

WELCOME HOME

By Jen Simon

Good afternoon and evening, Beloveds. I am so glad to be back in this space with you. I am so glad to see you again! Welcome home! Whether you have been in DRUUMM space before, or this is your very first time - welcome home.

Beloveds, can I tell you the truth? The truth is, I don't say 'home' lightly. See - home is where you're free to be fully you. Home is where you sit at the table with your ancestors and elders, siblings and children, where your story is known and acknowledged and seen.

I don't know about you, but I've found that notion of spiritual home to be really challenging. I find it very hard to enter a place and be fully known. And here's why: When I enter a room, I bring generations with me. I bring my mother, a white woman whose people were farmers in New England and upstate New York for centuries, and whose name came over on the Mayflower.

People see the Scots and the Dutch on both sides, in my brown hair, light skin, blue eyes. But in marking my light skin, they've been trained not to see my nose, the broadness of my shoulders, the fullness of my hips as the gift of my Ghanaian and Nigerian foremothers.

The truth is, they don't know that my braids - corn rows or, if you're Jamaican, cane rows - are an expression of my connection to the strength and resiliency of my enslaved Jamaican ancestors, or later the lumber workers of British Honduras, or my Grammy who came over from Costa Rica to New York when she was still a girl of 17 and set up a seamstress shop in Harlem.

See, when I walk into a room, often half of my ancestors walk in with me, unseen. My particular journey frequently involves asserting - sometimes even announcing my Blackness. This is my reality as a light-skinned, Black biracial person. *Continued on Page 7*

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Jen Simon is a candidate for ministerial fellowship. This past Spring, she completed her internship with First Unitarian Society of Denver and graduated with a Master of Divinity degree from the Iliff School of Theology. When she isn't thinking about UU theologies of liberation, she enjoys singing and attempting to keep up with her son Gabe, who will enter middle school in the fall.

PROTEST IS THE PEOPLE'S POWER

Protest is the Peoples
Prayer and Rioting is an Act of
Faith

Black Lives Matter is a chant
to Yemaya begging for
change

We have Sacrificed Land,
Peoples, Languages, Cultures,
and Scream

*hey hey, ho horacism has got to
go*

Collectively chanting
to Mourn, cry, grieve together

because if Black Girl Magic
and Black Boy Joy was the
lead hashtags Saying Their
Names would be a
celebratory reminder

