

W R A C E

creative
writings
on race &
identity

a zine

maya angelou bao phi eliza

andrews james baldwin

jenny zhang sherman

alexie roxane gay andrea

jenkins langston hughes

kao kalia yang **tanwi**

nandini islam *ijeoma oluo*

thomas king michele norris

becky albertalli DESIREE

COOPER sun yung shin

toni morrison sandra

EDITED BY

LIZ TETU

cisneros elizabeth

alexander **ta-nehisi**

coates JAMILLAH

ASHIRA KARIM *tony*

kushner karan mahajan

This zine was compiled in part to complete the WRIT 300 Creative Writers, Race and the Twin Cities final project, Summer 2018.

As part of the project requirements, this zine is available to the “public,” in this case online via a free PDF on Weebly, distributed to various Ramsey County Library locations, and given to contributors to distribute and keep as they see fit.

WRACE

Introduction

I prop my back of creaking, groaning oak against the least comfortable wall in the entire Gasoline Alley I call home. I breathe in my city's sour nickname namesake and wince, dreading when I'll have to lean over to pick up the soft off-white envelope I let slip when I got home from work from the splinters I call a porch. The sky's orange juice and rum, and I'm thirsty, and the purr of my neighbor's riding mower is humming me to slumbering again.

Creative writing about a physical place is common, not easy but typical. Writing about race and ethnicity, though? We often leave it to those like essayist Ta-Nehisi Coates and poet Andrea Jenkins, those names on the cover who have spent much of their literary careers on this tender part of their identities and their relationship to society.

Writing about race requires a different function from creative writing. A word and emotion many of the poems and creative nonfiction pieces in this zine use is "angry." Prose about race is often raw, less descriptive, **hard to separate from feelings of frustration, loneliness, and fear**. Creative writing on race is an exercise in exploring the depths of emotions surrounding discomfort, unease.

The most powerful writing on race and ethnicity also has an audience. My personal audience is the 12,000 or so people I share the four square miles of Mounds View, MN, with, especially others

in the 81.3 percent part that seem to direct 100 percent of the “town” decisions at meetings. This project is an attempt at a love letter, or at least loving concern, for this city I’ve lived in most my life.

With the help of four other writers from Mounds View, the Twin Cities, this country, and even across the Atlantic Ocean, writing about trying to find their place in their own ethnic cultures, what we expect from people based on gender, sexuality, and race, and physical and emotional violence, more holistic, passionate voices combine to define how we are hurt and limited by a social construct that also cannot be separated from us, the histories of our families and communities as well as the pain of less uniformed and more unempathetic actions.

Race isn’t poetic or pretty—it’s part of our identities. We each have a **storied past** with it, experiences that we can describe about as clinically as would a play by Shakespeare or David Henry Hwang. As these generously provided pieces provoke your own memories and inner writers, consider sharing your reviews and narrative with us via the survey at wracecreativewritingsonrace.weebly.com.

Thank you for reading *Wrace* and emboldening our stories,

Liz Tetu
editor

Contributions

FREE VERSE POEM **Oreo**

BLACKOUT POEM **Fighting**

CREATIVE ESSAY **An Endless
Story of
Being A Balkan
Migrant**

CREATIVE NONFICTION
Basically White

MEMOIR **Yellow Fever**

HYBRID PIECE **Race Does
Matter**

Oreo Gabrielle

Disconnected from the black

I feel whack

Is it that

Part of me is missing

And I simply want it back?

Okay, then question:

Who's the thief?

Is it you?

Or is it me?

Did I tuck away my color

Behind my insecurities?

Or did you disconnect my race

From the way I act and speak?

In a way I think it's both;

Hyper-consciously I cope

Without "my people"

My brothers and sisters in this world.

I'm a chocolate cookie

With some cream in between

(As observed and vocalized by a kid back in my tweens)

The extent to which that label though

Has lingered from my past

Is a thing you can't predict

But I promise you it lasts

See the pigment of my flesh


Only amplifies this hunger

And I wrestle with the fact

That I'm starved for ethnic friendships

And the melanin I lack.

