

The Color of Pregnancy

In a learning experience centered on prenatal care,

My eyes were opened to a world I hadn't seen.

"How are you feeling?" I ask.

I expect a response of "Excited",

Or even "Blessed".

Instead, I hear:

'I'm scared, afraid.

You see, people who look like me don't get to celebrate.

You celebrate the bump, the glow, the nursery decorations.

We are scared so we prepare, anticipating complications.

We suffer more than you.

We aren't the same as you.

We aren't believed like you.

We aren't the same as you.

We die more than you.

We aren't the same as you.

You see, if even Beyonce and Serena can't make it through,

We surely aren't the same as you.

You say you will listen, that you're here to help me,

But until you have lived with the color of my skin,

Until you have existed in:

The color of my skin,

The shade of my skin,
The tone of my skin,
The blackness of my skin;
Until you've been black,

You'll never know my pain.

You don't know what we go through,

We aren't the same as you.'

As I left the clinic room, experiencing a visceral reaction to the fear in this woman's eyes;

her trembling voice;

the tears slipping from the corner of her eyes down her cheek;

I could not ignore the call to carry this story in my heart.

Even now, I acknowledge my position of privilege to share these words.

Because for too long, black women have been ignored;

their stories discredited.

Maybe this will be the last time a white woman has to use poetry to legitimize the inequities that black women face.

Maybe this will prompt you to dig deeper to address racism in health care.

If nothing else, I hope this story honors the words of the young woman who opened my eyes to the harm that has been done and lit the fire in my belly to not let history dictate the future.

By Abbey Klein

Doctor of Philosophy, graduating 5/2022. CON Omaha Division