Marching down the streets is
the Love Language of the
Oppressed

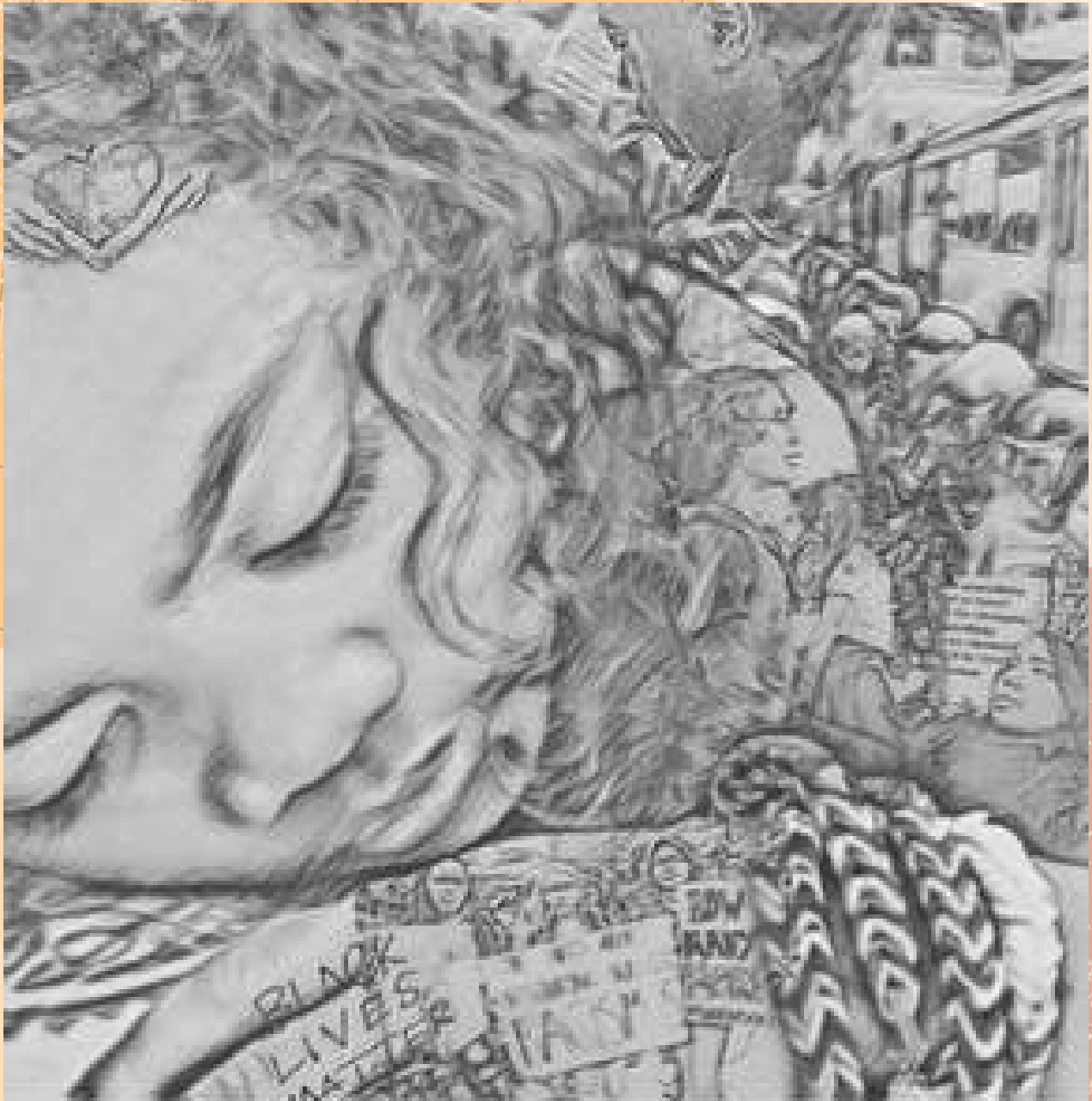
Mujeres de la
Diaspora Estamos aqui,
¡Presente!

Orgullosamente Libre Aché.
Amen. Aho. Blessed Be.



*Ayari is a Queer Xicana Boricua activist
of Afro-Indigenous descendant who
writes with and is a member of, the La
Red de Mujeres Afrolatinoamericanas,
Afrocaribeñas y de la Diáspora
(RMAAD). Ayari's work has been
published in Sojourners Magazine and
Black Activism Production Group.*

EVEN THOUGH WE ARE TIRED



F. Michelle Santos is an artist and educator in the DC/Baltimore area. She led DRUUMM's children's programs at our annual conference at Murray Grove in the 2000s. Michelle has a passion for co-created public murals.

EVEN THOUGH WE ARE TIRED

**BY
MICHELLE SANTOS**

Even though we are tired. We must stay woke.

As my baby girl sleeps, I stay woke.

As I cradle her in my arms and stroke her head because nightmares creep into her peace, I stay woke.

As we are lulled into fraudulent slumber inundated by senselessness, ridiculousness, viciousness, I stay woke.

As steel walls enclose, suffocating and stifling in this malicious trap of intent, bound by ties of lies, manipulation, deceit, and greed, I stay woke.

As I can't stop pacing, heart racing, fury facing denial, fear, and hate, I stay woke.

As disgust, rage, sadness, confusion, hopelessness, detachment, loss, pain and exhaustion grows rather than lessens, I stay woke.

As I cry for the losses the mothers of millions have endured over time, I stay woke.

As I sob in silence for all of humanity, I stay woke. As the sick and tired are sick and tired of being sick and tired, I stay woke.

Even as I awake I stay woke.

I stay woke so my baby can sleep for now with peace.

I stay woke to protect her, to guide her, to teach her, to help her, to prepare her as one day she needs to stay woke as my grown babies have done. Because it is imperative.

I stay woke because so many I hold close in my heart could be beaten, battered, and killed, in body and/or spirit. In an instant. Anywhere. Anytime. Any way, just because the color of their skin.

I stay woke because I can't sleep. If I do, the nightmares will surely come true.

I stay woke because I choose not to live in fear. I choose to fight.

I stay woke because we need to stay vigilant.

I stay woke because we cannot afford not to if there is to be real change in the world.

