

Lillian Williamson
Booker High School
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December 6, 1865, freedom was tasted in the mouths of starving slaves. Fathers and mothers and sisters and brothers cried in joy, for their lives were finally not tethered to a stake buried in the core of earth.

But the infants wailing for more, was smothered by the bare minimum. Because at least the right assigned by the higher gods, were acknowledged by the humans.

The right to life.

The right for their skin to no longer be flayed by the sun, their bones no longer broken by the harsh whips, and their hope to no longer be destroyed as families were clawed apart.

The 13th amendment was meant to cause change.

But they were told it didn't matter because they weren't citizens, and the Bill of Rights didn't apply to them.

So, they waited.

985 days of injustice, 135 weeks of hands banging against bars, 2 years 7 months and 3 days of questioning how to fix themselves so they could be enough. So they could be worth the change.

Till July 9th, 1868.

Natural born citizens became a right, and there was a plate of just a bit more freedom handed to the colored. The chains slipping off colored men's bruised wrists.

But what freedom did they have if they couldn't change the tyranny and corruption with OUR government?

So, they waited, yet again.

Tongues scarred from the harsh words of rage they swallowed down. Noses runny from the putrid smell of their feces and urine, as they didn't even have a right to use the restroom publicly.

Eyes clouded with denial and conflicting anger.

15th amendment came. Colored men could vote.

They were free. Right?

So, what if they couldn't walk on one side of the road, so what if they couldn't eat in that restaurant for whites only, so what if they couldn't change in those stores, so what if they

couldn't sit in the front of the bus, so what if women still suffered under their husbands hands, so what if 3rd grade education was a blessing unlike the 12th grade education whites got.

So, what if they were the ones who died to build America. So, what if their blood, sweat, and tears were fertilizer for the crops we eat.

So, what. They have to wait.

Wait.

Because their cries of discontent will fall on our deaf ears.

Wait.

Because the movement still has room to grow.

Wait.

Because the world is not ready yet.

But it will be later.

Later is not a time!!

You promised later because that is all you were willing to give. But later was a promise for never. It was ignorance, dismissal of the rotten apple and the blind eye to crimes YOU have committed.

They will not wait.

We will not wait.

It does not matter if your ears are deaf, because we will sign. It does not matter the movement can grow, because we are already here. It does not matter if the world is not ready, we are.

The injustice of racism and sexism didn't end in 1865 and it won't stop now, if we wait. If we wait for a chance to be heard....

Do not ask for permission to roar, to scream, to whisper, to love. Be strong, fierce, and undeniably you. That is what I learned. That changing yourself, for them is never worth the life inside you murdered. You cannot fix yourself, because nothing is broken.

So bare your fists in the air, sit in the front row of those buses, kick your feet back knowing you will be on the right side of history.

My name is Lillian Williamson. I am part of the movement. Are you?