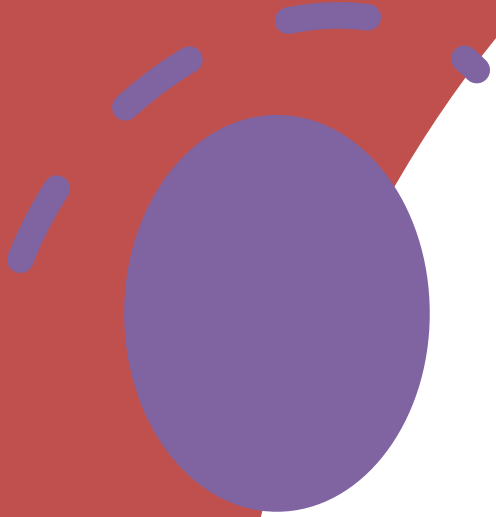


Racial Unity Team
2020
Poetry Contest Entries





ADULT CATEGORY

4 SUBMISSIONS

Birthmark

I had a dream, above a forest the moon was covered in black flames, the wolf had its ear to the ground, tracking the sound of a bullet returning to it's wound. Were they white shadows or angels who in turn wore a drop of blood suspended in the air as a tear.

At the moons command a pair of white hands carve Martin Luther Kings and Muhammad Ali's faces, they moved across the sky but the message remained the same.

My face on a marionette being controlled by a marionette comes into focus.

Desert searches for a tongue to catch the ventriloquist's echo, the Arab does not see propaganda's moon in the eyes of his camel birthmarked by the stains of Indian genocide. The cries of Comanche skies pass from lakes to rivers as they take delivery of the death masks of times daughters, the colour and design are all the same.

By Barry Carter

With
Liberty
and
Justice
for ...*

(A Ghazel)

1787-The Fugitive Slave Clause - enslaved persons crossing state lines into a state where slavery is abolished, must be returned to their owner .penal system assails. Justice?
Slavery lives on; abolition fails. Justice?

1890s-Supreme court rules separate railway carriages for whites/ blacks . Jim Crowe lives on ; blacks are separate but equal. Justice?

1920s-Living in run-down, isolated, crime ridden neighborhoods- no city housing- no urban renewal. Justice?

1940s -Busing to segregated schools far from home? followed by cruel, jeering, taunts. Justice?

1950s -Sitting in the back of the bus, daring not to move forward- fear of lethal consequences. Justice?

1960s -Stopped by police without cause; shot to death* - no help through legal recourse - justice?

1970s-Racial disparity in pre-trial- detention; - Bail amounts for blacks twice as high as whites- how futile - Justice?

1990s- Blacks- stereotyped as violent, addicted to alcohol, drugs - root cause of police brutality. Justice?

1890s to 2019- 1890s to 2019- Massive black incarcerations - my passion for liberty consistently violated - no redress -I bristle with anger as I see injustice.

*Dates are used to demonstrate that incidents of injustice have always been present.

by Marilyn Liota



Ardenia

I am a racist because of how much I loved Ardenia.

She came to us in a friend's beat up car, while riots raged in Detroit.

She changed into her white maid's uniform, white shoes, scratchy pantyhose.

Her lunch plates were in a different cupboard.

She didn't have health insurance, she didn't have race insurance.

She held me in her arms, she was a mirror to my sadness, my joy.

She beckoned me to take my first steps, she praised my potty trials.

She took me onto her lap and told me how special I was.

She listened to my chattering, she talked to me about her life.

She frowned when my mom laid on the sofa, alcohol scent coming out of her pores,

Not coming to the door when I walked home from the school bus.

I wanted to live with her.

I wanted to go to her big church with all the dancing and singing.

I looked at my smooth white arm, and at her age worn brown one,

And more than anything else I wanted to be brown like her.

So my parents let her go.

A bonus check. Christmas checks every year.

They tried to substitute Lucille her sister,

As if I wouldn't know the difference.

I am a racist because of how much I loved Ardenia.

I know now that her being there like that was wrong.

But she saved my life.

