

Just Because...

a collection of poems by IRC youth

Just because I am Muslim
Doesn't mean I am a terrorist
Doesn't mean I am untrustworthy
And doesn't mean I don't have empathy toward others
Just because I wear the hijab
Doesn't mean I am from Middle East
Doesn't mean I obey men
And doesn't mean I can't be equal to other genders
Just because I am Muslim
Doesn't mean doesn't mean I can't dream big
Doesn't mean I can't have my own voice
And doesn't mean I can't be successful in my path
Just because I am who I am
Why do I have to be treated differently than others?
Why can't I just have a normal happy life?
Why can't I be who I want to be?
I am a proud, independent, beautiful
and respectful Muslim lady. Periodttt!!

Just because I am 4'9"
Doesn't mean I can't reach 6ft
And doesn't mean I am a kid
Just because I don't fight back
Doesn't mean I am weak
Doesn't mean I give up easily;
it is because I'm mature.
Just because I am calm
Doesn't mean I don't have opinions
Doesn't mean I don't know my rights
And doesn't mean I don't have a voice;
it's because I love.
Just because I am quiet and short
Why do I have to be treated differently?
Don't I have the right to be short?
Aren't we supposed to treat all human beings
the same level?
I am not perfect, but I'm proud of myself for
who I am.
- Si Ngo

Just because I am from Blue Nile State, Sudan
Doesn't mean I am not tired hearing my people dying every day
because of decisions only a few local leaders made
Doesn't mean I have to be pushed out of Sudan
And doesn't mean a group of leaders represent my interests.

Just because it's rainy outside
Does that mean the sun won't come out?
Does that mean I couldn't take a walk outside later?

The world is full of problems and different feelings.
Ranging from the problems you create yourself
and the ones created by others, but they still impact your life.
But at the end of the day it is a great gift to be alive
because when there is a rain, the sun will always come out.

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Just because I have doubt
Doesn't mean I've never been confident
Doesn't mean I'm discouraged
Just because I have failures
Doesn't mean I'm weak
Doesn't mean I lack knowledge
Just because I'm imperfect
Doesn't mean I'm unordinary
Doesn't mean I'm wild
Does a person need to be perfect?
Does a person need to live
for other people's worlds?
What you didn't know:
I live in my own world
My flaws are my motivation
And motivation leads me to success.
-Ti Meh

Just because I'm quiet
Doesn't mean I don't have a voice
Doesn't mean I can't stand up for myself
And doesn't mean I don't ever speak
Just because I put a smile on my face
Doesn't mean I don't hurt inside
Doesn't mean I am happy
And doesn't mean I don't cry - I am a human
Just because I am a girl
Doesn't mean I can't play sports
or do whatever I want to
Doesn't mean I don't have freedom
And doesn't mean I can't raise my voice
Just because I am a girl
Why should I have to act a certain way?
What would the world be without girls?
Why can't all people just understand how girls feel?
-Lailuma

Just because I'm a woman
Doesn't mean I'm supposed to be cooking
Doesn't mean I have to clean
And doesn't mean I'm a maid
Just because I'm a woman
Doesn't mean I like makeup
Doesn't mean I like dressing up
And doesn't mean I'm girly
Just because I'm a woman
Doesn't mean I'm weak
Doesn't mean I can't do what any man can
And doesn't mean I shouldn't be treated equally
Just because I'm a woman
How about you fix your perspective?
How about you show some respect?
How about you educate yourself?
Yes, I'm a woman
but don't ever underestimate me.
- Arsema

Just because I am from Africa
Doesn't mean I'm dangerous
Doesn't mean I don't have education.
And doesn't mean I go in street to beg for food
Just because I am me
Does having dark skin make you dangerous?
Do all African have to be poor?
Why do people judge based on looks?
Just because you met a person for the first time
you don't have to judge them based on their looks.
Get to know people before you say
things about them that aren't true.
-Rachel

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Just because my family is more conservative than I am
Doesn't mean I'm not a proud girl of my culture
Doesn't mean I am becoming westernized
And doesn't mean I always have to agree with your ways
Just because I sit quietly
Doesn't mean I don't have a voice as loud as lions
Doesn't mean I don't have views as strong as diamonds
And doesn't mean I'm submissive
Just because I'm not expressive
Doesn't mean I don't care
Doesn't mean I am scared to use my voice
And doesn't mean I can be taken advantage of
Just because I'm introverted
Why do I feel like a stranger in my own family?
Why is it when I'm quiet, I'm perceived as standoffish?
Why do I have to prove myself to the world?
Yes, I keep to myself. Yes, I may be shy, but I'm not speechless.
- Roma

