

Ask No Questions, Hear No Lies
By Elliott Brown '21
Gold Award – Poetry
American Voices Nominee

The sidewalks are paved with good intentions
But the cities are plagued with pain
Our Sons and Daughters left to die on the cold roads;
Unwelcome in their own homes.

We planted seeds of prosperity
Sundown to sunrise
They grew.
Then we watched you destroy our Garden.

Some claim we feed off false equity
Yet demand the right to touch our hair
We scream,
but they mute our voices.
Why do you act like we're invisible?
Oh, that's right
You don't see color.

We don't teach oppression 101
We can't make you feel how we feel
Take a look outside our window,
and see how free this land really is.

Which were broken first?
Your promises
or our families?
Fewer wives, more widows
Fewer lives, more
unmarked graves.

Your high-rises censor our city blocks
as we are forced into a corner.
Gentrification dwindles our population
Chocolate city, vanilla-fied
Black people: Vilified
Like our memories embalmed on the old photos
Our culture
Our history
is fading.

Generations of your wrongs
Woven into Amerikkkan structures
You call it the Constitution
We call it a wishlist
You call it a threat to your way of life
We call it Black Excellence.

If I force my knee to your neck
and you felt your soul slowly suffocating
Would your people's reactions be unreasonable?
Ask No Questions,
Hear No Lies
The truth doesn't hurt
When you've known it your whole life.