

Dear Black People

Now I know this piece may not be popular among my peers and it will probably fall on death ears, but I trust that someone will hear. And stand with me. Because for too long we have stood against *WE*.

Dear black people.

We are our own worst enemies. We keep each other as frenemies. And when my back's turned you're really not that into me. And my light skin and vocabulary turn you against me. You don't see the beauty of our ancestry. To have so much complexity within one race.

This is our race. Stop trying to outrun me. We should try to keep the same pace. But some are too busy trying to save face. Bickering and arguing about this and that and wondering how "they" are able to take our place.

We rally around our causes when it's a fad and then we turn it into a hashtag. Why do we only rally around *us* when someone dies? Then we point the finger and wonder why we have no allies. Or why no one cares about our black lives. We blame our indiscretions on the whites. And yet we are the ones losing sleep at night. We are the ones consistently engulfed in the fight. And we pick each other off one by one and call it strife.

Black lives only matter when taken by white cops. Right?

We call each other nigga. But are quickly offended when it's used by those of the lighter tone because they use an 'er' in their tone. But we made it okay to use in any tone because we have allowed it for so long. The enunciation may change but the bigotry is still the same. I'm not your nigga or your nigger. Call me by my name. And yes, no matter how you say it, at the root, it's the same.

Dear black people.

We are haters. And imitators and perpetrators. And sometimes generators but we don't take care of our own generations yet we want someone to elevate us. Something for nothing will always be mediocre.

Every white person is not out to get you. And, yes, some of them just want to lynch you. But honestly, you have a better chance of being stabbed in the back by that brother sitting next to you. Envyng you.

Your honesty about your sister comes only when her back is turned. And you lie directly to her face. Smile to her face. And then when a bullet takes her you want to plead your case. It's too late.

Like the old folks say give me my flowers while I'm here. But you're too busy throwing the Bible at your son who's queer. While we all here living in the same neighborhoods in fear...of one

another. Talking mess about such and such's mother and why she ain't got no husband or why old man over there never opens his door and everyone on the block knows his daughter's a whore. Because her mouth is sore. But that could be from the many words she spews to get her daddy's hands off her nudes.

Dear black people.

We want to yell "stay woke" when most of us are sleeping with our eyes open. Being tokens. Allowing the masses to systematically separate of us. We are broken.

Dear black people.

We lost our faith. Some of us don't believe in anything and some of us hold our hands out for everything and some of us break our backs for nothing. Trying to keep up with a society that laughs at us. Because we are crabs in a barrel, keeping up a fuss and a cuss to you and yours, yet we continue to stand behind closed doors.

Dear black people.

The slaves are turning in their graves. The lashes all in vein. Two hundred years later and we are now the deflectors of our own pain. It's a shame.

We're always looking for a come up. Or a hook up. But we're not trying to pull each other up. Which is why your 13 year-old daughter is pregnant from a "hook up". We taught her well. Our sons are in jail and some of our mommas are in houses with their mommas living in their own hell.

Our celebrities get on TV and think they can act a fool because they have money. That shit ain't funny. Because the middle and lower classes are looking at you thinking that's okay for them to do. What's the difference between a rich fool and a broke fool? Bail. And now our kids are sitting in cells. Idolizing males who only care about ticket sales.

Dear black people.

This is a rally cry. How many more of us have to die, whether at the hands of them or hands that look like us. We pass judgment around like it's a collection plate. And then we wonder why shortcomings and unfairness have sealed our fates. That is why we should be making a fuss. *We* have failed us. *We* don't trust us. *We* don't help us. *We* don't support us. *We* don't respect us. And now look at *us*.

Dear black people.

I love my people. Imagine the effect we could have if we all loved our people. Now don't get me wrong some people just don't want to act right, but we must have compassion for those people. Light skinned, dark skinned, let's just be equal.

Sincerely,
A black people

We must take responsibility for us.

