

IN
TIMES
OF
TERROR,
**WAGE
BEAUTY**

by Mark Gonzales

In Times of Terror, Wage Beauty

dedication

What you are holding in your hand are ideas in story form that I've learned on this journey called my life.

What you are also holding is people, the visually curated memory of dreams of all I've crossed paths with who've touched my heart and inspired my spine.

Grateful to all who contributed to the collage of visions I am determined to advance.

Grateful to all those who will carry forward the ideas I've laid out in this book and my life.

As I look at the world today, I am aware of how miniscule one person may seem to the systemic actions in front of our eyes yet, oddly, I ask you to laugh at such shrinking of our potential. For the Divine does not make mistakes and nearly every sacred tradition says we who exist were imagined since the beginning of time.

What does that mean? Simple.

We were made for this moment.





chapter 2

we weren't made in America



The question of how human beings learn to be who they think they are has always fascinated me. So much of our understanding of identity mirrors product development concepts, where we stamp humans by place of origin and the date of manufacturing.

Origin: the place one begins. This could be such a fascinating ecosystem of conversations. Sadly, it is now flattened to a nation state and color coded passports.

What a boring way of engaging human experience.

The effect of this mentality is most evident in those of us who have either had our lands of origin invaded, or were forced out of them. These series of displacements thrust us into a world where we are continually expected to explain ourselves, our identity, and our origin.



Those who've never lived inside a body that is constantly under interrogation do not know how emotionally and mentally draining it is.

Yet the most tragic part of chronic interrogation is this: as long as we spend the vast amount of our days answering the questions being asked by others we have no time or energy left to ask our own.

Am I an American? What a boring question. Ask if I'm a lover, a dreamer, a present father, a decent son.

Am I British? Frances? Australian? Was I manufactured here? Am I a bio-toy to have my country of origin embedded on my belly?

Truth is, I am many things, and one of them is a word that has not yet been invented. One that articulates the generational journeys that lead up to this moment called now. I don't know what to call us, we whose identities have been denied citizenship, we who were forced arrivals, who became new neighbors, who became blended with those who were here before a country was.

We are an ancient people, a mosaic of genes and dreams and all other human elements of beautiful beings who were stolen and who were occupied.

Where are I from? To be honest, due to erasure of stories and language, I can only travel back so far. What can tell you is this: even if we weren't made in America, we made America.

