

# THE Anonymous Girl Look in the Mirror

(Morning. Spring. A teen-age Black girl of Haitian descent. She has hair which is straightened, and is wearing a navy blue jumper and a white shirt. She is seated in a stairwell at her junior high school in Brooklyn.)

When I look in the mirror . . .

I don't know.

How did I find out I was Black . . .

*(Tongue sound)*

When I grew up and I look in the mirror and saw I was  
Black.

When I look at my parents,  
That's how I knew I was Black.

Look at my skin.

You Black?

Black is beautiful.

I don't know.

That's what I always say.

I think White is beautiful too.

But I think Black is beautiful too.

In my class nobody is White, everybody's Black,  
and some of them is Hispanic.

In my class

you can't call any of them Puerto Ricans.

They despise Puerto Ricans, I don't know why.

They think that Puerto Ricans are stuck up and  
everything.

They say, Oh my gosh my hair is so

guy and everything.

But they act like that themselves.

They act just like White girls.

Black girls is not like that.

Please, you should be in my class.

Like they say that Puerto Ricans act like that

and they don't see that they act like that themselves.

Black girls, they do bite off the Spanish girls,

they bite off of your clothes.

You don't know what that means? biting off?

Like biting off somebody's clothes

Like cop, following,

and last year they used to have a lot of girls like that.

They come to school with a style, right?

And if they see another girl with that style?

Oh my gosh look at her.

What she think she is,

she tryin' to bite off of me in some way

no don't be bitin' off of my sneakers

or like that.

Or doin' a hairstyle

I mean Black people are into hairstyles.

So they come to school, see somebody with a certain style,

they say uh-huh I'm gonna get me one just like that uh-huh,

that's the way Black people are

Yea-ah!

They don't like people doing that to them

and they do that to other people,

so the Black girls will follow the Spanish girls.

The Spanish girls don't bite off of us.  
Some of the Black girls follow them.  
But they don't mind  
They don't care.  
They follow each other.  
Like there's three girls in my class,  
they from the Dominican Republic.  
They all stick together like glue.  
They all three best friends.  
They don't follow nobody,  
like there's none of them lead or anything.  
They don't hang around us either.  
They're  
by themselves.

## The Reverend Al Sharpton Me and James's Thing

(Early afternoon. Fall. A small room that is a part of a suite of offices in a building on West Fifty-seventh Street and Seventh Avenue in New York. A very large man Black man with straightened hair. Reverend Sharpton's hair is in the style of James Brown's hair. He is wearing a suit, colorful tie, and a gold medallion that was given to him by Martin Luther King, Jr. Reverend Sharpton has a pinky ring, a very resonant voice even in this small room. There is a very built, very tall man who sits behind me during the interview. Reverend Sharpton's face is much younger, and more innocent than it appears to be in the media. His humor is in his face. He is very direct. The interview only lasts fifteen minutes because he had been called out of a meeting in progress to do the interview.)

James Brown raised me.

Uh...

I never had a father.

My father left when I was ten.

James Brown took me to the beauty parlor one day  
and made my hair like his.

And made me promise  
to wear it like that  
'til I die.

It's a personal family thing  
between me and James Brown.

I always wanted a father  
and he filled that void.

And the strength that he's demonstrated—