

Woke Light

By Fabiola Bagula

I've been to five educational organizations in the last few months

And all I hear is grandiose discussions about the importance of equity

Equity

Educational gap

Black and brown students

We want them to succeed

Go to college

Be all they can be

We believe in them

We want to organize ourselves for equity

More AP coursework

Free college classes-

Yet take a look around

Those that surround you aren't who you say you are fighting for

And the few that look like the kids you want to save

Are now all grown up

With more degrees than you

Learned how to play school,

code switch,

drop their color at the door,

say no to their families and friends- we even turned white in the eyes of our brethren

To be "successful"

To graduate

To go to college

To be all we can be

And now have the same positional authority as you

And still we are voice less
And we still have to play school,
still have to drop our color and our sound to fit into your rules
What good is it for you to claim to want college graduates when you won't hire us?
Don't want us at your leadership tables-
don't value our voice as much as the colleague that looks like you?
But lately,
as you build your equity teams
as you want to create more opportunities for black and brown children
you call on us
to join
to discuss
to lead
this isn't our work- we are still fighting for equity in your organization
I've seen the loss of culture, the denial of color
The critique of foreign accents
Mispronunciation of names
the loss of voice,
the nopal en la frente and Zacatecas looking skin
pretend not to speak Spanish so that they could more easily lean into your table.
I am not willing to play anymore.
This is your work, not mine.