

# BEATS

NEWCOMER YOUTH VOICE + PERSPECTIVE



**ISSUE 9**  
Summer 2017



Location: **Philippines**

**BEATS RECOGNIZES THE UNCEDED COAST SALISH TERRITORIES OF**  
xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, Skwxwu7mesh and Tsleil-Waututh Nations  
(Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations )



AN INITIATIVE OF  
vancouver  
foundation

# EDITOR'S NOTE

Jennifer Sarkar

Hello! Welcome back to our Issue 9. It has been a great pleasure working with this Editorial team. BEATS team has been very fortunate to be able to continue this publication.

Through this issue, the editors are bringing forward experiences and situations they had to face because of their race, gender, identity and values. This issue speaks to the reality of being a racialized woman in this community. As newcomer immigrant and refugee youth and young adults, racism and sexism are not just simple terms, they are things that affect daily lives of most young people. For us shit gets real!

Issue 9 also brings forward some amazing collection of photography and artwork by many individuals locally and globally. As the BEATS team we are very greatful for the support and love we continue to receive from allies and community supporters.

I hope you all enjoy this issue and continue to support BEATS in the future.

## CURRENT BOARD OF DRIVERS

Simran Sarwara, Golsa Golestaneh, David Sadeghizadeh, Ariam Yetbarek, Marlio Rali and Pooja Lodhia.

## LOVE BC

### Leave Out Violence

LOVE is a youth-driven media arts-based non-profit organization that facilitates violence prevention and intervention programming to youth who face multiple barriers. LOVE youth use media arts to document their experiences and share their views of the world, and build leadership skills to break the cycle of violence in their lives and communities.

To learn more about LOVE BC's work please go to: [bc.leaveoutviolence.org](http://bc.leaveoutviolence.org)  
or Email us at: [vancouver@leaveoutviolence.org](mailto:vancouver@leaveoutviolence.org)

# EDITORIAL TEAM

**Ayan  
Mohamud**  
Editorial/Poetry



My name is Ayan, I'm originally from Somalia and grew up in Kenya. I enjoy reading, writing, listening to music, and playing basketball. I adore my mother a lot because she's been my role model all my life. I currently go to university, which I'm loving so far. It's been a pleasure to be part of BEATS Issue 9 and I hope you all have a joyous reading, cheers!

**Ivy Gaile  
Gregorio**  
Editorial/Poetry



I am from the Southeastern part of Asia. I recently moved to Canada. I like to write about a lot of things. It is my way of understanding my thoughts and telling people about it. I do not often share my story, but if I do it is because I want to share what I learned.

**Narges Samimi**  
Editorial



I'm Narges Samimi from Afghanistan. I came to Canada four years ago to have a safe life without any racism or prejudice; however, I can't see an environment free of hatred and violence in here. I'm here to be the voice of refugee girls who are experiencing injustice and racism. I share my experiences to let others know what refugees are going through.

**Janelle Huinda**  
Editorial



I'm Janelle Huinda, 17 years old from the Philippines. It's been almost 6 years since I arrived in Canada. I'm an outgoing and friendly person. I enjoy volunteering, hanging out with family and friends, learning new things and more. Peace out and spread love!

**Golsa  
Golestaneh**  
Editorial/  
Photography



I'm Golsa. A 20 years-old Iranian with refugee background. I have been in Canada for two and a half years. I describe myself as a social justice activist and an intersectional feminist.



