

Survival Is Joy with Teeth

Joy as a Form of Defiance

Joy is often presented as something soft — a gentle happiness, an easy pleasure, a simple delight. But for people navigating oppression, joy is rarely soft. Our joy is sharp. Our joy has roots and history and intention. Our joy is a strategy.

Because when power tries to exhaust you, drain you, silence you, frighten you, or break you — joy becomes a refusal.

A refusal to disappear.

A refusal to collapse.

A refusal to let harm have the final word.

Joy with teeth is joy that insists on our humanity.

It's the kind of joy that grows between people who have survived together. The kind that springs up at the end of a long fight. The kind that feels dangerous to those who expected your despair.

Oppressive systems don't just fear resistance — they fear joy.

Because joy fuels resistance.

Joy sustains it.

Joy makes it last.

Despair isolates, but joy gathers.

Fear shuts down, but joy opens.

Oppression wants a tired people — not a joyful one.

****Joy with teeth knows the world is burning**

and still chooses to dance.**

This is not escapism — it's endurance.

It's how we keep imagination alive when the world tries to starve it. It's how we keep relationships strong when systems try to fracture them. It's how we build futures when the present feels impossible.

Joy is not the opposite of struggle — it is the partner of struggle.

It gives us breath.

It gives us capacity.

It gives us vision.

Children understand this intuitively. Their joy is fierce, bright, unapologetic. It doesn't apologize for being too loud or too big or too bold. It refuses to shrink.

Adults can learn from that.

We can learn that protecting joy is protecting possibility.

That cultivating joy is cultivating resilience.

That sharing joy is a form of collective care.

****Your joy doesn't have to be small to be worthy.**

Your joy can be revolutionary.**

Joy with teeth is the smile that survived.

The laughter that wasn't supposed to make it.

The celebration that honors the people who fought for us to be here at all.

Your joy is not frivolous — it is necessary.

It is resistance.

It is rebellion.

It is survival.