Fighting Liz Tetu

Everybody was 




 frightening





They 

 knew their part

 from the hip



 fast as lightning



 expert timing

There [redacted]

[redacted] on

[redacted] a stand [redacted]

[redacted] we're [redacted]

[redacted] fighting

[redacted] lightning

[redacted] a little bit [redacted]

[redacted] did it [redacted]

Everybody [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted] a little bit [redacted]

[redacted]

An Endless Story of Being a Balkan Immigrant Rori I

BULGARIANS: *have dishes similar to Southeast Asians, have words in common with Middle Eastern languages, share genes with Persian and Turkic peoples, genetically related to Mediterraneans and Middle Easterners¹, suspected common ancestor with Tatar peoples*

ALSO BULGARIANS: Wow, we hate foreigners. We are so European. Middle Eastern people are evil. We are not all Roma. Go the EU! *Voulez-vous coucher avec moi ce soir ?*

ME, A BULGARIAN AND AN INTELLECTUAL: *major facepalm*

*

So, I almost got attacked recently.

A late evening, at one of the last trains from the capital to the place I live: It's a fairly

popular stop, so there are some people at the doors as we wait for the train to come to a halt. I am at one side with a pair of men and one woman; the other door across the busy car has a small crowd in front of it too.

¹ As determined by the works of anthropologists Alexander Iliev and his team as well as biologists and geneticists such as İlhan Cengiz, Carles Lalueza-Fox, and María Lourdes Sampietro from the scholarly sources originally linked here. –ed.

I am listening to music with one ear, the other free just in case somebody needs to approach me. A girl comes down the stairs to join our bunch and she is on the phone. The language sounds like Turkish to me, although I cannot be certain.

One of the men—a Finn no doubt, by his features—looks at the girl with obvious condescension, puffs dismissively, and walks across to the other door.

I stare, the complete awe on my face making the other Finnish man as uncomfortable as he should be.

"Asshole," I murmur after the Original Finn.

He hears me.

Unconcerned with that, I step off the train and head home. He's ahead of me; when he

notices me—unmistakable in my bright red Uni hoodie—he stops in his tracks and waits me out.

I'm thinking, he's about to say something. Is he planning on giving me a speech about foreigners in Finland, or the necessity of Finnish language when you are around a sensitive Finnish ear?

I don't know.

But he says nothing as I pass him by. I walk away, casting glances over my shoulder. It's how I notice him resuming his stride, following me, adjusting his scarf to cover his face as he hurries not to lose me.

There and then, I am terrified. Three full seconds of knowing I am about to experience a hate-crime motivated ass-whooping, and then—then, I am done cowering. Not for him—he is hardly worth it.

Instead, I get prepared.

I walk faster, knowing I will reach a populated area soon, all the while planning where to put my glasses so he wouldn't be able to break them into my eyes. I flex my fingers and wait for...

But I make it to the busy area before he makes it to me. The people outside the fast-food joint chat with me until he's passed. He gives me an unmistakable silent threat as he walks by me, and I wonder whether I could safely walk the 15 minutes it takes me to reach home. My teeth hurt from clenching but I am sure I

would have taken that beating, because I was not wrong.

Because he thought it was his right to be surrounded—without failure, hour after hour—by exclusively Finnish speakers. Anything less offended his sensibilities. Because a special, nationalist, bigoted snowflake couldn't take to be called out on his xenophobia.

I was right. Even if I almost got my nose punched in. Or perhaps, that was a symptom of my rightness.

The current number of times a native speaker has looked at me with condescension and said, "Well, you speak quite good English," is in the double digits.

waves Certificate in Advanced English, a Specialised Language School diploma, and my middle finger

I was so god damn pregnant and I didn't care about it when it came to dates. My husband and I would go to concerts, festivals, and parties, regardless of how big I got. In restaurants, we'd order something fancy to eat, he'd order a wine to match, and I'll sniff it before sipping my juice. Fun times.

