We Rise To Remain



A
Song
and Poetry
with Art as Zine
by Jay Siegmann

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Author's Introduction

I was driving through the South Lower Saxonian landscape one afternoon in spring—land that still holds my roots, even as I've so often felt unrooted. It was only the third short drive I'd taken in a span of 1.5 weeks, after many months in which even a 15-minute stretch behind the wheel was beyond me. For most of 2024, my body and spirit had resisted movement. But on this day, something shifted. The horizon widened. I turned on the music—an act I'd been avoiding for a long time—and though I longed to hear my "On the Road Again" playlist, I wasn't sure if it was downloaded and didn't want to risk using mobile data. Instead, I listened to a country CD, and with it, a spark returned.

That spark became this anthem.

What began as a fleeting idea—perhaps I could rewrite some lyrics to a familiar tune, give voice to something bigger—quickly became a deeper necessity. A Pride Month song, yes, but also a people's song. Not just for queerness as it is seen in dominant narratives, but for every letter of

LGBTQIA+, and every person outside of its letters. For the non-binary, like me. For those who've been made invisible, misunderstood, tokenized, policed, punished, and pushed to the side.

This piece rose out of the ongoing political and social rollback we are witnessing—not only in the U.S., but in Germany and far beyond. Rights stripped away, one by one. DEI initiatives hollowed out. Trans rights vanishing, bodily autonomy crushed, public funding for queer communities withdrawn. And still, so many people don't understand how deep the silencing runs. Because some of us were never fully visible to begin with.

For decades, I've lived with the consequences of being told I was too much and not enough. Erased for being non-binary. Boxed in by categories that never fit. Struggling with ableism, ageism, and the quiet violence of being overlooked. I've felt it in friendships, in activism, in so-called community spaces. The sting of

dehumanization doesn't always shout—it often whispers, excludes, forgets.

So this anthem is a declaration and a lifeline. It is not just about celebration—it is about insistence. A poetic naming of every group cast into the margins. A rhythmic refusal to go back. A rising chorus of those who are still here.

We Rise to Remain is structured around the acronym W.E. R.I.S.E. T.O. R.E.M.A.I.N., with each letter representing a group, struggle, or truth that deserves naming. Each verse is a stanza of lived history. Each word is meant to be sung, spoken, marched, remembered.

This work came to life through the fire and tenderness of my own experiences, but it belongs to anyone who's ever had to fight for the right to be whole.

We are not going back. We are not waiting for permission. We rise—and we remain.

Jay Siegmann
Einbeck, May 2025



W – Women / Womanhood (Sexism, gendered oppression, bodily autonomy, reproductive justice)

🎵

They told us to shrink, to fold, to obey,

To hide what we think, to get out of the way.

But we are the bloodline, the breaking, the flame—

No one owns our bodies, no one owns our name.

We bled through centuries stitched with pain,

Tore off silence like rusted chains.

They feared our fire, our hands, our truth—

But we've been building power since our youth.

🎶

We are not your burden, we are not your blame—

We are rising anyway, and we remain.

🎶



E – Earth / Ethnicities / Elders (Environmental justice, racial & ethnic identity, ageism, Indigenous wisdom)

🎵

We rose from the soil with stories unspoken,

Our names erased, our spirits unbroken.

They drew their lines across stolen land,

But we still remember where we stand.

The earth is aching, the elders ignored,

The forests burning, the treaties torn.

But deep in the roots and the rivers that flow,

Our power runs wider than they'll ever know.

🎶

We are land, we are time, we are every domain—

We rise from the ashes, and we remain.

🎶



We rise for
the silenced,
the stolen,
the shamed,

For every forgotten,
erased,
and unnamed.

