

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.