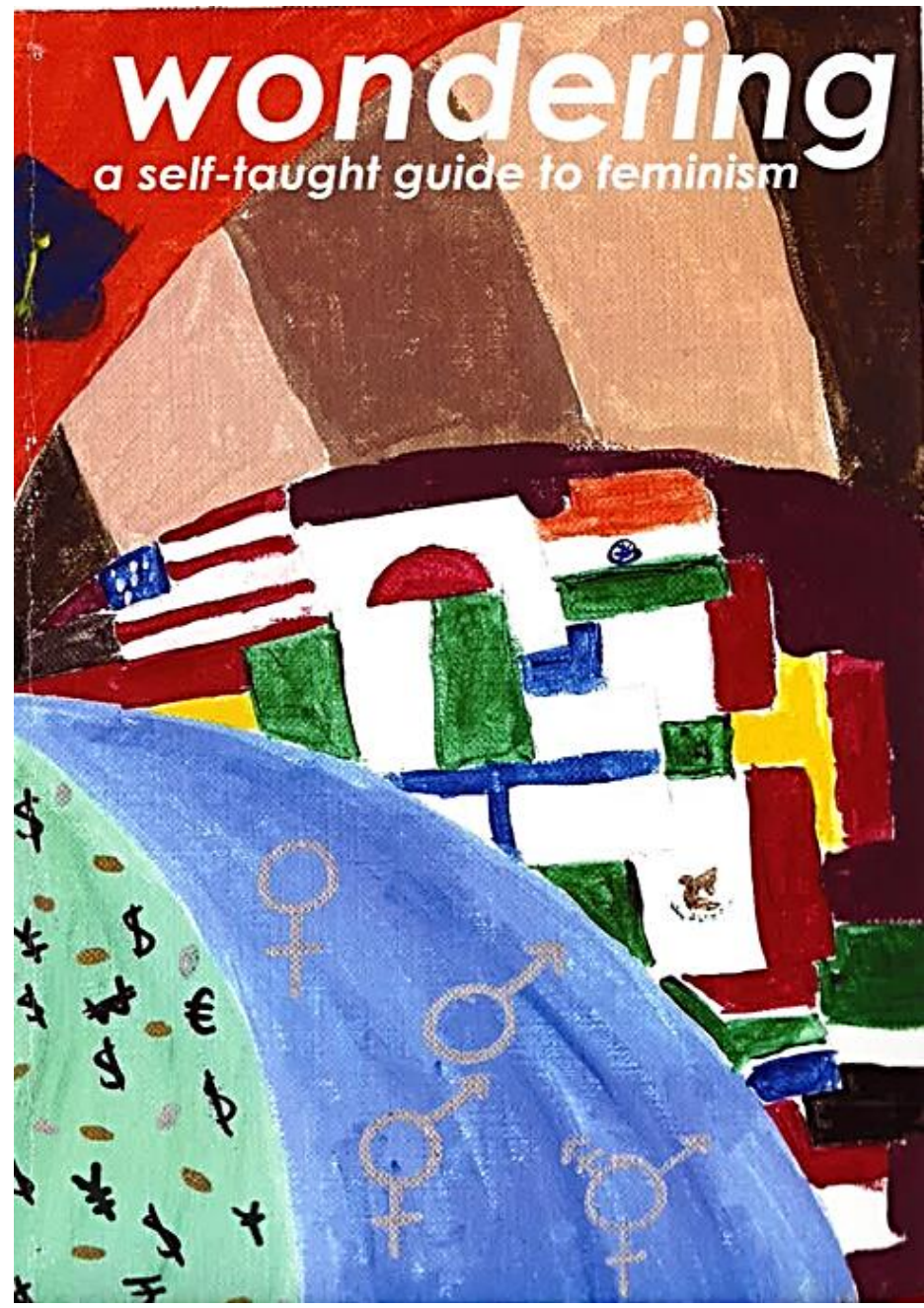


wondering

a self-taught guide to feminism



Wondering

A Self-Taught Guide to Feminism



Feminism is hard to pin down. It is almost elusive in its abstract meaning; it is such a broad word, a word that reflects centuries of hard work and countless stories.

Feminism is interesting to learn in its trickiness. It does not happen instantly, or arrive completely—and the concept of “arriving” is the key. Feminism rarely “arrives”: it is sought out, it is labored for, it is an active rethinking. Feminism demands rewiring, it necessitates challenging the status quo and questioning years of what we’ve been taught.

Our sexism differ, and so our feminisms are diverse. It has been wondering—wondering why boys interrupted us while we were speaking, why our mental illness is invalidated at every turn, why men both on the street and inside school hallways felt it appropriate to vocalize their sexualization of our bodies. It has been living as a mixed race girl in a society that demands you choose to be only one thing, and adopting white attributes to garner more acceptance from a society that favors them—it has been living between identities, and finding your own affirmations. Feminism has been being gay in a heteronormative society that supports the

continuation of your oppression. It has been living in a body, in skin, in spirit, in culture, that is valued less by society.

Feminism has been experiencing the continuing dominance of a white man in the first presidential election we could partake in, our first opportunity to mold our future. It has been watching the first woman major party nominee give her concession speech, among shouts and bursts from people who have been emboldened in their racist, sexist, and violent thoughts.

Our feminism has been feeling angry about our experiences, and understanding feminism as it relates to *our* life, and then cracking it open and looking for its effect on others. Feminism, to us now, is knowing that we are the only people who control our self-worth. It is being told that “boys don’t like girls with opinions,” but having and speaking them anyway. It is raising our hands in class. It is knowing that we reserve the right to take up intellectual and physical space. It is strength, and knowledge, and strength *in* knowledge. Feminism is helping and empowering each other. Feminism is creating community, but knowing that there is no “universal sisterhood.”

We put all 20 of our pens to paper and used feminism as a lens through which to wonder about our lives, our experiences, and our values. In reading each other’s pieces, we gained a kaleidoscopic view of how feminism can be a different type of weapon for every warrior. As students, we learn from the art and academia created by well-known feminist figures, and wanted to show how it inspired us to create and share our own understanding of feminist theory. This is feminism: as lived by the 20 freshmen students of ENGL 298 F.

-ENGL 298 F Class of Fall 2016

Mixed Chick

by madison

"Is THIS your mother?". Questioned incredulously. A question I receive much too frequently. Hard to believe that a child with dark skin could possibly have a white mother I suppose. Whenever faced with this question, I become enveloped in embarrassment, and my brown skin turns red (for a reason that I can't pinpoint). Maybe because the way that people ask the question makes me feel so abnormal and mysterious. Abnormal for having parents with different skin colors. Strange for being a mixture of the two of them.

I am a multi, a half, cockle in cream, an Oreo. What a different creature I am because of my skin.

I don't fit in.

Almost everywhere I go, I am asked at least once the question, "what are you?". To think I want to say, "I am human", but of course I don't. I obediently indulge them with my racial identity. When people ask this question, they ask because they don't know what to refer to me as. As if my name isn't sufficient enough for reference (they don't even ask for it), my race must be identified. I have to be labeled for people to feel comfortable in my presence, so that they don't feel uncertain. I feel like some sort of ambiguous being that is less than human when they ask me what I am. I guess that because my skin is brown (instead of white), I am considered to be that way, to be less than. Because of course to be a normal human being my skin must be white.

"White is right". "Black is whack". These are the ideas that have surrounded me since I was born into this white world. How do I fare though, since I am both white AND black? I need not have any fear! I just need to remember that "light is right", right? I'm already on the right track. I have been told more than once that I act more white than I do black. I have been told that I talk white, and dress white too. People say these things with pride. I think that they feel as though they are giving me a compliment, praising me for my "white" words and actions. It almost seems as though they think that these "compliments" are going to make me feel better; "don't worry, you aren't too black!". They don't make me feel better. They make me feel horrible. They make me feel guilty. But how else am I to respond other than with a "haha, thank you"? Because if I respond emotionally, and show that I am hurt, I would be labeled... either as the "overly emotional girl", or the "angry black woman". I don't want to be labeled more than I already am. Their words are supposed to be

some sort of consolation for having to live with what has been deemed as a horrible condition – being colored. But because I am mixed, both black and white, I can just pretend to be white! I will just choose! That is as close to 'living the dream' as I can get. Hooray!

Despite what SOME people may think, it's not that easy. As my mixed race pals can validate, we cannot just choose to be only a part of ourselves, and still be happy. With choosing comes a sense of isolation, and separateness.

If I look back on my life so far, I am able to recognize situations in which I have been forced to only be half of myself. I do not know how many exams I have taken that, in the identification portion, ask me to select "only one of the following boxes" to describe my race. I'd always waste time just sitting there, thinking about whether I should call myself white or black this time. Oh! Or how about "Other". That box is sometimes an option, and what a cause for celebration when it is. I personally always loved to be dehumanized by checking the box labeled "other"! Surveys always ask participants to describe themselves by checking the box that best fits them, and here I am once again forced to pick which race I feel like most that day. I think most often when faced with these racial identity boxes, I pick "Black". I used to think that if the person behind the exam or the survey ever decided to investigate me further, they would be upset with me for saying that I was white when I have brown skin. I thought that that may be some sort of insult to them. And I always try to avoid conflict.

