

Open Your Mind and Soul by Haneen Alkabasi

Denial

She's not racist
But we can't stop for iced coffee in Hartford
She's not racist
But they are always causing trouble
She's not racist
But we can't talk to people with darker skin
She's not racist
But they are extremely loud and aggressive
She's not racist
But I can't be near girls who have more melanin
She's not racist
But they are unintelligent and unwilling to cooperate
She's not racist
Racist, racist
Big nose, big lips, big forehead
She is racist
But she would never admit it.

Blinded

He says,
Why Black Lives Matter?
I already know what's about to come.
I don't mutter a word
I don't acknowledge it
I don't want to argue
More than we already do—
I keep my eyes forward
Focusing a great deal on the road
But where's the logic,
I can't get ahold of it
It's not even remotely there

He says,
I understand thank you to essential workers;
But why are there Black Lives Matter signs?
They're not above white.
You are racist
And you refuse to see it

I find the courage to speak up
But he shuts me down
 Screaming
As if that makes him right
As if that justifies his rational
As if that fuels his opinion
But he just wants to win the argument
He couldn't care less about anyone

Inform

I will never fully understand the Black experience
But I learn more about it everyday
I was not given “The Talk”
After receiving my license

While I was told to be aware of my surroundings
They were told to show respect no matter what
I was told to maintain a safe following distance
They were told to comply with every order
I was told to follow the speed limit signs
They were told to place their hands
On the dashboard; So the officer
Can see their every move.

As a matter of fact
It is something unheard of
In the Arab community.
We share their fear
And mutual distrust
But not to the same extent.

There was a lack in communication;
To the point where
Children at the mosque
Would dial 911 as a joke
The police were not our enemy.

I have attended countless webinars
One more informative than the last
Did you know that the police system was built on slavery?
From slave patrols and night watchers
Who were tasked to prevent slave revolts by chasing down runaways
To modern day policing
And people wonder why the criminal justice system—
Still discriminates against African Americans.

Did you know that America was founded on riots?
Remember the Boston Tea Party you were taught numerous times
Now try to recall any Black history in those textbooks
The little that was included was white washed
But that's a conversation for another day.

The police escalated the violence at protests.
Maybe consider that they were intended to be peaceful
But turned violent due to the excessive force.
Maybe compare the reactions for a
BLM Protest and the Capitol Riot.