Do Black Lives Really Matter?

By: Katrina M

rising 10th grader at Science Leadership Academy

Pow! Pow!
Gunshots go off, another life gone
Black person reaches into their pocket
Police automatically think you have a weapon

You run, you look suspicious
Next thing you know, handcuffs, on the ground
Can’t speak, can’t breathe
Can’t move because the cops piling on top of you multiply

“What have I done wrong?”

“Why am I a threat to you?”

“Why do you take my life?”

Protests...riots...damage... these things happen because through your eyes, black lives don't matter
We’re getting killed off one by one
Why do you do this?

All of a sudden you see us, we're automatically dangerous
They don't ask questions, they start shooting
Put us into the back of a cop van and go on a rough ride
We get shot while going on a jog
Privilege kneeling down on our necks until our eyes shut.
Trayvon, Aiyana, Philando, Freddie, George, Ahmad, and more
Their lives were decided by a bullet
Lives in your hands..
Keep a life or end it?

You scream ALL lives matter but is that even true to you?

Do you get racially profiled and sent to jail for a crime you didn’t commit?
No justice served.

We start a movement- it’s racist, wrong, inappropriate

But let’s not forget slavery, segregation, police brutality, hate crimes, and your flawed justice system
For us to take a stand, it’s discrimination
We can’t speak OUR truth without you telling us we are the ones in the wrong.

Black people are defined by the color of their skin
Why does my skin matter to you?
Does it scare you?

We don’t “fit in”
We’re too “different”

We’re human beings, just like you
We have have an abundance of feelings, just like you
We have loving families, just like you
We have bright futures, just like you
But that doesn’t seem to matter to you,
Because when you see me...
“My hands are up! Don’t shoot!”
Family Tree
Kelmaris D.
Rising 9th grader at Philadelphia High School for Girls

I'm tired of seeing them fall.
I'm tired of this all.
Them lined up protected by plastic
And us into ashes.

We go as far as night.
They go as far as white.
Them holding us down by the neck.
We are begging for our breath.

Open your eyes and see.
What they have done to me.
Pleading please!
Don't kill me!

My eyes bleed.
But I won't flee.
So stand here with me.
Roots growing beneath this family tree.

#Black Lives Matter

Her.

By Kelmaris D.

Rising 9th grader at Philadelphia High School for Girls

She was all. She was the beginning. The only thing we saw when at first we opened our eyes. Or noticed when we looked out the window. She was everlasting. She was the flower and we were the petals. She had danger inside of her but never gave us any...just her beauty. She was home.

It was until now that we fidget with our fingers in fear. The cold night hugs us, telling us it will never be okay. We know that, as spring gives us hope, so does the summer day. But, its words whisper in my ear to “look out the door” and see it in me. Let it vibrate in my body as a pulse. Never will we forget how it spread along the unknown. In the forbidden forest. In the forbidden practice. Just to go around unnoticed.

It makes me feel as if I'm in a parallel world now finding out the true meaning of my world's existence. Was it the dark past or the rotten grass that united us all? It was her. The smile she left in the meadow. Sun lightly kissing her chocolate skin. Her brown eyes telling its meaning. Her healthy touch never left my cheeks. Now all I feel is the empty
color of my skin, of my home. Can it ever return because we begged on our knees? Do we have to lose all of our mind for you to finally disappear?

It was the first time we could blame others for this. The first time we could blame them for us losing her. Then, why does it hurt to blame them for this? Is it her telling me it’s not their fault but… something bigger? Something brutal and ruthless like bullets. A battlefield. The human’s weakness and strength. The one thing that makes our bones shake. What costs thousands of lives to prove…victory? Is that why you’re gone? The reason why we have no choice but hide behind others?

I can see it clearly. Her smile, her laugh. I can hear her telling me to fight this darkness. That it was never in the forbidden forest. I just needed to look harder to see the light. To see her standing right next me. Telling me she was with me the whole way. Told me there were others like me who felt the same way about her being gone, but wants us to stay together and fight the dark… the loneliness.

Fight it united.

