

#ISKOLARStoo

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Dead. White. Men.
Dead White Men as Scholars
appear everywhere
like ghosts that haunt and hunt
the minds of
Living. Brown. Queer.
Living. Brown. Queer Sages
Responding to the same great Call

These ghosts
have a particular aura of inerrancy
that command submission, mimesis, currency
Their eerie power and presence unmistakable
Untouchable they may seem
Yet they mutate everything they touch

Like the living especially those with similar pigmentation and accent
Think and contort their mind like the mastermind
Parroting and quoting their words and their world making
As if under a spell, chanting divinations
Ready to dispense approval and belongingness
And to exact punishment and exclusion to those who don't belong

These ghosts, these hungry ghosts
Consume the living
Collapsing the past into the present
Making them seem eternal and transcendent
Still haunting, still hunting
Even what is yet to be

Some of these ghosts become nightmares
They conjure memories
Haunting memories of subjugation and debasement
Of thievery and rape
Of violence, of sacred violence
All meant to continue the legacy of empire and coloniality

In a twisted and hair (hell) raising way
These ghosts and those who are possessed by them
Get the accolades in perpetuity
That legitimize and sanction their ghostly presence
Here, there, and everywhere
With the air of superiority and exclusivity

ISKOLARS of a different kind
Roamed the earth as well
Born
From unlikely places and circumstances
Sages and scholars in their own right
They left a different legacy
Not to be mimicked or regurgitated
But to nudge us along to chart a different path
To think differently without apology

They were iskolars/scholars, artists, and sages at the same time
Who curated and created lifeworlds, different word and worlds
Not from the tower of the privilege
But from the sweats of their brows
From the hands that toiled and tilled the land
From the heart that bled blood of courage
And from the mind that refused to be "whitened" and "straightened"

They, too, have an ethereal aura in them
But not as ghosts that haunt and hunt
But as guides, as spiritual guides
Who continue to inspire, uplift, and rejoice
Especially when we find our own voice

The voice of the
Living. Brown. Queer Sages
Whose work of he(ART)
Are installed not in museums
But carved in the hearts and consciousness
Of other queer folk that
Query and queer
The assumptive binary cis/het white world

We bend that which is straight
And bring discomfort and affliction
To the comfortable and supposedly well
Not so much through abstraction
Though we can certainly play that game well too
But through the quiriness
Of our queer bodies
That are vessels of wisdom felt and experienced
and not simply drummed up by our creative minds

Yes, these queer bodies
Though distorted and discarded
Rise from the ashes like phoenix
With vigor and vitality

So that our writings, living, and loving
Become portals to the infinite possibilities
of a world that embraces all
Because that is our sacred iskolar/scholar's call.



About the Author

Dr. Rolf Nolasco is the Rueben P. Job Professor of spiritual formation and pastoral theology at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary and director of the Rueben P. Job Institute for Spiritual Formation. He is an experienced professor, trained in pastoral and counseling psychology, mindfulness and contemplative spirituality, and affective neuroscience. Nolasco is also a psychotherapist, published author, and has vast experience in cross cultural communications from living and working across the world within varying social and cultural backgrounds. In addition to *Hearts Ablaze: Parables for the Queer Soul*, he is the author of *God's Beloved Queer* (Wipf & Stock, 2019), *The Contemplative Counselor: A Way of Being* (Fortress Press, 2011) and *Compassionate Presence: A Radical Response to Human Suffering* (Cascade Books, 2016).