1-1-2020

# If We Must Identify

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## Author Bio

Re'Nyqua started out as a reader, stuffing her nose in every book possible and falling in love with stories—until one day she decided to write her own story. The story still has not ended and she plans on writing until she has nothing left to say. Although she dreams of having her name across the front cover of a published book, nothing is more important to her than inspiring readers and writers through her stories.

# IF WE MUST IDENTIFY[1] ■ RE'NYQUA FARRINGTON

If we must identify, let us strip

the hurling insults of the past that tear

through our Negro souls; the insults that rip

apart the armor we built around fear.

If we must identify, let us dance

at night without judgement during the day;[2]

free to paint our face, sans a sideways glance

or a worry about what they will say.

If we must identify, let us kiss

away the white injustices that hunt

for dark flesh and embrace our lover's bliss

during combat without special affront.

If we must identify, let us be,

be free to name our own identities.

[1] In 1919, McKay published "If We Must Die," the poem often considered the "inaugural address" of the Harlem Renaissance.

[2] In his *Crisis* magazine book review, W.E.B. Du Bois critiqued McKay's novel, *Home to Harlem*, for his morally deficient portrayal of African Americans.