

02 October 2019, 10:00pm

Today, I worked all day (2pm-9pm) and I sure did experience a little bit of my already ongoing identity crisis. I wrote this poem a while ago and I felt as though it would be some relative context to my current situation besides my overwhelming sense of anxiety and depression:

filipino enough

the difference between my grandmother and i
is the fact that she is an asian woman
living in america
while i
am an asian american woman.
while she endured the systematic oppression
of being an immigrant,
i was born and raised on soil that was earned through hours of underpaid work as a
baby sitter and seamstress from she
since our lands and hearts had been stolen from us.
so i adapted to become more like those who harmed my people
by reclaiming the land under my feet
for generational trauma has taught me that virtue is gained through plundering the
disadvantaged
and managed to disassociate myself
from cultural values in an attempt to survive.
because even though
i do not contain the sacred ability
to speak my mother's tongue like she,
i know how to survive in a reality
that will forever downplay my achievements and abilities
through speaking the language of the Man in order to
"speak american in america."
the difference between me and my grandmother is not the differences evident in our
faces,
but that she fled her land and was stripped of familiarity in search for her american
dream,
while i,
i am her american dream
and the only remnants of her land
is worn and draped in my hair

and on my skin:
a medal of honor that portrays the evolution of a culture.

-07/23/19 12:23pm

6731 bus from Oakland to Santa Cruz

I think for me, I never felt as Filipino and as cultured as the rest of my family since I could never quite speak my native language, but also because I was always openly outed as being “not-straight.” From my short hair to athletic build, I always rejected my family—thus my Filipino culture—because I never quite fit in. Not because they never wanted me to, but merely because I never felt welcomed. Why would I want a culture that had such a long history of misogyny and “traditionalism” anyways? If I couldn’t find a man to take care of me so I could take care of his children and his house, sure I would be disappointing his family, but I could do the exact same for my wife and our kids and our house.

I am regretting how much rejection my mother country endured now, but lately I can’t help but wonder how many more disappointing looks I can receive after I reply to a lola on the street’s Tagalog question with “I don’t speak, but...” before I cave into myself.

I wonder how many more times I’ll be told that my face is “very Filipino” before I am proud of my brown skin and wide nose.