

Can you Breathe?

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What rule of law?
What justice?
Have you answered to either?

The three words you hate to hear the most,
not the large ones above,
But the ones you hear on the streets,
do not discount your jobs.
Your lives matter,
but they matter too much.
And jobs are not colors.

I do not care for the weight of your badge.
And I doubt your intentions,
But if we must care about yours,

What about hers, for sleeping in her own apartment?
or his, when he went on a jog?
or his, when he went to the store?
or his, for walking away from a fight?
or his, for standing on a street corner?
or theirs, when they took naps in their cars?

Does your badge mean so little
That you can only shoot?
That you allow lynching?
That you shoot seven times?
That you choke indiscriminately?
That you must take away their breaths?

I know it does, but you
And those like you
And those who side with you
And those who defend you in court
Seem to think that it means more.

Perhaps it should, once you learn
how to do your goddamn jobs
And protect.

Protect the people around you
And those who side with you
And those who defend you in court.
But also,
Protect those who are not like you
And those who do not side with you
And those who defend themselves from *you* in court.

You seem to need help remembering
where exactly the weight of your badge comes from.

The loss of their lives
And the loss of their loved ones
And the blood on your hands
is the weight of your badge.

They are more than a name.
They are more than a name in the news
on a court document
on a sign
on a mural
in a poem

Say their names.
Honor their lives.
Remember them.

They cannot breathe.
Who made it that way?

Can you breathe?
I think you can.