
Death Canto: The Urban NDN Nature Poem in Tommy Pico's *Nature Poem*

ANDREAS P. BASSETT

The reluctance to engage with and inability to compose nature poems is a recurring theme throughout Tommy Pico's *Nature Poem* (2018). Rather than attempt a contrived modern pastiche of an Indigenous nature poem that feeds into outmoded stereotypes, such as the ecological Indian trope, Pico purposefully resists traditional and Western poetic conventions altogether. Accordingly, individual sections in *Nature Poem* are untitled, internet shorthand (or text-speak) comprises much of the book's language, and, predictably, no conventional nature poem ever emerges. Although Pico does not showcase traditional nature writing, he does present us with an alternative nature poem on pages 32-33. This curious section immerses readers in the fast-paced, sensory-overloaded, and discombobulating features of the digital urban environment. For the most part, this section limns a digital landscape imbued with consumer capitalism and entertainment culture. Every line is an excerpt from a diverse range of external sources from the near and far past—American television commercials and product advertisements, films, songs, poems. Read linearly, these snippets mimic the aural effects of digital media browsing found in activities such as skipping songs on media players or streaming services and scrolling through short-form videos on a smartphone or tablet application. However, amidst this patchwork of intertextual quotes, a hashtag—#death—caps the end of each line, invoking an ominous mood. The repeating hashtag is what gives this section its digital pulse, but affixed to the intertextual excerpts #death is a siren-like warning that something about these lines, individually and collectively, is amiss. The amalgamation of fragmented transtemporal multimedia tagged with a

parasitic “#death” hashtag captures the essence of an overwhelming digital urban realm, but there is also an insinuation that elements of this mediascape, artistic and creative as it may be, possess an unsettling familiarity to some. For urban, modern Indians, such as Teebs, the queer protagonist in *Nature Poem* and the broader Teebs tetralogy (*IRL*, *Nature Poem*, *Junk*, *Feed*), encounters with audiovisual bites that embody or reflect consumer capitalist culture within larger settler colonial contexts will always retain an inherently deathly nature.

This article examines the intertextual content, configurations, and latent meanings in the untitled section on pages 32-33 of *Nature Poem*. I contend that the serried intertexts in what I refer to as “Death Canto” are audiovisual characteristics of digital urban environments, and, initially, when taken as a whole, this bricolage portrays a superficial reality where both short-burst consumption of digital media and elements of the digital media itself are innately death-inducing to the urban-dwelling Teebs. But when viewed in bundles or lines, “Death Canto” also reveals that beneath a cynical exterior, there is a hidden world burgeoning with potential for liberation from such darkness.

Throughout, I refer to the section on pages 32-33 as “Death Canto” primarily for the sake of convenience to you, the reader, but I want to acknowledge and respect Pico’s intention to not title this section or any page in *Nature Poem*. As Teebs writes in *IRL*, “I grow / my poems long” (97), and *Nature Poem* is structured as one long-form poem, not individually cordoned-off, self-contained poems. I do not wish to contravene Pico’s authority by isolating one section for analysis and, in doing so, assign it an unsanctioned name. As I restate in Appendix 3, it is important to recognize that subsequent references to “Death Canto” should be understood merely as a temporary designation for ease of reading strictly within the confines of this article.

Before proceeding, in the spirit of self-reflexivity and transparency, I would like to acknowledge that my positionality as a relative newcomer to Kumeyaay literature colors the

interpretations of Pico's work presented in this article. I am not and have never been an active interlocutor in Kumeyaay spaces and affairs. In the course of my academic training in the study of English literature, however, I have cultivated a genuine interest in American Indian fiction and poetry. Through engaging Pico's work and insights produced by scholars that study Pico and broader American Indian literature, I have come to embrace amplifying the voices and stories of American Indian experiences at large. While my perspective as an outsider undoubtedly shapes the meaning-making put forth in the following pages, I hope this article contributes meaningfully to the ongoing discourse surrounding Kumeyaay and American Indian works of art.

On the one hand, "Death Canto"—and, in a broader sense, *Nature Poem*—represents an instance of narrative resistance. From an aesthetic standpoint, the form, substance, and flow of "Death Canto" defy easy decipherment; each line's source and cultural reference taken at face value may or may not be known, there is no detectable rhyme scheme and meter, the organization of excerpts comes across as haphazard, and a conspicuous digital hashtag (a word or phrase preceded by the pound symbol used to designate relation to a special topic) calls our attention to something insidious but not immediately apparent.¹ In this sense, Pico indirectly subverts stereotypical nature writing by sewing together multimedia pieces extracted from the digital urban environment, and in so doing, he opens a space to consider and critique the NDN experience within it.²

A persistent motif that runs through the Teebs tetralogy is a turbulent love-hate relationship with urbanity that bleeds into digitality. In *IRL*, Teebs expresses fondness for city living, stating, "I'm in the city. Am the city, / The rush is what I covet—the / noise of constant motion" (60). Teebs in *Nature Poem* admits, "I can't write a nature poem / bc I only fuck with the city" (4), even going as far as saying, "I miss the city when I'm in the city" (64). But in other moments, the city bustle enervates Teebs, imposing such an overwhelming force that it renders him catatonic: "Clack, clack of expensive shoes slapping down the train / platform A car backfiring

Sputter of gunfire on a Snapchat story / I don't know where the feeling is or what to do with it n
spent / most of the day in bed with my eyes squeezed shut” (*Junk* 17). This sentiment continues in
Feed, but with a focus on the presence of violence and death in digital media: “Once again I don't
know where the feeling is or what to do with it / and spent most of the day in bed with my eyes
squeezed shut— / everything all over the news... The list of the newest mass shooting on record
the / names the list of shooting victims of fragile masculinity and misogyny and a rigged system in
favor of assault rifles over human life” (48). Teebs' emphasis on the overpowering feeling of
demoralization stemming from his interaction with digital media evokes Dian Million's felt theory.
Million's concept explores a sensory-based knowledge imbued with “the affective life force that
runs through us... the affective content of our experience[s]” (“There Is a River in Me” 32, 35) and
encompasses “culturally mediated knowledges, never solely individual... projections about what is
happening in our lives” (“Felt Theory: An Indigenous Feminist Approach” 61). By articulating his
on-the-ground, affective responses to digital urban encounters, Teebs illumines the ambivalent
lived experience of what it means to be NDN in metro America. While the accentuation of
negative “feelings” foregrounds a felt sense of Teebs' conflicted physical and mental wellbeing
within a growing techno-urban environment, Laura Furlan finds that “In the cities, Indian characters
become what Vizenor calls ‘postindian warriors’ who ‘create their stories with a new sense of
survivance’” (31). For urban NDNs, cities are both “a generative space and one where Indians are
marginalized” (35) due to settler colonial legacies, but digital urban environments also possess
“the potential to germinate meaningful activism” (12), as they empower Teebs to combine affect,
environment, and critique as a means of fostering social change. Thus, through “Death Canto,”
Teebs offers an NDN-specific critical commentary on the struggles faced in urban digital realms
while at the same time charting creative pathways for reparative social transformation. As Teebs

outlines himself in *Junk*, “it’s hard to let go Resisting death for / generations, *I want to make the opposite of death*” (66; emphasis added).

