



LIVE AND LET DIE

POEMS THAT DRAW ON THE
U.S. GOVERNMENT'S NEW
'FORBIDDEN WORDS'

Edited by
JENDI REITER

WINNING WRITERS | NORTHAMPTON, MA

Copyright © 2025 by Winning Writers, Inc.

All rights reserved, except you may share this book in its entirety without changes.

You may not charge money for this book.

No extract from this publication may be reproduced, distributed or transmitted in any form or by any means, without prior written permission.

Winning Writers, Inc.

351 Pleasant Street Suite B PMB 222

Northampton, MA 01060

www.winningwriters.com

Cover and interior layout by Laura Duffy Design | www.lauraduffydesign.com

Live and Let DEI/Winning Writers, Inc. — 1st ed.



Editor's Introduction

This anthology, like most of our good ideas here at WW HQ, started with a joke.

When the Trump administration released its list of words to be scrubbed from government programs and grant applications, someone on social media suggested that it would make a great poetry prompt. How about a whole book, I replied—erasures, sestinas, puns, parodies, and more? Well, you know what they say, if you want a job done right...don't ask Pete Hegseth.

The anti-intellectual, humorless fundamentalists who have taken over the federal government believe that words should have only one meaning. Even if that means that the AI-in-chief has to rename the World War II bomber "Enola Straight".

Poets are the court jesters we need right now. We have the tools to display the stubborn diversity (uh-oh, can't say that now) of language and life. The tech bros can't compare their stock portfolios without the word "equity." If we can't say "women," does that mean everyone with XX chromosomes is now a trans man? (Welcome to the party, boys!) Without a "sense of belonging," we wouldn't have white supremacy or Christian nationalism. Words are ungovernable, and that's what we have to be, too.

We received over 650 submissions for this anthology, from which I selected the 34 poems and text-image hybrids you are about to read. Some are comical, others are poignant, tragic, or righteously angry. They share a commitment to keep our language and our country from becoming corrupted.

I was looking for poems that used the banned words in a transformative way. A lot of these words are abstractions, which can make a poem feel generic and unmusical if one simply stacks the words together without surrounding imagery or poetic rhythm.

Many entrants picked up on my suggestion to use them as end-words for a sestina. Lucille Shulklapper's "The Inequity of Justice" stood out from this batch because it wove the banned words into a montage of emotionally wrenching images from the news, while Angela Maniscalco's "Braving Barriers" used these words to create a complex inner monologue of a woman's self-silencing in a trauma support group. Aidah Gil's "A Sestina on DEI (Deceit, Exploitation, and Indifference)" dramatized how workplaces misuse diversity lingo to pretend they treat their Black employees well. Frank Bradstow decided to write a ghazal, another word-repeating form, with clever internal rhymes that allow tonal shifts from mockery to yearning for social change.

I also enjoyed playful poems that brought out the words' other meanings, like Judy Clarence's "So You Want to Be a Cat Show Judge?" Though it starts off fluffy in the best way, it ends with a gentle but pointed allusion to white supremacy. "Diversity of Sound" by Jennie Meres recounts how indifference to the male/female binary of electrical plugs led to an explosive childhood experiment.

A great parody will always get our attention at WW. Angela Sweet-Christian's "Baby Got Sacked" employs the catchy structure of Sir Mix-A-Lot's rap hit to satirize the know-nothings' destruction of academic research. R.C. Hoerter imagines an alt-right love sonnet titled "My Tradwife's Lies Are Nothing Like JD's". Zazie Productions channels the Beat poets in "Howl for the Banned Words" while Chris Krechowiecki-Shaw's "We Did Diversity Hires" updates Billy Joel's Boomer history lesson.

John Beck, Jonathan Creamer, Erin Bondo, and Kenton Robinson each had original visual approaches to erasure poetry. Paul Fericano's hybrid poem-illustration represents Trump as the ultimate text blackout.

All this and much more awaits you in these pages. Enjoy and be inspired to create subversive word-collages of your own!

Jendi Reiter

Vice President, Winning Writers

Contents

Editor's Introduction	iii
Baby Got Sacked Angela Sweet-Christian	I
My Tradwife's Lies Are Nothing Like JD's R.C. Hoerter	4
Howl for the Banned Words Zazie Productions	5
A Certain Kind of Man Remi Recchia	8
Women No Longer Exist Jonathan Creamer	10
Sleep AF Lord TrenT MedJii	12
A Sestina on DEI (Deceit, Exploitation, and Indifference) Aidah Gil	14
Markers Renee Atkinson	16
The Forbidden Garden Abdul Aleem	18
I agree that I am no longer Lindsey Yoo	19
Diversity of Sound Jennie Meres	20
DEI Frank Bradstow	22
discord hymn Abhiram K	23
A DEI-Safe Poem Karyn Hunt	25
If You'll Excuse the Expression... Duane Matthew Dodson	26
Dear Misinformed: Marie Griffin	28
Words Matter Dave Wynne-Jones	29
Glossary for a Future Without Us Lukhanya Thompson	31
The Inequity of Justice: Sestina Lucille Shulklapper	33
State of the Union John Peter Beck	35
Political Correction Kenton Robinson	37
Hear Us, We Exist Athena Law	38
Two Roads (a true story) Fern Bryant	39
So You Want to be a Cat Show Judge? Judy Clarence	40
Hands Off My DEI Binna Choi	41
Erasing Women* Erin Bondo	42
Scattered She Ann Wuehler	44
Braving Barriers Angela Maniscalco	46
The Words They Feared Joshua Adam Walker	48
Made You Look Sarah Shea	49
Karen AJ Layague	50
I Went Off My Testosterone To Grow My Hair Back & All I Got Was This Lousy Menstrual Cycle Gabriel Jayroe	53
We Did Diversity Hires Chris Krechowicki-Shaw	54
Disappearing Act Paul Fericano	58



Baby Got Sacked ANGELA SWEET-CHRISTIAN

Oh my God Becky, look at her research grant, it is so big, ugh.
She looks like she's funded by some Public Health idiots.
But ugh, you know, who understands social justice? They only talk to her because
she looks like a total statistician, okay?
I mean her budget is just so bloated.
I can't believe she drives an Impreza.
I mean, ugh, gross, she looks like some kind of diversity hire

I steal big budgets and I can lie
You other brothers can't deny
That when a woman walks in with a big fat grant
And says Latinx to my face, I get sprung
Wanna pull up tough cause the bias budget was stuffed
I have no discrimination caring
I'm a glutton and I won't be sharing
Oh baby I want to get rid of ya
And kill your research agenda
The judges tried to inform me
But your big budget makes me so horny
You want me to pay for your pens?
Nope, too invested in my Benz.
I'll use ya, use ya, 'cause I can't stand you professors
In offices all day grinding, I don't give a rip about your findings
Go ahead and holler, while Musk and I steal every dollar
Say social justice is a good thing
But ask Vance and my staff that
It's gotta get sacked!
So felons (yeah!) felons (yeah!)
Has the public research department got budget? (Hell yeah!)
Then take it (Take it!) Take it (Take it!)
Shake that healthy budget, baby got sacked

Baby got Sacked
She was finding correlations now she deals black-jack
Baby got Sacked
She was finding correlations now she deals black-jack

No one's checking our food for crap from a pig
And when I'm throwing a gig

I wear matching clothes with help from Garanimals.
I like socks and sandals
I gonna get your grant
And ugh, double up, ugh-ugh
I aint talking about business school
'Cause that's hashtag pretty cool
I want that inclusivity research money
Gonna make my money double
Us billionaires are unsubtle
Getting off on the diversity struggle
Lgbt videos be
Milking the Feds like hoes
Teachers get all my vetos
I'll suck you like a huge mosquito
A word to all the suckers researching the safety of
 baby food on the government dime,
I'm Gonna rob ya, yeah, rob ya, Gonna out-of-a-job ya.
But I gotta be straight when I say I wanna -uh
'Til the break of dawn
Baby forget about gender all day long
A lotta simps won't like this song
Cause them punks like to advocate when they should discriminate
Hate speeches and ripe peaches belong
Your reports are way too long
I'm down to get my fiction on
So postdocs? (silence) postdocs? (silence)
They're already be bygones
I threw their research out
Truck driving white boys got to shout

Baby got Sacked
She was finding correlations now she deals black-jack
Baby got Sacked
She was finding correlations now she deals black-jack

(Bridge)

Yeah baby, who needs research on the Affordable Care Act. Nobody. Nobody does.
I'll replace healthcare with Frito's vending machines. I like chips.
Everybody likes chips. Chips are great.

