

**For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide/
when the rainbow is enuf**

A Choreopoem by Ntozake Shange

Presented by VCUarts Theatre, Fall 2024

Directed by Dr. Tawnya Pettiford-Wates

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one

i used to live in the world (harlem)

pyramid

Love Poem #1

Love Poem #2

Love Poem #3

Love Poem #4

somebody almost walked off wid alla my stuff

sorry

a night with beau willie brown

a layin on of hands

LX 0.1 - Blackout Check

LX 0.9 House opens
SQ 0

STBY LX 1-6
STBY SQ 0.1-5

LX 1 House 1/2
SQ 0.1 Preshow Ann.
STBY CL 1-6

LX 2 - House Out
SQ 1 - No scwbs

LX 3 - 1/2 Blackout

LX 4 top of show
SQ 5

CL 1
↓
CL 2
↓
CL 3
↓
CL 4
↓
CL 5
↓
CL 6
CLEAR CL
CL 1
CL 6
CLEAR CL 4
CL 6

LX 5 ① *everyone frozen*

dark phrases

lady in purple

dark phrases of womanhood

of never havin been a girl

half-notes scattered

without rhythm/ no tune

distraught laughter fallin

over a black girl's shoulder

it's funny/ it's hysterical

the melody-less-ness of her dance

don't tell nobody don't tell a soul

she's dancing on beer cans & shingles

this must be the spook house

another song with no singers

lyrics/ no voices

& interrupted solos

unseen performances

are we ghouls?

children of horror?

the joke?

don't tell nobody don't tell a soul

are we animals? have we gone crazy?

i can't hear anythin

but maddening screams

& the soft strains of death

& you promised me

dark phrases

STBY SQ 10-11.5 you promised me ...

STBY LX 7

somebody/ anybody

sing a black girl's song

bring her out

to know herself

to know you

but sing her rhythms

carin / struggle / hard times

SQ 10

sing her song of life

she's been dead so long

closed in silence for so long

she doesn't know the sound

of her own voice

her infinite beauty

she's half-notes scattered

SQ 10.5

without rhythm/ no tune

sing her sighs

SQ 11

sing the song of her possibilities

sing a righteous gospel

the making of a melody

let her be born

let her be born

& handled warmly

LX 7

lady in purple

i'm outside Prince George's County

dark phrases

pages 3 - 5

lady in yellow

i'm outside Alexandria

lady in red

i'm outside Washington DC

STBY LX 8

lady in green

i'm outside Chesapeake

lady in blue

i'm outside Birmingham

lady in orange

i'm outside Maryland

lady in pink

i'm outside Richmond

lady in teal

i'm outside Rocky Mount

lady in gold

i'm outside Glen Allen

lady in lavender

i'm outside Norfolk

lady in fuschia

i'm outside Laurel

SQ 11.5

lady in purple

& this is for colored girls who have considered suicide

but moved to the ends of their own rainbows

LX 8

green, lavender, blue

mama's little baby likes shortnin, shortnin,

mama's little baby likes shortnin bread

green, lavender, blue, purple, yellow, gold

mama's little baby likes shortnin, shortnin,

dark phrases

pages 3 - 5

mama's little baby likes shortnin bread

STBY LX 9-11

red, fuschia, orange, pink, teal
put on the skillet

put on the lid

red, fuschia, orange, pink, teal, green, lavender, blue
git that baby

⑦ ⑦ XUS

LX 9

all
some shortnin bread

lemonade, crunchy ice

sip it once, sip it twice

lemonade crunchy ice

sip it once sip it twice

turn around, touch the ground

kick your boyfriend out of town

lemonade, crunchy ice

sip it once, sip it twice

lemonade crunchy ice

sip it once sip it twice

turn around, touch the ground

kick your boyfriend out of town

truth or dare

i dont care

put a peace sign in the air

now freeze

⑦ ladies ext

LX 10

lady in purple
you're it

dark phrases

pages 3 - 5

roussaint

lady in pink

LX 11

de library waz right down from de trolly tracks

cross from de laundry-mat

thru de big shinin floors & granite pillars

ol st. louis is famous for

i found toussaint

but not til after months uv

cajun katie/ pippi longstockin

christopher robin/ eddie heyward & a pooh bear

in the children's room

LX 12

only pioneer girls & magic rabbits

& big city white boys

i knew i waznt sposedta

but i ran into the ADULT READING ROOM

& came across

TOUSSAINT

my first blk man

(i never counted george washington carver

cuz i didnt like peanuts)

still

TOUSSAINT waz a blk man a negro like my mama say

who refused to be a slave

& he spoke french

& didnt low no white man to tell him nothin

toussaint

pages 5- 8

not napolean
not maximilien
not robespierre

TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE

waz the beginin uv reality for me
in the summer contest for
who colored child can read
15 books in three weeks

