

The Color of Friendship

Snow Blindness

To pitying Europeans: From an African

Once upon a time we were a people united, we built monuments yet unexplained today, we were fearless warriors who laughed in the face of danger, and triumphed in adversity. We were a spiritual loving, sharing people, who believed that one child was the child of the whole village. Yet you refuse to admit these facts to our children, who continue to feel the pangs from a hunger that cannot be satisfied with food.

In fear, you took our brave men, our protectors and our children's pride from us, and stripped them of their dignity and self worth. Yet you wonder why we despise you. When we walk past, you droop and lust for us in private. But don't you know that we would rather DIE than satisfy your lust?!

You systematically and purposely wiped our culture, language, pride and other African traits from us, so that you could more easily rob us of our riches and use us to increase your own. You divide us, and turn us against one another, so that you can steal and murder with ease. Your wealth was and is still built from our suffering. Yet you wonder why we never forget.

AND YOU CALL US CRIMINALS?!

You treat us like children, and wonder why it angers us. You call us backward and tell us we are a people in shambles - from a continent in the same condition. Yet you forget what we were BEFORE you soiled our minds with your lies, took riches from our land without paying, took our people without asking, diluted our blood with your seed!

AND YOU WONDER WHY WE DON'T TRUST YOU!

You prefer to remain in a mental fog, so that you do not see the destruction you have rained on us. You toppled our house. We have been rebuilding it - despite all. Yet you say we are useless, lazy, hopeless, helpless.

ARE YOU YA & YA BLIND?!

You expect us to learn about you, yet you refuse to do the same for us. Then you use your ignorance as an excuse when you offend.

WE ARE STRONG! And don't you EVER forget that!

Please do not frown with sadness, shrug your shoulders in wonder, or use words of pity. It is you who deserves pity. It is your head that needs to be examined. It is you who will pay dearly in the end.

A.Njoku

The Thinking Thought

There's more to me than just me.
There's more to me than what people see.
Maybe she's the body and I'm the living spirit
of her thoughts. Maybe she's the guidance that
hold me in peaceful thought, and he's the peaceful
hands that keep her at rest as she holds me.
She is she, together we are we.
Best known as family!

Rolanda C. Kane

(To the living memory of my mother Mrs. Madeline Suella Kane)

by Nadia Ronke Meley Maathey

I saw him as I was climbing up, he was standing just at the end of the stairs. "He must be the new guy who has been jumped a grade," I thought. At that moment little did I realize what a cherished and beloved friend he would become - he was Indian and I was Black....

I grew up in the nation of Ghana in West Africa. I had no shame whatsoever about my race, simply because I had black role models all around me, and within my family. My mother is a lawyer, my father runs his own company and my grandfather was a judge. Other Black role models included doctors, politicians and professors. I grew up with a lot of pride in my race. Ghana also has a business community of successful Lebanese and Indian people. My dislike for Indians began when I noticed how badly they treated their Black employees, as though they were slaves. They considered themselves superior to Black people. I also witnessed an Indian male say that Black people were utter fools. It was against this backdrop that I grew up forming negative stereotypes for the painful and humiliating treatment they meted out to my race.

..... as I got up the stairs I said "Hi," to the Indian boy, thinking how lonely, friendless and intimidated he must feel. He flashed a grateful smile at me and introduced himself as Senthil. Over the course of the term we got to know each other better and discovered that, in spite of our racial and religious differences, we shared lots of common interests and opinions. It was hard initially for Senthil to feel fully accepted in the class since he was new, much younger and a brilliant student. The top scholars of the class felt intimidated by this "young upstart" who beat them in courses in which they had dominated. They mocked him and tried to intimidate and belittle him. (I found it interesting that one of the ringleaders was an Indian himself). Senthil however, stood his ground admirably in these trying circumstances. Most of Senthil's provocateurs were my friends so when they made derogatory remarks about him, I boldly rose to his defence and expressed my disgust and displeasure.

..... Throughout the course of our blossoming friendship I grew to respect Senthil for his integrity and honesty and I gradually discarded my negative and stereotypical preconceptions about Indians. Sometimes it took a particular situation for me to even realize the preconception I held since it buried in my unconscious mind. A very good example of this is that one day early in our friendship Senthil asked me to become his girlfriend. Even though I was not surprised I was not prepared to answer him at the time. I said, "No," and muttered something about

how it would ruin our friendship. At home that night I was very perturbed, I wanted to be absolutely certain that my response was not because of his race. I came to the sad resolution that it was. I simply could not imagine having a relationship with a Indian. Even the thought of marrying one was out of the question. However, as I got to know Senthil better I soon realized that I could have a

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relationship with him without misgivings due to his racial identity.