I stay woke because we are far from a world in which all of our children are treated with the respect, the dignity, the equity, the love and the humanity they deserve.

I stay woke because they deserve to be fought for and loved.

I stay woke because annihilation and extinction is where we are all headed if we don't understand our interconnectedness. Even though we are tired. We must stay woke.

THOUGHTS DURING A PANDEMIC

by Theresa Hardy

I,
You,
We,
are tired, Not the kind of tired that eight
hours of sleep will fix.
Bone tired, the kind of tired that makes
leaving the couch for a glass of water seem
impossible.
I,
You,
We,
are bone tired,
Weary down to our souls tired.
Tired of staying home or being forced to
go out to provide for your family, without
adequate protection-sacrificing yourself-
for the economic well being of the ultra
wealthy.
Tired of making the moral choice to keep
providing essential work- work you are
called to that was broken way before
Covid, healthcare/education/social
services- only to decontaminate each night
before allowing seven-year old arms to
wrap around your middle with welcome.

Tired of the fear that one four foot
distant conversation will mean the
demise of you or someone you love.

I,
You,
We,
Are tired of being anxious
Hyper vigilant
Angry
Terrified,
Not knowing who to trust,
Not knowing how much longer we can
hang on,
Not touching another human being for
2,4,6.....weeks.
Tired of not knowing when the pre-
covid normal, that was already awful
for so many, will be back
or
fearful that it will return.
I,
You,
We,
Are tired of being apart for birthdays,
graduations, memorial services and
staying apart to lessen the latter.



THOUGHTS DURING A PANDEMIC CONTINUATION

Tired of explaining to tear streaked families that dinning in comes before visiting the dying. That face time will have to do, because in person is too risky-
Tired that those most removed from the reality of death and emotional destruction have the most power and chose denial over leadership.

Tired that we're all in this together rings hollow, when some have the privilege or naïveté to work from home or risk reopening regardless of the numbers.

I,
You,
We,
Are navigating territory that surpasses our abilities emotionally/physically/mentally and yet we are waking up,
caring for ourselves and our loves,
Tending to our sick, burying our dead alone,
Masking our selves to save lives,
Learning new ways to survive and praying for the day when we once again may thrive.



Rev. Theresa Hardy

works as a Chaplain with VITAS Innovative Hospice Care in Fairfield, providing spiritual care to patients and families in home and facility settings. She is a member of the UU Church of Berkeley, and active in the Coming of Age and Our Whole Lives youth programs



WELCOME HOME CONTINUED

In her work, *Womanist Ethics and the Cultural Production of Evil*, the Rev. Dr. Emilie Townes identifies what she calls the Fantastic Hegemonic Imagination - the imagination of the dominant, white culture that, she says, “‘plays’ with history to spawn caricatures and stereotypes” that allow the dominant culture to justify the continuing oppression of Black people. In the book, Dr. Townes names five of these stereotypes of Black women - and one of these is the Tragic Mulatta.

She says the mulatta - the mixed-race Black woman, like me - is tragic in the white imagination because, while she may achieve a station above her darker-skinned siblings, she can never quite be white. Light-skinned with some advantages, she still carries either the worst characteristics of Blackness (if the white observer is overtly racist), or she must deal with the realities of slavery (if the white observer happens to be an abolitionist). Either way, the goal of whiteness is hopelessly out of her reach, and to the arrogant gaze of whiteness, where whiteness is all that matters, this is a tragedy.

And so the Tragic Mulatta, Townes says, is, in the fantastic hegemonic imagination, marked with the curse of ‘almost-ness.’ She can almost be white, but not quite. She’s always in a state of trying to prove herself - to bridge that last, small gap between herself and acceptability.

The truth is, friends, in the eyes of some of our fellow white UUs, we are all marked by “almost-ness,” aren’t we? We can sing the same songs. We can use the same words. We can occupy the same seats. But we’re never quite the right kind of UUs, are we? And maybe you’ve felt, especially in recent times, like you don’t have a home, either. Maybe you’ve felt like you can’t bring ALL OF YOU to the sanctuary. Or to GA. Let me tell you, if you feel this way, that’s not a bug in the system; it’s a feature.

