

Engineering I loved it, but it did not love me *back*.

Is it because I am a woman or because I am *Black*?

These are traits, by which I am *defined*.

Labeled, placed in a box, I have been *confined*.

I need to escape, I am ready to *go*.

Who am I really? This I need to *know*.

My intellect, my own abilities, I am beginning to *doubt*.

To gain back self-worth, I must get *out*.

Others too, sad to *say*, will face this same dilemma, before graduation *day*.

Is this degree worth *it*? Am I the right *fit*?

They will ask, before they finally *quit*.

Give up on a dream, a path they took.

Discouraged from *persisting*, simply because of how they *look*.

Engineers we need more...*in the USA*; this we hear the privileged *say*;

as they push the "other" *away*.

What will it take to get more Americans to innovate?

Unconditional love? A little less *hate*?

Recognition and acceptance that we are all *great*. Giving everyone a chance to *participate*.

Recruitment and retention...buzz words administrators *speak*.

Yet their efforts are far too *weak*.

Inclusion, acceptance, and diversity too; but only for those who are most like you.

Deny who I am. Ashamed of who I was born to *be*?

Just to earn an engineering *degree* and to *be* doubted *daily*.

Even by those with less education than *me*.

Contribute to society & make a difference in this *life*; have kids, get married, and become a *wife*.

This is the choice many have *made*; to avoid heartache if they had *stayed*.

Stayed in a career, as an unwanted *guest*; even when they have given their *best*;

EXHAUSTED...so they decide to *rest*.

Why so few? Why do they leave? If I told you the truth, you would not believe.

Yes, they had the ability to *achieve*. Yet, what they needed, they did not *receive*.

The freedom to be authentic and *free*; a chance to exhibit their unique *creativity*.

When all can agree that our differences make us great, this will give us the power to innovate.

Develop novel things, not just *replicate*.

When everyone is allowed to join in the *game*;

appreciated for not being the *same*;

acknowledged as part of the *team*...*permitted* to live the American *dream*.

If being an Engineer is a dream of *mine*; include me, allow my light to *shine*.

Recognizing my light will not cause yours to *diminish*;

Instead it gives energy...helps you *replenish*.

United, as one, working side by *side*; giving each other permission to excel with *pride*.

My chosen profession, I am teaching it how to love me *back*....to accept me as an engineer

who happens to be a woman, who is also *Black*.

Dr. S.L. Gregory