I feel vulnerable, having bared my soul in this personal story since I'm not proud that I once harboured racist feelings. However, it serves to illustrate the problem of racism that I find to exist in Canada and Nova Scotia, in particular.

1. Most White people hate being accused of racism even when there is a valid basis. They get defensive,

vehemently deny it and invariably say, "Well, I have Black friends.... so I'm not a racist." This does not necessarily follow. I had a few Indian friends before Senthil and I did not consider myself a racist.

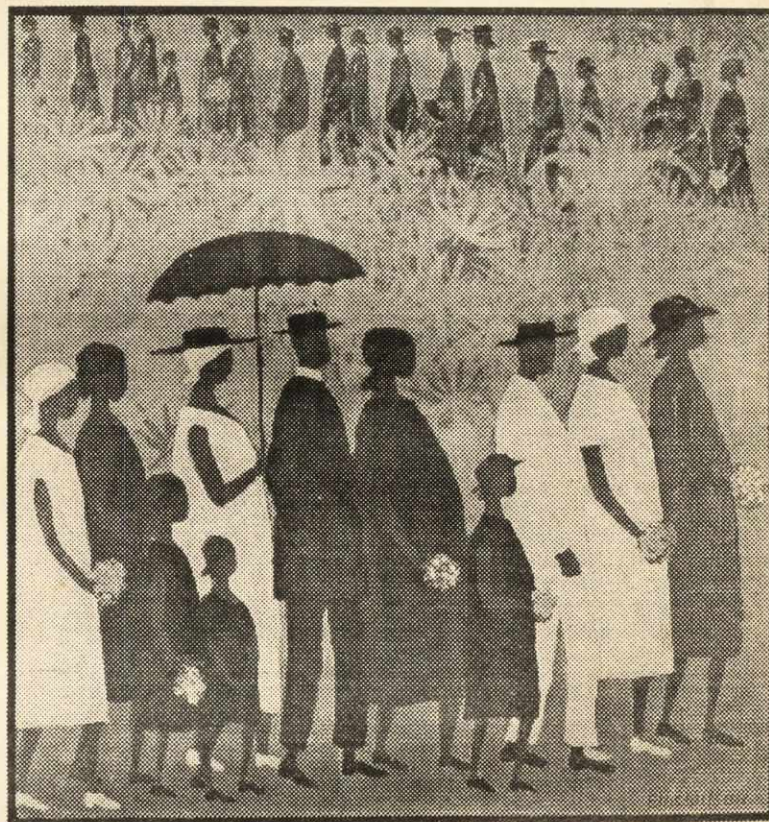
2. *Are you racist?* If you call yourself a non-racist you should not allow your friends to make racist jokes. It's not enough to say your a non-racist, without backing your words with actions.

3. An effective way of knowing if you have racist tendencies is to ask yourself whether you can in all honesty marry someone who is Black or of another race. *Well, can you?*

Finally, I would like to encourage you to take a chance and make friends with someone of another race. Don't allow their racial identity to be an obstruction to the otherwise enriching experience of a cross-cultural friendship.

Epilogue:

Senthil and I keep in touch and remain great friends. He is currently studying Engineering (an interest we both share) in one of the Ivy League universities in the states.



Dead before its time

STUDENTS, Black - 200, formerly of Africa, died January 1, 1994, in Dalhousie University, Halifax of historical amnesia. Born in Canada, Africa, Caribbean, and America, they were the sons and daughters of the late Harriet Tubman, Malik El-Shabbazz, W.E.B. DuBois, Sojourner Truth, and Kwame Nkrumah. They were members of the Black Canadian Students Association (B.C.S.A.), African Students Association (A.S.A), Black United Students (B.U.S.), and Dal-Mount Caribbean Students Society. They are survived by the emptiness which will be left for future generations of Black students. Their lack of gumption in organizing themselves into a collective union has weakened their political position to a point, comparable only to the federal Progressive Conservatives. Visitation will be in Halifax from now to whenever. Funeral services t.b.a, depending on the responsiveness of the Black student body. In lieu of flowers, assistance may be offered to any Black student association or group. Maybe that assistance, a.k.a. work, will resurrect the dead.

Jasen Gannon