On the other hand, “Death Canto” paints an exceedingly bleak picture of tuning into the digital. In particular, the urban environment’s more materialist digital content produces pernicious effects on its users because its substance is laden with intermittent consumerist and self-destructive messaging. This is most evident in lines 8-11 of “Death Canto”—“I’m lovin it #death / because you’re worth it #death / the best a man can get #death / maybe she’s born with it #death” [32]—where the grim #death hashtag assigns each capitalist slogan’s (McDonald’s, L’Oréal, Gillette, and Maybelline, respectively) object an innately deadly quality. Robyn Maynard, in her epistolary dialogue with Leanne Betasamosake Simpson during the COVID-19 era, recognizes that the state of the despairing world makes it difficult to “stop doom-scrolling the multiple crises of our time” (Maynard, et al. 13). Morbid fascination springs forth from mass media, particularly television, which exposes users to graphic electronic media violence to the point of desensitization. We see this kind of powerlessness to the doom scroll in one of the organizational frameworks of *Feed*: a series of devastating news article titles formatted in full capitals (e.g., “GUNMAN FIRES INTO OKLAHOMA CITY RESTAURANT” [41], “MASS GRAVES OF IMMIGRANTS FOUND IN TEXAS” [57]). At one point in *Junk*, too, Teebs references the 2016 Orlando nightclub mass shooting, noting that after the murder and wounding of over one hundred LGBTQ+ individuals, “In the silence that followed, / the only noise was cellphones Desperate family and friends / wailing praying against their bottomless suspicion It’s all I cd / think about that day” (62). In this brief meditation, it is the inert cellphone as a communication technology that stands out to Teebs for attempting (and failing) to connect deceased and incapacitated users with loved ones.

Teebs repeatedly links contemporary, often quotidian violence to settler colonialism in “Death Canto” and its surrounding pages. As Colleen G. Eils observes, Teebs “is bound in the repercussions of ongoing colonial projects and—he would remind his readers—we, too, are also

either subject to or beneficiaries of colonialism" (96), which renders "Death Canto" a decolonial endeavor that recognizes that really "There is no post-colonial / America" (IRL 43). On the preceding pages of "Death Canto," an unfazed Teebs states, "my dad texts me two cousins dead this week, one 26 the other / 30," to which he responds nonchalantly, "what I'm really trying to understand is what trainers @ the gym mean when / they say 'engage' in the phrase 'engage your core'" (30). Death's proximity and commonness in Teebs' life lead him to a kind of survivance coping mechanism where indifferent treatment of death attempts to mitigate the trauma it typically causes. Teebs also staves off grief a few pages later when he resorts to "invent[ing] myself some laughs in an / attempt to maneuver from a sticky kind of ancestral sadness, being a / NDN person in occupied America" (37). *Nature Poem* early on intimates that settler colonialism operates as an overarching backdrop, working as a normative feature of contemporary NDN existence and contributing to much ongoing tension:

it seems foolish to discuss nature w/o talking about endemic poverty
 which seems foolish to discuss w/o talking about corporations given
 human agency which seems foolish to discuss w/o talking about colonialism. (12)

For these reasons, "#death" should be viewed not only in connection with an urban technological malaise that Teebs suffers from, but also within the broader framework of settler colonialism that continues to hold sway in American society. As Teebs comes to terms with the realization that "America / never intended for me to live" (IRL 70) as a "weirdo NDN faggot" (*Nature Poem* 2), we should equally regard "Death Canto" as an interpretive rumination on survivance in present-day settler colonial realities, encompassing both physical and digital dimensions.

Yet, beneath the surface of doom-scrolling digital media, the subtext of consumer capitalism, and systems of settler colonialism in "Death Canto," a ray of hope lies waiting to be discovered. "Death Canto" may exhibit a sense of fatalism, but it is through this struggle to find

meaning in the digital urban setting that a positive outlook comes into view. Twelve of the seventeen song extracts in “Death Canto” stem from African American musicians. When considered in relation to the rest of the intertexts, Black artists comprise exactly thirty per cent of the section’s textual makeup. These songs also cluster more than other genres (notably in lines 25-26 and 29-35). It is, therefore, imperative that we situate “Death Canto” within a context that not only takes into account Black agency but also integrates it with the NDN experience. Tiffany Lethabo King in *The Black Shoals* (2019) finds interconnections between Black and Indigenous discourse throughout American history. She argues that while Black and American Indian experiences under the auspices of settler colonialism are distinct, when put into conversation with each other, they harness a “shared critique” (King 15) of slavery, colonization, and their aftermaths. King uses the geographical term “shoal,” the shallow area where coastal land meets water, as a metaphorical location for Afro-Native “contact and encounter, as well as emergent formations” (3) to take shape. Such a liminal space, King argues, is an “alternate site of engagement to discuss Indigenous genocide, anti-Black racism, and the politics of Black and Native studies” (35). With such a large contingent of Black artists present in “Death Canto,” I interpret “Death Canto” as a kind of shoal—for its lines spring from and exist in the ether that is the digital urban—where Black voices come to inform Teebs’ urban NDN experiences in largely digital realms. In *IRL*, Teebs recognizes that the “Internet is comprised / of possibility. Like. Book. / Reading revealing what / I’m ‘really’ thinking” (52). Delving into the audio-visual snippets Teebs invokes in “Death Canto” allows us to develop a greater understanding of Teebs’s rationale for sensing death in the multimedia he consumes. As King advocates, “I encourage the reader to engage the nontraditional geographies (visible, uncharted, and invisible) that connect Indigenous and Black diasporic thought reparatively” (12), and by shoaling “Death Canto,” we can glimpse how Black music can be used cooperatively with NDN meditations on urban existence as a guiding force to confront and transcend deep historical traumas.