WRONG PARTY
(Protest)
Isabel F.
Rising 9th grader at Arts Academy at Benjamin Rush

Welcome to the party that no longer holds the meaning of my message.
I’ve invited people who had great reasons, all of the time. Until, god forgive me; I had invited the wrong people. People who overshadowed my message. After seeing the injustice, I shout my solution. Planned it all out, I was ready to fight. Wait. No, I’m not ready. A single man Let anger take control. Blind to the chaos unfolding, the music synced with the vibrating roars. Invaluable things became useless, the whole meaning of my party had been destroyed. While others cleaned up the mess, now my party was miscommunicated on the news. Lies. My fight had reason. oh goodness. I hate to say it, but I’ve become what my enemy craves to see, I’ve become the act of raids. My friend,

I’ve become the WRONG PARTY.

BLACK LIVES MATTER
Zahara D.
Rising 10th grader at Lankenau High School

Every day, you go on social media,
See a black man, black women, black kids being tortured because they’re alive. Ultimately tortured by racism, systemic injustices, and the people who are meant to Protect.

So many fights happening in these nights,
Wanting our rights before they cut the lights. Can’t even go outside with a hoodie on because a “white” person’s going to think you’re a thief, When really, you just went for a run hoping you'll find some relief.

Then hear this,
You can’t even go to the store, without seeing a body drop to the floor,
And when you see that body, what is it?
A black person, right?
Is it cause we’re in the dark and you can’t see at night,
Or is it because we’re black and you refuse to give us our rights?

Then y’all wanna say black don’t crack,
How about those scars on our backs?
Cops still shooting us, because the color on our skin,
Put the whips away and release us from the shackles you put us in
MLK, Rosa Parks, Ruby Bridges, you fought for us and we are still living in sin.

Oh and let’s not forget about those cops,
Hoping they can’t catch sleep knowing what they did.
Man, how would you feel if someone shot your own kid?
Killing a parent’s gift,
Killing a son’s role model,
Killing a daughter’s protector,
Was this the only thing you can give?
Got them chasing us, trying to hurt us until we’re dead,
Man what the hell is wrong with them in the head?

Now look at us, we’re trying to protest - make sure MY people can get a right
Instead we have the cops and the President holding us down, making sure we see no type of light.
You can’t end our fight!
All we ever tried to do was be free, but instead you got a cop’s knee on a man’s life,
not letting go, even when he said, “I can’t breathe!”

This is AMERICA
If white people were able to have a right, have a fight, why can’t we?
There are army tanks and AR-15s in front of my house, can you see?
You tried to make us feel weak.
But now we have to get stronger.
Stronger than you’ll ever be.
Falling into the footsteps of the greatest in the movement
Standing with black men and women, never wearing a disguise
Just like Maya Angelou said, “Still, like air, I rise.”

It’s crazy, because you think this is all happening because of one man’s life.
How about Philando Castile that was killed in front of his daughter and his wife?
You gave us no choice but for us to do what we did
Another innocent black man’s death in the hands of a cop,
George Floyd died, left never to see his kid.

You’re getting mad because of the destruction Philly has done?
You should have listened to us, instead make us run.
Being a person of color has done nothing, but left my tears dry.
Now Philly isn’t the same anymore,
but to all those innocent black people, fly high.

Now you want to say Black Lives Matter,
But how about you actually look at our hearts, know how we really feel,
As if it’s glass, because it’s been shattered.
But we will rebuild, that’s what we’re best at
Hear my voice, march with me, stand by our side
Notice that we are worth it, that we are apart of this nation
We will have justice and end this world crisis.
To put it simply, “BLACK LIVES MATTER”