So many times I have felt that I do not belong. I have been turned away from groups of black people, because I am "not black enough". They feel like I am trying to be something I am not. I have been turned away from groups of white people, because I am "not white enough", as though my mixed skin is "dirty" and contagious. I have felt as though I am impure. If I am not one hundred percent of one thing, then there's certainly no way I can be pure. I do not like this inner turmoil that is forced upon me, because both black people and white people look at me as though I am not one of their own people. I went through elementary school, junior high, and high school feeling like I wasn't welcomed. It felt like there weren't any clear connections between me and the people around me. And so what was I to do? Blame myself.

I think I've been accepted more by white people than black people, and I think it's because they consider me some sort of community service. Things weren't all fine and dandy even when I was included though. I had white friends say racist shit towards and around me all of the time. I think they thought that it wouldn't bother me because they were my friends. And because I was mixed... so it's not like I was ACTUALLY black. In my head I'd think, "what

the hell?", but I wouldn't actually say much at all to their faces in response. I had to avoid being labeled. And I didn't want to ruin the few connections I had to the people that accepted me despite my brown skin.

I am tired of only being allowed to be what other people want me to be. I am tired of feeling like I have to fit in, but don't fit in to any one category. I am tired of having to explain that my mother is in fact my mother to people that can't seem to fathom it. I am tired of having to label myself to make people feel comfortable. I am tired of only being able to label myself as half of what I am. I am exhausted with being a something rather than someone. I am done with being embarrassed for being me.

How do we, my mixed race friends and family, fit into a society that insists that we choose to embrace only one part of our identity? How do we make ourselves comfortable around people that are uncomfortable with us, and our perceived ambiguity? We have to be comfortable with ourselves.

Easier said than done. I could not agree more. It's hard to imagine being comfortable in our skin, when that same skin has been deemed "less than" by the world that we live in. Here in the United States, we live in a racist heteropatriarchal society. White is right, men are superior, homose equality is wrong - those are some of the ideals upheld in this society. People of color, mixed race people included, are considered to be "different" because of skin color. If we are not completely white, we are wrong. If we are not white passing, we face additional stress and turmoil. This society also enforces binaries. People are either considered to be one thing or the other: male or female, gay or straight, black or white. There is no in-between recognized, and when there is one present, it makes people uncomfortable. It is incredibly abnormal. It is an outsider. So therefore we as mixed race people are not "normal", we are "outsiders".

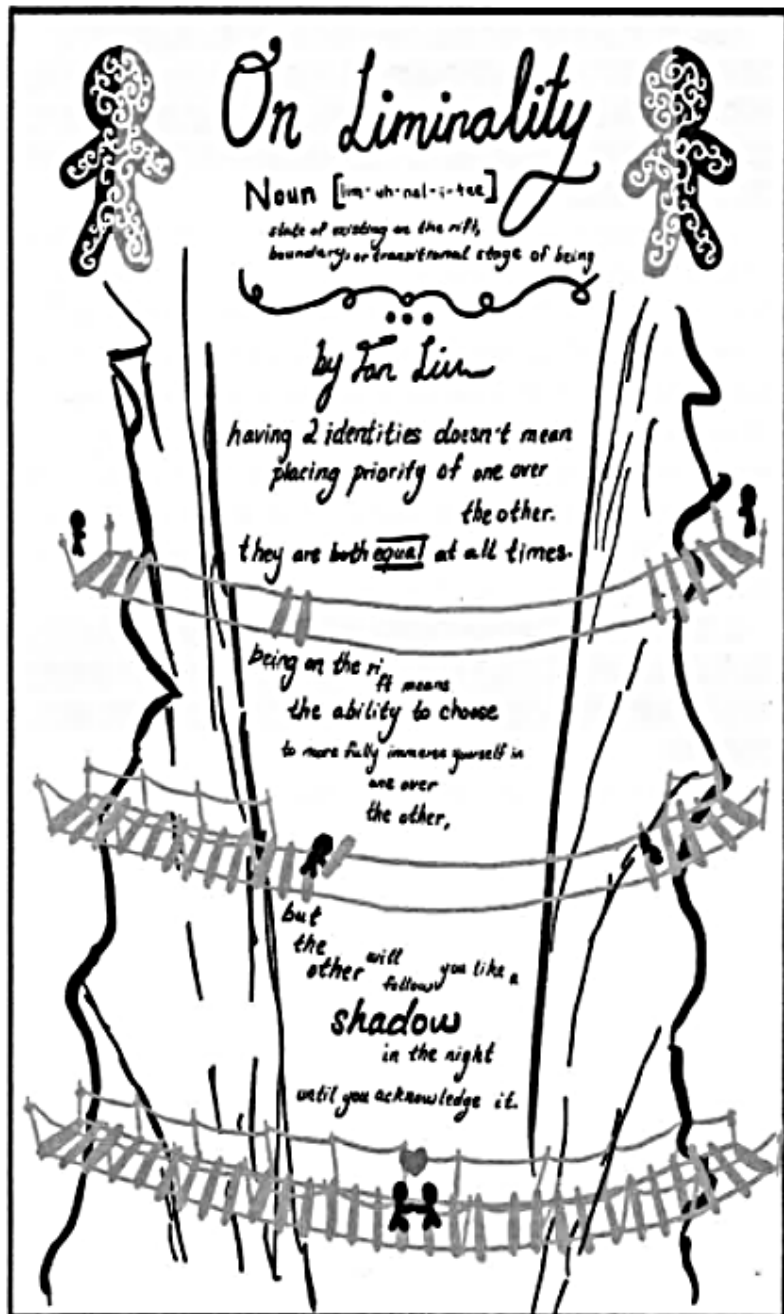
For too long we have let this white male led society here, tell us that we should be ashamed of ourselves. We have let this racist heteropatriarchy govern the way we live our lives because it has made it clear to us from birth that we are different. We have to embrace this difference. We must recognize that this aspect of our identities that society perceives as "different", cannot be changed! There is no magic spell we can perform, no prayer that we can pray, no surgery that we can get (even if we could afford it). Our skin is our skin. It is not diseased because it is colored. It is beautiful. We are not "not _____ enough" or "not _____ enough". We belong wherever we want to be. It is up to us to make this known.

You and me, we have every right to feel comfortable in our skin. We have every right to enjoy ourselves, we have every right to express ourselves, and we have every right to be ourselves. Our whole selves. We should not feel alone, ashamed, embarrassed, less than or unwanted. We have no control over the color of our skin, so we sure as hell should not let the color of our skin control us.

I have spent the majority of my years on earth thus far, wishing that I could change the way I looked. I've got kind of curly, kind of wavy hair. It is not stereotypical black hair (it's not "nappy"), and it is certainly not straight. I do not think that I have a stereotypical black nose, or a stereotypical black body (usually thought to be voluptuous and curvy). I have my mom's eyes. Blue eyes. Color changing eyes against my brown skin, always seem to be a shock to those I come across. I do not fit into many racial stereotypes in regards to appearance or any other aspect, and I have always felt like less than because of this. I do the best that I can, to not anymore. To not feel like less than. I am not less than anyone else. I am me! There is no need for comparison. All of my characteristics make me who I am, and I am choosing to no longer feel ashamed of me. None of us should be ashamed of us.

If any of you are looking for a solution to this problem and this turmoil that so many of us face, I hate to tell you that there isn't one. There is no solution, because this isn't even a legitimate problem. There is a difference. We are not a problem. This racist heteropatriarchal society we live in is

We are just different, and that just makes us unique.



On Liminality

Noun [lim·uh·nal·i·tee]

state of existing on the rift,
boundary, or transitional stage of being

by Jan Lin

having 2 identities doesn't mean
placing priority of one over
the other.

they are both equal at all times.

being on the rift means
the ability to choose
to more fully immerse yourself in
one over
the other,

but
the other will follow you like a
shadow
in the night
until you acknowledge it.

Closed Lips

I

Sit as I saturate in my stable silence.

Screeching Screaming Silent.

I

Wallow as I whisper wasted words under my wet breath.

Wanting Wishing Waiting.

I

Tremble as the thoughts in my head trickle towards the tip of my tongue.

Tasting Tormented Tethered.

Mom, Dad

I'm ga.....

Hush,

I say to myself.

Don't you dare.

The Black Girl Chronicles



"Why cant my hair be straight like all my friends at school?"

"Your brothers blue eyes are beautiful!"



"I dont want my wife to look like I do"



"I want my wife to be lightskin with long beautiful hair."

"He would never date ME."



"I am white not pretty enough"

The Real "F Word"

By: Hannah Nystrom

Plus size. Chubby. Thick. Sturdy. Overweight. Chunky.

Heavysot. Curvy. Hefty. Big. Pleasantly plump. Portly.

Hello, my name is-

What's the point of even giving you my name if I'm going to be labeled before I can even utter the word?

So, let me make this easy for you.

Why don't you just address me by the name I'm most recognizable by

Hello, my name is fat.

Judge me accordingly.

The television flashes brightly. Beautiful skinny women are on the screen.

They are happy. They are loving life. In a word;

Desirable.

Women's heads turn in admiration and envy. Men's necks flick towards them in pure lust.

Desirable.

A fierce-looking athletic woman in work out gear is on the screen. She is exercising, working up a bead of sweat that seductively trickles down her neck.

Desirable.

She looks directly into my eyes and I know that as she speaks, she is talking to me and me alone. "Tired of being fat?"

