January 2018

My America

Yara Khalifa
Nova Southeastern University

Follow this and additional works at: https://nsuworks.nova.edu/digressions

Part of the Art and Design Commons, and the Creative Writing Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://nsuworks.nova.edu/digressions/vol14/iss1/11

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by the CAHSS Journals at NSUWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Digressions Literary Magazine by an authorized editor of NSUWorks. For more information, please contact nsuworks@nova.edu.
“Keep your head up, love,” my mother says.
Sent off with a kiss and a brown lunch bag.
Contorted faces and visible scowls,
No one tries to hide their distaste,
I nervously look for a seat.
“Can I sit he—” “No”
But why? I think to myself.
I look down and realize, Oh right.
I finally found a seat, right in the middle of the bus.
The piercing stares of adolescent boys,
The relentless whispers behind PINK backpacks,
Ten minutes was a lifetime.
The day goes on.
I keep my head to the ground and my comments to myself.
Then to my horrid surprise, I hear,
“Hey raghead!”
I know they’re talking to me.
I ignore and hurry to the bus.
But that’s a mistake.
With one swift motion,
I am violated,
I am confused,
I am disrespected,
And most importantly,
I am scared.
My symbol of faith—my Hijab
Ripped off and thrown to the ground.
As if it meant nothing,
As if I meant nothing.
They don’t realize, I’m not a bad person.
I’m not going to hurt them.
It’s just me,
The same awkward, quiet girl they’ve known for years.
Unaware that there could be so much hate,
Unaware that there could be so much ignorance.
It has been six years, And not much has changed.
Always reminded that I’m not “from here.”
But my passport says American,
My address says American,
My childhood says American,
But if I’m not American,
Then what am I?
How can I appease you?
By losing the best part of me?
Excuse me if I don’t agree.
Excuse me if I won’t apologize for my faith.
Excuse me for daring to be different,
For giving YOU the opportunity to learn.
Being American isn’t just having white skin and speaking English.
My America loves all.
My America accepts all.
My America is all of us.
Brown, White, Black, Yellow, Orange, Purple.
That’s my America.
And that’s the best America.

"Faculty Pick"