

#notallkillnotallwhitemen

in solidarity with Bahar Mustafa

1.

o! where is the safe space for boris johnson?

o! where is the safe space for toby young?

o! where is the safe space for ian dunt?

2.

i beg you – misspell my name
i beg you – misquote me
i beg you – pretend you don't understand metaphor
i beg you – feel sad that people have been so offended
i beg you – context context context
i beg you – take offence
i beg you – take me at face value when i am not to be taken seriously
i beg you – ridicule me when i am serious
i beg you – if i talk of watermelon smiles and picaninnies make me mayor

3.

let us boldly imagine the violence of oppressor and oppressed are equal
let us humbly celebrate our sincere love of equality

4.

there is a speech for which there is a need,
there are hard painful words which must be said,
and if my presence should in any way impede
their speaking: kill all the white men in me dead.

failing that
bleach out my whiteness
bludgeon my maleness
let me dissolve
i wish it

failing that
let me shut up
and fuck off
if only
for a bit

5.

let us pretend that
we are fearful in our whiteness

that our maleness is terrified
that our existence is an invitation to violence
that our validity is relentlessly denied

let us act as though
racism is a trap into which others fall
and not a stop and search policy
a death in custody
a colonist alive in us all

let us resolve
to chase from life that which tells us what we are
to cower in the face of our own power
to feed our outrage with this feast of tears
to bravely name the spectres of our fears

6.

i am fearful too
i offer you my fearfulness
i am cowed to silence too
i offer you my silence if it is of use to you
i too feel shame
if my shame can nourish you, drink deep of it

my fear is not your fear
i know it
my silence is not your silence
it would be violence to claim it
my shame is not your shame
i hope, one day, to carry yours with you

alex swift