

Text 1 Autumn 1945, New York.

(...) Delia and her mother are alone. Alone as on that day, up in her attic practice room, when Delia first spoke about the man she'd fallen for. How fine her mother had been, after the first shock.

(...) "I'm so tired, Mama." (...)

"I'm tired of everybody thinking they know what colored means."

(...) "Who's telling you that? Nobody here's going to tell you what colored means."

(...) "My boys are... different."

"Look around you, girl. Everybody here's different. Different's the commonest thing going."

"I've got to give them the freedom to be –"

Her mother pinches up her face. "Don't you dare talk to me about your freedom. Your brother died in the war – for that word. A black man, fighting to give folks in other countries a freedom he wouldn't ever've had in his own, even if he came back here alive."

"Lots of people died in the war, Mama. White people. Black people. Yellow people."(...)

“It’s not one thing against the other. We’re not taking anything away. Just giving. Giving them space, choice, the right to make a lifetime anywhere among –”

“This why you married a white man? So you could make babies light enough to do what they wouldn’t let you do?” (...) “White’s just one color. Black’s everything else. You gonna raise them to have a choice? That choice don’t belong to them. Everybody else is going to make it for them!”

(...) “What are you going to tell them to call themselves?”

“Mama. That’s the point. We’re not calling them anything. That way they’ll never have to call another person –”

“White? You raising them white?”

“Don’t be silly. We’re trying to raise them... beyond race.”

Richard Powers, *The Time of Our Singing*, 2003