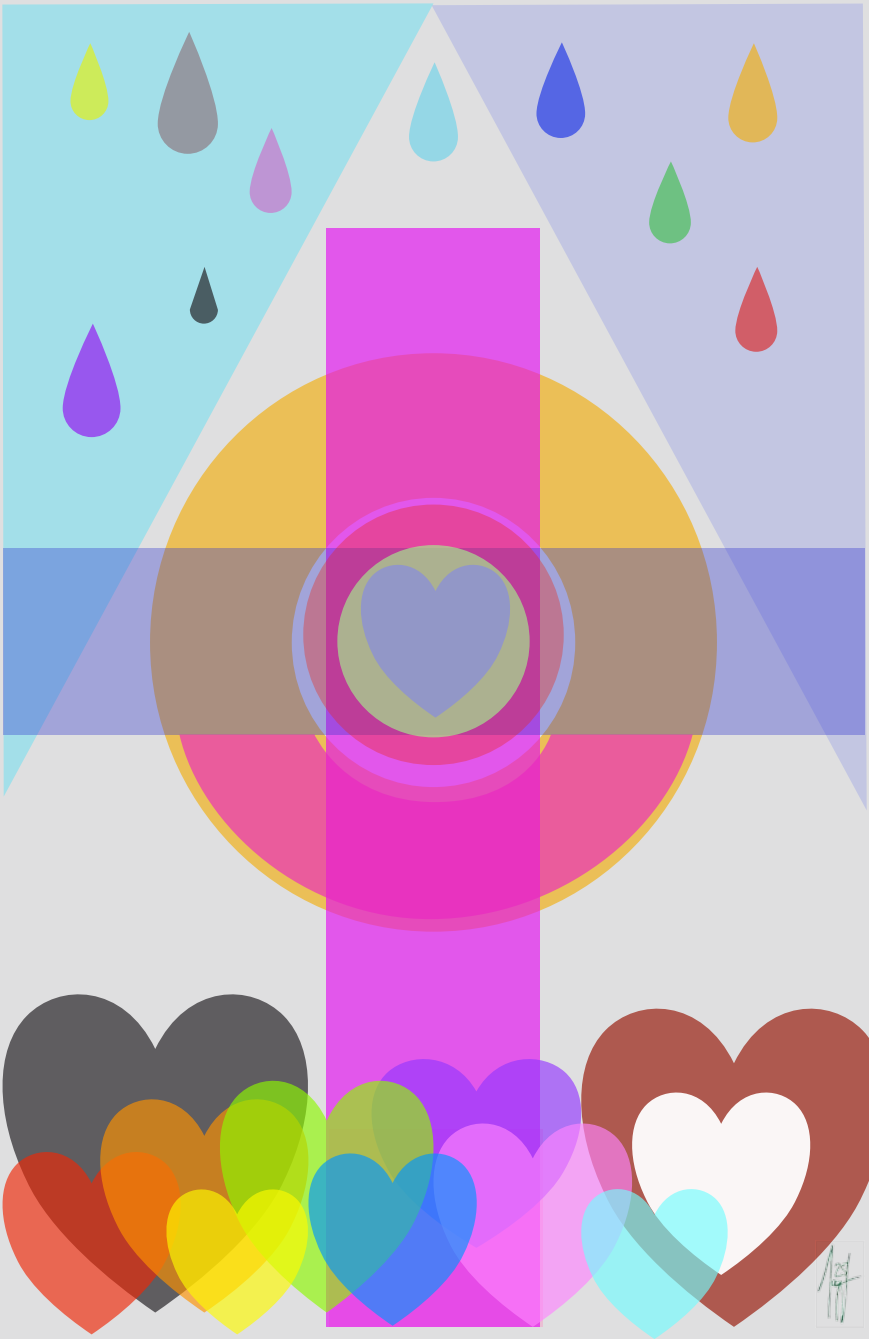
We rise not
alone—
we rise as a flame.

They tried to
erase us—

but still, we
remain.







R – Religion / Refugees / Rejected by Cultures (Religious discrimination, migration, spiritual abuse, scapegoating)

🎵

We prayed in the dark where they told us to hide,
Where borders were drawn and gods were denied.
We crossed every ocean, we climbed every fence,
With language and longing and quiet defense.

