We can’t catch a breath.

Police. Power courses through your veins and empties into your mind. 

In our living room, there’s a mother training her son in hopes of one day saving his life. 

Holstered up and bolstering your power around our streets. Our homes. Our lives. 

You’re safe behind that bulletproof vest. Our hands are up. Back against the wall but we stand tall against the institution; against you. You break training. 

Your solution is clear; there it is sitting anxiously in the holster of your belt. “Innocently” as a child on the playground you

Point your finger 
pull the trigger 
You kill us.

Silenced. —LLR

Where do we go from here?

We’ve been exiled.

We must persevere. 

Heresy and Activism shall breed 

Acceptance 

We must persevere. 

Scrawl our stories on the marble and glass of their towers until our voices are heard 

Reject the institution that houses hatred and ignorance till we see the other side.

I’ll meet you on the other side. —LLR

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Living Air, Silencer, and Illuminations combine Lumen Lugo-Roman’s poetic form with his historical overview of the Reimagining Conference and Voices of Sophia documents – words of encouraging empowerment and patriarchal condemnation. Last summer’s police violence against Black Americans also informs Lumen’s verse, First Degree.