Carol Miller's observation that "city spaces are, for Indian people, places of risk, separation, disillusion, and dissolution" (31) highlights the historical challenges faced by Indigenous communities in urban settings. Nevertheless, the notion of NDN existence being inherently at odds with urbanity has recently undergone reconsideration. While, according to Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit, the Western city may be a "wicked symbol of greed, godlessness, and rootless cosmopolitanism" (21) in the eyes of Indigenous peoples, Furlan and others have pointed out that technically "all US cities are Indigenous cities" despite possessing "a long and complex Indigenous and settler colonial history" (Furlan 12). For one thing, the rural/urban, reservation/city binary oversimplifies complex realities and is grounded in non-Indigenous knowledge systems. As June Scudeler notes, "Pico attempts to disentangle himself from nature but realizes that binaries between nature/urban are false because they're based in colonizing logics" (170). Teebs acknowledges in *IRL* that "Good/Bad, / Right/Wrong, Binary is / another weapon of the / oppressor" (87). Kyle T. Mays critiques the notion that "The 'urban' is supposedly where premodern Native people go, lose their 'traditions,' and bring back the negative aspects of cities to the rez" (2) because more than two thirds of modern North American Indigenous people live in cities. As Tommy Orange reminds us, "Plenty of us are urban now. If not because we live in cities, then because we live on the internet. Inside the high-rise of multiple browser windows" (9-10). Although "this urban-rez dichotomy continues in scholarship" (Mays 2), Furlan asserts that it is specifically in metro settings that "Native characters reestablish and sometimes reclaim space in creative, occasionally subversive ways" (32), underscoring how urban spaces become catalysts for empowering NDN individuals. The shoal "represents a process, formation, and space that exists beyond binary thinking" (King 28), and "Death Canto" serves as a compelling example, illustrating how Teebs's engagement with dynamic urban digital landscapes can subvert binary frameworks imposed by colonial structures to (re)imagine alternative, more life-affirming realities.

In the end, such visions can, in the words of Warren Cariou, “destabilize those edges that keep Aboriginal peoples marginalized in contemporary North American culture, and it can do this by holding different realities side by side: by juxtaposing the received mainstream perception of colonial reality with a perception that is rooted in Aboriginal experience” (33).

Teebs’s deliberate sourcing of Black music functions as the driving force to (re)imagine this better world and practice future-making to (re)create it. Maynard and Simpson, echoing King, acknowledge that “it is the apocalypses of slavery and settler colonialism that bind [Black and NDN] collective pasts and presents together in the calamity at hand” (Maynard, et al. 14). Will Clark also remarks that “dispossession of Black autonomy and labor and dispossession of Indigenous land and sovereignty are often treated as incommensurate events despite the complex relations that historically and theoretically connect them” (540-541), suggesting the imbricated histories of Black and Indigenous peoples today might compound together more than run parallel to each other. One of the ways in which “Black-Indigenous histories have been crossing paths with each other ever since whites began inhumanely bringing captured Africans to Turtle Island” (Mays 8) is through the art of music. Mays informs us that “From its conception, drums (and beats) have been a significant part of hip hop music. Both African and Indigenous descendants continue to use the drum as a part of their musical production. Blackness and indigeneity, through sound, have intersected” (11). Through music, Black-NDN collaboration can “move beyond the persistent narratives of their demise, or their invisibility, or the notion that they are people of the past incapable of engaging with modernity” (Mays 3) to forge powerful counternarratives of fortitude. In this article, I maintain that it is through the invocation of predominantly influential Black music that a reimaginative world-building emerges in “Death Canto.” Though some lines appear dire at times, polyphonically, they possess a combinatory power that demonstrates resilience across space and time. In the face of hundreds of years of historical tribulations, the prominent and powerful Black voices invoked by Teebs in “Death Canto,” such as Rihanna, Mary J. Blige, Janet

Jackson, and Lionel Richie, coalesce Black resilience with NDN experience in digital urban realms. Simpson notes that “The absence of hope is a beautiful catalyst” (135), for progress is often constrained without the crucible of hardship, and seen in this light, “Death Canto” with its shadow #death hashtag is transformed into an exercise of interruption and searching for ways to create new forward momentum and possibilities of meaning in critical digital landscapes.

My reading of “Death Canto” in the following paragraphs will (1) attempt to demonstrate the section’s centrality to the thematic undercurrent of American Indian urban digitality in *Nature Poem* while also (2) investigating how the specter of death—as signaled by the omnipresent #death hashtag—maintains a tense position within digital urban contexts. Imagining Teebs as the primary user and listener in “Death Canto,” I analyze the intertexts with his perspective in mind and use the resultant interpretations as inroads to grasp Teebs’s—and, by extension, the NDN’s—multifaceted relationship with the digital urban world. My analysis takes a tripartite form: it ranges from micro (single line readings) and meso (clusters of two or more lines) to macro levels (lines having connections with other parts of *Nature Poem*), all of which work in concert with each other to interrogate the inner workings of “Death Canto.” Ultimately, I contend that Pico does engage nature writing to a certain extent as “Death Canto” portrays the cultural phenomena of the digital urban environment, albeit through a critical lens. Teebs’s ambivalence toward modernity and digital urbanism, which resonates throughout *Nature Poem*, finds further extension in “Death Canto,” but in the end, the #death hashtag overshadows his fraught relationship with urbanity by perpetuating Teebs’s existential cynicism of the urban NDN experience. However, by explicitly concatenating lyrical fragments of Black artists at the section’s end, Teebs also inadvertently models the resilient and reimaginative potential a Black-NDN coalition might implicitly hold in digital realms.