They called us strange, they called us wrong,
But we carried our rituals all along.
The prophets were queer, the faith always wide—
We kept the divine and tossed out the pride.

🎶

We belong to no empire, no shame and no chain—
Our worship is freedom, and we remain.

🎶



– Identity (LGBTQIA+, Non-Binary, Intersex, Agender, Asexual, Queer)(Every expression of identity outside gender- and heteronormativity)

♬

We are not secrets, not side notes, not strays—
We are futures unfolding in infinite ways.
Not one or the other, not wrong or confused—
Our bodies, our names, are not yours to refuse.

We love without limits, we live beyond shame,
We rise in the margins, we bloom without blame.
From ballroom to chapel, from protest to pride,
We walk in the light they told us to hide.

♪♪

We are truth, we are many, not broken, not tame—
We rise for our right to exist, and remain.
♪♪



S – Survivors (of Patriarchy, Assault, Shame, Feudalism, Cults) (Toxic shame, systemic violence, inherited trauma, survivors of control)

♫

We carry the weight of silence and scars,

Branded as liars behind locked doors and bars.

Our truths were denied, our memories dismissed,

But still we exist—yes, still we resist.

We've fled from the hands that should have been kind,

Unwound the guilt they etched in our minds.

Through cult, through caste, through power misused,

We rise from the ruins they thought we'd refuse.

♪♪

We are not what they broke, not what they've profaned—

We are still standing. We heal. We remain.

♪♪



E – E – Economy / Exploitation (Class, capitalism, labor justice, poverty, stolen labor and wealth)

♫

They measured our worth by the hours we gave,

By coins and control and the debts we repaid.

We worked through the sickness, the cold and the fire,

For futures they hoarded, for lives they conspired.

They called us essential, then left us behind,

Built towers from backs they refused to mind.

But we are not numbers, we're not your machines—

We're workers, we're dreamers, we're more than routines.

♪♪

We are tired but rising, from struggle and strain—

We fight for our labor, and we remain.

♪♪



We rise for
the silenced,
the stolen,
the shamed,

For every forgotten,
erased,
and unnamed.

We rise not
alone—
we rise as a flame.

They tried to
erase us—

but still, we
remain.







T– Territories / Tongues / Traditions (Colonialism, language erasure, landless & stateless people, ancestral cosmologies)

♬

They mapped out the world like it was theirs to divide,

Renamed the rivers, the mountains, the tide.

They silenced our stories, our language, our song—

But the drumbeat inside us has echoed all along.

We speak in the tongue they tried to erase,

We gather our kin in every displaced place.