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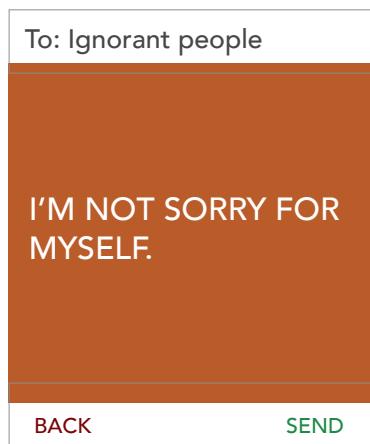
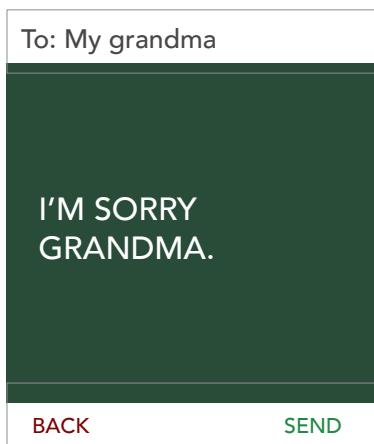
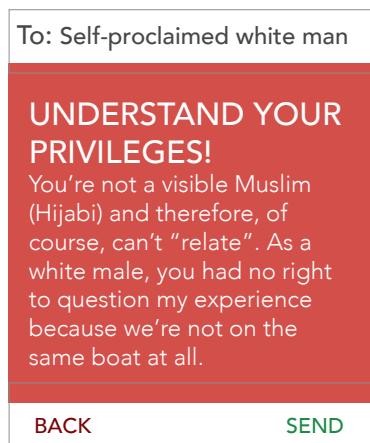
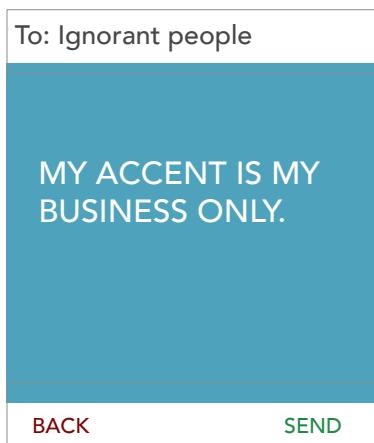
## EXTERNAL ARTIST AND PHOTOGRAPHERS

*Mina Jazayeri  
Jed Adrian Rezano Denosta  
Sepideh Jebrail  
Tahera Rezaee  
Ali Etrati*

# SHIT THAT GETS REAL

BY: *Golsa, Ayan and Narges*

As immigrant and refugees we face multiple different situations in a day. Sometimes we stop and try our best to fight back against the racist, sexist, discriminatory, ignorant remarks that are made. However, often we are in a situation where we lose the words or we don't feel safe to say what is truely in our minds. "Shit That Gets Real" brings forward those thoughts and the responses in our heads.



To: Ignorant people

I DIDN'T STEAL  
YOUR JOB.

BACK

SEND

To: The guy I dated for one week

GET YOUR HANDS  
OFF OF ME!

BACK

SEND

To: Everyone

NOW I'VE  
CHANGED, I'M NOT  
A HELPLESS GIRL  
ANY MORE.

BACK

SEND

To: Prejudiced English speaking  
individuals

I KNOW 3  
LANGUAGES YOU  
KNOW ONE, WHO'S  
DUMB NOW?

BACK

SEND

To: My uncle

WHY DID MY  
LOUD LAUGHTER  
HURT YOU?

BACK

SEND

To: My family

IT'S NOT LAZINESS,  
IT'S CALLED  
DEPRESSION.

BACK

SEND

To: My family and friends

I'M NOT AN  
ACTIVIST BECAUSE  
I'M LOOKING FOR  
TROUBLE, I'M  
ACTUALLY ANGRY.

BACK

SEND

To: Strangers and some non-strangers

DO YOU HATE  
ME BECAUSE OF  
MY ACCENT AND  
APPEARANCE?

BACK

SEND

To: My family, friends and teachers

THE REFUGEE LIFE  
GAVE ME THESE  
PAINS AND HEALTH  
PROBLEMS, NOT ME.

