

## I HAVEN'T WRITTEN HONESTLY SINCE THEY STARTED BANNING DRILL



POEMS

**By The Repeat Beat Poet**

I hover pen over page, my insides are knotted  
Time to commit, engage, sign upon the dotted.  
Whether at bliss or enraged, ideas fluid or solid  
I begin by paying homage to those dishonored  
the dispossessed, discriminated against, defrauded, detained illegally on islands  
the prisoners of conscience who dared to speak, risking being clapped in irons  
The First Nations, the Indigenous, Adivasi, Black, and aboriginal,  
because our freedoms and privilege were won through this violence,  
And because we stand on lands polluted by greed, or power, or diamonds,  
Please, a moment of silence.

My pen drops half an inch before I flinch, and wrench it back, quick as a flash  
I stew in potential thinking eventually the words will just descend on me  
Like the Lord dropping in on Daniel in the Lion's Den  
or Nebuchadnezzar's imprisoned men  
If I sit in a fiery furnace, convinced I'm the most truthful, the most earnest  
Then somehow these words will be my sermon and reach the furthest.  
I can burn this fetid fake fuel until the cows come home  
be a song seeking salvation through short-sighted sycophants  
I can bite back my tongue and protect my neck  
From these wild situations  
Again, hesitation.

I drop nib like a needle in a groove in lockstep bounded to my truth  
But hand won't flex and my pen won't move,  
blotting ink soaking the page like a shirt manna shot in  
Hands off my voice, but know the old style was rotten  
Now we kick rhymes when we used to pick cotton  
Coughing in smoke relaying what life's like  
Residing in coffin blocks ten storeys high

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POEMS

Shooting out of bandos, don't you ask me why  
This message is encrypted, my tongue is tied.

A woman whose face curves like mine is holding a bowl and mortar  
In an A3 frame with a raised paisley pattern and underneath her wrist is

AKWAABA

Some syrup is spilling from the bowl like honey  
And her knuckles point out into the room  
Mangled and shot with tension  
Battle-weary and beleaguered  
and invite me to pay respect.

She's been pounding her fist so long I thought it was my heartbeat  
Grinding so long I forgot it was for my heart's peace  
Sometimes she drops the pestle and mixes grain with her fingertips  
sneaking in sweet fruit picked from fresh soil grown the old way  
and packing it in so high that the bowl runneth over  
I cup my hands and drink  
Spill nourishment all down my chin  
All over my pristine shirt  
And my hands clean like ornaments or ancient tools encased on plinths at a museum  
  
I dip my fingers in the mess and play.