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Khawla

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On struggle, resilience, love, and the trans women's martial art.

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Dear sister,

I love you. I'm so sorry that the world is like this.

I love you. I want you to be free to be yourself. To love and to live and to have and to hold.

I love you. None of this is your fault. You deserve so much better.

Juniper Blessing deserved so much better. Davonta Curtis deserved so much better. Eryka Caldwell deserved so much better.

We deserve to live. We deserve to make our art. We deserve to dance, and sing, and create. We deserve to be soft and vulnerable. We deserve to feel loved, and safe, and treasured.

Trans women are a treasure. We have always been a driving cultural force, whether the world was with us or against us. We have always brought so much light and color into the world.

I love you. You and I are going to have to rip and tear to survive this. We are going to have to burn the world and tear down fortresses.

Our enemies have made major strides in their plans to erase us. They surround us from every side.

I know you see it too. I know you're scared.

I want to leave too. But I couldn't do that to you. I couldn't stomach to leave you here to fend for yourself.

There are a lot of people who mean well towards us. A lot of people who really believe they would fight for us.

But I have experienced enough to know we only have each other. I have experienced enough to know that trans women throw the first brick and they hate us for it. I know that Black trans women pave the way when everyone else wants to give up and turn back.

Where we're going there's no place for organizers and marshals. There's no place for symbolic victories, good press, or witty signs.

Where we're going, we're going to have to fight for our lives.

So many of us are already fighting for our lives. V-coding in prisons, stalking, doxxing, harassment, assault, murder.

Little egg middle schoolers are growing up in a world that makes it known it hates them. Trans children are killing themselves and the lawmakers know it and they celebrate it.

You and I both know that they want us dead.

I love you. You don't deserve any of this. You did nothing wrong.

I love you. It's ok to be scared. But you have to get angry. You have to become powerful.

I love you. When I go to the range, it's for you. When I throw a stone, it's for you. When I write, it's for you.

I love you. We are going to have to tear down fortresses to survive. We're going to do it together.

I'm not leaving you. I've got your back.

We have got to get organized. We have got to get armed. We have got to have a strong defense. We have got to have a strong offense. We have got to get the knife off of our neck and onto theirs.

Court decisions that rule favorably for our survival are not victories. They are luck at best. Victories are things we bring about by

our own hand. Court decisions are something power bestows on us like a gift after reminding us of its intent to erase us.

Our enemies are pushing at us from every angle. The courts occasionally get in the way by chance like a clumsy, bloated bureaucratic monster. The attacks on us do not stop. Our survival cannot depend on an institution that exists to serve our enemies and to serve a genocidal, carceral, settler-colonial empire.

It has to depend on ourselves and each-other.

You should own a gun and you should know how to use it and clean it. You should have trans women friends who do the same.

If you cannot safely own a gun, support your trans women friends in being armed.

Support them in training. Pack them lunch on range day.

When you have a gun and know how to use it, it is a safeguard against the last hour. It is a safeguard for when the police come to your home to take you to a camp.

When you have a gun and know how to use it, and your friends have guns and know how to use them, it becomes a capacity for strength and to project power. When you and your friends understand fire and maneuver, when you understand how to fight, it becomes a capacity for retaliation against power, a vehicle to secure victories like we haven't seen before, the ability to put the enemy on the back foot, the ability to punish him for crimes he has committed against us and our sisters.

I call small unit tactics, or fighting as a group with guns, the trans women's martial art because that's exactly what it could be. It is sitting there for us to claim as our own. Outside of institutions, no community here has fully made it their own. The way a community fights is a part of its cultural identity. What is that going to look like for us?

I want to braid your hair in a foxhole. I want to clean my rifle while you keep watch.

I want to see us strong and feared by those who would do us harm. I want to see us loving each-other so much that we will not accept this for each-other anymore.

Together with the people I love I've written a few zines with ideas on how we can fight. Those can be found on the anarchist library under the name Khawla, as well as with any distro that's been willing to host or distribute them.

I believe our community should have a wealth of knowledge on a variety of ways to fight, for every field and context. We should know jiu-jitsu for self-defense, especially as a precaution for prison and interpersonal violence, bloc tactics for the streets, and fire and maneuver for the battles.

The community that dances together is same one which makes war together. I have felt so much love at the rave that I do not understand how any force in the world could ever hope to suppress us. We have to take it beyond the rave. Beyond rest and recovery and mutual support. We have to be able to seriously fight the people who very seriously want to exterminate us.

There is no happy ending except the one we forge for ourselves. Fortune favors the bold.

I love you. You deserve more than just to survive. You deserve to thrive and love and be loved.

And so do those who come after us.

I love you. I've got your back. I'm not going anywhere. I'm in it to win it.

If you've got my back too, then I'm not scared.

—Khawla [Ⓐ]