

To Be Black in America is To Be a Superhero

By Remka Nwana

When I was a kid, I was introduced to superheroes.
And of course, you probably know them too.
Those characters with abilities
so out of this world, that it struck me,
as a little girl, to believe
they could never be real.

Those characters that could overcome the wildest adversity
such that there was a certainty
that they can never be real.

Those characters with strengths
at lengths unconceived and unbelieved.
So to me, they can never be real.

But as I've grown up, I've started to change my beliefs.
Started to gauge how fake superheroes really may be.

And even though it's common consensus to say that they are fiction.
I'd like to challenge common sense today with my diction.

The world must have superheroes.
The way people are thrust into injustice but stay strong,
now that's a toughness
that only the supernatural could possess.
I mean, to progress while oppressed,
also leave a legacy and have success,
that can attest
to the fact that superheroes are real.

The world must have superheroes.
Systems are constructed just for lives to be destroyed.
I mean, for 500 years, a whole race was abducted.
Peace always disrupted 'cause bullies like Jim Crow find ways to disrupt it.
A world this corrupted can only be survived
if it has superheroes.

People may call me crazy for saying this,
but that's okay.
This recognition isn't for them.
It's for the ones that save the day.

To my Black brothers and sisters,
you are superheroes
and I can tell by your
supernatural strength.
You possess the ability to
stay calm, cool, and collected
despite being unprotected
in the places you live.
They've tried to break
your spirit, shoot you down
because your power, they fear it,
but you stand strong amidst this.
To my Black brothers and sisters,
you affirm that superheroes are real.

To my Black brothers and sisters,
you are superheroes, and I can see it
through your supernatural strength.
To be promised a life of freedom
and then to exercise it,
to only have your life taken away
while you're exercising,
those are the fears that you have to deal with every day,
but you're still smiling,
you're still thriving,
walking the halls of universities that you were once denied in.
To my Black brothers and sisters,
you affirm that superheroes are real.

To my Black mothers and
fathers, you are superheroes
and I can see it through
your supernatural strength.
You bring children into
this world through love
knowing that someone else can
take them out through hate,
but still you don't hesitate
to let them fly free
with the strong values that
you instilled in them to see.
To my Black mothers and fathers,
you affirm that superheroes are real.

And then to the Black grandmothers
and grandfathers, you too are superheroes.
And I can tell by your
supernatural legacy.

To be told that you can't
do it but push through it.
You defied,
refused to comply
just to secure rights for our lives.
And although today we still fight,
We have come a long way because
of your heroic sacrifice.
So, to my Black grandmothers
and grandfathers,
you affirm that superheroes are real.

Although it may you,
it doesn't surprise me
that the books we read
mised us to believe
that superheroes aren't real.
The white man wrote his story as history,
such that the historical record doesn't record Black superpowers.

On this Juneteenth,
let us not only celebrate freedom,
but also call for the liberation
of all things Black,
including our stories.
And then maybe with that,
you'll finally be able to see, in fact,
we do live amongst superheroes.