Something worth noting before moving forward is that “Death Canto” is positioned alongside the only other digitally born section on page 34 of *Nature Poem*. Most of *Nature Poem* is written in the voice and point of view of the semi-autobiographical Teebs, but four sections on pages 8, 32-33, 34, and 51 eschew this logic. The section on page 8 is a straightforward (but unsettling) list of entities associated with various acts or historical moments embroiled in violence (“Janjaweed, the Lord’s Resistance Army, Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, Oscar / Pistorius, the Tea Party, Andrew Jackson, the Niña the Pinta and the Santa / Maria”). From this list, “the Niña the Pinta and the Santa Maria” stand out as the names of the three ships employed by Christopher Columbus during his voyage to the New World in 1492. The ships, translated roughly into English as “the Girl,” “the Painted One,” and “Saint Mary” combined symbolize the European first contact that precipitated disease-stricken mass death, enslavement, and genocide in Indigenous and Black communities. In *IRL*, Teebs points to the resilience affected populations demonstrated to weather such atrocities, in the process questioning his own capacity to endure similar tribulations: “Ppl survive all the time, / thru true horrors like the Holocaust, / Middle Passage, 1492 like how? / I am one of the weak ones. I cry at Beyoncé songs” (86). The section on page 51 similarly presents irregularly spaced out words and phrases in line groupings (e.g., “pure deviant,” “American mixed,” “down-to-earth,” “support our troops,” etc.) in a list-like manner and ends in presumably Teebs’s voice, interjecting with the rhetorical query, “you know what I mean?” Conversely, the section on 34 is an online chat log between usernames “heyteebs” and “AngelNafis,” in which they discuss with enthusiasm their reactions to the legendary Aretha Franklin and her songs. The section on 34 and “Death Canto” on 32-33, therefore, stand out as outliers from the rest of *Nature Poem* for consisting of primarily born-digital materials.³

At first glance, as the more cryptic outlier, “Death Canto” does not appear to feed into Teebs’s conversational and insouciant style that pervades *Nature Poem*, but the section does offer a peek into Teebs’s urban digital footprint. Although Teebs’s direct discourse is absent from the

intertextual miscellany, the excerpts stand out as deliberately singled out catchlines, beckoning an attentive, critical user—like Teebs—to deconstruct the power dynamics they conceal. The lines—alone, in clusters, and collectively—afford varying degrees of insight into the multimedia Teebs consumes and urban digital culture at large; they capture the sounds, visuals, and messaging that get trapped in his head and burned into memory. This labyrinth of fragments, in turn, becomes the site of both critique and subversion for Teebs.

“Death Canto” opens with “the fabric of our lives #death,” which (1) conjures images of weaving textiles, which is a meta-reference to the section’s intertextual makeup, (2) invokes *Nature Poem*’s repeated usage of the sky and star metaphor, and (3) subscribes an ominous tenor (#death) that contrasts the opening line in its emphasis on life. The first six lines are an interchange between mainstream national television commercials and song and poem lyrics:

the fabric of our lives #death [television commercial, Cotton, 1992]

some ppl wait a lifetime for a moment like this #death [song, Kelly Clarkson, 2002]⁴

reach out and touch someone #death [television commercial, AT&T, 1987]

he kindly stopped for me #death [poem, Emily Dickinson, 1890]⁵

kid-tested, mother-approved #death [television commercial, Kix, 1982]

oops, I did it again #death [song, Britney Spears, 2000]

The alternation between commercial and lyric from multiple periods (the late 1800s, pre-internet 1980s, and the dot-com era to the early-2000s) weaves together a dynamic “fabric” that puts these sources into conversation with each other. Cotton products, cereal, pop songs, telecommunication, and death poetry from the Gilded Age: these extracts speak to some aspect of life’s interconnectedness and hint at an underlying sinister issue. “The fabric of our lives” serves as an extended metaphor that underpins the interpretation of “Death Canto,” but beneath the line’s commercial messaging exists a shadow story that runs throughout the beginning and

culmination of the section. Cotton Incorporated promoted the use and image of cotton as a raw material beginning in the 1990s through its “Fabric of Our Lives” advertising campaign. Behind the scenes, however, the company’s promotion board allegedly spent producers’ and importers’ money on lavish things, such as adult entertainment, golfing, and luxury cars. Financial irresponsibility in the face of a clean, do-good public message confers a sense of irony and hypocrisy to the “the fabric of our lives” line.⁶ The opening line is thus a tapestry of tension: “the fabric of our lives #death” stands in as a metaphor for the entirety of “Death Canto,” offers a glimpse into the deceptive nature of the corporate slogan it references, and the capping “#death” hashtag invites us to consider cotton’s grim history.

The rise of cotton as a key resource in the southern colonial plantation economy, of course, bears direct connections to Black slave labor. Indeed, it stands as an inextricable part of cotton’s dark roots in U.S. history. In the contemporary context, “The fabric of our lives” evokes images of soft, white, comfortable clothing in its final form and perhaps even nostalgia for individuals who remember watching the first Cotton advertisements on television in the 1980s and 1990s. But to premodern Black Americans in the colonial South, cotton held starkly different connotations: pain, bloody fingers, violence, and subjugation. Cotton as a material was literally a “fabric of” the “lives” of Black American laborers because they were forced to spend grueling hours picking the commodity for plantation owners with meager compensation in return. In addition to Black Americans, Indians participated in the plantation economy, and both disenfranchised groups, at some point in time, engaged in both labor and conflict with or for each other. For example, Tiya Miles shows that, in Indian Territories, “Cherokees adopted black slavery in part to demonstrate their level of ‘civilization’ in the hopes of forestalling further encroachment by white America,” which eventually led to the legalization of “slavery and black exclusion to maintain economic growth and independence and to demonstrate a social distance from the subjugated African race” (4). Celia E. Naylor finds that “enslaved African Cherokees in the Cherokee Nation

constructed several layers of connections and disconnections between themselves and Cherokees in nineteenth-century Indian Territory,” creating a “distinctive African Indian cultural milieu in antebellum Indian Territory” (4). Ultimately, though, settler colonial logics set precedents for “southeastern Indians’ conceptions of themselves—as Indians, as ‘civilized Indians,’ as slave owners, and as people who often defined themselves as superior to those of African descent” (Naylor 4). In the end, neither population could truly benefit under overarching systems and cultures that disempowered them. King reminds us that in premodern and modern times, “Black and Indigenous people must die or be transformed into lesser forms of humanity—and, in some cases, become nonhuman altogether” for the continuation of “White humanity and its self-actualization” (20-21). As troubling as it may be, it is the cotton plant alluded to via “The fabric of our lives” line in “Death Canto” that amalgamates Black and NDN histories and survivance. So, implicit in line one of “Death Canto” is simultaneously a quilt-like connectedness that stitches the section’s intertexts together and a national history burdened by chattel slavery that brings into contact Black and NDN peoples. Although the veiled allusion to America’s national shame may conjure images of systemic racism and violence in the opening of “Death Canto,” seemingly foreshadowing the course of the rest of the section, as I demonstrate later, the final sequence of lines arguably takes a wry, hopeful turn and distinguishes itself from the more uneasy “fabric of our lives #death.”