So, there we were, at an Australian pub—him hoping to have an exciting Aussie brew, and myself hoping to sniff it like a junkie with a glue problem.

But before we could get to that particularly exciting experience, we must order. The bartender practically gives my husband his own place at

the bar. They like each other instantly and I am so proud of my charming, lovely sweetheart, who is not at all a Finnish stereotype and cannot wait to meet new people, engage with them, make them laugh. I adore it.

My husband decides on a beer and it's my turn.

The bartender looks at me, his smile falters, and then dies. The temperature in the bar drops several degrees.

At this point, I am unsure what has happened. I wasn't at the time aware Australians had any particular attitudes towards Balkan people².

² The author originally hyperlinked here an introduction to the slur "wog," used in Australia towards folks from Southern/Eastern Europe, the

Mediterranean, and the Middle East. While some ethnic groups have reclaimed it, it still defines the xenophobia of Australia towards these peoples. —ed.

So, there I was, trying to order a juice for my pregnant ass and the bartender wouldn't look me in the eye. He wouldn't tell me what juices they have. He'd just spent five minutes combing through cupboards and fridges to make sure he'd offered the most suitable brew for my husband, but he wouldn't bother to peek at the juice section for me.

My sweetheart ends up ordering for me. I know something had happened—something which involves bigotry—but I am unsure exactly what.

Today, I know what you think of me. Today, I know if you ignore me, I'll just have to be louder.

There were fliers coming regularly to my post box in the UK, with calls to 'DRIVE THE FOREIGNERS OUT OF BRITAIN AND TAKE BACK OUR COUNTRY' written in big letters.

One weekend, I couldn't go out because a nationalist group was organising a protest against immigrants at the city centre. I couldn't do my shopping for the week. I was reduced to hiding in my room, like numerous friends and neighbours.

"Oh, you are BUL-geeeeh-rian. I *see*."

...

What? What is it you see?

Here's a story you wouldn't expect happened.

My in-laws have always kept close ties to old friends. They were the type of people whose jolly attitude had many from our small town running up to us at random places just to say hello. That very same friendly and open-hearted approach had me falling in love with my (then) boyfriend's parents in no time.

So there we were, this one time, in the middle of their old friends' and long-time colleagues' house. It's a lovely home and the fact the hosts had two children just a bit younger than myself was a great bonus.

We had a great conversation for the most part, even if I was excluded from the main topics due to a language barrier. I

have since learned not to mind it so much, but at the time I relied heavily on my loved one translating.

Now, at the time, I was a student in the UK; there were no certain plans about where we'd be settling, if we'd be settling anywhere together at all. So, my grasp on the Finnish language remained basic, and I had no reason or desire to change that.

My hostess, to my endless surprise, had other plans for me.

She of course insisted I attempt speaking Finnish (an impossible task since I knew none of the grammatic rules) and was too excited about telling us all how the exchange student they'd hosted had been quick to pick up the language. I was of

course already weary, but new to this “being an immigrant” thing. Coming from a poor place had not done much for my self-esteem anyway, and I was among people who had—due to their country’s social system—never had to worry about choosing between food and new clothes to replace the broken ones.

So, I accepted the only thing interesting about me is my potential to speak a language I wasn’t interested in. I accepted it while she probed and questioned and kept insisting people would “let me try” the language. I accepted it until the last drop of my patience had been drained.

And then she pushed further.

Engaging the rest of the party in her game, our hostess endeavoured to turn me into an experiment. She demanded nobody translate her words to

me; she was to address me without saying my name, so they’d find out whether I understood she was talking to me.

The thing with Finnish is, you’re bound to understand more than you talk, at first. It’s a tough language but I had been exposed to it enough to know what she’d said.

