

★ *I Talk About It All the Time: A Memoir*

Camara Lundestad Joof

Olivia Noble Gunn, Translator

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Camara Lundestad Joof's piercing memoir *I Talk about It All the Time* concerns the particularities of systemic racism in Scandinavia.

Joof, who is a queer Black Norwegian Gambian woman, writes in Nynorsk—"the much less used of two official written languages in Norway." Her collection of fragmented anecdotes is radical, candid, and unapologetic, documenting with introspection the experience of being Black in a white society in which macro- and microaggressions are ubiquitous.

Some anecdotes are only a sentence long and still poignant. Their absorbing reality includes the use of the N-word, hate crimes, and neo-Nazi parades—all laid bare for the audience as Joof speaks "directly to the reader ... to different 'you's': Black and white, family, friends, lovers, and strangers." This multiplicity accounts for those who identify with the "I" of the text, challenging the "you's" of the text to interrogate their own assumptions and biases.

This sensitive facilitation of racial conversations proves exhausting: "I have to confess that I don't really want to write this book," Joof says. "I'm afraid that my whole life has been reduced to the color of my skin ... Brown first, and everything else afterward." She uses repetition techniques, revisiting earlier stories in later chapters or repeating phrases ("I talk about it all the time") to further convey her weariness over the burden of instructing white audiences about the traumatic consequences of racism. Although she yearns to free herself of this invisible responsibility, she echoes Audre Lorde, noting that "silence will not protect you."

Sharp, complex, and lingering, the memoir *I Talk about It All the Time* places its masterful compilation of devastating truths in the context of Scandinavian racism.

BROOKE SHANNON (July / August 2024)

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