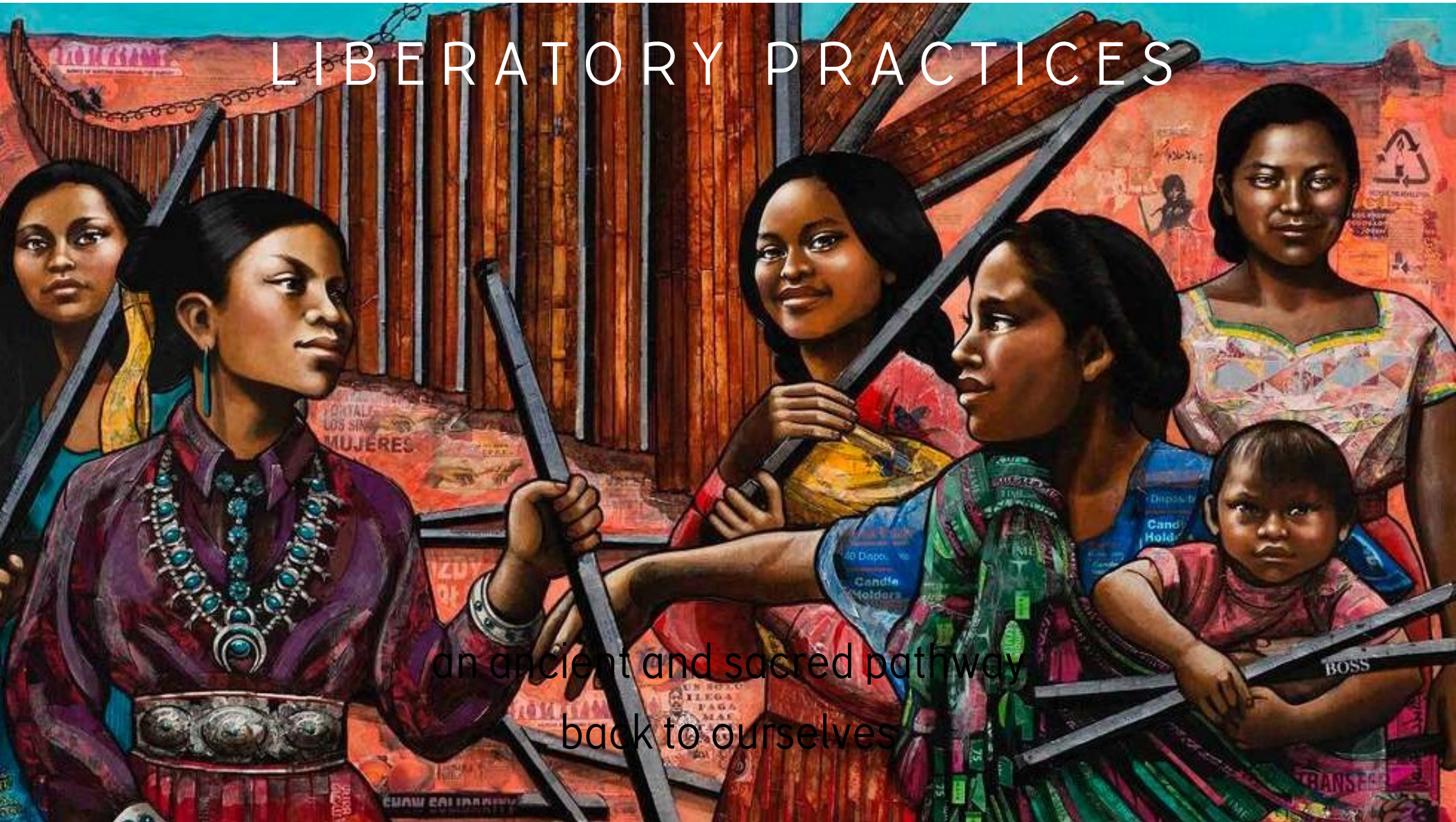


# LIBERATORY PRACTICES

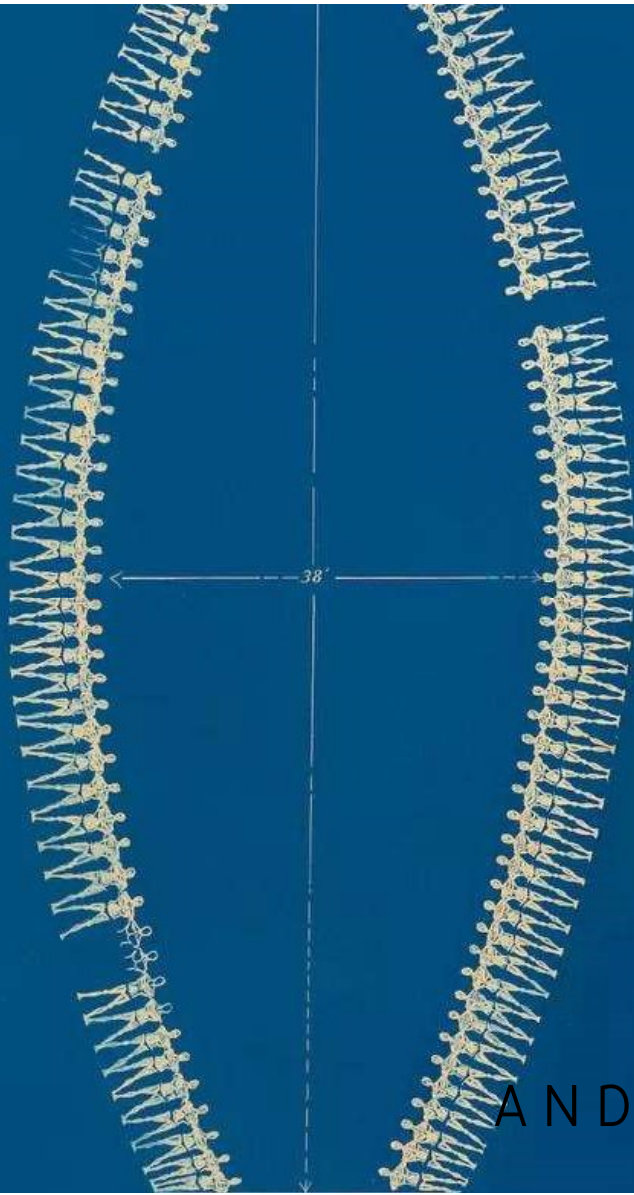


an ancient and sacred pathway  
back to ourselves

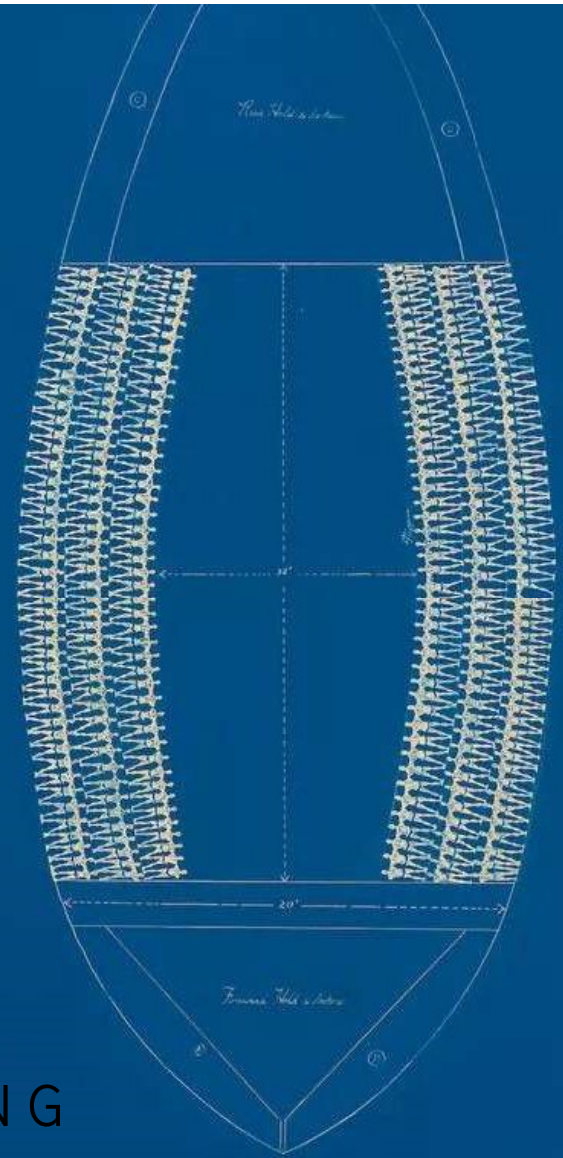




LIBERATORY  
PRACTICES  
ARE AS  
ANCIENT AS  
THE EARTH  
ITSELF



*Cotton Plant with Buds  
Gossypium Herbaceum - Linn.*



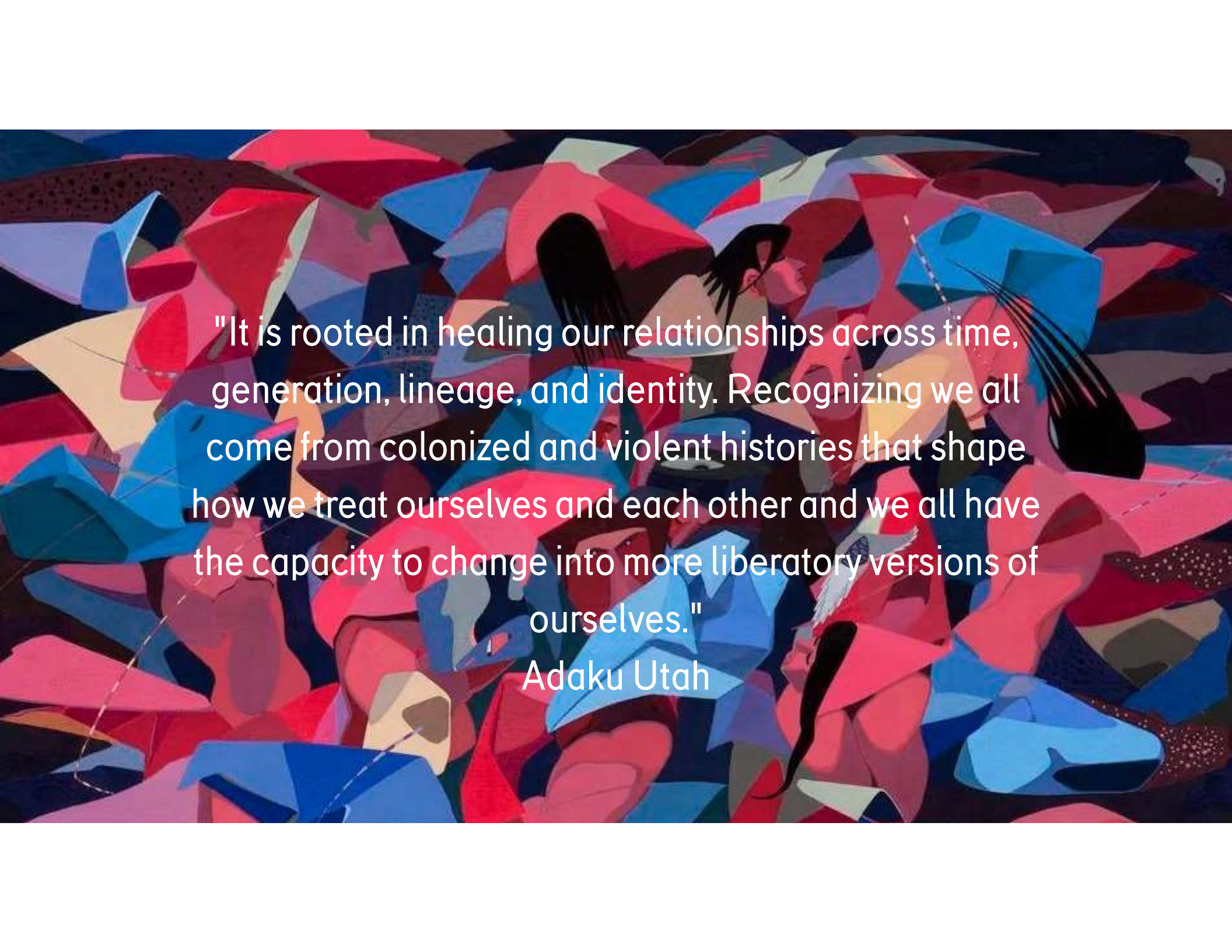
AND OUR EARTH IS HURTING



VIOLENCE, SLAVERY,  
CAPITALISM,  
RACISM,  
OVERPRODUCTION,  
MISUSE OF POWER,  
COLONIZATION  
HAVE HARMED THE  
EARTH...  
SPIRITUALLY AND  
PHYSICALLY