Undesirable.

She means "Tired of being undesirable?"

The only version of myself I see in this world is the version that society wishes I would just shrink into already.

Both literally and figuratively I don't fit into their box.

Their narrow definition of beauty is something that I could never even hope to squeeze into.

My life has been an eternity of being both invisible and the "elephant" in the room, all at once.

But I could just get less fat, right?

Sucking in my stomach harder and harder

I can't breathe

Am I pretty yet?

Once I pull enough of myself out of view will I be worth it?

Disappearing is the best magic trick I could ever do for you.

Sawing myself in half comes at a close second.

To make myself less and less is to make myself more and more beautiful.

But beauty is pain, right?

I couldn't do it.

I knew what they would be thinking.

I begin to rack my brain for answers

I search the entirety of myself for a way out

There is no avoiding this interrogation

My breathing picks up

All eyes are on me

I brace myself for the impending blows

Once I speak about this topic that'll be all they think I talk about

I'm damned if I do and I'm damned if I don't

I'm stuck between a rock and a hard place

That wouldn't even be a consideration of someone smaller

I promise that I am more than just this

"Hey Hannah! What are you having for lunch today?"

But I could just not eat, right?

Sticks and stones will break my bones

But names will never hurt me?

There is a constant bombardment of words.

Soft ones, harsh ones, kind ones, unsolicited ones

Words everywhere.

No escape.

"People of your size shouldn't wear that."

"Wow, I love the fact that you're confident enough to wear that!"

"Are you sure you want to eat that?"

"Don't worry, this'll hide all of your "problem areas"

"What are you talking about, you're not fat, you're beautiful!"

Some of these are intended to heal

Others intend to hurt

People knock me down and then fain being the hero, extending a hand

Only to play the victim afterwards saying they got hurt- citing my size as the issue

It was too much of a strain on them to pick of the pieces of me that shattered during the fall that they caused

That's okay

My fingers bleed just the same when I pick them up.

But it's my fault for having the audacity to believe that I had the same right to these spaces as you

The same right to live a life where people don't feel that they need to try to be the narrator of my story, telling me how to feel

The same right to be a part of a world where I am not prejudged based on the arbitrary number that comes stitched into my clothing, so important that it might as well be my social security number, or better yet, etched into my soul

The same right to live in a world where people do not turn up their noses at me for living my life but instead turn away from the putrid stench of prejudice emanating from their very being

Names and verbal slime will hurt me at the time

But your actions will always define you

But I'm just being overly sensitive, right?

Poor, poor me.

I must be constantly unhappy.

I must hate everything about myself.

It's so brave of me to even go out in public like this #Inspiration.

Hmmmmmm, how about no?...

Yeah, I like it, no.

No freaking way.

I live every day in this body of mine; not you.

I have learned far more about it in my humble eighteen years than you have in your moment of judgement.

I know all of its freckles, its stretch marks, its weird scars that I don't remember how they got there,

I know how good it can look.

I know that it has had amazing hugs from people who needed it most.

It has been beaten and bruised through countless sports practices and games.

It has been painted up for theatre.

It has been forced into the world's ugliest outfits
(And been forced to pose for photographic evidence of said outfits)

I know that I am still working to improve it

For myself and no one else.

Plus size. Chubby. Thick. Sturdy. Overweight. Chunky.

Heavysset. Curvy. Hefty. Big. Pleasantly plump. Portly.

Beautiful.

I know that I love myself and I'm happy, and that's all that should matter.

So, let's try this again.

Hello, my name is Hannah

Judge me accordingly

But it's my job to conform to your ignorance, right?

Wrong.

I
Gail Pierson is a badass. In the late 1950's, she saw men rowing on the Charles river and wanted to join in on the fun, too. She practiced and practiced and, lo and behold, she got better and wanted to compete! So she entered herself in the Head of the Charles singles race. She was the first woman to ever do so.

.....
Years pass. American women rowers band together to send a boat to the Olympics. Gail asks Bud Smith (head of the National Rowing Federation, the organization that funds all the men's trips) to help them out and foot the bill for their trip too. After all, it is the OLYMPICS!
He sends them a check for \$450.
Gail Pierson sends it back.
Gail Pierson doesn't settle.

.....
It is 2016. Thousands of high school young women have joined their local crew teams. Many of them will go on to row in college, and maybe even the Olympics. But hardly any of them know Gail's name. Why do we forget the women who fought for us? Why don't we learn about them in school, too?
Gail, this one's for you.

II

One day last summer I was walking around Green Lake with a friend, iced coffees in hand. I saw a cluster of pull up bars just off the path and handed her my coffee, athlete that I am. There was already a man using one and he smirked at me.

"Going to try a pull up?"

"They're harder than they look!" He laughed. I laughed, too.

Then I walked over to a bar, tucked my long hair behind my ears, and did a perfect pull up.

I politely smiled at the man and took my iced coffee back from my friend. We kept walking.

III

A: "I like that our team has a record board"

J: "Yeah it's pretty inspirational to see all the best athletes up there"

A: "I just wish there were some girls on it"

J: "Find a girl on our team who can beat Nick's 15 minute 5K run. Then get back to me."

A: "Yeah but only highlighting male athletes kind of seems sexist, doesn't it?"

J: "It's not sexist, girls just aren't as good"

A: "Girls deserve their own record board!"

J: "Oh not this feminist shit again"

.....
Update: I made a record board for the girls. It's bigger and better than the old one for the guys.

J is bitter.

-avery

**What a
REAL
woman
looks
like!**





We aren't born knowing the concepts of gender but rather, are taught. Magazines are the reason for why "most people, however, voluntarily go along with their society's prescriptions for those of their gender status, because the norms and expectations get built into their sense of worth and identity" (Lorber 143).

and sets the guidelines for how we view

Media is the largest source people's news for what is "in ourselves as well as others.

When a white person flips through either magazine

they are reaffirmed that they are the majority.

READ BETWEEN THE LINES.



"IF HILLARY CLINTON CANT SATISFY HER HUSBAND WHAT MAKES HER THINK SHE CAN SATISFY AMERICA?"

-Donald Trump on Twitter, 2015 (unintentionally deleted)

"YOU WOULDN'T HAVE YOUR JOB IF YOU WERENT BEAUTIFUL."

-Donald Trump while interviewing a reporter for *Mass Universe*, 2014

"WITH THE PROPER WOMAN, YOU DON'T NEED VIAGRA."

-Donald Trump on *The Howard Stern Show*, 2004

"IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT THEY WRITE ABOUT YOU SO LONG AS YOU'VE GOT A BEAUTIFUL PIECE OF ASS."

-Donald Trump about the media in *Esquire* magazine, 1991

"YOU'RE DISGUSTING."

-Donald Trump to a female lawyer after she asked for a break to pump breast milk during a court case, 2015

"THEY'RE ALWAYS THE BEST IN BED ... YOU DON'T WANT TO BE WITH THEM LONG TERM, BUT FOR THE SHORT TERM, THERE'S NOTHING LIKE IT."

-Donald Trump on "deeply troubled" women (like Lindsay Lohan) *The Howard Stern Show*, 2004



MY FEMINIST RANT ON DONALD TRUMP

If we are the land of the free and the home of the brave then who is brave enough to stand for our freedom—for our equality? This is not an activist blowing things out of proportion. This is an eighteen year old woman who is furious. I don't speak out much but these words need to be said. When Donald Trump said he could grab a woman by her genitalia, a mother told CNN that "boys will be boys." Fuck that. Boys will be held accountable for their actions and their words. This is not locker room banter, this is a display of the character who will be our next president. This is not the media distorting our view, this is reality. These are not isolated incidents of candidness, they are collective proof again and again that Donald Trump is sexist.

