

How We Nourish

A Poem by Des Jackson

At CACHI's 2022 convening, poet Des Jackson was invited to attend, listen to the vision and accomplishments of the ACHs, and write a poem based on their impressions. The resulting poem was then read aloud to attendees.



Des Jackson is a Black Mexican American Queer Poet and Scholar.

They have been writing from a young age, always in love with the way words fashioned worlds of escape. In middle school, they discovered the power of poetry and spoken word, and since have used the landscape to explore themselves and be liberated from the confines of the world we know and live in. Des is interested in exploring the ways poetry and prose become spaces for joy, healing, acceptance, and liberation, which to des is embodied in community, radical love, and the legacies we create to live and breathe beyond us.

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Audre Lorde said,

“Your power is relative, but it is real. And if you do not learn to use it, it will be used, against you, and me, and our children.”

Relative-

Meaning interrelated, in proximity, intertwined
Mutually responsible to share our power and minds.

As mushrooms in their mycelium networks
Build legacies of interdependence,
They survive and thrive through intergenerational knowing
Of how to root and nourish.

No one spore ever grows alone;
Its life is in the others, known and unknown.

And these mushrooms, forests,
Know no silo, no lonely,

They only know bridges and strength,
They know that through shared soil,
Their roots reach new lengths.

The growth is slow, eternal, never ends;
We grow at the speed of trust.

You must be patient while you water,
And pay attention to the trends.

The seasons shall come, the seasons shall go,
But how can we flourish in renewed light,
If there's rot in the roots and everyone isn't alright?

We embody the past in present,
Learning by its wisdom and seeing through brand new eyes;

In order to arrive at the future, we must believe it lives with us now, as a guide.

We are skilled architects

Building bridges and closing gaps;

If we can do this, why wouldn't we do that?

Imagine an endless table,

Covered in an abundance of fruits.

You've heard of too many cooks in the kitchen, but we need every
hand and every finger we can get for stitching this net-work,

For this blanket that fits every shoulder, every back.

And thus, the work continues,

Even after we are gone. We re-shape, evolve,

Trans-form- which doesn't mean change.

Trans also means beyond; so,

Who are we when we belong,

When we can feel our roots intertwined?

When we recognize that we reach the sun

Because of our strength combined?

We move beyond survival, then,

To truly thrive.