

"PARABLE OF THE SOWER"

Pamela Sneed

If you want to know the ending
 how it's all gonna turn out
 the aftermath of trump's presidency
 don't turn to analysts, wall st. or cnn
 for an accurate portrait of where it's all going
 what it's gonna look like
 reread Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Sower*
 set in California around 2027:
 people in fear/behind walls/gated communities
 a woman raped so much
 she can't stand
 gun violence/addiction/fires that can scarcely
 be put out
 people scavenging for food/trying not to become prey
 compassion gone
 the main character named Lauren a hyper-empath
 can feel others' pain
 a metaphor for artists
 whatever you think of Marina Abramović
 her show title is right, the artist is/was always present
 from the beginning of time until now.
 Look again at the *Hunger Games*, the districts are
 actually concentration camps with gray garb
 and barbed-wire fences
 that nod to Nazi Germany
 humans pitted against each other to survive.
 Sometime after Trayvon Martin was shot
 I finally understood
 something deep about Star Wars

I've always rooted for good guys/always.
 Once I heard a friend at the movies rooting for Poison Ivy/
 Batman and Bat Girl's nemesis
 I was shocked that anyone could root for a bad girl
 but after Trayvon was killed by George Zimmerman
 who walked free
 I finally understood what could turn a character's eyes dark
 (you could become so disillusioned)
 and then I understood in the Star Wars franchise
 what made Darth Vader, Vader
 I felt that again after Trump's election
 No more green, blue light
 Only gray, dark drab, white bones, war.
 Last week, I worked with a class I hadn't met before
 On the subject of Black Lives Matter.
 I repeated something Gregg Bordowitz said to a group of students
 "What if the only justice we have right now is here
 in this room?"
 One student said, "Nothing ever changes."
 So responding, I ask, "Are you telling me then
 you can't change?"
 They were all surprised, shocked by my question.
 At the end, I asked the class, "What have you learned today?"
 A Black girl answered as if she were channeling Octavia herself,
 "Change.
 Is up to us."