

I Can't Move



Étude pour un portrait de John Edwards, Francis Bacon, 1986

I can't move.

My legs are banded with ideology. My arms tied with expectation. My eyes blindfolded by political correctness. My mouth is gagged by misinterpretation.

I cannot move.

In a time where it is glorified to be uncluttered, we find a need to clutter people with self-proclaimed *Post-It* notes based on our own biased ways. We label every citizen. We weigh others down with proclamations of our inner thoughts that have little to do with any individual. We want clutter-free homes while we clutter the people around us. We make imaginary labels and place it on those we believe need it. What weight these labels create—especially when we bully others to believe our accusations.

Imagine a figure engulfed in nothing by scraps of paper. An avalanche of prejudice and pride creating a mountain over a human being you never got to know. A gigantic hill creating a shroud covering the core of a human being. Now pull off one piece of paper. Rip off a single thoughtful injustice. What does it say? Does it matter? Is it truth? Is it propaganda?

Pick another label and look at it. It is written in unfeeling grey ink stating the person is left-handed. Another one has these words written on it, "Hazel eyes." One falls to the ground holding the words, "wears glasses." That one reads, "hates mushrooms." This one talks about dancing the Polka. Pull off another, and another, and another. Keep pulling till the labels of importance and truth remain. Where you see words like Parent. Leader. Son/daughter. Historian. Futurist. One of the last reads, "Just a dash on a timeline."

Once all the figurative papers are picked and discarded. Once the person becomes uncluttered by expectation and fear, what is left? Is it you? Is it me? It is a clump of cells that started with the make-up of basic traits. A shell of

simplicity. An unflavored mixture of tissues. A flesh of potential.

Two legs, two arms, a torso, a head, and a hand full of organs; creates a living avatar. The brain is the switch that collects those outside views that society crams on us. From birth we are framed by labels, but they do not define us. Sadly, they do stay with us. Cluttering us like a collection of "yesterday's clothes" filling a closet of mediocrity.

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Desire dies. Inspiration dries to the point where a new generation blows it away. Ideas don't matter anymore when an agender tramples on the dust that is left.

I can't move not because I am trapped under a mound of labels. I am more than other's perceptions of me. I can't move not because my essence flew away. I am more than the sum of my parts. I can't move because my fight is here because I am here, and it needs my hand.

If we want our houses uncluttered, we need to unclutter the way we see people. If we want light shining through our windows, we need to peel our labels away and see the world without pride, fear, anger, and mostly misconceptions. There is evil around us, just as there is good. We need to come together meeting at the fence that divides us, to share a beverage and our hospitality. We need to unite at the fence post of understanding and flourish.