

## Out of Darkness

In the beginning was the Word.  
And the word was Make.  
We were made.  
Forged through the fire of our experience.  
We did not evolve —  
We always walked upright.  
We clawed our way out of darkness  
to dance through prejudice,  
to raise our voice in song,  
to write our truth, tell our story.  
We were elevated out of darkness  
to invent a myriad of things  
to excel at whatever we put our hands to  
to create art.  
We were hoisted out of darkness  
to rise, like oil, to the top of the watery cover-up.  
In the beginning were words:  
"Say that"  
"Speak"  
"Well..."  
We each had a testimony.  
A story to tell.  
We lifted our voices and words spilled out.  
We had no community.  
"Say that"  
We did not belong.  
"Speak."  
But there were folks

outside of the establishment  
who stood in the gap  
"Well ..."

And now we must bridge the gap  
Be a bridge.

New arrivals,

come,

stand on our backs to cross over  
just as we stood on the backs of those  
who came before us.

"Can I get a witness?"

No, my brother,

no, my sister

You can't get a witness.

You got to be a witness.

You got to speak your truth  
through your craft.

Show, don't tell.

Come

out of darkness.

Don't be duped

They want to rescind the 'one drop' rule.

Want to dissipate our blackness;

cause our darkness to be lost by converting it  
to white.

The One Drop that used to be enough to make me  
black,

is now, not enough to keep me black.

We have the treasure

We are the treasure

We are treasured.

They couldn't see it.  
They didn't try to diminish our light,  
they just refused to believe we had it.  
We were and still are  
a dark secret,  
mysterious, hidden, concealed.  
We are black,  
pitch black, jet black, coal black.  
We are 'black don't crack' and  
'in the black'.  
We are dark.  
And out of darkness  
comes light.

Hope Anita Smith