For the Progression of Blacks

by Steffany Herndon

I am the voice of my people.

I am the slave running to freedom alone at

night, heading North on the Underground Railroad.

I am the unheard cry of the young black

boy, hung from a tree and skinned to death

Do you hear my cry?

I am the housemaid, endlessly scrubbing glossed

wooden floors, going home with my personal collection

of splinters in my knees.

I am the inspirational crusader, shot

dead in the head because my opposition feared my thoughts.

Can you fathom my intelligence?

I am the struggle of a black face in a white place,

receiving an education that my history is deleted from.

I am the educator with a message to tell

yet fearful that not enough young ears will hear the stories of their culture.

Will you let me live?

I am the black body lying lifeless in the street,

even though I was only going for a walk.

I am the prisoner in the execution chair,

preparing to die for a crime I did not commit.

So therefore, don’t tell me to be quiet.

Don’t silence my voice, because it is not only mine.

It belongs to those that came before and those who will come after.

This is only the beginning

of our war cry.