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English 9
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Somewhere in America: Outline

Theme: Here in the United States, land of the free, inequality and injustice is rampant, whether it is through our education system or the media.

Beginning: Tone- Angry

Important lines/ quotes:

The greatest lessons you will ever teach us
You will not even remember.

...

Because we must control what the people say -
How they think

And if they wanna become the overseer of their own selves
Then we'll show them a real one.

...

We were taught that just because something happens
Doesn't mean you are to talk about it

Mini- analysis:

The poet is referring to how the government here in the United States filters everything we can have in schools that are beneficial, however, they allow hatred to be spread and do not ban those things. Children aren't taught the right lessons in many schools. Without even realizing it, "they" teach us to hold our tongues by banning things that are important for stupid reasons.

(Why is it important? What does it prove about speaker? Connect back to theme)

Middle: Diction-Negative connotation

Important lines/ quotes:

The preppy kids go thrift shopping cos they think it sounds real fun
But we go cos that's all we got money for

Mini-analysis:

The poet is referring to the disparity between the rich and the poor in the United States. While some kids starve, others are spending thousands on frivolous things.

(Why is it important? What does it prove about speaker? Connect back to theme)

End: Mood: unfair, angry

Important lines/ quotes:

Women are killed for rejecting dates.

But god forbid I bring my girlfriend to prom?

...

In every state in America

The greatest lessons

Are the ones you don't remember learning

Mini- analysis:

Through our bs education system, women are being sexually assaulted, nobody cares about this. Rather we are taught lessons in which we are told not to make our voices heard. This education system isn't enlightening students, it's brainwashing them.

(Why is it important? What does it prove about speaker? Connect back to theme)

Somewhere in America

Here in America
In every single state,
They have a set of standards for every subject
A collection of lessons that the teacher's required to teach by the end of the term.
But the greatest lessons you will ever teach us will not come from your syllabus
The greatest lessons you will ever teach us
You will not even remember.

You never told us what we weren't allowed to say
We just learned how to hold our tongues
Now somewhere in America
There is a child holding a copy of *Catcher in the Rye*
And there is a child holding a gun
But only one of these things have been banned by their State Government
And it's not the one that can rip through flesh
It's the one that says 'fuck you' on more pages than one

Because we must control what the people say -
How they think
And if they wanna become the overseer of their own selves
Then we'll show them a real one.
And somewhere in America
There is a child sitting at his mother's computer
Reading the homepage of the KKK's website
That's open to the public
But that child will have never read to kill a mockingbird
Because his school has banned it for its use of the N word.

Maya Angelou is prohibited
Because we're not allowed to talk about rape in school
We were taught that just because something happens
Doesn't mean you are to talk about it
They build us brand new shopping malls
So that we'll forget where we're really standing:
On the bones of the hispanics
On the bones of the slaves

On the bones of the native americans
On the bones of those who fought just to speak

Transcontinental Railroad to Japanese internment camps;
There are things missing from our history books.
But we were taught that it is better to be silent
than to make them uncomfortable
Somewhere in America
Private schoolgirls search for hours through boutiques
Trying to find the prom dress of their dreams
While kids on the South Side spend hours searching through the lost and found
Cos winters coming soon and that's the only jacket they have

Kids are late to class for working the midnight shift,
They give awards for best attendance
But not for keeping your family off the streets.
These kids will call your music ghetto
They will tell you you don't talk right
Then they'll get in the backseat of a car
With all their friends
Singing about how they're 'bout that life' and 'we can't stop'
Somewhere in America
Schools are promoting self confidence
While they whip out their scales
And shout out your body fat percentage in class

Where the heftier girls are hiding away
And the slim fit beauties can't help but giggle with pride
The preppy kids go thrift shopping cos they think it sounds real fun
But we go cos that's all we got money for
Cos mama works for the city
Mama only gets paid once a month
Somewhere in America
A girl's getting felt up by a grown man on the subway,
She's still in her school uniform
And that's part of the appeal,
It's hard to run in knee socks and Mary Janes
And all her male teachers know it too

Coaches cover up star players
Raping freshmen after the dance,
Women are killed for rejecting dates.
But god forbid I bring my girlfriend to prom?
A girl is blackout drunk at the after party
Take a picture before her wounds wake her
How many pixels is your sanity worth?
What's a 4.0 to a cold jury?
What'd you learn in class today?
Don't walk fast
Don't speak loud
Keep your hands to yourself
Keep your head down
Keep your eyes on your own paper
If you don't know the answer
Fill in C
Always wear earbuds when you ride the bus alone
If you feel like someone's following you
Pretend you're on the phone
A teacher never fails
Only you do
In every state in America
The greatest lessons
Are the ones you don't remember learning