

## Black Educology Mixtape “Journal”

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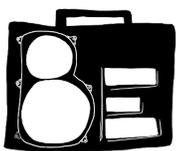
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*The Black Educology Mixtape is an open access mixtape that moves beyond academic articles to feature various art forms and voices that are typically muted. Our scope and sequence focuses on the past, present, and future of Black education, which has been historically and systemically caught in the underbelly of western education. The main tenets of Black Educology’s educational vision are rooted in critical race theory, with a focus on counter-storytelling, Black critical theory, Afro-pessimism, and Black educational epistemology. Our work is grounded in creating mixtapes that are both revolutionary and emancipatory in the name of love, study, struggle, and refusal.*



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# Black Magic: A Collective of Lived Experience

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Janise “Jay” Powell

## Abstract

Anti-Blackness is a pandemic that plagues societies across the world and across histories filled with the murder of Black lives, spirits, and dreams. Yet, throughout it all, Black folx have found strength and been leaders of resistance, radicalization, self-emancipation, and liberation. Black Magic is a collection of tracks that Powell has formed in relation to critical race theory and the ways in which Black folx have found solidarity, liberation, freedom, and healing in a world that seeks to destroy them. Utilizing short stories told through spoken-word poetry, Powell shares her experiences and the experiences of those who she has been blessed to be in community with. She endeavors to go beyond sharing about systems that prevent eradication of anti-Blackness, instead highlighting the ways in which Black folx are experiencing anti-Blackness and finding joy despite them. This collection of tracks seeks to name and draw to light that which we know through lived experience: the magic of Blackness.

Each track is named after a Black woman who is the living or lived personification of that story. A real life example of Black magic, specifically a real life example of Black Girl Magic.

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*This track is named after Linda Goss, sometimes known professionally as Mama Linda. Goss is an American storyteller and performer in the African diasporic oral tradition. She is a co-founder of the National Association of Black Storytellers, which works to preserve folk traditions.*

### Mama Linda: Critical Race(ism)

#### **Racism**

An endemic  
Pandemic  
Take power; add privilege  
Built into every social structure  
Makes the world go round  
Burn it to the ground  
Build the phoenix from its ashes  
So we can all be found

#### **Cause cures are more than interest**

**convergence**  
More than Black getting a step and white a mile  
They say we must move at your pace for solidarity  
Accept your definition of my humanity  
But your interests are not mine

And free  
Not slaves of **whiteness**  
The head start  
Moved closer to the finish line  
Got time  
Got wealth  
Got land  
Got stealth  
The privilege its system has  
rewarded  
Acknowledging the power of  
whiteness  
A symptom but not the only cure

And I don't have time to wait for them to  
align  
You can shorten the time of the fight for our  
lives  
But with or without you the fight will thrive  
*We will do more than just survive*  
We will live our lives  
And become **storytellers** of our joy  
  
The story of our Blackness  
The story of our Black men  
Our Black women  
And their **Intersectionality**  
Tell the story of Black sex  
Black religion  
Black Mental Health  
Black wealth  
Black, Black, Black  
And the intersections of all that  
The story of Black Magic

*This track is named after Fannie Lou Townsend Hamer, one of the most important, passionate, and powerful voices of the civil rights, women's rights, and voting rights movements and a leader in the efforts for greater economic opportunities for African Americans. She is known for her famous words "All my life I've been sick and tired. Now I'm sick and tired of being sick and tired."*

Fannie: Idea(ology)

I am tired of being tired  
No, I am angry  
More like, hurt?  
Am I afraid?  
I have no earthly words  
As I sat down to write a piece about all the injustices happening  
About how I feel  
About the protest  
The riots  
The news  
About America and the world

I wanted to find a way to express that I can't turn on the TV anymore  
I can't go on social media anymore  
I can't talk to anyone  
I can't tell them that I'm stuck in a nightmare  
That I can't wake up  
That I don't know if I can answer the phone  
I don't have the strength to stand anymore  
I don't have the will to fight anymore  
I don't have anything to offer  
Because I am broken

Every murder, a direct hit  
Every hashtag, a shattering soul  
Every social media, every news station,  
everything reminding of the trauma  
But not the person

Nor the history  
Everything a reminder that we were never part of America  
Even though it was built with the white bones of our ancestors  
Painted red with their blood  
And covered in blue bruises  
Every star a reminder of my ancestors, lost  
But still shining in the night sky

Still shining through the darkness  
Still praying for their children  
And their children's children  
And their children's children's children  
Until they reach me  
And how will I use this moment?  
How will I seize this time?  
Will I be the answer to their prayers?  
And if not, what then?  
When will this oppression end?  
When will my ancestors be able to dim their lights  
And rest  
And know that their prayers have been answered  
Know that I can turn on the TV  
That I can speak  
That I won't be tired anymore  
Because we will be truly free  
In every sense that that word could mean

