Why We Rage

In his blog post titled "Why We Rage," HIV advocate Matthew Rose shares why he uses poetry to express the grief, pain and trauma he and others in the Black community experience. Below is his poem.

June 29, 2020 By Matthew Rose

It's not because we are tired,

It is not because we have grown weary of being held down by the weight of the world,

The cruel whip breaking the sacred skin of our backs,

it's not because the world doesn't believe that we can succeed,

Or that we've been handed the short end of the stick,

It's not because of those forgotten places,

Those silent disappeared faces,

it's not those lost chances that we were never given,

it's not the places at the table that we've always wanted,

It's not reliving the same old story for the rest of our lives,

We rage to move,

To occupy the space that can move us,

and our communities with us

We rage to draw your eye, ear, heart and hand,

To make you see we are the who's who need

To be given what we have achieved

Because we are long overdue

What the nation has promised us

A place among equals

not a hollow handshake,

An empty gesture,

The silent words on your social media

A single moment that is supposed to make up for generations of neglect,

For the pain that existed in the heart and soul of a people

We rage so we can get on the stage

to demand that you hear our words,

That you not tell us that our protest makes us

Unpalatable to your ears your sight your hearing

For if you cared before

You might have given a damn to change

The way we were seen, the way we were treated

By a system that was designed without us in mind

We continue to rage for the struggles of our people from now until the beyond

We rage so that our songs can be heard

A narrative that demands you to listen

You take the time to understand

To not just claim that privilege exists

But you use it to change the system

We ask that you walk with us

Creating space that was never meant for us

And make a new place for all of us

That stops negativity, the shaming and shunning

The world that watched us die again and again

And then promised us that no more

We rage because we are tired of needing mass graves

To understand the pain of our community

To bury us behind unknown names in figures and in spaces

To forget our contributions to your world

To your place your space your race

To bury Black bodies in unknown graves

Trying to disappear who we have been

We rage so that that you will learn

To engage

We rage because it’s our last hope

To make you listen

We rage because

We are tired of being children born into a world that teaches them how to survive toxic air

Rather than trying to clean the air

We rage because we imagine a time that we could potentially be free

And we wonder when you will join us in that reality

Not about the looting, the pillaging, the burning, the questioning

The changing the circumstances that pushed us to the extreme

The only thing we could do was unleash our rage upon this place

And hope that will at least make you notice

Maybe make you care

We try to make you understand

That deep inside us is unimaginable generational pain

Screaming for release

Wishing to be healed

But we alone cannot get there

We hope, we pray, that you will understand why we rage

And make it so we have to rage no more

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http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/rage-black-community-matthew-rose