Because just as systems of white supremacy see my light skin and immediately render my Black identity invisible, they see an Asian or an indigenous or a Black or a Latinx person and make an assumption about that person’s fitness to participate in “their” religion. Black Jesus? Out. Curanderismo? Not so much. Buddhism? Only if it’s sufficiently whitened. Islam? Only the flowery bits. Black humanism? What’s that?

So...what do we do with that? How do we live into our identities as UUs in the face of a denominational white supremacy that can either see our cultures and our skin tone, or our Unitarian Universalism, but not both at the same time?

I believe one of our answers to this question was given to us by Rev. Joseph Santos-Lyons in response to a remark by Rev. Theresa Ines Soto during the Berry Street essay that named “confusion as a strategy” of the dominant culture, where confusion is used to delay the inevitable work that has to be done. Rev. Joseph said that this kind of confusion is based in either/or thinking.

WELCOME HOME CONTINUED

I just completed my ministerial internship with First Unitarian Society of Denver. And one of the biggest challenges was to figure out first, how to introduce my hybrid racial identity, then where, when, and how to speak of it.

What I learned was, sometimes I need to enter a room for the first time and just say, "I'm Black, y'all!"

Awkwaaaardddd... Especially awkward in white spaces, where the idea of a Black person who looks like me has often never even occurred.

But see, it's not awkward because of who -I- am. It's awkward because of what white supremacy wants me to be. Let me repeat that for you: It's awkward because of what white supremacy wants me to be. I with my light skin and blue eyes am supposed to want to be white. And it's awkward because the racist, colonialist system that seeks to separate people out into binaries - acceptable and not, powerful and not, Black and white - says that my space - liminal space, hybrid space - shouldn't exist. I shouldn't exist. I shouldn't exist. And yet, I do. I am squarely in that non-binary space that defies spiritual dissolution.

Friends, today I'm gonna tell you the truth - the real truth. If you are new to GA, you will in all likelihood experience white supremacy culture rearing its ugly head.

But this year, we can see it crumbling, y'all! The story that took years to create, it's coming down in Minneapolis and Denver, in Seattle and Atlanta. Even in Bristol, England, it's being brought down in the form of a statue of a slaver - a monument to pure evil - and thrown down into the sea.

But the truth is, with the "established order" being challenged, with the inability of the police to enforce systems of oppression without accountability, white supremacy and insecurity is pushing back. It is in the nature of oppression to perpetuate itself, by any means necessary.

And so, during this general assembly, white folks will make assumptions about who you are, what you believe, and where you belong. When that happens, OCCUPY YOUR SPACE. Root yourself in that place that has no place in the dominant narrative. Be firm in it: that's YOUR space, and beloveds, that is holy ground. And then come back to this space, that is ours, and remind yourself:

The truth is, that narrative isn't ours to control. It's not ours, and it's never been ours. Changing that narrative is not our job. We couldn't do it if we wanted to - that's white people's work. But creating and developing and boldly proclaiming our narrative is our work. When confronted with a binary-based confusion about who you are, be loud! Mirror the confusion back so its perpetrators need to work through it. It's theirs to deal with.

WELCOME HOME CONTINUED

We need to take this moment to create “countermemories.” Dr. Townes refers to countermemory as “that which seeks to disrupt ignorance and invisibility... to force a reconsideration of flawed histories.” (Townes, 21) And there are a few flawed histories in our denomination, right?

Our task is to loudly proclaim the stories of our ancestors in this Unitarian Universalist faith. Our work is to bring the theologies and the histories of our ancestors to the table, unabashedly. As Rev. Kimberly Quinn Johnson remarked, she is witnessing people in Unitarian Universalist spaces who are insisting that they will bring their full identity into every space they're in. Our work is to insist on our wholeness.

Because, Beloveds, we are not “almost.” We are not “not quite.” We are both-and. We are both people of color and Unitarian Universalists. We are both proud communers with the ancestors, and prophetic, progressive voices for our children. We are both reason-based AND spirit-moved, and heart centered, and innovative and...

When we bring our ancestors to the table, we are bringing spirituality that is alive. When we bring our children to the table, we bring a future to this faith that will give it the resilience and strength, the liberation and true freedom it needs to forge a new and lifegiving path.

Beloveds, we are enough. We are MORE than enough.

The truth is, in this time, as we watch our country begin to reckon with the wrongs it has perpetrated on its Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, and other people of color, what we have to offer is what we have always found: A way out of no way.

