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## Racial Literacy Poetics for the Academy & Beyond

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Racial Literacy is a skill, a practice  
that dares you to see your neighbors  
as human.

To respect their existence  
& support their resistance  
when their humanity is at stake.

Racial literacy  
    calls you  
        tells you  
            invites you  
to bend towards justice  
& break your silence  
on isms & phobias that infect society—  
It abhors the destruction of Black & Brown  
bodies & uprisings to a crescendo  
when tasers & wallets & sandwiches & Skittles  
are mistaken for guns.

Co-conspiring towards justice,  
the racially literate put our minds & bodies  
on the line while our souls march  
towards freedom's destiny.

*We meet our ancestors on arrival.*

Racial Literacy rejects daily police killings.  
Scaling walls of justice instead of white houses—  
It requires truth.  
Telling of an archaeology of the  
    self  
        family  
            institutions  
that you worship.  
In the church of the Academy, racial literacy  
is a foreign language that must be taught & learned.  
It is how one begins & continues the fight  
to restore what all have been given at birth.  
What others have stolen away, leaving  
a soul bereft of peace & a stranger to love.

Racial Literacy dreams justice,  
talks about setting souls free from  
    anxiety  
        fear  
            uncertainty.

It leads with Critical Love,  
seeking to penetrate that love through  
our vocations & the masks we wear  
in the face of the world's most pressing problems.

Racial Literacy talks of 400 of Years of Inequality.  
It echos the words of Baldwin:  
*Nothing can be changed until it is faced.*  
We face the truth that race is a lie;

socially constructed, not rooted in biology,  
but boasting real & complete consequences  
that wrecks havoc on the lives of those who built  
this country out of blood & sweat;  
those whose land was stolen in manifest marches  
& movements towards a *destiny* that meant  
claiming & conquering what was not yours.

*Change is inevitable.*

Like  
    the tides  
        the seasons  
            our minds,  
change will come when there is  
a collective will for equity & disdain  
for myths of meritocracy, false sentiments of equality  
& *true* justice for all.

Racial Literates incite the change & bring the nation  
to the tipping point of what it professed long ago—  
before you or I  
came to be.

Racial Literacy is a practice.  
It probes the existence of racism  
& examines the effects of its damage  
on our experiences.  
Racial literates have the skill to discuss  
& dismantle centuries' old lies of superiority.

Racial literacy desires constructive talk—  
Requires a stance that knows the difference  
between being not racist & anti-racist.

*Yes, there is a difference.*

Racial Literates know there is no neutrality  
in the fight for humanity.

There is no sitting still or standing by,  
upstanding against excuse-making &  
fantasies that evoke distorted memories  
of not *seeing race* & only *seeing people*—

That sentence makes no sense.

It never did.

In Amerikkka, it *never* will.

Racial literacy is

reading

discussing

writing

a world devoid of racism

& the myth of race.

It seeks to reach truths

that help us discover

what we always knew—

Everyone *is* equal.

Racial Literacy implores the shift from the liberalism—

That free-thinking, non-racist, Kumbaya approach

to maintaining the status quo by speaking

in borrowed tongues; ventriloquists of radical love.

Racial Literacy rejects the mere speaking  
& expects talk of freedom, dreaming the world we seek;  
one we know can exist, the moment we dare  
to be the light that  
    haunts us  
        guides us  
            is us.

Racial Literacy will free us —  
Eventually.  
It will release us from static quoness  
& shift us from the liberalism that traps us  
in the quagmire that subjugates bodies  
of glorious colors.

Racial Literacy activates the anti-racist stance;  
the only leg on which to stand.  
The only road to take & make while walking:  
the path that leads to  
    freedom  
        equality  
            & justice  
for all.