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Civic-Critical Literacy

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If the ocean were books, I'd drown just to learn myself
Swim unsteady on the bind of my duality
Remember the way my mother molded my mind
Taught me to move beyond the horizon because the tide is global
Though waves of pages paint an illusion of who I could be
I dive deeper, still

The salt in these waters makes me thirst
I drink gallons
Nietzsche, James Baldwin, Lorraine Hansberry, e.e. cummings, Malala Yousafzai,
All archetypes of how to swim here

To write is to exist

The thing about tides, like identities they shift
Momma gave me critical consciousness as compass to navigate the discourse
Taught me to be more like ocean floor than wave
Sturdy rock and molten liquid
Locate empathy in listening
Understand the ever-present force of gravity like oppression
Yet swim against the current
Find harmony in the enemies
Admire the beauty that blooms from my marginalized experience, as complex as
barrier reef

Lay belly up when I grow weary
Rest,
Question,
Where the bind of this ocean of books gives way to the weight of my curiosity
Find a school of fish to study with
Research
Or look into the abyss above: the sea of stars like mentors to guide me to shore
To self-certainty.