

Woman, Girl – Lift up!

For far too long your shoulders  
have bent forward from the weight of  
the despair of injustice, inequality,  
mistreatment, ignorance,  
devalue, degradation and disregard.

Straighten your posture,  
clean up your face.

Did you forget or have you never heard  
that a blessing was put upon you  
to cause the continuation of Mankind  
from generation after generation,  
from the beginning of human existence  
until today?

Do you even know your worth?

They – all those whom you reproduced - speak down to you  
so your eyes are so filled with tears  
that you can't see your way out,  
see your way through, see your way up,  
but Sister, Mother, Auntie, Cousin, Friend,

Hold your head up.

Don't bow to the whispers in the corner.

Your place is in the center of the room.

Don't respond to catcalls behind you,

because anyone knowing your value

will hold his conversation face-to-face.

Give advice to your daughters, your sisters,

your sistas, your coworkers and the lady next door.

Tell them to tell the girl around the block,

the woman in the checkout lane,

the young mom at the bus stop,

their teenage friends in school

about being a woman of substance

because they were born into a world

without any; and they are growing up

in a society that doesn't even know

what substance means...

Woman, girl lift up!

They will dress you like their blow up dolls

and condition you to think you like it,

with over-rouged cheeks and luscious lips  
and things implanted in places  
no foreign objects belong.  
They will dismiss your advice,  
overlook your intelligence  
consider you as refuse,  
someone not allowed, disavowed,  
over-proud, held down  
from joining the boys club –  
though you are always the topic of conversation.

Woman, girl lift up!

When they think they are running circles  
around you with their words,  
not knowing that your kind  
are the most educated in the world,  
though they do every dastardly thing  
in their power to keep you from it.

It doesn't take a college degree,  
your life history is your Ph.D.

Get it. Research it. Study it. Know it.

Make the words you speak informative  
and impactful.

Never waste your oxygen on uselessness –  
either people or thoughts.

They will call you out of your name,  
they will have you doing the same  
to one of your own.

Never give away your dignity.

We were born female. Be a lady by choice.

They will always go low, but lift up!

Live like you know God is watching.

Dress like you know your worth.

Speak like you're standing before kings.

Walk like you own the earth.