UC Merced
The Vernal Pool

Title
Don't Put Your Labels On Me

Permalink
https://escholarship.org/uc/item/45k3q32x

Journal
The Vernal Pool, 5(1)

Author
Oswald, Kathryn

Publication Date
2018

DOI
10.5070/V351041761

Peer reviewed|Undergraduate

Don't Put Your Labels On Me
By Katie Oswald

I am not a California peach—

So please, don't put your labels on me!

What you get is what you see,

Bisexual, oddball, opinionated know-it-all

I own all of these things,

But don't put YOUR labels on me.

Believe me, I won't always agree but

That doesn't mean I'm racist,

Queerphobic, transgender hater.

I promise you I do not give a fuck

Who you're sleeping with later.

I won't say I am color blind—

Because our world is blinded by color, by gender, by race,

But I care less about the color of your face

And more about the way you occupy your space,

We all have to be accountable for what we do

I'll tell you what—

I'll do me and

You do you.

In America we have this prevalent disease

It's everywhere you look

In everything you see.

It's called ignorance.

But ignorance is something we endure

Because ignorance has a cure

Education and tolerance.

But when you use your words as swords

To subdue, abuse, confuse—antagonize

You lose all chance that they will see things from your eyes.

Don't use anger to fight hate

Because screaming at a stranger

Won't change their mind, instead—

Use your words as swords

To change their view of world.

It just takes one moment to change a mind

One moment to do something kind,

We cannot fight hate with anger

That won't change the mind of a stranger,

But maybe words of wisdom can

Or a positive example.

And if not, at least you tried.

A bona fide attempt—

And if they look at you in contempt

All you have to say is:

I am not a California Peach,

So please, don't put your labels on me.