

## Lying by Omission

*Ala Mohamed\**

It's called lying by omission,  
That detail left out as gossip fills your ears,  
That small section about Blacks being the first colonists,  
That small picture about the brutality of slavery,  
That small description about why the past is being hidden.

Why are you trying to hide it?  
Tell me, can anybody in here tell me why forgetting about the past is a cure?

Why Billy and Maddy don't see color?  
Why everyone doesn't know the true brutality of slavery?

No, I won't ask you to lie and give me answer, because when my ancestors were on their hands and knees and praying to god to survive another day, how could we not know?

How can we not know the feeling of being hung by a tree, the feeling of being whipped till death, the feeling of having no air to breathe to suffocate where they can't be seen, in the bottom of the boats where no shine can reach—and you have the nerve to tell me to keep it hidden, and forget about it?

How dare you? How dare you try and act like you are supreme rewriting these history books as if you are the greatest mankind has ever seen, writing

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\* Ala is an Iowa Freedom Rider Organizer. One of the earliest members, she is the Social Media Head, Housing Committee Liaison, and IFR Representative Student at the University of Iowa. She is majoring in Enterprise Leadership & Chinese. Ala joined IFR to bring awareness towards BIPOC injustice.

only history, and leaving her story in the back and trying to understand the difference between African American and Black.

You play me like some sort of game, bring out my color to represent my name, making me feel ashamed, and when it's all said and done your people are claimed as insane, but mine are murderers.

How dare you claim you understand?

Because when the walls are caving in and I can barely breathe, you are the thing that leaves me empty with do's and don'ts and if it were left to you, you might even take away my breathing.

But listen here, as a kid I had no fear, when mama cradled me at night, I thought the sun and earth were in perfect orbit around my little world. Can't you see I was just a little girl, when tragedy struck my world, as people words were hurled at me with the intent of breaking me.

And I prayed every day to see the beauty of the stars and for my family to never split apart, but lying by omission caused it all.

Oh, you who drag me by my head scarf and choke me with my veil, don't you say a word—I'm talking here.

Don't you tie me up and only show history, because my story is not going to be forgotten about, and I promise you next to the declaration of independence, next to the constitution, next to 9-11, next to the great depression, next to segregation, next to Michael, and Brown, Trayvon, George Floyd, and Breonna Taylor are my people who were enslaved and grew this country and built it to where it stands today.

Now don't tell me to hide my story if you barely know yours.