When she spoke and the entire table remained silent, engaged in her experiment—in her treatment of me as a science rat, a sub-human, a person not worthy of consideration but rather just there for her eternal amusement—I could not stop myself from tearing up.

I was utterly alone, surrounded by people who were unaware they were doing something wrong, and one person who was so deliberate in her actions, she

surely understood way-too-well *exactly* what she was doing.

She invited us to her wedding years later and I spoke English to her with a polite smile.

The cold shivers down my spine when I found out the person who was going to wed us is running for a position in the government with the Finnish far-right party.

I gave birth in the middle of 2015. It was warm and nice and beautiful. The first hours of contractions were painful, annoying, and long, but I felt safe and happy with my husband next to me and an attentive midwife making sure everything was going smoothly.

The shift changed the moment I went into labour.

The midwife started the entire ordeal by proclaiming she had not come to work today with the intention to speak English. She admitted she understood it well, although she ignored every word I spoke in it.

She ignored me when I said I couldn't breathe.

Again.

And again.

And again.

I lost consciousness for a few seconds due to lack of

oxygen. Sheer willpower kept me afloat through the last

moments of labour. I had to somehow gather strength to yell "I CANNOT BREATHE" for her to offer me an oxygen mask.

Suffice to say, I did not trust her with my new-born, breakable daughter.

Suffice to say, I had no choice in the matter.

I only prayed – atheist as I am – that she would not be that great of a monster.

"What is *this Bulgarian gibberish*? I speak three languages but in *this country*, I speak *its language*, as one should."

– A person sitting at **my** table, in **my** home, listening to me speaking **my** language to **my** daughter.

Nobody knows anything about Bulgaria, much beyond the fact they must hate us for being poor. Of those who do not hate us, they are still unaware of who we are.

Our country was established in 681 [CE] according to official accounts, although a Great Bulgaria existed already during 635 in Asia. Our

country was formed through the alliance of (what is estimated to have been) over a thousand Bulgar nomads and the resident Balkan Slavic tribes. Over the course of the following centuries, Bulgarians spread out to include other Slavic, including some Mid-European. Our lands—although in a constant state of shift due to never-ending wars

with the Byzantine Empire—reached on occasions three seas: Adriatic, Aegean, and Black.

We spent altogether six centuries as an independent empire. Our first universal law extended beyond the limits of status or nobility, threatening all criminals (even those living in our castles) with serious punishment. We were by recent accounts among the first countries in Europe (long before the middle Ages) to bring canalisation and fresh water supply systems to our big cities; the architectural collaboration with Middle Eastern societies is an interesting archaeological discovery: a lot of knowledge was lost to us during the destruction brought upon us by the Ottoman empire. We were also the ones to spread the Cyrillic alphabet among Slavic-speaking peoples, and the first to use it in our

churches in the form of Old Slavonic.

We spent five centuries under Ottoman Yoke.

I will be the first one to tell you we must never bring the pain of our past into our present, let alone our future. I will be the first one to tell you we must not blame Turkish people for the crimes of their ancestors. Unless we are met with that maddening, infamous reminder that we have been their “cattle”, it wins us nothing to point our fingers at them. Especially at those who say proudly they are Bulgarians by birth but do not deny their ethnic Turkish roots.

But we must never forget—for our sakes and not for the sake of hatred—that we were denied the right to move freely, denied the right to live under the protection of a law, denied practicing a religion

which defined us, denied spreading language or education which humanised us, denied access to a script we've developed and popularized. We were denied the right to be people; denied the right to be free.

We were owned, and shipped, and stripped, and slaughtered, and bullied, and managed exactly like—cattle. Our women were taken for unwilling concubines. Our churches and towns and schools and educational centres were burned. Our boys were taken to be owned by the Ottoman army. Our blood ran as rivers along the lands of our ancestors and although the people who have committed those heinous crimes are long-dead... *the pain remains.*

We must never forget that if we kicked the Ottoman Master's dog even though it

was nibbling on our leg, we were shot and killed. We must not forget that if we didn't let the Ottoman militia rape as they pleased, an entire household was slaughtered. Or an entire village. We must not forget we lived in peace with common Muslim folk. But we must not forget that we were indeed once cattle.