BACK

SEND

# TRAVESTY

POEM BY: IVY GAILE GREGORIO

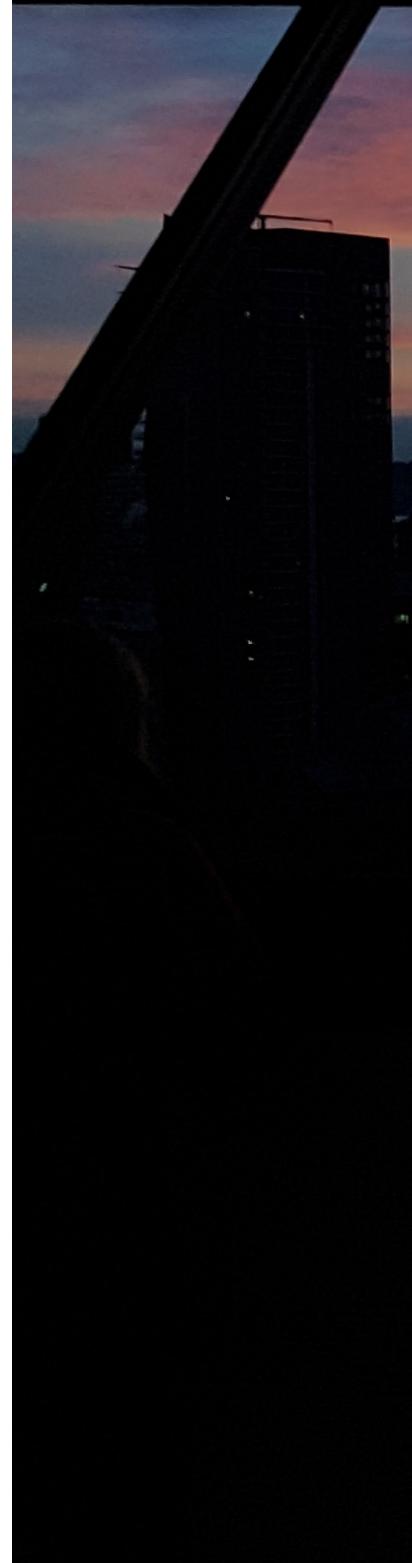
When I was four, I tried to learn making paper flowers.  
I wanted to give one to my nursery teacher.  
She was very pretty and she was always sweet.  
I had always been that someone to sweep women off their feet.  
It was just that it never happened to my mom,  
To be treated like a queen by an admirable gentleman.

When I was six, I used to tuck my shirt in my pants  
And play with my bicycle while looking so gaunt  
My body was covered with bruises and scars  
For not listening when my mother said, "Don't go too far."  
From the distance, I'd hear my brother shout,  
"Come now my protégé let's play a bout."

When I was eight, my aunt bought us some expensive stuffed toys,  
But water guns and toy trucks were the ones that I enjoyed  
So I asked my nanny to buy them with me in town,  
But I went home with my parents welcoming me with a frown.  
I used to hate playing house with my cousins and sisters.  
I wanted to play guns and chase bad guys with my brother.

When I was ten, my father threatened to kill me  
I might have given him a reason to let out his fury  
Sometimes, he would hit me with a belt, a hanger, or his fist.  
It always depended on how badly he was pissed.  
It was all right. I was fine. It was nothing I couldn't handle.  
I just had to remember that he was a gasoline that should not be kindled.

When I was twelve, I watched a man plan out our future home.  
My mom wanted to finally have a place we can call our own.  
And while he traced my house on a clean sheet of paper,  
I was building my dream and became a dreamer.  
I wanted to be a successful engineer.  
Since then, it was something I adhered.



**“I LOOKED FOR ANY POSSIBLE REASON  
ON WHY I HAD TO BE CONFORMED.  
IT ALL CAME BACK TO A WICKEDLY  
ANCIENT NORM.”** —*Ivy Gaile Gregorio*

When I was fourteen, I taught myself to respect women,  
To compliment them sincerely and often,  
And to never make them feel subdued and barren.  
I would open doors for them and walk closest to the curbs.  
As I promised to get them safely to their doors,  
I'd walk with them to places that seemed undisturbed.

