

# Black Information Futures Symposium: An Autoethnographic Field Series (Part II)

## Part II: The Proposal, the Block, and the Dream

The proposal came from abundance.



In November 2025, I was in St. Maarten celebrating my little sister's 40th birthday. Four of us traveled, but only two of us were early risers. Each morning, her business partner/mentor and I would wake before the others, find breakfast with a view, and sit quietly with the ecosystem unfolding in front of us. Planes descending. Waves breaking. Birds lifting and settling. Lizards moving across warm stone.

It was a needed reprieve before difficult months ahead.

I wrote poetry every day I was there and finally had the space to revisit what I had written throughout the year. Reviewing the poems from 2025, organized chronologically

in my Google Drive, I recognized they were doing documentary work. They captured location, activity, mood, and environment. They preserved context. They marked time.

That is metadata.

That recognition shaped my proposal, "***Verse, Voice, and Virtual Archives: Poetry as Method for Black Information Futures.***"

The framing took shape. The language felt honest. I submitted the proposal the day after I returned home from St. Maarten and waited anxiously for a response.

## **Life Was Life-Ing**

Before the island air had settled, life was already life-ing in the background. LIFE-ING!

Caregiving responsibilities for my mother intensified. Caregiving is relentless. No two days look alike. You believe you are prepared until you are not.

In December, everyone in my house caught a bad case of the flu except me. Then came the final stretch leading up to Net Inclusion 2026 in Chicago in early February.

Life was not paused. It was accelerating.

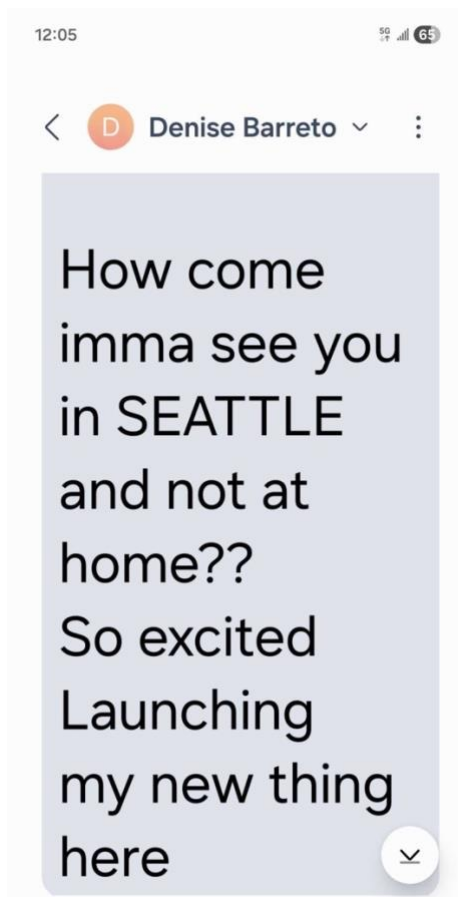
And the presentation just would not come together.

## **Presentation Block**

I was suffering from what I called "presentation block." I had the words and ideas in my head, but every attempt at slides felt like stick figures. This would be the first public showing of my research idea and thesis. I wanted it to be good and look good.

As beautifully as the proposal had come together in St. Maarten, none of that ease translated into the deck.

I packed just a few hours before heading to the airport on very little sleep and made my way to Seattle. Somewhere in that rush, I received a text message from my former colleague at Cook County, [Denise Wilmer Barreto](#), who said she would be in Seattle too. I barely processed it. I was focused on not missing my flight. Exhaustion leaves little capacity for anything beyond the immediate.



When I arrived in Seattle, I made a different choice. Instead of working through the night, I gave myself a break. I chatted with the Hubs and the kid. I ordered pho. I binge-watched a few episodes of Madam Secretary. I resolved to put up one slide and tell the story. I hoped that would be enough. Then I went to sleep.

## **The Dream**

My dreams were vivid that night.

I saw the presentation come to life through images. A black background. Grey. Gold. Mixed typesets, some echoing a typewriter. I heard the voices of the poets whose work I planned to feature. A lecture hall appeared. I saw myself standing at the front, presenting. None of the nerves that appear during public speaking were there.

I felt seen. Supported. Safe.

I woke up very early, still on Chicago time, opened my laptop, and began building the deck with intention and passion.

The structure was suddenly clear.

## **Poetry as Method**

This presentation was not simply a collection of poems.

It was a claim about Black information theory. It was also a claim about poetic epistemology; poetry as a way of knowing.

The slides needed to honor that claim.

They needed to honor the spirit of the poets whose words I was carrying into that room. Their work was not illustrative. It was evidentiary. It was theoretical. It was infrastructural.

The dream did not invent the argument. It gave it form.



## **Rest as Method**

And the rest that preceded it mattered.

Choosing not to work through the night. Choosing pho. Choosing Madam Secretary. Choosing sleep. That, too, was method.

Rest created the conditions for clarity. Poetry created the conditions for argument.

By the time I finished the deck, I was not scrambling. I was steady.

I gathered my things and made my way to the University of Washington campus for Day 1 of the inaugural Black Information Futures Symposium. A quiet anticipation followed me there. I knew I was about to encounter something special.

*Part III enters the room, traces the opening day of the symposium and the intellectual threads that began to bind this moment together.*

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