

EQUITY

The Shell Game

is equity intentionally ironic
hiding in inclusive language
bearing the mark of the woke
it wraps itself in the soft wool of sheep
when it is really a brillo pad
scrubbing shame from institutions
that invest in lawyer-laden secrecy
that use “do not disclose” methods
to silence dissent

the same tactics used within families
where suppression camouflaged as love
binds together generations
leaving those seeking equity
with their hands out begging for fairness
that never comes but is posted
on websites filled with promises of inclusion
while hidden in the fine print
of what is never said
but everyone knows...

some are considered more deserving

few will admit equity is a game of hide and seek
those with offshore accounts
named philanthropists
crystal wine glasses in hand, gifted
with gold-watch thank yous
everyone bowing down to their generosity
while the marginalized, the underrepresented
prepare and serve their food, clean their houses

keep their secrets

A Small Voice Within the Echoes of Equity

“The patterns of the universe repeat at scale. There is a structural echo that suggests two things: one, that there are shapes and patterns fundamental to our universe, and, two, that what we practice at a small scale can reverberate to the largest scale.”

—adrienne maree brown, *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds*

I am but a small voice within the echoes of those asking for equity. My ways, quiet, change closer in. What many do not know about me is that I have wealthy family members who would have welcomed me into the fold, but I chose sovereignty. Not just for myself but for all who have been oppressed. I didn't want to be like my aunties, many of whom were stay-at-home wives married to rich men, or like my uncles who pursued money like hungry ghosts in need of sustenance. Raised poor and from a large family, many of them sought cover and comfort in luxury. They were white and I was not, but, if I had agreed to go along, I would have been given access to their world.

I have instead worked for change, more in the background than in front. I am but a small voice within the echoes of equity that are bouncing off the walls of institutions and workplaces. I am a believer in the power of humans to gather and to bring change, even if only one person at a time. I have always felt that change needs to happen in both small ways—close in, with our families, our communities—and in big ways within larger organizations, academic institutions, and governments. I have been guided by my Ancestors to be one who practices *at a small scale* knowing that it *can reverberate to the largest scale*. They rarely speak but instead provide inner urges felt in the body much like the starlings must feel when they fly as one. When I take the time to lean in, to listen deeply, my body and their knowingness become a divining rod offering me guidance and direction. I give thanks for their kind ways, for their care and attention, as the living have never been able to provide this. In fact, I was excluded for speaking up, for choosing differently. I give thanks for the ways of my Métis Ancestors, their stubborn resistance to being beholden to anyone, and their desire for this freedom to be extended to everyone.

What We Can Become

consider the implications of rising
starlings in the sky we could fly
wordlessly wheeling our way
learning to live on the edge
letting go into the unknown
so that we might become
responsive as starlings
undulating in unison
sharing an in-breath, folding into
a small ball and with a shared out-breath
simultaneously expanding, turning with
no one leading together, shapeshifting
pulsating singular spectacular murmurations
rising iridescent symbols of what is possible