

# **Speak, But Don't Speak: Diminished Women**

**Poetry by Sandra Flores-Strand**

## **About**

The concept for this A Capella piece is based on the times we have felt discounted as women, whether it be emotionally, mentally, or physically. The prologue sets up the idea of the value of asserting our views, but only if we are being listened to. The refrain throughout the piece reminds us we are often encouraged to speak out, but easily silenced. The epilogue concludes that these attempts to silence us don't go unnoticed.

## **Prologue**

The value of words is highly sought

Yet lost on the ears of many.

Speaking holds power,

But only if words are heard.

Listen as the accounts are read.

## **Chorus**

Speak, but don't speak.

Your words are spoken

But go unheard.

## **Verse 1**

Feeble mind, your feeble mind

Precious girl caught up in time.

You're lacking sense and cause collisions

Unstable girls can't make decisions.

Feeble mind, your feeble mind

Precious girl, it's not a crime.

The stress is something you create  
A mess for others to make straight.

You're overreacting!  
Upset over nothing!  
Get over it!

### **Chorus**

Speak, but don't speak.  
Your words are spoken  
But go unheard.

### **Verse 2**

Doctor, Oh Doctor,  
Please help me, I'm in pain.  
What seems to be the cause of it?  
Can you help me Doctor?

Doctor, oh Doctor,  
Please help me, I can't stop bleeding.  
I've bled for three months straight.  
Can you help me Doctor?

Doctor, oh Doctor,  
Please help me, I'm always fatigued.  
How is that a normal thing?  
Can you help me Doctor?

Doctor, can you help me?

Doctor, do you hear me?

What does my weight have to do with this?

How is it my fault?

I'm getting a new Doctor!

### **Chorus**

Speak, but don't speak.

Your words are spoken

But go unheard.

### **Verse 3**

Can I say something?

Will you listen if I speak?

You twist my words into shapes,

Shapes that I don't recognize.

They blister my mind

And dampen my light.

When you tell me to move on,

Moving isn't inspired.

I'm looking for help.

Help you could provide.

Instead of building me up

You're content to tear me down.

Only your feelings count.

Only your words are heard.

Can I say something?

Will you listen if I speak?

Are my words valid?

#### **Verse 4**

Delusion has dimmed your light

But I still see you.

The most brilliant, talented

Woman I have ever known.

Addiction swallowed you whole

But I know you still exist.

Your venom resides in me

And in those who know your fury.

Discounted and broken,

Your tether to reality

Slowly attenuates,

Furthering the reach from aid.

What will help you, sister?

Who can help you, sister?

What could have been done?

I sense the emotional smoke

Surveying her fire from a distance.

It decimates the landscape

And taints the most beautiful sunset.

I thank the universe everyday  
For the gift of sanity  
And for the blessings of the people  
Who bring me light in darkness.

### **Chorus**

Speak, but don't speak.  
Your words are spoken  
But go unheard.

### **Epilogue**

Our words diminished by ignorance.  
Our hearts destroyed by arrogance.  
Our politeness mistaken for weakness.  
We see through your attempts.

Dampeners, Discounters, Gas lighters,  
We understand your message to us.  
Believe me,  
This time you will hear ours!