When I was sixteen, I met a very beautiful girl  
She effortlessly made the butterflies in my tummy twirl  
I watched her swoon the crowd while swaying like a gypsy  
She was an art who made me feel things through her melody  
We talked and we danced, and it was epic.  
Loving her was beautifully tragic.

When I turned eighteen, men started giving me flowers.  
I was told to stop tucking my shirt and to look like a charmer  
There was no more toy guns or chasing the bad guys.  
It was books and dresses or learning to style.  
I was advised to stop wanting to be an engineer.  
Apparently, a woman should not take a manly career.

When I told a friend that I was infatuated with someone,  
The first thing she asked was, “Is he a handsome young man?”  
I looked for any possible reason on why I had to be conformed.  
It all came back to a wickedly ancient norm.  
I am a girl. I am a lady. I should be everything that makes up a woman.  
From a bygone belief, it harrowingly cannot be undone.



*Painting and art work by: SEPIDEH JEBRAEIL*

# THE FEMINIST IN ME

BY: NARGES SAMIMI

**“EVERYONE WAS DEAF AND BLIND TO WHAT WAS HAPPENING. THEY COULDN’T SEE ME GETTING VERBALLY ABUSED BY THREE WHITE MEN.”** —Narges Samimi

My hands were locked to each other and my head was full of sounds. I was angry but couldn't say a word, I was afraid of getting physically attacked. I was ashamed of being a woman, a “racialized woman” who has to experience sexism and get verbally abused by men. I was afraid of raising my voice, I was afraid of defending myself and my rights. I was so helpless seeing myself getting attacked but others denied to defend me. Everyone was deaf and blind to what was happening. They couldn't see me getting verbally abused by three white men. It was okay for them to see a woman being insulted. They were swearing nonstop. I was shaking and my body was freezing. I didn't know what was the best. I had to escape that situation so I went near the train doors, as soon as the doors opened I ran. I was running as fast as I could like never before. Now I've changed, I'm not a helpless girl

any more. I don't let myself suffer without responding. I stand up for myself and don't let anyone abuse a girl in any way. I fight even if I get hurt.

I became more passionate about feminism. There are many women who go through horrible situations and find themselves helpless. There are many others who get killed and no one talks about it. Women are human-beings and their lives matter!

That experience helped me become the voice of women who can't defend themselves. I am and will fight for women rights and encourage girls, specifically racialized girls to defend themselves.



Photography by: GOLSA GOLESTANEH

# MY FAULT TO BE BORN A GIRL?

BY: AYAN MOHAMUD

Growing up, I was always reminded that I'm a girl and therefore should be second to boys. I grew up with four boys and had to learn everything the hard way. As young as ten I was discouraged from performing better than my brothers in school, just because I was a girl. When I did poor I was asked to do well but not outshine my brothers. How I wish I could be myself and not controlled, even in my education, because of my gender.

# **“DO YOU SPEAK THE AFRICAN LANGUAGE?”**

BY: *IGNORANT PEOPLE*

*“DO YOU SPEAK THE AFRICAN LANGUAGE?” IS A QUESTION I’M VERY TIRED OF BEING ASKED SINCE I CAME TO CANADA. THIS DRIVES ME CRAZY BECAUSE I FIND IT IGNORANT AND SILLY. I WISH PEOPLE HERE COULD LEARN AND UNDERSTAND THAT AFRICA IS A CONTINENT WITH 55 COUNTRIES, “AFRICAN LANGUAGE” DOESN’T EXIST THEREFORE. WE HAVE DIFFERENT PEOPLE WITH DIVERSE AWESOME CULTURES SO GET EDUCATED!” —Ayan Mohamud*



