

ABSTRACT

COLORED BY DESIGN: A COLLECTION OF ESSAYS ON RACE AND FAMILY

As a Black man, I love my family.

Often, it is familial love that unlocks the pass code of memory and reminds us how valuable and precious our family is to us.

As a Black man, I feel my color and often it is very painful.

At some point, given the right circumstances, everyone feels their color, and when we feel our color fully, it is often troublesome and disconcerting.

This collection of narratives—an exploration of how a dream evokes memories of childhood thievery and betrayal, an account of what blackness feels like, and the *rite du passage* a boy faces while becoming a man—shares my experiences growing up in a large African-American family from Tulare, California, and suggest Zora Neale Hurston's famous words: "You got to go there to know there."

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