

# UC Berkeley

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Being Human

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## VERSE IN PLACE

NAIMA PENNIMAN

### Being Human

I wonder if the sun debates dawn  
some mornings  
not wanting to rise  
out of bed  
from under the down-feather horizon

if the sky grows tired  
of being everywhere at once  
adapting to the mood swings of the weather

if the clouds drift off  
trying to hold themselves together  
make deals with gravity  
to loiter a little longer

I wonder if rain is scared  
of falling  
if she has trouble letting go

if snowflakes get sick  
of being perfect all the time  
each one trying to be one-of-a-kind

I wonder if stars wish  
upon themselves before they die  
if they need to teach their young how to shine

I wonder if shadows long  
to just-for-once feel the sun  
if they get lost in the shuffle  
not knowing where they're from

I wonder if sunrise and sunset  
respect each other  
even though they've never met

if volcanoes get stressed  
if storms have regrets  
if compost believes in life after death

I wonder if breath  
ever thinks of suicide  
if the wind  
just wants to sit still sometimes  
and watch the world pass by



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if smoke was born knowing how to rise  
if rainbows get shy back stage  
not sure if their colors match right

I wonder if lightning sets an alarm clock  
to know when to crack  
if rivers ever stop  
and think of turning back

if streams meet the wrong sea  
and their whole lives run off-track  
I wonder if the snow  
wants to be black

if the soil thinks she's too dark  
if butterflies want to cover up their marks  
if rocks are self-conscious of their weight  
if mountains are insecure of their strength

I wonder if waves get discouraged  
crawling up the sand  
only to be pulled back again  
to where they began

if land feels stepped upon  
if sand feels insignificant  
if trees need to question their lovers  
to know where they stand

if branches waver at the crossroads  
unsure of which way to grow  
if the leaves understand they're replaceable  
and still dance when the wind blows

I wonder where the moon goes  
when she is hiding  
I want to find her there  
and watch the ocean  
spin from a distance

listen to her  
stir in her sleep

effort give way to existence

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## VERSE IN PLACE

**NAIMA PENNIMAN** is a freedom-forging futurist rooted in her ancestors' brilliance. She is a devotee of seeds, a soulful story teller, a multidimensional artist, movement builder, medicine grower, healer, and educator. Co-founder of WILDSEED Healing Village, Director of Education at Soul Fire Farm, and healing practitioner at Harriet's Apothecary, Naima devotes her creativity and collaborations towards planetary interdependence. Published in *All We Can Save*, *We Are Each Other's Harvest*, *Farming While Black*, *A Darker Wilderness*, *Black Earth Wisdom* and *Semillas*, Naima's poetry has inspired thousands of people and movements across the world.

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