

## **The Unfortunate Logic of Dreams**

November 9, 2016, 6:00 a.m. – I almost didn't get out of bed this morning. My phone was buzzing and beeping. My radio alarms were blaring the sound of shock jockeys acting shocked. I did not turn them off. I did not hit the snooze button. I just laid there, my body weak and deflated. Facing the choice of getting up or going back to sleep.

My mind cast its vote in favor of sleep, with promises to return to a world where I can fly if I believe I can.

But my heart responded to the alarms by keeping time with their rhythm. It filled my veins with nutrients. It pushed blood into my muscles. It refused to allow me to pull my comforter back over my chest.

It wouldn't accept the idea of laying down when I should be standing up.

It made me open my mouth to breath in a new combination of gases. It made my lungs extract what they needed, then pushed the rest back into the atmosphere.

Perhaps the trees that are still standing can use what remains.

My left foot slowly found the floor. I could only hope it would support my weight as I shifted from the softness of my bed to the firmness of the ground. I had reason to believe it would. It has every other morning so far. Even on the mornings that came after the darkest nights.

I stood, my body still pleading, my mind still aching, but my heart still pounding. The time for sleeping was over. A new day had arrived.

A new kind of day. In a new world, so similar to the old one it is frightening.

\*\*\*

Last night many people in this country were awakened from the dream they tried so desperately to believe was real. It was a beautiful dream. A post-racist united states. A shattered glass ceiling. A world without struggle. Or need to struggle.

But those of us who haven't had a good nights sleep in far too long have been sounding the alarms. We've been widening the cracks of empire and congregating around the light that trickled through them. We've been working to de-segregate our cities and stop the spread of urban colonialism. We've been fighting the separation of our families and tearing down walls put up to stop our ability to move freely. We've been calling murder out for what it is and demanding our lives matter. We've been praying and holding the line to stop poison from being piped through our lands and legacies. We've been coming out of closets and into the streets. We've been forming unions and workers committees. We've been exposing violations and atrocities.

We've been organizing like our lives have depended on it. Because they do. And always have.

Our people have faced open racism and bigotry before, yet children have been born and lived to hear the tales.

Our movement has faced repression and backlash before, yet new generations of organizers have risen.

Our hearts have broken before, yet we got up from our beds and faced the day ahead of us.

Still, I can't lie. Things are going to get worse before they get better. The backlash to the first Black president of the United States has begun in earnest. We knew it would come. Perhaps we should have prepared for it. But we chose the dream instead. The policies of racism and misogyny have long been on the books. But the pages of those books were seldom read aloud in polite spaces. Now they are shouted with pride. A day of open and unapologetic white-supremacy and patriarchy has dawned. The morning has broken. The dream is gone.

It was a beautiful dream and our minds are telling us it can't be over. That is the unfortunate logic of dreams. One minute you're flying, the next, you're falling. Who was once kissing you, is now chasing you. When you open your mouth to smile, your teeth start falling out. In a dream, things are always ok in the end. "Stay in bed," our minds are pleading. "Maybe the beauty will return."

But our hearts know what must be done. We have to get up, though our hands and feet are sore from making phone calls and knocking doors. We must get up.

It is true, one dream is over and another is beginning. It's starting off as a nightmare because that is the unfortunate logic of dreams. Our hearts are broken, but they are still beating. The more of us that push through the fatigue of the struggle, the louder the beating will get. Blood will rush to our feet and hands and carry oxygen to our brains. Our hearts will remind us that our lives have always depended on our ability to organize.

And we will respond to the nightmare with a truly beautiful dream. We will respond to yesterday with tomorrow. We will respond to oppression as we always have, with resistance. We will organize. And one day, we will overcome.

No staying in bed this morning, compañeras. We've got work to do.