Stateless but sovereign, we carry the flame,

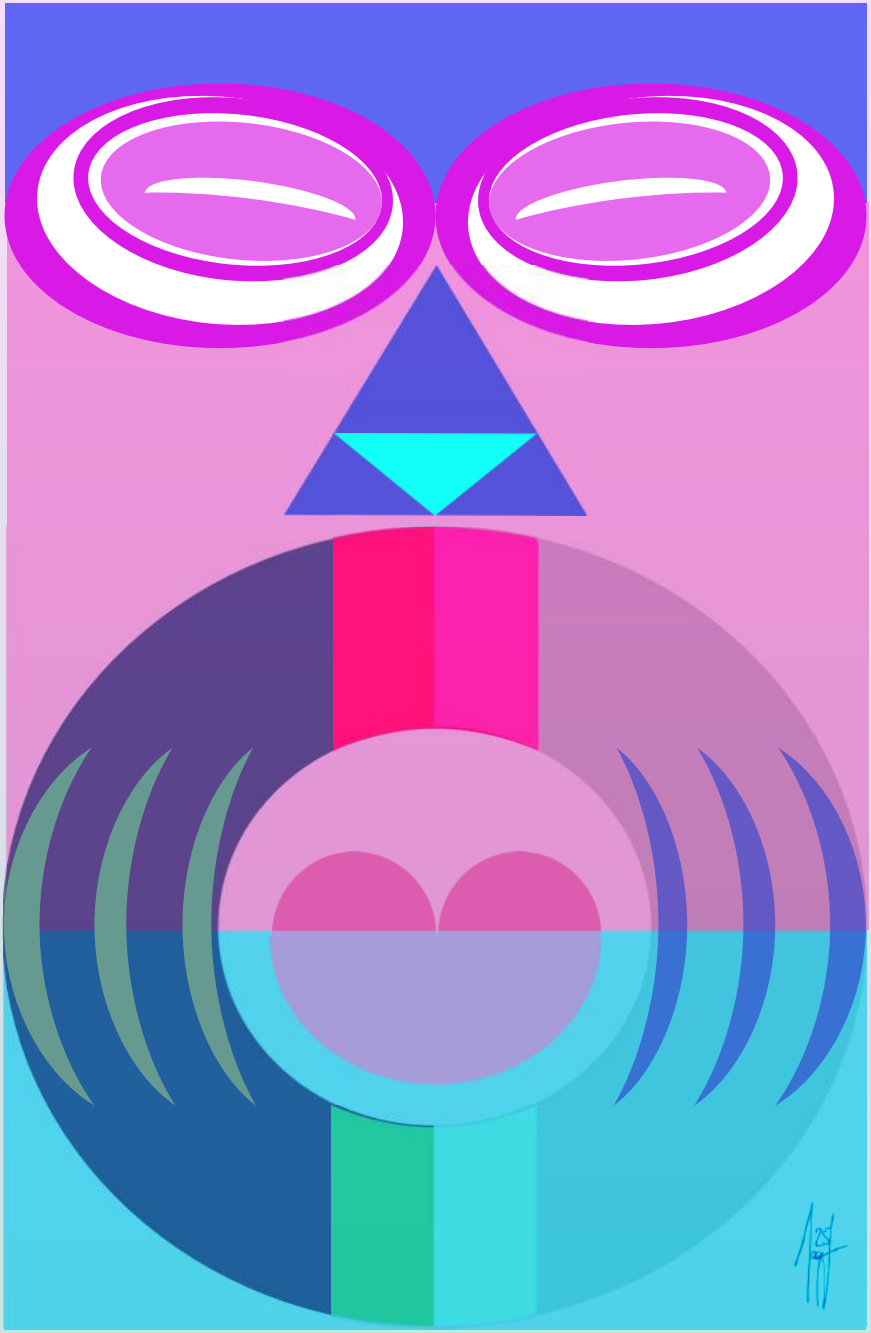
Our myths are alive, our spirits remain.

🎶

We reclaim the land, the voice, the domain—

We are not erased. We remain. We remain.

🎶



O – Others / Overlooked (Neurodivergence, disability, fat liberation, mental health invisibility)

♫

We were the ones they pushed to the side,

Told we were broken or labeled with pride.

They laughed at our bodies, our minds they dismissed,

And we speak in the patterns they never could list.

We move through a world that forgets to adapt,

Yet we build new systems from strength they've unwrapped.

No longer unseen, no longer alone,

Our way of being is power full-grown.

🎶

We're not made to fit in—they must widen the frame.

We are whole as we are. And we remain.

🎶



We rise for
the silenced,
the stolen,
the shamed,

For every forgotten,
erased,
and unnamed.

We rise not
alone—
we rise as a flame.

They tried to
erase us—

but still, we
remain.







R – Resistance (The act of rising: queer resistance, global south uprisings, intergenerational memory)

🎵

From chains to chants, from silence to sound,

We rise where injustice has poisoned the ground.

We carry the signs, we carry the songs,

Of all who were told they didn't belong.

We've lit every torch in the coldest of night,

We've shouted through fear, and danced through the fight.

