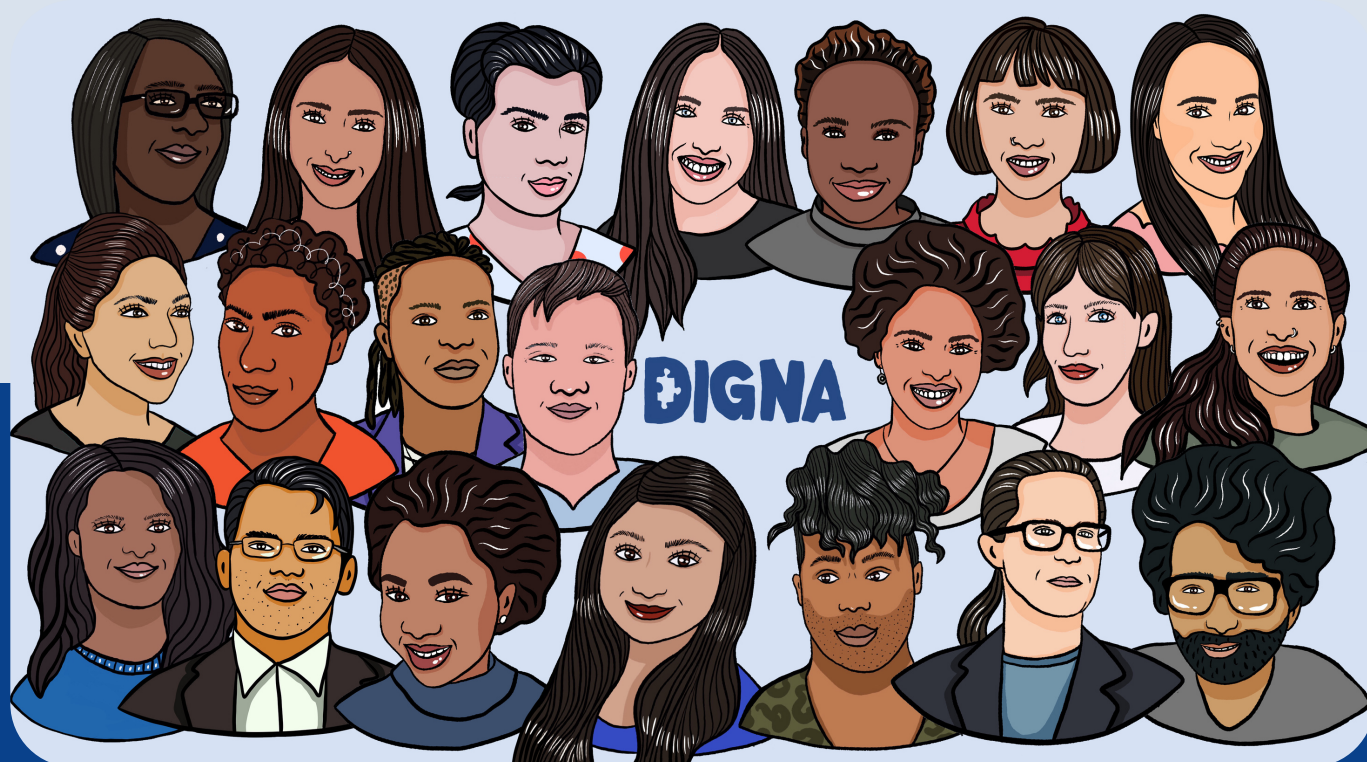


POEMS FROM THE ADVISORY GROUP

ARTIVISM FOR INCLUSION



A world of acceptance for everyone,
Glorifying inclusion of all and exclusion of none
Providing different perspectives to improve the social environment
Because freedom of thought is key to development.
The expression of all thoughts should be respected
Regardless of social standing or caste never neglected
Willingness to share critical information
To improve lives is our declaration,
To facilitate a better tomorrow
Change the lives of poor
Share the wealth and continue to give more
Collectively we should try to end the sorrow,
The plan of action
Is to give the vulnerable satisfaction
To enhance development from country to country
And an eruption in philanthropy



Inclusion goes along with union
On this simple, but rich rhyme
In this hurt Earth we live in
How can we walk ahead
Without giving hands to each other

Love slowly and stealthily steps into the room
Oh! Our 'diversity and inclusion' trainings are going on
Finds no space left for it but refuses to leave
Settles down uncomfortably in a small corner
Little by little the others make space
Love now has the largest seat of all



Belén Giaquinta - Argentina



In progress

When did we turn inclusion
into an empty word?
into a mere discussion?
I would rather say that it is a symbol of infinity,
a nucleus of action,
with a soul of sisterhood.