This is our way out of no way in this country - that we are building new systems from the ashes - from the literal ashes - of a morally bankrupt system. We are the ones who know how to build again from the ashes of Tulsa, the concentration camps of California, from immigration raids that decimate communities and genocide that murders our elders for land and erases our culture.

We are the ones who have faced down the evils of slavery, of impressed servitude, of the devaluing of our work and our bodies, of policing, of invasion and genocide. And we are the ones who have come out with our dignity and our spirits whole.

The truth is, this faith needs us. In undoing its sin of white supremacy, a sin it has perpetrated since its beginning, in dismantling the systems of racism that have been a blight on the souls of white people and an attack on the integrity of its people of color, this faith needs the resiliency, the spiritual steadfastness, the gods of war and destruction and peace and liberation that came with us voluntarily, when we didn't have the option.

Here we are in this virtual space together today, building a religious faith out of a denomination that until recently - and sometimes, STILL, EVEN NOW - has refused to listen to our voices and our experiences.

WELCOME HOME CONTINUED

And yet, through the work of DRUUMM and of BLUU, we are creating vibrant, heartfelt, ancestor-led, 7-generations-forward-looking Unitarian Universalist theology and community and safe harbor and rich spiritual connection that is leading this faith as it stumbles its way out of its legacy of silencing Black and brown and trans and disabled voices.

We bring the knowledge of the true beauty of diversity, of how to be together. We bring the ability, forged of necessity, to be “committed to survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female.” (I’ll add, “and non-binary” - thank you, Alice Walker.) We know how to go on, because there's no option but through.

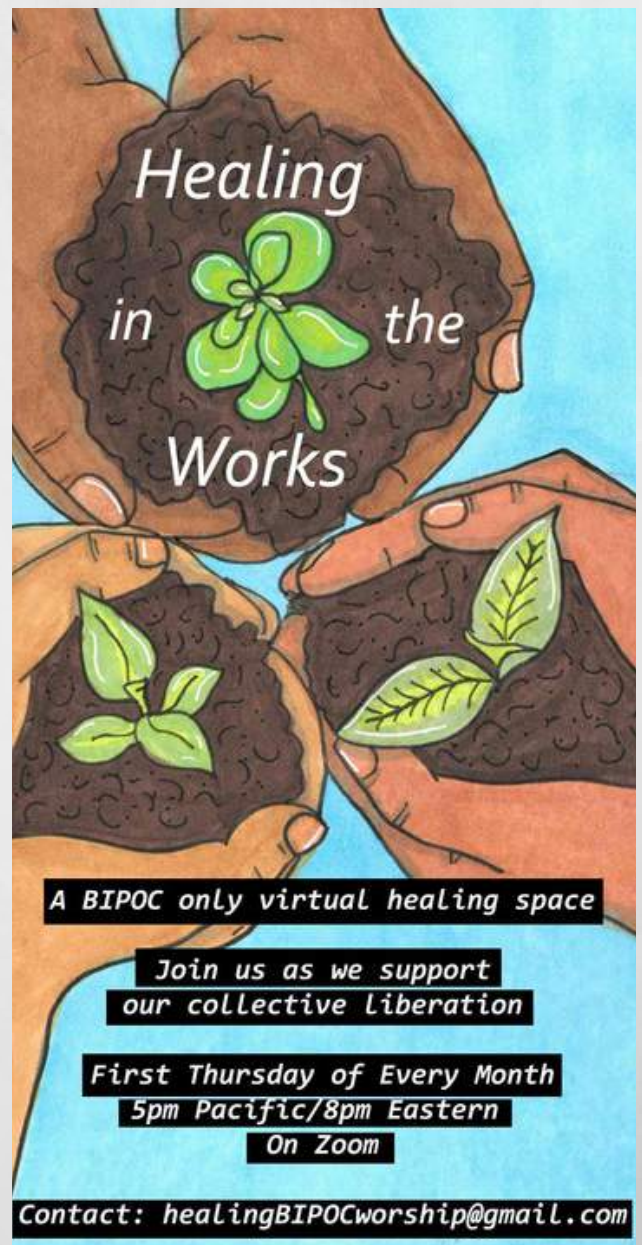
Some of us bring to this, our first supper, resilience. Some bring joy. Some bring peace. Some bring power. Some bring holy anger. Some - I’m looking at our youth - bring energy and a deep, deep understanding of the times we are living in.

