

Obligation Emancipation: An Hocicono Proclamation

By Rosanna Alvarez

I read once that if you're not writing, you're a waiter not a writer . . . or something like that. I will also be honest with myself and admit that on a huge level, I am self-silencing to protect out of obligation. *Obligation* – such a loaded word. It's run most of my life. It is what made me keep the secrets that burned a hole through my soul. Luckily, the soul is an expression of the vibration of love that is embodied in my person and is therefore powerful and self-regenerating.

I come to this writing from a place of healing. As always, my written musings serve as my medicine for self-recovery, helping me make sense of the whole that fills the holes. My writing allows me to unpack my baggage – the huge suitcase of burdens I carry, which admittedly are much lighter these days, but somehow much more dense at the same time. My writing is also a tool for unpacking the *tlazoteotl* in that baggage. For in that hot mess lies so much beauty and each burden carries a blessing. Not in the self-deprecating martyr sense, but in a very empowering way. Each burden is an opportunity for growth and self-discovery. It is a duality that anchors me when I acknowledge the true roots of my cultural heritage from a decolonized consciousness. But, I digress.

Maybe I subconsciously revert to writing about why I am writing rather than writing what lies beyond my *hocicono*-ness. Out of obligation, I allowed myself to be forced into silence. I participated in the silence knowing full well I had no responsibility, or accountability, in the tragedies themselves. I find myself thinking about writing and beautiful prose comes to me. It is poetic. It is lovely. It is painful. It is my truth. At the same time, I know that my truth exposes the glass house of lies that others have built and where they comfortably reside. Even now, with my pen to the paper, I hesitate to delve into the unpacking of my truth because obligation tugs at my sense of doubt and is intricately entangled with every lesson handed down about love. Therein lies the dilemma –ripping off the bandages that cover my wounds requires a betrayal. Speaking my full truth disregards the (sigh) façade that has served others so well. But, I have to weigh that against my self-betrayal, and while my willingness to “speak” and my need to shout my truth is ironically tied to obligation, I find that I am less torn.

Out of obligation to my daughters and the generations that follow me, I break the silence in hopes that I will break the cycle. I embrace the healing and release you. Old friend you have served me well, protecting me in a hard shell transformed into a form of resilience as I grew into a space where I could embrace the softness from a place of pure love.

Contemplating, torn, self-imposed torture while *waiting to exhale*. I've lived most of my life as if that expression were the guiding force of my existence. Well, I'm done waiting. In coming to my own journey of self-awareness, self-consciousness, self-fulfillment, I shift my footing and emancipate myself from what I have allowed to hold me back. Replacing fear with love and compassion, I shout my truth through these written words. I declare power over my own destiny and while it is informed by my past, it is defined by my perception and intention.

I find the courage to release myself from so many things. "*Are you ready?*" I hear that little voice of self-doubt invading my jaguar sense of bravery, attempting to tame the wild horse that drives my soul. With a long and heavy breath, I respond, "*Do we ever really know?*" In the habit of meeting a question with a question, I find that ounce of courage I need to truly take the leap. In we go, and to go in, we must go back. In time. For on this journey, I must face that girl –the child who kept the faith that one day I would come, take her by the hand, and love her unconditionally.