Inclusion means active listening,
it means reflection combined with a dose of empathy.

I first question my truths,
and then I drown out my blind spots,
I dissect my prejudices, I dismantle them,
and by putting together the pieces of a new reality I set myself up.

There is no starting point,
nor is there a finishing line,
but on the way, layer by layer,
I get rid of the looks, of classism, of sexism,
of colonialism and racism,
of traditionalism and of all the -isms,
which keep me tied to an eternal fiction.

In solidarity, it is possible to rewrite the history,
to celebrate our humanity
and to tattoo 'respect for diversity' on our memories.
To tell you the truth... "it's not about having the right to be equal,
but of having an equal right to be different".
(Unknown).

Me for You

I will love you for me
then me for you-
for, I am because you are.

Your unique stature
my different self-
diversity, making the world cute.

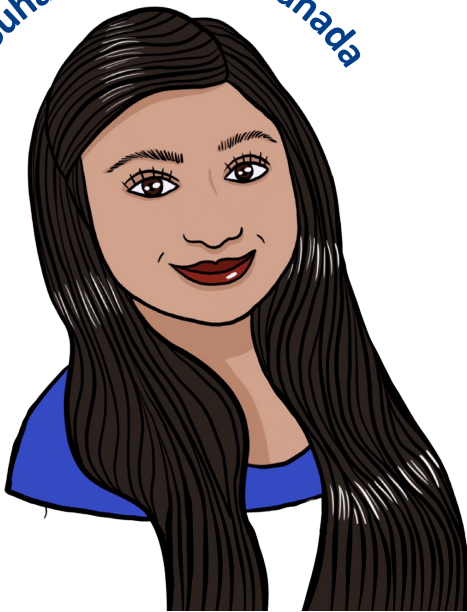
We need not look like two fried eggs,
that difference, embraced-
Ohhh, how powerful we are.

-Me for you, you for me-



Bhekumusa Moyo - Zambia

Suhani Bhushan- Canada



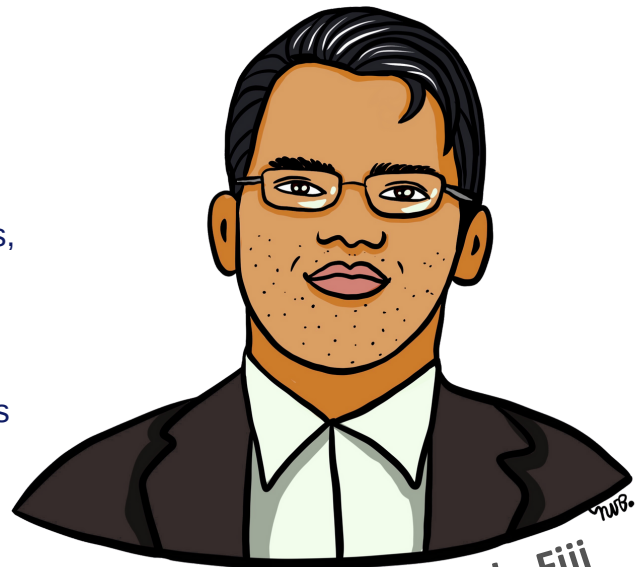
I walk into a room and no one looks like me
 I walk into a room and no one looks at me
 I try to speak but no one can hear me
 I try to speak but I no longer trust my voice
 They ask about diversity
 Suddenly everyone is looking at me
 Speak they say, we want to know!
 With dead eyes and fake smiles
 I sometimes miss being invisible
 So that I can disappear into myself
 Rather than being a spectacle
 Being trapped in a cage
 'Helping people learn about my pain'
 Until they continue to walk on
 But I remain stuck in my cage

Rewa Street

Red lips, rosy cheeks, hair flying in the wind
 Peep peep went the car on the road,
 Standing on the sidewalk in a knee-length dress,
 "Uroooooo"* went the men on the road
 A mother and a child walk by, "Hello" she says
 Swoooosh and they cross the road
 One step, 2 step, under a street light a car stops
 Sir. One for the road?
 Go away you qauri**. Fuck!
 And she steps away from the road
 Back into the shadows for her next trick
 Because she was told she belongs on the road

*Uro - Fijian term for fat but translate to hot or sexy in sentences.

