

a howl

by **alejandro rodriguez**

I saw the best minds of my generation
all members of a Facebook group called
The Best Minds of My Generation.
So I posted this on the wall:

Here's to the hip-hop heads.
On the flat tops of metal mountains
standing in circles
heads bowed and bouncing
freestyling their futures
their present pronouncing.

To the punks in the parks
panhandling for fares
dope-dreaming of being in their parents' nightmares.

To the weed-dealers and the daytrippers
going on cosmic journies in their own backyards
puff puff passing conspiracy theories / trading visions like they're baseball cards.

To skaters who sacrifice their kneecaps to higher powers.
To surfers who leave their fear at the shore for an hour.

To gym rats
who pay monthly for pain so they know they own it.
To adrenaline junkies
who stare down Death like he's just another unlucky opponent.

To those who sit, following their breath under the waning moon
and to all the bending bodies who salute the sun each afternoon.

To vegetarians, steaming greens from Detroit to Dallas
local, raw, or macrobiotic, mostly they just want a taste of balance.

To the homeschooled, the night schooled
the self-schooled who lose track of the years
jumping down wiki rabbit holes
lifting weights in the gymnasium of ideas.

To the goldrushers
who move west to find shinier lives than the ones they currently own
and to the mythopoetic heros who go and get degrees in Fire
and then return
to bring their flame back home.

To coffeeshop novellists.

To cellphone songwriters.

To backroom trackmasters.

To speaker-mouths who hold a hundred drums
in their lips, their teeth, and in the tips of their tongues.

To the travelling bards with three minutes to spare
who learned their psalms from Saul and Suheir
and who slam their truth down on bars and bookfairs.

To dance-dance revolutionaries
conjuring combos in the night
inspiring 16 year-old girls more into Twyla than Twilight.

To independent women
who rise and rise and will not be smothered
and to all the young mothers
who reorganize their social systems to put their sons above all others.

I'm with you.

Here's to the black girls
and the brown boys who more than hate it
that the neighborhoods are still skincolor-coordinated

To Jewish kids who love rap music
write it too
yet won't use the N-word
'cause they're cool enough not to crash a party they weren't invited to.

To the Filipinos, Koreans, the Vietnamese
scattered like stars in the California skies
with sun-slapped skin and eyes like infinite signs.

Chicanos in Texas and Arizona who thank God for the time
their moms had the cojones to go ahead and cross the line.

To all the children of immigrant folks
this country's a wheel of fortune they're the million spinning spokes
their parents crossed the ocean / crossed the border /
crossed the cross bronx expressway
now in code they can conversate
with words they sample like records from their cultural crates.

To the boys from the burbs who can seem to win just by showing up
and yet who come to understand
sometimes you need a beatdown to grow up.

To the millions born to mixed marriages
more and more each day
with cinnamon dolce skin that says Made in the USA.

To soldiers who spend months alongside brothers
hunting enemies down
and then come back home to find
the soil they were saving no longer feels like common ground.

To the men who'd restrain their government in order to preserve their nation
and to the kids who made themselves into a human microphone and occupied our
conversation.

To the upstarts at the start-ups who learn what a good idea can be worth.
To the self-promoters and self-producers who understand that their platform
is planet earth.

To the young people doing old jobs: weavers, whittlers, cowboys and farmgirls
and to the web designers and programmers who write the code that connects the
world.

To good actors who make for great teachers
and to teachers who deserve Oscars for Best Supporting Actors.

To all those who finish grad school with good intentions intact
and to everyone who ran from religion only to meet God on the way back.

I'm with you.

This is to the sluts and the prudes.
To the flip cup phenoms and the fifth year seniors
and to Daddy's girls who dance for money.
To the fags and the dykes. To brothers who like brothers
and to all the straight men raised by two mothers.
To everyone still living at home.
Still sleeping on a sofa bed.
Still riding a bike to work.
Still working for their parents.
This is for the knock-kneed. The bowlegged. The pigeon-toed.
The flat-chested and to boys with acne into their twenties.
To the temps, the caterers, the baristas, bartenders and baby-sitters,
the security guards, the special-ed teachers, the personal trainers and all the
employees at all the Starbucks and the Apple stores all around the world.
To the sneakerheads.
The dub-steppers, the bong rippers and the Red Bull Warriors.
The bloggers, graphic designers, amateur photographers and independent
filmmakers
and to all the secret midnight dancers standing in front of their bedroom mirrors
right now.
God is licking her finger to turn the page and in the next chapter we are the
protagonist.

In my dreams
we're all gathered in a cave
our faces are illuminated by the glow of a thousand laptops
and we're hatching ingenious plans to make love, finally,
go viral.

- Alejandro Rodriguez

alexjrodriguez@gmail.com
www.alejandrorodriguez.biz

