

## Brian McHale - Kevin Young

\* \* \* VOICEOVER \* \* \*

(reel three)

# BLACK MARIA

*being the adventures of*

DELILAH REDBONE & A.K.A. JONES



POEMS PRODUCED *and* DIRECTED BY

## KEVIN YOUNG



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*Redbone mourns her on-screen life,  
her lover and Boss—sometime the same—  
who dominate her days and even her sleep,  
or lack thereof. Stranded in Shadowtown,  
she begins to long for home.*

*At the bar, or in the car, our man Jones is  
missing him some Miss Redbone. He feels  
rooked; she took him for his money, and  
more. Would more winnings win her back?*

*Looking to score, he pulls The Heist,  
which, like all heists, goes awry. Only thing  
that holds him now is jail, pending bail.*

*Escape might mean her help, sprung like  
the season, while he spills his origin to  
whoever'll listen. Which is to say, no one.*

*Cut—*

## THE HEIST

Some tripped silent alarm

I empty round  
after round as if at the bar

Hands trembling  
like a suspension bridge

This bank heist gone  
bad as a marriage.

Radio requesting backup

Me sweating bullets,  
endless rounds

Outside, a sandwich board  
hawking God

Shotgun smuggled  
past security in a flower box

Black mask I can't see  
squat out of.

Lady, let's slow drag  
as the sirens sound closer

Well-paid police dog  
on my tail—

Soon we'll be tropic, taking  
baths in getaway green

Letting our skin ripen  
& sweeten

The nights crisp  
as a banknote Ben Franklin—

Put your hands  
where we can see em

Hear the hounds  
grow nearer, growl

Outside, the getaway car  
leaking gas, tires shot

The megaphone hollering halt

My stethoscope cold  
against the vault's locked heart

## One Poem by Layli Long Soldier



38

Here, the sentence will be respected.

I will compose each sentence with care by minding what the rules of writing dictate.

For example, all sentences will begin with capital letters.

Likewise, the history of the sentence will be honored by ending each one with appropriate punctuation such as a period or question mark, thus bringing the idea to (momentary) completion.

You may like to know, I do not consider this a “creative piece.”

In other words, I do not regard this as a poem of great imagination or a work of fiction.

Also, historical events will not be dramatized for an interesting read.

Therefore, I feel most responsible to the orderly sentence; conveyor of thought.

That said, I will begin:

You may or may not have heard about the *Dakota 38*.

If this is the first time you've heard of it, you might wonder, "What is the Dakota 38?"

The Dakota 38 refers to thirty-eight Dakota men who were executed by hanging, under orders from President Abraham Lincoln.

To date, this is the largest "legal" mass execution in U.S. history.

The hanging took place on December 26<sup>th</sup>, 1862—the day after Christmas.

This was the *same week* that President Lincoln signed The Emancipation Proclamation.

In the preceding sentence, I italicize "same week" for emphasis.

There was a movie titled *Lincoln* about the presidency of Abraham Lincoln.

The signing of The Emancipation Proclamation was included in the film *Lincoln*; the hanging of the Dakota 38 was not.

In any case, you might be asking, "Why were thirty-eight Dakota men hung?"

As a side note, the past tense of hang is *hung*, but when referring to the capital punishment of hanging, the correct tense is *hanged*.

So it's possible that you're asking, "Why were thirty-eight Dakota men *hanged*?"

They were *hanged* for *The Sioux Uprising*.

I want to tell you about The Sioux Uprising, but I don't know where to begin.

I may jump around and details will not unfold in chronological order.

Keep in mind, I am not a historian.

So I will recount facts as best as I can, given limited resources and understanding.

Before Minnesota was a state, the Minnesota region, generally speaking, was the traditional homeland for Dakota, Anishnaabeg and Ho-Chunk people.

During the 1800s, when the U.S. expanded territory, they "purchased" land from the Dakota people as well as the other tribes.

But another way to understand that sort of "purchase" is: Dakota leaders ceded land to the U.S. Government in exchange for money and goods, but most importantly, the safety of their people.

Some say that Dakota leaders did not understand the terms they were entering, or they never would have agreed.

Even others call the entire negotiation, "trickery."

But to make whatever-it-was official and binding, the U. S. Government drew up an initial treaty.

This treaty was later replaced by another (more convenient) treaty, and then another.

I've had difficulty unraveling the terms of these treaties, given the legal speak and congressional language.