**Qauri - a derogatory Fijian term for gay, feminine men or trans women. This poem is for the LGBT sex workers in Fiji who have been abandoned and lost out to opportunities in education and employment and have had to resort to the sex trade. It is titled Rewa Street. Rewa Street is a famous stretch of road in the capital city of Fiji, Suva where sex workers can be found. In popular culture in Fiji, mostly as a joke, Rewa Street has come to denote a road where unemployed people go to earn money.



Abdul Mufeez Shaheed - Fiji



I woke up in the morning ready to face the day,
excited about what could unfold. I just couldn't
wait it was indeed the month of May, when
rainbows shine. And there were no shades of red.
I walked out of the house, telling myself, I need to
chill out, who I am too radical to our proud and
loud. I tried to lay low and blaming the crowd,
trying so hard, so hard not to make a sound,
walking down the street. I hear faggots . I think
I've heard. I give myself a pinch. Bloody Fakaleiti
sucking on our blood, just like your environment.
Goodbye. line you're lonely and cold. No one's
had to reach out and hold for I got punished.
Tonight, for being both, and to the devil, my soul.

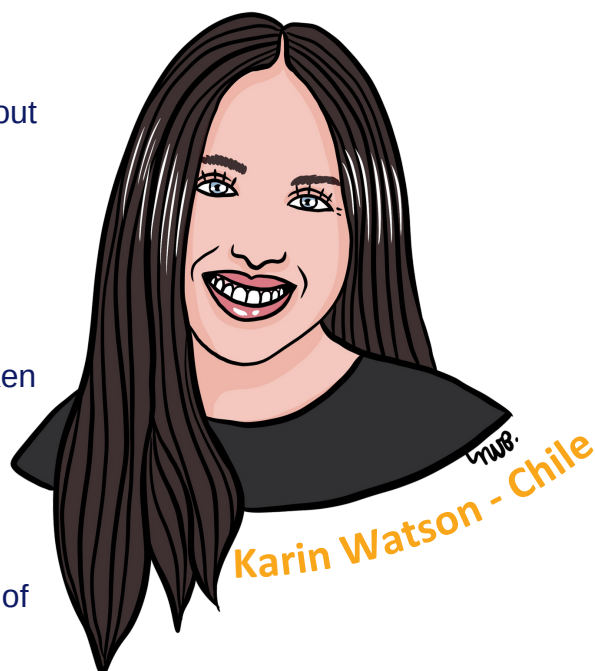
Soul ran me down in my overly decorated casket. Just like cotton flowers, lay down in a
basket. You beat the Pharaoh, with the ring of tears, promising to stand up and fight for the
Queers. But hold on, pick it up for a second. Where were you when my car was broken.
Where were you when hush would be spoken. When I was used to snap a token. As I lay
down in my resting place. And you blessed me with your presence and grace. While I exit
from earth without a trace. Will you promise to love, respect, and embrace the gaze.

I don't know how to write a poem in English
because Spanish shapes the way I think
I speak, I communicate
The way I was taught and the way I learnt about
poetry

So here I am writing this tiny, maybe broken poem
In an English that I grew up being ashamed of
In an accent that I grew up to be afraid of
A poem that today celebrates that also broken
English

And a tiny poem that celebrates above all
those people that made me understand
that there's nothing to be ashamed of, to be afraid of

That I don't have to be ashamed of my English,
but the opposite, I should be proud of my Spanish
of my accent del fin del mundo





Carey Rutherford - Canada

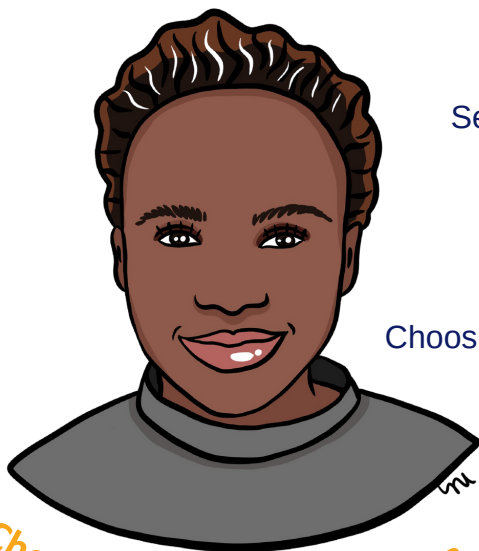
Who Are You?