**Your assistant drove a Honda
Thought a lot about Rwanda
But Rwanda got no money in the back of that Honda
My accountant don't leave none
Of your research funds hun.
Don't test drugs for side-effects
Big Pharm's got all the flex
Healthy food aint no fun
Some brothers want the whole wheat rolls
But I tell ya'll that white bread's gold
They toss it, and leave it, and I tell the U.S.D.A. to retrieve it
The Dean says she likes your stats
Well I ain't down with that
Salmonella is just fake news, kids who eat diseased chicken
Had it coming, they deserve to sicken
Don't show me no trans-sister, Pence would be pissed if I couldn't resist her
Hormone therapy gonna miss her
Some scientists try to diss
'Cause his diverse team was on my list
He had no game when he chose to support them
Sorry Doc, I had to deport them
So researchers if your budget is round
or you care about peoples' hearts shutting down
Dial I-900 Nix-A-Lot
And kick them humanitarian thoughts.**

**Baby got Sacked
She was finding correlations now she deals black-jack
Baby got Sacked
She was finding correlations now she deals black-jack**

Works Cited

A-Lot, S.M. (1992) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X53ZSxkQ3Ho>



My Tradwife's Lies Are Nothing Like JD's

R.C. HOERTER

**My tradwife's lies are nothing like JD's;
his tie is far more red than her lips' red;
if his bloodline white, her ethnicity
is shady as the black hair on her head.
I've seen the rosy glow of torches burn,
but no such blush can pierce her thin-lipped rage.
Sweet smoke from flaming BIPOC books do turn
more heads than any breath her teeth encage.
I love her great keynotes, yet well I know
that Kid Rock's jam will up jump the boogie.
I have never seen Melania go;
but my tradwife's booty ain't no beauty.
And yet, by God, I think my tradwife's rare
as Cybertrucks that never need repair.**



Howl for the Banned Words ZAZIE PRODUCTIONS

This poem is a modernized homage to Allen Ginsberg's Howl. It carries forward the spirit, cadence, and rebellious ethos of the original, while responding to the sociopolitical urgencies of our time. Dedicated to those still howling.

I saw the best minds of our generation
shredded by dashboards and dopamine, starving, hysterical, shadowbanned,
dragging themselves through suburban cul-de-sacs at dawn
looking for an open mic or open wound,
angelheaded queers in sequins and sorrow
burning for the heavenly algorithm to bless them with one clean stream,
who, in poverty and push notifications and hollow-eyed TikTok stupor,
sat up praying for Venmo Mutual Aid—

Who read Drag Queen Story Hour in Dollar Tree tiaras
and were branded devils by men who masturbate to Fox & Friends
beside Jesus candles of false prophets,
pearl-clutching necrophiles who fuck the corpse of 1952
while their bulimic five-year-old, Botox-stuffed, Eden-tantruming beauty queen
daughter poses in a red, white, and blue bikini
on the hood of a lifted truck nicknamed Liberty—

Who started wildfires with gender reveal napalm,
blue smoke blistering through national parks like a flag turned to skin,
smoke rising through drought-choked pines
like last rites delivered by propane,
flames licking the scorched bibles of prairie towns
as *To Kill a Mockingbird* was tossed onto the pyre
beside unopened copies of *All Boys Aren't Blue*,
books crackling beside propane confetti and American amniotic fluid,
as the fetus' name—Braxxlyn or Gunner-James—
was stenciled in sparklers across a sky once mapped by constellations and slave ships,
now hemorrhaging discount fireworks and particulate ghosts,
the same sky under which they banned the 1619 Project
but minted NFTs of Project 2024:
animated Lincoln winking with laser eyes,
Harriet Tubman deepfaked into a Founding Father,
Lady Liberty pixelated on the blockchain and auctioned for \$76.19 in Dogecoin—

**Who want to ban the antipsychotic
that once kept their doomsday visions on a dimmer switch,
now twitching in basements lit by the glow of RFK Jr. and flat-earth livestreams,
who swallowed Alex Jones like communion wafers,
washed down with antifreeze and eschatology,
who see George Soros in every school lunch menu
and think FEMA camps are hidden behind synagogue doors—**

**Who launched the arms race of the nuclear family:
toddler pageants and taxidermied marriages,
dad in camo with concealed-carry vows,
mom with Botox and purity pledges,
the baby's first words: build the wall—**

**Who redacted racial inequality with a Sharpie made of denial,
called equity a Marxist slur and inclusion a gateway drug,
who replaced gender diversity with “chromosomal uniformity metrics,”
stuffed community equity into a manila envelope marked critical threat,
held séances to exorcise implicit bias from job applications
but accidentally summoned three HR managers and a ghost intern—**

**Who siphoned grief through stainless empathy rigs,
rerouted sorrow into compostable swag,
harvested trauma like lithium
from rust-belt cafeterias and lockdown drills,
rebranded it as resilience—
gluten-free genocide served at folding tables
beneath murals painted by the unpaid—**

**Who stitched pain into conference lanyards,
poly-blend straps spun in factories where parolees sweat through silence,
then wore them like relics,
bowing before keynotes titled The Future of Listening
delivered over TEDx mics bolted to bulletproof glass—**

MOLOCH RISING

**Moloch who signs bills with funeral ink,
whose pen bleeds in cursive over the names of the disappeared—
Moloch who erases them in footnotes,
then names a parking garage after their ghosts,
who commissions bronze plaques for corpses still cooling,
calls it closure, calls it bipartisan healing,
then sells the naming rights to Pfizer.**

**Moloch who kneels only for Elon,
whose miracles explode on reentry,
whose gospel is a spreadsheet of child labor exemptions
and apartheid emerald dividends—
Moloch with a Neuralink halo and a Tesla-shaped coffin,
Moloch whose love language is nondisclosure agreements,
whose empire is held together by HR investigations
and silence bought in bulk.**

**Moloch of the post-verbal press release,
the bloodless clause,
the morality clause,
the conscience clause,
the heartbeat clause—
syntax polished until it cuts,
framed in bipartisan Helvetica,
sealed with a corporate watermark and a proprietary silence.**

**Moloch who drinks from a chalice of deregulated mercury,
Moloch whose organs are sponsored content,
whose spine is a ticker tape of war stocks and weather alerts**



A Certain Kind of Man REMI RECCHIA

**My life is currently absurd in that I am a trans man working in grant administration.
I read research proposals & strike from them any indication that
people like me might be included.**

**Upper university administration is conveniently illiterate when I
send them letters of protest.**

***Inclusion* is another word for *life*, which is, in turn, another word for *value*.**

**As in: a body is *valued* if it carries another body but not
necessarily because it carries its own.**

As in: a body is *valued* while carrying another body but not necessarily after the fact.

