I did not know that an assignment in Dr. Hart’s Sp 2021 COUN 523 course would result in my writing a poem/song for Malcolm X.

The assignment was to read the book *Malcolm X* (co-authored by Alex Haley) and present an encapsulation. My critical reading revealed vivid descriptions of how this most committed anti-racist grew in his understanding of what racism is, how it perpetuates itself, and the chronic and systemic nature of it.

His outrage figured prominently. An understanding of where he was at as a young man, according to stages of Black American Racial Identity (Cross, 1991) helped me see him as moving from Encounter, through Immersion/Emersion, and just entering Internalization stage, just before he was murdered.

It was at this point that I unexpectedly found myself writing a rhyming poem/song tribute to the young Malcolm X.

This is my way of trying to enter and respect his lived experience.

**THIS IS MY WAY OF TRYING TO ENTER MALCOLM X’s LIVED EXPERIENCE**
WARNING: YOU ARE ABOUT TO UNDERGO POETRY
and some cursing...
No Little Lip

A Tribute to Young Malcolm X

Written by Sheila W. Chambers

Lyrics © 2021 Sheila W. Chambers
Images courtesy of GettyImages.com
I was born to protest
I was born to shout
JUSTICE was my fuel

It’s what it’s all about
I wasn’t taking any crap
was calling it by name
my murdered father’s rage
taught me WHO to blame
Refrain...

I gave them lip; I took no shit
I got the whole damn gist

I could whip ‘em with my mind
way faster than my fist
I could whip ‘em with my mind
way faster than my fist
Couldn’t accept being less
Pride don’t mix with shame
Orphaned by injustice
And my mother’s broken pain
Let someone else aspire to be more like the Whites
I am thrilled with my own and itching for a fight
I gave them lip; I took no shit
I got the whole damn gist
I could whip ‘em with my mind
Way faster than my fist
Yeah I served ‘em sandwiches with a side of attitude. Blinded by their privilege they dare to call me rude!
I’d never purchased them
Like they were property
Or spoke a vicious rumor
about inferiority
I gave them lip; I took no shit
I got the whole damn gist
I could whip ‘em with my mind
Way faster than my fist
I could whip ‘em with my mind way faster than my fist
I gave them lip
I took no shit
I knew that
every time
I didn’t need
to use my fist
I could whip ‘em
with my mind!