And even though our suffering was quantifiably different to the pain endured by the Black British and American communities, we must not forget we were slaves once too.

It's because we must never allow ourselves to be slaves again.

We have a story, Bulgarians.

That when the Ottomans first came, they pillaged and raped and destroyed, but if they'd left any survivors, they would ask them always a simple question: *"Do you convert to the Muslim faith?"*

We have no certain way of knowing whether this is a story of pride, an anecdote to signify the overall resistance of the people, or an actual account of the events during the conquering of our lands.

But according to what we've been told, a Bulgarian who accepted the Muslim faith

would shake their head and stand as they were.

A Bulgarian who would deny the offer, would bow their head—in preparation for their execution.

It is, according to this anecdote, the reason why in our culture, we bow our heads for *"no"* and shake them for *"yes"*—in contrast with the rest of Europe and the Western world.

*

Above is one of the reasons I never bow my head or accept a faith offered to me by a bigot.

It's in my blood to stand my ground, even if it means my downfall. It's in my blood to be considered cattle but to persevere nonetheless. It's in my blood to be ignored, shunned, forgotten, stepped on... and to still bloom beneath the piles of dirt and cheap concrete blocks.

It's in my blood to be regarded as sub-human; and it is in my blood to shed every tear, every drop of blood, to be better than that. To survive despite it.

It's why I was ready for a fight the night I was almost attacked. It's why I still speak the language I want whenever I want to. It's why I still call people out on their bigotry.

This why I am a proud Balkan immigrant.
This is why I persist.

*Stay strong, stay true, stay readin',
Ro-ri*

Basically White Jade

Discovering my racial identity wasn't something I'd find myself delving too deep into until I had a racist experience with someone I used to love. You see, we were just a couple of Queer high-schoolers all diddly-diddly in love. They're white, I'm Asian. From the things they reblogged on Tumblr, I was sure that this person had some sense about self-reflection when it comes to racism. In fact, at this point in time I was sure every white ally who claimed to "tried their hardest to not be a stupid white person" was actually living up to just that, and I could hold hands with all my white friends as we rode off into the sunset of social justice. But boy, was I wrong.

This incident happened on a typical date night out of ours. Spend all of Saturday together doing whatever high-schoolers that are in love do, then when it's over they drive me back home until we could see each other again next Saturday. On this particular ride home, we were talking about rude customers we would have at our job. I was talking about some customer that had a fit over some ugly looking grapes, and they told me about frequent customers that come in and ask annoying questions about coupons. Not just any

customers, though, according to my then-partner. It was the Indian customers. Always the Indian customers. Only the Indian customers.

Woah, woah. Hold the phone. "Honey, what the fuck? Did those words literally just come out of your mouth?" is what I said to them in a very sharp, but not quite yelling tone. I remember in the moment not being too upset, just very confused. I would have to go home and process my emotions. "I'm sorry, I'm sorry, it sounds bad but it really feels that way and it sounds wrong saying it," was what they decided to reply with. After that, I remember not talking to them for the rest of the time in the car. I was just so confused. Why would my partner, a self-claimed intersectional feminist, say something like that? Don't they sit and ponder about their own racism and how to learn from thoughts like that?

After that incident, I was analyzing them more as a white feminist rather than an intersectional one, and all the points lined up. I don't know how I didn't realize this before. I would try to talk about racial injustice, and the conversations led to nowhere. They would say "God, I'm such a stupid white person," and not really build their character anymore from that. I

could only handle a few more months of their white feminist bullshit before breaking up with them. I feel terrible because I never told them the specific reason as to why I wanted to break up with them, I just stated I wasn't interested anymore and then we parted ways.

