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We're looking forward to seeing you at the Oregon Convention Center, Portland for our annual

Martin Luther King Jr. Breakfast
 Jan 19, 2015 from 8:30-10:30 a.m.

Two Big Men, One Giant Moment in History

By Renault Catalani

I recall the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in our television's grainy black and white. I remember his eyes. Who doesn't remember Dr. King's eyes?

In my memory, he's examining some very important papers over the shoulder of the President of the United States of America, Lyndon Baines Johnson. The President's likewise skimming those serious docs – our



Renault Catalani

1964 Civil Rights Act – a chunky pen in hand.

I'm 10 years-old and we're on our couch, near our Penncrest TV. Pop is to my right, silent — exhausted from work. A respectful space separates us. Big brother Robbie's slouched on my

left, we share a thin film of sweat between his arm and mine. Our parents' first American-born boy Roy sits between Robbie's muscular thighs.

Left and right of Dr. King and President Johnson, in several shades of grey, stand suited men from New Hampshire to California, shoulder to shoulder. All white.

Even as a fifth grader, I knew that both our kids' and our parent's awed generations were absorbing that grand moment. Indeed,

back then we believed every household on our street, our immigrant and settled neighbors alike, were moved by that monumental black and white moment. We believe it still, today.

Fifty years after those most trying days and terrifying nights of American democracy, the US Civil Rights Act still lives on. It lives as much as a provision of law produced by the best of pragmatic politics, as it does as an article of faith. American faith. Of course it does.

That same grainy scene of Dr. King's polished obsidian eyes and President Johnson's determined brows, came back to me some Saturday nights ago. My wife and I were sitting on Timothy Lake's south shore. If you've not been there, Timothy Lake is a clear Cascade reservoir curtained by tall fir, pine, and cedar, shoulder to shoulder a lot like those 1960s US congressmen. But these big elders never let harsh city lights or our urban din get past them. Not a bad thought they allow there. There, in their humbling stillness.

On that lake's edge, everyone's gazing up at a billion-billion miles of pretty planets and pulsing suns and sparkling stellar matter. Heaven's enormity packs people's eyes and ears. That late night, it all so paralyzed my ordinarily-buzzing big city neural networks that my wife had to elbow me, hard – to remind me to breath.

For immigrant community mechanics

See **TWO MEN** on page 20

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