By Mary Hibbard



TRANSLATION
BOOK FOR A
CHILD BETWEEN
COUNTRIES

AN AMERICAN
CENTO

instead of having to say i'm falling apart because grief is easier to rename, i spend my night awake & press my back to the dark damp wood of my bed. there'd been black birds flitting above the crosshatched grass & a howl here so strong it shakes the pawpaw tree. i'm filled with the need to stay & i choose to stay this time for once with all my deep sins. *the world tells me, i am a tree. i live in a spot on a train's track that leads to nowhere. i touch myself—* & at the next stop, i meet a girl who wears a stain— *the stain on rubble like scarves around her neck.* living can be an act of loss. i don't know how to define mercy. my mother is a map of holes dressed in hooded vestment. my father is questioned for marriage fraud. my uncle dies from *self-harm* in a detention centre. my sister is a false minor— she wears white & became a shadow. my brother is a bird we return to the sky as smoke. it's funny being here & a memory of motion. *i'm no one's daughter— a child with a hole in her throat.* how did i get here? & in my hands, a whisper— war. what every child knows but rarely discuss. *violence is my country's boyfriend.* nothing else cuts the air quite like this movie of blood blinking lively like popcorns *along its numb scar.* what leaves you half dead? *what strips the precluded fascination with flowers?* what paints you in colors with the *blunt edge of a practiced tongue* until *gray appears on your earlobes* like *stoned cattle?* i've lost track of the times *i have hope for something so simple & sweet to sip: jawbreakers.* i confess *i am a double-ended wick & i carried it for justice & the wind.*

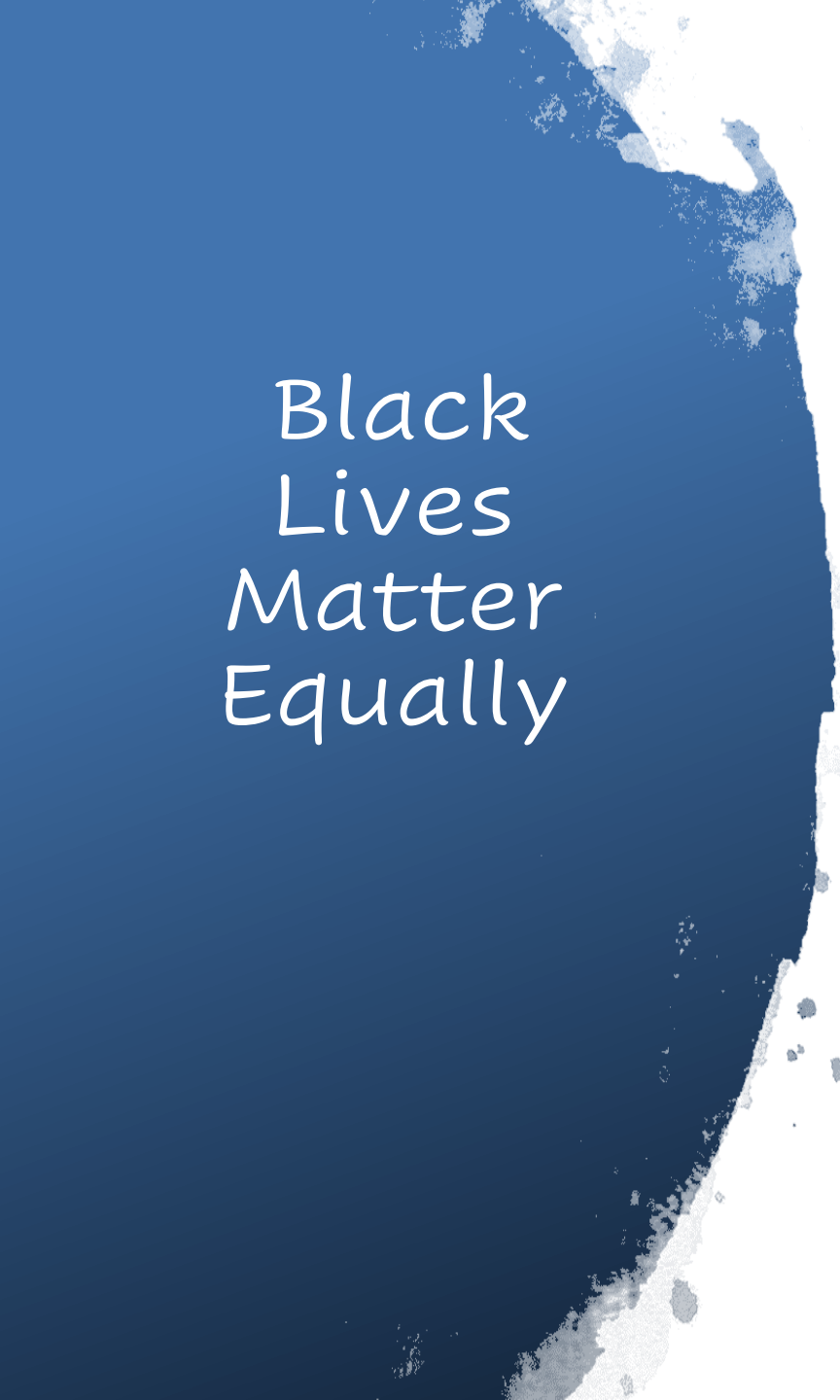
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

0 Submissions



MIDDLE SCHOOL

4 Submissions



Black Lives Matter Equally

Think about the world, God, Jesus, they made us and brought us to Earth for a reason.