"It is rooted in healing our relationships across time, generation, lineage, and identity. Recognizing we all come from colonized and violent histories that shape how we treat ourselves and each other and we all have the capacity to change into more liberatory versions of ourselves."

Adaku Utah



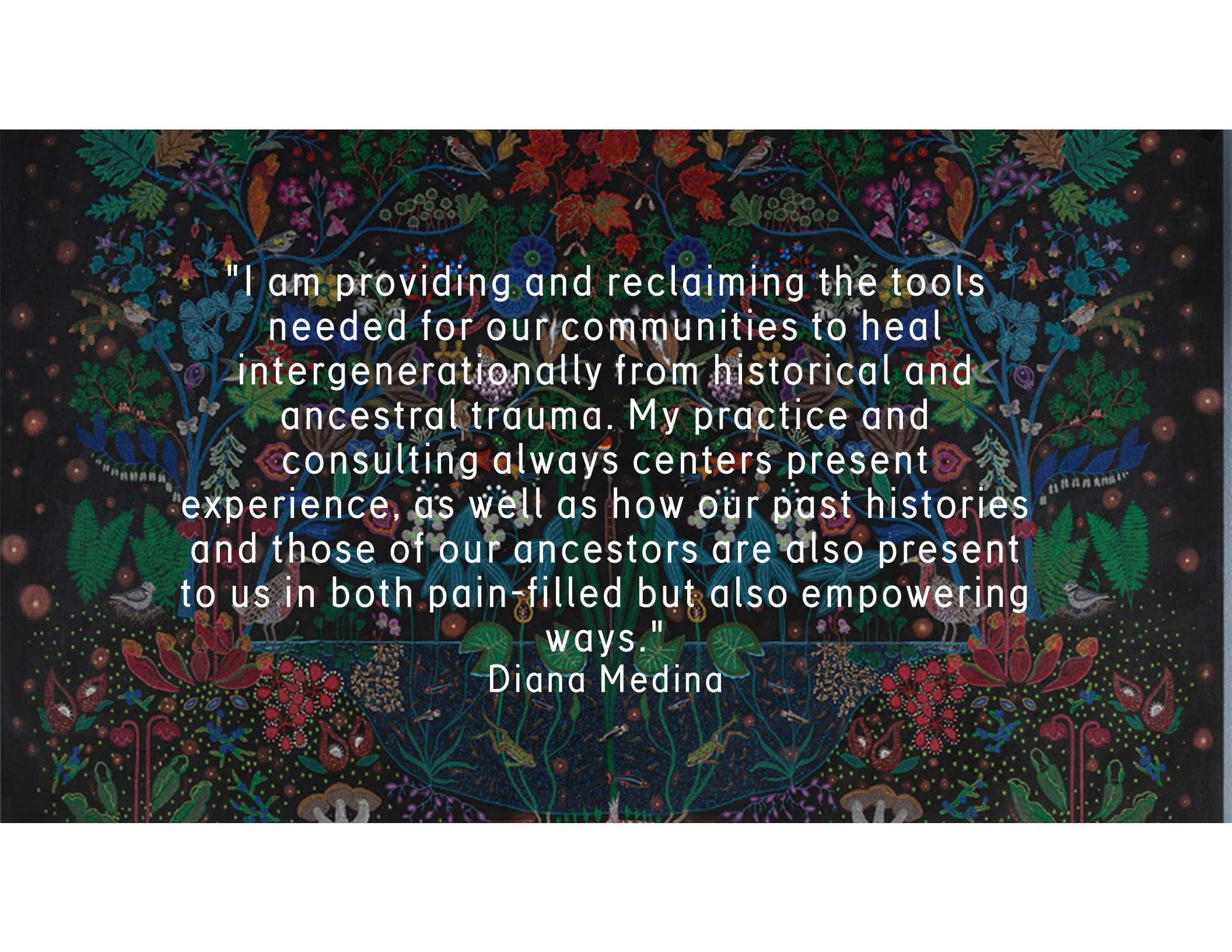


OUR ANCESTORS EXPERIENCED  
THIS PAIN AS THEY WERE IN  
DEEP SOLIDARITY AND  
RELATIONSHIP WITH THE  
LAND.

Their blood, skin, and cells, are  
a part of this earth; their bodies  
nourish the land that continues  
to feed, shelter and protect us.

Their stories are not only found  
in and on the land, but also  
within each of us.





"I am providing and reclaiming the tools needed for our communities to heal intergenerationally from historical and ancestral trauma. My practice and consulting always centers present experience, as well as how our past histories and those of our ancestors are also present to us in both pain-filled but also empowering ways."

Diana Medina



The land and our ancestors are calling to us...urging us to create a different world, a world where we are all free to just be...





IN THIS PRESENT  
MOMENT, WE ARE AT A  
THRESHOLD.

MANY OF US ARE DEEPLY  
AWARE OF THE HARMS;  
AWARE, OUTRAGED,  
ANGUISHED, AND READY  
TO HEAL.

