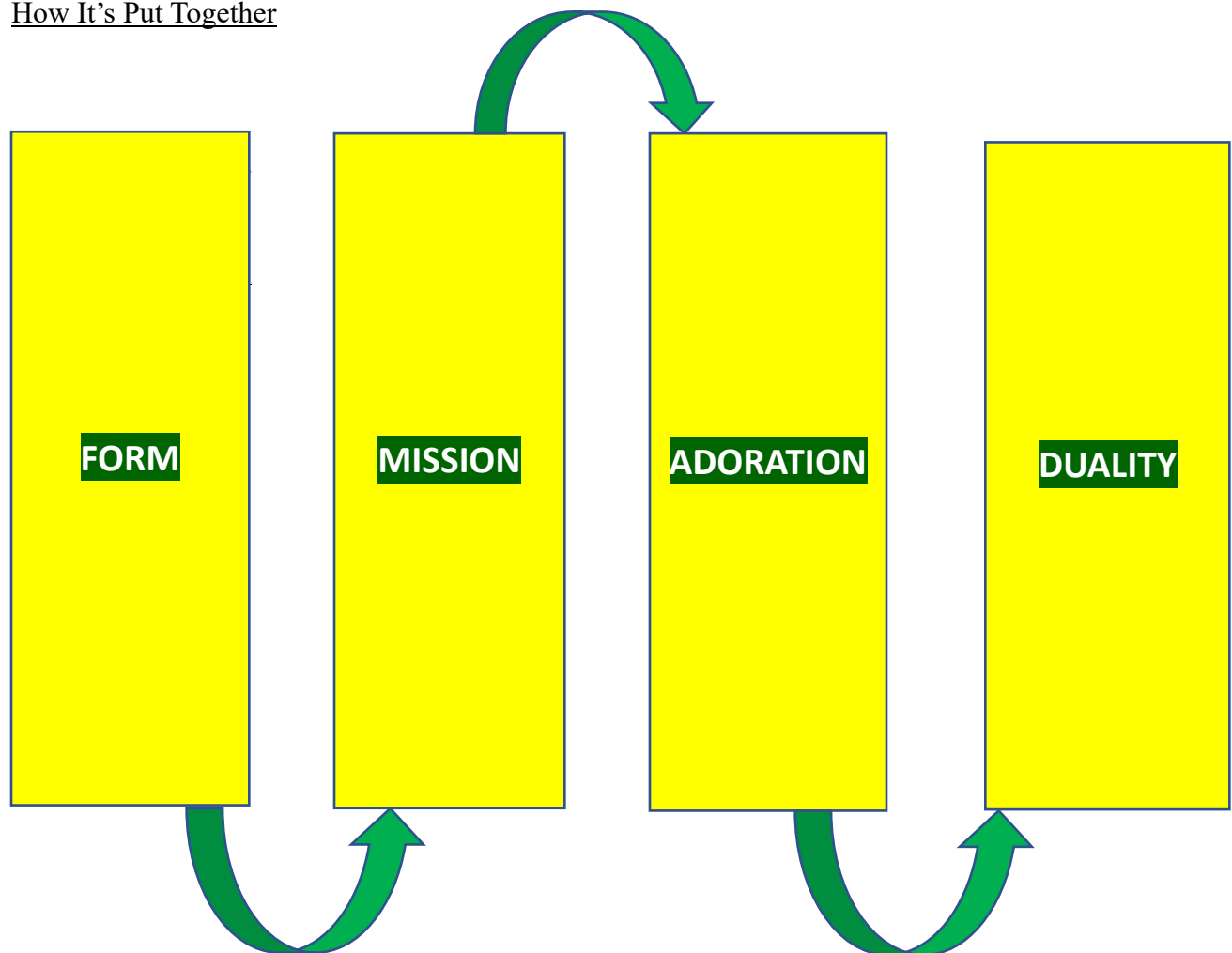


Dear Poets,

Today's teaching takeaway, DaMaris B. Hill's "Amazing Grace and Unloved Gentiles," appears in *A Bound Woman Is A Dangerous Thing: The Incarceration of African American Women from Harriet Tubman to Sandra Bland* (Bloomsbury, 2019). Grace Jones, le poème en scène.

