Our revolution

Erica Violet Lee

We’re half the world
but carry the rest of it on our backs

We both live in occupied territories
But what can I know about you
Half a world away from me.

You and me, we know violence:
The pain of our mothers,
The memories of this land.

We share a history of being moved,
removed,
moved again.
Taken from our homes
and wondering if we’ll ever go back.

We’re shared sleepless nights telling,
retelling,
telling again
the stories they tried to take from us;
trying to remember the ones they did.

You and me, they see us as passive and weak,
disposable and unintelligent,
pawns and prizes in the politics of men.

As if those boys simply sprung out of the ground.
You and me
we’re the ones they run over on their way to the revolution,
but we’re the ones who hold it down at home,
Hebron via 20th Street.
Because we know that even with guns going off in the background,
children still must be fed.

So this is for Amal:
the 17-year-old shot by an IDF soldier,
while reading a book on her porch
and this is for Einav:
the girlfriend that soldier went home and killed
two years later

– Tell me again about your revolution

This is for Anna Mae:
A Mi’kmaq activist executed point blank on Pine Ridge,
her body left in the snow to freeze,
the voice that had grown a little too strong.

– Tell me again about your revolution

This is for the women in refugee camps:
the 53%
forced to endure labor and give birth in the dirt

– Tell me again about your revolution

This is for women who never left their houses alone
until the day they were carried out

– Tell me again about your revolution

This is for the women who are raped,
told that speaking out will dishonor their community,
and abortion is a crime
so it’s best to suffer in silence.

– Tell me again about your damn revolution
You and me
We’re the ones who lead the charge in the streets:
Intifada and Idle No More,
And we won’t fight only to return home as servants.

So this is for the Arab women who fund girls schooling,
so this is for Shannen,
and for all women who have the courage to learn

– You and me
We’re the nation

And this is for the mothers and daughters
leading movements from Gaza to the grasslands

– You and me
We’re the resistance

And this is for the women
who are told not to speak
not to write or read
not to dream or feel
but do it anyway

– You and me
We’re the revolution

Erica Violet Lee is a Nēhiyaw writer and community organizer from inner-city Saskatoon. She writes about Indigenous Feminist futures on her website, moontimewarrior.com