UnCensored¹

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Speaker: This place is sold as the ideal place, but when you come here you realize that the reality is different. So then you start to explore other places and you realize that, oh, you know, I can go somewhere else, I can get better opportunities, you know?

When you're out there, you're like, oh, this is utopia.

You're going to this place and everything will be okay. And that's how it has been sold.

But when they come and the reality hits them, they're like...I would probably see it, like, as discrimination but it's very subtle.

Researcher: If you were the mayor, what kinds of things would you do?

Speaker: You have very educated people coming here, but they're still at the whims and mercies of the majority, the host culture, very qualified skilled people whose qualifications don't apply here.

Education will play a big role in terms of changing the perception, because people want to come here and feel included.

Inclusion is a big thing.

But when you come here, it's challenging. It's challenging. It's challenging.

Researcher: Do you think there's a critical mass of your own people that would make you feel comfortable here?

Speaker: Yes absolutely. My parents live in Calgary. And so it's quite easy to, kind of, feel a sense of belonging there because it's not just even, oh, let's have a little shop here or a store there, but there are businesses and events and a life. Here in Brandon, I mean, I can count them on two hands. I've known people who just dove right in, you know, and they, in a sense, have not *died* to themselves, but they really postured themselves to be as Canadian as possible.

Researcher: That's an interesting phrase, "died." Do you feel like it involves some death?

Speaker: I would say, a *suppression*.

I love what I do here, warts and all.

But I also know that there are things that I

don't bring up. People want to see the *novel*/things, right?

You're actually poking at something at a heart level for me.

Poking at, you know, something that is part of my identity.

And you're mocking it. People are like, 'Oh, I just love ethnic food, it's so great!'

But I remember working at a place and there was

an order of curry, and he looks at it, and he's like, 'I'd rather not eat something that looks like shit.'

I've had to learn to adapt which is difficult for me every single time.

I'm good at it now. But that doesn't mean it's ever comfortable. It's never comfortable for me.

Endnote:

¹ In marked contrast, the second poem: "Uncensored" fills in the gaps. Accordingly, the second poem explores key issues related to being a Black immigrant woman in the White and winter white Manitoba, where no one really cares about the culture clash experienced. The ideas in the poems are taken from a focus group, part of a larger research project with immigrants.