

THIS BODY/MINE

How does Blackness live in my body?

It feels like anger over all the injustice and propaganda.

It feels like pride for achieving in the face of 2 out of 10 odds.

It feels like self-hatred from all the brain washing and my part in the genocide.

It feels like love because of what's inside of me, this Blackness, is inside my family, friends and role models.

It feels like fear because White supremacists seem like they would rather kill us all than share equality.

It feels like being Jewish because White power wants to bake me in an oven next.

It feels like being Puerto Rican, like my father, because that's how I look, who I shared Brownsville with, and how I also identify.

It feels like power because adversity has introduced me to one heck of a man.

It feels like the future, as more babies non-white are born than white.

It feels disconnected from Africa or culture but re-rooted in Hip Hop and art and Queen and Slim.

It feels like Rahsaan "New York" Thomas.

Rahsaan

How does Jewishness live in my body?

With ambiguity.

With the inheritance of a Jewish mother and Christian Father.

With a conscious choice to identify as Jewish, even when my brother does not.

With affinity toward my sister and her family, who also identify as Jewish.

With effort to make sure my son knows he is Jewish, though he can take that on any way he chooses.

With discomfort for the ways my slightly hooded eyes host epicanthic folds.

With self-hating, for not being blond and pretty.

With awareness that being a dancer has trumped, so far, the rounded shape of a middle-aged woman typical of my family line.

With certainty that my grandmother's argumentative intelligence has been passed down to me.

With connection to the vast numbers of Jews in the U. S. who have no religious practice.

With an ever-present sense of responsibility to do the right thing.

With a genetic memory of being made-- by force, by death, by exile--- not to belong.

With growing discernment, as White nationalism grows around me.

With more Jewishness, as I study the intersections of trauma, race, feminism and Jewish identities.

With a growing understanding that Brash has been a survival strategy, and so, claiming it.

Jo

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