an open letter to the white feminists holding a literary panel on Toni Morrison

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look to your left, your right—where are her sisters? why are they missing? while there’s a shared violence only your bodies can know, they were never your breasts from which milk was stolen or freely given to sons with their own white teeth. your daughters will never destroy dolls, scraping skin to find the beauty beneath. will never see their fathers shot off fences, or shucking with shirley temples while they watch from behind grim windows. you will never slit throats as a slave-act of salvation, or place a God-tanned pap between gums with uncertain futures. your backs are forever clear of chokecherry trees. you—whose faces adorn the cups, the magazines, the movies—are married to the master narratives she subverts. are intrusive as rusty nails breaking an arch. move her stilled lips without consulting her face, her family. forget she still has a voice.