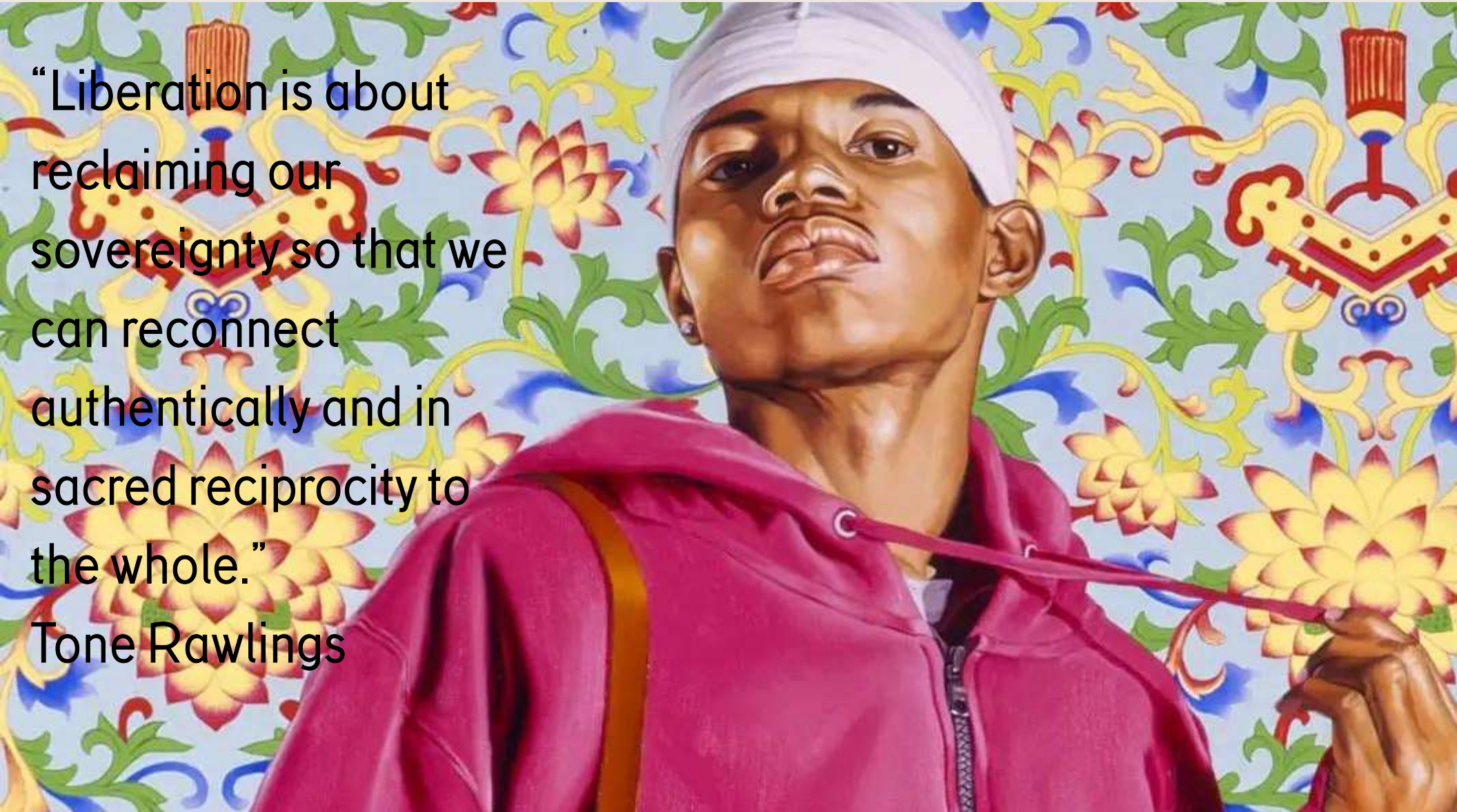
WE ARE WILLING TO  
JOURNEY TOWARDS A  
LIFE WHERE WE CAN BE  
IN OUR ENTIRETY,  
EMBODYING THE  
WISDOM OF OUR  
ANCESTORS AND OF  
EARTH: A LIFE OF  
LIBERATION.



