

THE PROBLEM WITH LOVING BLACK MEN

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I love Black men. I love their skin, their strong jaws, those heavy lips, and wide-set noses. Black men are these beautiful amalgamations of strength, pain, growth, and determination; which makes them my greatest weakness. I love everything about Black men, everything except their disposability.

As a Black woman who loves Black men, who is the sister to a Black boy, and the daughter of a Black man, my greatest fear is the disposable nature of the Black male life. How can you grow to love something so much only to know that every time they walk out the door it could be their last step, the last time we speak, the last embrace I feel. Loving Black men is this beautiful tragedy that plays like a desperate concerto through the ages. You never know if you can wake up to them the next day. I've kept very quiet on the subject of Ferguson because...well because what else is there for me to say that others haven't already said. I close my eyes to the images, because it physically hurts my heart. Studying Black history in college, one of my last courses was on the Civil Rights and Black Power movements. A course filled with images of riot gear, fire hoses, tear gas, and dogs. That was over 50 years ago. To quote a protest sign, "I cannot believe I still have to protest this shit." I could put a photo of Ferguson next to a photo of Birmingham in the 1960s and swear I was looking at the same day.

Ferguson instills a fear in me like no other because it reminds me of why it is so hard to love Black men. It is so hard to know that the life of someone who means everything to you means absolutely nothing to others. It's so hard to believe that the loss of Black life is still underneath the loss of a dog's life; even more painful when no one else understands your pain. No one understands the pain that comes with the loss of a Black man like a Black woman because no one loves a Black man like a Black woman does. No one cries over Black men like Black women do. No mother could fear for her son like the mother of a Black son fears for hers. The silent rage you feel from Black women, it's our hearts breaking. It's the cracking of our souls as a piece of us is ripped away. You could flood oceans with the tears of Black women's loss. We lose fathers and brothers and sons, but more than that, we lose love. Loving Black men is so painful because losing Black men seems so inevitable. If Black women ever had a hope of holding onto what they love so dearly it has only been fleeting, short spaces of time to breathe in the scent of Black men's existence before being plunged back into the battlefield.



Sometimes I get this unending frustration because there just don't seem to be enough words to convey the pain, the disappointment, and the fear that I feel watching Ferguson unfold. While I know that the whole ordeal spans into more issues than the loss of Black life, I can't seem to get past that point. I know that police brutality is an issue and that the voice of the press is being muted, but I just can't bring myself to care. In the midst of this war zone all I can continue to think is that another Black mother is without her child. No amount of media coverage, of protesting, or of riots can bring him back. I want to scream for all the idiots who claim revenge as they loot, that no amount of merchandise pilfered from any place can compensate or measure up to the loss of this life. I want to scream for all the "eyewitnesses" plastered across the screens thinking they are helping bring to justice this atrocity by regaling the tale over and over again as it is broadcast into our homes. All I can really understand or recognize is that just like through history, society has ripped another child from the hands of a Black mother, and just like through history, there is nothing we can do about what has already happened.

There is a solution, out there somewhere. Some way, some how, there exists a resolution, but I'm too hurt right now to search for it. I think Black society is too hurt to think clearly on how to find it. The loud roar of protest exists right now to drown out our tears, because I know, like me, everyone is crying out to Mike Brown; and frankly I don't know when we'll be able to stop crying.