

# Dare To Feel – No More Shaming Myself Into Safer, Darker Places

*BY LAURA LARRIVA*

Belonging is a word that moves like an arrow to pierce the ache in my heart.

Rarely it comes as a knowing, but rather as a series of disturbing questions that pile up behind my lips and eyes, and push into my dreams. As if belonging were a dark intelligence all its own, come to tap open my white-knuckled grip on the sense I've made of my life, and the fences I've built around it. Come to be sure I haven't swallowed whole the stories that press into my belly each time I dare myself to feel.

When it comes as a question, I inevitably find myself squeezed into a sliver of my being. My heart gripped too tight for good dreaming. Beholden to someone else's idea of what it means to be a woman, I shame and criticize my aliveness into safer, darker places – along with the bright, red passion that comes with quiet sovereignty.

With earthy wholeness.

I listened to too much poor advice in my innocence.

In the place of good dreaming, an ally of a different kind. When I inhabit my confusion, my lost-ness, my loneliness, my longing, it crowds into my kitchen at meal times, silent and still and waiting. It oozes down the drainpipe past the bougainvillea and the milky-eyed possum in the fig tree to pool at my doorstep. It coils around the edges of my touch-screen when I hold my breath – presumably to remind me how little it helps to numb the knowing in my bones.

***There are pieces of me, and of you, that have been tucked into the divots and dark caves of our being. There, they remain safe until it is time.***

Our uninhibited knowing. Our powerful wholeness. Our revolutionary dreams. Our full-throated voices. Our toe-curling pleasure. Our trembling songs. Our deep conversation. Our wild belonging.

There, they remain safe, until our longing for another way to live spills over the rim of the coffee cup in the morning and we touch the root of earth's becoming. Until we touch the part of ourselves that is a part of that becoming. Tender and opening. Feral and free. Powerful and fecund. Full of life.

This flesh-body with all her wrinkles, and smells, and folds, belongs just as we belong to the grasses in the summer, and the cold, silver moon of midwinter. Just as we belong to the streams and the waterways, to the raven's tongue, and the bee's buzz, and the great bulk of the dreaming bear. Just as we belong to our spitting anger and our fierce desire, and to the many-petaled unfolding of a life lived fully.

We belong to all of this...to the ecological web of relationships far older than our vocational roles, and social groups, and familial circles. To all that is weighty and real and wild. Weighty like ripe fruit. Real like the pink-orange of sun-soaked desert rock. Undeniable. Awe-full. In flow.

This belonging – the widest sphere of belonging, will ask the longing you carry to pierce the ache in your heart. Let your loneliness remember you to the wilder belonging that awaits the gift of your innocence. Dare yourself to *feel*.

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"There is no time  
more important  
than now to drop  
in and listen. To  
each other, to the  
land, to the rhythms  
of our hearts."

LAURA LARRIVA

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