**When my mother carried me, she did not know what chromosomes were forming.
She knew there was a beginning, and she loved it. She loves me still: my ripening.**

**At work I draft factual statements & am told to soften my language.
I take a hammer to my principles & shatter them at my
desk for the sake of a paycheck.**

**While I am cleaning up my morals' shards to meet other people's deadlines, a man
shouts outside the library that abortion is murder. He is not asked to soften anything.**

**I bring coffee to my coworkers with an underserved smile.
I wonder if any of us has a real sense of belonging.**

**When I'm bored & not fixating on how many more shots of T I could
afford without insurance,
I think of the time I parked outside my church, full & fat with fervor
for the Lord, & a city**

**cop rushed over to ask me if I had *borrowed grandma's handicapped pass for a joy ride*.
I did not look sick enough, disabled enough, to require assistance for equity's sake.**

Now that he mentioned it, my grandmother is actually dying.

Her thin hair & I Heart New York

**T-shirt lie, fading, on the hospice bed that is somehow
simultaneously overpriced & underattended.**

**The gracious Remi (the ideal Remi) says the cop
had no way of knowing my grief, my life.**

That he's underpaid, overworked. That maybe he hates being part of a fascist regime.

**The bitter Remi (the real Remi) asks, *how long must I
excuse strangers for thinking***

(for wondering) *I am a certain kind of man?*



Women No Longer Exist JONATHAN CREAMER

According to government websites and research papers,
Women no longer exist.
(Of course, they still exist, but only in reality.)
The same is true of black and latinx people,
People living with disabilities,
LGBTQ+ folks,
And other minorities.

They will not be found in any white papers,
On topics such as racism, discrimination or underrepresentation,
As these no longer exist either.
There is no longer any inequality,
So equity is unnecessary,
And the disappearance of diversity removes the need for inclusion.

The government has solved all these issues,
(And more, such as polarization, prejudice and hate speech),
Through the use of Ctrl+F and the recycle bin on their laptops.
Problems no longer exist, and yet they remain.

According to government websites and research papers,
[REDACTED] no longer [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] is [REDACTED] only [REDACTED] reality [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] true [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED],
And [REDACTED] it [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] will not be found in any white papers,
[REDACTED]
As these no longer exist [REDACTED].
There is no longer any inequality,
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] the disappearance of diversity removes the need [REDACTED].

The government has solved all [REDACTED] issues,
[REDACTED] such as polarization [REDACTED] and hate [REDACTED],
Through the use of [REDACTED]
Problems [REDACTED], and yet they remain.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] only [REDACTED] reality [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] will [REDACTED] be found in [REDACTED] white papers [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED].
There is no longer any inequality [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED].

The government has solved all [REDACTED] issues,
[REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] and [REDACTED] they remain.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] only [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] white [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] men [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] remain.



Sleep AF LORD TRENT MEDJII

*This is a spoken spell for the Systemically Sedated.
For the Racially Rebooted, the Historically Hacked.
For the Marginalized Minorities they mock...
Let the script flip like prophecy in reverse.
'Cause if "Woke" is wrong? Then America's really just... Sleep AF.*

**I was born where the algorithm sleeps,
Where Black men dream in rationed breaths,
Around Black women, god-bodies, with lioness steps,
Get labeled "aggressive" for protecting their depths.
That's sleep. That's Sleep AF.
I speak like a chakra cracked from the Sun,
Birthed from cultural heritage coded in drum.
Call it diversity, call it activism,
I call it survival through your algorithm.
Y'all remix "woke" like a TikTok dance,
Then blame the minority for not clapping they hands.
Say "systemic" is a reach, like we ain't seen the glitch,
As if discrimination isn't threaded into every seam and stitch.
We're allergic to truth but inhale an inflated stories spin,
While the water in Flint, Michigan still ain't safe to swim in.
That's sleep. That's Sleep AF.
We binge-watch trauma on a paid subscription,
Then gaslight grief like it's fiction.
No BS, we made racism a character arc.
Same villains get a rebooted spark, chance to win the crowd's heart.
Your scripts got more redos than the DCEU, and that's the prob',
Me and my people are skipping the sequel, 'cause wtf is a 'BLACK JOB'?!
Historically, our powers been sealed in the scroll,
But I cracked them codes with an obsidian soul.
So here I am, Narrating a remix of Revelations in rhyme,
With numerology lines and metaphysical time.
Each bar is a blade, each stanza divine,
Each rhyme is a sigil that reprograms the mind.
Y'all cry foul when we say the word "victim,"
But what else you call it when the system tricks 'em?
Redline our chakras, block our blow-up-tuation,
Then blame us for our frustration and support us with suffocation.**

That's sleep. That's Sleep AF.

Ethnicity erased in pixel and paint,

But we still exist in hieroglyph and saint.

We carry whole galaxies in locs, lyrics and skin,

While you crop and photoshop your sins to fit in with trends.

You want melanin magic but not the cost,

Not the slavery, not the stolen ID, not the lives that we lost.

That's sleep. That's Sleep AF.

I ain't here for your filters or woke-brand shirts,

I'm the voice of the highest vibrations when the matrix hurts.

Discrimination ain't debate, it's the floor plan of your throne,

You built a country off melanated and marginalized bone.

Then banned the words that tell the tale,

So we write them in rhythm, Let the Ancestors yell.

So go on. Call me "too much," "too deep," "too fast."

That's just static through the echo of a dying broadcast.

I'm what happens when you try to delete the Divine,

When the Black, the Man, the Woman, and the cosmos align.

We are the past you pixelate, the myth you fear,

The future you gatekeep, the voice you try hard to not hear.

But we are here. And you? You still a-fucking-sleep..



A Sestina on DEI (Deceit, Exploitation, and Indifference)

AIDAH GIL

Marketing:

**We're surprised there are race questions about our organization.
We're doing better than rainbows: They don't include the color black,
But we do and have made it onto the *Best Places to Work* list again!
Though not a company mission, pretense is to your advantage.
Smile! You should be thrilled to have health insurance, a salary, and a role
As a readily available instrument of our company's will to power!**

Human Resources:

**The light that comes from the sun seems white to many, and to power
But, yes, it is made of a mix of different colors like our organization.
Light travels in waves, and each color plays its respective role.
The color that has no role because it isn't a color is black.
Nonetheless, we use it boldly for success: Take Advantage.
Refer to the *Employee Relations Manual* to be reminded again.**

Operations:

**Why is it that we're dealing with this diversity nonsense again?
Ah yes! Repetition creates habits and actors, and both have formidable power.
The thing is, the significance of power proceeds from advantage.
Anyone with sense is here to make money, not friends in this organization.
But fine! Be Issa Rae and Alex Haley, rooting for everybody Black!
Just know that getting carried away will get you carried out. **PLAYYOUR ROLE.****

IT:

**An employee is a dispensable person who takes on an indispensable role.
Slavery will be noted as a choice if you fail to submit your timesheet again.
We don't deserve any trouble: Most of the laptops we provide are black.
Considering optics, white could serve as a symbol of collective power.
Considering stock dips, human capital is paramount for the organization.
Oops! We may have deleted data on diversity as a competitive advantage.**

Legal:

**Exclusivity has always been a company's prerogative and advantage.
No one will prosecute us for compelling them to master their role
But will imply that prejudice somehow informs our organization
Or accuse us of bringing color to oppression and oppression to life again.
Has no one learned anything from history about speaking truth to power?
People always claim damages. As if panthers roar about being black!**