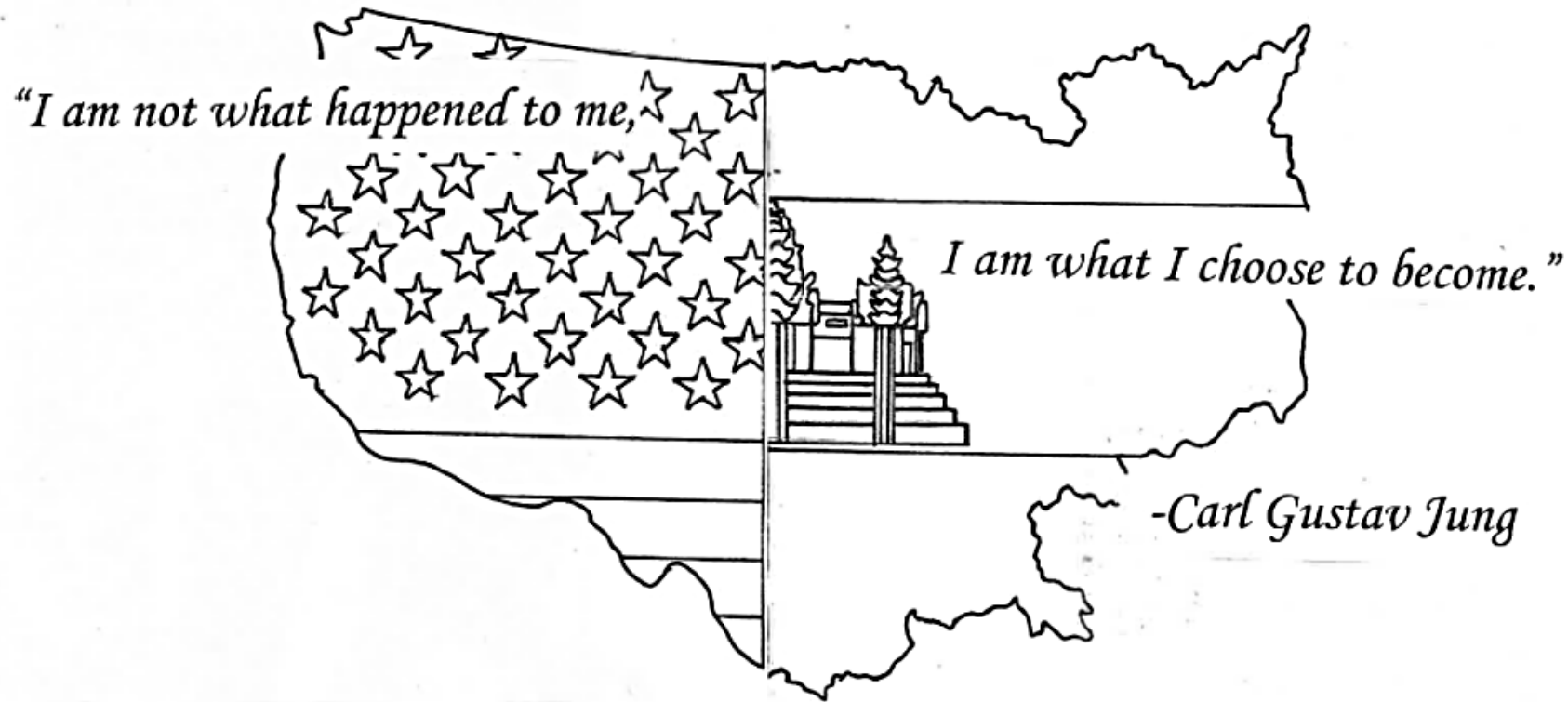
Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me this many times and shame on me.

-Macey Crooks



When you come from a family who has given so much to you, the only thing you, granddaughter of immigrants, and a lot comes along with that, you must know most to succeed. Culture isn't the only thing running through the veins of immigrants; passed down from generation to generation.

can think about is how you can give back to them. Like many, I am a daughter and where you come from, but not let it hold you back, you must face more barriers than hard work, determination, and resilience does as well. The will of immigrants get



Being a descendent of an immigrant family puts a toll on a person. Being set back through many obstacles to makes our lives easier for us. They do it for us because to, so that we don't have to struggle to make ends meet like they did. Everyone's resilience that they have, all of which gets passed down to us. We all also feel this spoken about, but believe me it is there. You can see it in everything that we do, can is to pay back for all that our loved ones has done for us.

from the start and having to see ones' parents be strong for their kids and work they are our parents, they love us, so they endure hard work so that we do not have stories may not be the same but we all can see the hard work they put forth and strong gratitude towards our parents and family members. It may not always be The drive that you see, the push that we give ourselves to do the best that we possible

Honey?

A heavy lidded eye
"she's smart
...good at math"

full lips
"she's sexy
hopefully not a whore"

blond hair
"they have more fun"

a wide, open eye
"she seems so innocent,
docile,
submissive"

pale skin
"pure,
just my sort of woman"

a small nose
"not too ethnic
—a good Christian girl"

big hips, tiny waist
"curvy in all the right places"

short, petite
"small enough that you can throw her around"

plucked, waxed, trimmed
"it's not infantile, hair is just gross"

big breasts, big butt
"nobody wants to make out with a surfboard"

perfectly tanned
small feet
defined calves
thin fingers
thick hair
closed mouth

"why aren't you smiling, honey?"

Honey?

Honey?

Honey?



Hor

Honey?

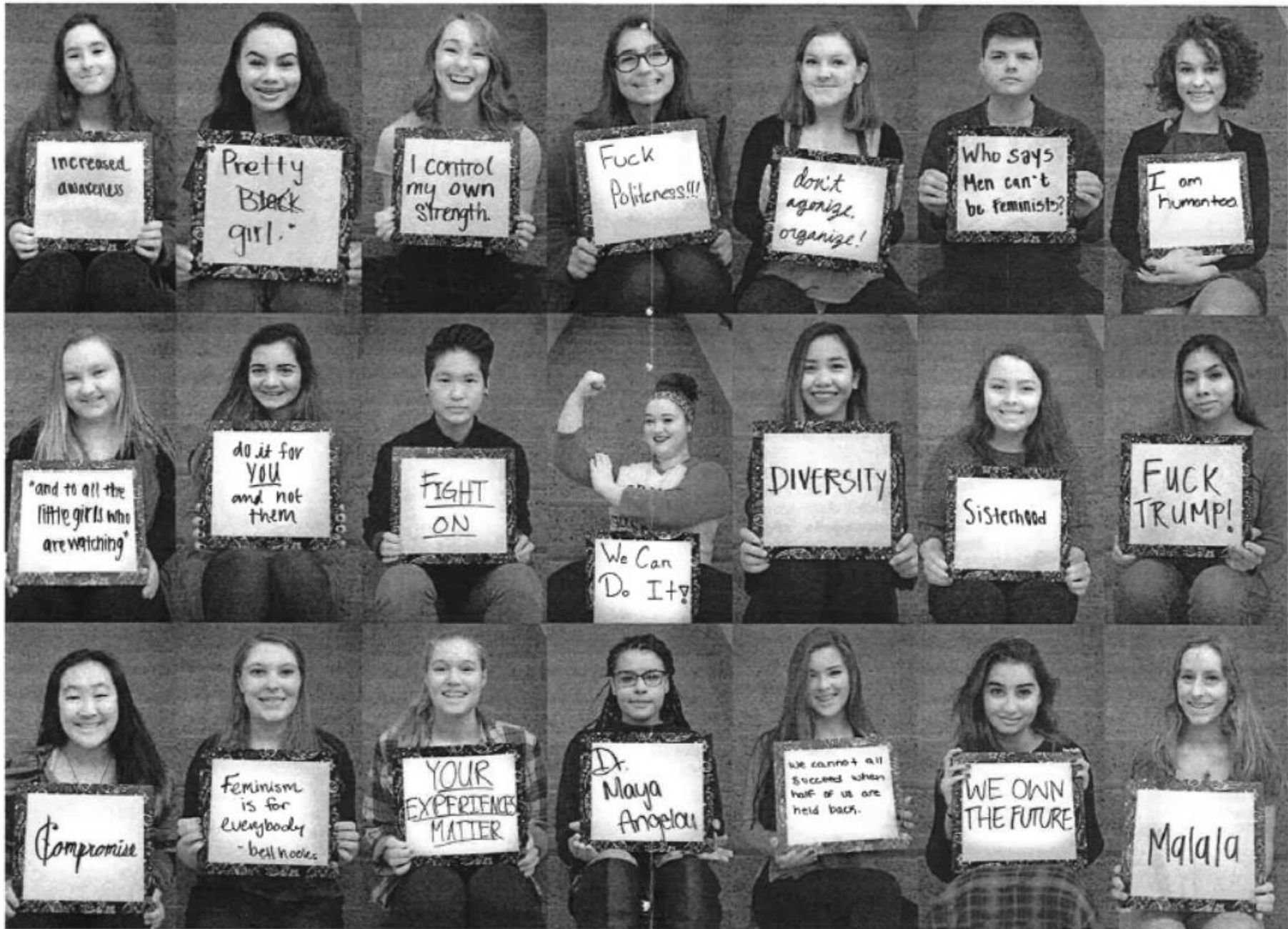
Honey?

Honey?

Honey?

Honey?

Honey?



increased awareness

Pretty Black girl.

I control my own strength.

Fuck Politeness!!!

don't agonize, organize!

Who says Men can't be feminists?

I am human too

"and to all the little girls who are watching"

do it for YOU and not them

FIGHT ON

We Can Do It!

DIVERSITY

Sisterhood

FUCK TRUMP!