As treaties were abrogated (broken) and new treaties were drafted, one after another, the new treaties often referenced old defunct treaties and it is a muddy, switchback trail to follow.

Although I often feel lost on this trail, I know I am not alone.

However, as best as I can put the facts together, in 1851, Dakota territory was contained to a 12-mile by 150-mile long strip along the Minnesota river.

But just seven years later, in 1858, the northern portion was ceded (taken) and the southern portion was (conveniently) allotted, which reduced Dakota land to a stark 10-mile tract.

These amended and broken treaties are often referred to as The Minnesota Treaties.

The word *Minnesota* comes from *mni* which means water; *sota* which means turbid.

Synonyms for turbid include muddy, unclear, cloudy, confused and smoky.

Everything is in the language we use.

For example, a treaty is, essentially, a contract between two sovereign nations.

The U.S. treaties with the Dakota Nation were legal contracts that promised money.

It could be said, this money was payment for the land the Dakota ceded; for living within assigned boundaries (a reservation); and for relinquishing rights to their vast hunting territory which, in turn, made Dakota people dependent on other means to survive: money.

The previous sentence is circular, which is akin to so many aspects of history.

As you may have guessed by now, the money promised in the turbid treaties did not make it into the hands of Dakota people.

In addition, local government traders would not offer credit to “Indians” to purchase food or goods.

Without money, store credit or rights to hunt beyond their 10-mile tract of land, Dakota people began to starve.

The Dakota people were starving.

The Dakota people starved.

In the preceding sentence, the word “starved” does not need italics for emphasis.

One should read, “The Dakota people starved,” as a straightforward and plainly stated fact.

As a result—and without other options but to continue to starve—Dakota people retaliated.

Dakota warriors organized, struck out and killed settlers and traders.

This revolt is called The Sioux Uprising.

Eventually, the U.S. Cavalry came to Mnisota to confront the Uprising.

Over one thousand Dakota people were sent to prison.

As already mentioned, thirty-eight Dakota men were subsequently hanged.

After the hanging, those one thousand Dakota prisoners were released.

However, as further consequence, what remained of Dakota territory in Mnisota was dissolved (stolen).

The Dakota people had no land to return to.

This means they were exiled.

Homeless, the Dakota people of Mnisota were relocated (forced) onto reservations in South Dakota and Nebraska.

Now, every year, a group called the *The Dakota 38 + 2 Riders* conduct a memorial horse ride from Lower Brule, South Dakota to Mankato, Mnisota.

The Memorial Riders travel 325 miles on horseback for eighteen days, sometimes through sub-zero blizzards.

They conclude their journey on December 26<sup>th</sup>, the day of the hanging.

Memorials help focus our memory on particular people or events.

Often, memorials come in the forms of plaques, statues or gravestones.

The memorial for the Dakota 38 is not an object inscribed with words, but an *act*.

Yet, I started this piece (which I do not consider a poem or work of fiction) because I was interested in writing about grasses.

So, there is one other event to include, although it's not in chronological order and we must backtrack a little.

When the Dakota people were starving, as you may remember, government traders would not extend store credit to “Indians.”

One trader named Andrew Myrick is famous for his refusal to provide credit to Dakotas by saying, "If they are hungry, let them eat grass."

There are variations of Myrick's words, but they are all something to that effect.

When settlers and traders were killed during the Sioux Uprising, one of the first to be executed by the Dakota was Andrew Myrick.

When Myrick's body was found,

his mouth was stuffed with grass.

I am inclined to call this act by the Dakota warriors a poem.

There's irony in their poem.

There was no text.

*“Real” poems do not “really” require words.*

I have italicized the previous sentence to indicate inner dialogue; a revealing moment.

But, on second thought, the particular words “Let them eat grass,” click the gears of the poem into place.

So, we could also say, language and word choice are crucial to the poem's work.

Things are circling back again.

Sometimes, when in a circle, if I wish to exit, I must leap.

And let the body swing.

From the platform.

Out

to the grasses.

