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## Womanist, A Poem

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## Womanist

Laurie Garrett-Cobbina

I found that using the poetic was the way into the sacred and mysterious,  
powerful and inspired parts of me, which I call Womanist:

*I am a womanist.*

*I incarnate and articulate*

*The moral charm—spiritual imagination—boundary-bending faith  
of colored communities.*

*Yet a womanist also speaks the broken and whispered  
messages of a diversity of kindred who keep heaven in their view.*

*A womanist's passion gives birth to  
Prophets and Poets*

*Warriors and Rule-Breakers*

*Martyrs and Messiahs*

*Disciples and Healers*

*Mystics and Pragmatist*

*Saints and Heretics.*

*Womanists listen to the voices of those living in the shadows  
and hear their echoing spirits.*

*Womanists are not afraid*

*to see—smell—and learn*

*from the spilled blood of those echoing spirits who died for freedom:*

*Who died in bondage,*

*whose spirits live on for justice.*

*Nor does the sight of our own bleeding wounds*

*turn us aside from our journey—we march on.*

*Womanists listen not only for the spoken word, we listen also for what is whispered*

*And what is hidden, what is silent*

*between the lines.*

*I am a womanist who hears*

*the steady flow of bleeding questions and salty tears and sane laughter  
all that remains for them unsatisfied, repressed, incomprehensible, crazy and  
Possible.*

*I am a womanist who knows we speak for many.*

*We speak for all who search for the sane*

*And the just*

*And the right*

*And the Godly*

*In our journey toward liberation,*

*our march towards freedom.*

*My sisters and I,*

*We are not afraid to call into question every rock upon which the established powers  
rest their heads, and*

*we are not timid in dashing the heads of the powerful against the rocks that are  
attempting to destroy our hope, our humanity, our divinity.*

*We watch how your eyes move when your lips speak.*

*We do not believe just anything and we behave badly.*

*My sisters and I,*

*We are like a steady swirling wind  
whispering in the ear of the established way of*

*Being*

*Doing*

*Thinking*

*Believing*

*Because we dare to cross the burning sands of the safe and comfortable*

*and either on purpose or by grace  
stomp on the established 'truths and habits and conventions'  
that fuel the soul-numbing walk  
toward a spirit with no imagination or creativity.*

*My sisters and I  
We can cook.  
Through the echo of our juicy lives,  
With our cunning recipes and mad words and spices that make you want to shake  
your hips and dance and holler out loud!  
With the transfiguring energy of our lives,  
We break the pious ideas that order a way of life that functions to  
Extinguish  
Minimize  
and Distort Our Living.*

*Womanists use blissful Holy Spirit energy as an unfathomable  
theology of hope  
that is terrible in its salvific peace  
and imminent in its power  
because it hears, it challenges, it speaks and  
it makes our feet happy.*

*Womanists smile as we infringe upon the law and command of  
powers and principalities that hurt and destroy human beings.  
Womanists rejoice in going beyond narrow expectations and confining limits.  
Womanists let you scratch that itch, stretch, and breathe deeply  
And we won't ask you to hurry along.*

*We sway to the beats  
that carry the thumping bass line of liberation  
and we are open to the pulsating possibilities of  
Being Knowing Caring Loving Touching Understanding  
And existing—in honest-to-God love—with self, community and God.*

*Womanists release our transforming/transfiguring/transgressing  
power in positive and disturbing ways as  
My sisters and I  
Explore the unexplored  
Imagine the unimaginable,  
Question the unquestioned  
And sometimes just rest.*

*Womanists are working out our suppressed spirit-energy,  
redefining and renaming and reframing  
what it means to live emancipation out loud.*

*Womanist dare,  
Like Hagar  
Like Tamar  
Like Deborah  
Like Naomi  
Like the Queen of Sheba,  
To make our home in the wilderness while expecting a miracle  
To pitch our tents in the holy sanctuary of violence perpetrated and justice denied  
To make ourselves at home in our leadership and prophetic voices, visions and actions  
To create a home with friends and sisters and children and lovers  
To spread the warmth of our beauty and wisdom and regality to distant lands and peoples.  
Be blessed.  
We dare to make a part of our salvation and our redemption  
The search for the space where  
Meaning and movement*

*Energy and direction  
Creativity and love,  
Sacrifice and redemption,  
Truth, freedom and courage  
Commitment, vision, responsibility  
Joy and mutuality*

*Converge so that all people live affirmed within the Imago Dei.*

*Brave African American women are saying in the words spoken  
by Sojourner Truth in 1853,*

*“I know it feels kind of hissin’ and ticklin’ like to see a colored woman get up and  
tell you about things. We have all been thrown down so low that nobody thought  
we’d ever get up again, but we have been long enough trodden down, we will come  
up again, and now I am here.”*

*Sisters Brothers Friends Lovers say it with me  
“I Am Here.”*

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