

Being Proud by Cynthia Fernandez

They told me to tone it down..  
To smile more softly.  
To make them comfortable.  
But I was never built for small spaces.  
I spill out.  
I take up room.  
I exist too loudly for their peace.

Every insult they spit  
lands somewhere between my ribs  
But I don't break.  
I get louder.  
Because being quiet never saved anyone.  
Because they only love us  
When we disappear.

They think queerness is politics.  
They're wrong  
It's survival.  
It's learning how to walk home at night  
With your head up anyway.  
It's loving someone  
when the world still thinks it's a threat.  
It's choosing honesty  
even when it costs you safety.

They say, Keep politics out of love.  
But love's the first thing they tried to take from us.  
Our bodies were debated before they were ever held.  
Our stories were censored before we even spoke.  
Every kiss is a statement.  
Every pronoun, a refusal.  
I'm rewriting a law they wrote without me.

The personal is political  
because they made it that way.  
Because my existence  
is still a topic on someone's ballot.  
Because breathing,

laughing,  
loving  
still counts as a protest.

And yet,  
We do it.  
We build joy from the ground up.  
We hold each other together.  
We stay.  
In a world that wanted us gone  
That's the revolution. And we're not asking anymore.