

A THANK YOU, OVERDUE

By Sarrah J. Grubb

Indiana University, Kokomo

Maybe I'm tired of
Apologies

Instead it's time for
a thank you, whispered, roared, repeated

To Dr. D

And Peggy
And Tom
And Morna
And Lori

And Tiffany, Kevin, Kerri

And so many names I haven't mentioned because I remember faces better, can see
them from their seats in the plenary

I'll see you in June

And say "of course I meant you too how could I have forgotten to write your name and
whisper it with the others"

But this is most especially for Dr. D

Who

Because she is who she is

And does what she does

Bears what she bears

As we "unpack our backpacks"

And she waits

Holding her arms out

Patiently

And impatiently

Stamping her foot

Closing her office door

Only to return

Helping us lift

As her load gets heavier

And we drain her almost-but-not-quite dry

And take that last nerve and twist it 'til the almost-breaking-point

When we say that stupid thing everyone before us

Has said

Is saying

Will say

And she raises her one eyebrow

Makes you realize

You were better than that

But will you let yourself?

And how long are you going to let her hold onto

All that stuff you just threw off your own back?

But she HOPES for us

(And practices tough LOVE, but it is LOVE all the same)

That we will see

behind that wallpaper

Behind that poster of Dr. King

And that picture book about Ruby Bridges

And the tweet of outrage over tasered school children and penned up babies

Knowing that maybe, in my class one day, one of my future teachers will turn to another

TRUTH dawning on her

and whisper “you wouldn’t report because you couldn’t trust who you would have to report to”

And they don’t notice I am blinking rapidly too

And nobody else in the class hears

But they leave together

A fragile intersection (an epiphanic moment, Peggy?) freeing a voice

And I think of Dr. D

Because she has done this

So, a thank you,

whispered,

roared,

repeated.

SJG, 10/08/2018