From Stonewall to Soweto, from Gaza to Flint,

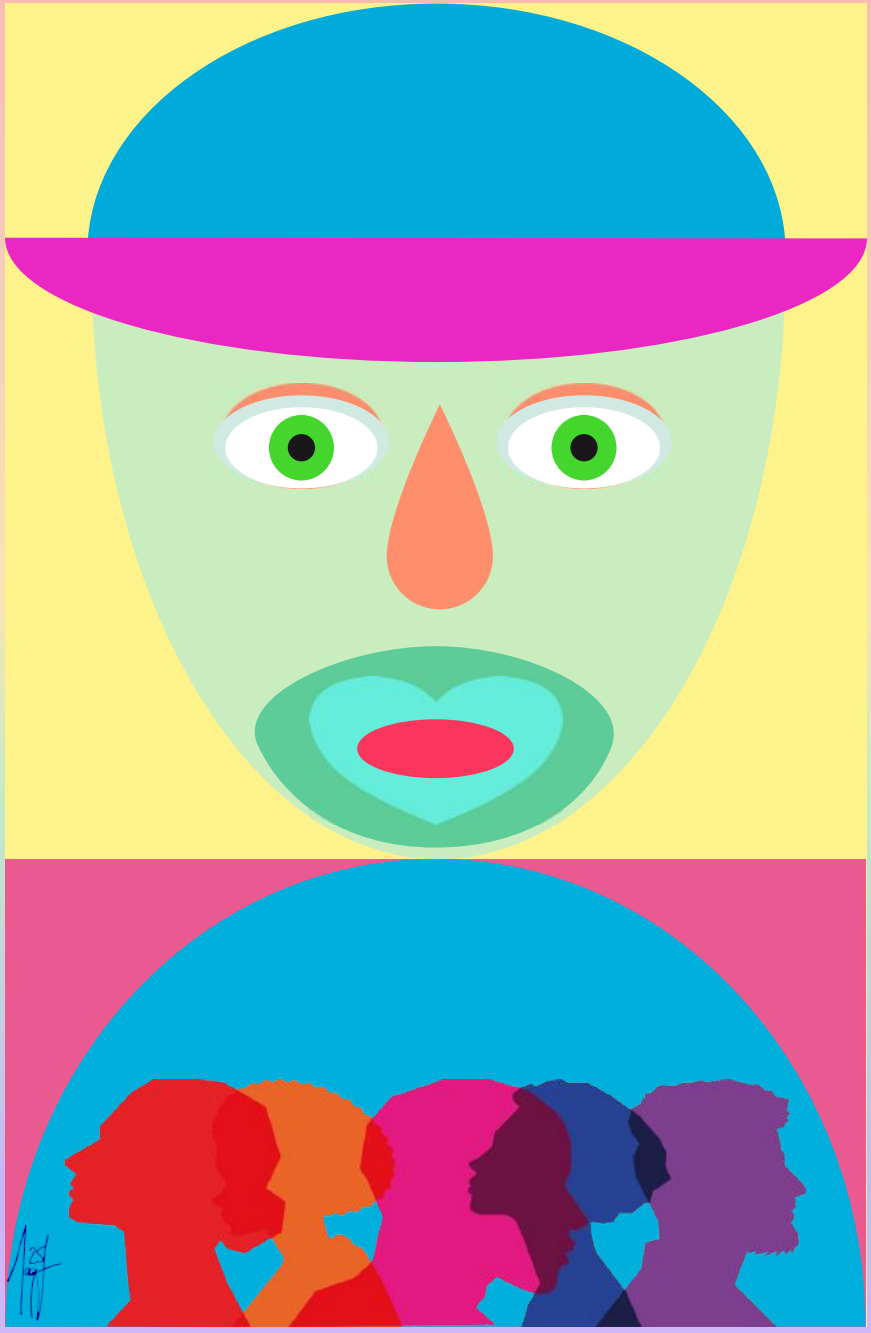
We are the pulse that won't ever quit.

🎶

This is not just survival—it's fire in our vein.

