

# THE EGG



**The Egg**

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We are here, and for the first time, we are listening.

We are claiming a space for the voices that have been silenced.

We are here, and together, we are fearless.

- The Egg

## **Table of Contents**

A Black Girl's Morning To-Do List — Teri Bradford

The Thought Process of a Suburban Black Girl Who Decided to Wash Her Hair on a Sunday —

Bailey Creamer

The Fate, of the Election — Anonymous

Black Girl Magic — Diarra Clarke

Am I Not Enough? — Madison Rubottom

Anger. —Destynie Chase

Neighborly to Some — Ahmir Allen

Mask — Alona Williams

Let Him Breathe — Destynie Chase

The N Word — Anonymous

Teri Bradford

### **A Black Girl's Morning To-Do List**

1. Wake up as Goddess
2. Admire how the melanin pops severely
3. Hear lies from snakes in the grass that make you afraid of your body, your purpose, your potential
4. Embrace your power, appreciate your capabilities, and overcome your fear to embrace yourself as an influential being
5. Listen to Beyoncé
6. Give reverence to the women who came before you, who birthed you, who allowed you to stand on their shoulders to reach your dreams that are higher than theirs were
7. Water the plants, be one with nature
8. Recognize the work that Black women often do without acknowledgment. Work that keeps humanity, this broken country, companies, and many households together.
9. Wonder if the Black woman will ever stop being the most disrespected, un-protected, and neglected people in America.
10. Eat Breakfast

Bailey Creamer

**The Thought Process of a Suburban Black Girl Who Decided to Wash Her Hair on a Sunday**

These water droplets will not stop creeping down the nape of my neck...

Deep conditioning. I haven't done it since

I left home – no no.

Wait, shit. I haven't done it since

Two fucking years ago?

So that's why I'm sitting in my dorm room at

11:48 PM, cold ass droplets streaming toward

the collar of my robe. I walked around

the dorm floor, shower cap atop my cranium.

The entire time, I hoped that none of these white girls would

Come out of their rooms and

See my normally “fluffy?” afro weighed down with moisturizer

And water confined inside of a

Thin, transparent, plastic lining.

“Yes, I know I'm not in the shower.”

I mean, I can see the look

That Fucking look, ya know?

I can just see it now.

Eyes angled slightly upward

Furrowed brow

Confused/amused smirk

“Oh my God,                                  doing?”

Bailey,            are you

what

Since elementary school, conversations involving my hair

Have induced Mild anxiety.

I need to stop stammering when I answer them.

I have no reason to be nervous.

*These* white girls haven’t tried to touch

MY HAIR yet...

Anonymous

## **The Fate, of the Election**

November 8th, the date that decided my fate...

The date that incriminated. The date that dissipated... that grated the backs of the slaves for some cheese.

That played on economic policies, rather than the welfare of the OTHER human beings.

The very day, that will prevent little brown and black boys from going outside to play. The day it hurt worse to be gay.

The time that no one would be punished for their hate crimes.

The night that it felt wonderful to be white.

The hour that the most brightest hopes lost power.

The minute we knew the OTHER lives would be finished.

The second we all felt our ancestors descending from heaven.

Diarra Clarke

•Black Girl Magic•

In the conflict of complexion  
Kemet sewed seeds of caramel drops in her reflection  
And they still called her ugly

Ma'at guidelines tell us to not be blindsided  
White as clouds  
Deep as espresso  
Her bitter soul  
They criticize her skin

Never acknowledging the magic within  
She moves in fright  
And never ever does she stop to look at herself  
Not in the river  
Not in the stream  
Cus when she sees what she is she screams lord what is this  
I don't understand why you made me so ugly  
My smile like cracked porcelain I'm broken  
Bones that hold my skeleton run away from my skin  
I'm in  
For life  
These 24 hour prison bars hold in my sides  
These pants ride so high  
My hips hate me  
My legs long like the sprint from my face could finish fast like him  
The night I let him in he was gone before my sun rised and climaxed to him I was ugly

My skin is not fair  
And society plays follow the leader  
Lead her into the heat  
Her hair will scream  
And her toes cry from in between the holy pews  
She gets on her knees and for him she blew  
Gulping her pride  
Swallowing him inside