Who are we and you and I?
 Above the ground beneath the sky,
 bordered 'round with hope and fie;
 Drag ourselves through life's imply:
 "are you with me? Are us a we?"
 when not a fear it's bittersweet.
 We quest the place in hopeful tryst,
 Or, solo tried, a frantic twist:
 Anxious solitudish race
 From vacant halls to crowded space.
 "Is this us now? Are you my we?"
 Look alikes in safe ennui?
 Or is our join imaginary:
 A bland wish by the DI Fairy?
 Separations of the skin
 Exacerbate the yuck we're in:
 You and I are not a "we";
 It's more that you and I are Me!

A beautiful mist.
 Torn apart in gist.
 Pathways of possibilities denied.
 It was not being blind, but rather naivety.
 The innocence of adolescence, masked by confusion.
 I did not know who I was – or so I was told.
 Reminded everyday that there is no belonging.
 But I was home, I was in class how is that possible?
 The many voices no longer sit within my being.
 They no longer occupy what is known.
 As I have become, I have grown.
 Anew, with clarity and truth.
 Away from the myriad of norms and piety.
 Among the diverse and forever wanting.
 A beautiful psalm devoted to service.
 To be heard, loved and cherished.



Dumiso Gatsha- Botswana



Chepkwemai Kimtai - Kenya

A prayer for the social justice warrior

Guilt, fear, worry, thinking about all that could go wrong
Selfish, mean, conceited, a path I wander off to too often,
The feelings I get troubling my soul
But like the waves of the ocean,
I have come to find, they come and go

As it's expected
Choosing myself, I have come to find, does not always feel so
great,

It's a strange feeling

But just like an athlete getting ready for a
marathon, I realise it is a muscle I have to build
I've been estranged from myself for far too long
Choosing myself as an act of care to myself will feel
disembodying at first

But I commit to myself over and over again, to this radical act
of self-care

I cannot be for others what I cannot be for myself
In my journey to dismantle the patriarchy
In my journey to challenge the heteronormative and
capitalistic systems of oppression
In my journeys that are wars...

I, first, must, dismantle and challenge the notion that I cannot
come first

Because I can

And today, I come first

We don't request permission

No

We make demands

Diversity from what?

Amplifying

Strengthening

What do they call it?

Trailblazing

Leading

Inclusion from who?

Dismantling power

Reproducing power

In all of its complexity

Regardless

It's a demand

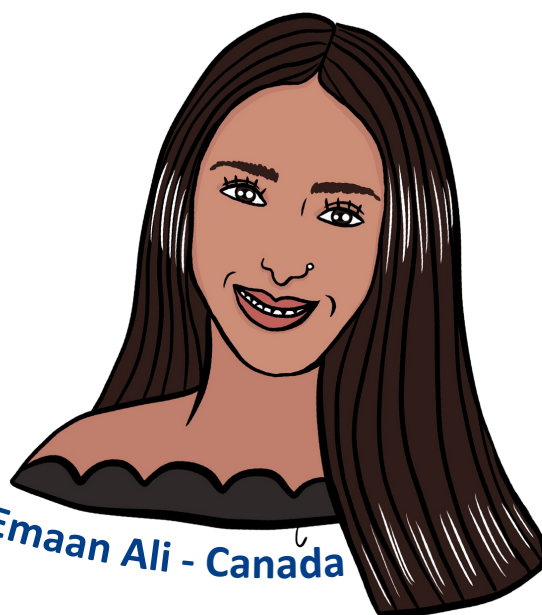
A necessity

A love letter

To the forgotten histories

To the untold stories

To ourselves



Emaan Ali - Canada

Do not speak for me

Don't speak for me, just because you noticed her.

Have you noticed her yet?

She's the one who was born from entrails
darker than the night, already having hers.
Dark entrails.

Walking with your own belly means honouring
the darkness from which you came.

And she walks.

She prays like a river that wanders and flows
without expecting love.

She prays like a dammed fountain of orgasm
and pain.

And she waits.

She is that one with the body.

The body that grew up early, rounded, shiny
and too fast.

Like the greed, which I barely want, always
accompanied her gaze.

But she always decides to wait for love.

And she walks.

And she carries with her a forgotten, erased
lineage, which, even far away, with her praises
and vibrates.

A tumultuous womb made of the sea, at times
fertile and loving, at times dark and tenebrous,
empty, cold, painless, insensitive and then
pain.

And she engenders.

She is that one with sex.

The sex that enters, that faints, that dominates,
that seduces, that is never hers.

Lonely as the moon.

Suffocated by the sun that rises every morning.

And with the sun, she walks.

And dances.

