

## *Diversity at Work*

*Outside the library  
Today I learned from the serene silence  
Broken by the ever-present  
Flip-flopping  
Despite the visible breath  
On the cold Tuesday morning.  
A flashed glimpse of her butterfly tattoo  
On her calf showed through the slit in her Capri pants  
Only because she turned and smiled at my oversized friend  
"You know her?"  
"Nah, she must be a fan I guess "  
(Funny how a basketball uniform can make you everyone's  
buddy.)  
As she exited our spot  
She plunged her hand into her bag  
And returned with a Marlboro Light and a yellow Bic.  
As she walks off there is an  
All too familiar twist in her hips  
Wide and curve deficient  
Pants sagging just enough to make the flowers  
Visible on an ill-fated thong.  
Clear now  
My open-mindedness  
Is non-existent and hypocrisy is painfully evident.  
Rationalizing how maybe if she wore  
Other clothes I'd be okay, or  
If she didn't smoke, it'd pass  
But it's all a lie, just like "them"  
I sit separated and silent  
Speaking of the other only to  
Remark on ridiculousness of outfits  
And the apparent lingering appeal of \$30 shower shoes  
Rainbows and furry cow print.  
Being the most frequented pairs.*

*And how Thursdays are filled  
With packed P2Ps full of  
The hoards of identical  
Gap sweaters, black pants, and boots  
As I ride past the houses where I hear  
Them chanting in unison  
The songs of MY struggle  
Yet I'm not allowed inside  
And I swear I heard the "n word"  
Floating among the onlookers at the door.  
Departing, I don  
A gangsta swagger and mutter a few slurs  
Of my own, no matter how outrageous  
Or untrue they may be.  
Though I do know I wouldn't  
Want someone assuming the same  
About me.  
Glares at my bandana  
Laughs at my baggy jeans with  
Tims untied, and a twisted back black cap.  
I'm as different from the next Black man  
As night is from day  
Just as they are from one another,  
But it's begun  
And sadly, it's clear that these are the thoughts  
Of an open minded  
Racist.*

*- Jeffrey Black*