I met Rashid Johnson in 2011, during my final year of graduate school. At that time, he purchased one of my paintings, *Pass the Folds*. Having an artist like Rashid take the time to get to know me and my work was incredibly meaningful. At a time when I had no idea how I was going to maintain my studio practice, I was given guidance on how to prioritize my practice. Over the years, we have maintained a dialogue on painting. Recently, we discussed his new *Bruise* paintings,

We began with three words
Support/Connection/Mentorship
Materiality, spills, paint leaking on the surface,
wrinkling like skin
Organizing a language around abstraction
There was the connection
I was living in that liminal space
between blunt force trauma
and opportunity or potential
A bruise
Color leaking just beneath the surface
The need for support and mentorship
Repeat that
The repetition is important

Support
Mentorship
Guiding this young blood
to blue
to black
to yellow and red again
to heal and thrive in a tenuous
and beautiful environment
Bruise Paintings
I entered the work through this definition
“A bruise occurs when small blood vessels break and
leak their contents into the soft tissue beneath the skin.”
Repeat that
The repetition is important
Leak their contents
Soft tissue
Beneath the skin
It’s about self-healing
It’s an after
action
moment
There is the impact of a discourse
Narrative embedded
That too is the bruise beneath the skin
the structure, the deconstruction
The space for improvisation and abstraction
Allowing space and hinting at freedom
It’s cathartic, the mark-making
The space between the marks
There is the melody
The space in which objects speak of figures
Signifiers speak of beginnings and ends
Repeat that
The repetition is important

Beginnings and ends
The start and stop
And scratch
Into the surface
The back and forth
Trying to find the way
A way
a range of blues
The color helps us navigate
From figuration to abstraction
And back to where we began, again
Repeat that
The repetition is important

We began with three words
We end with three words
Narrative/Abstraction/Figuration
How do the materials function in the collective?
With this work we collect an understanding
Repeat that
The repetition is important