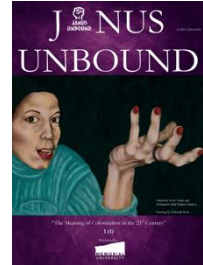


Title: A Sister's Song
Author(s): Diane Roberts
Source: *Janus Unbound: Journal of Critical Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1
(Fall 2021), pp. 99-101
Published by: *Memorial University of Newfoundland*



Disclaimer

The views, opinions, conclusions, findings, and recommendations expressed in this publication are strictly those of the respective author(s) and are not necessarily the views of *Janus Unbound: Journal of Critical Studies*, its editors, its editorial team, and Memorial University of Newfoundland (collectively, the “Publishers”). Authors are responsible for all content of their article(s) including accuracy of facts, statements, citations, and so on. The University gives no warranty and accepts no responsibility or liability for the accuracy or completeness of any information or materials contained herein. Under no circumstances will the Publishers, including Memorial University of Newfoundland, be held responsible or liable in any way for any claims, damages, losses, expenses, costs, or liabilities whatsoever resulting or arising directly or indirectly from any use of or inability to use the contents of this publication or from any reliance on any information or material contained herein.

Message from the Editors

The editors welcome letters on all subjects, especially if they discuss or comment on the works published in *Janus Unbound*. Please read our Guidelines for Authors prior to submitting your manuscript.

A Sister's Song

Diane Roberts



*Janus Unbound: Journal
of Critical Studies*
E-ISSN: 2564-2154
1(1) 99-101
© Diane Roberts, 2021

To be seen: these eyes, the mouth, the strain, this face
smashed by thoughtless time.
A laughing Child
his Mother's sorrow
an Aunt's lament.

What is this?

Black rock hard
surfacing through craggy attentions,
a warrior in anguish. Blown to ash.

What is this?

Earth's swelling loss.
Split shards
scattered between here and
almost,
each fragment
a hint.

An ignoble death, they said, watching
and waiting for the chosen ones to arrive.

And She with glory crowning stares
straight, follows a path lit
by the fallen ones, each step
a new landing.
Meeting ground between sole
and soil.
A crossroads
daring to be noticed,
hidden by choice.

A Sister's Song

elle she la hembra...

Tiny whispers of lives forgotten
wash past—not under—
the few that survive.

Were it not for seeing the shimmer of you in the distance,
I would barely know who this was/is.

The year is 2016.

I have been struggling to articulate an appropriate response to the unrelenting violence in thought, word, and deed directed towards us as African descended peoples. I am haunted by a 4-year-old's clarity: evaporated innocence. Her sweet voice, surreal amidst the terror, reminding her mother that she's there and that everything's going to be ok. In one simple instinctual gesture. Echoing a grandmother's love for a disquieted child. And I too want to believe that it's all going to be ok.

The year is 2020.

I am bolstered by the strong voice of protest reverberating through grassroots movements—Black Lives Matter, Wet'suwet'en Strong—and I feel the need to stand up and scream NO MORE. As I move along with the Montreal crowd in protest—maintaining what we now call social distance—there are moments when I am compelled to stop my voice, to hear the chants—black lives matter, no justice, no peace—which are, to my ear, transformed into meaningless sound bites.

The year is 2021.

In this necessary pause from all that we in North America know as freedom, I recognize a deeper wound that cannot be addressed through protest alone. I observe the gestures of protest, fists raised high, and I can't help but notice exposed side ribs, hearts and guts. I listen to hear the strained voice of public grief stopped short by the horror of incompetent justice. I vibrate alongside the strained voice of protest pushing to express (in the limited time given) a manifesto justifying our right to survive.

There is no bypassing loss...

What is this?

Now reshaped to a Sister's song.
His passage or hers?
A cleansing.

Diane Roberts

Biography

Diane Roberts is a practicing interdisciplinary artist, a PhD candidate in Interdisciplinary Studies at Concordia University, a Pierre Elliott Trudeau Scholar, a Joseph-Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarship award holder, and the founder of the Arrivals Legacy Project (www.arrivalslegacy.com).

Notes

This work was first produced by Primary Colours/couleurs primaires in June 2021 as part of the BLM=BAM initiative which commemorated the first anniversary of the murder of George Floyd. A recording is available at primary-colours.ca/projects/151-a-sister-s-song.