

## **The Indoctrination of an Epidemic**

From the moment we are born,  
Our senses create perceptions,  
Perceptions then are formed,  
And influenced by education.

No one ever said to me, “Black people are lesser,”  
It wasn’t so blatant, it was a quiet oppressor.

It was when my mom locked the car doors,  
While we drove through a black neighborhood,  
It was when true history was ignored,  
And manipulated so white people could look good,  
I realize now, George Washington didn’t have wooden teeth,  
Those teeth were taken from slaves, but that’s something American history doesn’t want us to see.

It was when my parents would not let me go on a date with a boy who was black,  
And when I asked them “why not?” they had nothing to say back,  
They assumed because his name was Ethan that he would be white,  
Cause if his name isn’t Dequan or Tyrone, then he’s not black, right?  
But once I showed them a picture, they were quick to say “no,”  
With no other explanation for their abrupt change besides “because I said so.”

White people believe that because slavery was abolished,  
That means racism no longer exists,  
But just like the COVID-19 virus,  
This is an epidemic that will persist.

Just like racism, this virus is an invisible villain,  
You can’t see it,  
but you know it’s there,  
Infecting the minds and bodies of men, women, and children.

Like the virus, racism today is quick, fast, and hard to pin down,  
But just because you cannot see the source, doesn’t mean it’s not around.  
As Gen Z would say, racism today is a bit more “lowkey,”

But why should it take shackles and chains to see that black people are being treated unequally.  
Black people may no longer be being caged physically,  
And yes, that is good.  
But they are still being caged mentally, emotionally, and financially,  
And feel they need to rise out of the “ghetto” and the “hood”

But what caused there to be a ghetto?  
What caused there to be more black people in jail?  
What caused worse education in urban areas?

Regretfully, it took an act of racism on blatant display,  
For my eyes to be opened to the sickness of our nation,  
It was about midnight on a Tuesday,  
When I awoke to screaming,  
And a white boy telling a black girl that she should go back to picking cotton on a plantation.

Some drunken white boys were passing by the front of James,  
When he decided to yell this at a black girl through a window,  
Everyone in the building looked at him with disgust and shame,  
And we all collectively booed at him below.

The eradication of this virus,  
Begins when we stop letting hate divide us.

And it begins with the education system correcting harmful rhetoric and indoctrination,  
That has plagued the institution for years, from generation to generation.

Black Lives Matter is educating our children about America’s true history.  
Not a rose-gold version that makes it seem better than it’s reality.  
Black Lives Matter is correcting our parents and teachers harmful and ignorant rhetoric,  
Maybe then we can start to heal and have more equality.