



The Queer Foundation Scholar

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Dear Readers,

The QF's seventh annual high school seniors English essay contest is now well underway. Talented young queer writers are now hard at work preparing their entries to meet the 2012 deadline of February 18.

Volunteers from the Gay Straight Educators' Alliance, an Assembly of the National Council of Teachers of English, and a dedicated group of published LGBT authors will help select the top essayists, who will receive \$1,000 scholarships to apply toward their first year of studies at the U.S. college or university of their choice.

All contestants receive recognition as QF Writers and are encouraged, after a year of further growth, to submit additional writings for possible publication online in the *Queer Foundation Scholar* and to compete for a QF Publication Scholarship. I hope you will find such writings in this and in future issues of this newsletter to be effective—able to change readers' opinions, attitudes, or behavior—and to exemplify the principles of The QF:

Queer Scholars

- are out, proud, and activist,
- have a social conscience,
- will fight discrimination against queers,
- are committed to social change,
- believe in organization,
- are of good will.

Through the generosity of The QF's donors and volunteers, whom I wish to take this opportunity to thank publicly, the Queer Foundation is able to provide encouragement of and awards for the efforts of these talented young queer writers. Please enjoy their writing in these pages and on The QF's website at <http://queerfoundation.org>.

To become a contributor, either to the general QF Scholarship Endowment or to the special Publication Awards Fund, please go to [Network for Good](#) or to [GuideStar.org](#) (search on "Queer Scholars"). Or write to me at the Queer Foundation, 3213 W Wheeler St, #145, Seattle, WA 98199.

With all best wishes for the New Year,

Joseph Dial, Ph.D.

Director

Queer Foundation Effective Writing and Scholarships Program

Righteous Rage

In the words of our president Barack Obama: WE ARE ONE PEOPLE, ONE NATION PLEDGING ALLEGIANCE TO THE SAME STARS AND STRIPES!

Over 200 years ago these same people

In this same nation,

Promised us the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,
but why is it that all I've gotten is strife, anxiety, and the results of heartlessness?

This is my piece

Righteous Rage by Me (**Javon Smith**)

Maintaining a level of integrity

At a rate of positivity

I ignore all the ignorant comments concerning my

Inconvenient Characteristics.

A bright light of immorality gleams through these

Feminine Traits.

As I stand in these cast illuminations creating shadows of darkness

I... I... I ache at the moment my mind hits the interpretation stage of these daily received

Lovely Compliments.

These Lovely Compliments are set out to ridicule displace and destroy me.

Homo! Gay BOY! FAG!

This is our restless homophobic society's unremitting shun of, not a gay boy, But a boy that seems that way:

Now maybe he may walk with a feminine stride or sometimes with a little pep in his step. Or maybe just a little bit of sometimes he may just talk a little bit of too fast, the rate of sarcasm in his voice may be just a little bit of too much, and he may just talk with a lisp.

Preceding anxiety, depression, and ultimate defeat in this intrapersonal altercation, come these insults.

No! Not insults! Because in order for them to be insults, I'd have to be insulted, but I'm actually disgusted by these displays of blatant immaturity and childishness.

The regularly ostentatious teen passes you and shouts one word and it leaves you feeling outraged! Not mad, Because in the words of my personal sage, Bill Cosby, "DOGS GET MAD!"

I said it leaves you feeling discouraged, not mad, Because in the words of my personal sage, Bill Cosby, "DOGS GET MAD!"

Now yes it was me dancing and prancing around my mama's room

In my mama's high-heels and her wig

walking around thinking I was just as bright as that third little pig.

Yes it was me trying to play rope instead of trying to play ball,

In the house playing with my niece's Barbie Dolls

An aspiring Beautician

Doing Hair and Nails and all!

Yes it was me loving the can you say my name, pay my bills and still allow us to be the independent women of DESTINY'S CHILD

And YES, I WAS ALSO AN ASPIRING DROP IT LIKE IT'S lukewarm, GIRL GONE WILD!

Yes it was me, but now it's a different story.

Now, I give GOD glory in this SPIRITUAL allegory.

