

James Madison University

JMU Scholarly Commons

MAD-RUSH Undergraduate Research
Conference

Proceedings of the Twelfth Annual MadRush
Conference: Best Papers, Spring 2021

8:46

Riell Swann

Follow this and additional works at: <https://commons.lib.jmu.edu/madrush>



Part of the [African American Studies Commons](#), [Other History Commons](#), and the [Social Justice Commons](#)

Swann, Riell, "8:46" (2021). *MAD-RUSH Undergraduate Research Conference*. 1.
<https://commons.lib.jmu.edu/madrush/2021/846/1>

This Event is brought to you for free and open access by the Conference Proceedings at JMU Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in MAD-RUSH Undergraduate Research Conference by an authorized administrator of JMU Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact dc_admin@jmu.edu.

8:46- Forging Empathy Amid Racial Disdain In America

By: Riell Swann

March 2021

Marymount University

Thank you for taking the time to view this creative piece. This poem was created amidst the intense racial divide within America. 8:46 speaks from the perspective of youth of our generation that seek to simply be treated as equal. The rise in police brutality over recent years continues to provide the narrative of the futility of life for those of darker skin. However, we can and must change this narrative, if not for ourselves, then for those that are to come after us. This poem serves as a precursor for change, however, there is much work left to do when it comes to creating a more empathetic, inclusive world for all. Next, we must come together and take action to ensure that such a world can exist. Stop racial hate, not only for the sake of the African American community, but for all minorities living within America that continue to feel excluded, targeted, or mistreated on the sole basis of color. While this poem speaks to the Black Lives Matter movement, it is a catalyst for racial equality for all. May we all continue to walk through life with empathy, an open heart, and cognizance when it comes to the judgement or treatment of others based solely on the color of one's skin tone.

Breonna, Freddie, George
Just to name a few
A number of black lives
Lost too soon.

Families turned to ash
In the blink of the eye
Heartbreak of the soul
Grief fills the skies.

People flock to the streets
Hearts beaten and battered
Shouting from the rooftops
Black Lives Matter.

The choice to shoot first
When it comes to being black
A simple crime of color
Empathy they lack.

These deaths hit close to home
What is one to do
When those sworn to the law
Choose not to protect you.

INCONSEQUENTIAL
This is what they say to me
When around every corner
Colored people asking to be seen.

I AM BLACK
But what is my crime
To dream or love?
To reach for the sky?

Why does your heart so easily hate?
When most choose not to understand
The emotional struggle
Of the extraordinary black man.

We both slice our hands
A river runneth red
Although we are similar
My dreams left for dead.

Thinking my life matters
Becomes ever so jaded
Every news cast
Another black life faded.

Hands sore to the cranium
With you I seek no plight
To support the lives of black men
Does not disparage the white.

8:46
The ticking clock of the darker skin
These are my brothers, my sisters
These are my kin.

I will bear all hate
Melanin is not a crime
One day you will see me
There I will be there, arms stretched wide.

Branded a failure, a criminal
Good for nothing
Simply open your eyes
My life is worth something.