Compromise

Feminism is for everybody - bell hooks

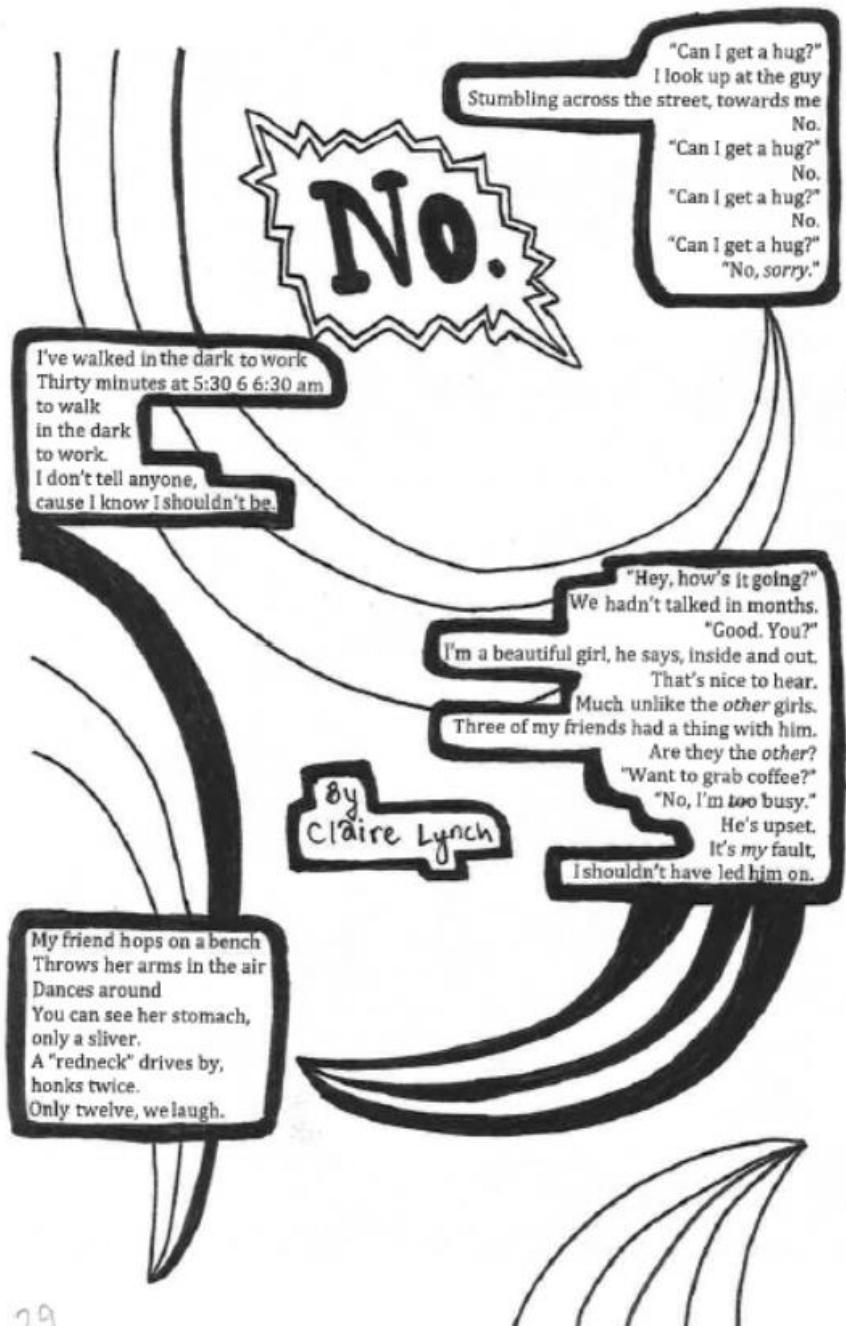
YOUR EXPERIENCES MATTER

Dr. Maya Angelou

we cannot all succeed when half of us are held back.

WE OWN THE FUTURE

Malala



"Can I get a hug?"
I look up at the guy
Stumbling across the street, towards me
No.
"Can I get a hug?"
No.
"Can I get a hug?"
No.
"Can I get a hug?"
"No, sorry."

NO.

I've walked in the dark to work
Thirty minutes at 5:30 6 6:30 am
to walk
in the dark
to work.
I don't tell anyone,
cause I know I shouldn't be.

"Hey, how's it going?"
We hadn't talked in months.
"Good. You?"
I'm a beautiful girl, he says, inside and out.
That's nice to hear.
Much unlike the *other* girls.
Three of my friends had a thing with him.
Are they the *other*?
"Want to grab coffee?"
"No, I'm *too* busy."
He's upset.
It's *my* fault.
I shouldn't have led him on.

By
Claire Lynch

My friend hops on a bench
Throws her arms in the air
Dances around
You can see her stomach,
only a sliver.
A "redneck" drives by,
honks twice.
Only twelve, we laugh.

"and-and to all the little girls who are watching this, never doubt that you are valuable and powerful and deserving of every chance and opportunity in the world to pursue and achieve your own dreams."

"This loss hurts, but please never stop believing that fighting for what's right is worth it."

- Hillary Clinton Concession Speech delivered November 9, 2016

~ Emily Starr

My Voice Is a Liability
By Annabel Paulsen

My voice is a liability. It is a risk to use, a gamble whose chances are dependent on two parties—myself and my audience—and it is a gamble with no winner. No, it has only a loser, the gambler, who wagers credibility and embarrassment, and who is already the lower handed party in a rigged game. My voice is my weapon of choice, but it is not a straight shooter. It quivers and trembles, its aim weary and uncertain. Sometimes I shoot myself in the foot without even releasing the trigger.

My voice is the source of much anguish. Its use has resulted in misfortune and mistake; its heaviness has weighed on my heart many a sleepless night. I feel the need to place a disclaimer here: I have in the past chalked these nerves up to my being a generally anxious person. I worry, a lot, about things that other people consider trivial. But the truth of that inclination, my proclivity to include a disclaimer in the first place, is indicative of the pressure I feel to defend myself in every feeling, thought and action. That pressure is placed there by society, in its constant belittling of my experiences and predisposition to invalidate my perspective.

In high school, I suppressed my voice; I hesitated to share literary analyses, the kinds of work of which I was typically most proud, for fear of disapproval. I agonized over small discussions, ten minute presentations, single comments and slide shows. I couldn't read aloud a line from the art history textbook without silently scanning it a few times first, lest I fumbled the words. My voice was a liability, you see; it held my reputation in its proverbial hands, my integrity at the end of its tether.

Before speaking, my heart races. My palms begin to sweat. I have to rehearse sentences in my mind several times before articulating them, and by that time, the conversation has often moved on to a different topic. Sometimes I have to write my thoughts down first. If I do speak, my voice sounds shaky to my own ears. I don't know if others notice. All I know is that I feel panicked, I feel dread.

I have grown in confidence through adolescence, and found more strength in my voice, but my level of discomfort varies with the audience—and I feel more comfortable among women. I feel the least amount of judgment there, the highest level of acceptance. I feel that if I am wrong, I will be respected regardless. I feel that my ideas are being absorbed, and that my audience is not listening only with the intention of voicing their response. My pulse becomes more temperamental, but it is more easily quelled. My thoughts are more coherent because I do not feel they are under attack.

My body speaks a truth of being a woman.

Assumptions of women's intelligence and men's dominance swim in the undercurrent of academia. Being a woman, in my experience, has meant combatting people who believe I should be silenced. It has meant being constantly afraid of being wrong. It has meant fearing that my intelligence could at any moment be compromised. And for me, being wrong, particularly in sharing my opinion, has felt equivalent to failure.

Why are young women so afraid to speak our minds, so fearful that our heart races and palms sweat? Why do I feel that my credibility is constantly liable to depletion?

At holidays, when politics are being discussed, my views are admonished with my grandmother's flick of the hand. "No offense honey," she says, "but I have lived for much longer than you. I know how the world works." Age is a small factor in knowing that fact. The oldest nominee for president was just elected to succeed Barack Obama, and I don't think he knows the slightest bit about how the world works. (Incidentally, I think my grandmother voted for him.)

My body is a truth of being young.

- Young women are often expected to be wrong. Young people are expected to be
- uninformed, and women have formerly been relegated to the homes: out of the public,

intellectual, and political spheres. We millennials are apathetic, disconnected, irresponsible. Who cares what we have to say?

But women of color have been disrespected—excluded—within these realms even more so. As much as I have felt anxiety in speaking, my whiteness has privileged me with a more secure impression of safety than has been granted to others. I can voice my opinions with less trepidation than many women of color, as I have less risk of retribution. As a woman, my opinions are less assumed credible, but as a white woman: my race has unjustly awarded me a larger and more sturdy pedestal. My megaphone is louder, my words received as more trustworthy.

My body is a truth of being a young woman.

And the frightening bit, is that my body is right.

A few years ago, I was out to breakfast with close family friends. Three boys, aged thirteen to twenty, and me, sitting around a table with pancakes and eggs. It was summer, and I don't remember how it came up, but somehow I found myself stunned at the image of my oldest friend talking—no, joking—about catcalling. He, a twenty-year-old college student, was defending his actions with the argument that he's never going to see these women again—a comment to which I objected in my sixteen-year-old self-conscious anger. They laughed at my indignation. "Oh, because it's happened to you so many times," one of them mocked. It had. I was, in fact, one of those women that he was 'never going to see again.'

- I tried to articulate myself—but my heart was already racing and my confidence was already dwindling, and my cheeks were flushing red with embarrassment. And their laughter was loud, loud enough that I could not speak over it; I could not drown out the chuckles and boots with my young woman voice. They knew better—that was the message I was receiving.
- Not because they were older, or because they were more informed, but because they were men.

Society functions on levels of ingrained traditionalism. The heteropatriarchy has established norms that are still being rejected. Even if boys in class "respect" what we have to say, they still interrupt us. It is an automatic, instinctive response to stop our thoughts, to stop over our voices. I am afraid to speak, and my body knows. When I forget, it is prepared to remind me, at the expense of my words and my conviction.

Why are women afraid to speak?

Why are women afraid to speak?

Why are women afraid to speak?

