and what remains.

This piece is inspired by the many fantastical writings Aaron and I exchanged decades ago. I loved his friendship, and this piece mirrors the tone of the stories we used to build together, each of us adding to the other's. I still have several of those writings and I will forever hold them dear. In many ways, I still feel his *tone*.