

## New Year, Same Me

Hope hums through the silence –  
a steady song,  
serenading pessimism and reality,  
composing a new melody.

I resolve to learn BSL,  
to embrace the quiet parts of myself.

I limber up for the excessive advocating,  
the lost puzzle pieces of conversation,  
the concentration fatigue,  
the opting out,  
the “any access needs?”,  
the “I don’t need a microphone – I’m loud enough.”  
Mostly, the lack of consideration.

But being a woman,  
and Black,  
and deaf –  
it’s nothing new.  
Just another day, month, and year.

Moving through the world in this body has given me a street-brawl spirit:  
spittle and bared teeth,  
cracked fingernails and mottled skin,  
clawing out a place with blood-stained hands,  
not sure if it’s mine or theirs.

Honed now into a professional iron fist, of course –  
but with the raw material simmering just beneath the surface,  
ready to access when I need it.

A threat?

No – a promise.

I pick my battles now.

I preserve my energy.

I give the joy of my presence only to spaces that honour it.

I embrace the joy in my deafness.

The pain in my deafness.

The space between.

New year, same me?

Definitely.

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