“PARABLE OF THE SOWER”

Pamela Sneed

I’ve always rooted for good guys/always.
Once I heard a friend at the movies rooting for Poison Ivy/
Batman and Bat Girl’s nemesis
I was shocked that anyone could root for a bad girl
but after Trayvon was killed by George Zimmerman
who walked free
I finally understood what could turn a character’s eyes dark
(you could become so disillusioned)
and then I understood in the Star Wars franchise
what made Darth Vader, Vader
I felt that again after Trump’s election
No more green, blue light
Only gray, dark drab, white bones, war.
Last week, I worked with a class I hadn’t met before
On the subject of Black Lives Matter.
I repeated something Gregg Bordowitz said to a group of students
“What if the only justice we have right now is here
in this room?”
One student said, “Nothing ever changes.”
So responding, I ask, “Are you telling me then
you can’t change?”
They were all surprised, shocked by my question.
At the end, I asked the class, “What have you learned today?”
A Black girl answered as if she were channeling Octavia herself,
“Change.
Is up to us.”

If you want to know the ending
how it’s all gonna turn out
the aftermath of trump’s presidency
don’t turn to analysts, wall st. or cnn
for an accurate portrait of where it’s all going
what it’s gonna look like
reread Octavia Butler’s Parable of the Sower
set in California around 2027:
people in fear/behind walls/gated communities
a woman raped so much
she can’t stand
gun violence/addiction/fires that can scarcely
be put out
people scavenging for food/trying not to become prey
compassion gone
the main character named Lauren a hyper-empath
can feel others’ pain
a metaphor for artists
whatever you think of Marina Abramović
her show title is right, the artist is/was always present
from the beginning of time until now.
Look again at the Hunger Games, the districts are
actually concentration camps with gray garb
and barbed-wire fences
that nod to Nazi Germany
humans pitted against each other to survive.
Sometime after Trayvon Martin was shot
I finally understood
something deep about Star Wars