

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.)

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.

This entry was posted on Wednesday, May 18th, 2016 at 8:31 am and is filed under [Poetry](#)
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