

As Us

A Space for Writers of the World

Kimberly Alidio – Poetry

Pancake Face (Friday September 13 11:48am)

What comes around the corner calling me by my father's title
In the cursed up-inflection of infectious need will scare me
If I don't scare myself first.
I don't tell jokes with lessons.
I really want to say, "I'm squirming right there with you."
A mom keeps a pastry on her Styrofoam plate
While we look at the rain and asks.
What is good exhaustion and what is exhaustion an affect of shame
Is it shame or is it a response, an experience, an effect or an escape
A bit of resistance is also a wearing down.
A mom, younger than she was last year, stays around to ask.
Not bad for a forty-five-year-old. Can I borrow a pencil?
I am raw from answers. I know the word for it is hoarse.
And you don't look like an adult, pancake face said.
When the object of your life story —
A public school English teacher who mistakes your plagiarized essay

For potential and gets you into private school where
You are no longer just a refugee child
But will become a tenured economist at the University of Chicago —
Refutes every part of your story
You invalidate her forfeiting claims to your success
She remains a channel of human resources.
You pluck strands of her story
To martyr her as well as a charm
Offering a refugee's escape from memory's commons
Is a happiness code



Kimberly Alidio is a poet, historian, high school teacher, tenure-track drop-out, and author of *Solitude Being Alien* (dancing girl press). Originally from Baltimore, she lives in Austin. Her poetry has appeared in *Bone Bouquet*, *Fact-Simile*, *Horse Less Review*, *Esque*, *Make/shift*, *Spiral Orb*, and *Everyday Genius*. She is a Kundiman fellow, alumna of VONA/Voice of Our Nation, a Center for Art and Thought Artist-in-Residence, and recipient of the Naropa's Zora Neale Hurston Scholarship. She holds a Ph.D from the University of Michigan. Her website is kimberlyalidio.tumblr.com.

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