Now is the time I speak my righteous rage!

Now is not the time for foolishness!

Now is the time for me and others like me to realize without GOD where we would be. We would be anywhere from handicapped top getting capped to cocking my cap to the left caught up in my GDs and my BDs and in my society inflicted lifestyle, STDs , because HIV is prevalent in the gay community.

You know what, when is rage really right and allowing it to happen politically correct? So, the next time someone calls themselves heating, or roasting you, or riding you.

Just remember sticks and stones they may break my bones but your words will never define ME.

The Battle of Lexington

By **Javon Smith**

DePaul University

The gunmen exclaimed, "Don't bring y'all fruity asses on our block no mo"! This is after they spotted me and my boyfriend walking down Lexington Ave. in Harvey, IL. They robbed us at gunpoint for indulging in each other's conversation and for obviously being gay.

Nothing we could have done, said, worn or felt would have changed their minds. We live in this community; this one instance changed my entire perspective on discrimination and intolerance in America. We were not even out for a minute, and those misguided young men felt the need to strip us of our things. The only things I had were a TI-89 graphing calculator for AP Physics and Pre-Calculus, my train fare to get home which amounted to \$1.98 in change, and my parents' obituaries. They took it. The only memorabilia left of my mom and dad—gone. We are victims of hate crime and hate speech, both of which should be redefined and put

into operation as unethical and, in some cases, illegal.

Derogatory words wound the soul, whether or not it causes a physical abrasion. Those young men that flashed their guns were bullies. They reminded me of the fourth grade when other kids would call me "gay" (as if that is an insult), insistent upon calling notice to my effortless femininity.

I endured (and even to this day) the same harassment from bullies Lance Lundsten had undergone, the most recent victim of suicide due to intolerance and hate speech from his peers. Young people are losing their lives because they do not know what to live for. In 2010, at least six young men were killed by hate. Tyler Clementi, Raymond Chase, Justin Aaberg, Billy Lucas, Asher Brown, and Seth Walsh knew hate speech as their assailant. Now they all know it as their murderer.

“We teach our children the proverb “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never harm me”...in our natural desire to save our children from pain, we encourage them to deny their feelings. But denial doesn’t make it so”. That method would just allow the radioactive insensitivity to bottle up inside its victims. Fag is a bullet; vocabularies are guns.

If hate speech is not altered soon it will infect too many of our children. Not to limit the act and consequences of hate speech to children, but that is where it starts. The infamous Don Imus, the man who insulted the entire female basketball team of Rutgers University calling them all “Nappy-headed hoes,” was most likely the outlandish kid—the one that students fear today.

Hate speech is any informal and formal language that certain people use with derogatory or exclusionary intentions toward any group of a certain demographic. Hate speech is only defined as such if it is spoken with blatant intentionality of hate. “African Americans can call one another “nigger” with the relative impunity under specific conditions, but a white person cannot do the same”. The word “nigga” can be a term of endearment only between two or more African Americans. If it is used by anyone of another race (especially by whites because of America’s racist history), it is deemed inappropriate and calls for a dispute of some sort, whether it is verbal or physical.

America is rising to a level free of segregation slowly but surely. After a history of enslaving an entire race, of course African Americans would be conscious of any possibly accepted form of hate. After not believing any other sexuality is humanly possible until 1983, of course members of the LGBTQIA community would be upset if any word that is not represented in that long acronym or any word that does not end in “-sexual(ity)” is utilized to describe us. After fighting for over a century and fighting for women’s suffrage, of course women would be riled up if any deplorable word according to a sex or gender hierarchy is acceptable. Every minority is tired of amassing the degeneracy of America.

I am not a nigga; I am an African American, former Black, former Negro, former colored. I am not a fag; I am a homosexual. Women are not hoes, b-words, or wenches; they are people. Undocumented immigrants are not illegal, nor are they aliens; they are people searching for a place of economic freedom. Lesbians are not dikes. Mexicans

are not wetbacks. Not all Irishmen are alcoholics. Yes— I was robbed for being gay. That is not all I am, and my robbers failed to see that. We are all people. Bullies and haters always seem to miss that note. Hate speech is indeed unethical, and its demise starts in the home. Hate speech is a crime and a serial murderer. It must be convicted.

