

Verse: *Blue*

By Ruby McCarter and Daniah Kadhim

“What is your favorite color?”

This is a game.
Correctly move the pieces,
Correctly arrange the right words
In the right order in your foreign mouth,
And you'll get wide grins, baby talk,
praise,
And the title of a refugee.
But you are not a refugee.
That word is broken, used, worn,
And reeks of pity.
You are an immigrant,
Forced by parents to abandon the place
You once called home.

Referred to as
“She”,
“That kid”,
“It”,
Because your name does not roll
Smoothly off the tongue
Like your white sisters, Lucy or Paige.
But do not envy them; you are your
people's legacy
And you are more than they know.

They stick you in their stereotypical box,
Telling you,

It is such a shame that you live in a land of
terrorists,
Your women are married off young,
You cannot speak your mind.
But that is all they know of your people,
That is all they expect.

You itch to tell them the stories of your
ancestors,
That they are human too,
But your words collide and mix
From the journey of your brain to your
mouth,
And they watched you with expectant
smiles,
Eyes wide with curiosity,
Trying to help, but not knowing how.

Your parents led you here,
With promises of going back.
Even after seeing your white hot fear,
Your quaking anger,
Your tears,
You were still led away
From the generation of your roots.
Here, it's a game.
People bounce you about.
Expect you to adapt,
To say your words right,

To know where the bathroom is
On the first day of school,
When you can't even remember
The teacher's English name.
You have been gone so long that you are
afraid
That when you board that plane to go
back
The turbulence of your flight will uproot
you with the truth,

That you are no longer sure which place is
foreign,
And which place is home.

But you cannot tell any of them this.
Your mouth won't let you.
So instead, you shift your grin,
And remember your favorite color.

“Blue.”



ANGIE SMITH

Makiwa Nduwimana, 18, at the Centennial High School prom, 2016.



From *Nyumbani Means Home: A Collection of Collaborative Poetry* (2015).

RUBY MCCARTER, pictured, attends Boise High School.

DANIAH KADHIM immigrated from a refugee camp in Jordan.