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## I Will Always Answer “Here”

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# I Will Always Answer "Here"

By Joy Hansen

I used to live there, with you.  
Now I live here, with them  
the people who listen to me.  
The people that let me be  
who I am,  
something sadly  
I cannot say you offered.

Nowadays, you might ask me, "Here, or there?"  
Then again, you probably wouldn't even give me the time of day.  
You never did before, unless you were forced to. Anyway.  
Without a second doubt, I would reply: "Here."  
Here, I am me. I am defined by **who** I am.  
There, I am just what you think I am.

Who I was  
didn't matter to you.  
You defined me by my economic class,  
my home,  
my parents.

Because of who you are,  
that is something that you could not tolerate  
I was never really going to be accepted by you.

I was a only a young girl then,  
and I didn't understand it.  
But now I do, and I must ask, "Why."  
Why did you put me in a box?  
Why did I trust you?  
Why did I trust that you actually cared?  
Why did I laugh when you joked about how  
my family will never be seen as yours?

That was there.

But here, I am me.  
They define me by  
my thoughts,  
my actions, and  
the things that truly make me, me.

Here my voice matters.  
Therefore I continue to make the voices of  
others heard as well.

Thank you for teaching me that  
who I am matters.

But don't think that I forgive you  
for how you judged me.

If you ever asked me again,  
I would reply "Here."