

**The voices of today
do not whisper —
they tremble.**

**Not loudly.
Not heroically.
Just enough
to betray how much they're holding.**

**We sit in fluorescent classrooms
that hum like tired machinery.
Tired eyes.
Bitten nails.
Phones lighting up like tiny lighthouses
in the dark of our palms —
each notification another reminder
that the world is still unraveling
and we still have homework due at midnight.**

**We say
we are fine
the way cracked glass says
it's still a mirror.**

**We learned lockdown drills
before long division.
We learned how to stay quiet
before we learned how to debate.
We learned that safety
is a procedure,
not a promise.**

**We measure time in headlines.
In court decisions.
In climate warnings that sound
like countdown clocks
no one is brave enough to stop.**

**Our laughter is loud —
but it has edges.**

Like something beautiful
that could cut you
if you held it too tight.

We joke about the future
like it's a rumor.
Like it's a scholarship we might not afford.
But the world we inherit is cracked.
bridges built before us crumble.
The roads we walk on are filled with questions.
Like it's a planet
with a fever
that adults keep calling "weather."

We scroll through wars
before brushing our teeth.
Through arguments about our rights
between classes.
Through think pieces debating
whether we are too sensitive
or not strong enough.

They say,
"You are the future."

But no one asks
how heavy that sounds
at fourteen.

No one asks what it feels like
to inherit a burning house
and be told
not to panic.

Depression doesn't always look like crying.
Sometimes it looks like numbness.
Like staring at the ceiling at 2 a.m.
while your brain replays
everything that might go wrong.
Like finishing an assignment

while wondering
what any of it is for.

The voices of today
echo in group chats at midnight,
in sarcasm sharpened into armor,
in silence when speaking
feels pointless.

We are compared to rising stars —
but stars burn themselves alive
just to be seen.

We are called resilient —
like rubber bands stretched
past their design.

The visions of tomorrow
aren't golden.
They're fogged.
Like a mirror after crying —
you can see the outline,
but not clearly enough
to trust it.

Still —

beneath the static,
beneath the exhaustion,
beneath the quiet ache
of knowing too much too young,

there is something.

Not hope.
Not yet.

Just endurance.

A low, steady hum

**that says:
we are still here.**

**The voices of today are cracked.
But cracks mean pressure existed.
Cracks mean something tried to break us.**

And tomorrow —

if it comes —

**will not be handed to us shining.
It will be built
with tired hands,
with stubborn breath,
with kids who are scared
but speaking anyway.**

**The trembling
is not weakness.**

**It's the sound
of a generation
carrying more than it should
and refusing
to drop it.**