In a broader context, this “fabric,” which meshes media excerpts from far and wide in “Death Canto,” aligns with the sky and star metaphor that Teebs uses throughout *Nature Poem* to convey a desire to reconnect with his Indigenous roots. A melancholic tone arises in the first lines of *Nature Poem* when Teebs asserts, “The stars are dying / like always, and far away, like what you see looking up is a death knell / from light” (1). From the outset, death is associated with celestial bodies. Teebs, gazing upward, recognizes that what he sees in the moment is a sea of dying or

already dead stars, that the starlight reaching Earth is a look into a star's millions-of-years-old history, but that past is most likely fraught with inexorable collapse. The “death knell / from light” means that an appeal to the sky for guidance is a defeatist act, but Teebs nonetheless still finds—or at least tries to find—recourse in the stars: “Tracing shapes in the stars is the closest I get to calling a language mine” (37). In a middle section, Teebs admits that “Stars are characters / in the tome of the night sky, which I shd work more at deciphering” and states at the end of the page that “Everyone remembers the weather when discovering a body. / I think it’s perfectly natural to look skyward” (37), and even earlier that his “eyes peel toward the sky / like memory” (23), rationalizing his instinct to defer to the stars for answers, especially when death is involved. However, “deciphering” star “characters” or ancestors is unfeasible if the sky conveys an illusory or an incomplete map to draw meaning from, which may be why Teebs is increasingly disheartened and resigned to “invent... some laughs in an attempt to maneuver from a sticky kind of ancestral sadness” (37). Toward the end of *Nature Poem*, Teebs again resorts to sky and star imagery in an effort to glimpse the totality of his forebears and their collective memories. Teebs states, “The first stars were born of a gravity, my ancestors . . . I look up at the poem, all of them up there in the hot sky” (71), and asks, “How many of you are there, up in the flat sky” (64), but he does not necessarily have a way to read and interpret what he sees despite admitting that “I’ve started reading the stars / Nothing is possible until it happens” (71).

This turning to skyward constellations for some semblance of meaning is emulated in “Death Canto” through configurations of popular culture excerpts. The sky represents a natural domain for Teebs to explore, and “Death Canto” functions in a similar way by assembling a constellation of intertexts to create a partial representation of a different environment. Like stargazing for signs, but now coincidentally in an urban setting where stars are obscured by light pollution, “Death Canto” intertwines transtemporal sound and word bites that exist largely in the present-day digital sphere, presenting them for imaginative interpretation. Reading linearly in

tandem with decoding each intertextual extract engenders a discombobulating effect akin to incessantly switching between media channels or scrolling through never-ending streams of audiovisual material. But this is arguably part and parcel of the digital urban landscape; it is by design frenetic and cluttered with advertisements, begetting and catering to shortened attention spans. Moreover, much like the dying starlight above, the snippets that comprise “Death Canto” are tagged with “#death” to signify that the digital sea of media below is also an environment in constant demise.

There is a noticeable shift in the nature of the intertextual lines and their messaging at the end of “Death Canto”—an interlude before the forceful final two lines. Whereas the initial two-thirds of the section (lines 1-27) remix mostly American film, television, and lyrics to create a dizzying multimedia experience infused with flavors of consumer capitalism, the final third (lines 28-40) turns almost exclusively to songs by Black artists that are upbeat to the ear as well as uplifting in spirit:

hang in there, baby #death [motivational poster, Victor Baldwin, 1971]

mr. big stuff, who do you think you are #death [song, Jean Knight, 1971]

solid as a rock #death [song, Ashford & Simpson, 1984]

all day, every day #death [song, South Central Cartel, 1997]

rude boy #death [song, Rihanna, 2009]

yr givin me fever #death [song, Little Willie John, 1956]⁷

that’s the way love goes #death [song, Janet Jackson, 1993]

almost doesn’t count #death [song, Brandy Norwood, 1999]

Here, in this multimedia shoal, we can see how, from “rubbing disparate texts against one another, unexpected openings emerge where different voices are brought into relationship” (King 31). The “Hang in there, baby” motivational poster causes the break between the first two-thirds

and the final third of “Death Canto.” The popularized image of a cat hanging onto dear life to a stick is often used as an inspirational message by people facing adversity of some kind. For Teebs, the poster represents a much-needed boost of hope, a reminder of encouragement to persevere in the face of challenges. This sentiment finds resonance in the subsequent selection of Black music: Jean Knight’s “Mr. Big Stuff” espouses strong Black feminist resistance to the control of “Don Juan”-type men; the love song “Solid as a Rock” by the husband-and-wife duo Ashford & Simpson conveys how a built-up love will withstand obstacles of all kinds; and similarly Little Willie John’s “Fever” and Janet Jackson’s “That’s The Way Love Goes” underscore a striving for passionate love. What this sudden series of sanguinity might imply is that Teebs draws on the optimistic work of Black artists for solace, for a respite from the overpowering, relentless mediascape of the digital urban. Beyond merely a fondness for specific kinds of music, Teebs finds meaningful relationality in these lyrics, extracting what appear to be affirmations that reinforce his sense of belonging within urban life. Music and digital spaces themselves, too, have in the past offered historically marginalized groups an outlet to communicate messages of resilience. We might catch a glimpse of this potential in the aforementioned chat log between usernames “heyteebs” and “AngelNafis” in *Nature Poem*. For instance, Clark notes that when Teebs asks AngelNafis, a Black feminist poet, “if he can ‘reproduce this twitter convo in nature poem plz,” Teebs inadvertently constructs “a textual bridge across disparate experiences of minoritization” (543). Back to the point at hand, lines 29-35 are, in effect, a collective act of solidarity where Black voices carry through into the digital realm reaching thousands, if not millions, of users. Teebs states that “Songs r spells / like poems” (19), likening the music he listens to and the inadvertent nature poem he is composing to magical incantations that possess the power to fulfill whatever wish they harbor through repetitive chanting. Repeated listens and vocalizations of the lyrics from these Black artists seem to actualize the essence of their affirming messages, centering themes of positivity, strength, and transformation. Consequently, the final

segment of "Death Canto" resembles a meditation on the potential of future-making to resist or reverse the oppressive and dispiriting effects of digital urban life and its comorbidities intimated in earlier lines. Furthermore, these lyrics serve as a reminder that possibilities for worldbuilding can withstand the historically loaded looming "#death" hashtag.

