

I hear your fear and your pain  
I feel your shame and recognize your guilt  
Most days rising from your bed with the best of intentions.  
Love Country, Love Family, Love Others and of Course Love God.

Life for you is hard...not enough hours in the day  
    Shuffling accounts to pay  
    All smiles but no time to play  
Striving for College for your children  
    Working hard, saving, sacrificing,  
Doing good in the public square minding your own business, seeing no color, or difference, ---  
that's how you were taught to be.  
You're a decent person who has enough tension with co-workers, spouse and siblings  
Enough for a lifetime

You grew up in a nice Christian Community, teachers who instilled values, reinforcing the values  
of your parents, reinforced by the values of your church

Values like quiet not loud  
Values like orderly and busy  
Values like what's  
    Attractive  
    Christ like  
    And Good

There were few ---different from you--at home in your neighborhood  
    Your church  
    Your school

What you knew about others you learned from  
    Home, on Tv and Newspapers  
    School, in textbooks, teachers and fellow students  
    Church, from Missionaries, and outreach efforts.

Avert your eyes when you see them  
Be blind to color-in the public square  
You learned it well

Love their children and their food, and occasionally their music

And fear---  
    Fear her- her strength, candor, passion  
    Fear him- he's superhuman, hypersexual, ultra violent  
Fear for yourself-

Redline your community for the sake of your property value,  
Protect your tradition for the sake of your children  
Maintain your position because who know what's coming next

Fear for your son-     who might be poisoned by them  
                                  Or lose his job or scholarship because of them  
Fear for your daughter  
                                  Who might be swooned by their sons  
                                  Who might defiantly see color  
                                  Or admit she hates black

I see you, hear you, feel you

Cause fear is real  
Black women ARE strong and loud (sometimes)  
Black men do excel in sports and benefit from affirmative action (Often).  
Mixed race marriages are on the rise making color truly hard to see(Truly)  
And your values Are interrogated, demeaned and vilified on TV, social media and in the  
public square

You Are called racist and privileged and unforgivable and you wonder if you “matter”

You fear that you'll never be forgiven  
Shame mingles in the roots of ethnic pride  
Pain stems from blame and knowledge that we will never be the same

I said I see you-----  
behind this caramel color skin and almond eyes  
draping locs and flat nose  
I see you--  
I don't hate you  
I don't pray for your demise  
I don't long for your fall  
I don't want it to be this way  
Between you and me---  
When I see you  
I see all the stuff, the feelings, and then I see-- the beloved of God--- that's who I see.

*~Written by Denise Kingdom Grier*