
Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Lisbeth Coiman: “Allyship”

Lisbeth Coiman · Wednesday, July 29th, 2020

Allyship

1

Identify the hair root-cause of self-hatred
Mother washing my hair with chamomile tea
To make it blonde
But she only made me a “bachaca”
“Yellow”
All throughout my childhood
I never understood why
A woman who despised Black people
Married the son of a Black woman
Gave him seven children
I wasn’t the darkest
Just the one with chicharrones
The kinky hair she grabbed with one hand
To slam my head against the wall
Because I was a carefree tomboy
Who didn’t/still don’t give a damn about straight hair
“Bachaca, machorra,”
She used to call me

2

At the hair salon
The enlightened witnesses
Show me the beauty of my hair
Celebrate the wooly texture of my unruly curls
My negritude

3

Recognize all forms of hate
As corrosive acid destroying our society
Xenophobia
Homophobia
Ableism
Sexism
Ageism
Religious intolerance

4

Refuse to laugh at jokes
About white man in white coat vs. Black man in white coat
Nor accept
negative comments about
Unsafe Black neighborhoods / women / men / children
Instead, ask “What do you mean?”
Not because I don’t know what you mean
I know exactly what you mean
Know I am not complacent
Nor participant,
Nor do I allow you to use my lighter skin as platform

5

Native American
African American
Marginalized American
From Patagonia to Canada
Hear the silence
Hidden in the white spaces
Between lines in the history books of the Americas

6

Black culture was not created for white entertainment

7

In the classroom

Teach tolerance.
Encourage new immigrants to preserve their culture and language
While shedding the bias and prejudices
We all carry
In our immigration baggage

8

Do not question
Younger generations' right
To choose between protest and self-preservation
Place themselves between an armed police and a black man
Or pretend invisibility on their way to a supermarket

9

Celebrate amalgamated ethnicity
Honor the ancestors of this continent
I am not your mulata, nor your criollita
Your colonized view of my complex identity
I am a brown woman
Una morenaza bella, loca, inmigrante
I am The Other
My ears
Wide open
Receiving
The call for action

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