The finale of "Death Canto" features a striking juxtaposition between two lyrics in two conspicuously different registers, and the double entendre in the final line makes for an ominous ending:

o say can u see #death [song, U.S. National Anthem, 1916]

shots shots shots shots shots shots shots #death [song, LMFAO and Lil Jon, 2009]

Line 39, "o say can u see #death," reproduces the first half of the first line of the U.S. national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner." In my video adaptation of "Death Canto" (see Appendix 3), I have elected to use a clip of renowned African American singer Beyoncé singing the national anthem before Super Bowl XXXVIII in 2004 to represent this line. This decision is informed by Teebs's evident admiration of Beyoncé, which also emphasizes the ironic fact that the national anthem was originally penned by wealthy slave owner and lawyer Francis Scott Key.⁸ (My creative move is also in consonance with the ending lines of the Teebs tetralogy in *Feed*: "As their eyes / were watching / Beyoncé" [78].) Beyoncé's presence in "Death Canto," like the artists in lines 29-35, gives the ending a jolt of energy charged with optimism. As Teebs mentions later in *Feed* when discussing Beyoncé's song "XO," he sees her as a source of illumination in the darkness: "You give me everything. The dark is, in fact, teeming with life" (57). The tempo in Beyoncé's rendition of "o say can u see" slows in what feels like a calm before a storm. These five words in the modern day are, of course, associated with reverence and steeped in revolution, considering the song's place in (and recounting of) U.S. history. And invoking the "The Star-Spangled Banner" injects a sense of unity or consolation into the conclusion of "Death Canto," but it also works to

reinforce *Nature Poem*'s recurring sky and star imagery.⁹ Diametrically opposed to "o say can u see" is the ridiculous series of six "shots" that follow to close out "Death Canto." On the surface, the party culture-driven hook from hip-hop artists LMFAO (Redfoo and Sky Blu) and Lil Jon's "Shots" (2009) is upbeat, mindless, and at times almost humorous with its absurd lyrics. The hook's delivery, base, and synths are all aggressive. Its tone is deliberately self-indulgent and flippant. The music video shows a crowd of ordinary people converted by the LMFAO duo and Lil Jon into imbibing partygoers.¹⁰ Line 40's connection to alcohol abuse within American Indian communities is blatant, as Teebs later notes in a tongue-in-cheek remark about the expectations of Indigenous poetry, "An NDN poem must reference alcoholism" (57). Resorting to alcohol consumption is often a coping mechanism for stress, anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues, all of which have historically plagued American Indian communities. But an alternative reading might construe the six "shots" as the sound of a firearm at discharge.¹¹ This adds a graveness to the end of the section, especially if we pay heed to the "#death" hashtag that has the last word. These six "shots" are a somber reminder of the ongoing challenges faced by Black and Indigenous communities in the U.S., which disproportionately bear the impact of gun-related crimes, such as per capita rates of violent victimizations, non-fatal injury, and homicide.¹² While the firearm (musket), as a weapon of war, played a pivotal role in securing victory in the American Revolutionary War, as a commonplace object in the modern day, the firearm alluded to in "Death Canto" symbolizes the deadening of Black and Indigenous agency. Though the U.S. national anthem may evoke romantic notions of freedom, liberty, and justice, the specter of #death after the six shots underscores a more serious reality of gun violence in urban environments, amplified by digital media coverage in news and entertainment. The theme of mass death by gun violence in NDN communities is echoed in the ending of the contemporaneous *There There* (2018) by Tommy Orange, in which a bloody shootout at the Big Oakland Powwow concludes the intersection of the novel's main characters. *There There*'s "Interlude" discloses that these "shots will

come from everywhere, inside, outside, past, future, now" (140) as if the fatal bullets have historical, recursive, and prophetic properties.

The last line carries connotations of gun violence, mass death, alcoholism, and a hint of comedy, ostensibly painting a rather pessimistic final picture of Teebs's engagement with the digital urban. But at the same time, as I have mentioned throughout this article, the ending of "Death Canto" does present a chance of hope that charts a promising path moving forward. Maynard offers guidance through the kind of doom-scrolling crisis Teebs exhibits, as she states, "For us to live in anything that I hope we can one day call freedom, it is necessary to put a swift end to the death-drive-disguised-as-worldview" (24). Teebs is prone to attributing "#death" to the urban digital way of life. Early in *Nature Poem*, Teebs is depressingly honest, asserting that "The world is infected" (12). His negative ruminations slowly compound out of control, digging himself deeper into a hole of despair. Teebs's "Death Canto" can be seen as a "death-drive-disguised-as-worldview" in the urban digital context, where his dredging of the dark past becomes compellingly addictive, but as Thomas King points out, "to believe in such a past is to be dead" (106). If Teebs truly aspires to "make the opposite of death" (*Nature Poem* 66), then his coalition of Black artists and their music in the face of #death proves successful as it demonstrates a form of resistance, a defiance of narratives that models how to unsettle settler colonial imaginings. Teebs's attempt at an "end to the death-drive" (Maynard 24) in an urban NDN nature poem perhaps also succeeds in "disrupt[ing] the current impulse and tendency within the academy that seems to focus on and find Black death wherever it looks" (King 31).

In this article, I have tried to demonstrate that certain lines in "Death Canto" can be approached linearly to form groups of clustered close readings and analyzed in further detail to reveal deeper interpretive meanings and connections. A meticulous unpacking of the easily glossed-over multisensory excerpts in "Death Canto" affords us ways to understand Teebs's

relation to and perception of the urban NDN experience. If poetry based on ancient earthworks from the American Indian past has the capacity to carry “mathematical patterning” and “forgotten sign systems” (Allen 808) for future readers to decipher, as Chadwick Allen has shown with Allison Hedge Coke’s *Blood Run* (2006), then I want to suggest that future-oriented NDN poems that feature the urban digital, such as Pico’s *Nature Poem*, can similarly contain codes and profound messages which readers possessing digital fluency may unravel.¹³ By investigating, identifying, and then stringing together the intertexts in Pico’s “Death Canto” to form a video adaptation, I hope to have also shown that recreating Pico’s more digital-based sections opens his work up to a different kind of comprehension and appreciation. Kyle Bladow writes that Pico’s poetry as a landscape denotes a kind of “visual art” (69) with “lyrics and aural qualities” that are meant to “be heard as much as read” (72), but I contend that certain portions of Pico’s work, such as “Death Canto,” can also actually be viewed to glean further insights. In the end, viewing Pico’s “Death Canto” from a bird’s eye view (see Appendix 1: Table 1) and in its original digital forms, studying its lines in groups and isolation, and drawing links to other areas of *Nature Poem* and the Teebs tetralogy allows for even more latent meanings couched in Pico’s intricately woven writing to see the light of day.