God wants peace and so do others, blacks and whites deserve to be together.

So stop this nonsense.

Hold your gun.

Today is not the day for you to yell and scream.

Destroying peoples' lives is wrong and mean.

Don't hold your hand up to their neck or choke them till they lose their breath.

Black lives matter and so do ours, we deserve to be equal close and far.

Open your door and scream we want no more!

Black lives matter just like ours.

So put yourself in their shoes and think of these cruel things some people do.

And let peace on earth shine through.

Black lives matter and so do you!

By Ashlyn Szelog

Age 10

**You can't
wear
yellow**

Yellow is the color of the sun

The eternal, giving, loving sun

That shines upon the wheat fields

Yellow is the color of the lemon tree's yield

Yellow is the color of wisdom, the color of the ancients

Yellow is the canary's feathers

That glide in the air gracefully, as from each tree branch it flutters

Yellow is the godly glow

Of glittering heaps of glistening gold

But... such a color

I am not allowed to wear

For such a beautiful color, I am not allowed to care

In this glorious color, I cannot confide

Unlike the canary, whose shining wings flutter

You lock me up, and keep me behind shutters

Because yellow illuminates

Everything about me that you want to hide

**You can't
wear
yellow**

You want my caramel colored, sand speckled skin to be left in the dark
Because you said that it wasn't acceptable to see
As you fed me barbed-wire biscuits in the form of lightening creams
I cried out in pain, but you took no heed
Your taunts of "Dark", "Crow" and "Ugly" are what haunts my mind
As you stomped over my shouts and stripped me bare of every
beautiful thing
You hid my dignity somewhere where you knew I wouldn't find it
As you hid my fairer sisters under your protective wing
Bleeding, in the rain, was where I was left to live
You slathered makeup on my face
You hoped it would not only make me lighter, but cover your snide
comments
To show that you were helping, making me prettier, leaving out the
fact you are nothing but broken promises

**You can't
wear
yellow**

You are society
You told me I wasn't acceptable to be seen
I am tired of you
You tried to extinguish the flames of my fight
A crackling, rich, golden hue
It's time I lift the veil that has hopelessly intoxicated you
I am the night, the casket of the stars
Don't you know there can't be stars if there is no dark?
When you claimed my paper-colored sisters were better
Because their skin was so much fairer
Did you ever stop, ever pause, and think?
Paper alone can't make a difference
Because to make a mark, you need ink

In these gorgeous plumes of my favorite yellow
Bedazzled with my skin's anthem of brown
This honeyed skin has become my crown
Society, I warn you, don't bring me down
Whatever cage you try to construct around me
Never forget,
I will always break free

By Pranavi Vedula
Age 13



We Are All Different, But The Same

there is no wrong skin tone or
trait and there is no right one
either

everyone is beautiful, boy or girl,
black or white

we all belong

difference is a gift, we do not
want everyone to be the same

we are all in this together and we
always should be

we are all different on the outside,
but the same inside

By Addy L.
Age 9



Enough of you

Why am I not enough for you?
I'm enough Latino to be asked if I'm Mexican
but not enough to proclaim my own Latinidad
I'm sorry for my lack of melanin
I'm sorry to confuse you
I'm sorry I wasn't taught Spanish
I'm sorry I'm not first generation
I'm sorry you can't pack me into your boxes
You think I'm not hurting enough?
Being constantly pushed and pulled
Not quite one, not quite the other

You think you're the only one confused?
You think it's easy trying to find a sense of identity?
Trying to grip on to the stories I have
Trying to regain the ones I don't
Trying not to impose when I'm stuffed into the box
Latino, as if I don't have a place there
Feeling like the misfit when pushed into the box of
white, knowing I will never feel at home there
You think I like not having a culture to grip on to?
You think I don't wish to kiss my Tia's cheek, learn the
family recipe for empanadas, to feel like I belong
somewhere?
To proudly say, "Soy Chileno Americano."

By Tae Diaz

HIGH SCHOOL

0 Submissions