# OPEN YOUR HEART, I'M COMING HOME

BY: GOLSA GOLESTANEH

Photography by: MINA JAZAYERI - *See You in Iran (cafe-hostel)*

It's been four years, five months and 24 days since I left my country. During these years, I've experienced so many different emotions towards my journey and my identity. Today, I am at a stage of uncertainty about my future and my life. I have always identified myself as a refugee but the fact that I have never personally been in danger, makes me question myself and my

life experiences. The intersection of parents' struggles and the life conditions of the children is the key factor in my current situation. In an era of fascists gaining power and determining our futures, in a world where goodness is only in appearance, in a place that one's identity carries so many stigmas with it, where insecurities overthrow the prides and the beauties, I can't

help but feel lost. Yes, I feel lost. I no longer have a concrete plan for my life where I am assured of my happiness in a place that I don't belong to. I kept keeping it to myself, I kept holding myself together but one day, when discussing with my mom the reasons I have for traveling to home, I broke down. I started to cry, I started to cry out loud, it was a bit after the rally that I had organized against the ban and the one that I had participated in by Trump's tower. I was exhausted, I was tired. My parents kept telling me that I should stop looking for trouble and on that day I just broke down while breathlessly saying that I am not looking for trouble and what I do is the mere result of anger and frustration. That I was actually angry, actually sad, actually scared and that was the first time my mom realized that I'm actually going through a crisis. So she agreed with me spending some time in Iran. After four years and a half, I am going home and I've been fortunate enough to have found a community in which I can be involved. After realizing how much time and effort I've put into changing the Canadian society, and how useful that amount of energy could have been to my hometown, I started spending the majority of my free time writing about my country and planning projects to be implemented when I go back. I started being an Iranian again and put my migrant self on pause for a while. It's sad that I can not be a migrant and an Iranian at the same time since it takes so much effort and I'm already exhausted. There are a lot of stigmas around my identity as a refugee person of color in Canada and as an Iranian refugee who hasn't been in danger but has built a life in Canada. I have been labeled as a liar, a waste of air, a hypocrite, just because I came here with my parents. I was shamed for being the child of refugee parents and talking about my struggles here. And that's why I can't be an Iranian and a migrant at the same time when talking about Iran because all of my thoughts and views will be criticized upon my identity. I left my country when I was 15, before having the chance to be involved in the

society and experience the social life of an adult individual. Next month (which is just a few days after you read this) I'm starting my individual journey of home, where I live my identity, my country and the Iranian society. Where I experience being an Iranian adult, looking like everyone else again, speaking the same language as others again, and understanding what it means to be Iranian and to live in Iran. It sounds silly to a lot of people but the fact that I left my country, my people, my culture and my memories without having the ability to analyze them, really hurts. When I booked my flight at midnight in mid March, I sat alone in the living room, on the carpet, sobbing. I couldn't believe that I actually gained the courage and the confidence to do it despite all of my struggles. It was just few days before that night that I told my friends there's no way I can go home, visit them and visit the café-hostel that I work for as a social media coordinator. But shortly after, I sent them a copy of my ticket. Yes, I write for an anti-Iranophobia platform and co-administer a group of more than 100 thousand people who either are from Iran, have visited the country, or are interested in visiting it one day. And that group started having a physical branch where we host those people who visit the country as well as gathering Iranian youth in a space where they share their thoughts, stories, skills and smiles. And when I go back, I'll be working there, with those travellers and Iranian youth; I'll be an Iranian in a space full of like-minded people. That's like a dream. Remember last year and BEATS Issue 7? Remember my story with "I am a daydreamer" title? Yes. I told you I have decided to dream big. And yes, this is one of my biggest dreams coming true: seeing my grandmother again, seeing my virtual friends for the first time, working in a young and intellectual space in Iran, traveling to different cities, and organizing reading sessions with children while discussing "different types of violence" with them. I promise to share lots of pictures and stories on the next issue.



