

To the Woman Who Washes Her Clothes in the Restroom Sink

Chanel Hardy

Losing control of your livelihood puts your pride at risk
In a state with no rent control, living on the margins of Sin City is a closer reality than hitting it big at the slots
Trying to keep your dignity intact while being singled out for trying to exist
I've seen them kick you out of restrooms and roadside tents
I've watched you get escorted out of a casino because you asked a tourist to buy you a meal
It's funny how money matters so much here but doesn't matter where it matters most
The privileged people pretend they don't see you, but I do
They pretend homelessness and poverty are individual failures and don't vote in solidarity with you, but I do
I see the price you have to pay every day
The price of being unlucky
The government's debt to society only gets bigger as the unhoused population grows
The sad truth is, money alone would never be enough to fix the damage caused by sacrificing a person's humanity for a dollar
I've learned that first step to helping the homeless is to humanize them, restore their personhood
So I won't take that from you
To the woman who washes her clothes in the restroom sink, I'm sorry that you have to do that
I wish things were different for you.

-Chanel Hardy



Photograph by Matt Gush