

Dear Mapso

I need you to understand that painting letters on a road is not enough

Because Mapso, my life doesn't really matter to you

until it's time to be labeled as diverse so people can move to this town

Until it's time to profit off of me

so you can make more money

You turn a blind eye to the achievement gap

You turn a blind eye to black students disproportionately getting suspended and expelled

Even up until this moment you turned a blind eye to racism

You ignored our stories

You found it easier to silence us instead of opening your ears

because you didn't want to ruin ur image of being stigma free

Dear mapso,

I am your image

Black people

People of color are what make Mapso mapso

So if you would like to keep profiting off of us

I would suggest you listen up

My culture

My skin

My existence

isn't something you can hold captive

You don't deserve me

I need you to understand that my being is explosive

Explode

To burst or shatter violently

See,

my heart was sculpted from porcelain

with minuscule cracks that slowly slide down its body

And my bones

be the color of Snow White

without white privilege

But they are strong

I'm convinced they were sewn together by my ancestor's very hands

I wouldn't be surprised

They built a lot of things for free

And let's not forget about my skin

This sun absorbing masterpiece

The devil is afraid to grace my presence

because I am fire

When my body goes up in flames
my spirit will prance throughout galaxies
and find its inhabitation with the stars
And my ashes will bury themselves
in the veins of my post-existent vanity

You will never deserve me

So you don't get to paint over the years of pain people of color have endured in this town
You don't get to paint over the self doubt and imposter syndrome your teachers imposed onto
black children

You don't get to paint over July 5th

You thought I forgot about that one?

How a July 4th celebration turned into Maplewood police forcefully pushing black teenagers into
Irvington because that's where they assumed they lived

How black children were slammed onto the pavement by the same police officers who are
supposed to be protecting us

How we were herded out like you've always wanted us to be

We will never forget

So wake up and start seeing what has always been there

We have never been stigma free

Dear Mapso,

I don't want letters on a road

I want change

Your time is up

I refuse to keep waiting

If not now, when?