

COMMUNAL RITUALS

In the fall of 2019, Woolly Mammoth presented The Movement Theatre Company's production of *What to Send Up When it Goes Down* by Aleshea Harris. This piece was written in direct response to anti-Black violence, past and present, that honors loved ones lost. What follows are words that Aleshea wrote to encourage us to continue sending up love, strength, resilience and joy as many times as needed, in the face of injustice.

WHAT TO SEND UP ON YOUR OWN

The ritual doesn't have to end just because the performers are gone. You may find it necessary to carry out your own ritual response when another tragedy occurs. Here are a few things you/your community can do to send it up, some of which were modeled in the piece:

1. SPEAK THE NAMES

In WTSU, we speak the name of the deceased once for each year that they lived. You can do the same or find your own way of acknowledging the tragedy of their death while keeping their name alive.

2. GROUP YELL

Gather in an appropriate place and yell together. Be sure to support each other's need for catharsis by way of this expulsing. Make sure the space feels and is safe for this kind of expression.

3. GROUP CALL AND RESPONSE

In a circle, one person can say any number of affirming, lovely things about Black people. Here's a format:

"You _____people!" and then the others in the circle and respond with, "Yeah!"

Examples from WTSU:

LEADER: You beautiful people!

ALL: Yeah!

LEADER: You creative people!

ALL: Yeah!

You could build a list of adjectives beforehand and create a script to do call/response with OR encourage participants to call out the adjectives as they think of them in a circle.

4. BREAK BREAD

Gathering together to eat good food can be a tremendous way of nourishing aching spirits.

5. LOVE LETTERS

You and your loved ones or community members can write love letters to Black people and share them however you see fit. Perhaps each person reads theirs aloud. Perhaps they're passed around randomly, tucked into pockets to be enjoyed when needed.

These are just a very few examples you are welcome to use. I encourage you to think about what's most useful to your community.

Be creative. Be loving. Be strong together.

—Aleshea Harris

Also, please feel free to visit: <https://www.bagofbeans.net/wtsu-resources>. This page is a virtual extension of *What to Send Up when it Goes Down*'s purpose, a space where people can honor those lost to anti-black violence, send love letters of hope and affirmation to Black people and access additional resources related to communal healing and social justice.