Just because I am Muslim
Doesn't mean I am a terrorist
Doesn't mean I am guilty
And doesn't mean I am weak
Just because I am Asian
Doesn't mean I am not brave
Doesn't mean I am selfish
And doesn't mean I am ignorant
Just because I am Muslim
Doesn't mean I am not a feminist
Doesn't mean I am quiet
And doesn't mean I can't change the world
Just because I am an Afghan American
Why should I do the worst job?
Why can't I study where I want to?
I am not American; I am Afghan.
English is not my first language
and I don't know everything in English
but I am smart
and I believe I can do whatever I want.
-Mahbuba

Just because I am a Muslim
Doesn't mean I destroy buildings
Doesn't mean I don't treat women fairly
And doesn't mean I force others to convert to Islam.
Just because I am from Africa
Doesn't mean I live in a mud house
Doesn't mean I don't have access to the internet
And doesn't mean I hunt lions and tigers for living.
Just because I get good grades
Doesn't mean I am a nerd
Doesn't mean I don't like having fun
And doesn't mean I am smart.
Why assume Muslims are terrorists?
Aren't most of the resources such as gold found in Africa?
Do you know Islam means peace?
Muslims are not something you should be scared of
nor associate with violence; there is more to Islam.

Just because I'm a Christian
doesn't mean I'm perfect
Doesn't mean I hate everyone
who doesn't believe exactly as I do
Just because I'm silent
doesn't mean I have nothing to say
Doesn't mean I'm done
Just because I am a woman
don't expect me to wear a dress
Don't expect me to keep my mouth shut
I'm strong because I am a woman
- Lidya

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Just because I am Asian
Doesn't mean I am the smartest
Doesn't mean I know everything
And doesn't mean I am cool guy
Just because I come to the USA
Doesn't mean my country is poor
Doesn't mean I hated my country
And doesn't mean I hated my people
Doesn't mean I insult people
Doesn't mean I am a terrorist
And doesn't mean I hate people
in different countries or continents
Just because I am a refugee
Does every Asian have to be a
good example around the world?
I am not a perfect guy
and I am not the smartest
But who is nice to me
I am nice to them for sure 100%
- Eh Pla Soe

Just because I was born in Nepal
Doesn't mean I was born at Mount Everest
Just because I have small eyes and light brown skin
Doesn't mean I am from China
Doesn't mean I can't see with my small eyes
And doesn't mean all Asian people are Chinese.
Just because I am a refugee
Doesn't mean people should treat me differently
Doesn't mean I don't have respect for others
And doesn't mean I am poor and have no education.
Just because I am a girl
Doesn't mean I am not strong
Doesn't mean I can't take care of my family
And doesn't mean I can't have education.
Just because I am a girl
Doesn't mean I have to be girly
Doesn't mean I have to behave like a girl
Why are refugees treated unfairly?
Why do people think that girls can't have education like boys do?
Why do people in America also treat us differently?
-Ishmrika

Just because I am quiet
Doesn't mean I don't have a voice
Doesn't mean I can't stand up for myself
And doesn't mean you can bring me down
Just because I am different than you
Doesn't mean I can't have freedoms like you
Doesn't mean I can't walk the same path as you
And doesn't mean I should be away from you
Just because I am refugee
Does not quiet mean listening?
Does not diversity make the world a better place?
I am being quiet to listen and you can't make a
judgement of me based on what you see in a few
minutes of what I do and how I look.

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Just because I laugh all the time
Doesn't mean I'm always happy
Doesn't mean I won't be sad
And doesn't mean I don't cry.
Just because I wear glasses
Doesn't mean you can judge me
Doesn't mean I have four eyes
And doesn't mean I'm completely blind.

Just because I'm a girl
Doesn't mean I can't dress like a boy
Doesn't mean you can tell me what to wear
And doesn't mean I dress up for you.

Just because I am myself.
Who can we trust when we lose trust in others?
Why listen to what others say about you?
Why not just be yourself
instead of trying to be someone else?
We are all the same kind.
Learn before judging others.