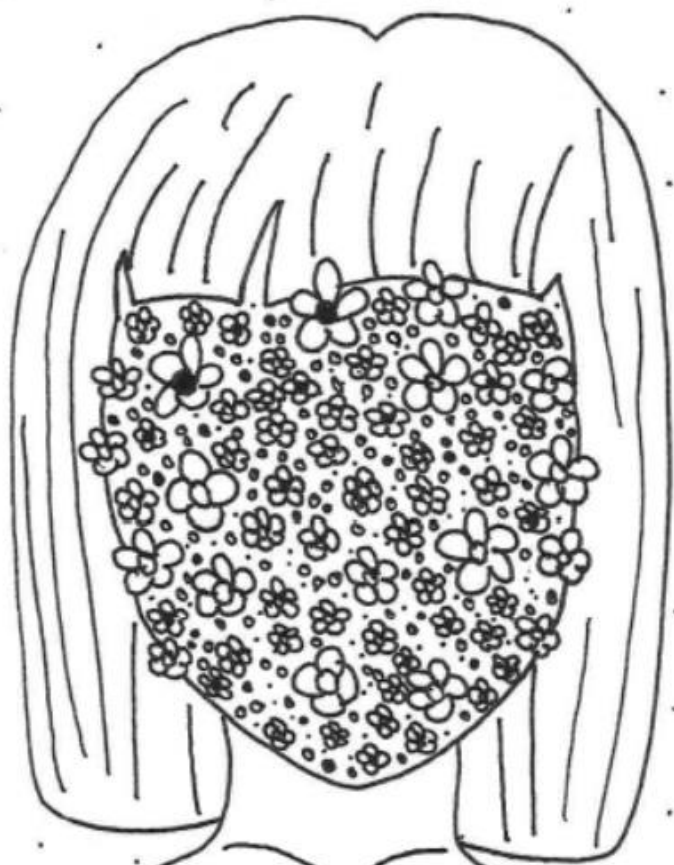
Because when a woman speaks, she speaks for all women. And when women are seen as uninformed, naive, and wrong, we are placed in the precarious position of having to defend ourselves, to constantly prove that we are the exception to the norm. We are faced with embarrassment, trepidation, fear. Fear of judgment, fear of failure, fear of retribution. I am afraid of being 'put in my place.' Maybe I don't want to speak about my own uncertainty, about what I don't know, because I will be shamed for a lack of knowledge I have not yet had the opportunity to curate. Maybe I don't share my opinion in class lest I be wrong, and I don't want to jeopardize my reputation of being smart. Maybe I remain silent around a table of boys, or family members, or otherwise because I don't want to embarrass myself.

We do not have to defend ourselves. We have nothing to prove. For we are not exceptions to a norm, we are insurgents against its preservation.

My voice has become a liability.

But I'm going to use it anyway.

KG



JUST KEEP GROWING

KG

YOU ARE



LOVABLE

Tread Lightly

By Olivia Bannerman

2016 has been a strange, dark and eventful year for the world. We have seen one of the most controversial Olympic games, the Zika Virus, Brexit, and so much more. There have been happy events and sad, ones that change the world for the better, and ones that make it worse. But the event that has really taken its toll on all of us is the U.S. Election. America has had elections before, but none has ever been like the race between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump. It has been a race that has divided America into two distinct teams and has given them a sense of permission to show their true colors.

Ever since Donald Trump has been elected as President, there has been an onslaught of hate crimes and violence across the country. Unfortunately, it isn't as if we haven't ever seen hate crime before in our communities, but there surely has been an up rise ever since Trump has been elected. There are many theories as to why Donald Trump has won this election, one of the main ones is that he speaks for the white man who feels oppressed. The white man feels that his country isn't doing all that it should for him and that it is helping the less fortunate too much. Even though it can be an over generalization, many of these people are also racist, sexist and close minded. They do not believe in equality, and they think selfishly on many levels.

What Donald Trump has done is legitimized their bitter thoughts and feelings. He speaks ugly words of hate and discrimination and they are aired out to millions of people across the world and in our local communities. This in turn has made it seem okay for other to do so. And even though this is America and we have freedom of speech, everyone also has a right to be here and there should be in no way a new form of social construct that prevents that. These radical individuals and groups and performing horrid acts everywhere we see. My colored friends are waking up to their

cars sitting in their drive ways where they left them except now they have been spray painted with racial slurs. Girls my age are walking out of university building and are being struck on the back of the head for wearing hijab.

And it isn't only grown people inflicting pain on others. Adults are influencing their kids too. It hurts to say how many Facebook posts I have seen from parents about the heart ache they have suffered from their Hispanic child being told their "time is up" when they are only in the third grade. A third grader shouldn't talk like that. A third grader's only worry should be about what colors they get out of the crayon box. It isn't fair to half the population to feel objectified by the other half. Yes, we may have some *extreme* differences. But that does not mean one side belongs more than the other. Donald Trump has made it seem this way though.

He isn't even President yet and he has already showed us that he will not support and help the half of the country that did not vote for him. He encouraged violence and negativity towards them when they showed at his rallies, and has yet to comment on the swastikas that are being spray painted on local landmarks across the country. He does not say anything, and therefore there is no one to stop and tame those who are only listening to him. His campaign was based on hatred and fear so now there are people actually think it is *okay* to push black people around and try to put them in the place they were in decades ago. It is truly mind boggling that we now have a leader who is not only a symbol of hate and a laughing stock across the planet but also does nothing to combat this hate. It is his duty to create a safe and open environment but he has done nothing but open paths of destruction and darkness to us. All we can do now to protect ourselves is to tread lightly amongst what is up against us but to also stand strong.



How Humans are

Society

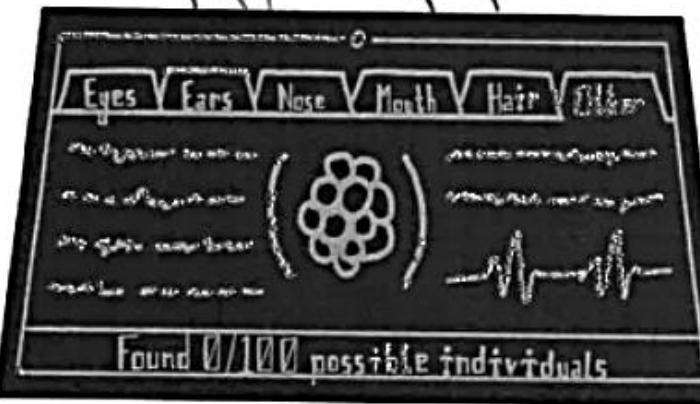


Sex/Gender: Select One ♀ ♂

Race: use color slider

Size: Feed Skinny Average Fat

Sexuality: Straight Gay



Made



by Tan Lin

Reality



Sex: Choose Dosage ♀ Set Copy Set Use

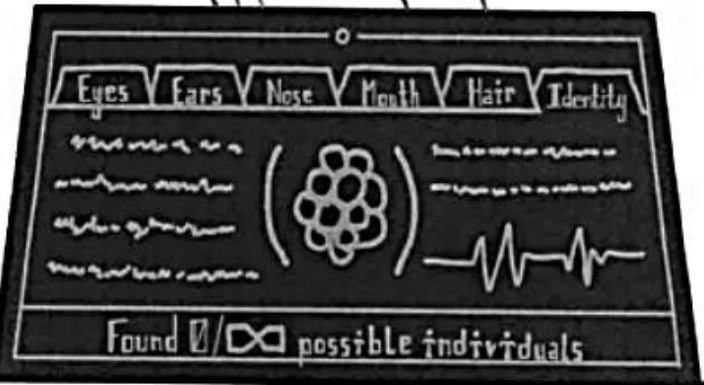
Race: Human ♂ Set Copy Set Use

Gender: Chosen by individual

Skin tone: use color slider

Size: Doesn't Matter

Sexuality:





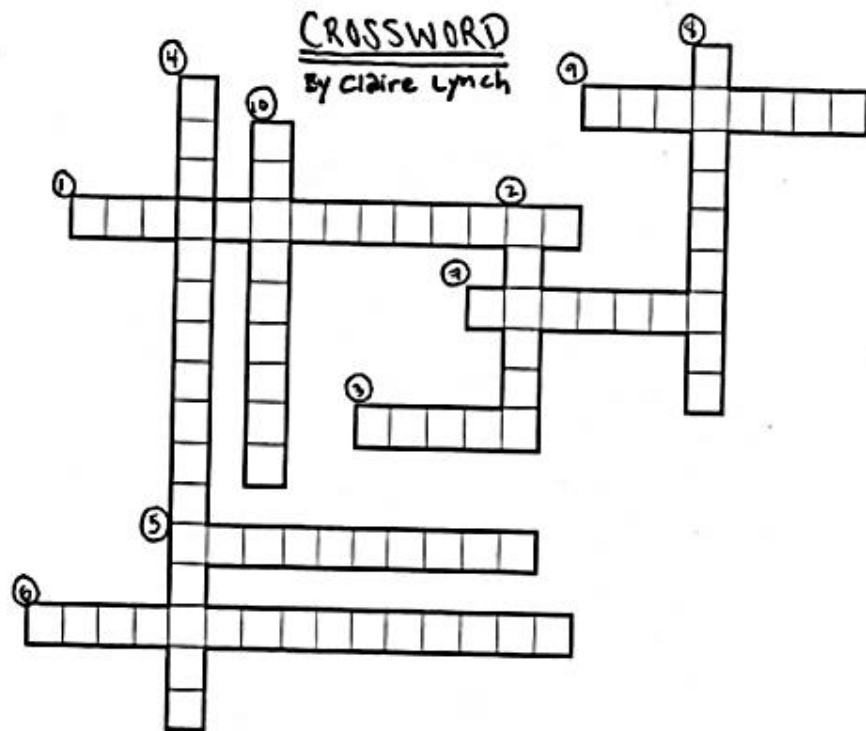
Yo No sali de
 tu costilla tu
 saliste de mi
 ovario"

The only way you'll fit in is if
 you're one of "them"
 My mother assumed my vocabulary, english
 and manners would improve. It was like
 she underestimated our own Raza
 As the days go on and the longer we
 assimilate to the American culture, will affect
 the people around us. Where is my culture?
 I caught myself before it was too late.
 I do not like being known as a "white
 washed Karina"
 I may be a coconut to you brown within
 the outside and white in the inside...
 But I am a cactus from
 the desert of my tierras
 I am more proud then
 ever!



