

woman of color

by Ayushi Tripathi

no.

check again.

content yourself not with your smaller share,
slam your hands on the table and demand a better lot in life.

don't let them pull the hair out of your head with your hands,
don't let them speak with your tongue,
don't give them your body or your mind.

check again.

the scale still isn't balanced,
and you'll have to work to make up the difference.

slam your hands again.

beat your fists on these walls 'til they're sore.

check again.

sigh, or scream, and wrap your knuckles for another round.

don't let them crawl inside your skin,
don't let them poison you through your eyes and ears,
don't let them drill through your skull.

check again.

their dissonant drums echo for seemingly forever.
i understand. take a break.
but there's still work to do.

your rage is not insolence,
and its kindling is nowhere near burned out.
tie your hair back and never pull your punches.

check again.

you're still being slowly but inexorably crushed.

don't let them white out your existence,
don't let them paint over your murals,
don't let them cut your words out.
checking seems pointless when the cycle's relentless, doesn't it?

check again.

your voice is hoarse but your song is far from over.