Notes

¹ “Hashtag, n.,” *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, Oxford University Press, June 2022, www.oed.com/view/Entry/59371427. Accessed 3 August 2022.

² According to Chelsea Vowel, “NDN is a term of more recent origin, in heavy use via social media. This shorthand term has no official meaning and is very informal. If you say it aloud it just sounds like Indian, so its use really only makes sense in text-based situations. NDN is more of a self-identifier than anything” (9).

³ At the same time, the sections on 8 and 34 interweave Black and Indigenous histories, creating further connections between the two peoples in *Nature Poem*.

⁴ Teebs notes later in *Nature Poem*, “I literally love Kelly Clarkson. Things reflect / their intersections” (49).

⁵ The most popular instantiation of this line in the past few decades may be *Sophie’s Choice* (1982).

⁶ See Sharon Walsh, "Cotton Industry Promotions Questioned; Agriculture: Two Agencies Spend Millions to Boost Fabric's Image, but Expenses for Swank Parties and Topless Clubs Are Drawing Scrutiny: Home Edition," *The Los Angeles Times*, Los Angeles, 1998; Sharon Walsh, "Spending Hidden By a Cotton Curtain; Farmers' 'Promotional' Fees Used For Golf, Topless Dancing, Alcohol: FINAL Edition," *The Washington Post*, Washington, D.C., 1998; Oral Capps Jr., and John P. Nichols, "Our Cotton Study," *The Washington Post*, Washington, D.C., 1999.

⁷ "Fever" was popularized by Peggy Lee in 1958. The video adaptation, therefore, uses a Peggy Lee performance as the snippet for the "yr givin me fever #death" line.

⁸ Teebs mentions Beyoncé in *Nature Poem* multiple times: "The perigee moon haloes the white comforter in a Beyoncé way" (27), "that drop in 'Mine' by Beyoncé where she says 'no rest in the kingdom' (note to self: write pop song called 'Once, Twice, Three Times Beyoncé')" (42). Beyoncé is one of the most referred to artists throughout the Teebs tetralogy.

⁹ This synchronizes "Death Canto" with the bracketing beginning and end structure of *Nature Poem*. Although not explicitly mentioned in "Death Canto," the national anthem's title, "The Star-Spangled Banner," and the second half of the first line, "by the dawn's early light" (emphasis by me) indirectly find an analog on the last page of *Nature Poem*: "The sun is / over the hill... and all across Instagram—peeps are posting pics of the / sunset" (74). Teebs' final remark—watching city folk take Instagram pictures of our solar system's lone star—is perhaps glimpsed in the tacit reference to the dawn in line 39 of "Death Canto."

¹⁰ "LMFAO ft. Lil Jon - Shots (Official Video)," *YouTube*, uploaded by LMFAOVEVO, 4 Dec. 2009, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XNtEibFvIQ>.

¹¹ Coincidentally, revolvers or "six shooters" typically hold six cartridges.

¹² See "American Indians and Crime," The U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1999, and Erika Harrell, "Black Victims of Violent Crime," The U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2007.

¹³ See Chadwick Allen, "Serpentine Figures, Sinuous Relations: Thematic Geometry in Allison Hedge Coke's *Blood Run*," *American Literature*, vol. 82, no. 4, 2010, pp. 807-34.

Appendix 1: Table 1: Intertextual Source Map of “Death Canto”

Line #	Line Content	Originating Interest(s)	Medium(s)	Author(s)	Year(s)	Notes
1	the fabric of our lives #death	"The Fabric of Our Lives"	TV commercial	Cotton	1992	
2	some ppl wait a lifetime for a moment like this #death	"A Moment Like This"	Song	Kelly Clarkson	2002	
3	reach out and touch someone #death	"Reach Out and Touch Someone"	TV commercial	AT&T	1987	
4	he kindly stopped for me #death	"Because I could not stop for Death"	Poem	Emily Dickinson	1890	Originally also used by Bell in the late 1970s
5	kid-tested, mother-approved #death	"Kid Tested, Mother Approved"	TV commercial	Kix (cereal company)	1978 (slogan), 1982 (commercial)	Poem used and possibly popularized in the film adaptation <i>Sophie's Choice</i> (1982)
6	oops, I did it again #death	"Oops!... I Did It Again"	Song	Britney Spears	2000	
7	it keeps going and going, and going #death	"Just Keeps Going"	TV commercial	Engelizer (battery company)	c. late 1980s to early 1990s	
8	I'm lovin' it #death	"I'm Lovin' It"	TV commercial	McDonald's	2003	
9	because you're worth it #death	"Because You're Worth It"	TV commercial	L'Oréal	1971 (slogan), 1973 (commercial)	
10	the best a man can get #death	"The Best a Man Can Get"	TV commercial	Gillette	1989	
11	maybe she's born with it #death	"Maybe She's Born With It"	TV commercial	Maybelline	1991	
12	a whole new world #death	<i>Aladdin</i>	Film	Disney	1992	
13	high flying adored #death	<i>Evita</i>	Film/Musical	Andrew Lloyd Webber	1978	Performed by Madonna and Antonio Banderas
14	be all that you can be #death	"Be All That You Can Be"	TV commercial	U.S. Army	1981	
15	it's... Alive!!! #death	<i>Frankenstien</i>	Film	James Whale (director)	1931	
16	the freshmaker #death	"The Freshmaker" (multiple)	TV commercial	Meats	c. 1980s	
17	stick a fork in me #death	"The Butter Shave" in <i>Scinfeld</i>	TV episode	Larry David, Jerry Seinfeld,	1997	
18	when you've got it, flaunt it #death	<i>The Producers</i>	Film	Mel Brooks (director)	1967	
19	why you gotta be so rude #death	"Rude"	Song	MAGGI!	2014	
20	the best part of waking up #death	various commercials	TV commercial	Folger's Coffee	c. late 1990s	
21	it's morphin time #death	<i>Mighty Morphin Power Rangers</i>	TV show	Shuki Levy, Hann Shanon (creators)	1993-1996	
22	hello, is it me you're looking for? #death	"Hello"	Song	Lionel Richie	1984	
23	just do it #death	"Just Do It"	TV commercial	Nike	1988	
24	Got #death	"got milk?"	TV commercial	California Milk Processor Board, Michael Bay (director)	1993	
25	he can get it #death	"You Can Get It"	Song	Anjel	2003	
26	what's the 411, son #death	"What's the 411?"	Song	Mary J. Blige	1992	
27	takes a lickin and keeps on tickin #death	"Times - Takes a Licking and Keeps on Tickin'"	TV commercial	Times	c. 1960s	
28	hang in there, baby #death	"Hang in There, Baby"	Motivational Poster	Victor Balaban	1971	
29	me, big stuff, who do you think you are #death	"Mr. Big Stuff"	Song	Jean Knight	1971	
30	solid as a rock #death	"Solid"	Song	Ashford & Simpson	1984	
31	all day, every day #death	"All Day, Everyday"	Song	South Central Cartel	1997	
32	rude boy #death	"Rude Boy"	Song	Rihanna	2009	
33	yr givin me fever #death	"Fever"	Song	Little Willie John	1956	Popularized by Peggy Lee in 1958
34	that's the way love goes #death	"That's the Way Love Goes"	Song	Janet Jackson	1993	
35	almost doesn't count #death	"Almost Doesn't Count"	Song	Brandy Norwood	1999	
36	loved by Neil Patrick Harris #death	various award shows	na	na	c. 2010s	
37	yr not the boss of me #death	"Boss of Me"	Song	They Might Be Giants	2001	
38	clever girl #death	"Clever Girl"	Song	Tower of Power	1973	
39	o say can u see #death	"The Star-Spangled Banner"	Song	U.S. National Anthem	1916	From Francis Scott Key poem "Defense of Fort M'Henry" (1814)
40	shots shots shots shots shots #death	"Shots"	Song	LMP-AO, Lil Jon	2009	

