The Black Odyssey: A Human Collage

I, Darian Ramone Wilson, stand before you today no hero. 
I am just a black man, making my way through this tangled web of life. 
I am a man that is only but a man. 
Egotistical, ignorant, and arrogant. 
But yet afraid, lost, and flawed. 
I am only on year 22 on a journey of 1,000 miles. 
I am just the latest warrior to walk down our history’s path. 
I am following in Romare Bearden’s footsteps. 
I try to sing on these pages the way he did on those canvases. 
We are soldiers of the same creed. 
And our Trojan War has been being waged for more than 500 years.

You see black people were born from the ocean. 
Slick and smooth. 
We can speak like water and move like the wind. 
We are flexible. 
Our hues are darker than the blues, we’re known for. 
We rule with an indigo mood. 
There is a Poseidon in all of us. 
Which is why it makes sense our 1st journey began on the on the waves of the ocean. 
We were taken from our homeland by men born from fire. 
Like Odysseus. 
Angry, vain, and full of pride. 
They set out to conquer the world. 
And everyone in it. 
Our displacement has made into harried warriors. 
Confused. 
Angry. 
Falling apart. 
We are not quite stable on these foreign lands. 
As a people we are built on faults, but we are not broken. 
We are layered. 
The tectonic shifts in our history have been vastly caused by ourselves in motion.

We have always wanted the world as we know it. 
Free and full of love. 
But anger be now our song. 
We speak smooth talk of death because we are familiar. 
Violence and pain, we know them all too well. 
Like the lyrics of our favorite song. 
And while we wish for peace and love and acceptance, 
We are often shown the opposite.
We are a complex people.
Jumbled and layered.
One and multiple, at the same time.
The juxtaposition of our culture may not make sense.
But I promise we are all different but yet the same.
Just like the pieces of a collage.

My people have been on our Odyssey since the beginning of time.
Much like the Cyclops, we have been blinded by Nobody.
A faceless force that is never seen and rarely heard, but always present.
Nobody had promised us sweetness to match our homes.
He tricked us with flashy fallacies of greed and folly.
That only doubled our suffering.
We have been stretched to our limits on this odyssey.
But we are still here and we are still pushing.

But I cannot lie to you.
I am tired.
Even though I am less than a mile into my own Odyssey, I am exhausted.
I am sick of the fighting, I am sick of all this rage I have.
I just want give up and crawl into a world of bliss with my Circe.
I want to forget the outside world and fall into her strength.
And allow her to help me carry these burdens I no longer wish to hold on my own.
I want to lay down my sword and my shield.
I don’t want to study war no more.
But I can’t.
These battles were chosen for me by fate.
And fate cannot be avoided, only mastered.
And master it I shall.

No matter the level of suffering,
and the number of obstacles we may face,
we are all on this lifelong Odyssey and it is universal.
And all of our Odysseys are just pieces of this collage titled humanity.
We all have a role in this collage.
And more importantly we are all just small parts of a larger canvas.
And there is no doubt that we, as humans, have a long way to go in understanding that.
Our collage, messy and juxtaposed, is not quite ready for the halls of the Chazen just yet.
But the collage of 1000 pieces began with just one scrap.
The poem of 1000 lines began with just one word.
And the Odyssey of 1000 miles begins with just one step.
You’ll never know where you are going or where you’ll end up.
You just have to go.
And like Odysseus, never stop.

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