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AMAE Special Double Issue, Part 2

Muxerista Pedagogies and Praxis:

Art, Activism, and Scholarship as Resistance and Restoration

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Poetry Collection

Flor Olivo

Writer, Artist, and Community Organizer

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Writer, Artist, and Community Organizer

Forgive Yourself Today (in love)

a poem for the days you feel like quitting

you feel the lack.
and your body is screaming for more,
not more work,
not more survival,
not more roles to play
or hats to wear.

more love.

the nourishing kind.
the kind that sees you
and doesn't ask
for a receipt.

you don't owe your trauma
to anyone
who won't even
hold your hand
through it.

you need tenderness.
you need gentleness.
you need to stop
proving your worth
to rooms that feed
on your hunger.

begin again,
a daily practice.
small, sacred acts
of re-parenting.
nothing grand.

just a soft
touch point
with your own
wild
aching
heart.

when you say,
“even my body feels broken,”

I believe you.

that kind of exhaustion
doesn't come
from laziness.
it comes
from war.

but your body
is not broken.
she is wise.
she is begging
you to listen.

that tightness in your chest?
that ache in your bones?
that numbness,
the fire, the fog
that clings to everything?

that is your body
whispering...
please. choose us now.

you don't have to heal overnight.
you just have to stop
hurting more.

let's make a ritual.
a grounding.
a tiny promise:
today, I will give my body one thing
she didn't have yesterday.

water.
a nap.
silence.
a slow stretch.
a full meal.
permission
to rest.

you are not too late
to save yourself.

you are not unworthy
 because you're tired.
 you are not too broken
 to begin again.
 you are not weak
 for wanting out.

you deserve
 a room of your own.
 a rest that doesn't cost you everything.
 a love that starts
 with your own
 breath.
 yes
 that breath.
 You are the beginning.

I Can Do This Job, and Twelve Others (in love)

A Poem Made of Work I Had to Explain

Dear Hiring Committee,

I am writing to express my interest
 in surviving.

In keeping the lights on.
 In making the most of a résumé
 that zig-zags like trauma
 but somehow looks linear in Word.

My background includes
 graphic design, trauma-informed facilitation,
 bartending, inventory control at a nursery,
 and crying during grant deadlines.

I've folded baptismal laundry in the Salt Lake Temple,
 taught gender theory in a polyester blazer,
 designed logos at 2 AM with a baby on my chest.

Yes, I've worked across sectors—
 nonprofit, higher ed, unpaid emotional labor,
 and the occasional committee
 that "values diverse voices."
 (As long as those voices take notes.)

I've written cover letters
that said, "I'm passionate about your mission."
when what I meant was
I desperately need dental.

I've taught college students
how to deconstruct media
and how to ask for an extension without lying.

I've managed social media accounts
and generational trauma.
I've facilitated equity dialogues
and PTA snack sign-ups.
All while maintaining
a deep commitment to not screaming in meetings.

You said you're looking for someone
who can multitask.
I offer:
nursing my son,
translating my parents' divorce documents,
and answering emails at red lights.

I do not promise perfection.
But I do bring
presence.
Perspective.
And a Google Drive full of miracle saves.

I am not your ideal candidate.
I am every job I've taken
because I had rent due.
I am every line I cut from this letter to sound "professional."

What I bring is:
grace under pressure,
clarity under chaos,
and a sense of humor
I do not owe you
but offer anyway.

In Community,
Flor Olivo, MA