I Must Ask..
Joshua R.P.
10th grade student at Science Leadership Academy

Do you murder us because of our fear?
Or your fear?
Do you murder us because of our color?
Or your color?
Do you murder us for our protection?
Or your protection?
Do you murder us for our freedom?
Or your freedom?
A country that is named United
Finding it impossible to be as such.
We are from a place of disparity.
Where we lose sleep worrying that our mothers and fathers will be sent to the graveyard.
We see you posting on social media that you are disgusted
But you’re too timid to take action.
We riot because human beings are murdered, on camera, in cold blood.
By men sent to protect.
We riot because our pleas have been silenced
We riot because we don’t know where to place our built up anger.
Yet you riot over sports teams and it is accepted blindly
Your feelings matter less than our lives.
How many black deaths do we need to witness in order for change to happen?
In order for my brothers and sisters to walk down a street peacefully?
In order for my brothers and sisters to drive legally in their car?
In order for my brothers and sisters to live like every other white American?
I will not shut up. I will not sit down.
I'll stand in front of my brothers and sisters who want change in this town.
The issue will no longer remain hidden.
You need to change the system or we will change your privileged lives.
Our color is beautiful-
Triumphant, powerful, undefeated.
We protest peacefully, yet we still see no change.
Crazy how you’d rather see our nation burn down
Then open your eyes and put your pride to the side
We scream “I CAN’T BREATHE”
You hear our cries, you see our pain,
And even our own president hides out and doesn't want to take any blame.
It's time America stands up and makes the change!
I must ask, “Will you stand with us?”
George Floyd pleaded for his life but to no surprise the words he spoke were avoided- IGNORED. Head and body to the ground begging for his life but the police acted like they didn’t even hear a sound.

Now don’t get me wrong for the people who protect, I do respect, but it’s the ones who neglect a person for his or her color.

Not caring if a mother is losing her child, not caring if a child is losing their father.

Imagine how you would feel being told this because what happened was ferocious. Knee to neck - that's what's being seen. Everyone saying that was mean, but, No!

I think it's cruel for people to abandon their job rules.

In all seriousness, before you see what color a person is, don’t treat them like their skin they wear is a sin, because just like them you come from a mother, just like them you grow throughout the years, and just like them you shed tears, so I’m begging you...

Freeze and think, “What am I thinking?! They're human, just like me?”

Because we all have a voice, so we should all be able to make a choice because when it’s time to plead don’t forget red is what we all bleed.

God accepts all- whether their White, Black, tall or small.

Now let me be honest, as a kid, we are told to be silent, but I can’t anymore, this world is getting too violent.

Now as an adult you can no longer hide, you have to confide about what’s going on to your kid and don’t keep the truth locked under a lid because as soon as you turn on the tv all you see is chaos. People who try and fight to be heard, left or right, no matter where you look, it won't change the fact innocent people's lives are being took.

I think everyone is wasting their time committing these crimes.

I understand that it is said that actions speak louder than words but what happens when people are dead because of the herds.

What people are doing is a choice,

But there are many other ways to use your voice.

Now with everything going on

our generation is obligated to speak out loud,

and we really want to make you proud,

but we fear no matter the tears and words being spoken,

it won’t change the crowds from making their own cities broken.

I'm begging and praying that what I'm saying is enough because right now people are losing their jobs while others are being robbed.

It's devastating that we’ve come to a point where we can’t lie and say everything is okay
Because we’re afraid that another innocent person is going to die the very next day

You’ll see on the news that in the ground is where they lay

All because one person was too small-minded didn't care what another person had to say.
Hands Up!
Tyreena G.
Rising 10th grader at Philadelphia High School for Girls

Do you see?
The dead bodies on the floor
That break families to their core
Why has burying a loved one become a regular chore?
Placing a name before the words “has died"
Has shown that dying can not just be let to slide
It must be a guide to a new solution
So hear our roars in this revolution.
You pick up a gun
Aim
No matter who’s really to blame.
One shot
BOOM!
There goes another life - gone away
We are killing each other every single day
Just trying to find someone to blame for our pain
But let’s not forget the racist cops, sent to keep safe the neighborhoods we live in
Instead killing us off because our crime is the color of our skin
Us black people can never win
That's when the protest and rioting begin
And everybody soon thinks it is all a sin
We said,
“Hands up,
Don't shoot!”
Screams.
It’s just not fair this world we live in
That's why there needs to be a change
How many times do we need to say it?
Can't you see that I am somebody?
I have a future!
HANDS UP.
DON'T SHOOT.
Because George Floyd couldn't breathe and if there isn’t a change,
One day, neither will you.

“I Am the Streets”
By Anonymous
10th grade student

They run they cry
They walk they die
Do you decide
Who lives or dies
I am the streets
I cannot cry
I cannot die
I can't decide
Who lives or dies
They run on me
They shoot on me
Can't feel the pain
Only drink their tears
Only dressed in their blood
I comfort them but they just disappear
They revolt
I see their signs rise
Screaming and yelling
With tears in their eyes
They scream for justice
As the cars burn down
They scream, they matter
And their voice will ring through this town
They will not die
They will survive
They scream it with the passion still in their eyes
They won't back down without a fight
They scream it in the dark moonlight.

