

Her roots and her flowers
by Hershelle Bailey



When I think of Black lives matter I think of love, expression, and honesty. Growing up, I remember growing up my mother always wanted me to have a variety of white and black barbie dolls, while my dad only wanted me to have black dolls. Back then I didn't know a difference. I just wanted to love my dolls and play. I could remember being so happy with whatever dolls I decided to play with, even if the dolls had curly-kinky hair while the other had straight hair. When

I think of black lives matter, I think of being judged for wanting to live outside my experience growing up in poverty and parents who abused substances. I wanted to live outside whatever stereotype society viewed me as or the opinions the white teachers thought of me when I went to school with dirty clothes and no money to afford school activities and calling my parents at home making sure I was in a stable home. I knew one day this black girl was going to create an atmosphere for herself, not out of anger, but out of expression. When I think of black lives matter, I think about how I barely remember learning about my history in school and that's a problem. When I think of black lives matter I think about my art, how I've taught myself how to be the black girl who enjoys painting whatever her heart desires. When I think of black lives matter I think of honesty, being honest with my feelings, my thoughts, and my self-love, especially when I think I'm going to be judged because I feel comfortable wearing my hair in an afro. When I think of black lives matter I think of my dad always telling me "Well, is he black?" and thinking to myself why does it matter.