Young Black Male

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I just want to start off by saying thank you to the Journal of Critical Scholarship on Higher Education and Student Affairs for giving me this opportunity to share my voice and express my opinions. My name is Shumon Jenkins. I am from Brockton, Massachusetts and I go to Emmanuel College in Boston, Massachusetts. And I have to say the issues and incidents that have taken place over the last few years have made me, to be blunt, FUCKING UPSET. From the death of Trayvon Martin, to the protests at the University of Missouri, I fear I am a target to those who do not understand me and have no desire to do so. I feel I have no other choice but to express my outrage and frustration by calmly telling you about my life as a young Black male.

In my life, my pants sag like my eyes, Exhausted from school and the dramas with it. She did this, he did that, Dude it was ill, god damn she's getting fat. This is my life.

And I got my own problems to deal with it.

Three five-page papers due, Didn't even start. This girl I loved doesn't even want to be my friend anymore, And it breaks my heart. To top it off my brothers just died. Eric Gardner, Trayvon Martin, Mike Brown, Along with too many other guys. I don't want to die too, But I fear I will without knowing what I can truly do. I wanted to be a Malcolm X, a MLK, or a Tupac Shakur. I wonder what my brothers wanted to be, I didn't live their lives, but if I did what would I see? The police protecting me and telling me this is what I should do? Or will they look at me, Follow me, Take me down, Shoot then kill me, Leave me on the street, Ending my life before I can text my mom back, “I love you too.”

This is my life. To never fully be understood, trusted or looked at the same way I look back at you, What would you do? A skin color, a blessing and a curse, Let it be known that there is good in bad situations, But with racism, the situations only get worse and worse.

I fear racism will always exist unless we all become the same color, But until that day, please stop taking Black sons from their Black mothers. God. If there is one, he didn't want this I don't know who would, but if I could just somehow understand, Why?

Why was I called a monkey? Why do I speak “white”? Why do I know my dad? Since he was supposed to leave me at first sight. And why do I have to know how to fight?

Or how to ball. How to rap, How to sing, How to dap, How to roll, How to act, These are “facts” about being Black.

This is my life.

And with it, I walk with the memories of my dead brothers. Along with the marks of every lashing and whipping of my ancestors on my back, And although I might lack in the history of my people, It is now my mission to make it.

This is my life.

Thank you for listening.