nicknames and constant teasing was the same size and pigmentation of the scabs that I had painlessly removed from other parts of my body and thus it could be removed in the same manner. Yelps of pain and what seemed like quarts of blood later I realized how wrong I was.

Years later, I’d wish to scrape off a part of myself as I watched my father being handcuffed. My sister and I stood powerless, tears running down our faces as we held each other on the gravel-stoned road. “Porfavor, mi hija esta allí?” “Please my daughters are right there!” my dad said. Until that point, I’d never seen my dad, a lighthearted and vivacious man, raise his voice or shed a tear. In that moment I saw my whole life crumbling, I feared I would never see my father again. I was stunned, why hadn’t they given him a chance to explain himself?

My sister who locked her keys in her car, had called my dad to see if he could open it. Someone had alerted security that a suspicious-looking man was breaking into a car and the police were called and arrested him upon their arrival. “Porfavor, mi hija esta allí!” The policemen stopped, one of them said “Tu eres hispano?” “You’re Hispanic?” The police apologizing, “Perdóname porfavor,” undid the handcuffs and allowed him to tell his story. My father was a biracial man born in Cuba, black enough to be assumed a criminal by the police. I felt the fear that been cowering through my body wash away in place of a boiling anger as I realized what had happened. The sad, distressful tears were replaced with tears of rage and bewilderment. Why do they hate us?

That moment solidified something I suppose I had always known subconsciously. I had known it when I’d asked my dad why he always spoke in Spanish when we went into a high-end store and he said, “It’s the only way they take me seriously.” I had known it when people were taken aback when I’d tell them my background. I had known it when my Abuela (grandma), an old-fashioned, white Cuban woman would speak of Obama’s election as making African Americans “think they’re all that.” In all these instances it is clear that despite boasts of how much the world has progressed, it still remained that there was an established hierarchy.

In that moment I’d found that I couldn’t hide behind my Hispanic blood in shame. I learned that no matter how much I tried to indirectly scrape off the scab that was the melanin in my skin, it would always be with me, and with the amount of people who have lost their lives and everything they had to right the wrongs in the world, I had better accept that part of myself because ultimately, all picking scabs does is leave scars.

Maybe it’s the fresh, pink skin that emerges from its ragged, brown prison but there is a strange satisfaction you get from picking scabs. For me the berating of a Caribbean mother in my ears and the smack of her hand to the side of my head soon ended the satisfaction. “You’re going to leave a scar”, she’d say. I never listened. One day I got the bright idea that the mole at the left side of my face that had earned me

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