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### How It's Put Together

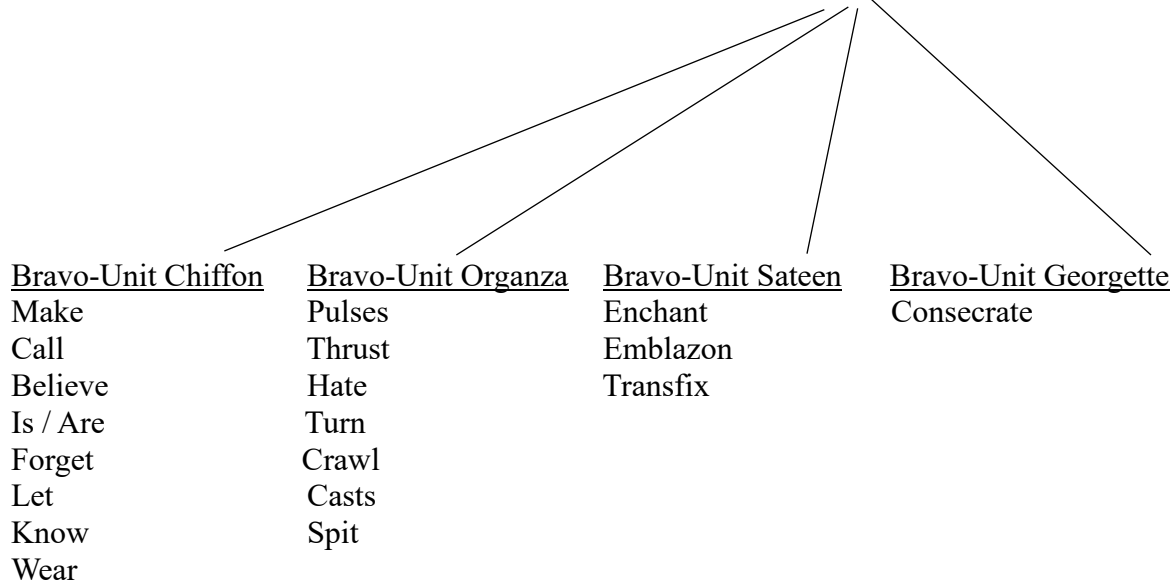


First it was line hypnosis, "Glamour is picking your teeth / with a glittered peacock feather." Quill me mesmeric. Then cohabitation, Jones's "[Pull Up to the Bumper](#)" and Arcadia's "[Election Day](#)" sharing one of my LimeWired CDs. Finally, her roles in *Conan the Destroyer* and *A View to a Kill*, "Amazing Grace . . ." querying durability's and longevity's split hairs. As the poet's introductory material states, "She cannot be boxed in. She will change and become new again."<sup>i</sup>

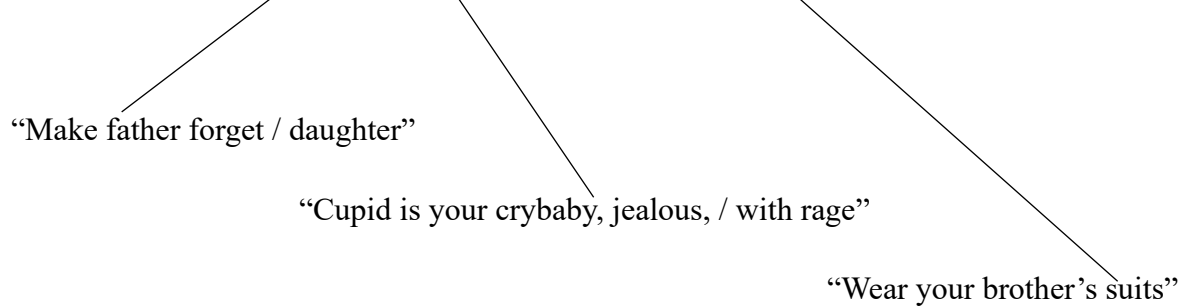
Hill fleshes the tension between physicality ("Your life is one of acrobatics") and equilibrium ("Wearing a tilted hat / on the runway, one side white / with fright."). The piece's lineation—left, right, left, right—mimics a promenade. The columns are fashion shows, "The other side soiled deep / with pleasure." scoring for dichotomy couture. Attendees? Aphrodite, Adonis. Weaponry?

“Security is knowing your stiletto / —an axe extending from your hips.” Em dash, you’ve never been sharper. Orpheus, perform as you do.

From this point, the poem’s mission is staying power. Its verb regiments



Tactical support: amnesia and one-upmanship. Goodbye, sartorial norms.



If reverence is the target, adoration is flagship captained by anomaly (“Make God call your name / with curiosity.”), masculinity toggling between allusions Greco- and Adamic (“his ribs”). Jones, the disco-isthmus to her “Paparazzi; / disciples.” Flashbulbs, our oars.

Literature’s most compulsory pivoter, Orpheus and “his beautiful boys” appear after a set of imperatives whose line breaks illustrate dualism pertaining to “the ways [Jones] abstracted and performed race, gender, and sexuality in pop culture.”<sup>iii</sup>

Line 12, Right                      Make Aphrodite evil.  
 + Line 13, Left                      Make her believe that you are

= A sisterhood. Compatriots.

But partnership halts when you add line 14's, "the second coming." Aphrodite, accept messiah Grace. Line 17 pairs flawlessness and ire—

Make Adonis hate you. Let everyone

Arrowed by line 18:

know that Cupid is your crybaby, jealous, / with rage.

Tension's dignitaries:

Make Adonis hate you. Let everyone  
know that Cupid is your crybaby, jealous,

Worship Jones and you adore an eros at odds with her "religious Pentecostal family."<sup>iii</sup> Harvest those garden *mirrors* of line 23 and *shards* nourish. Commit to Yves Saint Soundalike and *genitals* goes scriptural, *Gentiles* concluding.

### Prompt

Write a poem about an icon who has at least forty years of relevance under their belt. How might your layout convey stardom and indifference? Just as Hill's work affirms that Jones is "Still shaming uninspiring pop stars all around the globe,"<sup>iv</sup> so too will your composition pantheonize. Invest in verbs and a soundalike closing.

Happy Poeming,

Jon

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<sup>i</sup> Hill, 115.

<sup>ii</sup> ----, xviii.

<sup>iii</sup> ----, 115.

<sup>iv</sup> ----, 115.