

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Nadia Villanueva: "More Than a Princess"

Nadia Villanueva · Wednesday, May 18th, 2016

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

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### More Than a Princess

When I was five they told me I could be whatever I wanted so I said I'd be a princess.  
 I found the idea of a castle, fancy dress, and handsome prince impressive.  
 Disney sold me the idea that you weren't happy till you had this.  
 So in my mind this was my future,  
 But when I was seven my teacher had a meeting with my mother.  
 Told my mom I was above average, there was great potential for my future.  
 So he had me enrolled in gifted courses, where I was surrounded by little prodigies,  
 I'll be forever thankful for my teacher, the first person who ever saw potential, said I could be somebody.  
 After that I started to think bigger.  
 Bigger dreams, bigger goals. Maybe I'll be a doctor.  
 I didn't put so much importance in beauty and fancy dresses anymore,  
 My main focus became education – I was seven but I knew I wanted more,  
 I wanted all the opportunities education could give to me,  
 Test my intelligence to the best of its ability.  
 I liked the feelings that I had endless possibilities.  
 I could do whatever I wanted because I knew I had it in me.  
 I'd get excited over lessons; every time I learned something knew.  
 I used to ask my teachers for extra homework; I always wanted to have more to do.  
 I grew older, grew more determined.  
 The destination slightly changed but my goal remained certain.  
 Sometimes I lost my focus—growing up rough can do that—  
 But I always found my way back, my feelings to succeed ran deep.  
 I felt it in my bones, in my heart; shit, it flowed through my bloodstream,  
 I want this more than anything.  
 But there's always people who will doubt your ability,  
 When I was seventeen I had a teacher tell me  
 "You're pretty face can only take you so far," as if that's all I had going for me!  
 Those words stung, stabbed me gruesomely.  
 Funny thing is I never really thought myself as pretty.

He didn't know me, he judged on what he thought he seen  
Judged me on the times I lost my footing, on the times I lost who I want to be.  
But his opinion no longer matters, because I've gone further than plenty thought I could.  
I'm gonna go places I only dreamed I would.  
I grew up surrounded by poverty, pregnant teens, junkies on the street,  
But I never let any of that become the death of me.  
I'm tough enough to keep pushing no matter what I'm surrounded by,  
I know where I want to go and I won't let myself get sucked in to some other life.  
No matter how many times I lost it, I always found my way back home,  
Back to the little girl who wanted to be a princess, but realized she wanted so much more.

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