The Firearm
- Anonymous
8th grade students at Feltonville Arts and Sciences

What have I done.
I was made to be used for protection,
But in the wrong hands for destruction.
My foolish cop didn’t read the instructions.
Now let's have this discussion:

This is what I have to say to you,
This is my expectation.
You shouldn’t shoot because of your frustration.
Don't let your racist and ignorant ways be your motivation.

Listen up this needs to be clear:
I don't want to be the reason you react to your fears.
I know your parents are hurt,
I know they are going through pain.
Now you hear their angry chants of “Justice needs to be gained!”

“This cruel cold world,”
I hear them say.
“Needs to be reformed in every way.”
They don’t want any violence,
They don’t want any harm.
This is a wake up call,
This is an alarm.

But all I can do as the firearm,
Is pray for the day that I
Am used for protection,
Not destruction.

Racism Ends Now
Marvin T.
Rising 10th grader Olney Charter School

Why? For what reason?
Another black man dead for no sudden move
A white cop kills a black dude and it ends up on the news
When something like this happens
My brain turns to fumes

What if everything was turned around?
What if it was the white cops getting gunned down?
Wouldn’t they tear up the town?
For respect and glory
At this point, no one has a say to the story

Why when a black person gets pulled over
They have to fear for their lives
Not knowing when they get pulled over
If they’re going to make it out of there alive
To go home to his wife and kids
To make memories and have a good time
It’s the end of the racist world and this is a sign

The system is against us, so we need to band together.
There’s no reason to hate when we all bleed the same color
Instead of fighting, let’s just all love each other

But I would be lying if I said I didn’t have my doubts
This isn’t the first attempt at ending racism,
But here we are again, that’s what this is about.

I’m disappointed
How can you not see we are all humans?
there’s really nothing different about us all
But when a racist talks trash and is killing our brothers and sisters
I understand the brawl.
Because blacks are tired
Of this endless fight and being called names they don’t want be called

Racism ends now!

We are all equal!

So let’s stop and make it right,
Everybody ball up a fist for black lives.

Racism ends now!

What Really Matters!
Sully M.

Black lives matter, what is that?
Black lives matter, is that evil?
Black lives matter, what is that changing?
Black lives matter, are they helping America?

Black lives matter is about educating one another.
Black lives matter is bringing unity and justice to all.
Black lives matter is putting an end to ignorance.
Black lives matter is an unsilenced change our world needs.

Black lives matter is making everyone equal.
Black lives matter grabbing a person’s mind and wrapping
It around the fact that everyone has the same rights, throwing prejudice away.
Being judged by the color of your skin, will be no longer.
Black lives matter is about creating peace, but we will erupt like and earthquake for you to hear our voice.
Black lives matter just as much as yours do.
From George Floyd, Fredy Gray, Ayiana Jones, Amadou Diallo.
Falsely accused, tortured, innocent, murdered.
But who’s paying the consequences..
Only a paid judge gets to choose.
Don’t Hurt Me
Anonymous

Black lives matter,
but soon there will be no one to care for if cops keep wiping us out.
We used to Love the cops,
But now we freeze up like deer in headlights if we see the cops nearby.
These cops take Action without even knowing if we innocent or not,
Because our skin supposedly reads, “kill me, I’m the bad guy”
They don’t understand that my race is filled with Culture.
Why does our skin intimidate you so much?
You’re so scared of us that you automatically reach for the gun in your holster.
Don’t shoot and Kill me for reaching for my ID,
running out of my bed because YOU set my blanket on fire, you shoot me.
And when you arrest me please give me my inhaler when I ask, you choke me.
Don’t leave me with a broken spine, you take me on a “rough ride”.
Nowadays kids know to say, “hide momma the cops over there”.
Cops got us so scared that my seven year old cousin bursts out crying,
“Saminah, I didn’t steal anything! I don’t wanna die!!!”
We need these cops to go back to loving us, so we can go back to loving them.
At the end of the day, cops are supposed to protect us.
Not hurt us.

