

## seeds of antiracist education (by tawona ganyamtopè sitholè)

vakuru vakati chinokanganwa idemo  
asi muti wakatemwa haukanganwi  
the proverb is a reflection that  
what forgets is the axe  
but the tree that was cut does not forget

the mouth of this river is dreaming of words  
in dreamtime but in the meantime  
it is not going swimmingly  
bursting on the inside but on the outside  
all we get to see is the brave face  
so to ask where is the safe space  
brave enough for difficult conversations  
safe enough for nuanced observations  
elsewhere it is just life

*“racism isn’t a problem in Scotland”*

*“oh God she’s talking about racism again”*

at the same time

*“no matter how much i’m perceived to be loud  
my voice is still not heard”*

*“I feel like I cannot bring my whole self  
just parts that are acceptable”*

and in the meantime

instead of raising instead erasing  
the young talking of problem behaviour  
unfair burden placed on people of colour  
racial trauma leading to mental unwellness

in all this embarrassing richness  
we cannot afford to ignore race  
to ignore race is to ignore ourselves  
we cannot afford to neglect healing  
to neglect healing is to neglect learning  
fundo cunoastere seekna al táleem ionnsaich  
so much ground covered  
so much left uncovered  
in the spirit of this dear rugged land

the mouth of this cave is yawning in song  
yawn time but in the dawn time  
it is not going harmoniously  
brimming on the inside but on the outside  
all we get to see is the brave face  
so to ask where is the safe space  
brave enough for collaboration  
safe enough for cocreation  
elsewhere it is just life  
*"I don't see colour i'm colourblind"*  
*"I concentrate on what unites us"*  
but in the dawn time  
*"they gave me a place but don't want me  
to fully occupy that space"*  
*"i'm expected to accommodate others  
so that my difference does not offend them"*  
and in the dawn time  
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the young talking of problem behaviour  
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the mouth of a ventriloquist is dummies the run  
in dummy time but in running time  
it is not going tickety-boo  
bubbling on the inside but on the outside  
all we get to see is the brave face  
so to ask where is the safe space  
brave enough for the insatiable search for justice  
safe enough for amplifying voices trapped in brackets

elsewhere it is just life  
"what does it have to do with me"  
"it is all in the past let's just move on"  
and in running time  
"am i good enough im not good enough"  
"why am i different i don't want to be different"  
and in the dawn time  
instead of raising instead erasing  
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all we get to see is the brave face  
but there is a brave safe space  
a teaching and learning programme  
called building racial literacy  
what everybody should be doing  
promoting race equality and antiracist education  
inclusive and supportive  
where its ok not to always stand tall  
where its ok not to always stand at all  
sometimes we have to stumble a little  
real is ok but i kinda like the surreal  
where we take those stumbling blocks  
and we turn them into building blocks

in the spirit of this dear rugged land

my habibti and i are raising two girls  
and if they came one day saying

*"mama baba i hate my hair i want to be blond"*  
i would say *"you need to add an e after d"*  
*dictionary says that is th correct female form"*

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i wouldn't say that  
i would probably tell them what they tell me  
*"you're sparkling on the inside"*  
*"you have a rich culture where you come from"*  
*"we all have varying amounts of melanin"*  
but they don't want to hear that  
they don't want to hear that from me  
they want to hear it from friends and peers  
teachers neighbours and mates  
they need to hear it from out there  
and they may settle for now  
for now is not the time to get into it  
to get into what they say  
*"teach them to be proud of who they are"*  
but how can they reach for pride  
when they are still figuring out  
how to tie shoelaces  
do and undo buttons  
and they are not alone  
they are just among  
all who just want to belong  
all children  
all children of this rugged dear place  
i don't want to see another brave face  
i want to imbibe the vibe of ancients  
the proverb is a reflection that  
tend them all for all have seeds inside  
chenga ose manhanga hapana risina mhodzi