**GOLESTAN PALACE, Tehran, Iran**  
Photography by: ALI ETRATI



**MEMORIES OF PHILIPPINES**  
Janelle Huinda

Photography by: JED ADRIAN  
REZANO DENOSTA



Photography by: TAHERA REZAEI

# I DO NOT KNOW WHERE I HAVE BEEN LOST?

BY: NARGES SAMIMI

Maybe I am in the presence of a woman who embraces her child and takes her for a walk. A joyful woman in a field of wheat who plants for her child's future. A woman with a blue veil, an amiable woman and a woman who is not afraid of the future.

You may think I am lucky to be living here, but you are wrong. You may think it's great being in other countries but you are wrong. It was not luck that brought me here, it was my family and I putting our lives in danger for getting here. By going to other countries that give no value and respect to strangers. It's not great when people put you down and don't let you to go to school. Don't let you work, don't let you breath freely.

It's not great when you have to be afraid of the police and don't have the right to speak up when some one hurt you or injure you. It's not great when you loose your identity and don't know who exactly you are. And it's not great when you don't belong anywhere and people look at you strangely and give you many attitudes. You may think I'm happy, but you're wrong because everyday and every minute I remember horrible events of my life. They're always there and eat me from inside. It can't be erase and will stay with me forever. I'm a refugee who have not been accepted anywhere. I am a person who was a stranger even in her own country.



"MOM TRUSTS THAT  
I'M CAPABLE  
MOM TRUSTS THAT  
I CAN  
MOM TRUSTS THAT  
NO ONE CAN STOP HER DAUGHTER  
BECAUSE SHE THINKS THAT  
I'M "TOO STRONG"  
AS SHE PUTS IT  
SHE BELIEVES! SHE BELIEVES!" —Ayan Mohamud

Photography by: Ayan Mohamud

# MOTHER AND DAUGHTER: A BOND OF ITS KIND

*Poetry: Ayan Mohamud*

I stare into a blank space  
With the hope that I'm doing the right thing  
To achieve my dreams and goals  
The promises I made to mom  
Of making her stand tall among others  
And be proud of her daughter  
I believe! I believe!

Endeavors, challenges and struggles  
Keep coming every single day  
It's something I'm not in control of  
They would always be there  
But my HOPE  
Of realizing my dreams  
Is much bigger and stronger  
Determination, Patience and Focus  
Is all I need now more than ever  
To give the last blow  
I believe! I believe!

Mom's faith in me  
Her love  
Her prayers  
Her blessings  
And her HOPE  
That her daughter will make it right  
Always pushes me on  
She believes! She believes!

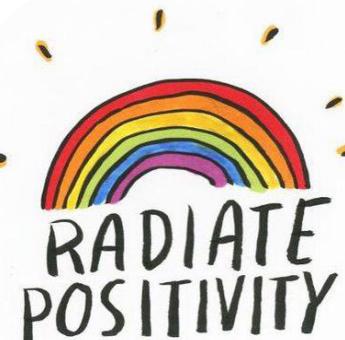
Mom trusts that  
I'm capable  
Mom trusts that  
I can  
Mom trusts that  
No one can stop her daughter  
Because she thinks that  
I'm "too strong"  
As she puts it  
She believes! She believes!

When all faith  
All optimism  
Of the most important person  
In your life  
Is in you  
It's a huge pressure  
You don't want to let them down  
Because they believed in you  
But the HOPE we both have  
Is incredible  
And unimaginable  
We believe! We believe!

# RADIATE POSITIVITY

BY: *Janelle Huinda*

Hello! My name is Janelle Huinda and I am 17 years old. Here's a little bit about myself. I am Filipino. I am an outgoing person. I love hot weather and I am always up for an adventure. Notice that I said "I am an outgoing person"? Well, that wasn't the case for me back when I moved here 6 years ago from the Philippines. When I got here at the age of 11, I was this shy new girl who didn't really talk to anyone due to my limited vocabulary in English. I was scared that they would laugh at me or make fun of me. Over the years, I have learned that just because my English isn't as good as everyone else's it doesn't mean that I can't talk be a friend to them. I put myself in volunteering, made new friends and join school activities. Through all that I was able to practice my English, make new friends and even achieve some outstanding achievements. Looking back at my life, I am proud of what I have accomplished so far. From being that shy, quiet girl a couple years ago I am now this girl who is out there trying new things. Through my volunteering experiences, for example, volunteering at a Neighborhood House, they noticed how hardworking and determined I was at volunteering and helping other teens adjust as a newcomer to Canada that they decided to make me a leader for a club. As a start, that was pretty cool because I was able to help teens and also help myself grow as a person. During my last



