

### **Noise on these streets**

What makes a country? Cardboard signs  
and coloured words, the culmination of the people  
in urban assembly and digital unity. Ancestors  
first spoke to their struggles, tuned their voices,  
made themselves heard.

My grandparents pursued possibility from India,  
took their piece of the clay of the country  
and shaped it into acceptance.

We look back on hundreds of years of battles,  
ordinary individuals taking up a chorus for respect,  
for acceptance, for status even as people.

The actions alone were not immense,  
Few individuals with names remembered,  
but their voices linger, continue to call for justice.  
They took up chants in streets, on ballots.

The edges remain rough, this system imperfect,  
the sandpaper seems to fracture  
before anything can shine, but this is  
the voice of the people. This struggle,  
this constant correction,  
this pursuit of improvement  
a labour of love  
by those who love this democracy enough  
to bring it to live up to its name.

Still we promise our futures some greater justice.  
I tell myself that I will tell my children,  
tell each child to come,  
that they no longer need to fight, that  
we never let ourselves be silenced,  
so that they may breathe in quietude.

So we run our voices raw, pack sunscreen  
and handmade signs, declarations  
in every language. We meet at voting booths,  
promise ourselves that these voices will be used.  
We are driven by the past,  
called by the future,  
to defend this, for the people.