



Kettly Mars

The Tyranny of the Future

What if the future was just a prison where we voluntarily locked ourselves up, praying to escape all forms of untimely deaths, while the powerful world leaders deprived us of today and its wonders? What if we ended the tyranny of the future?

“No one can possibly know what is about to happen: it is happening, each time, for the first time, for the only time.”

James Baldwin, *The Devil Finds Work* (1976)

Faced with all the uncertainties expressed around the world by men and women of the highest intelligence who have been entrusted with the task of reflecting on the disappearance of the future, and faced with the singular power of a company that holds the potential to change the course of history on our planet, great care and humility are required. The deliberations have been lengthy and translated into hundreds of languages. The conclusion is unanimous. It expresses hope and the fight for the return of primal imagination, the reign of animal creativity. We must find a new tense for expressing the future because this barbaric notion of time created by men and women is the pretext for the slow and systematic destruction of life. The war against the tyranny of the future has begun. The use of the future tense as it is known in every spoken language has been suspended for forty-eight hours, after this period, an alternative must be found. Human existence reboots every morning at 12:01 a.m. The clouds on the horizon no longer indicate the weather. The obsession to control and possess time, life, people, natural resources, the fish in the sea, nuclear weapons, these obsessions vanish like a lost libido. The batteries in the vibrator have died! Artificial intelligence moves into the non-evolutionary stage. A forgotten concept. Stuck at square one for the moment. The robots sit disassembled in their factories. Dismembered and staring blankly. We desire real blood in our veins, real smiles on our faces. We no longer move forward without knowing where we're headed. We're tired of faceless and nameless dictators pushing us desperately down the tracks. Does time stop when the future no longer exists? Will we stop aging once the future becomes nothing more than a bad memory? Oops! There is no future tense allowed in the non-future. “We cease aging because the future is nothing more than a bad memory!” Depending on how we choose to live or die, the future-tense verb can condemn us to nothingness or, on the contrary, open up all eternity. But is



eternity not the accumulation of many possible futures? Or is eternity nothing more than billions of overlapping chasms where life creeps along like a phosphorescent ectoplasm? Is eternity just a prayer to lull the night watchmen to sleep? The only possible solution to the dictatorship of the future is finding another space where life can reach its own substance, just as long as life is not conjugated in future. If we die right now, in the present tense, what is the point of the future? The real challenge is finding the magic word, the eddy of words in the palm of every living being that we share in a handshake. Hats off to the author of this idea, a woman living in a man's body,



floating in a giant bubble of blue water. It doesn't really matter because it was only their voice that was heard during the gathering of the men and women of the highest intelligence, where images were prohibited so as to not influence the truth and purity of ideas. Since no one wants to die, the future can no longer play a role in the way our bodies evolve with each new sunrise. And since tomorrow must become a notion as simple as the wind tickling the foliage of the tallest trees, the contradictions inherent to the human condition would melt into the reunification of the sexes. Death falls to the past. To the past of our future. But, that said, we're far from finding the real solution to the problem. A countdown has begun. Forty-eight hours is a past or a present imbued with an unprecedented sense



of urgency. How can we express in spoken language a dimension that we would wish to be unaware of so that our deaths may escape the tentacles of the future that no longer exists? We granted women, men, and children of good will and superior intelligence a period of forty-eight hours to find a word that could undo the future and construct an existence without the triumph of hatred or the vindictiveness of the manipulators of futures created out of thin air in underground laboratories. After this deadline the results may be either immeasurable or fatal. We can't rule out a pandemic that would end racism worldwide by introducing philanthropic obsessions into the retinas of the White, Black, and Yellow supremacists. It might be possible to witness the emergence of a virus that would dye the skin of the eight billion people on earth the same color. Midnight blue, for example. Forecasts predict migratory birds flying backwards, avoiding the sun's path by a thousandth of a centimeter. Or, even worse, the women and men of the highest intelligence and good will predict the possibility of an addictive substance erupting from the underground, likely to cause a violent rejection of power, money, and hegemonic fascinations in human beings. Opponents to this cause are on red alert. It poses a threat to every dollar in their bank accounts. For forty-eight hours, not a cent is placed into their piggybanks. Anxiety sets in. Fears begin to mount. We're searching for a dangerous word, one stronger than all the gods imagined by women and men. A sightless word, but one that can hold the light and distribute it one day at a time. But we're still far off. This word might exist. Maybe it's painted on the walls of faraway caves or on the invisible bodies of ancestral spirits? Perhaps female and male prophets had found it millennia ago, but they were not the ones we made into superstars by crucifying them or by erecting cathedrals in their names. There's nothing more effective than the banalization of truth. Maybe we're not ready to hear this word? Does time accumulate, or do we have to subtract it from the future? The life expectancy for a man, depending on the longitude or latitude under consideration, can vary from forty-six to eighty-two years. We're pretty sure about that. So how can we talk about the reaches of the sky without talking the future? The sky absorbs the light of time and reverses it into a dimension where the eye can discern the substance of things. Maybe we need to look to the sky to find the solution to our problem. And if the sky turns red? Red like a sea of cold flames that would consume, in forty-eight hours, the blue future laying deep in the sky? There's a war to be waged! The future can't have the sole monopoly on the unknown. Imagine for a second the end of fascism due to the impossibility of summary executions! The grammarians twist their brains, the tinsmiths too, and the children in kindergarten go for the challenge because their horizons are fixed at the tip of their noses. They must realize it. Everyone has the right to compete. The first woman or man to cross the threshold of the non-future with this savior-word is going to be recognized as the hero of the conquest of new dawns. An additional twelve hours is accorded

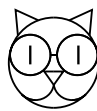


to living beings of undefined gender because they need a delay to call upon their unknown selves trapped in the future that doesn't exist. A handicap that needs to be addressed. We begged Ogou and Bouda. We burned incense. We showered the four cardinal directions with tafya. Danbala, the serpent of the highest intelligence, whispered the verb during a ceremony, but the drums split in two under the force of this nuclear word. It seeped into the air and was absorbed by the red flames fighting against the deepest blues bearing the tyranny of the future in their breast. It's no small thing to brace yourself against the walls of the unknown. But time passes or stands still. Forty-eight hours isn't much, until we find the word that must contain fear and destruction. The world is boiling. The teachers and professors organize workshops, seminars, colloquia. We must find the word, the one that can bring an end to conjugations in the future tense. The word that can determine if time goes on, accumulates, or reverses course. The most lucid psychics and fortune-tellers set themselves to telepathic mode. The writers and poets compete with the children, the two groups handle the imagination and madness effortlessly. They have a leg up on the rest of the competition, or at least they seem to think so. The enemies of the cause fire rays into the atmosphere programmed to seek and destroy every new word, unknown to the terrestrial lexicons that might attempt to neutralize the tentacles of the future and cease the summary executions in the public squares, the orchestrated bacterial wars and famines, and the supremacies of every origin. A new word that would turn the skin of the eight billion women, men, and children on the earth the same color. What a threat! What a global catastrophe! An nth World War won without firing a shot, without launching a missile, without a ballet of drones in supposedly enemy skies, without a single body torn to shreds. The possibility remains. But time is running out. It is 12:01 on the final morning.



BIO

Kettly Mars is an award-winning Francophone writer from Port-au-Prince, Haiti, who has been producing short stories, poems and novels since the mid-1990s. Her work has been translated into several languages. Her most recent novel, *L'Ange du patriarche* (2018), is a thriller about a cursed Haitian family and explores the conflicts between Vodou culture and Christian culture in modern-day Haiti.



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