

Mixtapes

IN POETRY IS THE POWER TO TRANSCEND



IN POETRY IS THE POWER TO TRANSCEND



Mixtapes

POETRY
inVOICE

lesVOIXde
laPOÉSIE

DOYALI'S LINER NOTES

I hope you find something in this mixtape that carries you forward, lifts you up. Something you can put in your pocket and call on as a touchstone in a challenging time. I called this mixtape "Poetry is the Power to Transcend" because sometimes poems can give you life when you need it the most. Poems can help us to understand the world in a different way – a fresh way, or, maybe, a very old way that we've been made to forget. I chose poems for this mixtape that complement one another. The more you spend time with these poems, the more you will find your own delightful connections between them – and/or to other things that mean something to you.

A few words each about this mixtape's extraordinary poems/poets:

Naomi Shihab Nye continues to be one of my all-time favourite poets and role models from afar. Nye's poem "Kindness" has helped me through moments of despair when suffering in the world seems too much to bear. "Kindness" reminds me to stay focussed on what I can do, and that that is enough. Nye's poem "Famous" reminds me what kind of artist I want to be in the world. Mohja Kahf's poem "Bury Me in Arabic" is a poem I came across more recently. By turns playful, tender, and sombre, she opens a door in welcome. Kahf's poem "My Grandmother Washes Her Feet in the Sink in the Bathroom at Sears" is testament to how much negotiation occurs in just one moment, and it beautifully and skillfully "hold[s] the door open for everyone." We need Kahf's presence in the world. Kevin Irie's poem "current" is tiny and stunning. Having had the good fortune of interviewing Irie a few years ago, I feel a genuine connection between the work and the life that created this

Continue on back >>>



POETRY
in VOICE
POÉSIE

IN POETRY IS THE POWER TO TRANSCEND



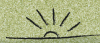
IN POETRY IS THE POWER TO TRANSCEND



work. Irie's poetry as a whole reminds me to pay attention to the present moment, to understand what that moment might be saying about death and life, and to enjoy the natural world I am privileged to have access to.

Randy Lundy's poem "The Cactus" is the perfect example of his work as a whole – deeply meditative, deeply reflective, deeply restorative. Like Irie's work and the works of all of the poets I have included in this mixtape, Lundy's is powerful in its need not to shout. I remember when I heard Alice Oswald quietly and confidently recite her poem "A Short Story of Falling" live at Koerner Hall during her Falling Awake Griffin shortlist reading. As soon as she began, I could feel the audience get still. I too was held – so much so that I wept through the whole thing. It felt like exactly the poem I needed in that moment – deeply circular. For those who have a sense of faith in a hereafter, or a belief in something – call it the Divine, God, or otherwise – Alfred Lord Tennyson's poem "Crossing the Bar" might provide you with solace when you experience loss or worry about what comes after the death of our physical body in this particular plane of existence.

Joy Harjo's poem "Praise the Rain" welcomes a whole world in its entirety, which is, of course, the supreme act of transcendence. Geoffrey Davis's poem "Unfledged" is beautiful and lyrical, and reminds me that even if hurts cannot be undone, sometimes if we see someone in a different setting, we can be touched, and maybe just maybe understand. And last but of course not least, we come to the great Lucille Clifton's poem, "won't you celebrate with me". This poem has helped me, as a woman in brown skin and as someone who has experienced chronic/recurrent illness for the past 19 years, to keep going. I hold it dear like all of the other poems I have included in this little curation. The magic of poetry is that somehow the right poem can find you where and when you need it. I hope you find the poem you need. I hope you are safe, well, and happy.



THE POEMS

A SHORT STORY OF FALLING

by Alice Oswald

KINDNESS

by Naomi Shihab Nye

FAMOUS

by Naomi Shihab Nye

THE CACTUS

by Randy Lundy

PRAISE THE RAIN

by Joy Harjo

MY GRANDMOTHER WASHES HER FEET IN THE BATHROOM AT SEARS

by Mohja Kahf

CROSSING THE BAR

by Alfred Lord Tennyson

WON'T YOU CELEBRATE WITH ME

by Lucille Clifton

UNFLEDGED

by Geoffrey Davis

BURY ME IN ARABIC

by Mohja Kahf

THE CURRENT

by Kevin Irie