

AS A...

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As a baby I learned
women are seen as
weaker
due to the abuse
my mother received
at the hands of a man.

As a young girl I learned that
appearances matter
when a girl with
transparent golden threads
bursting from her arms
was more attractive
than the dark black licorice
growing from mine.

As a young girl I learned that
I'd be made a target by a
young boy
who insulted my intelligence and
sexual harassment
from another
thrusting his hips
to provoke me.

As a young girl I learned
sexual assault when
a beast tainted my sanctuary.

As a young girl I learned that
I'd be made a "victim"
the day I stepped foot
into the world.

As a young teenager I learned that
my contouring skills and tags on my back
were more important than

the love in my heart
and the life in my soul.

As a young teenager I learned that
imperfections imprinted on your skin
and an extra set of eyes makes you
undesirable.

As a young lady I learned that
whether it be baggy sweats or short skirts
all I'll be seen as is a
slut.

As a young lady I learned that
rumors are more powerful
than the truth
for the truth is boring
and if someone gets hurt,
so be it.

As a young lady I learned that
dressing nice gains
disgusting drippings
from foul jowls
to which I learned
just how useful the
single finger wave can be.

To which I thanked God
that I wasn't back home
for that little wave would've meant
a gun shot.

As a young lady I learned that
simply being a woman
makes me a target
when I was told to carry pepper spray
because,
"something might happen".
To confirm what I had learned
I walk on campus at night
with two companions

one of which says
there's nothing to fear
the other disagrees
and I say
"I'm also a woman"
and they both agree.

As a young lady I'd been conditioned
to think of myself as a target.
To be paranoid and prepared for possible attacks.
To believe that I am weaker.
To believe that I am not good enough.
To believe that I am not worth anything.
To believe that being a woman
makes me less human.

Backtrack.

As a young teenager I was told

*The best thing you can be in America
is an upper middle-class
straight white
man.*

*The second best thing
is a straight white
woman
married to that
upper middle class
straight white
man.*

To which I said

Fuck that.
Fuck your statistics.
Fuck your stereotypes.
Fuck your conditioning.
Fuck your cat calls.
Fuck your judgements.
Fuck everything.

As a young girl
my daughter will know
there are bad people out there.

As a young girl
my daughter will know
how to fight for herself.

As a young teenager
my daughter will know
appearances aren't everything.

As a young teenager
my daughter will know
that people suck,
but it's ok
because not everyone does.

As a young lady
my daughter will not
be afraid to walk the streets
in company
or alone.

As a young lady
my daughter will know
she doesn't need a man
or anyone
to get shit done.

As a young lady
my daughter will know
that being a woman
doesn't mean she's worth any less.

As a woman
my daughter will have learned
everything
I wish someone told me
as a...