Camila Silva - Brazil



She dances like the wind that, warmed by
the Sun, circulates, that cuddles, that
pushes away, that caresses and that hits.
That begets the typhoon and the storm.
Hurricane.

That neglects the child in love, but never in
pain.

That sustains.

That cuts, that inebriates.

That follows.

She is the one who continues wearing
lipstick.

An old woman, a girl.

Who looks into the mirror of the waters and
fails to see herself because she can't hear
herself.

And when she touches the water, she stirs
and dances.

She floats.

And she walks.

She walks through the trees quietly.
She diverts the gaze of men, influences the path of heat, cold and the river.
And she forgets.

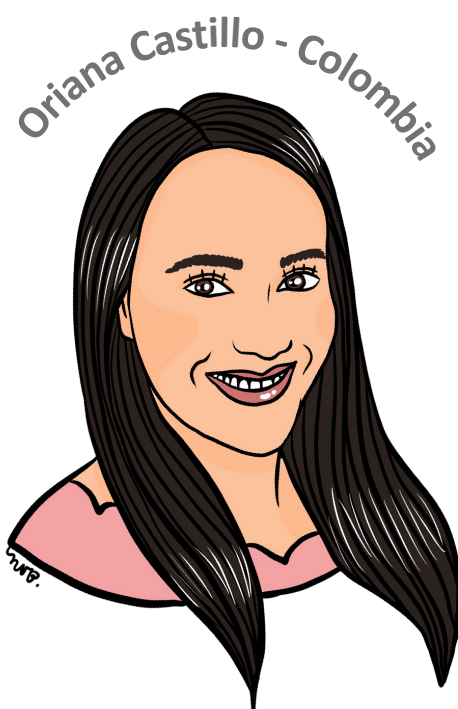
Forgotten, she is also the one who gives up.
She cries.
She floods.
She remembers that she has mothers, daughters, grandmother, great grandmother.
And she insists.

From every source, a little bit.
And always water.

Have you noticed her?

That body, those entrails, that walk, that dance, that conceive, that forget, that walk away, that lullaby, that non-love are all mine.

Don't speak for me, because I know how to love.
And loving me, I don't stop, but I hope.
I hope that you will look at me, behold me, hear me, walk and dance with me.
That you desire me.
Because I am that woman.
Keep me like the most precious good and let me free like water so I don't flood.
Just love me, feel me.
But don't speak for me.

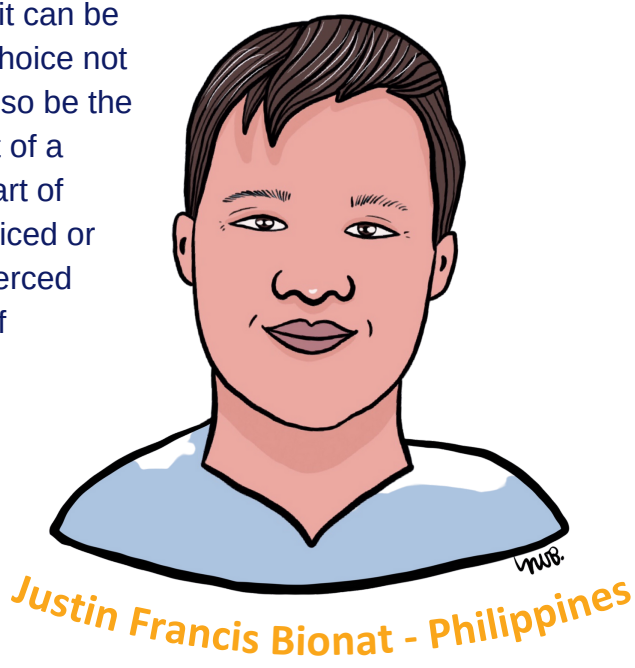


My truth

I feel like I belong
It makes me angry that I can't show it
To think I'm not enough,
To think that I never was.
I feel like I belong,
However, everyone is unsympathetic,
Unsympathetic to my reality
Unsympathetic to my fears,
Unsympathetic to me.
I feel like I belong, Perhaps, it's a fantasy,
Perhaps, it's an illusion,
Perhaps, it's the most absurd thought,
Most probably, I never did.