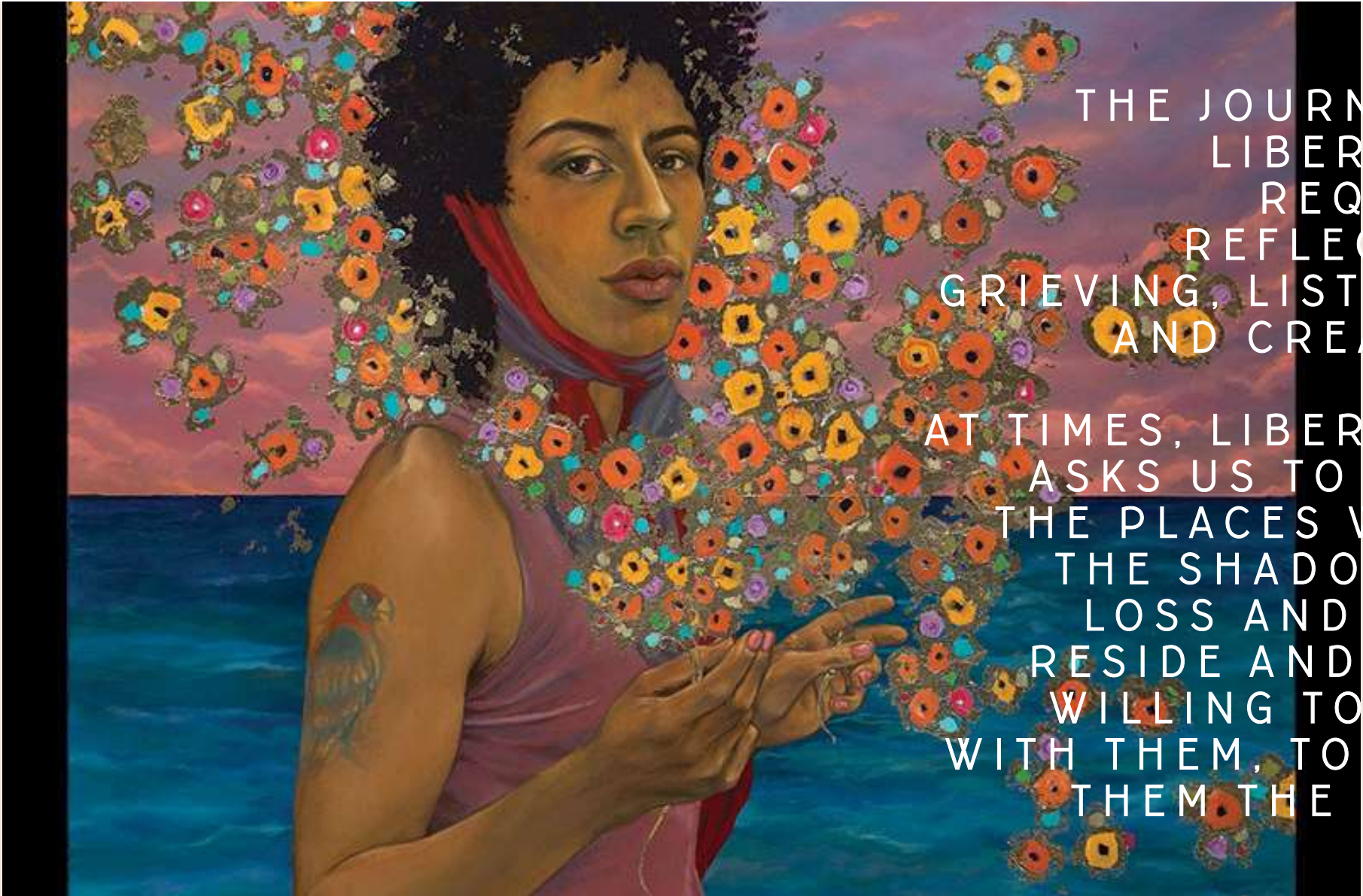


“Liberation is about reclaiming our sovereignty so that we can reconnect authentically and in sacred reciprocity to the whole.”

Tone Rawlings



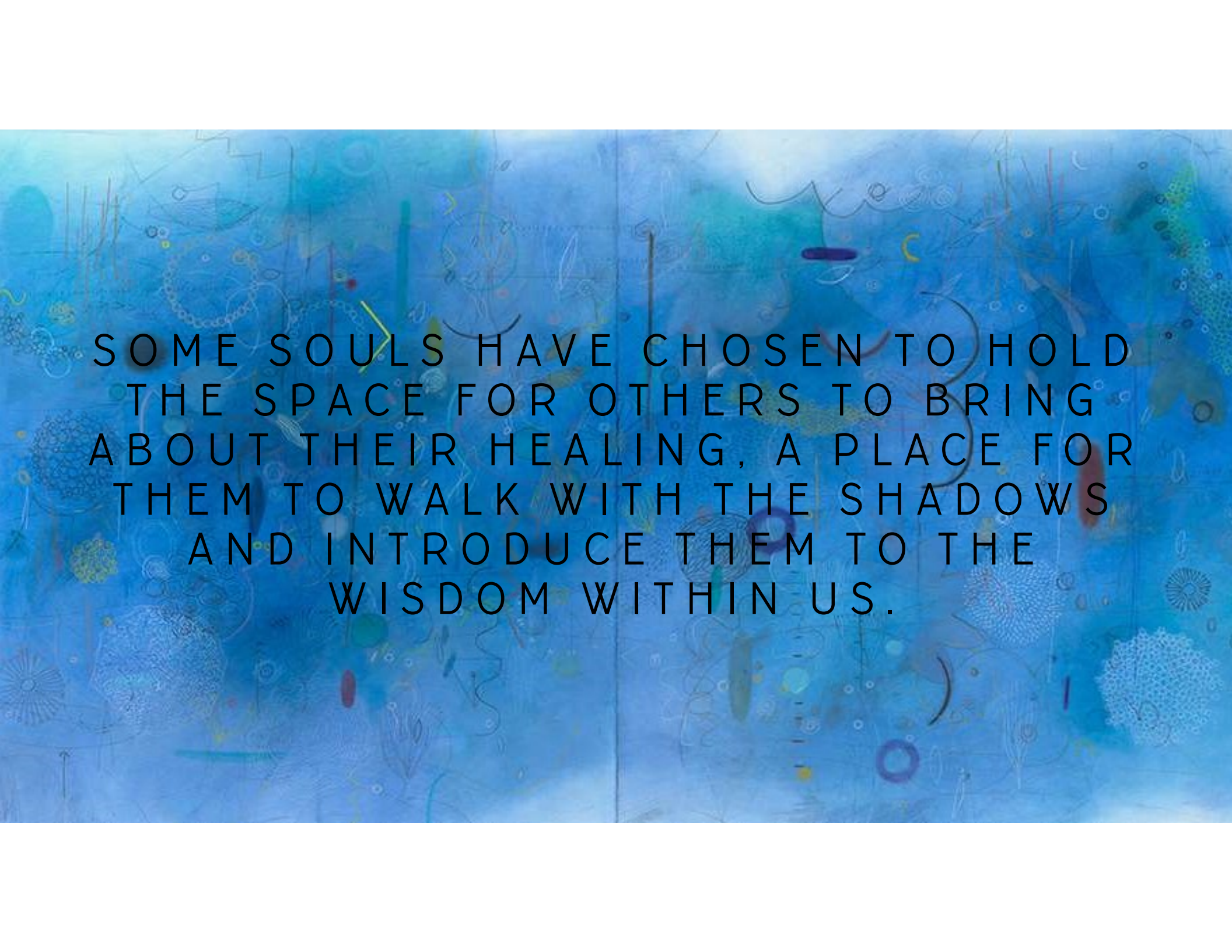




THE JOURNEY OF  
LIBERATION  
REQUIRES  
REFLECTING,  
GRIEVING, LISTENING  
AND CREATING.