Appendix 2: Description and Breakdown of Table 1

The forty-lined originally untitled "Death Canto" appears close to the halfway point of *Nature Poem* (32-33/73). Every line is an excerpt derived from an outside source, making "Death Canto" a collage of sounds and visuals from the past unified under one repeating "#death" hashtag. Table 1 traces each line's source and its genre, author, year of publication and/or circulation, and, when applicable, supplementary notes. Identified genres in "Death Canto" include film (three lines), musical (one line), poetry (one line), song (seventeen lines), television commercial (fourteen lines), television show (two lines), and motivational poster (one line). Some genres tend to cluster more than others. For example, songs appear on lines 2, 6, 19, 22, 25, 26, 29-35, and 37-40, and TV commercials appear on lines 1, 3, 5, 7-11, 14, 16, 20, 23, 24, 27. Only one line (line 36) is anomalous: "hosted by Neil Patrick Harris" is a general introductory phrase used for television and film award shows and ceremonies. Every line is unique in the sense that each intertext and its author only appear once in "Death Canto." The periods from which the intertexts date also cover a broad range of years across multiple decades in the last two centuries. Line 4, "he kindly stopped for me," is the second line from Emily Dickinson's poem "Because I could not stop for Death," which was first published posthumously in 1890. (This Dickinson poem is featured in the 1982 Oscar nominated and winning film adaptation *Sophie's Choice*.) The second-to-last line, line 39, "o say can you see," is the first line of the U.S. national anthem (ratified by congress in 1931), but the lyrics come from a Francis Scott Key poem "Defence of Fort M'Henry" published in *The Analectic Magazine* in 1814, which makes line 39 the oldest intertext in "Death Canto." "It's... Alive!!!" on line 15 is a well-known quote from the 1931 James Whale film adaptation *Frankenstein* when Victor Frankenstein proclaims that his inanimate

composite creature has come to life. Aside from these three sources originating in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, the rest of the intertexts hail from the late 1950s through to the mid-2010s: 1950s (line 33), 1960s (lines 18 and 27), 1970s (lines 9, 13, 28, 29, 38), 1980s (lines 3, 5, 7, 10, 14, 16, 22, 23, 30), 1990s (lines 1, 11, 12, 17, 20, 21, 24, 26, 34, 35, 37), early 2000s (lines 2, 6, 8, 32, 40), 2010s (lines 19, 31, 36). The tracing of intertexts facilitated and made more accessible by Table 1 thus illustrates the temporal and generic diversity immanent in “Death Canto.”

Appendix 3: Note on the Video Production Process of “Death Canto”

(<https://youtu.be/UHVYoWCDijM>)

Before creating the video adaptation of the untitled section on pages 32-33 in *Nature Poem*, I contacted Tommy Pico through Instagram for permission to undertake this project. I am fortunate and grateful to have received written confirmation from him to create my “Death Canto” video adaptation, given how busy Pico is now that he is involved in screenwriting and television in addition to poetry writing. As discussed in the article, I do not intend to give the untitled section on 32-33 a definitive name. Doing so would assert control over a literary work I do not and cannot have authority over. My references to “Death Canto” should therefore be considered only a provisional name for purposes of convenience within the context of this article and this article only. In future discourse, with respect to Pico and *Nature Poem*, the “Death Canto” designation should be avoided and/or not used when referring to the composition on 32-33.

All video clips in the video adaptation are sourced from YouTube. When possible, I have used the originating intertext for each line. When unavailable, I have taken several creative liberties while trying to stay as true as possible to Pico, Teebs, and *Nature Poem*. For instance, line

4, "he kindly stopped for me #death," is from Emily Dickinson's posthumously published 1890 poem, "Because I could not stop for Death," but I have used a clip from the 1982 academy award-winning film *Sophie's Choice* where Dickinson's poem is read (24:28-24:31) by virtue of the film's cultural significance in the 1980s. Similarly, I use Beyoncé's singing of the U.S. national anthem before Super Bowl XXXVIII for line 39, "o say can u see #death," due to Teebs' fondness for her and Beyoncé's numerous appearances elsewhere in the Teebs tetralogy. For Line 36, "hosted by Neil Patrick Harris #death," I use the opening clip of the 2011 Tony Awards Opening Number. If one or more intertexts have been incorrectly identified or their year or origin are wrong, the error is mine and mine only.

The copyrighted video and sound snippets used in this video adaptation fall under fair use due to the academic, not-for-profit, and educational nature of this project as well as the short duration of each video and audio clip.

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