

All Poetry and Art Written & Produced
By Brandon "fanlsee" Payne



Village Takes:
Live from Bed-Stuy

I grew up with the saying, “it takes a village to raise a child”. These pieces are an ode to the people and places in the Brooklyn community that have been essential to my growth. Brooklyn birthed my childhood memories and is responsible for my thought process as a young black man striving daily to give back to the community that raised me.

–Brandon ‘fanIsee’ Payne

Special Thanks

The Society X – I give thanks for a wonderful community of artists and a space where I’ve shared my poetry on a weekly basis and have developed a quicker writing process. Thank you Sarah for your infectious positivity, dedication and leadership of the group of “Night Owls” in a way that only you can.

Parachute Arts – It’s been a blessing to share stories on Saturdays with amazing poets who have written about NYC. I want to thank Amanda for connecting us all to create an organic community and SM Gray for leading the workshops with readings / prompts to help allow me to express myself. I grow tremendously each week as I’m able to reflect deeply about life.

Mom / Grandma – Thanks for being my biggest inspirations and sources of infinite wisdom in my life. You’ve loved and accepted me unconditionally and encouraged me to be myself every step of the way.

Who’s Grandma?

My 5 year-old self

Loved to judge–

I had my doubts about Grandma

She was “too active”

(for an old lady)

I honestly didn’t know who she was

Always out the door

Driving my mom and my aunt crazy

This 5 year-old would be stuck with her

During summertime

She knew I liked basketball

She said:

We’ll play at the park if you don’t whine

I said:

Whine about what Grandma?

Hang out with me for a little while

And the best of times I remember

Was always being with Grandma

At the Albany Senior Center

Mom's Struggle

I've seen–
Mom's struggle
Working a 9-5
Just to come home to media
Whose job is to tell-ill-vise
As years pass by
It's the same cycle–
Months– spent saving for the next rainy day
Weekends– spent serving the community
Weeks– spent scheduling activities
Days– spent stretching the dollar
Hours– spent scurrying about
Minutes– spent sleeping til the alarm sounds
Seconds– spent smiling
And hiding
What life is like for her.

But it takes a strong woman
To take this much responsibility
And still be sane
And still stand–
Not showing any signs of stumbling
And still be able to say
With her head held high
She raised her ma(i)n
I watched my mom endure–
This single parent pain
And brush it off her shoulders
Like she forgot her last name
God builds many strong women
And we still need to repair these broken men...
Why?
Because I'm tired of seeing mom's struggle

Growing Up

Didn't have much
In my feelings / wasn't really in touch
With reality
Action figured lines
Would make up
The hours after 9-5 of a
Single mom's struggle
Juggling both roles
Black woman tugging with
Her manchild / main child
and all the wrongs
Knew the
Black church would keep me strong
Had my Easter Sunday best
Determined for success
Christ realized fire baptized
Always chastised by the big talk
Big timers

Growing up
Can't forget the
Ball-a-holics, Whatchamacallits
Bed-Stuy bodega goers
Educators, meditators, graffiti-ans, comedians,
Poets, the all-know-its, mind readers, dreamers
Seers, secret-keepers, deeper
Black skin, Indian, Caribbean, Puerto Rican,
Dominican, Mexican
No borders
Party-goers, smoke-tokers,
Do it for the cam, Stunt for the fam,
16 & pregnant,
Community based, problem-faced
We didn't have much
But when I finally grew up
I was ready for reality

Rubik's Cube of Life

There are countless concerns

About the many twists + turns

Tip-toeing these white and black lines

Mix-matched by design

It's, hard to figure out- without

Taking the top off + adding glue...

Without a clue

So, we keep going-

Puzzled about

How to pick up the pieces-

Wondering...

Who Control\$

These Line\$

These Square\$

These Cube\$

These Paradigm\$

(THESE DIMEN\$IONS\$ OF OPPRE\$SION)

And WHY?

I can't breathe

I can't find my voice

I can't think

I can't see

Front, back, side to side

White collar, Blue collar

Red collar, Black collar

Metal collar – Pay a dollar

Learn the secrets

In God We Trust to put us in

The right sequence

Our sides will always be unfinished

But when you go under – will your hard-work be favored?

Seen as magic?

