

17 Things Doctors Rather Believe Than a Black Woman in Pain

1. you are over exaggerating. yes, i know you've been coming here for 4 years for the same problem
you are fine. what, i am your 4th doctor this year?
2. its probably just anxiety & the pain is in your head
3. white women are the only ones who need pain management before or after childbirth
4. look at Henrietta Lacks & aint she is still saving us?
5. Black people have thicker skin, this has been proven since the 1820's
6. we have thomas hamilton to thank for this study.
a doctor from the 1820's who conducted experiments on slaves. for example, John Brown, a borrowed slave who could hardly walk after 9 months
of hamilton trying to see just how deep Black skin went. called it red sea - split open to save an ungrateful bunch, to prove his skin was as thick as a bible.
& was this not God's work?
7. certainly, it worked. he survived & saved many.
& if a Black man can take it, certainly a Black woman can
8. hence, dr. james marion sims, aka the father of gynecology, who proved this when he experimented on 17 year old, Anarcha Westcott, who endured 30 surgeries over 4 years after a very traumatic labor & delivery, i might add!
he saved her because of the previous studies & she did not need it?
9. Black women have thick skin!
10. Serena Williams
11. ok, so actually - you were right, we did find something,
but we have to draw blood first. this will not hurt because you have thick skin
12. thick skin like leather, like horse skin. thick like blood or thick like pigskin or cowhide.
13. no, this information was not to justify the mistreatment of Black people, it was a study
14. this is fact & i have studied medicine for years
15. you cannot possibly know you are dying,
before i know you are dying
16. you have thick skin, i'm sure you will survive death
look at Henrietta Lacks
17. the pain is all in your head

Mercy

After Dance of Myal by Maurice Broaddus for Pap

on a December morning in 1999, after a moontide,
he walks along the water's edge to the spot where
he use to catch fish & relax. he remembers the creaky
floorboards, the kitchen tiles, & the smell of curry in his home

& how he has a week to pack, after the landlord finally
got him out. he remembers loss. call it ghost. call it an
empty shell of a house. call it bones. call it grief as heavy
as the wet clothes his mama use to wash in the river.

call it dead fish entangled in the bushes that lay
along the White River's embankment with gapping
mouths & gray glossy eyes. did someone take their home
from them, too? & leave their soft bones as evidence?

as warning? call them duppies. call the river
a grave site where his dreams lay with 4 million
fish bobbing along a 50 mile stretch of White
River from Indianapolis to Anderson. newspapers

will call it Indiana's worst environmental disaster.
he will call it the day he lost his home & all it's glory,
with a loud pounding heartbeat watching his hopes
sink & wade to the bottom of the river with hopes
to make room for new stories.