

# 1965. 1992. 2020.

Sue Park-Hur

## Author's note

For over forty years, I have lived as non-white settler on the land of the Tongva, also known as Los Angeles. I wrote this poem in the biblical tradition of lament, grieving the systemic and cyclic patterns of racialized violence in the city that raised me. In 1965, Watts Rebellion erupted with the arrest of a black man, Marquette Frye, by a white California Highway Patrol officer. In 1992, the Los Angeles Uprising erupted the day that the verdict was announced for police officers who used excessive force on Rodney King. Then, in 2020, we all witnessed the horrific killing of another black man, George Floyd, by a police officer in Minneapolis. As a daughter of Korean immigrants, I see how racism impacts us all in different ways. I see the need for us to know the history of this land and our place in it and to expand spaces to imagine a new way of being in transformative solidarity with others.<sup>1</sup>

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*City burns again  
Rage and anguish for George Floyd  
Overflow to streets*

*We are here again  
Unable to breathe freely  
Extinguished spirits*

*Fear to see and change  
Fear to hear and understand  
Admit wrong, repent*

*Newcomers like me  
Entangled in history  
Of violence and war*

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<sup>1</sup> This poem was originally published at <https://www.mennoniteusa.org/menno-snap-shots/lament-violence-of-racism/>

*Learn we are not safe  
From hate, scapegoating and blame  
It's hard to find home*

*But this is not time  
To hush silently withdraw  
It's time to speak up*

*God calls us to love  
Neighbors from the margins  
Where we too reside*

*Hosting space for rest  
Singing ancient songs we share  
Conspiring new paths*

### **About the author**

Sue Park-Hur is the denominational minister for Transformative Peacemaking for Mennonite Church USA, overseeing peace and justice related issues. She also supervises Women in Leadership. Park-Hur codirects ReconciliAsian, a peace center in Los Angeles specializing in conflict transformation and restorative justice for immigrant churches. A former co-lead pastor and co-church planter, her passion is to see the church living out the shalom of the gospel. She has a graduate degree in Christian formation and intercultural studies from Wheaton College and a bachelor's degree in sociology and Asian American studies from UCLA. She attends Pasadena Mennonite Church in Pasadena, California.