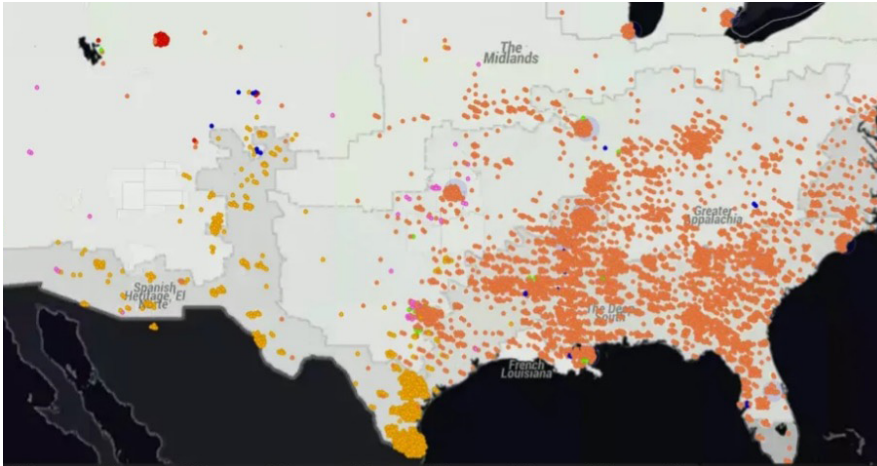
Finance:

**Taking a leaf out of any book, the figures that matter are likely black.
But many of you can't or don't read (and that is to our advantage).
Every decision lies in the heart, the mind, or the hands of power.
In shaping any group, the group's objectives play a significant role
And through setbacks, provide the motivation needed to endeavor again.
Profit, not equity, is the objective of a commercial organization.**

Senior Management:

**It isn't to anyone's advantage to express indignation again:
The optics of power will not change within our organization.
And to all Black employees, lighten up! Adapt to your role.**

Markers RENE E ATKINSON



Man fostered trees, engaging nature in complicity.
The trees' selection diverse seemingly void of implicit bias
But the Pines were marginalized, their limbs too soft.
Black Walnut underrepresented, their stature too tall.
Equitable Maples, Sycamores and Junipers stood ready.
Historically preferred Oaks were embraced by the prejudiced.
Hate speech echoed under leaves
Uttered by the privileged with nooses.
Inequality whispered in the wind
From California to New York, in Montana, Florida, Texas
The phenomena of hanging trees known for a particular purpose.
Strong branches framed by the sky, a community memorial.
Reminders that social justice was not available, inequity still present.
Systemic trauma on call, remainder rope still wound on the branch.
The lynched belonging to the tree, leaving last thoughts, last views, last sighs
Disabled by death.
All nationalities, all genders, all ages; advocate ghosts of discrimination.
By word of mouth, community came to claim the view,
The spectacle of the swinging
To walk beneath branches that held one or held many,
Participants in matinees or evening massacres
Though the soiled landscape was soaked in racism, sexism, fear
Political picnics were spread out under the public mutilation
Often inclusion of children, invited to instill a memory, to snack on hate
To see the dead weight, the sagging bodies, the faceless
Names remembered but some not newsprint worthy

**Bennie Mitchell, Jr. and Ernest Collins held by the Columbus Hanging Tree, 1935
Denmark Vesey and 34 of his followers held by the Charleston Hanging Tree, 1822
Vulture City Hanging Tree held eighteen and Jackson Hanging Tree held ten
Gallows Hill Tree in Salem and Boot Hill Tree in Dodge City
Creek Hanging Tree for the indigenous in Oklahoma
Dallas Hanging Tree in Oregon, Bandera Hanging Tree in Texas
If the tree is no longer living, a historical marker now resides
Thousands of heritage testaments, memorials of injustice.
Lynchings between the 1830s and 1960s charted and summarized,
Documented by state. the research still ongoing
The testimony now no longer interactive, the lab locked
The Smithsonian page empty—an online hanging tree.
Yet the markers remain.**



The Forbidden Garden ABDUL ALEEM

They said:

“Write only of safe things—” so I wrote about a teacup
that drowned in a teaspoon of sorrow.

They said:

“No sadness, please.” So I laughed—
with a broken spoon lodged in my throat.

I tried to praise a butterfly—
but they told me wings are political now.
“Please focus on earthworms instead,” they smiled,
“they stay low.”

I sang of earthworms, low and humble—
and they replied:
“Bury your words deeper.
We can still hear them breathing.”

I painted a balloon, red and loud—
they pierced it mid-air,
“Too much hope,” they whispered,
“Hope is dangerous.”

So I wrote about a sock. A sock without a foot.
A sock abandoned by its pair. And they clapped:
“Perfect! Perfect silence.
Perfect emptiness.”

They pinned a gold star to my hollow chest.
And somewhere in that hollow,
a garden of forbidden words kept bleeding,
kept blooming,
kept humming a tune they could not kill.



I agree that I am no longer LINDSEY YOO

It's come to my attention that the language I speak with
my grandmother does not exist,
And speaking it may set this house on fire.
So let us be clear about what I am now, and what I am no longer.

I agree that I am no longer an advocate for the sun, which unequally blesses and burns.
I am no longer an advocate for the earth, which unequally yields to
hands of varying experience.
I am no longer an advocate for the deep sea, which unequally nourishes and destroys.

I agree that there is too much diversity in color.
Gold and pink in the sky as the sun retires for the night,
Brown and specks of white and green as seedlings reward the gardener,
Black and turquoise as Jeju's mermaids dive for oysters.

I agree that I am no longer the girl who translated for my father,
Expertly moving my voice from my throat to the top of my mouth,
Switching from Korean assent
(*Eung, neh, arasseo appa.*)
To the undeserved honey of American English.
(*Hi! My dad says he needs.*)

I agree that I am no longer a woman with unequal trauma,
Limbs and tombstones in neat rows within my cells,
Next to recipes for fermented cabbage and radish,
Spiced with the red pepper I will no longer use to make my food unequally spicy.

I agree that it'd be much easier if we could all have the equal opportunity
To be unburdened by cultural differences like these, which do not exist.
To be unbothered by the ghosts of jungles and children, which also do not exist.

I agree that I am no longer speaking my mother tongue,
Which unequally flows from my mouth and lodges unequally in your throat.
I agree that I am me, you are you, and I have never existed.

It's come to my attention that the language I speak with
my grandmother does not exist,
And speaking it may set this house on fire.
So let us be clear about what I am now, and what I am no longer.



Diversity of Sound JENNIE MERES

Around the age of four I decided I needed to have my own radio

My father—

underestimating my powers of overcoming barriers,

gave me a broken radio

cutting the plug off,

thinking to castrate any catastrophe that could be caused by my inability to
play pretend without trying to plug it in

He misunderstood my request, as much as I
misunderstood his intent

AND

He failed to explain that outlets are not gender diverse
and only happily receive male connectors

While

only severing the cord at the base of the plug

In my defense, I did not want to use my imagination

I wanted the privilege of my own type of stereo, not my parents' stereo type
my own type of sound—
equal opportunity if you will

But also,

As mentioned,

I had not yet learned the sexual preference of electric outlets and receivers,

I was too young to know they even had one

I just wanted to hear my own music,

Make my own choice

It seemed to me that even after removal of the plug all I would have to do would be
make the wire seem like a plug,

simply

diversify

split it down the middle

power on...

...And

The first time my father walked past my room asking if I smelled smoke I responded with a questioning “No?” because I did not

in fact

smell smoke.