About the author

Javon Smith is a sophomore at DePaul University in Chicago, with a major in secondary education (English), and minors in LGBTQ Studies, African & Black Diaspora Studies, and Theatre Studies. He is also teaching youth about the value of expressing themselves in poetry.

“Righteous Rage” is an award-winning poem Smith wrote for a poetry slam when he was fifteen. “Niggot: The Misconceptualization of Homosexuality in the Black Church” is a revision of the essay he submitted to the QF two years ago. “The Battle of Lexington” refers to a more recent experience.



Translation from the Portuguese: “Sticks and stones can break bones, but words, ah, words, they can kill a soul.”

There is a new sensitivity about in the land. The Golden Rule was, in fact, egocentric. I first heard the Platinum Rule in the early 1980s: *Do unto others as they would have you do unto them.* That Platinum Rule partners with an adage from anthropologist Edward T. Hall: *The problem with thee is me.* – The Editor.

Niggot: The Misconceptualization of Homosexuality in the Black Church

By Javon Smith

DePaul University

Foot stomping, hand clapping, and Holy Ghost catching—King of Glory Tabernacle Church of God in Christ knows the meaning of Pentecost. This church is an institution that is devout in the belief that the Bible states fact, and any doubt cannot exist. One thing interesting about this church is that when the Pastor exclaimed a powerful couplet about Jesus, they were mildly reactive; however when he said with an extra power, “I rebuke the spirit of lesbianism and homosexuality,” the entire congregation jumped in praise of such wisdom. The entire congregation was aroused, except one—the only openly gay member of the church stood back in the face of such insult. The Black church has been spewing such righteous insults for too long. “African American lesbians and gays are generally born into Black churches and as consequence of this existence endure pain with their humanity, sexuality, and love relationships are denigrated” (Griffin vii). Homosexuality is so detested in the Black church that it has a dramatically negative effect on the Black community as a whole, and this disgust causes men to assimilate into social norms.

Black Americans have a heterosexist moral code with biblical and social justification (although the social aspect is not usually identified). “In a society where African Americans have been the victims of racial oppression, it is difficult for the same people to be self-critical and view themselves as victimizers, treating others in ways that they deemed oppressive to themselves” (Griffin xi).

Although men are considered homosexual if they engage in homosexual relations, homosexual men that conform to the goals of masculinity and/or degradation of feminine men in the Black church are not as degraded as the “sissies” and “punks” of the congregations. This is because of the common misconceptions stating gay men are all feminine or “not real men”. Some may find homosexual acts acceptable only when the man engages in heterosexual acts as well. Author E. Lynn Harris popularized the phrase “On the down low” as the description for a self-identified heterosexual man who engages in secret homosexual acts. Some of these men utilize the church to evade conflicts of

their sexual and religious identities with the Black church’s ‘don’t ask, don’t tell’ approach to sexual orientation.

The church has been the place for African Americans to find peace from social segregation. “The Black church was given credit for providing Black Americans an institution for political activity, consciousness raising, community advocacy, social networking, and social support” (Valera 108). To many Blacks, the amount of dignity, knowledge, and power one can possess is in direct correlation with one’s amount of religious (Christian) affiliation. As paradoxical as it must be, the Black church was a place to find freedom from racial segregation, but with use of scripture, this institution is forcing segregation of sexual orientations. This segregation causes men to either stay in the church and assimilate or leave and be free and loved.

Even if homosexuality or heterosexuality were a choice, there is no reason that either should be avoided. Both expressions possess the potential to offer sexual fulfillment and spiritual wholeness (Griffin 70). Love creates this spiritual wholeness. A man stated what he feels about being gay, Black and Christian:

“While I know that I’ll never be able to have the fairytale relationship that straight people get, I still want to have someone love me like David loved Saul’s son, Jonathan. I’m not sure if they were gay or anything, but when Jonathan died, David said that Jonathan’s love for him was more wonderful and stronger than even women’s love for him. I want something like that. Someone who cares about me that much and someone I can care about like that. But I’m still looking for my Jonathan” (Pitt 12).

