

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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