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Epilogue: I found my voice

by Barbara Hamilton-Hinch

I found my voice
Not that I lost it but...
It was silenced because of the truth I
Speak
It was silenced because of the beliefs I
Share
It was silenced because they could silence other
Voices

However, what they did not remember
Is when one strong African voice
Is silenced, another will rise and still
Another will rise

Those voices rise in Word Iz Bond,
Those voices rise in the writings of George Elliott Clark
Those voices rise in the films of Sylvia Hamilton
Those voices rise in the stories of our ancestors
Told over and over again

So what right do I have to allow
My voice to be silenced
What right do I have to give up the struggle of my ancestors?
What right do I have to use the excuse of
A mortgage, a family, an education

I cannot allow my voice to be silenced
When students continue to struggle for equality
When students have to prove they can not only speak and write the
Queens English but can speak languages others cannot even pronounce

When students prove they can be single moms, work fulltime, return to school and get a PhD
When students are able to travel thousands of miles
Leave family, children
Familiarity for an education for a better life

I have no business to allow others to silence my voice
I have found my voice and I will continue to use my voice to help others
I will continue to use my voice to speak for those who can't
I will continue to use my voice because I know it can
It will make a difference

Barbara Hamilton-Hinch is an eight generation African Nova Scotia woman, who is a mother of three amazing adult children. She is currently employed at Dalhousie University as a Professor in the School of Health and Human Performance and the Assistant Vice Provost of Equity and Inclusion. For most of Barb's academic career she has worked to advance research and opportunities for individuals who have been marginalized, particularly people of African descent. This poem reflects Barb's commitment to continuing to make a change and using her voice to advocate for others.