Pamela Barnes Submission: Poem

Every day I survive

Short breaths and long chains, my survival depends on being smart. Every day I survive is another day that I win. They say that if the folks up north win this war, then I'm going to be free. I don't put much stock in what *they* say. They told me that I could keep my children and every last one of them was sold away. Gone and lost forever. But I keep living and I keep praying.

Short breaths and long chains, my survival depends on being smart. Every day I survive is another day that I win. My feet are sore, and my soul is weary. They say if we join together, we can eventually sit wherever we want on that bus. I've heard this before and I saw what they did to that young pastor's home. But I'll keep pressing for my children, I'll keep walking, and I'll keep praying.

Short breaths and long chains, my survival depends on being smart. Every day I survive is another day that I win. It's been twenty-five years now. I've sat in this same office and looked out this same window all these years. I was told to attend college and become a professional. They said, education was my ticket. Well, I've arrived. Here I am and here I sit. I applied for promotions and they said you're not qualified, you're not management material. I know what that means. You know, I trained the last four presidents of this company. Yes, they each sat down right there in that chair. They wrote down every word I said. But, my grand-daughter is smart, she is something special. She has dreams and I intend to help her succeed. So, I'll keep sitting, I'll keep training, and I'll keep praying.

Short breaths and long chains, my survival depends on being smart. Every day I survive is another day that I win.