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IT'S IMPORTANT I REMEMBER THAT ORANGE IS THE NEW BLACK—

and, in the end, I'm of one mind on this.

The smartest call the showrunners ever made was reducing Piper's screen time. A satisfying story would never be about her, not because a person of her profile is some stranger to crime, but because they are, more so, a stranger to punishment.

Taystee, though, was my girl, an everygirl from around the way braided into predicament in a tale that tatters the viewer's heart.

That describes, by and large, the backstories of the colorful cast:
black stories and lack stories.

There are so many wrong places— *wronged* places—
to originate from in the land of almond milk and raw honey.

Time doesn't sit at 90-degree angles in South Central Los Angeles,
for example. Some kids don't get to be seen as angels, even in death.

Black slims you to nothingness and that's why it's forever
fashionable, the classic choice, institutionalized.

Where the show title's popular phrase comes from is the
reality of language as the system that the system uses. *New*
implies there's a prior or previous—not in captivity's complexion,
which is the sociological constant, but in method— *an old way*.

Michelle Alexander writes the n-word on her legal pad and underlines it, understanding the words of the phrase change while the structure of the sentence doesn't.

In 1865, the Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery and involuntary servitude except as punishment for a crime.

The first popular adjustable handcuffs were made in 1865.

National Handcuff Day is celebrated in the United States during February every year.

These sentences will never change,

nor that the skin of an orange jumpsuit peels from the body like rind while the skin beneath the jumpsuit doesn't.

IT'S IMPORTANT I REMEMBER THAT DROPPING A BOMB ON AN OCCUPIED ROW HOUSE IS UNCONSCIONABLE—

but it happened, here, on American soil:
West Philadelphia, 1985,

the year most of the country remembers
for the Chicago Bears' "Super Bowl Shuffle,"

reducing the massacre to a footnote
of a footnote of the Reagan years,

the nation gingerly marching rightward
wearing a smile made for television.

The sky was blue that day, as blue as a cop
or a Democrat's tie on the debate stage.

Wilson Goode was Philadelphia's mayor then,
Democrat, black if you can believe it, and I can

because racism is no stranger to blackface
whether by face paint or by borrow.

A bomb in a satchel bag: I can believe it
because I'm black, actually—it fell from the sky

like a Berlin care package back in '48,
the sky that was as blue as a cop,

after Philly PD had already put tens
of thousands of bullets through the walls.

The bomb broke the row house; flames broke out.
The flames broke into the neighboring homes

like the thieves they were until another 60-odd
houses were stolen in one move. MOVE

was the target, the alleged terrorists though also
the ones without a bomb to let fly.

Everybody in the row house was MOVE.
Everybody in the row house was Africa.

Everybody black is Africa.
Everybody black was in that row house,

that row house in the birthplace
of the United States of America.

Eleven of thirteen died, five of them children.
One woman went to prison

for not frying in the fire. She was not a cop,
not anyone receiving pay from the city;

she was Africa, so
she was everybody black.

America bombed my house in a former life.
America imprisoned me in a former life.
America killed me—a kid—in a former life.

In 2008, when I touched down in Philly for school,
Obama was running for president, a Chicago Democrat,

black if you can believe it.
I could see the smoke from the window

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as the plane descended to tarmac.
I was reminded who I was,

that I once lived in the birthplace of America
until I was moved out, to put it mildly.

Been on the move ever since.

From body to body:
every body that's black.

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