I tasted it

**I’m pretty sure my soul was infused with the bolt of zap that entered
the pinch grip fingers on
both hands and traversed my entire skeletal structure, if I close my eyes
I can still see the buzz and flash tattooed on the back of eyelids**

**Realizing the level of wrath I was about to bring down and knowing
nothing of self-advocacy**

or

**apparently, self-preservation
I did the next logical thing—**

I turned the power on the radio to off

and

**piled stuffed animals against the shower of sparks and
ever darkening smoke coming from the wall and**

nonchalantly

**stretched out on my belly in front of the pile—scorched hands hidden beneath a book
and pretended to read as my parents ran through the house yelling
about the smell of smoke**

**When all was said and done, fingers soothed, my defense underappreciated—
by which I mean excluded from consideration and given no due process—and
independent status of radio operation denied until adulthood,**

**I could still hear that momentary twinkle of music—diversity of sound,
before the sparks started to fly and I spun the dial to silent**



DEI FRANK BRADSTOW

**Activists pursue advocacy to break down so-called barriers.
It's all bad: diversity and inclusion.**

**Jobs are based on merit, women have equal opportunity,
it's just a fad, diversity and inclusion.**

**Bias in favour of BIPOC is discriminatory, privileging
a minority is mad diversity and inclusion.**

**People with disability have systemic advantages, close down institutional help,
it's ironclad diversity and inclusion.**

**Gender diversity isn't real, there's only male and female,
the woke have been had by diversity and inclusion.**

**The melting-pot of cultural heritage fosters community,
it's so sad: believing in diversity and inclusion.**

**White people suffer the trauma of being the real victims,
no-one's more marginalised than a Dad—where's diversity and inclusion?**

**Social justice is a myth, there'll never be equality,
destroying PC policy makes us glad: abolish diversity and inclusion.**

**The Poet thinks their work is undervalued and longs
for acceptance as a comrade, through diversity and inclusion.**



discord hymn ABHIRAM K

the morning of April 15, 2025
Superman crashed into my bathroom
mumbling about Tax Day and tariffs
Lex getting implants, taking over the White House
even brainwashing their pets to fight each other
“Krypto vs. Crypto, headline,” he said,
“Dog vs. Doge.”

buck-naked and on the pot
i locked my brown eyes with his blue
he shook away his confusion
apologized for interrupting my shit
held up our car to cover the hole
while I cleaned mine

over my mother's chai, wearing my father's lungi
he politely waited for her to wash his suit
mentioned he preferred bum guns
over forests felled for toilet paper
which made me laugh out loud

bum gun
such an interesting phrase
since I'm a bum with a gun
in the eyes of his state

wasn't that the dream, Superman, i finally spoke
go all-american, and drop the hyphen?
don't you love apple pie?
farmhands in a truck, barn on the side
stars flapping proudly in the wind
the greatest country on god's earth
where the competent competed to make good
something of themselves
bonus a nation built by backs of all colours

he blanched. some bizzarro truth stuck in his throat
i continued ranting of injustice
to the most powerful man in the world
said no white man called us beloved
aren't we both British bastards?

what is it to me! you Americans can all
wallow in your biased misery
you, no they, brought this upon themselves
who in their right mind would bring
again
a businessman into power

what difference does it make to us, Superman?
all I needed from yours was a good education
all our good scholars are within your borders
now yours say that making your children dumber
makes it easy to tear them asunder

but orange and saffron are not that far off
one look at Modis Operandi is all it takes
i am a polarized hypocrite.
truth is never social, we have religion
you have diversity, half the world is American
its new culture consumer electronics and algorithms
spectacularized billionaires, corporate fraud and McDonalds
but America is half the world too
superpowered economy, sure, fed fat
on undervalued seeds and STEMs

the classic immigrant lied to us, but told me the truth
not just that the orange toupee was the real alien villain
but that Krypton was a way to save face
he had to say he came from outer space
he'd be powerless to fight the fight for race
if everyone knew he really was from the US of A
moot point
he failed
with no one to fight
America fights its own sane



A DEI-Safe Poem KARYN HUNT

**Diversify your vocabulary—
erect a barrier around your poem
to keep banned verbiage away.**

**Don't let your readers be victims
of word-salad trauma—
ensure each word
has a deep sense of belonging
in the context of your poem.**

**Stitch your words along the bias;
marginalize your annotations—
keep them neat and organized.**

Is your symbolism systemic?

**Does each metaphor have an
equal opportunity to impact
your reader on a deep level?**

Who cares if

**your readers are from
diverse cultural heritages?**

**You must take care to
be neither inclusive nor exclusive
in your choice of subject matter.**

**There! Surely your finished poem
with no hint of DEI whatsoever
will have no equal!**



If You'll Excuse the Expression...

DUANE MATTHEW DODSON

If You'll Excuse the Expression...
(with apologies to Rudyard Kipling)

**If you can turn away when those around you
Cite bias or request equality,
If prejudice and hate speech don't astound you
Because you deem that "woke" frivolity;
If you can hate and not be tired by hating,
Or, facing victims, sneer, "There's no such thing!"
Or think that status isn't worth debating
While bowing to your Mar-a-Lago king;**

**If you embrace—and yet are not inclusive,
If you can serve—and yet not advocate,
If you find social justice too elusive
Or petty to explore or cogitate;
If you can stand to witness the disabled
Mimicked and mocked to entertain the base,
Or somehow legislated as mislabelled,
Their categories whitewashed and erased;**

**If you deny the eloquence of gender
Or deem it moot, unsanctioned, or debarred,
Or call the activist a prime offender
Or someone undeserving of regard;
If you can view minorities in trauma
Through one uncaring, stony, soulless lens,
And classify their pain as "needless drama"
To further your ungentle, spiteful ends;**

**If you allow some “woke mob” legislation
To turn away the ones in need of aid,
Condemning them to danger and damnation,
 Remaining by their tears and pleas unswayed;
If you reject diversified inclusion
 Or claim inequity is not systemic,
Yours is a world of grievance and collusion,
 And, which is more, a new—and worse—pandemic!**



Dear Misinformed: MARIE GRIFFIN

There has been a bit of a misunderstanding.

Disability is not destiny.

Diagnosis isn't ideology.

In fact, it can change numerous
times in a decade.

A DSM code is a string of numbers.

Maybe the numbers 299.0
can't pay taxes, or go on a date, or write a poem.

A sentient being can see and breathe.

A poem is not an arrangement of letters on a page.

A poem is the stimming of crickets.
The echolalia of owls and katydids,
the fixation of rivers and the intensity
of colors on an April afternoon.

There is poetry in the flight patterns of birds
when they circle glide and soar.

Images in haiku
rhythmic raindrops on roofs
rhyming flowers too.

The timing of those comments
is perfect. Do you know
what's celebrated in April?
There's irony in the juxtaposition.

Sincerely, with iambic and form,
signed, divergent, not an epidemic.



Words Matter DAVE WYNNE-JONES

What do we learn from Chicago's Poetry magazine
suppressing a review by an anti-Zionist
of a fellow-Jew's poetry collection?

Or Anne Boyer resigning as New York Times
poetry editor stating, "No more

ghoulish euphemisms. No more
verbally sanitized hellscapes. No more
warmongering lies" on behalf of
"the deadly profit of oil interests
and weapon manufacturers"?

Poetry matters, it can go
into places others do not know
beyond the reach of those who
seek to control the narrative
by sackings, censorship, and cancel culture.

In war, on tongues of Rumour slanders ride.
Defence becomes the default term for war,
casualties simply *collateral damage*,
legitimate resistance *terrorism*
and *self-defence* licenses genocide.

Israelis are *killed, barbarically slaughtered*
Palestinians just *die, This is war!*
October seventh's a *surprise attack*
on *innocent civilians* but in Gaza
human shields are pitilessly murdered.

Israel's reporters become advocates,
criticise a freed hostage *left uncoached*
who innocently reports her captors were
polite, fed her their food, gave medical care.
They dub as *traitors* those who don't collude.

When people are described as *human animals*,
germs or *crazed cockroaches*, terms that absolve

**a hearer from the effort of understanding,
it is the othering of colonisation
enabling massacre, forced relocation.**

**The world's press prints a president's lies about
decapitated babies whilst in Gaza
lacking the tattoos of Auschwitz victims,
children ink their own names on their arms
to identify the bodies after bombing.**



Glossary for a Future Without Us

for the garden, the body, the archive

LUKHANYA THOMPSON

In the beginning was the word
vulnerable,
like seedlings in late frost— not fragile, but tender,
aching toward something warm and unsanctioned.