Home

What is home? Where is home? It's a question that is simple to many people. Four walls and a roof is home to many people. Food on the table with mama and papa by your side. Maybe a tree with a swing and a little tree house where you hang out with your pals. An apartment, a flat, a room gosh even a bed in the corner of a room is already home to many people. The physical house is nothing but the access to food, water, shelter, a bed to sleep at night, and a door with a lock that keeps the bad guys away. Funny enough not all houses are homes and not all homes are just merely houses. Yes, you live in the physical concept of a house that you sleep in, bathe in, eat in, and store your underwear in but is that house a home? I'll spare you the confusion here. Not all houses are homes. Because home is where you feel loved, where you belong, where you are accepted, where you are valued, where you are considered and where you are nurtured. A house is not a home when you come home fearing another beat up from dear papa because he has, yet again, consumed a little bit too much of that whisky. A house is not a home when your own mother forces you to marry the man you know you will never love because he abuses you daily. A house is not a home when because you are a girl you are forbidden to wear boys clothes and date other girls and the consequence of love is utter disownment. Shocking stories we have here and shocking because these are realities. We find home away from conventionalities and traditions. To some people the idea of home has been changed, distorted or broken and sadly enough it is not of their own doing. The breaking or shattering of your home is the fault of others but the effects of such hurt you massively. I think home is so much more and we find ourselves confused and often forced to be at home when we know truly enough that we are not. It's a rather sad thought actually that we do not see as a huge issue. While we are concerned about changing the world we forget about the most important part of our world. Home doesn't even have to be a family, it can be yourself or among peers. It can be your family of choice not just your family of birth, but you know what it can also be the family you build. I guess the most fundamental part of a home is acceptance. Acceptance of every single part of yourself. This type of acceptance should not be policed or forced. It should not be shoved in your throat or coerced without consent. Acceptance comes naturally and if acceptance is not given then that is not a home. Let's talk about the whole concept of home as very important part of your idea of acceptance and belonging. We fail to see this as such an important part of who we are. We're so passionate about fighting for what is right but we sometimes fail to find our own true place of home.



There is No “WE” without Diversity and No “US” without inclusion

That ‘diversity’ is a virtue. True spirituality
dances diversely sparing no spectrum
for betterment of mankind.

I am present in every place you go, I am Zambia, I am Africa,
and am the world,

I am a force to be reckoned with
If I can soar like a bird and find my way through an open sky
Like the winds of change I move. I am swift.

I am present when two or more are together, YES DIGNA!
If embraced I can make the good even better.
Diversity is ones laughter, tears, love and how we live.

Like skin colors, Diversity is the flavor of life.

I am not limited to age, gender, or race.

I am invisible at times and yet all over the place.

Don’t exclude me due to a lack of knowledge
it is not our differences that divide us, it is our inability to
recognize, accept, and celebrate those differences
Let me take my seat at the table. Even though I may be
differently abled

My experience, my passion the authentic me
I see diverse beauties, their spaces over time change
dimension

And glide over the water erasing fear so all spirits would taste
peace

Then happiness and mindfulness naturally and easily rise.

Learn about me; improve my underrepresentation

And I can provide a competitive edge to entire mankind.

I exclude no one I am strengthened by all.

I am your best hope towards true innovation and to many, I
reflect hope and inspiration.

Thus the need for Diversity and Inclusion will also remain.

I am diversity and inclusion, embrace me and we’ll journey
far.

Embracing diversity coupled with Inclusion allows our lights
to burn longer

Together we are smarter, better and stronger

I am Diversity and Inclusion, I am Zambia, I am Africa and
am the world!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



Maggie Musonda - Zambia



Lily Rosengard - UK

'Where are you from?' They ask, eyes gleaming.
They don't even need to open their mouths anymore for
you to hear it,
The seemingly harmless question, which now taunts and
haunts you.
It happens with such regularity, it is like clockwork:
'No, but where are you really from?'
You know the answer you give will never be enough.
They have an answer in mind, so they're not really asking
you –
They're subjecting you to their own suppositions.

'But who are you really?' They ask, eyes glistening.
Because when they look at you, they make assumptions
about you,
About your gender, your sexuality, your health - your very
identity.

There is no room for your assertions of self
– no, no, they have already decided that for you.
'because it's easier', they say

'because it's too confusing to remember the acronyms',
they shout
'because its 'Political Correctness' gone mad!!', they spit
When really they cannot be bothered.
Do not want to change.
Do not want to put in the work of challenging their own
biases
because of what it may uncover about themselves.
These are the real reasons.

For we are not a token.
We need to work together
Put a recognition of privilege, power and bias at the centre
of our conversations.
We cannot progress without it.
We need it.
The living, loving, breathing humane side of our nature – it
needs it.

For diversity is not your enemy
and inclusion is not a delusion

Diversity is necessary
and inclusion is our solution