This is coming back to haunt me now, one year later. I'm trying to piece together why they were thinking that, and why they felt comfortable saying that to me. I've been reading a book on racism in Minnesota called "A Good Time For The Truth", and I used one of the lenses from a chapter in that book to come to a conclusion as to why my previous partner thought saying "It's always the Indian people in my store that are annoying customers" was ok to say:

1. The reason why my white partner thought this is because, they're white. White people in the US see every Person of Color with their racist, white lens. When white people see a Black man in America, they don't see him, they see a scary looking, uneducated, government-mooching figure. And however that Black man will act, white people record it in their heads as part of who all Black men are. The same was going on here. My partner

had "Indian" customers (to this day I don't know if they were referring to Indigenous Americans or referring to people of Desi decent), and didn't see them as people, but as a caricature of what they knew about "Indians". And this experience with these "Indian" people (which was also probably their only kind of experience with them), gave them another idea on what "Indian" people are "like", which is apparently annoying customers.

2. That racist lens that my previous partner had wasn't just used on all these other People of Color, it was also used on me. Judging by previous conversations about my own race we had that lead to nowhere, I figure they went with the lens that I'm "basically white". I'm the "model minority", I'm white-washed, I act like a white person, and every other Person of Color should just act like me. In our conversations, my race would never come up as a factor to our relationship, which in retrospect really upsetting me, because that was a red-flag saying "I'm just a white feminist!"
3. Because they thought of me, consciously or not, as basically a "white person", they feel

comfortable around me like white people in all white spaces. White people, when they're in all-white spaces, feel comfortable talking about racist things because they know they won't experience any kind of backlash. For lack of a better word, it's their "safe space". No one will call them out, and they can all feel comfortable being racist together. And that's why they told me this micro-aggression of a racist statement. Because I'm basically white and they felt comfort in that.

In conclusion, I'm angry. I'm angry at all the white people who reblog posts on Tumblr supporting Black Lives Matter, but got annoyed when they protested at the Pride parade this year and last. I'm angry that feminism to some people is so cheap, one could just say they are one and then they are without actually critically thinking about it. Feminism is a process! It's about constantly criticizing yourself and society and learning from it. At least from all this, I know how to filter out the stupid white people in my life.

Yellow Fever V. C.

Smash or pass. A game of which each person takes turns within a group naming someone to either smash or pass. It's played at parties, hang outs, school, or whenever you're bored with a group of friends.

There were lots of different times you could spot me playing this. In class to pass time, or casually walking down the halls with a group of people. Each game was always the same for me. Same people being called to either "smash or pass". Same responses from everyone in the group. I would sit with my friends, both guys and girls, in a circle, listening to them call out names and yell "smash or pass" to each one. It some occasions someone would say, "Smash or pass. V." Eyes would turn toward me, and I would just laugh it off. All it was to me was a game and nothing serious.

Everyone would give their responses while I sat there feeling a bit uncomfortable, but it was fine because it was all a joke. Everyone was having a good time. It was joke for me until the boy with the blonde slicked back hair and Birkenstocks explained why he would "smash".

"Asians are hot. Exotic." Others would respond while nodding their heads in agreement.

"Exactly." I could see them glance at me from the corners of my eyes. They would look at me and say it's the truth and continue playing while I sat in disgust, not

knowing if I should say something or not. Most of the time I didn't, but I wish I did.

Being in an environment with horny middle school white boys opened my eyes to how much Asian women, specifically east and southeast women, are fetishized.

"Yellow fever" is a term for someone with an Asian fetish. YouTuber Anna Akana explains it best in a video she made called "Why Guys Like Asian Girls."

"Men with 'yellow fever' look at you and they only see school girls or sexual geishas." She continues to talk about how these men don't care about who you really are, but only the idea of you.