AT TIMES, LIBERATION  
ASKS US TO GO TO  
THE PLACES WHERE  
THE SHADOWS OF  
LOSS AND GRIEF  
RESIDE AND TO BE  
WILLING TO WALK  
WITH THEM, TO SHOW  
THEM THE LIGHT.



The background is a complex, abstract artwork dominated by various shades of blue. It features intricate, organic patterns that resemble cellular structures, coral reefs, or perhaps microscopic organisms. There are fine lines, dots, and larger, more defined shapes scattered throughout, creating a sense of depth and movement. The overall effect is one of a rich, textured environment. Centered over this artwork is a block of text in a clean, black, sans-serif font.

SOME SOULS HAVE CHOSEN TO HOLD  
THE SPACE FOR OTHERS TO BRING  
ABOUT THEIR HEALING, A PLACE FOR  
THEM TO WALK WITH THE SHADOWS  
AND INTRODUCE THEM TO THE  
WISDOM WITHIN US.





# Who are Liberatory Practitioners?






Practitioners are birth workers, consultants, evaluators, psychotherapists, coaches, educators, cultural organizers, mentors, facilitators, and leaders.

Practitioners work with a variety of people with an emphasis on working with women of color, gender non-conforming folx, young organizers, activists, creatives/artisits and immigrants.

G. MORRISON - 1999

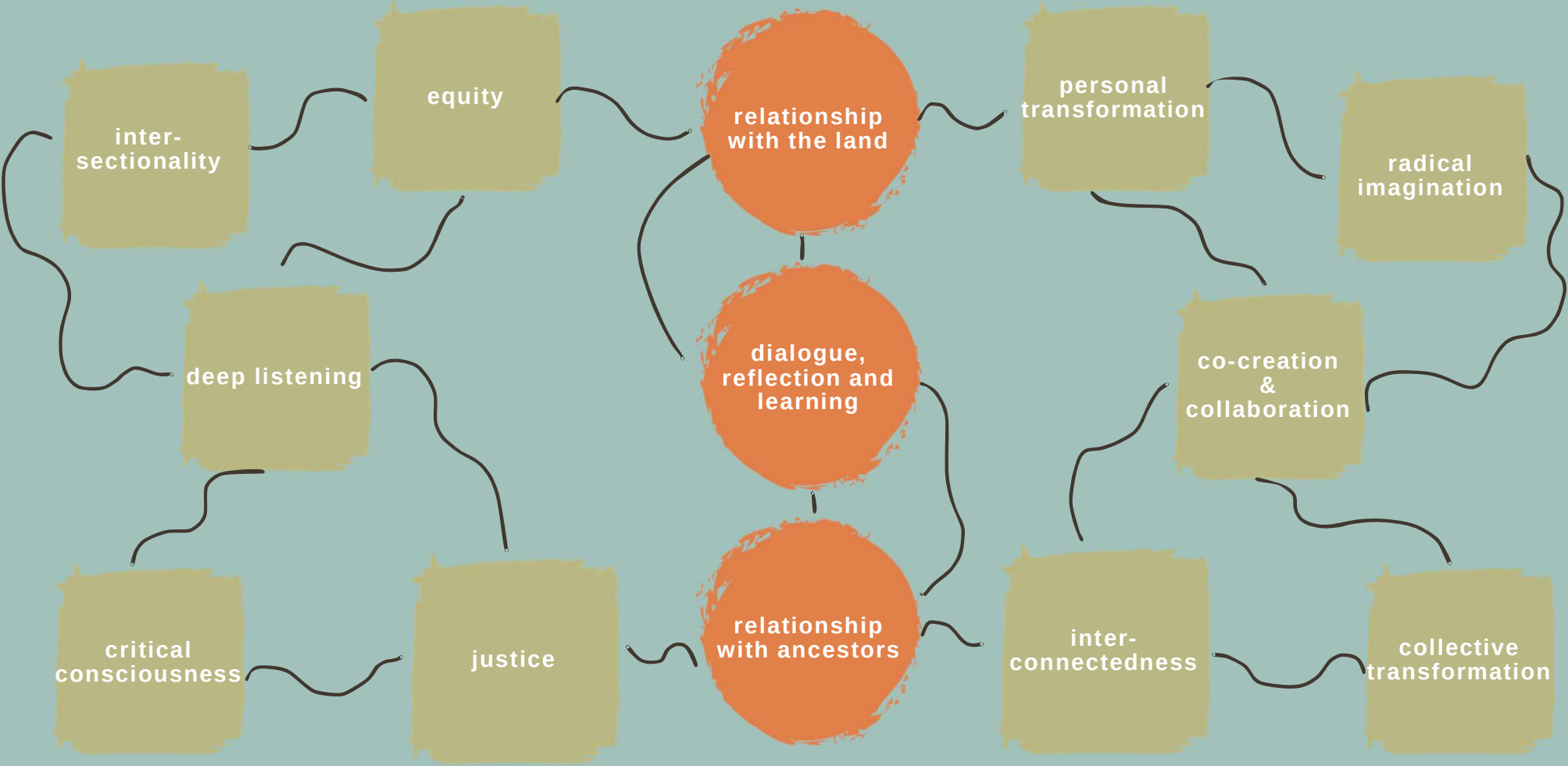


An abstract artwork featuring a dense composition of overlapping, colorful lines and shapes. The background is a light, textured beige. Overlaid on this are various elements: thin, sweeping lines in shades of blue, red, yellow, and green; thicker, more solid shapes in black, orange, and pink; and some faint, sketchy drawings of figures or forms. The overall effect is one of dynamic movement and layered complexity.

THE MODALITIES  
VARY BUT THE  
GOAL IS THE  
SAME: TO ALLOW  
PARTICIPANTS  
TO BE IN DEEP  
RELATIONSHIP  
WITH ANCESTORS  
AND LAND.



