

# Re-spiriting Songs and People from Cultural Memory to Now/Future Harmonic Consciousness

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## Abstract

Re-spiriting songs and re-spiriting people is a theoretical framework I have practiced and sung into being. As a pedagogy it lives in flux, and as a singer songwriter I understand how songs, like people, are in flux creating themselves in academic spaces. Re-spiriting songs came from necessity since on occasion singing at political events, I did not know political tunes. My roots came from popular love ballads, rock and roll, and American standards, where songs were thematically about love, joy, and getting people to dance. But when songs are contextualized to a space and moment, I found them taking on new meanings. In ephemeral seconds, popular love songs are transformed with critical messages of hope. Uplifted spirits shifted rooms and in turn re-spirited the people. With original songwriting, like storytelling, music and song works in solitude and in collaborative spaces in the classroom as songs are a dynamic critical tool that speak to just about everyone. I have students reflect upon their song/story, and the skills they bring to class that acknowledges their subjectivity. Songs as pedagogy, whether originals or pop tunes, nurture reflexive senses of self in harmonic consciousness and poly-harmonic world-building in collaborative now/future possibilities.

## Black Love x Brown Pride" (2020)

Along with "Black Love Brown Pride" I wrote "Dehumanizer" and "Judge Jury and Monster" all in one night, just days after the horrors of that 21<sup>st</sup> century lynching of George Floyd. In response to members from my brown community who were essentially asking "What about us, what about brown lives?", I understood their perspectives, but remain firm that we are always much stronger together, in coalition with others, while in the face of racialized dominant systems of oppression and repression.

If you're ashamed of burning buildings  
Be more ashamed of public lynching  
If you're ashamed of broken windows  
Be more ashamed of all the broken lives

In White Supremacy  
There's no decency  
It's a way of being  
a hatred for your life  
But in solidarity

We find a love  
That humanizes our lives

To love and survive with  
BLACK LOVE x BROWN PRIDE

If you're ashamed of burning buildings  
Be more ashamed of public lynching  
If you're ashamed of broken windows  
Be more ashamed of all the broken lives

In your complacency  
There's no humanity  
Just a blinded eye  
When people cry  
But in solidarity  
We find a love  
That humanizes our lives

To love and to thrive with  
BLACK LOVE x BROWN PRIDE  
In solidarity—we find a love  
That humanizes our lives

To love and survive with  
BLACK LOVE x BROWN PRIDE  
Oh humanity—together we can make a change

### **“Soul Has Body” (2022)**

Is the ceremony of being and taking your energy to a place, for a cause, to be in solidarity and in community.

My soul has body  
That I bring to this space  
My soul had body  
That I put on the line  
My soul has body  
Gonna take its time  
To put a heart in the body  
And the body don't mind

### **“Vivid Colors (Song for Pops)” (2021)**

My father planted creative seeds in my young imagination when he'd say things like, “You can do that.” At the sight of me dancing in front of the tv watching Elvis Presley sing.

I went down  
By the river  
And closed my eyes  
To make my (new) dreams

I (can) see  
Those (streams) of vivid colors  
That's when I know  
My soul speaks to me

When I play with energy  
Create what I see  
In dreams that come to me  
When I close eyes

I wash my hands  
In the water  
And wave them around  
To see what I see

And when I dream  
In vivid color  
That's when I know  
My soul speaks to me

When I play with energy  
Create what I see  
In dreams that come to me  
When I stop the world.....

When I play with energy  
Create what I see  
In dreams  
In dreams that come to me  
When I close my eyes.....

When I play with energy  
I create what I see  
In dreams in dreams in dreams  
That come to me  
When I concentrate  
On you....  
In a reverie  
When I stop the world