

Growing Pains

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZqxX4gEoyCY>

There are things we don't talk about.

When I think about Social Studies
about culture, about stereotypes
about where we are now,
I wonder why I had to learn about it on my own.
I wonder why they didn't tell me.

If I could write a letter to my younger self,
I think it might go something like:

"An Excerpt from the History Lesson that Never Existed"

Listen to what they teach you:

about Columbus

about slavery

about the Holocaust

Listen to what they teach you,

but know that we were not always the good guys.

We forced the savages into barren square meters
We dug our faces into the one thing that would not obey us.
We sold the skin of every color but our own.
We laid our foundation on black backs and whip crack
We saved the yellow stars, but imprisoned yellow skin,
then turned the yellow into gold to make the brown look darker

Listen to what they teach you, but learn what they ignored.

"In 1492 Christopher Columbus sailed the ocean..." true.

He sailed through sunshine, wind, and rain,

but don't forget the blood and pain.

But, we would not know this.

So, maybe it would be more of:

"A Survival Guide"

If you object to their comments, they will judge you even more.

So, when they say your name wrong,

when they say "you're overreacting!"

when they say "You're acting black,"

Just go with it.

When they tell you they like Asians,

When they tell you to stay with your kind

When they tell you to go back to where you came from
Just go with it.

When they take your culture, but leave all your sufferage,
When they take your identity, but claim it's a compliment,
Or when they call you "Oriental" "Ghetto" "Exotic" "Wetback" "China Doll" "Esse"
Just go with it!

Don't talk about race.
Don't raise your voice at the white man.
Don't get too tan.
Don't act your race.
Don't bring Chinese for lunch.
Don't speak about your heritage.
JUST GO WITH IT!

But this seems wrong.

So, maybe, it would be more of...

"An Analysis"

Why is the white man still superior?
When did race become a language?
Why do Asians need higher scores?
How does white skin get a free pass?
How does a phone look like a gun?
Why is dark skin and a hoodie criteria for a bullet?
How is lynching made Class B in 2018?
When will they stop pointing fingers overseas?
Why are my features only pretty on a white girl?
Why is gang violence justice for a life?
Why am I still seen as perpetually foreign?
Why does 'nigger' still slip off your tongue?

But this. Is. A lot.

So, maybe it would be more like:

"Three Pieces of Advice"

1. You should not put power in another person's ignorance.
2. You should not feel guilty for your privilege, but
3. You cannot keep living like these issues are not here, because

There are Things We Don't Talk About.

When I think about:
stereotypes
slurs

norms
xenophobia
Islamophobia
police brutality
racial divides
white supremacy
hate crimes
terrorism
prejudice
discrimination
generalization
appropriation
fetishization
representation
assimilation
immigration
targeting
profiling
lynching
shooting
black fishing
black facing
white washing

When I think about where we are now

I wonder why I had to learn about it on my own.
I wonder why they didn't tell me
that actually
I don't think they know.

So maybe it would be more of:

"A Letter of Recommendation for All the Ignorant People Out There"

Don't say that I am pretty for a black girl.

That is not a compliment.

Don't say that I'm smart because I'm Asian.

That is not a compliment.

Keep in mind:

That being mixed does not just mean part black.

That the right to say "nigga" is not a bathroom pass.

You can't hand that out.

Keep in mind:

That positive stereotypes do not exist.

That a radical follower doesn't make it a radical religion.

We will not cater to your fears

of brown skin
and almond eyes
or turbans
or hijabs.

We refuse to entertain your baseless phobias
to shelter you with reassurance
or indulge in your lack of understanding
“Ignorance is bliss” was created by the oppressors.

So, next time,
don’t expect us to stand by and say nothing.
We will not stop at the three minute minimum
We will not slow our words down, so that you can keep up.

Because awareness should not come when it is convenient for you.
Acceptance should not come when it is convenient for you.
Change should not come when it’s convenient for you.
We will not stop writing to be convenient for you.
We will not stop standing to be convenient for you.
We will not be quiet to be convenient for you.
Do not ignore our words so it’s convenient for you.