

# Nomadic

## By Fresh Linen

Where I'm from  
Happiness  
Is a fairytale for the faded skin  
So I left.  
Mama said  
"Half of life is just showing up"  
I guess when dad finally showed up  
that meant he's already lived half of his.  
They say,  
"Home is where the heart is".  
Well her smile feels like the dining room.  
I'm so full with her.  
She found me and I'm still looking for myself.  
I think I...  
You know she makes my insecurities feel like beauty marks.  
Her "lost boy",  
Is what she calls me.  
I think I might love her  
Her mind always appreciating the now  
My heart always looking for my final destination.  
I guess I've always seen myself in boarding passes  
Desperate for departures  
Anticipating arrivals  
All for connections

Who am I?

Obsessed with finding familiar fingerprints in fine fibers of art from my culture.

My 23 & me says I'm from a little bit of everywhere.

23 and I don't recognize home,

Anywhere.

The air here.

Hits my skin different.

We watch life together

I swear this moment lasts a lifetime.

We hear our stories in the music,

See ourselves in children.

This must be my culture.

The way rhythms tell stories to my soul like I lived them.

Why beats be on and off like heart murmurs,

My heart yearns for,

More.

I can't resist.

My new cousins make me their band mate.

They make me feel so important,

Is this what family,

sounds like?

Could this be,

Home?

I see love,

And though it might be foreign,

It's not threatening.

Little black boys,

Showing each other love.

Proof we were all once human before.

Really human.

I hope they remember the taste of vulnerability when they're black men.

I wonder when the world will see me the way I see them.

Like them,

I'm still looking up.

When did we start looking down on those that look up to us?

I found my long-lost brother.

We have different fathers,

His skin is darker,

We have different stories,

But his happiness and pain all feel familiar.

We both are so good at disguising struggle with our pearly whites.

There is no judgement in his ear drums,

No competition in his brow,

Raised on different coasts but our skin is from the same sea.

I found my long-lost brother.

We have different mothers,

But we both know the wrath,

That bad grades and streetlights bring.

Our safe place is the barbershop.

The shop owner will vouch for us.

I met the local wisemen.

We call them barbers.

Despite all the debate we all agree,

Black sure does look good with a fresh cut.

So many different souls occupy their chairs,

They knew me better than I knew myself.

Sculptors.

They see the beauty in the block.

I walked these streets,

Looking for something stunning,

When all along they help me see,

Beauty,

In the block.

It's surreal.

Christmas air with no frostbite.

I usually give Rudolph and Pitbulls a run for their money.

No red nose this year.

No gloves or peacoat.

Hot cocoa,

Will take your,

Coat off.

I'm,

Sipping,

Bubble tea,

In front of a Christmas tree!

I'm so used to dreaming a reality of white Christmases.

Not this,

This sensation of sweat beads racing to rendezvous with the bottom of my beard during

Christmas Carols.

Not these snowmen with Ray Bans on and sunscreen.

Not these sunbathed ornaments who reflect every stranger passing by,

Like an eager child.

Like abstract art this is all strange, yet I can't take my eyes off life.

Hands tremble with excitement,

I'm hype yet,

Zen.

My melanin,

Popping,

With this sunset and Christmas lighting

Is this what a soul looks like?

This evergreen tree has never kissed a snowflake

Never shivered from Jack Frost

Never had to huddle up to others to stay warm

I guess we're both strangers here

I guess home,

Is everywhere my soles

Take me.

Maybe home,

Is wherever my soles,

Are planted.