

## Stove Works – A Score for Unlearning

by Jessica Lynne

You begin by reading a line from a poem:

*I must become a menace to my enemies*

Repeat this aloud, once, twice, three times. Inhale deeply. Then, exhale.

This is a poem for our time:

*I will no longer lightly walk behind  
A one of you who fear me:  
Be afraid.*

Poems will not save us, but they do give us roadmaps. They point us toward an *elsewhere*. Take June Jordan's words and study them. You have an elsewhere awaiting.

Now is the time to lean into the collective, the group, the network, the neighborhood. Now is the time to remind yourself of the knowledge that you carry. The one that remains covert or illegible to a body politic that wishes you death/harm/destruction.

This is a knowledge that reminds you to:

*navigate by your mother's voice, renew the song she is singing.*

And so, I invite you to sing.

Take this moment to find your breath again and locate the/your song. When you have found it, release the melody aloud. This could also be a hum.

This is my song:

*We were never perfect.*

*Yet, the journey we make together is perfect on this earth who was  
once a star and made the same mistakes as humans.*

Take Joy Harjo's words and commit them to memory. You have an elsewhere awaiting.

Unlearning is a refusal, but it is also a song that does not belong to the formal institutions and apparatuses of assimilation or comportment. To unlearn is to undo, and also, it is how we find our way back to the first note, the first hum.

Stand where you are and close your eyes. Relax your shoulders. Take one, two, three deep breaths.

Here is where you will take the first steps toward that new place, that site that where fear is relinquished for a new fortitude.

Here is where you will release to make room for all the poems that are maps of undoing and unlearning that will lead you to the new place of possibility where the song or the hum or even the quiet looks like freedom.