To You

Doretha Michiah Davé Benn
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This poem is a collection of dedications to poems that did not quite articulate the true feelings of the author. The dedications capture a loss of words and an inability to say the “right thing” to student affairs. This poem speaks to more than just the field of student affairs; it speaks to anyone who is in need of hope. To you.

To the community that raised me,
The community that allowed me to be myself,
The community that continues to embrace me,
And to you

To those who get lost in the music, the Shondaland fanatics, over-thinkers, and optimists,
To those with bleeding hearts, who find the joy in the small things,
To the realists, to the procrastinators, proactive, and anyone in between
And to you

To those suffering in silence and to those whose suffering has been silenced
To those with insecurities who are struggling to love yourself
To those who give until they are drained and continue to give
To those in need of care but are not seen
And to you

To my friends and colleagues
To the students who are my heart and the ones that are out of reach
To the supervisors who shaped me and the ones who broke me
To the field that inspired me with its capacity to break barriers down
And to the same one that unceasingly perpetuates systems of oppression
And to you

You, whoever you are
This is to you,
To heal, to breathe, to hope, to see a future—a better future
To transform spaces, when you have the capacity to do so
To listen—truly, actively, deeply listen

Doretha Michiah Dävé Benn is a second year at the University of Vermont in the Higher Education and Student Affairs Administration masters program who hails from Knoxville, Tennessee. Her mantra for the year is, “But where does your heart feel free? Go there” and she intends to do just that.
To seek understanding
To repair harm and forgive
Please, forgive yourself.
To learn from the past
And to know it does not have to be our present or future
To give grace to others
and to yourself—you are deserving
To let our hearts lead us in the direction of love and connection
To embrace each other as a community, who is deeply hurting
To again find our purpose, our path, our way
To rest, refuel, and deconstruct the spaces that drain you
To recognize that your cause is my cause is our cause

To me
To you
To us all
Dear Student Affairs.