

CRUEDA Meeting February 14th 2017

Carlynn Newhouse is an African American poet, activist, actress, and performer. She writes about love, loss, community, race, the Black Lives Matter movement, mental health, and the life experiences that made her who she is today. She was the 2015 Youth Speaks Seattle Grand Slam Champion and competed in the Brave New Voices poetry festival in 2015 and 2016.

The Sky Is Falling

"I don't pay attention to the world ending. It has ended for me many times and began again in the morning." -Nayyirah Waheed

The world has ended so many times
and we believe it will end again.
This year, will be fire and storm, and burnings of holy things
The world is crashing, is burning, is spiraling out of control

The world is ending and I cannot stop it
These black female hands are only strong enough to write a poem
these hands cannot stop a bullet, so how can they stop the sky from falling?

The sky is falling.

You remember Chicken Little? You remember him?
You remember when he warned his whole town the sky was falling,
and they did not believe him?
Do you remember a few months ago
when we warned everyone this white man would do us in-
and they did not believe us?

The sky is falling
Can't you see it?
The darkness of the world hurdling towards us
The sky is falling,
Can't you hear it?
It sounds like twitter feeds and police sirens
Can't you hear it?
It sounds like handcuffs clinking and white men laughing
Can't you hear it?
Our ancestors screaming? Our children asking all the questions we cannot answer?

Can you hear it?
The sky is falling, the country is falling,
Which is to say this country has always been falling
We have seen the breaking before
We have seen blood splattered church walls and gun chambers,

But we know how to build beauty out of destruction
How to make home out of hollow wind

The sky is falling-
but we have seen this before.
Let the sky fall, let us see all the stars

We will not waver
This howling wind will not be stronger than our hope
The world is ending, the sky is falling-
Thank God
I am tired of this earth
I am ready to build a new one

The sky is falling, the world is ending,
But it will begin again
We will build a new world from the ash-
but let us not forget the fire
We will build mosaics out of the shards-
but let us not forget the breaking
Let us not forget the past
But let us not relive it either

This cycle shall not continue
The world has ended so many times
We know of breaking, of falling, of bending,
Yes, we have heard of the end
But what is the end of something if not the beginning of something better?

Let the sky fall
Let it give birth to something new, something bright and beautiful,
Let every bullet be sucked into space
Let the sky fall
Let the new one be beautiful

Praise all that is new and holy
Praise all that lifts us
Let the new world hold us better than all the ones before
Let the sky fall,
Let us prepare for the new beginning
Let the new world be so much better than this one,
Amen.

Emma Conklin is a visual artist, but also works with Youthspeaks Seattle doing writing and spoken word-related events. She is a senior at Seattle Academy, and will most likely attend the University of San Francisco next fall.

An Open Letter to the Past and the Future

Dear 2016,

I have tried to write this letter, so many times
Started anew, with each tragedy that ensued
But was always interrupted,
by the occurrence
of another.
It has been a complicated relationship,
and I do not know
how sincere I can be when I say
“I will miss you”.

But you have taught me so many things.

Dear 2016,

You have reminded me that
the justice system needs to be fixed.
Or wait, it already is, just
not in favor
of those who need it.

Dear 2016,

You have shown me how night club gatherings

can turn to night club nightmares.

Somebody call 911, because someone
is opening fire
on the dance floor.

Dear 2016,

You have seen the last moments of too many people,
Witnessed the theft of too many breaths,
You have lost, so many bodies.
Broken so many sanctuaries, so many spaces where people
had been able to exist in truth.

Where people

had been able to exist in safety.

Where people had been able

To exist.

But if these spaces could be created
they can certainly be mended.

So dear 2017,

I hope you bring change.

I will not ask for peace, or justice,
or even for love.

I am not this naïve.

It is clear to me now,
these are things which must be fought for,
earned, and created.

Instead, I ask simply for strength.

To carry our feet through those long marches.

Our wallets through the boycotts.

I ask for the strength so that streets will
bend to our will when we fill them.

A collective voice
catching in the wind,

Carrying throughout the city.

Dear my future,
I know you can hear us,
I am only asking
for you to listen.