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(29)

*Old Man Travelling*

ANIMAL TRANQUILLITY AND DECAY, A SKETCH

The little hedge-row birds,  
That peck along the road, regard him not.  
He travels on, and in his face, his step,  
His gait, is one expression; every limb,  
His look and bending figure, all bespeak  
A man who does not move with pain, but moves  
With thought—He is insensibly subdued  
To settled quiet: he is one by whom  
All effort seems forgotten, one to whom  
Long patience has such mild composure given,  
That patience now doth seem a thing, of which  
He hath no need. He is by nature led  
To peace so perfect, that the young behold  
With envy, what the old man hardly feels.  
—I asked him whither he was bound, and what  
The object of his journey; he replied  
'Sir! I am going many miles to take  
A last leave of my son, a mariner,  
Who from a sea-fight has been brought to Falmouth,  
And there is dying in an hospital.'

10

20



# Beth Hewitt - Dickinson

And Life was not so  
 Ample I 5  
 Could finish - Enmity -  
 Nor had I time to Love -  
 But since  
 Some Industry must be -  
 The little Toil of Love - 10  
 I thought  
 Be large enough for Me -

PUBLICATION: *Poems* (1890), 36, as two quatrains. *Poems* (1955), 367; *CP* (1960), 230-31. *MB* (1981), 824, in facsimile. (J478)

A 12 Be] Was P90 CP24 P30 P37

## 764 *My life had stood a loaded gun*

MANUSCRIPT: About late 1863, in Fascicle 34 (H 131).

A My Life had stood - a Loaded Gun - F34.9  
 In Corners - till a Day  
 The Owner passed - identified -  
 And carried Me away -  
 And now We roam in Sovereign Woods - 5  
 And now We hunt the Doe -  
 And every time I speak for Him  
 The Mountains straight reply -  
 And do I smile, such cordial light  
 Opon the Valley glow - 10  
 It is as a Vesuvian face  
 Had let it's pleasure through -  
 And when at Night - Our good Day done -  
 I guard My Master's Head -  
 'Tis better than the Eider Duck's 15  
 Deep Pillow - to have shared -  
 To foe of His - I'm deadly foe -  
 None stir the second time -  
 On whom I lay a Yellow Eye -  
 Or an emphatic Thumb - 20

Though I than He - may longer live  
 He longer must - than I -  
 For I have but the power to kill,  
 Without - the power to die -

5 in] the - 16 Deep] low 18 stir] harm 23 power] art

*Division* 1 a | 5 in | 7 speak | 9 such | 13 Our | 13 done - ||  
 15 Eider Duck's] Eider - | Duck's 17 deadly | 19 Yellow | 21 may |  
 23 power |

PUBLICATION: *London Mercury*, 19 (February 1929), 354-55, and *FP* (1929), 143, with the alternatives for lines 5 and 23 adopted. *Poems* (1955), 574; *CP* (1960), 369-70. *MB* (1981), 825-26, in facsimile. (J754)

## 765 *The sunrise runs for both*

MANUSCRIPT: About late 1863, in Fascicle 34 (H 131).

A The Sunrise runs for Both - F34.10  
 The East - Her Purple Troth  
 Keeps with the Hill -  
 The Noon unwinds Her Blue  
 Till One Breadth cover Two - 5  
 Remotest - still -  
 Nor does the Night forget  
 A Lamp for Each - to set -  
 Wicks wide away -  
 The North - Her blazing Sign 10  
 Erects in Iodine -  
 Till Both - can see -  
 The Midnight's Dusky Arms  
 Clasp Hemispheres, and Homes  
 And so 15  
 Opon Her Bosom - One -  
 And One opon Her Hem -  
 Both lie -

PUBLICATION: *FP* (1929), 152; in later collections, line 15 concludes line 14. *Poems* (1955), 545; *CP* (1960), 349. *MB* (1981), 827, in facsimile. (J710)

A 11 Erects] Enacts FP29 P30 P37

Me +

My life had stood - a  
Loaded Gun.

In Corners - till a Day  
The Corner passed - identified -  
And carried the array -

And now we roam<sup>+</sup> in  
Savanna Woods -

And now we hunt - the Doe.  
And every time I speak  
for him

The Mountains straight - & long -

And so I smile, such  
Cordial light

Open the Valley glow -

It is as a Victorian face  
Had let its pleasure through -

And when at Night - Our  
Good Day done -

I guard My Master's Head.  
'Tis better than the Eider-  
duck's  
+ deep Pillon. 10 have shared.

To for of His. In Obed,  
for.  
From + all the second time.  
On whom I (a, a fellow  
4, 4.  
Or An emphatic Thums.

Though I than He. May  
Cinger Air  
He Cinger must. than I.  
For I have out the + power  
to kill.  
Without. the power to die.  
+ the. + Cor + harm + Art

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