

Your family was not on the Mayflower. Nor were they on any ship after that. No, you were little-already born- when they took that 21st-century airplane to America.

Yet, an American-Asian born classmate,

who had just shared with the class that she,

indeed,

did not celebrate Thanksgiving over the break,

because her parents are immigrants,

begs to question why you,

a white woman,

had the *audacity* to not celebrate.

You now hold the attention of the classroom. Your classmates take a breath in, but no one dares to breathe out. All expressions tell you that they are starting to wonder the same question. It is not the first time, nor the last time, that your own, respective story will be eclipsed by the whiteness of your skin; You're not special because you are white.

“Are you not from **here?**”, she asked,

with what sounded like the intention to,

maybe

listen.

You try to tell her that you weren't born here-

I'm from Sweden!

“Well, every white person in the US is from Europe.”

Because you are white, you must celebrate Thanksgiving with the enthusiasm of a football fan.

Because you are white, you have less of a right to spend your Thanksgiving break the way you wish to.

While this will never be a possibility for you, she continues to clarify that you are just as -even more- American than her. You bite your tongue. You grew up speaking Swedish, you crave sweets like dammsugare and semla, and you wish to be with your relatives that live so far away.

You don't classify as American, she can't tell you-you're just like everybody else when you're less American than she is. Unconvinced, she falls quiet and rejoins the classroom.

How do you explain that you do not think in English? You do not think in the mannerisms of an American? That you stutter because you struggle to explain that there is a feeling between feelings that is invisible to an American tongue? Like your classmates witnessing that confrontation, sometimes you too must hold your breath. Take a breath in.
Why can't you open your mouth?

Tongue tied?

My family was not on the Mayflower. Nor were they on any ship after that.

People claim you are American,
you are from **here**,
that you do not have a specific culture or heritage that can be celebrated.
Yet all of Thanksgiving, you tried doing just that.
You tried to find the ingredients to make Havregrynskugler, and though the scent was familiar,
here, the taste will never be the same.