

A Seat At The Table

By Logan Green

Youth Storyteller in Residence

Honorable Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson was asked a defining question by Tennessee senator Marsha Blackburn: “Can you provide a definition for the word **woman**?” With a look of polite confusion on her face she leaned in and replied, “No. I can’t.”

Hmph, “a definition.”

Before I begin, understand that this is not a race poem.

This is not a poem defining gender.

This is in fact not a poem.

This is the absence of poetry.

This is a conversation.

One that I have been left out of.

At a table that had no seat for me.

In a place that had no space for me.

This is not a poem

Because without the presence of Black girls and women, there is no art.

A reckoning without us is incomplete.

Becoming only a fragment of this future that you seek.

I’ve spent time researching feminism and its relevance to my life

Reading excerpts from Black feminists

Beah Richards, Audre Lorde, and bell hooks to name a few

And I have discovered what they already knew

Your feminism is a like an invitation to a meeting that started an hour prior to only a select few

Your future is like a continuation to a song that praises you

And that is not a feminist future that I want to be in

In this future, I am a server at a table that was never set for me

I am the cater, the maid, the caregiver, but I am never the host

My body, their props for performance

An opportunity to showcase their inclusiveness

In this future, our equity comes with a bargain

If you tone down now you can have your equality later

You can’t talk about how hard it is being Black and being a woman: CHOOSE

But in my present, I am Black before I am woman



You asked me to describe my version of a feminist future
I immediately think of the future that my ancestors deserved
One they moved mountains for
As they hear the longing in my prayers
One that was not painted with the colors of their reality
One that remained in the beautiful minds of the women that birthed me
When I think of feminism, I do not see a girl whose skin is as rich as the soil that flowers bloom
I do not see my mother, the first home I ever knew
I do not see anyone that looks like me
Or many that look like home
Black
Transgender
Queer
Muslim
Disabled

Can you provide a definition for the word woman?
A question left unanswered because it can't be defined
For your feminist future, what do you have in mind?
Do you see experiences aside from yours?
Are there leaders in every shade, shape, and religion?

When the interviews stop, and the curtains close, where will your feminism lie then?
Will it still lie in the bags of the women who put theirs aside to carry yours?
There is a world of women who have never known feminism and its possibilities
And while the only knowledge of it lies in the possibility of reintroduction...
reconstruction is still there

Feminism is teaching, listening, THEN creating
Feminism is knowing that the word woman has an infinite meaning
Feminism is the girl who must take the ramp instead of the stairs
The girl who bows in praise to Allah
The girl whose heart and soul declared her girl before her body did

Feminism is me standing here reading this poem
My voice carries weight like the shoulders of the women before me
who have been taught for generations that their sole purpose in life is to be servants to men
I won't hide my body for their comfort
I won't Roe or Wade in their waters
We are not cattle
We are not daughters of patriarchy
We are mother earth
Revolution starters
Warriors who always prevail

It's time that we are seated at a table where freedom no longer has one face
It drinks from the same cup
Eats from the same plate
Feminism belongs to whoever chooses it
It is time to build a new table
Where no one must earn their seat because everyone is already here