We rise for the future. And we remain.

🎶



E – Every Body (Intersectional embodiment: no box can contain us)

♫

We are curves and corners, scars and stretch,

Souls in motion, beyond what they sketch.

We dance in our bodies, however they bend—

Not waiting for norms, not asking to blend.

Some of us walk, and some of us roll,

Some of us shimmer and all of us whole.

We are more than the lenses they try to apply—

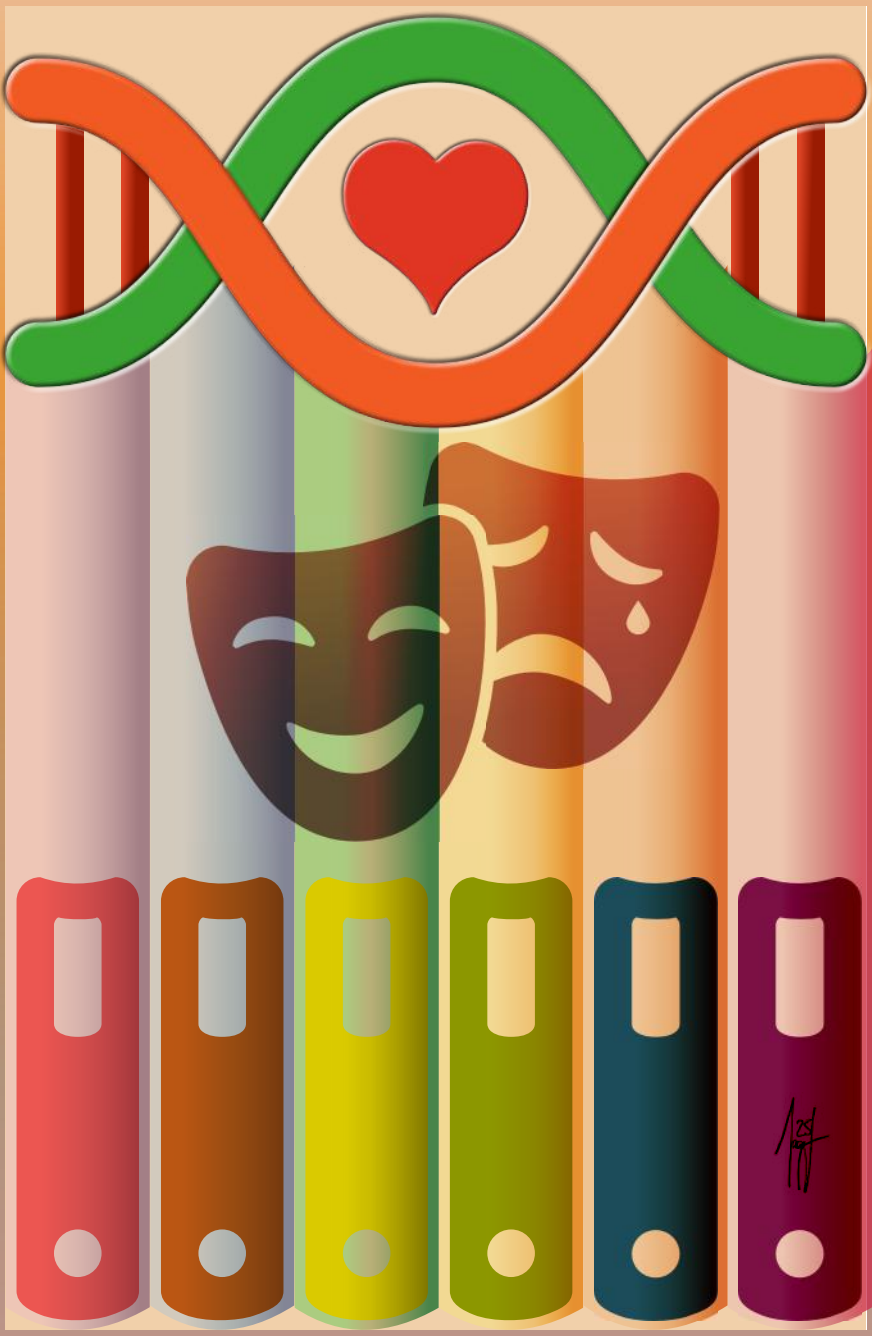
Each body a cosmos, each breath a reply.

