

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.