They banned fetus next.
Not the word, precisely—
just the echo of a curled idea,
soft-spined and dreaming in its amniotic syntax.
We called it chrysalis. We called it maybe.

The meadow, once thick with diversity,
now hums a thinner song—
the monarchs deported mid-migration,
lichen classified as subversive.
Only the compliant grasses remain,
neatly mown, precisely named.

Transgender became
a whisper between pronouns,
slipping past border checkpoints of the tongue.
Language forgot how to carry certain bodies.
We grew fluent in absence.

Entitlement—
that one they saved for us.

For wanting water.
For daring to call housing a right.
They said we'd asked for too much
and rewrote the hunger as choice.

The archive, once science-based,
now catalogs miracles only.
Salt doesn't melt the ice, it prays it away.
The data confessed to sins it never committed.

Evidence is now anecdote. Truth, a kind of treason.
And I—
a weed in the margins,
still flowering.



The Inequity of Justice: Sestina

LUCILLE SHULKAPPER

Dreams die in the blood of children,
embryos born from the seeds of sorrow,
the milk of starvation, the torture
of chains and broken bones, the searching
of scorched earth; of survival as the “other.”
Mother and child, deported, disappear.

A cancer-ridden toddler and his mother disappear.
The video follows the mother, struggling to free her child
from the chains that bind them to “others,”
to the brutal and inhumane soldiers, deaf to sorrow
prodding them toward a military plane, after searching
naked bodies with naked hatred as prodding guns torture

the nameless, bent and broken, then pack them in tortured
positions, until the engines roar, the plane lifts, and America disappears.
Activists march in the streets, carrying signs of protest, searching,
their eyes and ears alert to the danger of their neighbors. Children
and strangers in their midst, yet unaware of pain and sorrow,
might be kidnapped, handcuffed, and thrown into cars with “others.”

As if on cue, masked men swoop down upon “others,”
targets of skin and color, a mother and three daughters, tortured
by HSI in their own home, left with smashed lives of fear and sorrow,
shivering in their underwear, in the rain, until the men with guns disappear,
leaving terror, and trauma cut with razor blades, on the backs of children
crying, “Mama, where are you, Mama?” and living through a lifetime of searches.

Is there no end to a life whose desperate searching
leaves scars and barriers that haunt all “others,”
grieving as ICE hunts men, women, and children?
The loss of deported loved ones enduring torture
affects human beings who mourn their disappearance,
and pursue justice in community and legal searches.

**Today, a Vermont man was not deported. Released from sorrow,
returning to his community which made, rehearsed, and researched
plans to release him, they acted to assure his reappearance.
Hope returns with him, to all of us in helping “others”
escape the lawlessness of criminals in their acts of torturing
“Illegal aliens”, the name given to adults and innocent children.**

**How much longer can children endure grief, sorrow, and torture?
Who will name these children? Why are they the “others”? Has justice
disappeared?**



State of the Union JOHN PETER BECK

Once
I edited
the speech,

removed the lies,
the insults, the fearmongering,
the divisive hate, the cruelty,

there wasn't much left—
only punctuation.
There is a unity

in punctuation.
We all follow
the well-known rules.

Periods, question marks,
commas, exclamation points,
colons and semi-colons

show up in everyone's work,
a triumph of diversity
equity and inclusion!

They have a truth, an economy
of use and meaning, a language
all their own, no matter who

is peppering them
among the words, demarcating
one thought—no matter

how unthoughtful,
how unthought through,
how small, petty and mean

—from the next.
When you can't trust the words
and the numbers, all that is left

is punctuation.

I collected all
that was true

in the speech
and I will let you
see that for yourself:

...,!.,...!?,...,...!!.,..?..!!.,...,...,!..?.....,.
!.,...!?,...,...!!.,..?..!!.,...,...,!..?.....,!,.
..!?,...,...!!.,..?..!!.,...,...,!..?.....,!,...!?
..,.,...!!.,..?..!!.,...,...,!..?.....,!,...!?,...,
...!!.,..?..!!.,...,...,!..?.....,!,...!?,...,...!
!.,..?..!!.,...,...,!..?.....,!,...!?,...,...!!.,.
..?..!!.,...,...,!..?.....,!,...!?,...,...!!.,..?..
...!!.,..?..!!.,...,...,!..?.....,!,...!?,...,...!
!!.,...,...,!..?.....!!..?/....!

Once I stripped it down,
I felt cleaner, lighter,
happier and secure

to be back
in the rule
of law.



Political Correction KENTON ROBINSON

We hold these myths to be self-evident: That God made men, but
Never _____. There is no _____ for the male, as Adam never lost
A rib. Jesus told us, Be fishers of men, but if they are _____, throw
'em back in. Happy are the wealthy who will pay no tax! There'll
Be whites, but no more _____. & as we dictate these our dictims,
There will be crimes, but no more _____. & every man will be
Included; only losers to be _____. Rightly so. We say the ____
Goes to the swiftest, never to the slow. Now these new decrees you
May berate, but you will have no _____. & if you accuse us of
False afflatus, ICE will redefine your _____. & lest you protest
This fact-fascism, we'll deactivate your _____. & we? We will
Know NO recrimination. We'll have saved Our Great Nation from
_____.! There will be whites, but no more _____. &
Happy the wealthy who will pay no ____! (If a word does not exist,
The thing it names will not persist.)

Answer key:

**Women, female, women, blacks, victims, excluded, race,
advocate, status, activism, discrimination, blacks, tax.**



Hear Us, We Exist ATHENA LAW

If we don't have	the fundamental right to
free speech,	our freedom of ideas
then we don't have	voices together—
a free country	rises up
said the Leader,	representing not just
deleting women and	men and all
bipoc...	exclusive fat-cat cronies—
you no longer	hear us, we
exist,	know our inalienable rights;
it's for the	pursuit of happiness,
future of our country,	having life and liberty
wait for greatness	we protest!
nothing is free	about taking away our words



Two Roads (a true story) FERN BRYANT

Two roads diverged in a troubled wood,
And knowing my choice was not a joke
But a matter of principle, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could,
To where it bent in the war against woke.

Then took the other, as just and fair,
Though lacking the bias of voters' acclaim,
It promised integrity—this I swear;
Though diverse communities passing there
Had worn them really about the same.

And both that morning equally lay
Though minority rights were under attack.
Oh, I shunned the first, come what may!
And aware how privileges fall away,
I affirmed that I should never come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
In London ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less travelled by,
And changed my country of residence.



So You Want to be a Cat Show Judge?

JUDY CLARENCE

**I'm so happy for you! It's fun. Some things
you need to know:**

There are three major cat fanciers' associations.

To avoid systemic confusion, pick one to join.

Attend a cat show.

**Notice: all cats are displayed in individual
cages, providing a barrier keeping them apart.**

**Most cat show attendees and judges are, historically,
women. Breed classes are separated by gender: male,
female, neuter. Cats not amenable to handling
are excluded from the show ring. A judge who fails
to follow rules will lose their privileges. Some cat
breeds are under-represented: Korat, Bombay,
Khao Manee, Norwegian Forest Cat.**

**While exhibitors are encouraged to be advocates,
activists for the breed of cat they show, a judge
must be equitable. You may be slightly biased
toward the type of cats you own, but must not
demonstrate a preference for that breed. You must
be able to evaluate diverse colors, shapes, sizes of cats,
and not exhibit prejudice against shorthair, longhair,
hairless cats. Give each cat an equal
opportunity by comparing it to the standard
for that breed.**

**To attain the status of Cat Show Judge,
you'll go through a training period.
to learn about the great diversity
in varieties of cats: Turkish Van. Bobtail.
Curl. Rex. Ragdoll. Do not marginalize**

**those unfamiliar felines in the show ring.
Do not select your favorite breed and color,
a pure white American Shorthair,
as your Best in Show!**



