

A letter to call upon when you need it

Angela M. Brommel

— in conversation with *Walking with Purpose, Solidarity, and Grit* by Orlando Javier Montenegro-Cruz and the students of the Nepantla Program, acrylic on canvas, 2019.

One night you will wake up, unsettled,
grab a book to read a passage
that once brought you light.

Finding comfort, you will go to bed again.

You will return to this book many times
over the years. Don't hold onto the heartache
of standing there again. Hold on to the knowledge
that you know truth and where to find it.

Turn off the light and call upon your brightest memories.

For mothers and fathers who saved money
on the right side of their sock drawer,
near the box with your baby teeth
and a lock of hair from your first haircut
so that you could pursue your dreams.

For the grandmothers and grandfathers
who kept their nickels and dimes
in a glass jar to give you boxes of books
for birthdays and holidays.

For partners, siblings, and children
who called your work heroic
so that you might remember
that what we do for ourselves
creates a path of possibility for others.

For aunts and uncles,
for teachers and librarians,
for friends and community
who kept you fed at mouth

and heart.

Remember the people who held you, they are tributaries to your truth.

Remember that you are a wonder
of nature surrounded by the butterfly,
the hummingbird, the coyote,
the scorpion, and a mountain
within a range in a valley
that holds you in its palm,
beloved.

When you find yourself in a heap
at the bottom of the staircase that, this time,
seems too much to climb, convinced that
this time you and your heart are broken —

What if this is the breaking open?

Like water seeking its own level, this is your return.

May you love the sunlight and the moonlight.
May you guard your wholeness
so that you may light the path for others.

May you know that all work is honorable,
and that your work and your purpose
are often not the same.

May you practice your purpose
in solidarity, with the grit required
for mending yourself and
the portion of this world
that is yours to heal.

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