

# We Are A People

Text by Oviya Ramesh

*We are a people,  
painted from a diverse palette of skins and faiths*

*Wool-knitted hats or hijabs or baseball caps or  
jasmine flowers or yarmulkes  
white Tat Sing slippers with blue straps or  
bare calloused feet or limited-edition Nike  
Air Jordans  
handcuffs or cufflinks adorning wrists*

*Beneath layers of grime or gold  
who are we  
but anthologies  
of people whom we've met  
kept alive by the urge to take the next  
breath  
diagnosed with the human condition*

*We are joined in  
the euphoria of rhythms and movement  
of ourselves  
the thrill of running to find shelter when rain  
hits our heads  
the transfer of fear, excitement, and courage  
through gripped hands  
the liquid love in a mother's lullaby  
the solidarity in rejoicing for someone else*

*Then why is one worth any more than another?  
why does one serve while another is served?  
why are some blatantly disrespected for choices  
they could not make?*

*Some of us have won the lottery of life:  
a family that stands by us  
a reliable source of food and water  
a well-rounded education  
a home to wake up where we fell asleep  
what about those who don't qualify for the game?*

*Let us empathise over our shared experiences  
and recognise our unique differences  
let us remember not to place others below ourselves  
as it is pure luck that our consciousness exists  
within us  
let us empower them to lift up their communities  
using the great privileges we've been so  
fortunate to receive*

*Let us link arms  
and pull one another through the finishing line  
for simply,  
we are a people*

Oviya is a Year 3 medical student at the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine. When she's not plucking her guitar strings, she can be found engrossed in a book, best accompanied by a hearty cup of genmaicha.