# Common Principles and Central Goals of Liberatory Practices



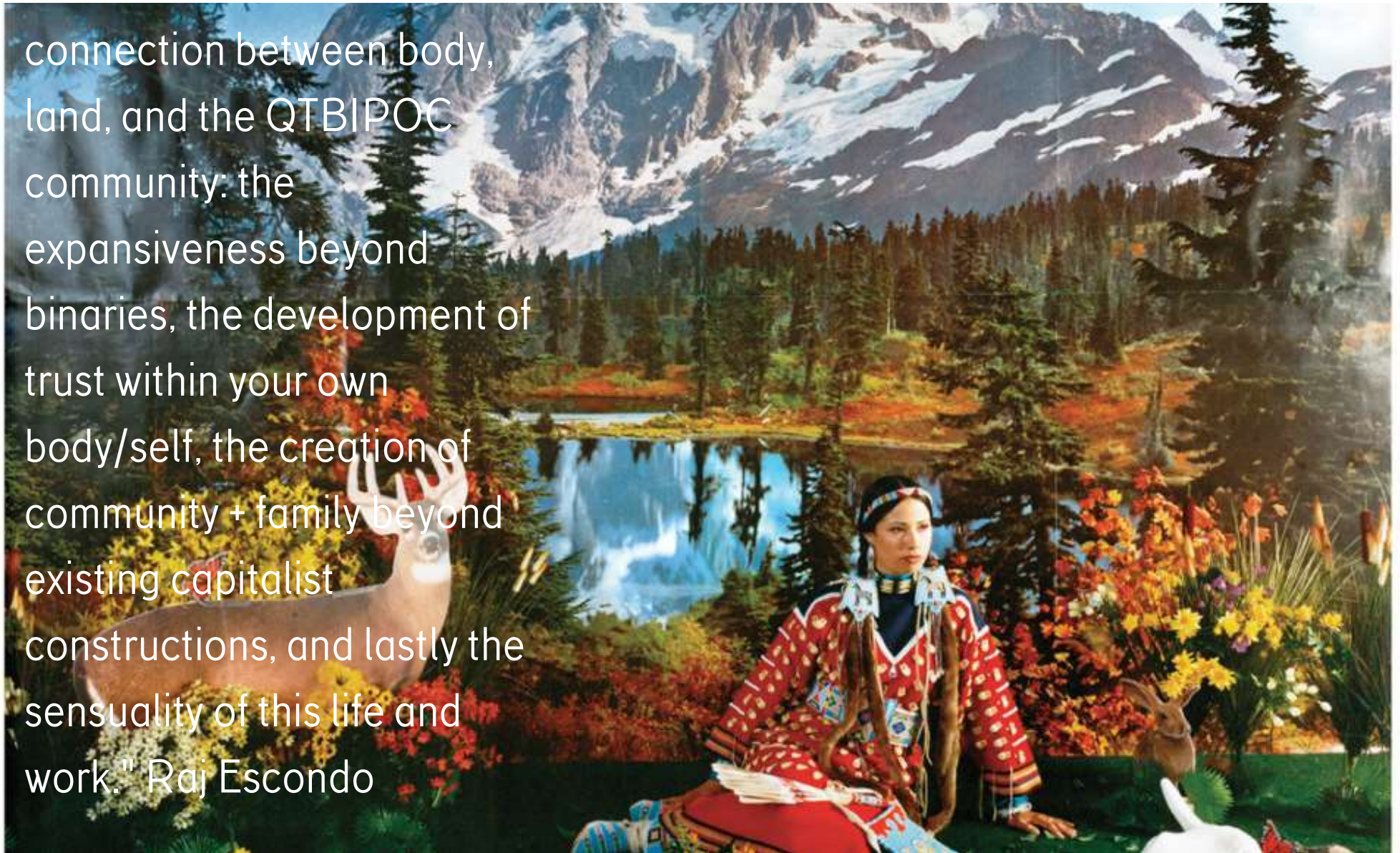




**Liberatory practices go beyond mainstream and aim for revolutionary and radical solutions towards justice.**



connection between body, land, and the QTBIPOC community: the expansiveness beyond binaries, the development of trust within your own body/self, the creation of community + family beyond existing capitalist constructions, and lastly the sensuality of this life and work." Raj Escondo







AS WE EXPLORE OUR SHADOWS, WALK  
ALONGSIDE OUR GRIEF, WE GROW IN  
STRENGTH TO UNLEARN AND  
DISMANTLE THE OPPRESSIVE  
PRACTICES THAT HAVE TAKEN ROOT  
WITHIN OURSELVES.

AS ALL, ESPECIALLY BIPOC FOLX,  
CONTINUE TO EXPERIENCE LIBERATION,  
WE CREATE A PEACEFUL, LOVING AND  
JUST WORLD.





“I believe that liberatory practice must occur on a collective level and individual level in order for it to be effective and impactful. Therefore, as a Black, queer, genderqueer artist and community organizer, I consider liberation practice to be a lineage that I am part of and a legacy that I carry forward.”

Black the Creator



Liberatory practice is freedom to listening and coming back to self, to our relationships, to the land, to nature and the animals, to Nature calling us.

To transcend geographic borders that divide and distance us and come back to remembering how big we are together.

To remember that our work for racial equity and justice must be grounded in the Earth and all its inhabitants.





**TEND TO THE EARTH**



**TEND TO THE ANCESTORS**

*Jessie Sabogal KILL JOY*



# Sources:

Slide 1: Erin Currier American Women (Dismantling the Border) II, 2018, Acrylic and mixed media on panel, 48"h x 60"w

Slide 2: Canva visual

Slide 3: Malcolm Bailey, Untitled, 1969, 1969. Courtesy of the Whitney Museum of American Art.