STBY LX 13

i won & raved abt TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE

at the afternoon ceremony

waz disqualified

cuz Toussaint

belonged in the ADULT READING ROOM

LX 13

& i cried

& carried dead Toussaint home in the book

he waz dead & living to me

cuz TOUSSAINT & them

they held the citadel gainst the french

wid the spirits of ol dead africans from otta the ground

TOUSSAINT led they army of zombies

walkin cannon ball shootin spirits to free Haiti

& they waznt slaves no more

TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE

became my secret lover at the age of 8

i entertained him in my bedroom

widda flashlight under my covers

way into the night/ we discussed strategies

how to remove white girls from my hopscotch games

& etc.

TOUSSAINT

waz laying in bed wit me next to raggedy ann

the night i decided to run away from my

integrated home

integrated street

integrated school

1955 waz not a good year for lil blk girls

Toussaint said 'lets go to haiti'

i said 'awright'

& packed some very important things in a brown paper bag

soi wdnt haveta come back

then Toussaint & i took the hodiament streetcar

to the river

last stop

only 15¢

cuz there waznt nobody cd see Toussaint cept me

we walked all down thru north st. louis

where the french settlers usedta live

in tiny brick houses all huddled together

wit barely missin windows & shingles uneven

wit colored kids playin & women on low porches sippin beer

i cd talk to 'Toussaint down by the river

like this waz where we waz gonna stow away

on a boat for new orleans

& catch a creole fishin-rig for port-au-prince

then we waz just gonna read & talk all the time

& eat fried bananas

we waz just walkin & skippin past ol drunk men

when dis ol young boy jumped out at me sayin

'HEY GIRL YA BETTAH COME OVAH HEAH N TALK TO ME'

well

i turned to 'TOUSSAINT' (who waz furious)

& i shouted

'ya silly ol boy

ya bettah leave me alone

or 'TOUSSAINT'S gonna get yr ass'

de silly ol boy came round de corner laughin all in my face

'yellah gal

ya sure must be somebody to know my name so quick'

i waz disgusted

& wanted to get on to haiti

widout some tacky ol boy botherin me

still he kept standin there

kickin milk cartons & bits of brick

tryin to get all in my business

i mumbled to L'OUVERTURE 'what shd i do'

finally

i asked this silly ol boy

'WELL WHO ARE YOU?'

he say

'MY NAME IS TOUSSAINT JONES'

well

i looked right at him

those skidded out corderoy pants

a striped teashirt wid holes in both elbows

a new scab over his left eye

& i said

'what's yr name again'

he say

'i'm toussaint jones'

'wow

i am on my way to see

TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE in HAITI

are ya any kin to him

he dont take no stuff from no white folks

& they gotta country all they own

& there aint no slaves'

that silly ol boy squinted his face all up

'looka heah girl

i am 'TOUSSAINT JONES

& i'm right heah lookin at ya

& i dont take no stuff from white folks
ya dont see none round heah do ya?'
& he sorta pushed out his chest
then he say
'come on lets go on down to the docks
& look at the boats'
i waz real puzzled gain down to the docks
wit my paper bag & my books
i felt TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE sorta leave me
& i waz sad
til i realized
TOUSSAINT JONES waznt too different
from TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE
cept the ol one waz in haiti
& this one wid me speakin english & eatin apples
yeah.
toussaint jones waz awright wit me
no tellin what all spirits we cd move
down by the river
st. louis 1955 hey wait.

