

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Chase Perry: "I Am a Black Girl"

Chase Perry · Wednesday, February 15th, 2017

(*"Tomorrow's Voices Today"* is a new series curated by poet and educator Mike Sonksen.)

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I am a Black Girl

That's different than just saying I'm a girl
 That's different than just saying I'm black
 To be a black girl doesn't just mean I have darker skin
 To be a black girl doesn't mean I'm hard to approach
 To be a black girl doesn't mean you have to be ready to hold my earrings
 To be a black girl doesn't mean you have to try harder to teach me something

But

To be a black girl means I'm special in every way
 To be a black girl means there's nothing I can't do
 To be a black girl means I am capable of more than you'd know
 To be a black girl means that I am phenomenal

I am a Black Girl

With emphasis on the word black
 It's more than just a race,
 It's a lifestyle we must live
 It's a collection of actions that we have to get used to
 It's an expectation that we work to avoid
 We work to teach the world what it is to be black

Like

When you're looked at sideways for walking in a certain store
 When you see a women clutch her purse a little tighter when you get on the elevator
 When you are told "you're acting white" for speaking with correct grammar
 When you walk into a room nicely dressed and see the surprised look on people's faces
 When everyone turns to you in 3rd grade history when you start to learn about slavery

I am a Black Girl

And all through my life
 I've had to work a little harder to fit in
 It's hard to find your place in the world when you're the only chocolate chip on a sugar cookie
 It's hard to figure out who you are when you're the sole representation of your race
 I found my way through this maze, but some people don't have the support that I had
 Not everyone has strong black role models in every part of their life
 Not everyone has parents that protect you from things you don't even see coming
 Not everyone has people in their lives that have seen them grow up
 and have molded them along the way
 Not everyone was exposed to the opportunities that I was

I am a Black Girl

So yes I've heard the calls
 Of guys on the street or at the mall
 I understand that there's something about me everyone wants
 And that just because I've got it doesn't mean I need to share it
 I've seen the way people respond when they hear about my straight A's
 Or the fact that I'm 16 and haven't done stuff that is "normal" for my age
 I get that I'm not like a lot of the people around me
 But I don't see why I should take that as a bad thing

I am a Black Girl

So sometimes it's hard to see past what's on the outside
 But once you've given some time to understand the confusing
 And dedicated some care to get past the concealed

You'll see that

All the world waits my coming
 All the world watches with interest to see what I shall become
 They want to know if I will be like others
 and use "what God gave me" to make money
 Or if I will break boundaries
 and do something with my life to make the world greater.

I am a Black Girl

I am an inspiration to those around me
 I am the embodiment of the ideals of my parents
 I am wise beyond my years
 I am the light in a dark room
 I am the joy in your eyes
 I am the example for having fire in our heart
 I am the reason to not lose hope
 I am why my family is free
 I am the work of those who came before me
 I am the hard times as well as the good ones
 I am the people in their time of need
 I am because we are

I am a strong, independent, black girl

And I am me.

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