

# Silence

by [John M. Joyce](#) (December 2022)



*The Latecomer*, Salman Toor, 2021

**And when you** speak and say: “I speak for you,”  
I say: “You do not speak for me,  
for I alone, and no one else, can speak for me.”

And when you say that I’m oppressed and  
losing in life’s lottery because of what I am;  
I say: “You do not speak for me.”

And when you say there's no such thing as gay,  
you must be trans, so change and do it now because you can;  
I say: "You do not speak for me."

And when you say that I cannot understand because  
I'm white and privileged so must add silence to my guilt;  
I say: "You do not speak for me."

And when you say that I and mine are murdering our world,  
so we must stop and willingly undo the good we built;  
I say: "You do not speak for me."

And when you say the children find that nature is the most  
confusing thing,  
so they must bind their breasts and cut their bits as your  
cult's sacrifice;  
I say: "You do not speak for me."

And when you say that I and mine are racist to the core  
and equal opportunity is but a sham device;  
I say: "You do not speak for me."

And when you say that I am old and male and of no consequence  
and  
should not interfere in your much longed for and anticipated  
bliss;  
I say: "You do not speak for me."

And when you vote and count the votes and say you vote and  
cheat for me  
'cause I'm too stupid to see that things are truly much amiss;  
I say: "You do not speak for me."

And when you say with force that I must not speak for I am  
wrong  
and my poor words for all the weak and credulous are far too  
strong;  
I say: "No longer can I speak for me,  
but mark, for soon there'll be no speech for thee."

\*See also: <https://quillette.com/2022/11/25/gay-not-queer/>

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