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Check the Appropriate Race

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Check the Appropriate Race // Lisa Hozey

White is what I am. How many times am I allowed to say that without being racist? It's the death color in Japan. America too, I'm told. That's why my Jesus is black. And a woman. An old, rickety woman. A rickety, basket weaver woman in Her hand-carved rocking chair, my Jesus weaving baskets and singing that sweet grass Gullah song. She knows my past and pasts passed before that. She shakes Her head and says, "Nah, chile ya isn' gud," but trails off in Her coughed chuckles. She laughs at my white and how every time someone asks what I am I have to do ethnic algebra. Broke-ass Confederate family that can't afford to even spell out S-L-A-V-E + out of work, potato famine Irish folk + Sicilians that immigrated from one shit hole to another = i. Not to be confused with imaginary i, but the i that I am.

White is what I am. Curse you WASP blood! I don't hold the fact those cop bastards use the synagogues two streets over as speed traps against my Moses. We have Seder together every year anyway. My gypsy Moses, homosexual Moses, Polack Moses yells the same thing when he first sees me. "Shalom you mother-fucking Nazi!" My forced side grin gets him to slap me on the back and laugh, "Mashugana kid! Lighten up Jew killer!" He smiles sympathetically when I don't, knowing I didn't choose to be born in Germany. Just another thing to not be proud of or I'm branded: Skin-head-anti-Semite-Hitler-lover. Tradition is that we open the door for Elijah when the meal begins. We always hope the prophet strolls in before we get to the maror. He never does, and the bitter herb taste sits on my tongue a while after.

White is what I am. Allah gets coffee with me when She has free time. No, She is not a terrorist. She does, however, love to watch a good futbol match. My beautiful Allah does not scream Jihad! in my face. She knows I have my own jihads every day. Only cubic zirconia shine in the hijabs She wears, because She sees how the real ones make me think of Africa. Africa, the guilt that isn't mine to have. She will remind me they're fake sometimes when tears start up as I stare. I cry for Africa. Cry for the HIV infected Blood Diamonds. Child armies and orphaned parents. Death of love. Death of everything. She'll smile soothingly and shush me, "You were not a part of Apartheid either, babe."

White is what I am. Babysitting mi Chico Buddha is my

favorite unpaid form of employment. His little five-year-old giggles echo when I worry about my future. "Hehehehe, you're silly, just silly silly!" Perfect little giggles. Tag is a great game to play with Buddha because He never wants to win. Never wants and giggles, "Don't you got enough without the future in your noggin! Tu es loco!" I don't answer, just catch Him and turn into the tickle-monster. The future is more about what I don't want. The thoughts rise of putting on a uniform and the title of 2nd Lieutenant. In one hand I hold a paid for degree. In the other is an M-16 whose bullets are lodged elsewhere. But Buddha just giggles at me, "You can't always get what you wannnhaaahaheheHA!" The Rolling Stones tune fights its way through inescapable tickles. "But if you try sometimes geeheehaHa! You just might find..."

White is what I am. Not a racist, but a stupid-humanist. I've known the feeling of survival compared to actually living. Vacation has been a full-night sleep, a half-night sleep, just feeling like I had sleep. There was a time I had to live in my car. I've saved a life. Nigga is not a word that I cannot say. I just don't want to say it. I also don't want to say: bitch, fuck, damn, dick, cock, ass, cunt, shit. But I do sometimes. I've seen injustice and voted shitty politicians into office. I even paid these taxes on time a year or two. White is what I am. But there is no box for that.