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# *A* Love Letter to Future Generations

BY NAIMA PENNIMAN

1.

A flower comes before fruit

Love precedes a child

Someone was dreaming of you  
with a womb full of water and seeds and stars  
a drum skin stretched over a full moon

One heart beat becomes two

One seed becomes a hundred

You are the result of countless love stories  
and unnumbered feats of overcoming

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Can you hear your mother  
humming you to sleep  
while hiding out on escape routes  
to an implausible freedom

you made her believe in

2.

Every seed braided  
into the crown of messengers  
before uncertain passages

a love note to future generations

a grain of hope  
somewhere somehow  
there would be soil  
that would open  
to receive our prayers

and multiply

3.

We are descendants of futurists  
who did not give up on the possibility

at least one seed would survive

the endless tides of  
transatlantic crossing  
auction blocks

monocrop cotton  
razor sharp sugar  
the harvest of salt  
the scalding sun  
and burning crosses

hidden propagation in forbidden gardens  
generations of dehydration and bondage

summoning softness from the clouds  
our bodies are made of water

and promise

4.

Our mother's mother's mothers  
did not give up on the possibility

at least one seed would make its way

through layers  
of cold hard rocky silt  
and sand  
and clay

and in the face of great danger  
soften its shell  
open its hull  
extend a tender root  
find water and food

trusting

# Dried Beans: Cultural Resistance and Environmental Resilience

HANDOUT: A Love Letter to Future Generations by Naima Penniman (p.4)

WE ARE EACH OTHER'S HARVEST

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there is light somewhere  
enough to bloom

A flower comes before fruit.

Love precedes a child.

Someone was dreaming of you.

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