I Am The Bridge: A Poem By All of Us

AFFINITY GROUPS

EU = European AS = Asian FBA = Foundational Black Americans AF = African JE = Jewish NA = Native American LA = Latino All = Everyone on stage

FBA + AF - Our History did not begin in chains

I am African rhythms thumping in a breakdance battle in Brooklyn

We’re Foundational Black Americans: Born in the basement of the American dream

A lynch rope for an umbilical chord,

FBA + AF - Attached to a motherland we’ve long forgotten

FBA + JE - The trauma of my ancestors is imbedded in my DNA.

FBA - So, we sang. Our story, wild as a swing dance to Louisiana Jazz.

Our Ancestors spirits carry us and our bones are made of stardust

Surviving the whips, chains, and segregation

Forced to build families and this nation without Reparations!

The sweat of our brows paved the ground of the Red, White and Blue.

A star noose that choked the life out of my ancestors

ALL - And, still we rise!

the Blood and Bones I carry are rich and yet they are seen as opposite

I am the People who have been feared, hated, misunderstood, and revered

I am the unstoppable, indestructible human expression of Love and Resilience

FBA + AF - I am unapologetically Black in all shades and rhythms

ALL - I am the bridge between yesterday’s sorrows

FBA - And a child's hope for tomorrow.
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AF – We are the immigrants from the home of all humanity!
Once, a continent with no barriers and borders
Is still a cradle of hope for all!
A land, so often spoken of, but seldom actually listened to!

AF + FBA - We are Africa!

AF - Six letters that speak to the diversity of its many nations
How can you minimize such grandeur to simplistic words, depictions, otherings?

North, South, Central, East, West.
The beauty of the high peaks of Mount Kilimanjaro.
To the rolling hills in Cape Town
The waters of the Niger
And the vast of the Sahara Desert

This poem is yesterday & tomorrow celebrating the past, present and future - our ancestors –
This poem is for the weak and strong. It will tell of history

ALL - I am the bridge

AF - To a world where the weak coexist with the strong
AF+ LA - Until we find a world where we all can belong.

LA – And speaking of belonging, us Latinos know about how borders can divide
Many have tried to put us down by saying we are unworthy of being here, but what would this country be without us?

ALL - A mother earth with an empty womb

LA + NA - They want us in the shadows, forgotten in history’s tomb.
But, I am that eagle crossing the borderless sky, I am that mestizo
I am not from here or there,
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No soy de aqui ni soy de aya

“I’d rather die on my feet, than live on my knees”

LA + FBA My dream is for unity, justice, and peace,

ALL - Amongst all nations, cultures, and creeds,

JE – My Jewish faith is about creating a world where we can all breathe in peace

Always with an eye, heart and mind on God’s work, the Torah – JE + FBA + LA -

And, the other eye on persecution.

JE - Wary, careful, always looking over our shoulders

“Are we safe here, and for how long?”

Fitting in American society, but then also not.

Assimilating only as far as society will allow

In the words of the ethics of our fathers, “If I am not for myself, who will be for me?

But, if I am only for myself, who am I?

ALL - And If not now, when?”

EU - We are European America

We walk in the room white with a lower-case w and a knapsack filled with privilege

By our bootstraps we capitalized

We colonized, consumed and exploited people and Earth

We called it “Freedom”

ALL - This is the barrier we will break

EU - The bridge we will build is made of recognition and restoration

Recognition of real justice and universal humanity

Restoration of a shared vision for a common destiny
The bridge has planks of empathy and action

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**EU + FBA** - Empathy that binds us to each other’s lives and stories
**EU** - Action that amplifies the quietest of voices and creates new histories

Understanding where we are so we can see what’s ahead

**ALL** - Dismantling the systems that oppress and cause dread.

**AS** – Because we are here to live courageously, and creatively

We are Asian-Americans.

Our hair is as black as ink, with eyes like coal, and everything looks light around us

We are small in stature, with hearts the size of giants

Breaking stereotypes of the “Model Minority”

**ALL** - While building a future for our families.

**AS** - Discipline, hard work, and respect are hallmarks in the Asian communities

Virtues we share with the best of Humanity.

“Okage Sama De”

**ALL** – What I am today, is because of you:

**NA** – And, what we are today is on indigenous land

The Ute, Cheyenne, and Arapahoe still sing on the wind

Can you hear them? Among the roar of the traffic.

There’s a sound that captivates our ears.

Under the grass, beneath the soil. You have to get close.

**NA + LA + AF** - They’re Drums. Low and forceful.

Like Mother’s heartbeat. Steady, persistent.

She calls to her children…
ALL - “Remember who you are.
NA - Your umbilical cord is your connection to the universe,

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the sun, the stars, the water, the land your people have walked since time immemorial.”

AF – We are humanity
AS - Brothers and Sister separated by water and distance
EU - Here we have found each other.
JE - Our fear set aside for friendship
FBA - Please remember we’re family.
LA - Today is a new day to stand together.
AF + FB - Foot to foot, Shoulder to Shoulder
AS + EU In beautiful colors and shades.
FBA - We are the indestructible woven thread.

ALL – We are the bridge to the world…of tomorrow!!