-Paw Moo

Just because I smile often
Doesn't mean I'm happy all the time
Doesn't mean I'm not struggling
And doesn't mean I don't get sad easily
Just because I like painting
Doesn't mean I'm really good at it
Doesn't mean I can paint everything
And doesn't mean I paint all the time
Just because I'm shy

Doesn't mean I don't get things done
Doesn't mean I can't do what I want
And doesn't mean I don't know my rights
Just because the way I may look to you
Do you have the right to judge someone
without knowing their whole story?

Why assume things so easily?
Why not just appreciate each other's uniqueness?
People may look fine on the outside, but we don't
know what they've been through on the inside.
Let's just love and be nice to one another.

- Aewa

Just because I am an immigrant
Doesn't mean I am not a normal child
Doesn't mean I should not enjoy my life
And doesn't mean I have to give more than others
Just because I am quiet
Doesn't mean I don't have a voice
Doesn't mean I don't have integrity
And doesn't mean I am timid
Why does everyone keep pointing fingers at immigrants?
Why do people keep stereotyping?
Why do people expect so much from us?
Just because I stay quiet doesn't mean I am a loser.

I notice everything.

- Sarah

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Just because I am an Asian girl
Doesn't mean people can judge me
Doesn't mean they can make fun of me
Just because I smile a lot
Doesn't mean I am always happy
Doesn't mean I can't be serious
And doesn't mean I don't cry
Just because I am impatient
Doesn't mean I pick a fight
Doesn't mean I steal other belongings
And doesn't mean I give up easily
Just because I am not smart like others
Why do people have to judge me?
Why are they afraid to make friends with me?
Why do they have to talk behind my back?
I am who I am.
I can't change myself the way you wanted me to change.
I do what makes me happy and comfortable. Each one of
us has different talents and just like you respect yourself,
you also need to respect others.

Just because I put a smile on my face
Doesn't mean I'm not hurt inside
Doesn't mean I never cried
And doesn't mean I don't feel pain
Just because you're leaving
Doesn't mean I won't miss you
Doesn't mean I won't cry
when I think about you
And doesn't mean I won't come visit you
Just because I left you behind
Doesn't mean I wanted to,
I just didn't have a choice!
Doesn't mean I never loved you
Just because I'm not perfect!
Why do I always have to be strong?
Why do I have to hide what I truly feel?
Does it make me less of a human
because I'm not perfect?
I hurt, I cry, and I feel pain
and that is just what makes me human.
-Pasqalina

Just because I'm a girl doesn't mean
Doesn't mean I wear girly makeup
Just because I'm a female
Doesn't mean I'll never be as good as men
Just because you see girls a certain way
Doesn't mean I would have this image for a fact
Just because of who I am
I'll never be who you want me to be
Why are girls considered weak?
Why do we compare people according to their race and gender
but not strength of their character?
Why people are not kind enough to each other?
I am a girl and I believe I can do whatever a man does.
I believe that we should not compare people according to their
race but strength of their character.
-Bahishta

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Just because I'm an awkward person
Doesn't mean I'm not nice
Doesn't mean that I don't care
And doesn't mean I don't want to talk to people
Just because I'm a girl
Doesn't mean I don't play video games
Doesn't mean I have to dress girly
And doesn't mean I can't do what a boy can do
Just because I came from another country
Doesn't mean I'm an illegal immigrant
Doesn't mean I can't learn a new language
And doesn't mean you have the right
to make fun of my accent
Just because I'm being myself
Why do people still judge others?
Can't a person feel good in their own skin?
Why do people still face discrimination today
because of the color of their skin?
Everyone is simply different from others because
they are unique in their own ways.
- Sela

Just because I'm quiet
Doesn't mean I can't hear or understand you
Doesn't mean I can't talk
And doesn't mean I'm deaf
Just because I don't smile all the time
Doesn't mean I'm not happy
And doesn't mean I hate you
Just because I'm short
Doesn't mean I can't play sports
Doesn't mean I can't wear cropped pants
And doesn't mean I can't wear ankle-strap shoes
Just because I'm a refugee
Do all people in America have to be citizens?
Are refugees violent?
Do all people have to speak English?
I am a refugee, but I am not violent:
I am a human just like everyone else.
-Mimi