

## **“you remember this day when your father cried”**

By Alivia Vaughns

The hate in this world, the chaos it contains is too much and breaks my father's smile,  
the tears roll down as the corners turn into a frown and his words  
are sentenced to haunt me forever.  
Nothing has changed and hope of future change fades away.  
I look into the eyes of those called changemakers thirty years before me  
- yet the chants haven't changed, the riots haven't changed only the names, letter by letter,  
memorials change only in outer appearance  
the cause, the rage, the sadness is never changing.  
Generations go by and fight the same fight, have the same protests and yet here we are.  
My family sits around our dining room table and we cry.  
We are all too rage filled and saddened to say anything as I watch my father cry  
for the second time in my life about how he is sorry that nothing has changed.  
And I sit and wonder if it will ever end.

James Baldwin said, “to be a Negro in this country and to be relatively conscious is to be in a rage almost all the time.” And I wonder how anyone hasn't combusted yet from the amount of rage they contain, for I can barely make it two steps.

My friends reach out to ask if I'm ok. I don't know how to answer a question that can only be answered with the annihilation of a system which wraps its hands tighter around neck until only the crushed imprints remain - and they call this a noose and I don't know what they expect me to say. I say not really because I can't properly convey the ways in which I'm constantly burdened by fear sadness rage numbness over the state of our country. And I don't know how to live my life in this chaos. And I don't know what will be said in the future when the ones before can only apologize for leaving what they thought was a better world.

These words are shards puncturing hands with each letter  
but I keep going because someone has to bear witness.  
Someone has to set in stone the bodies laid down to fight, never will they be forgotten.  
These words are resistance, proof of existence that to simply be black and exist  
is a treasured triumph to be had.