After learning more about Asian fetishes and stereotypes, I realized how much of it I see in the people around me. There was a scenario where I was sitting in the hallway with a classmate of mine. We were talking, and during the conversation I swore once or twice. He gave me a shocked expression, as if he had never heard a swear word before. He said to me,

"I never saw you as a bad girl. You seem like those shy, quiet Asian girls. You know?"

I responded with a harsh no, and we sat there in silence.

Some guys I know would come up to me randomly and say that they would smash an Asian, giving the

reason why, and for every guy it was the same. They would talk about how they watch Asian porn, and ask if I have a "tight pussy". No, I'm not an "exotic lotus blossom." No, I'm not your Asian school girl. No, I'm not your precious maid. No, I'm not quiet, and I'll beat the living shit out of you if you keep talking to me.

Living in a world where people have this label for Asian women make me angry. They see them as all these different things without getting to know them. They assume they're a certain way because of their backgrounds and how they look. They assume they're passive and weak. Asian women are strong and beautiful in their own ways. They all have different paths that they choose to be on. And no, they will never be your "exotic lotus blossom".

Race Does Matter Liz Tetu

FAT, MAN,
WHITE.

SHAVED HEAD, STEEL TOES,
WHITE.

RESIST MUTANT MASCULINITY
LOOKING EXACTLY LIKE THAT.

LOWER CLASS, WORKING CASTE,
WHITE.

READ DOROTHY ALLISON, LESLIE FEINBERG,
WHITE.

I THINK
WHITE PEOPLE
KNOW WHEN
WE'RE BEING
MOST RACIST

OR "JUST"—

It doesn't matter that my bristly buzzcut rests on a fuzzy and friendly, if fleshy and flushed, queer face, or that I can't get that Futhark/Norse runic tattoo because I can't remember why Fehu signifies "cow" but am intimate with how the magic of language stabbed and chipped into snow-soaked stone kowtows to snow-white fragility flight-flight. It doesn't matter that I toy with in my palm smooth "educated" words like marginalized, colorblindness like worry balls, tuck under my arm a too-new degree with one class in "ethnic studies" and two on race and media.

It doesn't matter that I've written on race and racism in a couple of places because when I still can't actually look Black people in my own neighborhood in the face, or shuffle visibly uncomfortable around covered women, or audibly sniff around South Asian families, or shallowly nod as familiar white guts press to mine as ~~they~~ we whisper around vitriol and fear and aversive racetalk, pressed together like we're running out of room to speak, like we know we're embracing racist, my sheepish dimples peeking from under my ruddy nose and that short cropped mop I call hair, those steel toe boots and muscle shirts, the pink polka-dotted hide I sing as skin reveals a white boy and the way the liberal power of a disillusioned

white people looks.

Bios

Gabrielle ("Oreo"), age 23, African American female.

Jade ("Basically White") is a half Hmong, half Lao, 100% American Butch-identified 19-year-old. They currently spend their daytime working at a local Butcher shop, but has aspirations to work within the sexual education community. They live happily with their partner Scout and their dog Ripley.

Liz Tetu ("Fighting," "Race Does Matter," zine editor) is a white queer guy uprooted from Northeast Minneapolis and planted in the swamp of southeast Mounds View. His written works on race appear in *Cartoon Punk: Artists Against Fascism* and *Lahar Berlin*. He now has a BA in Creative Sexual Communication from Metropolitan State University.

Balkan, queer, immigrant, proud – **Rori I's** ("An Endless Story of Being a Balkan Migrant") fictional worlds are filled with diverse characters, each waiting to take their turn under the spotlight, one book at a time, while zer essays are simply filled with zer screaming into the void. Hopefully, one day zer voice will echo further than zer tumblr blog.

V. C. ("Yellow Fever"). A 14 year old queer Hmong/Lao American who enjoys music, adventures, and staying in.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Aboriginal/Indigenous
<input type="checkbox"/>	African/Black
<input type="checkbox"/>	Central Asian
<input type="checkbox"/>	East Asian
<input type="checkbox"/>	Euroasian/White