She has summed up her worth as she knows it

They don't tell her the coils in her hair are rich with ominous light

Dark as the Galaxy,

Balance

We search for isn't found on this earth

Crem-de-kryptonite she smacks her hair to relax so she can sleep at night

Without the mocking dreams of what she looks like

A Devine kink holding her crown up to Amenra for soiling

A piece of a diamond is gouged in her eyes and she sees coal she was never told

They won't be at peace

With your Black girl piece, so please

See the magic in your black soul

You embody divine magic Black girl

No matter what you're told

That's my peace.

“They will rebel your Black Girl Magic”.

Madison Rubottom

## **Am I Not Enough?**

Am I not enough  
to be considered Asian?  
to be accepted as Vietnamese?  
Where are the rules  
and measurements  
that you'd have me meet?

My mother  
My grandmother  
Born in Vietnam  
Is their blood  
their family  
not enough to extend to me?

Is it because  
I don't speak the language  
more than to lovingly call my Grandfather  
"ông già" : "old man"  
or to name the food on my Grandmother's table

Is it because  
I look white?  
My brother, blonde hair and blue eyes  
looks white?  
Our one quarter Vietnamese  
cancelled out by how white we look

When I stood in my Grandmother's kitchen  
barefoot and in pajamas  
in the summer Florida heat  
and learned to cook  
Pho  
Bánh xèo  
Nước mắm pha  
some of my favorite dishes,  
I wasn't thinking about my "one quarter" status

I don't know  
as much about my cultural heritage  
as I would like  
But I keep learning

Your discount of my family  
"one quarter doesn't count"  
diminishes who I am  
and I will not stand for that

This is a part of who I am  
I am biracial  
I am proud of my family heritage

Destynie Chase

**Anger.**

To be a Black Woman is to be under constant attack.  
It is to be constantly disrespected.  
It is to be called  
Ghetto  
Nappy headed  
Ugly  
Too Dark  
Too Aggressive

Black Women cannot win  
We cannot breathe without  
A squad of coons rushing  
To suffocate Us.

We cannot have anything  
without Becky and friends  
Griping about not feeling included

We don't have to share our culture.  
You've taken enough.  
Watching and waiting  
Like the vultures y'all are.

Ahmir Allen

## **Neighborly to Some**

There are certain places in the city of Pittsburgh that I can't stand to go to anymore. Places I used to be familiar with, but after a few years away I returned and they looked nothing like what I remembered. The issue of gentrification in Pittsburgh is complicated but clear to see at work every time you walk through neighborhoods like East Liberty and Bloomfield, neighborhoods that people suddenly began combining under the umbrella term "East End," which didn't seem to exist when I was growing up.

I've always moved around the city, with my mom renting homes from Penn Hills to the West End and everywhere in between while I was growing up. This gave me a chance to know what it's like living in places that the city doesn't pay attention to, neighborhoods with food deserts and dilapidated business districts and shabby infrastructures. While my mom did her best to make life convenient for my older sister and myself, the condition of the areas around us never made our houses feel like homes.

The one constant neighborhood I knew growing up was Point Breeze where my grandmother lived, specifically McPherson Boulevard which is the last street that's officially considered Point Breeze before moving into Homewood. At the end of the block is Westinghouse park, and all the kids who lived on my street used to meet up and play there for hours. It was more fun because most of the kids I knew on that block were my cousins, so if we ever felt like it we could just hang out at any of our houses as much as we wanted. We would always play at the park until the streetlights came on, and then at dusk my cousins and I would race each other back home to seal the day.

Living on McPherson kept me in close proximity to an area that didn't receive fair attention from the city and had some pretty tragic crime rates, but also had a history of art and liveliness that people don't always mention. This was also the story with East Liberty, where the community was also primarily made of black and working class citizens just outside of the wealthy neighborhoods like Shadyside and Squirrel Hill.

Growing up around that area felt comfortable because even though the streets had tons of litter and a lot of people and business looked like they had seen better days, my whole family knew everything about the neighborhood. The restaurants and stores all had a firm history with the community, and everyone looked after each other when they could. There was also a vibrant history of art and music with places like the Kelly Strayhorn Theater, a history I was too young to have seen personally but all of the adults seemed to remember very happily.

