Bias & Discrimination

In the following selections, authors share stories of discrimination, as both victims and witnesses. These works explore the emotional, physical, and financial consequences of bias and discrimination.

“A Crime Too Dark” – Brittany Boyd, pg. 33
“Another Challenge to the Dream” – Brittany Boyd, pg. 35
“Chocolate and Vanilla” – Mya Green, pg. 79
“An Invisible Wall” – Nathan Hubel, pg. 97
“Rural Vandalism,” Michael Mingo, pg. 135
“Co-Ed” – Bridget Re, pg. 153
“Unmovable” – Casey Spindler, pg. 175

In “A Crime Too Dark,” Brittany Boyd reflects on how colorism in the African-American community has affected her self-image, while in “Another Challenge to the Dream” she shares the disquieting experience of receiving a racist hate letter after “A Crime Too Dark” appeared in a local newspaper. In “Chocolate and Vanilla,” Mya Green recounts a childhood experience that ended with a bloodied nose and the subpar care her injuries received from the white adults around her. Bridget Re’s “Co-Ed” captures the complicated feelings of self-doubt that often accompanies discrimination, including an uncertainty about whether you’re experiencing discrimination and how to respond. In “Unmovable” Casey Spindler recounts his aunt’s response when a child refuses to swim with his cousin. In “An Invisible Wall,” Nathan Hubel explains on how a chance encounter on a snowy day made him reflect on the pervasiveness of racial bias and how it impacts people’s economic realities. And finally, Michael Mingo’s “Rural Vandalism” demonstrates how deeply biased thinking can root itself in the mind of a person or a community.
Questions for Group Discussion

- What kinds of bias are being described in these works? How do they manifest in terms of discrimination?
- What are the physical, emotional, or economic effects of bias and discrimination as described by these works? What other effects might bias and discrimination have on an individual or community?
- How do the people in these stories respond to experiencing or witnessing discrimination?
- What can people who experience discrimination do to defend and protect their selves? What can people who witness discrimination do to help victims?

Writing Prompt

Discrimination takes many forms, both subtle and blatant. If you have not experienced it directly, you have witnessed it in various forms in your life. Describe your earliest memory of being treated unfairly or treating others unfairly and reflect on how you responded at the time and how that experience may have changed you or shaped the person you are now.