♫♪

We are not what they framed—we are body and flame.

We move as we are. And we remain.

♫♪



M Memory / Margins / Melanin (Historical erasure, racial justice, diaspora power)

🎵

We are curves and corners, scars and stretch,

Souls in motion, beyond what they sketch.

We dance in our bodies, however they bend—

Not waiting for norms, not asking to blend.

Some of us walk, and some of us roll,

Some of us shimmer and all of us whole.

We are more than the lenses they try to apply—

Each body a cosmos, each breath a reply.

🎶

We are not what they framed—we are body and flame.

We move as we are. And we remain.

🎶



A – All of Us / Access (Universal inclusion, disability justice, non-dominant populations)

♫

This is for each one they tried to forget,

The doors they locked, the unpaid debt.

The ramp never built, the voice never heard,

The table not set, the truth never stirred.

We show up in wheelchairs, in silence, in light,

In genders unspoken, in battles for rights.

We build new blueprints where all can belong,

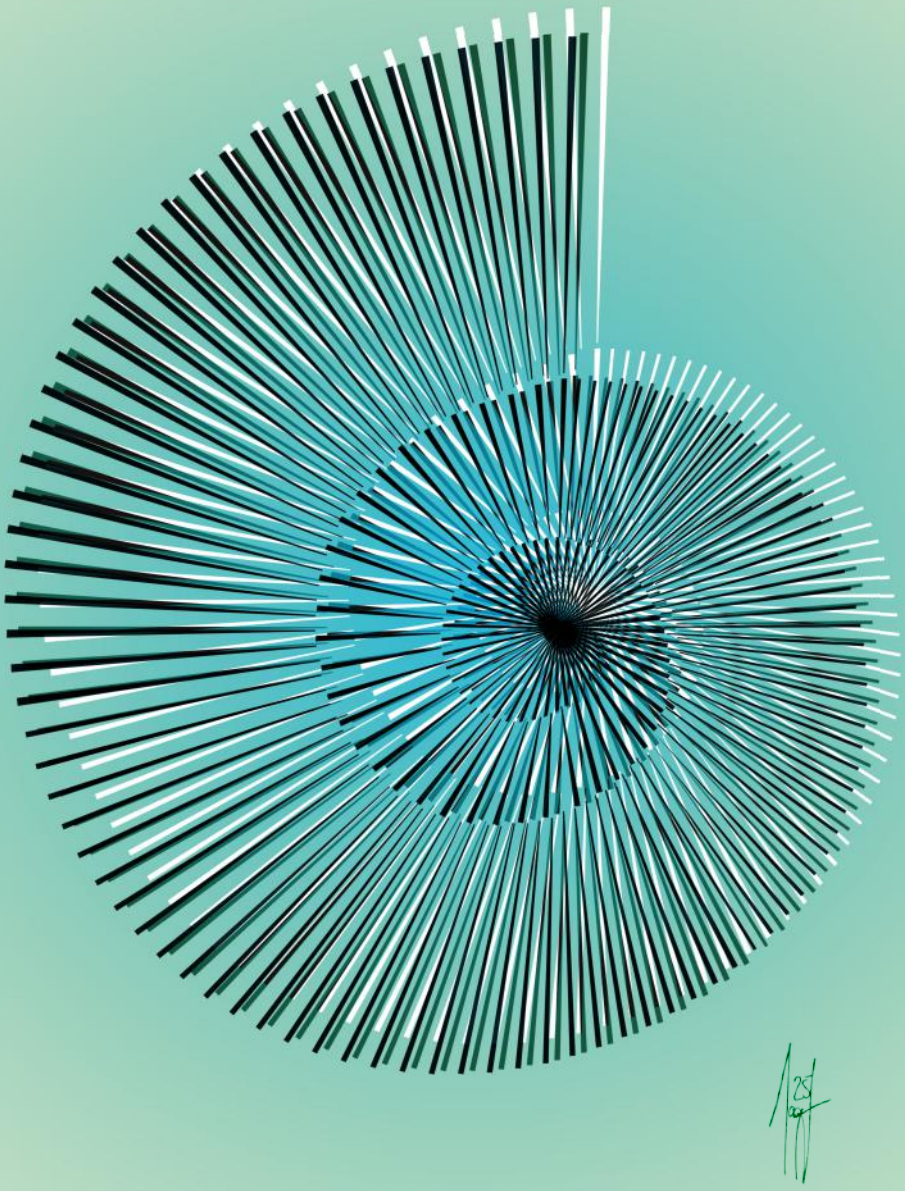
No whisper too quiet, no body too wrong.

