

# WHAT DO YOU GO BY?

*free verse*

Salai Diekumpuna | 11

Cold nights I can't feel the love within  
Should I burn down my city to feel its warmth again?  
Walking through halls with peers I call my friends  
I wonder if I'm just another N\*\*\*\* to them  
N\*\*\*\* N\*\*\*\* N\*\*\*\* that's what we all say  
A limited vocabulary stands in our way  
We call ourselves what others wish to call us out loud every day  
Education at our fingertips  
America's gateway to a better life  
It doesn't matter if you teach a man to fish if he is without a fishing rod  
Especially if he can't afford his ticket out of the hood  
Even then we still run to the government for help  
So we sell the drugs  
We make just enough to make a profit while our employer prepares our cell  
We get out of our earthly hell and the cycle continues  
Congratulations you've been employed by the US government  
To live past twenty-five is God's gift  
What a dream, my soul will never die

As long as I have God my soul and I will be fed even if my stomach isn't  
I don't ignore the truths because I'm not better off dead  
But that's how they want me, looking at me all pretty in a casket  
It's either my body or my soul killed by the world or a denomination  
Who should I choose life or death?  
We all die some time but not all of us are killed  
In this America to save my life I'd have to open my legs  
I'd bear a child desired in fetish eyes  
That or I'd have to be employed by the law  
In a pin or in an office I work for the same man  
Let me know who is the man again  
The microaggressions keep coming and the passive aggression grows  
Friends become foes  
Enemies in disguise  
A tale of old woes  
Tell me is it my hips or my lips that threaten you  
Or is it my skin  
Speak my friend  
If these were simpler times would you be my massa or my friend?