



## Free Range

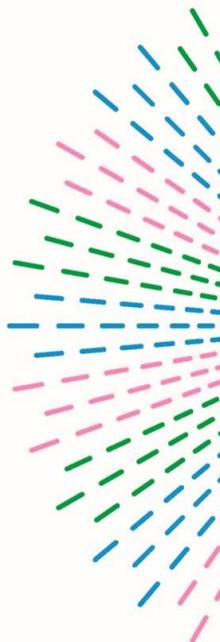
My Chicago be grid-mapped  
Superman up high spot train car lines  
Like speeding bullet through cityscape  
What a sweet escape  
Fall asleep on one side blue/red  
Wake up black/white  
Always knew red split city black/white  
Never took issue with this until nightfall  
Better be on your side by nightfall  
But nevermind that

CTA, the great equalizer  
Rich Dad, Poor Dad collide here  
Rush Hour, jam packed  
Personal space now mythic past  
All aboard the mystery machine  
Used to ride for hours just to Christopher Columbus neighbor-nooks unseen  
My scope widened every time I'd board a new line

Why we be sectioned off, bracketed,  
Rather than just one Line  
Thoughts swirl as I read billboard signs  
Talkin bout, " Building a New Chicago"  
But I ain't seen nothin new on my side

CTA reek of hope and despair  
Cloaked in stale loose cigarette smoke and school children's candy wrappers  
This be Chicago feature, Chicago future  
Joy ride on buses  
Joy still be here  
Love still be here

Bucket Boys wrists' ricochet heartbeats off the air  
Their wooden staffs split traffic like red sea  
Come see my cityscape dream  
Youth Ready, witness their glistening eyes gleam  
Access, if they get it  
Believe me, they got it  
Open these unmarked borders  
Listen to these kids kidding around  
Can you hear them skipping the dozens over turnstiles?





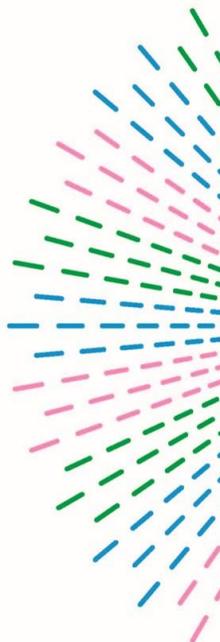
We fashion them complacent  
But they be curious  
Wanna see what's on the other side  
Was far into my highschool years before I frequented the northern sector of Lake Shore Drive  
But why is that?  
When the city has always been mine  
Or is it?  
Why those from suburbs arrive downtown faster than us from the southside?

This be my city plain, my city plan  
Before I take flight, I sit perched on this land  
Chicago, there's still time to do right by me  
Since before the Great Migration,  
Legends of the fall have been yearning to be free  
Don't trap us, don't clip our wings  
Just to stealthily set up shop where we be quarantined  
Gentrification is real. We're losing ground.  
Redline from 95th be expanding but you displace us now  
Then place your station inside our station  
We be over-policed like long lines marching towards the county

We're counting on this system collapsing and beginning anew  
Empathize with us. On your feet place our shoes  
What if your children were kept out of the Loop  
We deserve more than just a day at the Taste or Lollapalooza  
We are not this city's disposable income  
This city's scapegoat  
We only wish to roam.

- **Tarnynon (Ty-yuh-nuh) Onumonu**  
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### About the Artist

Tarnynon (Ty-yuh-nuh) Onumonu was born and raised in the Jeffery Manor neighborhood on the southeast side of Chicago, IL and is extremely proud of and humbled by her southside citizenship and West African lineage. Birthed from a Liberian mother and Igbo father whose families have both experienced extensive war trauma, she has been endowed with a diasporic experience in joy and pain that is atypical of most Americans. She draws from this experience to produce poetry, which is both specific in its autobiographical nature as well as global in its subject matter of love, trauma and disorientation over the span of time and the reach of Western colonization and global Black femme cultural experience. She is currently producing a memoir chronicling her experiences with second generation trauma of genocide as well as laying the groundwork for a poetry mixtape. She placed second in the annual Guild Complex Gwendolyn Brooks Open Mic Awards and on November 1, 2017, her first published work will be featured in the online literary magazine and podcast Scout & Birdie. (Photo by RJ Eldridge)

“I view my art as a scope into my individual experience as a queer, Black-femme whose identity is situated somewhere between the South-side Chicago Jeffery Manor neighborhood, Liberia and Igbo Land (of Nigeria). By way of free verse poetry, I am able to flesh out an individual experience in love, trauma and disorientation that is easily transferrable to a more global experience informed by familial war trauma in the African Diaspora. I am currently producing a memoir chronicling my experiences with second generation trauma of genocide as well as laying the groundwork for a poetry mixtape called, *Love Hath Descended Upon Me*. The mixtape describes my experience with romantic love in the same vein that one would say, “We did not land on Plymouth Rock, Plymouth Rock landed on us!” Both projects serve to give audience a feeling of a melancholy whirlwind where time, cultural space and geographic location aid in the necessary upholding of constant disorientation.”

TARNYNON (TY-YUH-NUHO ONUMONU)