*We must end the systemic racism
That we have allowed to cultivate
Within our own culture.*

*We must fight for us.
Stop pushing against us.*

Free

Allow me to introduce myself
Rather, allow me to define myself
To target myself
To label myself
To assert myself into your commonwealth.
Although, I do not come from your kind of wealth.
I am a product of your common fare, your welfare and your unfair practices.
Your justifications of a better life
Met with strife and despair and ramifications to the lessor heir.
Hi, I am the minority.
I am the black.
I am the gay.
I am the woman.
I am the lessor paid.
I am the underserved.
I am the one not worthy of god's love.
I am free.
But what does that even mean?
What is the legacy of those before me?
Why does the earth grown miserably underneath me?
And the trees sway in the winds of the sighs of breaths taken by those who have gone to nest.
I can pass the brown paper bag test.
I can speak in tones that put slang to rest.
I am free.
But freedom lies only in this moment for me.
The absence of subjection, of injection, of rejection.
But where's the protection?
For Trayvon Martin?
For Michael Brown?
For Tamir Rice?
For all the lives unfound to have been taken for any reason but one.
You're worried about the athletic symbol on my jacket.
Meanwhile, George Zimmerman out here autographing Skittles packets.
So before you offer yourselves a pat on the back or a high five for progress, consider the slack.
One nation. Under God. Indivisible.
But certain restrictions overhaul.
Freedom and justice are supposed to be for all.

***White people do not act the way they do
Because they are white.
They act that way because no other race
Has possessed the power or the audacity
To show them how it feels to be inferior.***

Paper Bag

I am a good nigger.

I am an educated nigger, an HNIC nigger, a look but don't touch nigger.

Are you offended by this nigger?

Or maybe my use of the offensive makes you an uncomfortable nigger.

You see my light brown skin?

Is it light enough to keep you comfortable, nigger?

How do I figure?

I can pass the brown paper bag test, which, to some, sets me apart from the rest.

The hue of my skin is my own protest and my inner being finds it all grotesque.

This is a mess.

I get a pass because I do not look oppressed.

I am not your Negroe.

I am not your Nigger.

I am not your Nigga.

Overcome

I have learned to be okay here.

I have learned to dismiss the stares that approach me from the outskirts of nowhere.

I am okay, here.

I am okay with the whispers that linger throughout winds blowing through here like waves to a boat pier.

I am content, here.

I am a part of the four flights of stairs that lead to the high rise in which I dwell. It's a constant hell, here.

Am I restless, here?

Am I tired of the mediocrity in which I mask as success or, even worse, as happiness?

Then, why have I allowed myself to stay, here?

Why did I choose to exert no effort for the life that was in my grasp, instead, watching time pass by and sands flow through my mental hourglass?

I am unhappy, here.

I am being suffocated by fear and led astray by tears stemming from the joys of yesteryears.

That is the only thing that is clear.

I put myself, here.

I became complacent, here.

I do not want to die like this, *here*.

How do I find life, here?

I am lost, empty, here.

I need to find myself... here.

Enough will never be enough

Until we decide that it is enough,

Until we decide to move out of the fluff,

And hold our heads high as intended by the blood of the ones before us.

We have to show up.

Before the show down

Which leaves so many of us underground

And so many of us unfound

And justice unfound

And unfair.

We must be the ones to care.

About us.

The United States of Africa

You brought us here.
You brought us here under hopes unclear
That quickly turned to fear
And mere loneliness.

You stole us from there.
To produce your farms
And allow your children to lie in our arms
We could not take up arms
To keep us out of harm's
Way.

You made the way.
For us to have no way
We were okay
Before you interfered and offered us for pay
In return.

We could not return.
To the comfort of familiarities of what was ours
For we became yours.

You made us property.
A belonging of a place to which we did not belong
An effect of notions that would have grave effect on our emotions
Because we were your most valuable resource
You made us stuff.

You made us your kin.
You gave us your last names and even offered us to your men
And the webs of immorality grew with you taking the lead but not the responsibility.
Our women became unwanted mistresses, with husbands raising children they had no claim to.
They biologically belonged to you.

And now you want us to go back.
To the place from which our ancestors were forced to turn their backs
To come here, to the land of freedom, to pick up your slack

No, you made your choice.
You made your decision to load us up like pigeons and dock us on the land of free speech and
religion.

We paid our due.

We made America a home for you.
Despite the suffrage and the heartbreak that you put us through
Now the other foot is wearing the shoe.

How can I go back to a place I've never been?