We bring the Liberation. We bring the freedom. We bring the knowledge that my truth doesn't take away from your truth; it enriches it. Your experience doesn't threaten the fullness and reality of my experience; it informs and fills it out - fullfills it. We bring the sense not, as Rev. Joseph said, of decentering others, but of sharing the center.

What an amazing time to be a Unitarian Universalist of color. This is -our- time, y'all. We already know how to do the work of liberation.

Our job is not to do that work for our white siblings. Our job is, as we can, to live our lives and our truths boldly and unmistakably as the embodiment of our ancestors, as physical witnesses to those who have gone before - to live the spiritual liberation they taught us, and to claim as our own the freedom they could never achieve in this country or in this faith. To claim our space.

**And so welcome to your space, beloveds.
Welcome home.**



LET US PRAY

Spirit of Life and Love, Goddesses and gods of our many traditions, Loving ancestors, Deep and Manifold Mysteries of the Universe,

We come to you in gratitude for this, our community over time and space.

We call upon you today, as we consecrate this sacred virtual space, our spiritual home and sanctuary, to bless us now as we embark on the joy of communion together.

Strengthen and fortify us this week as we gather to do the work, the true work, of Unitarian Universalism.

Gods of healing, minister to our wounded bodies and spirits. Warrior gods and goddesses of creation, help us to find courage to tell our stories. Goddesses of Earth, give us the strength to take root in our rightful space. Gods of strategy and knowledge, bless us with wisdom to discern the next right thing.

Givers of Love and light, bind us together that we might feel one another's presence in this space, now and forever more.

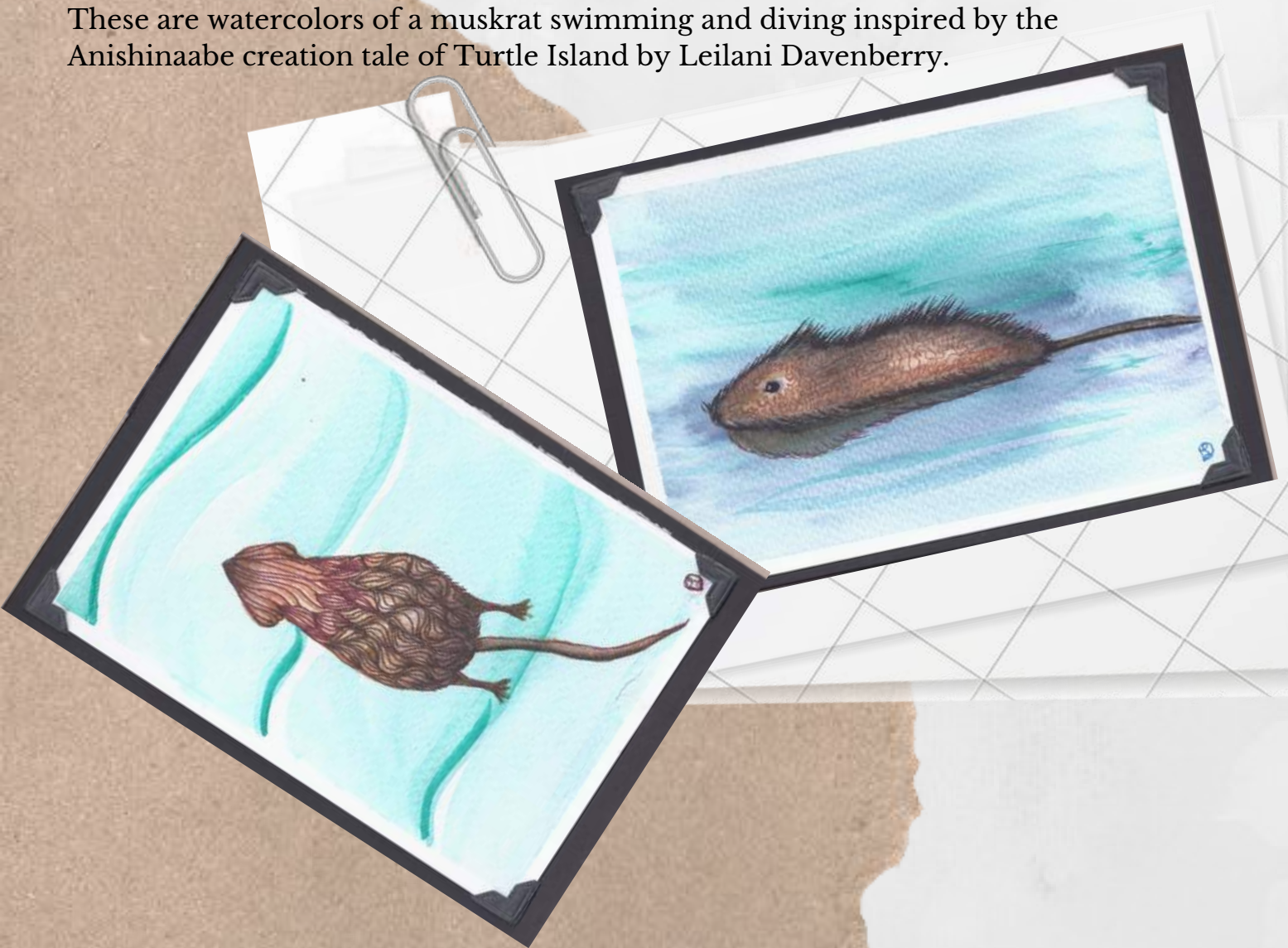
This we implore you, as we offer our gratitude.

