

*It's the year 2068, we are a family (chosen and biological), spending time together at home, celebrating, without any cares, struggles or hardship because we've made it. We've reached liberation; the fight is over. We look back at the world 50 years prior (2018) and discuss old times; older generations tell stories to their descendants about Black Lives Matter, Hogan's Alley and other Black liberation movements of the early 21st century in Vancouver and Canada. Perhaps we're celebrating a national holiday for the independence and freedom of our combined people. What is our life like in 50 years? Life exudes joy in ways that it never has before. There is so much luxury and privilege in being free. We have time to read, and laugh and play and grow as a community. We're held back by nothing... We do what white people do now.*

~

Photos by Cicely Belle Blain. Photoshop by Pearl Low, @fumichun, [pearllow.com](http://pearllow.com) (image 2) & Sunny Chiu, @fleshknife (images 1, 3, 12, 13, 14). Courtesy of the artist.



1 - Sandra gets ready for the day. She likes to take her time; she doesn't have to rush anywhere.



2 - Sandra spends the afternoon reading in her downtown apartment.



3 - *The family gathers for a selfie after a day of celebration. They value the ability to choose family; it's the combined struggle that connects us.*





4 - *The family believes documentation is the most valuable way to keep their culture alive. Even an act as simple as a selfie preserves the culture they have fought so hard for.*



5 - *Black joy is radical.*





6 - Vikki tells stories of the past - she was alive through so much of the struggle for liberation. She believes in educating her younger family members of how things were before liberation. Behind her sits a painting of Marsha P. Johnson.





7 - *Laughter used to be medicine. Now, it's just the stuff of every day.*





8 - Sandra fills her kitchen with books by Black authors. It is her duty to know of the struggle that came before. She also displays artwork by Black artists, including this one from the early 21st century by Odera.



9 - *Cake. Because why not.*





10 - *Champagne. Because why not.*



*11 - Cultural celebration has always been key to Black liberation.  
Now, we can do it freely.*





12 - *Mariam and Parker read "Children of Blood and Bone" together, laughing at the joy of Black creativity. Some people have done away with books, but this family preserves them to remember Black history.*



13 - Sandra braids Mariam's hair while they look at photos they took with their family during the day's festivities.





14 - *Kafiya and Mariam call in on Sandra. They like to catch up and discuss books together. The liberation is alive in their conversation and collective memory.*

## Produced in Response to:

*Touch Change: A conversation between  
Syrus Marcus Ware and !Kona  
@ grunt gallery  
02.11.18*

**Cicely Belle Blain** is a diversity and inclusion consultant, activist and writer; they are one of Vancouver Magazine's fifty most influential people of 2018, an award-winning co-founder of Black Lives Matter-Vancouver and a member of the Canadian delegation to the United Nations. Their work is informed by their professional and academic background at the University of British Columbia and their lived experience as a Black, queer artist, a community builder, an intersectional feminist and a Black liberation activist. Also, Cicely Belle loves dinosaurs, red wine, oil pastels and flash fiction.

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