COCONUT



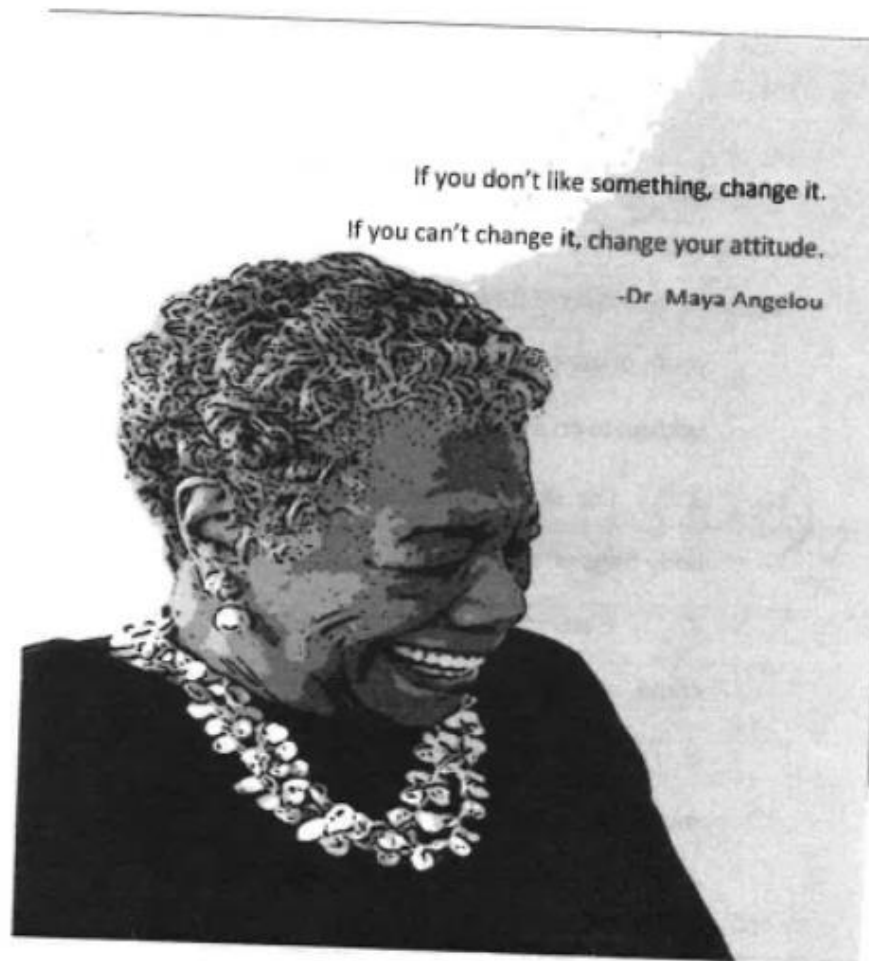


Down

- 2.) The capacity of freedom to act on behalf of oneself
- 4.) The dominance associated with a gender binary system that presumes heterosexuality as a social norm
- 8.) Advantages some people have due to their status or position in society
- 10.) Being aggressive, rational, and a leader are ____ characteristics

Across

- 1.) Looking at feminism through numerous lenses, an ____ approach
- 3.) "Grab them by the ____"
- 5.) Author who wrote *Poetry is Not a Luxury*
- 6.) Reducing women to things, not valuing them for their humanity
- 7.) Considered by many to be a feminist pop icon
- 9.) You can't be a feminist if you don't support ____, as argued by bell hooks



Daily Affirmations for a community that is

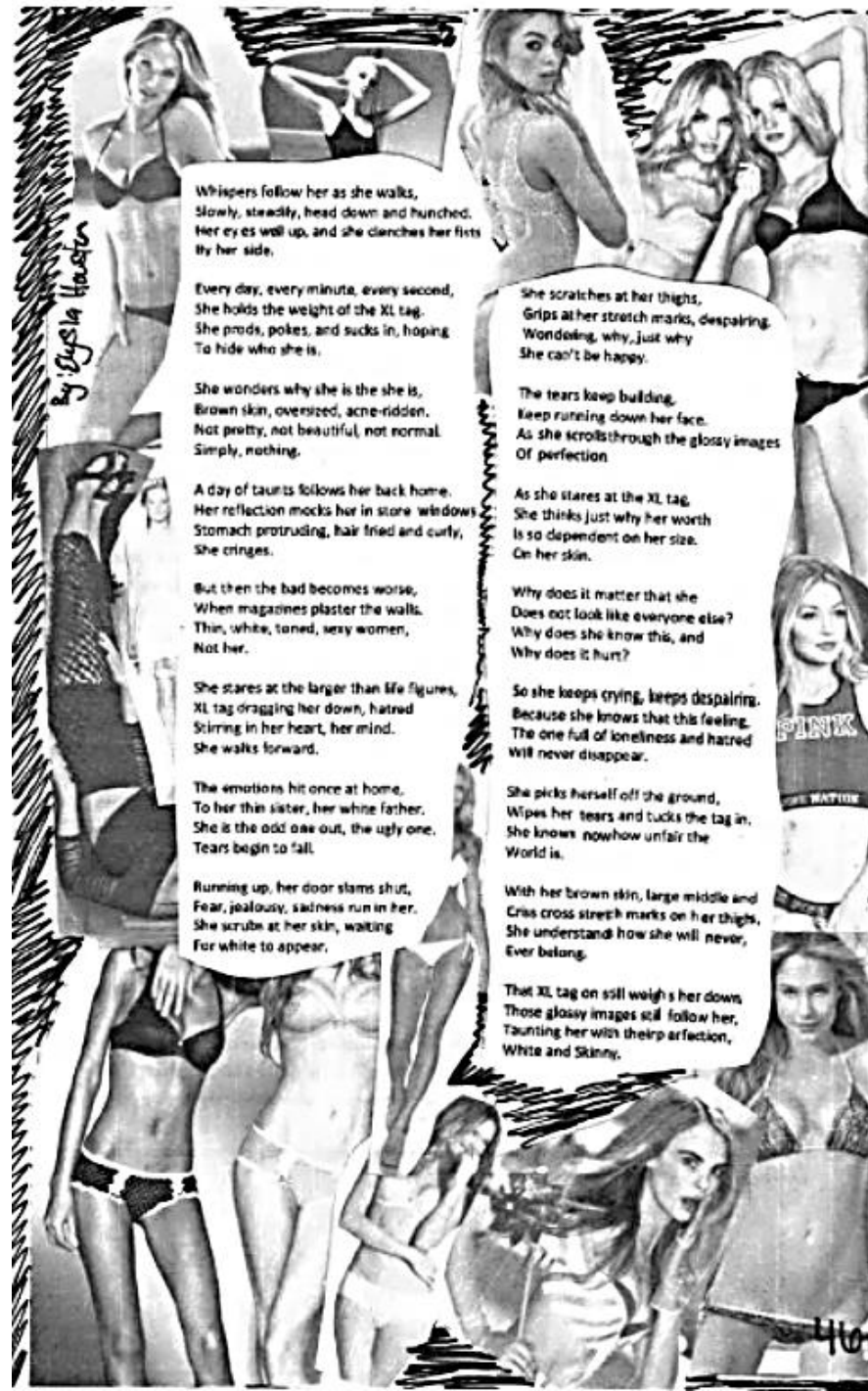
Hurting:

1. We are more than just a hashtag.
2. Will will protect the innocence and youth of our children from a word that refuses to do so.
3. Our stories do not have to end with body bags or incarceration.
4. Celebrating our Blackness is not a crime.
5. Our voices have and will continue to move mountains.
6. We come from a culture that is built on strength and collectiveness, and we will continue to honor it in our daily actions.
7. That We Matter.

May 22nd, 2016

That wasn't fair. They're not allowed just to come in my room and tell me what to do. I finally open up to my friends and they yell at me for my feelings and say that everything would be okay with therapy. They don't listen. They think they know best like they've ever had to deal with this? They say I'm too dramatic and that I just need to calm down. They say I don't know how hard I am to deal with. I am "too much work." That I will never get better and should never have told them about what I am going through. Thinking they're helping with their honesty, slapping me into "getting better" by making me realize it's all in my head. I hate that they think I choose to act and feel this way. It's not as easy as waking up in the morning and deciding to be happy that day because then the millions of others that suffer from depression would also stop feeling it. However that's not the case, there isn't a switch you just turn off and on. It's also not fair for her to blame it on my parents and how they treat me when the problem is created solely by my own head and no amount of support or love from my family can change the way I think about myself. It's an ignorant push 44

towards finding a solution that is NOT that simple. There is absolutely nothing they could have done to stop me from feeling this way, they tell me everyday how much they love me and how proud of me they are. My parents sacrificed everything to bring me to this country because they wanted me to be able to thrive. I don't know anyone that hates or doesn't value their children that would do that. So no, my parents are not the reason I'm depressed but thanks for trying to turn it on them.



