

**Resource #1: "White" by Nafeesa Monroe**  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4BuS4Gfi3ho>

I haven't always been a black woman.  
When I was a kid, I was a black girl with a White mom in a Mexican neighborhood,  
so all I wanted to be was a *CHOLA*.  
With black vans and white T, pressed straight hair with a flip.  
...But no, I didn't speak Spanish.

So school starts, and my White mom notices I'm too smart for the public education  
available in the barrio.  
So my White mom finds another job (not a better job), in the White neighborhood.  
So now I'm a black girl with a White mom in a White neighborhood and all I wanted to  
be was *White*.

Unbeknownst to me, I wasn't.

Oh, I was a niggA, a niggER, a Black who talked White, ... half-breed, half-a-person.  
I was even half-White, but never whole anything.

So one day I'm coming home from my White school, riding my white bike, wearing blue  
jeans and white T with a white ribbon in my hair.

And I pass this White homeless woman who says  
"There goes little nigger girl riding her bike."

Was she talking to me?  
Did she call me a nigger?

So white tears stream down my black face leaving white streaks on my streaked soul in  
the darkness of misunderstanding.  
And confusion remained even through year 18 when I ventured to attend Wesley and  
"diversity" university.  
I never found myself attracted to Black men until I was surrounded by so many *fine  
ones!*

But the Black women wouldn't speak to me.  
So I immediately tried to uncover why I had so many enemies of the same color.  
Come to find out that light-skinned, long-haired, California girl with Birkenstocks  
wouldn't understand a dark-skinned sister with dreadlocks.

Unable to escape my dark confusion, I still sought clarification of being Black and  
Caucasian.

Sophomore year at the Red and Black university, I shunned diversity! and lived in an all-  
black dorm bearing Malcolm's name.  
And at first, I was treated like a traitor.

But I stuck it out.  
And spent time remembering my Black side,  
    for it's never a question of not knowing, it's only a question of remembering.  
Re-*member*-ing.

And though I had battled with my Black reflection that sought a Whiter direction, my  
    introspection re-taught me what I had forgotten, that my bloodline has traveled  
    through time to remind me that these are the hands the built the pyramids.

And as I searched for me in literature, poems, music, dance, theater, art, and people,  
    I re-discovered Haiti, Africa, Germany, and Ireland.

I re-found my rhythms.  
I re-grounded my creativity.  
I re-read my history.  
and I re-membered me.

And though White streaks still occasionally stain this Black face, this dark confusion is  
    lifting her cloud, bringing clarity into this mixed Colored Girls Considered Suicide  
    When Her Rainbow is Enuf.

## **Resource #2: "Mien" by Bryant Pham**

**Video link:** <http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=2064298894758>

We are nomads,  
The unknown bastard children of Asia  
We don't have a motherland  
So speaking Mien is our only resemblance to our roots  
This is the closest thing we have to home

In 1993  
I was born carrying the language of a homeless nation  
Was the only thing my father had to remind him of self-identity

When I was 5,  
We were evicted from our first home in the United States  
I asked my father  
Why are we running?

He tells me this isn't the first time we ran away from a place we tried to love  
We've been running our whole life  
Calling more places home  
Than we can count calluses on both hands

Flashback  
January 1978,  
He fled south with his family from Nam Keng, Laos to Bangkok, Thailand  
Said that these were the longest nights he ever spent away from home  
Watched gunpowder and bullets enter in the sky and explode like an orchestra of drums  
Seen his people come crashing down like comets  
He wished for survival on these falling stars

1985,  
Thailand held my people as refugees  
Wanted to disassociate themselves with our burdens  
They prefixed our last names to make sure we couldn't hide our homelessness  
Our surnames were no longer  
Chao, Lee, Chin, Phan  
But Saechao, Saelee, Saechin, Saephan  
We were just said to be disastrous

1988,  
The United Nations shipped my father to the Oakland  
America is our newest home  
But this isn't our second or third

We are so tired of trying to find a place to live  
First we were outcasted from the mountains China  
Dumped from the fields of Vietnam

Ran away from the villages of Laos  
Exported out of the refugee camps in Thailand

We are tired of feeling unwanted  
We even peeled the self-identity off our skin and tongue

Told ourselves,  
It's easy to forget a language  
We choose not to speak  
Assimilation was our survival technique  
And English was our new survival song  
We just wanted to live  
So we called whatever place we could home

