

Shake the Dust by Anis Mojgani

This is for the fat girls. This is for the little brothers. This is for the schoolyard wimps. This is for the childhood bullies who tormented them. This is for the former prom queen. This is for the milk crate ball players. This is for the nighttime cereal eaters. This is for the retired elderly Wal-Mart storefront door greeters.

Shake the dust.

This is for the benches and the people sitting on them. This is for the bus drivers, driving a million broken hymns. This is for the men who have to hold down three jobs, simply to hold their children. This is for the night schoolers, and the midnight bike riders who are trying to fly.

Shake the dust.

For the two-year-olds who cannot be understood because they speak half English and half God. Shake the dust. For the girls with the brothers that are crazy, shake the dust.

For the boys with the beautiful sisters, the gym class wallflowers, the twelve-year-olds afraid of taking public showers, the kid who's late to class 'cause he forgot the combination to his lockers, for the girl who loves somebody else, shake the dust.

This is for the hard men, who want to love, but know it won't come. For the ones who are told to speak only when spoken to, and then are never spoken to, the ones who the amendments do not stand up for, the ones who are forgotten:

Speak every time you stand, so you do not forget yourselves. Do not let a second go by that does not remind you that your heart beats nine hundred times a day, and there are enough gallons of blood to make you an ocean.

This is for the police officers. This is for the meter maid. This is for the celibate pedophile who keeps on struggling. This is for the poetry teachers. This is for the people who go on vacations alone, and for the crappy artists and the actors that suck, shake the dust.

This is for the sweat that drips off of Mick Jagger's lips, for the shaking skirt on Tina Turner's shaking hips, for the heavens and the hells through which Tina has lived. This is for the tired and the dreamers, the family that'll never be like the Cleavers with the perfectly-made dinners and the sons like Wally and the Beaver. For the bigots, the sexists, and the killers, the big-house pint sentence cat becoming redeemers, and for the springtime, that always comes after the winters.

This is for you.

Make sure that, by the time the fisherman returns, you are gone. Make these blue streams worth it, because, just like the days I'm burning at both ends, and every time I write, every time I bike through the night, every time I open my eyes, I am cutting out a part of myself to give to you. So shake the dust, and take me with you when you do, for none of this has ever been for me.

All that was placed inside, that continues pushing like waves, pushes for you. So take the world by its clothespins and shake it out again and again, jump on top and take it for a spin, and when you hop off shake it out again, for this is yours.

Make my words worth it. Make this not just another poem that I write. Not just another poem like just another night that sits heavy above us all - walk into it. Breathe it in. Let it crash through the halls of your arms, like the millions of years and millions of poets that course like blood, pumping and pushing, making you live, making you live, shaking the dust, so when the world knocks at your door, turn the knob and open on up, and run into its big, big hands with open arms.