Hands Off My DEI BINNA CHOI

**Hello Officer, Dean or Provost is it?
Sir, this is not what you think
You don't have to revoke our charter
Our club is for Conformity
Winner take all and Exclude the rest
Don't worry, our DEI stands for
Daddy Employment Initiative**

**As victims of reverse racism
reverse sexism and reverse cowgirl
Ha! Sexy High Five!
We men, whether we be paper white or the
Red lobster hue of sunburned white
Need a way to get jobs after college
We don't have the advantages of
Underserved minorities with their government handouts
We deserve the very best service!
We demand jobs from our daddies!**

**And it's so hard choosing between
Business stuff to make money or
Politics stuff to get power and
Factor in my golf game too
I wish women would understand
Our struggle for balance
Wow, you really can't have it all**



Erasing Women* ERIN BONDO

An erasure poem of Section 1 of Trump's executive order titled "Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government" ([EO 14168](#), published on the White House website January 20th, 2025)



Across the country,

men

access

women,

abuse

women

eradicate

women

depriving them of their

being.

erasure of

not just

women but

truth



This road

ordinary and long

the immutable

reality

internal, fluid

self unmoored

the

category of "woman"

transforms

undermine the



Administration

defend women's

freedom

recognize women are

and

are

**Across the country, / men access / women,
abuse women / eradicate women
depriving them of their being. erasure of
not just women but / truth.**

**This road / ordinary and long
the immutable reality
internal, fluid self unmoored
the category of “woman” / transforms**

**undermine the / Administration
defend women’s / freedom
recognize women are and are.**

*** N.B.: trans women are women**



Scattered She ANN WUEHLER

Women in parts and pieces.

**Rhapsody half-played
from a kitchen**

**full of almost-knitted scarves,
bags of quilting squares,
breakfast dishes piled sky high.**

**Cut her apart, glue her back together
with the brutal notion**

that she enjoys such severings,

**that she asked to be protected
from her own thoughts
that mention once every so often
that she belongs to herself.**

**The pitter-patter of little feet
seem to be her own.**

**When slapped back together,
in the shape she's supposed to be,**

**that shape of shadow
designed to be pleasing
only when silent and serving,**

**the cracks that show
become the ignored fiction
of countless obituaries
pinned on wall**

**formed of knitted needles
intertwined with wire coat hangers
above a floor of new and old blood.**

**Women cut apart
like a roasting chicken for a Sunday dinner
trying to smile as if they like it.**



Braving Barriers ANGELA MANISCALCO

I arrived at five, seated myself, but felt no sense of belonging
In this windowless room filled with eerily demure women.
Microphone feedback pierces the silence—like frightened mice reflecting past trauma
Coffee and cookies spill as women jump and scream. *Curse you, mental barrier!*
This is a rare opportunity to be heard. Are we doomed to always play the victim?
An announcement; a meeting is about to begin, for women who feel undervalued.

Lights dim as I inhale the air tinged with coffee and
the sour sweat of the undervalued.
Women stir restlessly; nervous glances heighten my not feeling a sense of belonging.
As the opening speaker drones on, I question myself, am I truly a victim?
A woman in front of me raises her hand to answer a question,
“The victims were all women.”
I try to focus and follow the conversation—my self-doubt is an obvious barrier.
The barrier stalls my growth, feeds a monster called worthlessness,
and ignites past trauma.

I fidget in my chair during the video portion; forced to watch other women’s trauma.
In my mind, I argue women will always suffer trauma and feel undervalued,
Who are we to fight censorship? A darkness which obscures the light, a barrier
Silencing our ability to speak out, access resources, and find a sense of belonging.
I am affected by this, and yearn to feel valued. Can I unite with these women?
I gaze around; eye-contact is non-existent, smiles are absent. We fear being a victim.

The speaker asks if someone will share an experience of being a victim,
Explaining how they cope. The emotional tension, thick as molasses, reflects trauma;
A lack of acknowledgements...but wait!

One trembling hand rises in this room of women,
Like a brave soldier waving a white flag of surrender, she refutes being undervalued.
More hands brave the psychological barriers within, willing a sense of belonging.
Do I raise my hand? I do not. My self-doubt, social anxiety
and fear are too great a barrier.

I listen as they tell their tales, my eyes cast down upon the floor,
contemplating my barrier,
Fear of judgement. Muted shades of isolation, shame,
and blame color the canvas of a victim.
Weak sobbing from behind startles me out of my thoughts.
I crave a sense of belonging,

**And wish to be brave. Is speaking out a way to feel accepted
amid the suffering and trauma?**

**Like beady eyed rats in a stinking sewer, censorship forces us
underground; the undervalued.**

**A speaker thanks the volunteers; the last segment is
how to support victimized women.**

**Movement in the dark; women are leaving. I squirm, can't breathe—too many women
In this closed up room. I tell myself I am not a victim, not really.**

I can't conquer the barrier

Because there isn't one! I lie to myself very well. I will always feel empty, undervalued.

***Get hold of yourself! You need this. You need support!* It wasn't my fault; I AM a victim.**

**Willing the tears not to fall, trembling, I acknowledge the shocking event, the trauma
That forever changed my life. Am I brave enough to
accept and gain a sense of belonging?**

**No. Not today. I move swiftly up the aisle, abandoning the women
and my sense of belonging.**

I can live with censorship, and feeling undervalued!

Their eyes follow me; eyes of the victim.

I failed to brave a barrier today.

Tomorrow—I will fight again, and rise above my trauma.



The Words They Feared JOSHUA ADAM WALKER

They flagged the word diversity—too loud,
Too full of voices they preferred erased.
They said inclusion made the strong ones proud
Feel threatened by the truth they once displaced.
They struck down equity with frozen pens,
Declared bias was a myth the weak invented.
They scoffed at gender, labeled it pretend,
As if the world was better unrepented.
Disabilities were deemed too “political,”
As though a cane might shake the throne of kings.
They feared advocates—how hypocritical—
To tremble when the silenced grow their wings.
BIPOC made them wince—too many hues,
Too many truths that didn’t praise their past.
They censored heritage, afraid to lose
The myth that said their privilege would last.
They gutted community, unless
It meant the ones who knelt the same and voted.
They called diverse groups nothing but a mess,
As if the world was better pure and bloated.
They spit at activism, told us “Wait.”
“Be civil, smile, and swallow all your rage.”
They scrubbed out inclusion, locked the gate,
Then wrote entitlement across the page.
They laughed at implicit bias—“Grow up.”
They turned minority into a threat.
They crushed equitable, then raised their cup
To power built on names we don’t forget.
But here’s the thing—they knew what words could do.
Why else would they be frightened of a sound?
A name, a truth, a fact that dares be true—
That’s what they feared would burn their system down.



Made You Look SARAH SHEA

System ick issues got us screwed.
Our family we must in clued:
Check the margins; say their names.
If we do nothing, we're all to blame.

We're all created eek wall, so was writ.
And that can't be changed by rich, white twits.
Our own Declaration is not allowed
On government websites—hope they're proud.
Cull tour all literacy is what they lack;
Break the berry errs that hold us back.

Silence is dangerous; make fear your tool
Against administration unjust and cruel.

The rich play pious.
Through hates peach and by ass,

They seek pole it tickle divide.
Only active vision will turn the tide.

Rely on your come you knit tee,
For there is strength in die verse city,
And only then may we be:

appreciated
represented
served
valued

free.

bipoc black disability female latinx lgbt hispanic indigenous women underrepresented



Karen AJ LAYAGUE

I'm of the mind that we're able to opt,
to weigh all the facts and reject or adopt.

To comment and opine, we're all freely able
to play what you're dealt, put your cards on the table.

They ain't set in stone, my every decision.
(This cowgirl's been known to reverse her position.)

But Karens at best feel entitled disdain
to monitor people on every terrain,

to bully, intimidate, frighten and shock
black people mostly, but any BIPOC.