Black Lives Matter

By Kayleen A.
10th grade student

Yes, Black Lives Matter come and join right in.
There’s time for justice when we collab.
People judge because we are not exactly the same. 
Back off – we’re still human beings.

This is America. We should refuse to stay shut 
Not to come at people, but to work for our rights.

We’re getting tired of this nonsense, 
Be us for a chance, 
You’ll feel the pain and pressure.

Dang, we are getting tired.

This ain’t right. We should not get treated differently out of color.

We can’t be all the same. 
Then the world would be all plain with no interest.

Dang, that’s lame

Why can’t we be different?

Did you ever stop to think, that isn’t alright? 
The pain we’re in to fight for our rights. 
The pressure we have among ourselves. 
The hatred we endure toward us all.

Can’t be us without being deemed dangerous. 
Wow America, 
we need our rights.

Bodies
Anonymous. 
11th grade student
White body kills Black body  
But no body saw a thing.  
Every body has an opinion  
But no body has the truth.  
White body thought that it could  
Beat the blackness out of Black body  
But Black body stayed black.  
Black body cried out,  
"Some body! Please! Help!  
This violates rights!.
But still, nobody heard a thing.

Gone  
Aries C.  
Rising 10th grader at Multicultural Academy  

His voice was inseparable  
From my ears  
I’m deaf to his voice  

Now that he is gone  
He couldn’t be gone  
If they cared enough  

I  
Can’t see him  
Hear him  
Hug him  

Because they did not care  
Because we don’t matter  
Our lives don’t matter  

Nothing matters  
When it comes to us.  
Not even basic human rights.
Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness
We fought for these ideals
We shouldn't settle for less
A black man goes for a run - dangerous
And black man in a car- dangerous
They must be trying to injure us.

You could look up the definition of injustice
But it couldn't describe how unfair it is
For George Floyd’s daughter to sleep restless
I could never imagine what his family goes though
To go through what you went through...
To be in your shoes...

7 years ago I was your daughter’s age
I had no cares at that age
No injustice to go through, just house rules to abide
You left this earth way too soon
So many memories you will now miss out on

Buts it’s already over now
Killed in the country our father left for us
By the people trained to protect us, somehow.
Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness
We fought for these ideals
We shouldn't settle for less.

How Do You Feel
by Thayer A.
10th grade student

How would you feel if you were to run
you’ll be sure to be gunned.
How would you feel if the so called saviors
that are meant to make us feel secure
gave us fear up our reer and left us in tears.
How would you feel if instead of feeling your heartbeat,
you would be looking down at your blood stains on the street.
How would you feel if you were minding your business one day,
maybe even grabbing a snack, and
BOOM!
Just because you wore your hoodie,
you got shot by a man on fake police duty,
and by the end of the day the streets are just bloody.
How would you feel if you just found out on the phone,
at first you were in doubt,
but then you realized that your family member just went out
but by white supremacist.
And you wonder why we raise our fist.
Day in, day out, today, tomorrow,
beautiful families left in cold black sorrow.
Hashtag after hashtag,
Body bag after body bag.
This is nothing new,
as much as it sounds as false as a horror movie about citizens gone rogue,
this is all true.

The only people that can stop this
disgusting harassment on African Americans,
or people in general
are people like you.

You.

“My Fears Got the Best of Me”
By Leydalis C.
11th grade student

Growing up in a strange world
Strange people, strange customs
Lacking empathy
Its every man for themselves
I'm living in a hell
The governments are casting spells
The problems bigger than we think
“Boom!” - another dead
“Boom!” - through his head
Nothings being done
There's no game; it's not fun
They're accused
They're innocent
We’re different, it's okay
Drowning in an abyss,
Fault of our insecurities
“My fears got the best of me”

The Reality
Krista C.
Rising 11th grader at Central High School

In our modern day world
Society is brutal
Killing blacks in the street
Them, dissipating disapproval

With the job to protect
Like heros of a tale
They have a negative effect
Leaving fear in their trail

From Freddie to Tray
And Aiyana to Boyd
Injustice is made
Which others cannot avoid

Seeking justice for the men
One women, one girl
Looking upon their dark skin
That the bullets have impaled

Black lives matter
Is the riot they have caused
Making the government shatter
Until they make better laws