Slide 4: Chris Pappan (Kanza/Lakota), Atom Heart Mother (Earth), 2016, mixed media on ledger paper, Courtesy of Travois. © Chris Pappan

Slide 5: Dance of the Heyoka by Oscar Howe (Yanktonai Dakota), 1954 Philbrook Museum of Art, Tulsa, Oklahoma. Museum purchase, 1954.12

Slide 6: Shonto Begay - In the Days Following Summer (PLV90210A-0816-004)

Slide 7: Christi Belcourt (Métis, born 1966), It's a Delicate Balance, 2021, acrylic on canvas. Gift of Funds from Andy and Meg Ubel in honor of Mia's Docent class of 2015. ©Christi Belcourt

Slide 8: Charles Searles, Celebration, 1975, acrylic on canvas, 27 1/2 x 81 3/4 in. (70.0 x 207.6 cm), Smithsonian American Art Museum.

Slide 9: Steven Yazzie (Diné/Pueblo of Laguna, New Mexico/European descent), Orchestrating a Blooming Desert, 2003, oil on canvas, Collection of Christy Vezolles. © 2003 Steven J. Yazzie. All rights reserved. Image: courtesy of the Heard Museum, photo by Craig Smith

Slide 10: Support the Rural Population and Serve 500 Million Peasants by Kehinde Wiley, 2007

Slide 11: "The Poet." Aida Rogers.

Slide 12: Emmi Whitehorse (Diné), Fog Bank, 2020, mixed media on paper on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Washington, William A. Clark Fund, 2022.41.1. © Emmi Whitehorse

Slide 13: Sydney James, "IMAGINE." Photo by Lamar Landers

Slide 14: Untitled (Lake Superior Landscape) 1999; George Morrison, Pen and colored inks on paper; gift of Bill and Krista Thorburn; 2017.94.2

Slide 15: Julie Mehretu, Retopistics: A Renegade Excavation, 2001. Ink and acrylic on canvas, 101 1/2 x 208 1/2 in. (257.81 x 529.59 cm). Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, Arkansas 2013.28. Photograph by Edward C. Robinson, III. © Julie Mehretu

Slide 16: Corina Pinto

Slide 17: Cara Romero (Chemehuevi), Indian Canyon, 2019, archival pigment print, Courtesy of the artist. © Cara Romero

Slide 18: Wendy Red Star (Apsáalooke/Crow, born Billings, Montana, 1981), Four Seasons Series (Summer), 2006. Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, Johnson County Community College, Overland Park, Kansas (2014.06-2014.09)

Slide 19: Pansies in Washington (1969), Alma Thomas

Slide 20: Shonto Begay - Harvest Sentinel

Slide 21: Oscar yi Hou, birds of a feather flock together, aka: A New Family Portrait, 2020. Courtesy of the artist and Carl Freedman Gallery

Slide 22: Earth = Ancestors, Jess Sabogal and Kill Joy





## Resilience Initiative

The Fund for Liberatory Practice (the Fund) was launched in 2022 by the Resilience Initiative and the LeadersTrust to help support and amplify the field-building and exploratory work of liberatory practitioners more broadly. It was designed to provide \$15K awards, opportunities for networking, and other support to 20 full-time practitioners in active, productive partnership with social change leaders and organizations, and eager to expand and amplify liberatory practice. Fuller background and more context about the project, and the gap in practice support which the Fund set out to fill, can be found at [www.theleaderstrust.org](http://www.theleaderstrust.org)



The Fund's core objectives were to:

- Increase the ability among organizational development practitioners who lead with liberatory equity-focused approaches to spend time defining, building-out and 'trying on' new ways of working at the leading edge of this practice.
- Engender greater opportunity among practitioners to share their insights and innovation in ways that also extend and deepen learning among peers and philanthropic partners.
- Advance our collective understanding about innovative, equity-infused leadership and organizational practices which responsibly address the needs, interests, challenges and opportunities of today's social change leaders and teams.

The invitation to the Fund for Liberatory Practice was released April 2022. In all, 218 submissions were received by the 'due date' May 20, 2022. Decisions about the 20 practitioners who would receive awards were made in the fall of 2022. Since the awards were made, practitioners have been [invited to be in community with each other](#), and broader networks, in a variety of ways.



## Acknowledgements and Appreciations

The Fund (2021 – 2023) was powered by a community that included staff coordinators, field advisors – formal and informal, and funding partners. It was initially conceived of, and is managed by, a staff team at the [LeadersTrust](#) and the Resilience Initiative. We acknowledge and appreciate the following community:

*Our advisors:* We are profoundly grateful for the guidance and generosity of the Fund’s “First Phase” Advisors, all of whom were invited to this role because of the depth and range of their experience and wisdom. **They are [Bex Ahuja](#), [Aryah Lester](#), [Jean Ries](#), [Jesenia Santana](#), [Ericka Stallings](#), and [Marissa Tirona](#).**

*Our funding partners:* The partner funders which made the first year of the Fund for Liberatory Practice possible have been: the Packard Foundation’s Organizational Effectiveness Program, the Hidden Leaf Foundation, and the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative’s Movement and Capacity Building Program. We are grateful to each for sharing a vision with us about this work, and their faith in this team to advance this special project.



## Acknowledgements and Appreciations, continued

*Our inspiration and teachers:* This Fund and its hopes, values and goals, have been inspired and informed by the nonprofit leaders with whom the project coordinators work daily, and who generously share their stories, insights and aspirations with them, as well as the many practitioners with which the LeadersTrust and the Resilience Initiative team have had the privilege of learning from and with, most especially Monica Dennis, Rachael Ibrahim, the Co-LAB team inclusive of Maura Bairley and Viveka Chen, the Change Elemental team, Heidi Maria Lopez, Ana Polanco, Trish Tchume, Angelica Otero, Cathy Dang, merle mcgee, and Fiona Kanagasingam of the BIPOC team, and every member of the LeadersTrust Capacity Coach community.

*Our storytellers:* The staff team worked in partnership with Shiree Teng and Ernesto Saldano, to organize the voices and perspectives of the liberatory practitioners. Querido Galdo is appreciated for their design of this document.