

QueerCrip COVID Kaddish

Ari Yovel, 5/15/20

If I die in this pandemic, the disease alone will not have killed me.

My blood will have been poisoned by teams of professionals who will look at my history of lovers and tag my body as tainted. It's a political postcard from a previous plague; while history doesn't repeat itself, it often rhymes.

My lungs will have been wrested from my chest by carefully gloved hands. Every breath I take, I am told, is oxygen better spent on a body more able than mine. They will call it triage, and they will thank me for my sacrifice as I suffocate.

Do not dare call my memory a blessing. Pray for my memory to be a brand. Heat it in the fires that injustice has stoked in your heart until it glows. Press it, hot and searing, into the flesh of those who feel that a disabled life is an acceptable loss. Let the stench of charred skin rise from every person who would not let themselves see the image of G-d in a trans body.

If I die in this pandemic, I will not have died alone. Come and find me in the mass grave with my blessed brethren, the other queercrip corpses who fought and fell within a system that would not save them. So long as it keeps trying to cull us, you cannot say Kaddish over me. When you have built a world that would sanctify all our lives, then- and only then- may you sanctify the Eternal in my name.