

Let America Be A Rainbow by Zoe Kaltenbach

Let America be a rainbow
Let it be a haven for all
Let it be a place where all shades, from black to white, are welcome
Yes, let America be a bright and beautiful land

*Bright and beautiful to you
To me, anything but.
I see the waste, I see the worst
I see all the cracks that we slip through*

Let it be a nation of equality
A place where skin doesn't decide your safety
Where in courts, they see crime, not color
And where a weird name doesn't wreck a dream

*And it was never equal to me
My safety was a sham
I had to wake up from my dreams*

Let it be a spectrum
Not the discrete blocks of black and white
Of blue and red, left and right, girl and boy.
Let it realize that there are more than two options
That binary is for the cold world of computers.

*I have never been given any other options
One or two, which do you choose
Pink and blue*

Let America be accepting
Let parents embrace their queer kids
Let classmates come together, not fight over flags
Let phrases like "freak", like "Frankenstein monster", fade away
And let faces fill with love and joy

*Phrases that followed me like shadows
"Sinner", "You're just confused", "Why did you choose this"
You are the confused one, who chose a path of hate
What crime did I commit in your eyes?*

And who are you, who whispers of the darkness?

Who speaks of anger, fear, and prejudice?

*I am the children of this nation
The little infants poisoned by your hate
I stand in corners, quiet, escaping notice
Not bold enough to speak
So I wait*

*I wait for change and reason
I wait for someone braver
I wait for America to be better
I wait for the day*

*When we let America be a rainbow
When I can show my true colors
When I am free to shout my truth
When I can just say what i'm trying to say
Instead of hiding it in this poem*