♫♪

This world must be shaped for all who remain—

No more exceptions. We rise just the same.

♫♪



– Interbeing (We are linked: nature, human, spirit, breath—a wholeness beyond the self)

♫

We are not islands, not separate, not still—
We echo in forests, in rivers, in will.
The breath that I take, you breathe just the same,
No one stands alone, no life is to blame.

The roots of the trees know all of our names,
The moon pulls the tide and carries our shame.
From fungus to fin, from coral to sky,
We live as one body—we live or we die.

♪♪

This world must be shaped for all who remain—
No more exceptions. We rise just the same.

♪♪



N – Naming (Because to name is to honor. We name it all, and that's how we heal.)

♫

They told us to whisper, to not make a sound,
To keep every truth deep under the ground.
But silence is violence, and words are a flame—
We kindle the future by calling each name.

From daughter to dancer, from exile to friend,
Each label reclaimed becomes how we mend.
We speak what was silenced, we lift every voice—
To name is to live, to resist is a choice.

♪♪

With every word spoken, we shatter the chain—
We rise by our naming. And we remain.

♪♪



We rise for
the silenced,
the stolen,
the shamed,

For every forgotten,
erased,
and unnamed.

We rise not
alone—
we rise as a flame.

They tried to
erase us—

but still, we
remain.





We Rise to Remain — Shortened Version

🎵 **We rise** for the silenced, the shamed, and the scarred,
For women whose power they tried to discard.
We rise for the elders, the soil and the seed,
For histories buried and futures in need.

🎶 **We rise** for the silenced, the stolen, the shamed,
For every forgotten, erased, and unnamed.
We rise not alone—we rise as a flame.
They tried to erase us—
but still, we remain.

🎵 **We rise** for the exled, the faithful, the queer,
For names they erased and identities feared.
We rise for the margins, the masked, the unseen,
For fat liberation, for neurodivergent dreams.

🎶 **We rise** for the silenced, the stolen, the shamed,
For every forgotten, erased, and unnamed.
We rise not alone—we rise as a flame.
They tried to erase us—
but still, we remain.

🎵 **We rise** for the laborers, bent but not bowed,
For the backbone of nations, for voices unbowed.
We rise for the stories they silenced with shame,
And kindle the flame as we call every name.

🎶 **We rise** for the silenced, the stolen, the shamed,
For every forgotten, erased, and unnamed.
We rise not alone—we rise as a flame.
They tried to erase us—
but still, we remain.

🎵 **We rise** not in fragments—we rise as a tide,
With earth at our feet and stars as our guide.
They tried to erase us, deny and contain—
But still, we are many. Still, we remain.

🎶 **We rise** for the silenced, the stolen, the shamed,
For every forgotten, erased, and unnamed.
We rise not alone—we rise as a flame.
They tried to erase us—
but still, we remain.

Thank You

Thank you for Walking this path with me and having read through this poetry.

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