*This track is named after Harriet Tubman, an American abolitionist and political activist. Born into slavery, Tubman escaped and made multiple missions to rescue enslaved people using the network of antislavery activists and the Underground Railroad.*

Harriet: inter(SIN)tricity of race and racism

Safety  
Peace  
Freedom  
I now know the meaning of these things  
It only took my life, until this very moment  
It only took a plane and car  
A hike and an open mind  
I came face to face with the wild  
Of mountain lions and bears  
Caves and creeks  
Off grid is what I had to seek  
  
In the wiles of wild  
I found safety from them  
Peace amongst the animals we were taught to fear  
Freedom where God intended  
I had to leave the world of them  
The world of hurt and pain  
Murder and destruction  
I ran from those who have not only said they want me dead  
But pulled the trigger  
Stabbed me and laughed in my face  
In that world  
I am prey to be hunted  
A sacrifice to their power  
A way to prove their superiority  
In that world I was...  
Dead

I saw myself  
Face down, hands up, heart empty  
My head  
That lead the resistance  
They destroyed  
Tortured and burned  
My dreams of freedom  
Dreams not for myself but for those who follow  
I dream not for myself but for those who follow  
So I knew the safety I had found  
The peace I had  
The freedom I explored would be short lived  
I had to return because I do not dream for myself  
  
Why can I not imagine freedom and safety for myself?  
For this time, this moment  
Why, when I imagine freedom  
I am not here, not part of it  
I am watching from above  
An angel among my ancestors  
Because freedom comes with sacrifice, with death  
But I won't be a martyr  
Because  
I do not choose this death  
As I did not choose this life  
But I will stand for this life  
Celebrate it and turn nightmares into dreams  
Dreams into life  
Even if it is not a dream for me  
Even if it is not a life for me  
Even if it is not for my lifetime

*This track is named after Ruby Bridges, an American civil rights activist. She is one of the first African American children to desegregate the all-white William Frantz Elementary School in Louisiana during the New Orleans school desegregation crisis on November 14, 1960.*

Ruby: Power of the (Counter) Story

My niece told me she was good today  
That the teacher said she was the example child  
A good girl  
It was the first time

I asked my niece  
Well what did you do today to make you good?  
She said she was quiet  
But you are not quiet  
She said she did not talk  
But how did you share your ideas and your thoughts?  
She said she did not share  
She said she listened  
I asked her what she listened too  
She said the teacher

The teacher told her to stop talking  
The teacher told her to be quiet  
The teacher told her to be still while everyone else moved  
The teacher told her it wasn't allowed while everyone else made the same sound  
The teacher told her to be good  
To be the example  
She must follow directions  
Color inside the white lines  
She must bleach herself from the inside out  
The teacher said she must not: be her

I said but you  
You must be you  
Who else can you be?  
She said I can't  
If I am me, I will not be good  
There are no good students that look like me  
She told me  
I want to be good, Titi

My dear niece  
How do I unpack this with you?  
How do I tell and convince you  
That bleach is deadly

It is corrosive and dangerous  
Bleach is damaging to dark clothes

My dear niece  
You are more than good  
Something they can't understand  
You are the dreams of your ancestors  
The result of decades of generational curses broken  
You are the beginning of a new life  
A miracle

My dear niece  
They don't know you  
You have been empowered with every word a Black woman never said  
Every eye roll, head roll, and attitude hidden  
You are the legacy of brilliance  
Education we fought for  
You have been prayed for, blessed and dipped in the tears of God  
You are the Joy  
And the light  
And the pride

My dear niece  
Everywhere you go you bring truth  
They don't want to hear it  
But you say it anyway  
You say it unapologetically  
Everywhere you go you bring a smile to their face  
But they don't want your happiness  
Don't let them take it  
Don't let them break it  
Don't let them break you  
Kill your dreams or imagination  
Don't let them stop you from becoming everything they fear  
You!  
You are everything they fear a Black woman could be  
You are their nightmare  
But more importantly, you are our dream  
You!  
You are so much more  
So much more than good

*This track is named after Assata Shakur, civil rights activist and leading figure in the Black Panther Party and Black Liberation Army. She has continued the fight for human rights, from the 1960s to the present.*

Assata: Social Just(is)

Our resistance, like trees  
Wild trees  
Strong trees  
Growing arms toward sky trees  
Naturally adjusting to barriers trees  
Things trying to stand in our way  
Oops, we fell and broke the barrier trees  
Supporting life trees  
Bearing fruit trees  
We planted

Our resistance, like trees  
Cut down trees  
But wood, still strong  
Igniting flames wood  
Burning down systems wood  
Erecting new frames, new foundations wood  
Damming rivers wood  
Historistic wood  
Spears, bows, and arrows wood  
We fighting

