

**WRITING**

# Love Yourself

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**GENRE**

GRADES 9–10

**Love Yourself**

How does it feel to grow up in the United States isn't the right question, the real question is "How does it feel to grow up Black in the United States?" A young Black man's perspective and experience growing up here is way different from a young white man's.

It feels bittersweet. It's not all bad and it's definitely not good, growing up Black here you have to watch your back. You have to live in fear. You have to be careful, you have to be brave. You have to be Strong, independent, successful, angry, and the list just goes on. To grow up here it's confusing and stressful because if I'm not one thing, I'm another. There are so many rules and standards that us as Black people are expected to live up to, if I'm too loud I'm "ghetto and ratchet." If I'm too quiet I'm a "punk and scary." If I'm not dressed a certain way

I'm "poor" or a "h\*\*"—if I'm outspoken I'm "irritating or do too much." We never get a break and when we aren't successful we fit the "broke ghetto and ratchet" stereotype.

How is my vision of a world? It would be nothing like this and everyone would be equal and treated equally. The only way that can happen is if everyone loves themselves. Because if you don't love yourself, it's hard to love someone else. You'd have to be right with yourself before you love someone else.