

Rising Black Sea

by Dáminí Awóyigà

We have seen so much
We have seen hardships and overcome
Risen from pitch-dark nights,
Nights raging like never-ending wars
That left the hope in our hearts, battered and
torn Broken and bruised, left unattended to
Silence, so deafening you could mistake it for calm

In this Black sea
Let your baggage go
And let them fall where they may
Unload them
The Black sea erodes them
The Black sea heals us.
Let the winds carry your pains away
Feel redemption

In this Black sea
We see a reflection
Of our power
Of our Unity
And struggles

Justice grew on the tips of our tongues
It fed a palette that craved freedom
Craved liberation
Free as the lines of free verse
Praying liberation would cut us loose
Praying that the chains that were eating us alive would be halted

We lifted our tongues,
Each, a wave of our overlooked
And untold histories
Each pushing truths to the surface
Our stories, and experiences that couldn't be erased

When darkness descended
So did strength and resilience
Only love, hope, and family could transcend
The suffering we faced
We have braved
Stormy oceans and seas
We still hope and believe
there will be new horizons
Like waves anew
We will rise again

We stand here
Our faces, shown in this Black sea
The fire in our souls
Giving Life to power.
WE raise our voices collectively in song
We, a song to be sang
A story to be written
We are the tides
That will transform our communities

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Dáminí Awóyíḡà is a 16-year-old high school student. She is an activist, spoken word poet and Halifax's Youth Poet Laureate. Dáminí is the founder of Dáminí Creatives and the Afro-Indigenous Book Club, a book club created to encourage young people to read books written by Black and Indigenous authors and to share the realities and experiences of Black and Indigenous Canadians. She is a youth freelance journalist for CBC's Mainstreet and Vice-Chair of CPA High School's Black Student Association. Dáminí is a board member of the Nova Scotia Girls Institute for Resource and Learning (NS GIRL), she is also part of the HRM Youth Advisory Council. Dáminí has received multiple awards including the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal. As a spoken word poet for over five years, she enjoys writing, singing, and performing poems that bring attention to social justice issues.