Our resistance, like trees  
Cut down trees  
But wood, still strong  
Til it's wood no more  
Wood, turned to chips, turned to mulch  
Playground cushion, catching fallen children  
mulch  
Catch rain to prevent the flood mulch  
Informal paths guiding new ways mulch  
Enhancing mulch  
Composting mulch  
Biodegradable mulch  
Meaning it never dies  
*We do more than survive*

Our resistance like trees  
We planted  
Cut down trees  
But wood, still strong  
We fighting  
Til it's wood no more  
Meaning it never dies  
We do more than survive

*This track is named after Angela Davis, a radical American political activist, philosopher, academic, scholar, and author. She is a professor at the University of California, Santa Cruz.*

Angela: Social (Construct)ion

Wuz it mean to be Black?  
What does it look like?  
Feel like?  
Move like?  
Dress like?  
Style like?  
Black

Wuz it mean to be Black?  
Think Black?  
Act Black?  
Shop Black?  
Hair Black  
Be Black  
Be you

You decide who you are  
How you feel  
How you move  
How you dress  
How you talk  
And walk  
What you do  
It's up to you

You Black no matter all that  
You Black  
You Black  
And ain't it great to be Black  
And define yourself  
Not carry every Black person on your shoulders  
So... wuz it mean to be Black... for you?

*This track is named after Ellen Armstrong, who is noted as being the first American stage magician of color. She is the only African American woman of the early to mid-twentieth century to run an independent touring magic show.*

Ellen: Black Magic Forever

So you want to know about Black magic?  
About the collective strength of Blackness?  
About how when you walked across the stage at graduation  
Every Black person there cheered for you, and you didn't know why  
About when that Black fellow over there smiled, waved, and said, "hey fam"  
And you didn't know who he was but said, "how you doin' cousin?"  
About the times in class or meetings when someone say something crazy  
And you instinctively make eye contact with other Black people  
Well that's just the beginning of Black magic  
That's the pull of it  
Trying to get you to see what you've always had access to  
What's always been in you

Black magic like real-life Wakanda  
Think about it  
Ain't Black magic like T'Challa  
Ain't it like Killmonger  
Defending and challenging  
Putting its people first  
Ain't Black magic like Shuri and the Dora Milaje  
It's brilliant and elite  
Relies on its collective strength  
Ain't Black magic like real-life Wakanda Forever  
Wakanda Forever  
Wakanda Forever

Black magic like the real-life Wakanda  
Hidden away only for us  
I guess you can call it our superpower  
Our Vibranium  
Cause we absorb, store, and release large amounts of Black energy  
What else can you call it when we've taken everything the world threw at us but still found  
Black Joy  
When we absorb the pain of the mother who lost her son  
When we release stored Black rage and make change  
What else can you call it, when we do it all in the same moment  
What else can you call it, besides Black magic?

You want to know more about Black magic?  
Well it's a little different for everyone

But every sister and brother has their own gifts  
And the world don't always understand them  
That's why Black magic is our secret  
Black magic is bigger than you and I  
Black magic is not something one of us has  
Black magic is ALL of us  
Our collective power  
Our way of dreaming  
Our way of healing deep wounds  
Our way of lifting each other up  
Our way of celebrating ourselves  
Our way of being Black

So if you want to know about Black magic?  
There isn't much I can tell you that you don't already know  
All I can do is open your eyes to what you know without knowing  
That Black magic is part of you  
Black Magic Forever

*This track is named after Maya Angelou and Cicely Tyson. Maya Angelou was an American poet, memoirist, and civil rights activist. She is best known for her unique and pioneering autobiographical writing style. Cicely Tyson was an American actress. In a career that spanned more than seven decades, she became known for her portrayals of strong African American women.*

Maya and Cicely: The Magic Within

To my dear Black family (because everybody is a cousin or an aunt or an uncle),

They are scared and always have been  
When they took our ancestors from Africa they saw something in our melanin  
They saw something they could never have  
Black Strength. Black Rage. Black Power.

They know they can't take it so they try to silence it  
Bury it,  
Cause it to go extinct  
But we still rise.  
We make ourselves heard.  
It is our time, so  
Put on your crowns my kings and queens  
Grab your cloaks and capes  
Tell your story like Mama Linda  
Be a voice like Fannie  
Walk like Harriet  
Learn like Ruby  
Fight like Assata  
Think like Angela  
Pick up your wand like Ellen  
Remember like Maya  
Live like Cicely  
Put on your wings  
Soar. Fly. Find your instrument.  
Release the magic within

Because you've always had exactly what you needed inside  
You were born with it.  
It grew with you.  
A collective power. Our power. Our magic.  
Black Magic,  
There is nothing stronger  
Nothing purer  
Nothing that can stop it  
Black Magic  
Black Magic

It's just in you  
It's in us  
It is us

It is us

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