STBY LX 18

© PL. ex-
LX 18

little sally walker, walkin down the street
she didn't know what to do so she stopped in front of me
she said go on girl shake that thing
shake that thing now stop
go on girl shake that thing
shake that thing now stop

STBY SQ 25-25.5

i can't
why not
i can't
why not
cuz my back hurt my bra too tight
my booty shakin from the left to the right
left right left right left right left right
hit up high, hit down low
hit me on my, uh oh!
this is skinny this is fat
come on girl now shake that ah

SQ 25

@ once music starts
STBY LX 19-20

① YL CS
SQ 25.5

graduation nite

LX 19

lady in yellow

it was graduation nite & i was the only virgin in the crowd

bobby mills martin jerome & sammy yates eddie jones & randi

all cousins

② YL XDS

LX 20

all the prettiest niggers in this factory town

carried me out wit em

in a deep black buick

smellin of thunderbird & ladies in heat

we rambled from Camden to mount holly

laughin at the afternoon's speeches

& dangling our tassels from the rear view mirror

climbin different sorta project stairs

movin toward snappin beer cans &

GET IT GET IT THAT'S THE WAY TO DO IT MAMA

all mercer county graduated the same nite

cosmetology secretarial pre-college autoshop & business

STBY LX 20.5

all us movin from mama to what ever waz out there

that nite we raced a big ol truck from the barbeque stand

trying to tell him bout the party at jacqui's

where folks graduated last year waz waitin to hit it wid us

i got drunk & cdnt figure out

whose hand waz on my thigh/ but it didn't matter

③ YL XDSL

LX 20.5

cuz these cousins martin eddie sammy jerome & bobby

waz my sweethearts alternately since the seventh grade

graduation nite

& everybody knew i always started cryin if somebody actually

tried to take advantage of me

at jacqui's

ulinda mason was stickin her mouth all out

while we tumbled out the buick

eddie jones waz her lickin stick

but i knew how to dance

it got soo hot

STBY LX 21

STBY SQ 30

vincent ramos puked all in the punch

& harly jumped all in tico's face

cuz he was leavin for the navy in the mornin

hadda kick ass so we'd all remember how bad he waz

seems like sheila & marguerite waz fraid

to get their hair turnin back

so they laid up against the wall

lookin almost sexy

didnt wanna sweat

LX 21

SQ 30

but me and my fellas we waz dancing

since 1963 i'd won all kinda contests

wid the cousins at the POLICE ATHLETIC LEAGUE DANCES

all mercer county knew

any kin to martin yates cd turn somersaults

fore smokey robinson cd get a woman excited

we danced doin nasty ol tricks

pages 8 - 11

graduation nite

pages 8 - 11

STBY SQ 30.4 -30.5 doin nasty ol tricks i'd been thinkin since may
STBY LX 22 cuz graduation nite had to be hot
 & i waz the only virgin
SQ 30.4 so i hadda make like my hips waz inta some business
 that way everybody thot whoever was gettin it
 was an older man cdnt run the street with youngsters
 martin slipped his leg round my thigh
 the dells bumped "stay"
 up & down - up & down the new carver homes
SQ 30.5 WE WAZ GROWN WE WAZ FINALLY GROWN
LX 22 ulinda alla sudden went crazy
 went over to eddie cursin & carryin on
 tearin his skin wid her nails
 the cousins tried to talk sense to her
 tried to hold her arms
 lissin bitch sammy went on
 bobby whispered i shd go wit him
 fore they gotta cutting
 fore the police arrived
 we teetered silently thru the parkin lot
STBY LX 23 noun uhuh
STBY SQ 35 we didn't know nothing bout no party
 bobby started lookin at me
 yeah
 he started looking at me real strange

like i waz a woman or somethin/
 started talkin real soft
 in the backseat of that ol buick
 wow
 by daybreak
LX 23 i just cdnt stop grinnin.
SQ 35
lady in green
 you gave it up in a buick?
lady in yellow
 yeh, and honey, it was wonderful.
lady in blue
 we used to do it all up in the dark in the corners...
lady in green
 some niggah sweating all over you.
lady in red
 it was good!
lady in green
 i never did like to grind.
lady in yellow
 what other kind of dances are there?

now i love somebody more than

lady in green (salsa music)

mambo, bomba, meringue

when i waz sixteen i ran off to the south bronx cuz i waz gonna meet up wit willie

colon

& dance all the time

mambo bomba merengue

lady in yellow

do you speak spanish?