These statements were made although an anti-gay associate professor of New Testament at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary stated, “There is not a single piece of evidence in the Old Testament that even hints at a favorable attitude toward any

homosexual relationship. The David and Jonathan narratives are no exception” (Gagnon 62).

In the Black church, homosexuality is equated with other sexual sins like adultery, bestiality, and fornication. “How can we think that nature recognizes homosexuality as a distinct biological category? And are we to infer that other sexual tastes—pedophilia, for example—are also biologically decreed” (Cobb 121)? These sins are not equal. Donnie McClurkin, an award-winning songwriter and gospel singer whose testimony includes acts of homosexuality, spoke about the occurrences of molestation in his childhood. Though tragic, McClurkin blamed his brush with homosexuality on the occurrences. He is currently encouraging young homosexuals to “give up their wicked ways” (Boykin).

People are dying right now because they do not feel “right” enough or straight enough. Homosexuals need security in church; the same security of hope and strength it has historically given to Black people. Now, gay people do not even want to go to these services anymore because we are just tired of the ignorance. “Singer and Deschamps (1994) have shown that more than 60% of gays and lesbians say that religion is no longer important in their lives. Rejecting the religious identity can take a number of forms: Affiliating with a religion that does not stigmatize homosexuals, no longer attending worship services, or even becoming an atheist” (Pitt 9). Clearly, the Black church is doing more harm than help.

One minister of the previously mentioned Black church whose identity is withheld is a proclaimed delivered homosexual. He stated his position on homosexuality:

“I believe homosexuality is a choice. People choose between heterosexuality and pleasing God. Heterosexuality is the sexuality God ordained in relation to the Bible. Homosexuality should not be practiced in the church. It is an abomination according to the KJV of the Bible. I have not read it in any other versions. I do not care to. People that practice homosexuality should not be in the church because they are sinners. It is unrighteous. It is better to fight homosexuality, because you win. You get to go to heaven. If you practice it, you die and go to hell. They can be free. God is the only one that knows the heart, so I cannot judge. You cannot be born again without religious practices. Deliverance

from homosexuality is a three-step process. One, you believe in your mind that it is wrong. Two, make up your mind that you don’t want to do it. Three, you pray, fast, read the Bible. You let your spirit man grow. As far as ministers and men in the church that are on the down low, they are afraid of judgment. They know the truth, but they don’t want to deal with it. Jesus is the truth. Romans 1:24-28 is the truth. Homosexuality is of the Devil.”

These words can be caught being spoken over countless pulpits of Black churches. These words were spoken to me under the mentorship of a delivered homosexual so that I could become the same. Twice. As a teen, this social disease caused me to run to any cure I could find: the Bible, girls, counseling, Exorcisms, denial, and even attempting suicide. Nothing worked. My pastor helped me change when I was fifteen. Through prayer and fasting I became heterosexual. All I had to do then was swallow my pride, walk back into my closet and seal it shut with a cross for a key. That lasted for a whole seven months, I had a girlfriend and everything, but we broke up because she felt as if I was not completely true to myself. It took diligence and perseverance to stay straight and healed. After wallowing for being dumped, I knew she was right. Although the counselors made it clear that I would burn in hell for eternity where there are horrid smells, cramped spaces and no means to live, I concluded that God made me in his image, just as he did everybody else—gay and all.

Forthcoming in the April issue:

- **Brandon Lambert**, past recipient of a QF scholarship, and a sophomore majoring in Theatre Arts at Point Park University, writes about what he sees as negative stereotyping about bisexuals in the gay community on his campus and why such stereotyping hurts all of us.
- We’ll introduce the 2012 QF Scholarship recipients.
- Information on the 2012 Special Publications Awards – \$250.00 and \$500.00 scholarships for materials accepted for publication in *The Queer Foundation Scholar*. Would you like to help judge entries? Please contact the editor at rverzasconi@msn.com.