

# **AUDIO TRANSCRIPTION FOR IMANI JACQUELINE BROWN**

*What remains at the end of the earth?, 2022*

00:06

Some histories are cast in the light of a falling star that extinguishes the dinosaurs and gives rise to the dawn of capitalists, strange beasts that developed tools to segregate existence from itself and put us to work against our own interests. They drilled 10,000 feet and 65 million years deep into subterranean oceans, black of soil and oil, life and death. Powers too great for the tool bearers to wield. They raise colonies of primordial bacteria from their slumber and put them to work powering a trillion electric stars that are viewable from space but block the light of the old gas gods. That was when we were lost.

01:26

Not so long ago when Earth was sacred, we looked to the stars to show us the way. These days, we honor constellations of pipelines and wells drawn by fossil fuel corporations along guidelines laid by colonial joint-stock

companies. Haphazard icons unhinged from symbolic logic hurtling past the prophets and progress that we follow to the ends of the Earth.

02:28

Some say that to know the truth, we must ascend to view the Earth through the blue eyes of the state. No, to ascend is simply to bear witness to lie, to the catastrophe. The clouds break my heart. Below me stretches the whip lashed skin of my homeland, flayed and fragmented by 10,000 miles of canals, 50,000 miles of pipeline, and 90,000 wells carved into the flesh of the earth.

03:57

The capitalists are voracious land eaters. Their infrastructure devours the black earth, killing the plants that hold sediment together as land, receding the gradient buffer between our ecological community and the storms at sea, displacing place from itself.

04:30

Their power draws on ecological fission. Humanity is segregated from our wider ecological bodies. Black

bodies are segregated from the body of humanity. The end product of segregation is the world's disintegration. Our ecological body becomes a diaspora. The unnatural disaster of colonialism unfurls still today, emitting fractal catastrophes that spawn like sign waves. Coastal erosion, cancer, climate change. What remains at the ends of the earth? Refineries, tank farms, and walls. Walls. Walls striving vainly to shore our fragments against our ruin.

06:12

To accumulate the world, the capitalists must arrest our body's movement, dissect it into private property, and put it to work. They call this place the Working Coast, but once it was called Plantation Country. The black earth has been worked as hard as its people under threat of the whip and the noose and the cement cell block, black hands levied the river's banks. Segregating them from their land, they drained its fluid floodplains, hardening them into an industrial zone. And still, the black hands of our ancestors made life amid fields of death. They offered humble rituals of repair, planting magnolia and willow trees to hold their dead in a more than human embrace. Groves of trees offer their roots, garnished

in mycelium threads to resuscitate soil asphyxiated by monocrop plantations. In the face of industrial dispossession, roots anchor black communities to their land. Against the tide of coastal erosion, roots hold sediment together as land. Migratory birds land and nest, offering their guano and seeding the next generations of more than human resistance.

08:10

To know the truth, we must descend and return to the river, to our source. I don't know much about gods, but I think that the river is a strong brown god and we are its children. The muddy Mississippi gave birth to our land through 7,000 years of alluvial leaps, throwing out skirts of water as she danced in the harmony of the outer continental shelf and the muskrat and the oyster and the oyster eaters, who called this place Bulbancha, land of many tongues. Our ecology is a messy community of bodies. Native bodies of bodies. Bodies of land, bodies of water, bodies of people flow and become entangled, become solid through the bonds and hold each to the other.

09:40

From up here, I do not see like a state. I see like an ancestor with the future in my belly. I see like a bird with a map of home behind my eyes. According to the folk tales of my enslaved ancestors, birds are messengers from the spirit world and black humans can fly. I offer this message to you: What remains at the ends of the Earth is ecological resistance. Not just humans, but whole ecosystems inspiring to open portals to new horizons. Ashé.