

Speech for the 2020 Solidarity March
By the Rev. Molly Housh Gordon
Saturday, Jan. 18, 2020

Good afternoon Beloved Ones. I am the Rev. Molly Housh Gordon, and I am...tired.

Maybe you are too?

Maybe you are worn out because you are grieving deeply: the loss of species, the loss of freedoms, the loss of our democracy, the loss of how you thought the world was, the loss of who you thought you were.

Maybe you are run-down from racist micro-aggression and macro-aggression and outright threat against your life, and maybe you are also carrying the exhaustion of ancestors who were enslaved and robbed of their very rest.

Maybe you are exhausted from the grind of capitalism, working yourself to the bone for the right to live in dignity, the right you were born with, the worth that empire stole and tries to sell back to you at a premium.

Maybe you are spent from surviving intimate or structural violence or from day after week after year of holding your muscles sprung tight against the traumas of this world, vigilant and ready to spring into action.

Maybe you are drained from showing up day after day after goddamn day in a world that says you are wrong because of who you are, wrong because of who you love, wrong because of how you refuse the limits of their binaries and boxes.

Maybe you are just done fighting for a place in a world that was not built for you.

Maybe you are flagging because you've been fighting for years now, decades now and still they are dealing out death and suffering and still we are not free.

Beloved Ones, in a moment we will march but now will you join me in just a moment of rest. Take a deep breath. Take another one. Unclench your fist, or your feet, or the muscles in your chest.

The forces of empire win when we are running too hard to dream of something better.

They win when we are moving too fast to plant seeds of mutual flourishing in the earth and each other's hearts, or to give them water and coax them up from the ground.

Empire wins when we are too tired to look up, and reach out, and encounter each other in all our human glory and frailty. Exhaustion can be lonely, but look around, friends. You are not alone. You must know that in your bones on the journey to liberation.

And so I invite you breathe together and to attend with me for a moment to the world we are dreaming about together, when we stop to rest. This is the world we are seeding now.... The world where we are all healed. The world where we are all fed and nourished. The world where we are all free and thriving.

Here is a secret that I learned from organizing and from Star Wars: we are not going to win this thing by fighting what we hate. We are going to win by saving, and nurturing, and liberating, and creating, and enjoying what we love.

We are going to win by loving more broadly, more boldly, and more extravagantly than our fearful and defensive hearts know is possible.

We are going to win by robbing the empire machine of our energy, and sending our power instead straight into the wild seedling visions of our community - from the margins in.

We are going to win by dreaming, and by giving our energy and force of will to the dreams of those furthest from the center of the empire, those most capable of dreaming outside its logic.

We are going to win by giving form and focus and resources to the dreams of trans women and black women and indigenous women and queer women and Jewish women and Muslim women and brown women and migrant women and poor women and disabled women and trans and non binary folks of all gender.

Cis-men and fellow white people, this is not a loss of your dreams, I promise, it is an addition of untold richness and beauty.

But there is a real question and challenge for our local movement community here in Columbia and Mid-Missouri. Whose dreams are receiving space and breath?

Too often it is the dreams of those already at the center - white folks, men, people with privilege, assuming that because they care about justice their dreams will be liberating for those at the margins too. Assuming their dreams are big enough for everyone. That's not how it works.

Cis-Men and fellow white folks, let us not fool ourselves into thinking that we can dream outside of the ways of empire on our own, just as long as our analysis is sound. Our understanding is clouded by our proximity to structural power. We need the view at the edges to find our way out of this mess.

It matters whose dreams we center. It matters who is leading the way.

Whenever I am in a space led by those whose dreams are wilder and more free than I can manage on my own, my exhaustion melts away, and I glimpse what is possible and life-giving, and whole.

And here is another secret that sustains me.... A truth that is so much more beautiful than I am tired.... The dreams of real freedom and thriving that our community seeks to nurture and grow?

They are already alive all around us. Not once and for all and not everywhere and not altogether. But in each moment, somewhere, for someone.

This is where I find my energy, even when I am tired... knowing that somewhere in this community, a beloved undocumented neighbor who our sheriff detained and sent into the inhumane grip of ICE is free today because of their own faith, and their fierce family, and a scrappy community of folks who dreamed it would be so.

Somewhere in this community, a person living outside in a tent in the cold is inviting someone to sit beside their homemade stove and another is knitting hats for their camp-living neighbors, and another is traveling on bicycle to speak at a meeting advocating for a permanent shelter.

Somewhere in this community, neighbors who have been racially profiled and over-policed are organizing a community watch, a block party, new porch lights, a vision of community defense and community thriving outside the racist structures of policing in America.

Somewhere in this community, a trans adult is finding a newly out young person shelter and clothing and binders, and laughing and crying with them, and throwing down against the biggest church in town when they preach gaslighting and harm.

There are a hundred hundred more stories like this. Glimpses of the world we dream about. Moments of the Beloved Community. They are already here. We are already growing and cultivating them in the rubble of the systems of white supremacy and patriarchy and capitalism which tantrum and flail and crumble down around us.

This is our work now: starving the structures of empire by feeding our attention, our resources, our lives to the living dreams of the margins.

Here is how we survive and thrive: find yourself a glimpse of freedom and thriving more beautiful than you could have dreamed for yourself. Give yourself to that - give your time, your resources, whatever privilege you have, your body on the line.

Then, perhaps we will no longer be tired, but healed, and whole, and full of hope.