The city's stance on gentrification was clear when they began the process of hiking up living expenses to move out lower-class people who lived in East Liberty, finally knocking down the East Mall—a huge apartment tower with primarily low-income residents after moving everyone out to clear space for new projects. My last memories of it were walking by the rubble days after the dust had settled, confused at all of the construction equipment and demolition vehicles parked all over the streets.

There had already been an influx of businesses that many of the people who lived there couldn't afford, organic grocery stores like Whole Foods and Trader Joe's when originally there had only been a rundown Giant Eagle. They went on to build a huge Target and other small businesses and restaurants, but this of course led to old businesses being kicked out when landlords saw opportunities to send rent prices through the roof. Higher end hotels like Ace began developing

in the area, and the city began a huge reconstruction of East Liberty's infrastructure that's still underway.

Some people defend gentrification because there are a lot of impacts made by it that seem like benefits. Crime rates decline, old neighborhoods look nicer, people seem happier and more comfortable walking around. Business districts revive and the economy booms. But gentrification is devious because it doesn't look at the neighborhood that came before it and see the people or the history, just the land and property to be marketed. Housing issues and crime rates don't drop because the city has taken steps to help homeowners or to put people exposed to crime on a better path, they drop because the ones with power finds ways to move those people out. And the people without power, the ones who lived in these areas their whole lives and can't afford or aren't familiar enough to live anywhere else, end up suffering.

I would really love to be able to walk around Bakery Square and just have a chance to enjoy all of the new stores, all of the nice architecture, the whole friendly atmosphere. But when I see signs that use the history of a community that has been pushed out as advertisements for the businesses that did the pushing, and when I remember taking the bus and walking through East Liberty with my grandmother when I was young and seeing how familiar and comfortable she was with a neighborhood that almost entirely isn't there anymore, I can't help but feel sick to my stomach.

Alona Williams

## Mask

If we don't scream

Yell

Bite

Spit

Kick

Stomp and scratch

begged for it.

They'll split open our necks with our own blades and say we

Of course it's suppose to be this way, it's been this way this long

Being quiet

Silent

While our faces are being manipulated and mutilated

We put soot on our faces

Stretch our lips back like a balloon

Scrubbing our eyes white

way way past the beginning of our teeth

Itsfunnywhatyouwantustobewhatyouwanttobewhatyouwantustobewhatyouwanttobeiswhowereally  
ybe

But it's funny

You put soot on your face

Draw past that thin ham colored piece of skin that is the opening of your mouth

Engage in human emotions with a mask that you can take off

Its.funny.what.you.want.us.to.be.what.you.want.to.be.what.you.want.to.be.is.who.we.really.be

But what's left after that?

I mean after all who would you be, if you didn't want to be us?



Destynie Chase

**Let him breathe**

*Inspired by Ross Gay's A Small Needful Fact*

I wasn't there when Eric Garner was murdered  
But I was there to see his memorial:  
Teddies, flowers, notes  
Protected by a glass case

Let him breathe

Down the hill  
From my old high school  
In front of the same old creaky beauty supply store  
Juan looming over the elevated counter,  
"Do you need help finding anything?"

Let him breathe

I saw his mother once, while shopping in the little clothing boutique whose name you would not know unless you lived on Staten Island.  
I often wonder about her,  
Do the whispers stop?  
Do the stares become a quick glance?  
Has she eaten since?

I can't breathe  
I can't breathe  
I can't breathe  
I can't breathe  
I can't breathe  
I can't breathe  
I can't breathe  
I can't breathe

Get your knee out of his throat  
You vile monster

Let him BREATHE.

Anonymous

## **The N Word**

The N-Word.

The Friend word,  
The "IN" word,  
That makes you question words.

The Sin word.  
The Skin word.  
That makes you look in-word.

A defend word.  
A black-breaking,  
back-slashing, gashing,  
the whips,  
the chains,  
the nooses,

the screams,  
the pains,  
the bruises.  
A contend word.