

Christopher D. Sims

the art of being black:
a black man's truth in
poems

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the art of being black

I am practicing the art of being Black.
I am what some call, a Black man. Black
like the night. Black like the cosmos. Black
but bringing leadership, love, hope. I am
practicing the art of Being Black. A Black
being, a Black human being. Being my own
self; being who they say I am; being all that
I can, but I am still just being. The art of
being Black, what is the real definition?
Whose vision works best for me being
Black? According to you, the them, how
I am supposed to feel, think, exist, act?
Until there are real answers or facts,
in my own way, in my on understanding.
I will practice the art of being Black.

because you said i was black

because you said i was black you created a rift in humanity. you offset the natural order of things. you displaced Africans who come from the land of kings and queens. because you said i was black you created an economy that benefits from my ancestor's free labor, you empowered the stock market, you made black and other people of color targets - all because you said i was black. because you said i was black becky is calling the police on my people, police officers see me as a threat, using force that is deadly, lethal. because you said i was black, crack sentences are longer than those for cocaine and prisons are filled with women and men with ethnic names. because you said i was black me and my people live in project housing where we are spied on and watched - where you have placed cameras and you survey us for blocks and blocks. because you said i was black young black girls and boys are at police heavy inner-city schools and white children are happy and free on the east side as if that's not cool! because you said i was black we are poor, we are fighting, we are marching, protecting, and setting cities on fire. because you said i was black i travel to other countries where i am loved, envied, respected, admired. because you said i was black i am not included in your constitution, equity is an illusion, and your policies fall flat only creating more inequity, stress, and confusion.

black and white: social constructs

you do know that the terms black and white are social constructs, rights?
you do know those terms were created, right? me black, you white to
create division; to create caste systems; to put black people like me in jails,
prisons, in cotton and tobacco fields. those terms have created so much
mayhem and pressure throughout history! his story is that my ancestors
deserved to be slaves. his story wanted us to be slaves until we reached our
graves. black and white. am i black? are you really white? how can human
beings be described by their skin tone? you and i have the same blood cells.
you and i bleed red blood. this whole thing is false, is a fallacy, is
maddening, is not real, is based on lies. lies white men created to have us
where we are now: hoping to piece a shattered world back together. think
about it: the terms black and white are social constructs. how can we
reconstruct how we see one another?

black like

i am black, like jail, like prisons, like welfare, like poor and poverty. i am black like ghettos, like social safety nets, like food stamps. i am black like liquor, liquor stores, like pig feet and fried chicken. i am black like the vote, like voting democrat, like rats and roaches. i am black like failure, like no hope. i am black like we need a savior, we need prayers, praise God, like amen and Jesus. i am black like nights in Mississippi, like policemen in Chicago, Baltimore, DC, and in Memphis. i am black like slave songs, slave ships, like the word freedom. i am black, black like failed policies and demands of politicians. i am black like marching, protesting, arresting innocent people. like black, black i am undermined, misguided, mistreated. i am black like hunger, pain, the blues, starvation, debt, dollar stores, destroyed dreams. i am black like the blackest of things.

the art of being black 2

if being black is an art, then my picasso is from the heart; is from the ancestry that made me; is from the black-ness in Virginia that gave me my start. if being black is an art, then i can thank my mamma's greens and cabbage, her fried chicken and her cornbread. if being black is an art, i can thank all of the black people who raised me on the west side of Rockford, Illinois - who told me i was going to be an artistic black boy! if being black is an art, then the streets of the United States has been my canvass to caress you with poetical prowess that has encouraged equity, unity, and community. if being black is an art, these paintings i write with pens and the rhymes i recite are from a black moon disappearing in West Africa for the sun to shine. if being black is an art, look inside my soul and call upon my character for the most honest representation of what being black really is.

i was her black boyfriend waiting for her to get home

i was her black boyfriend waiting for her to get home from work. i was black and in my car. i was black and in a neighborhood with not too many black people. i was black sitting in my car listening to music. i was black and on the northwest side of Rockford, Illinois. i was black and minding my own business, not bothering anybody. i was black and quiet; and respectful and enjoying what i was doing where i was. i was her black boyfriend waiting for her to get home from work when a policeman pulled up behind me, got out of his car, shined his flashlight on me, and asked me for my identification. he said 'you fit the description of...' i was just a black boyfriend waiting for my girlfriend to get home from work.