lady in green

ola

my papa thot he waz puerto rican & we wda been cept we waz just reglar niggahs wit

hints of spanish so off i made it to this 36 hour marathon dance

con salsa con ricardo

'sugggggggggar' ray on southern blvd

next door to this fotografi place

jammed wit burial weddin & communion relics

next door to la real ideal genuine spanish barber

up up up up up stairs & stairs & lotsa hallway

with my colored new jersey self

didn't know what anybody waz saying

cept if dancin waz proof of origin

i was jibarita herself that nite

& the next day

i kept smilin & right on steppin

if he cd lead i waz ready to dance

if he cdnt lead

i caught this attitude

i'd seen rosa do

&wd not be bothered

i waz twirlin hippin givin much quik feet

& bein a mute cute colored puerto rican

til satrday afternoon when the disc-jockey say

'SORRY FOLKS WILLIE COLON AINT GONNA MAKE IT TODAY'

& alla my niggah tenper come outta control

& i wdnt dance wit nobody

& i talked english loud

& i love you more than i waz mad

uh huh uh huh

more than more than

when i discovered archie shepp and subtle blues

doncha know i wore out the magic of juju

heroically resistin being posessed

oooooooooooooh the sounds

sneakin in under age to slug's

to stare ata real 'artiste'

& every word outta imamu's mouth waz gospel

& if jesus cdnt play a horn like shepp

waznt no need for colored folks to bear no cross at all

& poem is my thank-you for music

& i love you more than poem

SQ 70.5

SQ 75

SQ 75.5

STBY SQ 80

STBY LX 25

STBY LX 24

LX 24

STBY SQ 70

SQ 70

STBY SQ 70.5-75.5

now i love somebody more than (oye)

pages 11 - 12

now i love somebody more than (oye)

pages 11 - 12

more than aureliano buendia loved macondo
more than hector lavoe loved himself
more than the lady loved gardenias
more than celia loves cuba or graciela loves el son
more than the flamingoes shoo-do-n-do-wah love bein pretty

SQ 80

oyè négro |

te amo mas que te amo mas que
when you play
yr flute
te amo mas que

everyone (*very softly*)

te amo mas que te amo mas que

now i love somebody more than (oye)

pages 11 - 12

no assistance

lady in red

LX 25

without any assistance or guidance from you

i have loved you assiduously for 8 months 2 wks & a day
i have been stood up four times
i've left 7 packages on yr doorstep
forty poems 2 plants & 3 handmade notecards i left
town so i cd send to you have been no help to me
on my job
you call at 3:00 in the morning on weekdays
so i cd drive 27 ½ miles cross the bay before i go to work
charmin charmin
but you are of no assistance
i want you to know
this waz an experiment
to see how selfish i cd be
if i wd really carry on to snare a possible lover

STBY LX 25.5-27

STBY SQ 85

if i waz capable of debasin my self for the love of another
if i cd stand not being wanted
when i wanted to be wanted
& i cannot
so
with no further assistance & no guidance from you
i am endin this affair
this note is attached to a plant

no assistance

pages 12-13

⑥ RD turns around
LX 25.5

i've been waterin since the day i met you
you may water it
yr damn self

④ OR XDS
LX 26

i'm a poet who (i dont wanna write)
lady in orange
i dont wanna write
in english or spanish
i wanna sing make you dance
like the bata dance scream
twitch hips wit me cuz
i done forgot all abt words
aint got no definitons
i wanna whirl
with you
our whole body
wrapped like a ripe mango
ramblin whippin thru space
on the corner in the park
where the rug useta be
let willie colon take you out
swing your head
push your leg to the moon with me

i'm on the lower east side
in new york city
and i can't i can't
talk witchu no more

lady in gold
we gotta dance to keep from cryin

LX 27
SQ 85

STBY LX 28 - 30
STBY SQ 86

lady in teal
we gotta dance to keep from dyin

lady in fuschia
so come on

lady in lavender
come on

lady in purple
come on

lady in orange
hold yr head like it was ruby sapphire

i'm a poet

who writes in english

come to share the world witchu

everyone
come share our worlds witchu

we come here to be dancin

to be dancin

to be dancin

SQ 86
LX 28

④ ladies run
LX 29

LX 30

latent rapists'

lady in gold
a friend is hard to press charges against

lady in teal
if you know him

you must have wanted it

lady in lavender
a misunderstanding

lady in fuschia
you know

these things happen

lady in gold
are you sure

you didnt suggest

lady in lavender
had you been drinkin

lady in gold
a rapist is always to be a stranger

to be legitimate

someone you never saw

a man wit obvious problems

lady in lavender
pin-ups attached to the insides of his lapels

lady in teal
ticket stubs from porno flicks in his pocket

lady in fuschia
a lil dick