



## The Bridge Poem

*Donna Kate Rushin*

I've had enough  
I'm sick of seeing and touching  
Both sides of things  
Sick of being the damn bridge for everybody

Nobody  
Can talk to anybody  
Without me  
Right?

I explain my mother to my father my father to my little sister  
My little sister to my brother my brother to the white feminists  
The white feminists to the Black church folks the Black church folks  
To the ex-hippies the ex-hippies to the Black separatists the  
Black separatists to the artists the artists to my friends' parents . . .

Then  
I've got to explain myself  
To everybody

I do more translating  
Than the Gawdamn U.N.

Forget it  
I'm sick of it

I'm sick of filling in your gaps

Sick of being your insurance against  
The isolation of your self-imposed limitations  
Sick of being the crazy at your holiday dinners  
Sick of being the odd one at your Sunday Brunches  
Sick of being the sole Black friend to 34 individual white people

Find another connection to the rest of the world  
Find something else to make you legitimate  
Find some other way to be political and hip

in the  
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I will not be the bridge to your womanhood  
Your manhood  
Your human-ness

I'm sick of reminding you not to  
Close off too tight for too long

I'm sick of mediating with your worst self  
On behalf of your better selves

I am sick  
Of having to remind you  
To breathe  
Before you suffocate  
Your own fool self

Forget it  
Stretch or drown  
Evolve or die

The bridge I must be  
Is the bridge to my own power  
I must translate  
My own fears  
Mediate  
My own weaknesses

I must be the bridge to nowhere  
But my true self  
And then  
I will be useful