When I was born  
My father removed "Sae" from my last name

We have no written past  
But I am a writer  
This is my attempt in reviving my legacy  
I will have my say in my history  
We are forced to put ourselves through a self-inflicted Holocaust to be accepted  
But we've learned that we can't love a country that wants to change us as much as we want  
to change it

Thailand,  
You taught my father that he is unimportant like a farm animal trapped in a cage

America,  
You anglicized our crowns  
Made them into halos and neck-laces so we could angelically hang ourselves whenever we  
wanted to feel graceful in your heaven  
You called this my freedom

But after years of running in the fog,  
We learned that the beauty of the wind sit in our lungs like homes  
Learned that our freedom is in the Ga' Soy and Liang Fen we cook  
The "Lang Xing", "Yie Hnamv Meih" that exchange in our everyday conversation

We keep songbirds in our lungs so when we speak in our natural tongue,  
We sing melodic whirlwind  
This is our national anthem  
But we don't have our own country  
So our language is the only thing we have to ourselves.

**Resource #3: "Carbon Copy" by Joshua Bennett**  
**Video link:** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MkNw74FPZjU>

He may never know  
that there are fireflies  
growing inside him.  
Wings threatening to sprout from his spine  
if he would merely reach toward the heavens  
my father  
is no hero.  
He's a postal worker.  
A Vietnam vet  
with a Jim Crow education  
six children  
and enough regrets to fill a casket with  
sometimes sleeps with his eyes open  
as if he's looking for 3 AM redemption  
from whatever insomniac angels  
may be still watching over his body  
and with all his flaws  
I still love him  
with every bit  
of the jigsaw puzzle heart  
that pumps life through this thin frame  
the exact same blood  
that runs through my daddy's veins  
because no matter  
how many miles I put between us  
the undeniable truth remains  
that I'm a carbon copy of my father  
exactly 5 foot 10  
170 pounds with not a muscle in sight  
love to pretend  
that we're really good at basketball  
and have this amazing ability  
to emotionally damage  
the people we care about most.  
Take my mother for instance  
the woman who gave me life  
and the person my dad  
and I owe the biggest apology to  
for our unwillingness to be vulnerable.  
Mom, I'm sorry  
for being so ungrateful.  
for not being satisfied  
with the fact that most times

it was only you in the audience at performances  
and watching me on the sidelines  
But if growing up as a Black man in America  
has taught me anything  
it's that there is nothing more dangerous  
than telling another man  
you care about him  
so at this moment  
right now  
I'm choosing to murder the  
monster that hides inside me  
the one that keeps me from crying when I need to  
and telling my little brother I love you  
Dad  
no matter what this world may say  
you are an inspiration  
a poetic painter on par with Pollock  
turned being a mailman  
into a metaphor  
because for as long as I can remember  
for 10 hours a day  
every single week  
he would sling a 100-pound sack of mail  
over his shoulders  
carry the hopes and dreams  
of the masses  
on his back  
like a 60 year-old Atlas with  
an Alabama accent  
and though he may not know it  
there's not much difference  
between the work he does every night  
and the way I write poems  
see my hands turn into carrier pigeons  
when I pick up a pen  
allowing my words to rocket through  
the air like I was on a first name basis with the wind  
and so as I long its cool with my dad  
I'll continue to believe that  
the lights I write to every night  
are coming from within him  
the fireflies on his insides  
the sunbeams that gleam  
from his gut  
as a constant reminder  
that my father will never die

even when we forget to act like family  
and he doesn't have the insight  
to see  
that I'm the only 19-year old  
I know who still wants to grow up  
to be just like his Dad  
that I'm fully aware  
that no one else could possibly bear  
the weight of my Earth-sized  
insecurities the way that he can  
and even when no one else gets him  
his second- youngest son understands  
that life ain't easy  
when you come from war  
with a purple heart fastened to your chest  
and a shattered one behind the seams  
when you come home from war  
and post office realities  
are spawned as  
the bastard children of your  
law school dreams  
I know what you sacrificed for me  
and I promise  
that I'll use this God-given gift  
to repay you one day  
but for right now  
Let go.  
no one's watching  
it's o.k. to be broken sometimes  
let the lightning bugs loose  
so I can illuminate the path for my children  
and provide them with undeniable proof  
that they are the descendants of a man  
who held the stars in his stomach  
could crumble a mountain with his smile  
and spoke truth to his son  
as if the entire world  
were watching.