Take your time to figure it out

Build up – keep your eye peeled

Find your voice

Breathe

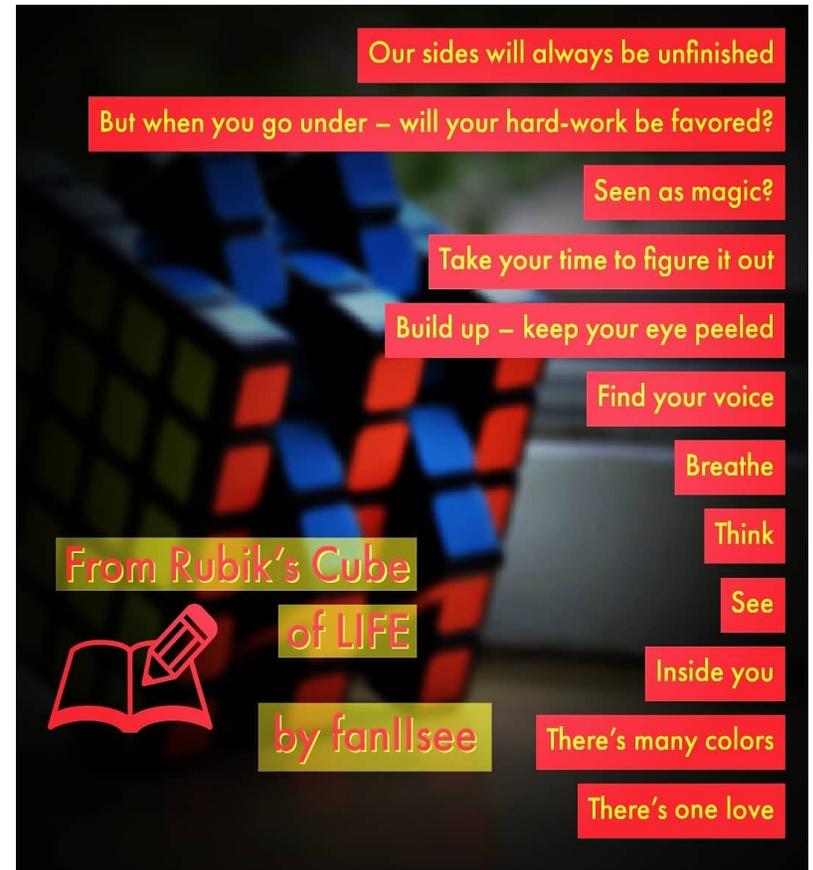
Think

See

Inside you

There's many colors

There's one love



After the Rain

World sure is a bore
When it rains it pours
Whether hatred or poor
D'greedy want
More and more
Not what they need-
Deep in some shitty situations
Stuck on fake news / Reality TV stations
Fiction becoming facts
ugh the dangers
How / you still tell lies from centuries ago
To fool a whole nation?
Cold day in hell when
Everything's going wrong
Eyelids soaking up

Never know what we got til it's gone
Temptations try to catch up
Singing wish it would rain
Pour in out my heart trying to
Avoid the pain / of
Translating my soul
Vibrating higher daily
That's my goal
Light of the sun
Feet in the soil
Continuously growing slowly
Planted
Rain running like forest
Coming together after the storm
Is how human nature progress

Imposter

We can be anything we wanna be

But not an imposter

Ultimately--
Is this the right choice for me?
Losing my voice
Aiming hopelessly
Wanna be forty
Living life drama free
Acting like: less than the queens
And kings we supposed to be
Perception of self
Is a drag
Why we slip and fall
Feeling less than fab
Sometimes it
Seems like it's too easy E or A
Getting in the game
But never play the way
We practiced
Outside the lines trying to match it
The high scores of yesterday.

So much wanna do with time
Can't escape the grind
Who do I need to talk to
Feeling weak like my name / S-W-V
Getting insecure-- Issa R-A-E
Enough / I need to breathe
Relationships keeping me strong
God protecting when I'm wrong
Seems like I'm good at helping others
Trying to extend my purpose for the long
So anxious genuinely
Remaining focused
On my magic
Changing my wanna be
Attitude / into better habits
Life's too short to be tragic
Top of the mountain is worth the climb
Just to see how high you can get

I Remember...

hustle, bustle
people in the street
trains packed
no such thing as 6 ft
distant memories of when we
were together
nothing closed / open books
in bookstores were better
classes in person
comments with lurking strangers

trying to get home
staying out of danger
kids playing playground patty cake
hoops were heating up with
every shot that was made
parks / beaches - chilling in the shade
backs laid/ no worries about getting paid
undeniable everything was pretty
imagining times before
they shut down the city

Rep N Dem

What if political parties ceased?
What if we stopped rep n dem?
Is the deign of revolution ever sleep?
What's a political victory?
Cause and effect of defeat.
Will assault on property be the answer?
Places where uproars rise
Cause and effect chained to the
Wheel of God in disguise
Opposition is weak perceiving himself
To be the clear-
His natural order is accidental
Built on fear
Faith, hope, love nowhere near
Until reality presently appears
Act always by necessity
Never mind rep n dem-
Hurry not for help
Stronger if you ask for nothing
And rep yourself