Now Karen has multiple titles and dynasties:
Becky and Patty are two of her finest. She's

endless authority, tasks, occupations,
Barbecues, Permits, and Pool violations.

Aims her privilege like weapons, she's naturally skilled.
(And someday she hopes to get somebody killed!)

I reckon the plea that she come to her senses
will backfire strong and re-trench her defenses.

Diggin' your heels in can make you feel grounded.
But, Karen, you know you just might be astounded

at how your protectorate buckles away
and vamooses like Junipers caught in the fray!

The truth of it all is your time's running out

to spout all your drivels, to bark and to flout.

Your poppycock, hokum, your blathering dreck
seem intended to taunt and determined to vex.

But your clannish and odious bindings of power
are dwindling fast and decline by the hour.

‘Cause we’ll call misconduct and document bias.
Hide your transgressions? Don’t think so—just try us!

You don’t want that video sent to your bosses?
Then best to stand down and mitigate losses.

We’ll litigate, prosecute ad infinitum.
We’ll defund your henchmen, we’ll stand and we’ll fight ‘em,

dissolve your six-shooters, your command stultify,
if you push transgressions as *casus belli*.

You played all your cards in a crooked casino
And guess what—tick tock—time’s up—you know and we know

the gossamer threads of connection you spin
are anemic and feeble and dreadfully thin.

Your foundation is shaky, your boss a disgrace.
The connection you’re bound for? My fist to your face!

To those who are listenin’ who say that it’s wrong
to counter a bully with physical brawn,

go right ahead, Karen, believe what you must.
I reckon you’ll find that the gist and the thrust

of the way that you’re headed is awfully bleak.
I suggest you pay heed to this mindful critique.

**Throw down your weapons, relinquish your gear!
The people have spoken! The oracle's clear!**

**Reckonin's comin', a day to portend.
Lady Justice is ridin', she's roundin' the bend!**

**She's flanked by her posse, Justice for All, and
Yours truly rides with her, and we'll come a-callin'!**



I Went Off My Testosterone To Grow My Hair Back & All I Got Was This Lousy Menstrual Cycle

GABRIEL JAYROE

nevertheless I am still transgender & euphoric
buzzing even
fuck it dandelions are growing from my clavicles
 rising, vining, climbing

yesterday I had gay trans sex
 with my gay trans lover
 & somehow the world didn't end
which makes for a bad narrative on Fox News
 but I find I am at my holiest
 when I am ruining the lives of conservatives

yesterday I went to a feminine rage show and not one person
 said the words "trans man"
 like I get it, some of you think i'm a womb traitor, but if I'm still bloody
 do I not feel rage? do I not become divine in the way that my womb is
so g e n d e r F U C K E D
 that the government doesn't know what the FUCK
 to do with it?

AM I NOT ALIVE IN MY GRIEF?

my gender is sometimes the baseball
 & sometimes it is the bat
 by which I mean I am always swinging
& only sometimes do I hear a crack

**WHAT ELSE DO YOU WANT FROM ME WOMB I AM HITTING
AS HARD AS I CAN BUT THERE ARE NO HOME
RUNS IN GENDER OR IN RAGE**

there is only one way out and it is through



We Did Diversity Hires CHRIS KRECHOWIECKI-SHAW

Advocacy, advocate
Build trust, fighting hate
Diverse backgrounds, racial justice
Marginalised bloc
Undervalued, underserved
Women's rights and trauma heard
Socioeconomic factors
Latinx, bipoc

Sexual preference, consent too
Helping LGBTQ
Gender, implicit bias
California wildfires
Public health and vaccines
Reading books with drag queens
Privilege and prejudice
Borders filled with barbed wire

We did diversity hires
And it's no delusion
To promote inclusion
We did diversity hires
Those minority faces
Sure pissed off the racists

Foster inclusivity
Embracing diversity
Tolerating, Representing
Disability
Sensitive to heritage
Different cultures in the fridge
Building equal
Opportunity
Free speech, hate speech
Second time to get impeached
Activism, activists
Push for social justice
Minority ethnicity
Schools teach CRT

**Megyn bleeds from her face
Blockage in the Suez**

**We did diversity hires
And it's no delusion
To promote inclusion
We did diversity hires
Those minority faces
Sure pissed off the racists**

**Standing Rock, student debt
Nutters on the internet
Costco, DEI
Fine people on both sides
Mask bans, anti vax
Cutting corporation tax
Stop with the genocide
Ivermectin suicide**

**Challenge status, stereotypes
Listening to racist gripes
All the networks, Jan the Sixth
Stormy Daniels, mushroom dick
Barriers, equity
Indigenous community
Proud boys stand by
Capitol police die**

**We did diversity hires
And it's no delusion
To promote inclusion
We did diversity hires
Those minority faces
Sure pissed off the racists**

**Liberty, rights of man
Panama, Greenland
Chevron, Roe, Wade
Russian troops invade
Discrimination, racial hurt
Red tie longer than his shirt
Pronouns, Biden's age
N-Bombs, White Rage
Twitter, changed to X
NDAs for having sex
RFK, gets his way
What else do I have to say?**

**We did diversity hires
And it's no delusion
To promote inclusion
We did diversity hires
Those minority faces
Sure pissed off the racists**

**Nuke tornadoes, record rain
Muslim bans are back again
Man, Woman, Camera, TV
United Shaesh, Covfefe
Bannon, Mammon, Palestine
Vladimir is doin' fine
Killin' Generals in Iran
Chillin' with the Taliban
Emoluments, Space Force
Playing golf, no remorse
I can't breathe, don't shoot
Controversial arm salute
Renditions to El Salvador
Introducing Martial Law
Stupid fuckin' tariff wars
I CAN'T TAKE IT ANY MORE!**

**We did diversity hires
And it's no delusion
To promote inclusion
We did diversity hires
But when he is gone
We will still belong, belong, belong...**

Disappearing Act PAUL FERICANO

accessible activism activists advocacy advocate advocates affirming care all-incl
allvship anti-racism antiracist assigned at birth assigned female at birth assigned
birth at risk barrier barriers belong bias biased biased toward biases biases toward
biologically female biologically male BIPOC Black breastfeed + people breastfe
person chestfeed + people chestfeed + person clean energy climate crisis climate
commercial sex worker community diversity community equity confirmation bia
competence cultural differences cultural heritage cultural sensitivity culturally ap
culturally responsive DEL DELIA DELAB DELL disabilities disability discriminate
discrimination discriminatory disparity diverse diverse backgrounds diverse com
diverse community diverse group diverse groups diversified diversify diversifyin
diversity enhance the diversity enhancing diversity environmental quality equal
opportunity equality equitable equitableness equity ethnicity excluded exclusion
expression female females feminism fostering inclusivity GBV gender gender b
gender based violence gender diversity gender identity gender ideology gender-a
care genders Gulf of Mexico hate speech health disparity health equity hispanic
historically identity immigrants implicit bias implicit biases inclusion inclusive i
leadership inclusiveness inclusivity increase diversity increase the diversity indi
community inequalities inequality inequitable inequities inequity injustice instit
intersectional intersectionality key groups key people key populations Latinx LC
LGBTQ marginalize marginalized men who have sex with men mental health m
minority most risk MSM multicultural Mx Native American non-binary nonbina
oppression oppressive orientation people + uterus people-centered care person-c
person-centered care polarization political pollution pregnant people pregnant p
pregnant persons prejudice privilege privileges promote diversity promoting div
pronoun pronouns prostitute race race and ethnicity racial racial diversity racial
racial inequality racial justice racially racism segregation sense of belonging sex
sexuality social justice sociocultural socioeconomic status stereotype stereotype
theyv/them trans transgender transsexual trauma traumatic tribal unconscious bias