By Sylvia Houston

Whispers follow her as she walks,
Slowly, steadily, head down and hunched.
Her eyes well up, and she clutches her fists
By her side.

Every day, every minute, every second,
She holds the weight of the XL tag.
She prods, pokes, and sucks in, hoping
To hide who she is.

She wonders why she is the she is,
Brown skin, oversized, acne-ridden.
Not pretty, not beautiful, not normal.
Simply, nothing.

A day of taunts follows her back home.
Her reflection mocks her in store windows.
Stomach protruding, hair frayed and curly,
She cringes.

But then the bad becomes worse,
When magazines plaster the walls.
Thin, white, toned, sexy women,
Not her.

She stares at the larger than life figures,
XL tag dragging her down, hatred
Stirring in her heart, her mind.
She walks forward.

The emotions hit once at home,
To her thin sister, her white father.
She is the odd one out, the ugly one.
Tears begin to fall.

Running up, her door slams shut,
Fear, jealousy, sadness run in her.
She scrubs at her skin, waiting
For white to appear.

She scratches at her thighs,
Grips at her stretch marks, despairing.
Wondering, why, just why
She can't be happy.

The tears keep building,
Keep running down her face.
As she scrolls through the glossy images
Of perfection.

As she stares at the XL tag,
She thinks just why her worth
Is so dependent on her size.
On her skin.

Why does it matter that she
Does not look like everyone else?
Why does she know this, and
Why does it hurt?

So she keeps crying, keeps despairing.
Because she knows that this feeling,
The one full of loneliness and hatred
Will never disappear.

She picks herself off the ground,
Wipes her tears and tucks the tag in.
She knows, somehow unfair the
World is.

With her brown skin, large middle and
Cris cross stretch marks on her thighs,
She understands how she will never,
Ever belong.

That XL tag on still weighs her down,
Those glossy images still follow her,
Taunting her with their perfection,
White and Skinny.

I wonder if identity can be qualified.

This past election has introduced more questions about myself than about other people. I have seen what is inside others. Tremors have fractured that wall, tremors that cracked rivers and roads, and split buildings. I have seen what is inside others because that skin has splintered. That skin has peeled like paint on a building. So has mine.

Over the course of this election, white supremacists and neo-Nazis inflated with support, from Trump and his associates, and from his coalition. They were emboldened—their beliefs had been granted justification and validation from a presidential nominee, now a president-elect. His chief advisor is transparently anti-Semitic; his supporters have verbally and graphically attacked Jewish journalists and public figures with slurs and photo-shopped images of children in gas chambers guarded by Trump himself.

I am Jewish. I am from a heavily Jewish area—Chicago was filled with Jewish Polish and Russian immigrants beginning in the 1870's, and Jewish populations still inhabit many of its suburbs and communities today. I have been surrounded by so many Jewish people in my life that I forget that less than two percent of the United States' population identifies with the religion.

I am Jewish, but I feel the need to qualify this: I am not practicing, and I am significantly less dedicated than many Jews that I know. I do not adhere to religion, in general—I am not certain in a god, I do not follow traditional beliefs and I do not follow the teachings of the Torah. My mother is Jewish, and that matrilineal bloodline grants a certain claim to Judaism. But despite attending several bat-mitzvahs, I did not have my own. My parents did not feel strongly about religion, and then time passed and it became too late to instill any. I have never attended temple, and I don't speak any Hebrew or Yiddish, but for a few prayers and phrases that my Nana still throws around. Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech Ha'Olam... it is the beginning of most prayers that I know after years of Rosh Hashanah and Hanukkah celebrations. I had to Google the actual words because I only know them phonetically. Everyone else in my family has gone to Sunday school, gotten a formal Jewish education. My cousins have all been bat-mitzvah-ed. I can't help but feel a bit left behind.

I have not been persecuted in the way that several of my Jewish friends have. I have a significant amount of white privilege, relative to the world and within the Jewish community. Every woman on my mother's side of the family has gotten a nose job. She grew up in 1970's Irvine, California, surrounded by white girls with bright blond hair, who teased and ostracized her for her hook nose and dark curls. She had her surgery by fourteen, around the same age as her sister and her mother before her.

I did not inherit this nose. I got my dad's Danish features and my mom's hairy arms. I think a lot about what I have been given along with an Anglo-Saxon nose: I saved thousands on plastic surgery, emotional strife on rejection. The stereotypes associated with being Jewish do not apply to me.

And so I have arrived again and again at this question: am I Jewish enough to identify with being Jewish?

If you think of Judaism as a culture, then ability and decision to identify with it are malleable. I think that is one facet of it: I feel much closer to my mother's Jewish family, I enjoy those holidays greatly more than those regarding Christianity. My Jewish family always makes an effort to discuss politics around the table, and connect current social justice issues to the old stories. Judaism feels warmer to me; I feel more welcomed.

But can I identify with Judaism culturally without associating with its religious positions? Can I choose an identity without enduring its persecution?

And that is the trouble with Judaism—it eludes classification. It is a religion, based on theories of a god with myths and truths and stories, with prayers and duties and traditions. It follows the writings of the Torah, the Old Testament. But it has a language—Hebrew—relatively specific to it, with roots in Israel. Is it an ethnicity? Its origins are in a place, its home a country, a land, important enough that it is used to justify murder and warfare. And if it is an ethnicity, does that affect my whiteness? Is anti-Semitism akin to racism? If not, then what is it?

I don't know where Judaism falls. I don't know where Jewishness falls; I don't know where I fall. I do not want to take without giving, to appropriate without right, merit, claim. I don't know what I am and what I deserve. I wonder if I can feel personally victimized by the anti-Semitism rife in this election. I wonder if I can lay claim to an individual offense, if that claim is not visible to those who victimize me. The skin that has splintered, the skin that has peeled off of my own body, has revealed nothing but another layer. I know not what lies beneath it.

But I do know that I don't *have* to know. Identity eludes classification as Judaism does. Questioning my own legitimacy is unproductive. I am, therefore I am. I don't have to extract and tweeze apart facets of myself. I can be partly many things, and I can be many things partly.

My identity is how I feel when I listen to "Extraordinary Girl" by Green Day, and "Then She Appeared" by XTC, because my dad put them on a playlist for me when I was eight. My identity is every old tee shirt I bought from a thrift store. My identity is the Eleven City Diner Chicago mug sitting on my shelf. My identity is all of the different ways in which my best friend knows me.

How much of identity is what you choose? How much is what is given to you? I don't think it matters. Identity is just that. It does not busy itself with authentication. It does not warrant proof.

I am, therefore I am, and that is enough.

Society teaches us from birth what the ideal form of beauty is, and many people aspire to fit within these strict standards. By changing to conform to these ideals, we are furthering the idea of oppression. We cannot believe these requirements to be valid, and it is our job to end this cycle by embracing our differences.

Taejah Jones



"The most courageous act is

still to think for yourself.

"Aloud"

-Coco Chanel

"I raise up my voice—not so I can shout,

but so that those without a voice can be heard...

we cannot

succeed when half of us are held back."

—Malala Yousafzai



an open letter
to: my "feminist" friend
From: avery

take that word out of your mouth
It doesn't belong to you

It belongs to the women who marched, who wrote, who fought, who yelled,
Who stayed up late
And woke up early
To write Our Bodies, Ourselves
To sit on a bus or a train
WHEREVER THEY DAMN WELL PLEASE
And sink their teeth into the men who push them around
To risk life and limb and livelihood to help women treat their bodies
with autonomy
To demand more and more and more because women fucking
deserve it
These women can wear the badge of feminism.

You?
You came to my feminist club and put in your two cents about why calling
out sexism is important and how we need to respect women and though I
appreciate that

You
voted for
Trump.

Because

"He has good business policies, Avery!
Don't you see? Hillary would have
ruined this economy."

Because you have a house. A large house.

And seven cars (yes! I counted!) and a yacht and two private
planes and another house and from the five years I've known you I
can tell you've never wanted for anything, except maybe a basic
understanding of the way our political system values some lives
over others

It's not that all this wealth inherently makes you a bad person but when you
put on your rose colored Chanel sunglasses and tell people to stop
complaining and to

just go to college and

just get a job and

just don't have an abortion because it's

just a baby jesus christ it can't be that
expensive and honestly even if you
were raped like it's probably for the best
that you have the child because who
fucking gives a shit that you're only
seventeen and you were just getting
started

And

"Can we not talk about privilege? Because avery lol i'm like the poorest
person in my parent's circle of friends i'm seriously so embarrassed when
i'm around them!!"

Shut up

Shut up!! I've wanted to tell you that for so many years SHUT UP SHUT UP
SHUT THE HELL UP YOU ARE NOT A FEMINIST

TAKE THAT PRECIOUS WORD OUT OF YOUR MOUTH
UNTIL YOU REALIZE THAT NOT EVERY WOMAN'S LIFE IS
YOURS UNTIL YOU START TO CARE ABOUT THEM AND THEIR
WELLBEING TOO

YOU ARE NOT A FEMINIST