Amen, and Ase.

Go in peace and power, beloveds.

A MUSKRAT SWIMMING

These are watercolors of a muskrat swimming and diving inspired by the Anishinaabe creation tale of Turtle Island by Leilani Davenberry.



I'm Leilani Davenberry, a transracially adopted, mixed race queer cisfemme, and a member of Westside UU located on the occupied lands of the Duwamish People. I grew up and have lived in the greater Seattle all my life, almost 50 years. I have been making art as long as I remember but have never taken an art class. Creation and creativity are part of the Divine spark. I often center and meditate through using pens, paints, yarn and fabric. You can follow me on Instagram at @leilaniidavenberry

DRUUMM STEERING COMMITTEE 2020-2021

The DRUUMM Steering Committee is made up of members elected to three year terms at our annual meeting.

For more information you can reach them at info@druumm.org.

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HAPPY WRATH



Looking for those interested in planning and participating in the following areas: Worship Team; Workshops; Entertainment; Social hour; Listening Circles; Spiritual Divination work; [Community/faith-rooted] Organizing workshop; Identify break out spaces. Interested? Please send an email to: druummacmc@gmail.com



2020 FALL GATHERING in OCTOBER

NOTATIONS

- Over 150 registered and participated in DRUUMM General Assembly virtual programs. GA 2021 is scheduled to be in Milwaukee, Wisconsin-however, due to the pandemic, this is still uncertain.
- The Steering Committee is on leave for the month of July and will be reconnecting with the community in August.
- DRUUMM hosted over a dozen caucuses throughout virtual GA, with as many as 33 participants. Gratitude to Cassie Montenegro for stepping up to organize.
- Beloved Conversations is launching a new Virtual program in October with new opportunities for BIPOC UU to participate in one of the primary race relations small group ministries in the UUA.
- DRUUMM is organizing seven regional super caucuses starting in September 2020 that will be held virtually via zoom. Look for save the date and registration information in our August edition.
- For persons interested in starting up a BIPOC UU Group, DRUUMM is hosting a monthly Zoom group on the Third Tuesdays 8:00 PM ET for networking and support. Contact jsantoslyons@uuma.org for more information.

COLOR/FULL: A DRUUMM GLOBAL MAJORITIES PROJECT



**DIANNE DANIELS
NORWICH, CONNECTICUT**

GOAL

I want to bring back some information for people in my congregation who've indicated an interest in something. I'm a second year Starr King Seminarian, to advance my education about church management and my ministry – and how it fits together. I am the face of my church, and I want to take it seriously. I'm doing what I can for my church.

GIFT

My passion for the faith, because I know in my heart of hearts – there is no other place for me. Universalism is where I'm meant to be, and it's where I planted my flag. I know this is going to sound like egotism, it's my verbal expression. If you can't get your message out, you'll have a big problem seeing what you have in common. You have to have a vision, and you have to be able to connect with people. I'm blessed to have this skill, and I'm happy to use it in my faith.

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DIVERSE &
REVOLUTIONARY
UU MULTICULTURAL
MINISTRIES