year in high school, surprisingly, I've done some new things that I never thought I would be able to. From playing field hockey since I was in grade 9 I became a co-captain as a senior which was voted by my teammates. Field hockey helped me grow as a person, and with that I was able to meet new friends that eventually led to best friends. I have gotten closer to my coaches as they encouraged me to go to different places and become fierce in and outside the field. Becoming a co-captain for me was a big deal. It meant that my dedication for the team, cooperation with teammates and playing well in the sport is finally being rewarded. To be honest, I never thought I would say this but I have been involved with my school because before all of this, I tried my best to not be involved with the school spirit and not go to any school activities. During my last year however, I became a part of the student Government who literally plans the school spirit and activities! Isn't that crazy? Being a part of the Student Government brought my attention to the situation in our school and encouraged me to increase the level of engagement and positive spirit of myself and othe students. Right now, being involved in my community (like being a part of the Editorial Team for Beats Magazine) is so damn cool.



I just want to end this by saying that I am happy to be living here in Canada where a lot of opportunities are available because back at home, it almost seemed impossible. Even though you are new in Canada or new to your school, that doesn't mean that you'll be stuck in that place forever. It's just temporary. My advice to others is to be involved and to not be shy just because your English isn't as good as theirs. You are unique the way you are, live the life you want and radiate positivity!

Photography by: **GOLSA GOLESTANEH**

# STILL I RISE

My stay in Vancouver has been a roller-coaster ride and I wouldn't survive if not for this poem, always uplifting me and giving me courage to push on, hope it gives you a life too! By: *Ayan Mohamud*

**"YOU MAY WRITE ME DOWN IN HISTORY,  
WITH YOUR BITTER, TWISTED LIES,  
YOU MAY TROD ME IN THE VERY DIRT,  
BUT STILL, LIKE DUST, I'LL RISE.**

**DID YOU WANT TO SEE ME BROKEN?  
BOWED HEAD AND LOWERED EYES?  
SHOULDERS FALLING DOWN LIKE TEARDROPS  
WEAKENED BY MY SOULFUL CRIES.**

**JUST LIKE MOONS AND LIKE SUNS,  
WITH THE CERTAINTY OF TIDES,  
JUST LIKE HOPES SPRINGING HIGH,  
STILL I'LL RISE.**

**YOU MAY SHOOT ME WITH YOUR WORDS,  
YOU MAY CUT ME WITH YOUR EYES,  
YOU MAY KILL ME WITH YOUR HATEFULNESS,  
BUT STILL, LIKE AIR, I'LL RISE.**

**OUT OF THE HUTS OF HISTORY'S SHAME,  
I RISE.  
UP FROM A PAST THAT'S ROOTED IN PAIN,  
I RISE.  
LEAVING BEHIND NIGHTS OF TERROR AND FEAR,  
I RISE.  
INTO A DAYBREAK THAT'S WONDROUSLY CLEAR,  
I RISE.  
BRINGING THE GIFTS THAT MY ANCESTORS GAVE,  
I AM THE DREAM AND THE HOPE OF A SLAVE,  
I RISE.  
I RISE.  
I RISE."** — *Maya Angelou*



Photography by: **GOLSA GOLESTANEH (East Van)**

Use the space below to write your thoughts, voices and words you couldn't say out loud.

To:

[BACK](#)

[SEND](#)

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