

A Poem for EOJ's Changemakers Dinner

By Azura Tyabji

I dream of justice and wake to my freedoms
being counted
and weighed
like copper trophies.

I'm tired of this.

I want diamonds for my mother.
By diamonds, I mean I want this pressure to amount something.
I want it to glitter like fresh water.
I want it abundant as what rites were promised to us.

Can my time be worth more than my rent, my bail, my fee?
I want a life that does not ransom my dignity
in a world where safety
is a luxury we can't all afford,

still, my brother's smile is good velvet.
Every memory I cherish
is a string of pearls on my neck.
Yes, I am still afraid.

A number decides
if someone I love
can eat tonight.
If my grandmother can get her insulin.

A number decides,
If Jay will have a bed to sleep in
when shelter
is not promised.

A number decides,
If my friend can get the right papers
to keep living where their life already lives.

If we have a humanity worth investing in.

With empathy as expensive as it is, if we all had empathy,
I'm sure we would break from the weight of it.
This world has been pain-rich and heavy,
It's time for breaking

this economy of remnants:
marrow in broth,
broken glass mosaic.
I hope resilience
is not the only song we are capable of.

Can I ask for a richer triumph?
Can we finally afford
to not just survive?

One time I met a driver who in the time that he could spare,
went metal detecting for his wife all around Seattle.

He collected engagement rings flung into the Puget Sound by scorned lovers.
He studied maps that led him to people's backyards and those people became neighbors
where he asked to dig,

he found toys
time capsules,
heirlooms.
Sometimes the gold was less important.

I think of how the treasure was precious
because it had once been buried,
because it had always been there,
because it was meant for someone else.

My great-grandmother was straight-laced woman
but she was a steward of roses.

When my mother asked her near the end
of her long life, in the bare desert of Nevada,
why she was still planting
new seeds,

she said,
the garden isn't for me.
I might not live to see it,
It's for someone else to enjoy.

And that is a kind wealth.
Everything we need is below us.
Everything we need is a safe, growing bed for the world's children.
Everything we need is has been on its way.



I want to love the life that made it here.
My vine hanging over the door. I
know someone, somewhere, is trying to decide what I am worth.
But not here. In this garden,
It is slowly rupturing. The seeds, they are moving.
They're growing. We're ready.

-Azura Tyabji

