I AM OSCAR GRANT

Victim of New Years BART police slaying, Oakland, Ca

On a mundane morning, I wait for the train.
The sky is clear and there is no bullet in my back.
23 people form crooked lines across the platform.
A man wrapped in wrinkled, black skin
thrusts a sign that reveals these tracks are not tranquil.
The bold letters scream, I AM OSCAR GRANT.
His arms wave up & down again & again &
23 people cringe. The tension in the air is so thick
it sticks to my septum & sloshes between my gums.
I feel the anger in the black man's grip.
I taste the fear tracing a white man's brow.
He is not Oscar Grant.
He will never be shot in the back, unarmed
& lying face down on a platform.
46 eyes shift side to side to see
who will pierce the silence and shout
a white cop killed a black father where we stand.
They say, "the bullet ricocheted off the cement..."
"...penetrated again." "Killed the 22-year-old man."
They say, "he begged for his life so clearly,
a deaf man could not have misheard him."
They say, "...his daughter?" "Four."
Employees already scrubbed his blood into a memory
but his stolen breath still makes 23 hearts pound
against 23 chests. This is a battlefield.
I stare at the blond haired woman in front of me
& want to take the privilege she has placed
so perfectly in a ponytail and wrap it around her throat
until the rivers surrounding her irises dry. I want to watch
her cheeks turn pale & leave her lying face down in death
& walk away. Then the train comes.
23 people step on board and sit in separate seats.
As it dances along the tracks, violent heart beats
slow to passive rhythms & eyelids droop
as bodies ease against tinted windows
& the music in our motion lets the fight within us
sleep.