

**Collection: “feMale”****filtered**

we meet in the Woods. the Woods that separate our homes. there are Mud and Dirt in the Woods, if i jumped in, i'd be scared to go home. but Your family allows You to show up in Dirt and Grime, they say Boys will be Boys, while my mom will fuss if my braids are untied. once playtime is over, as moms call for supper, Your jeans are unfairly covered in Mud and Stains while i try to look proper. mom sighs as i cry of the Injustice of my shoes being dry. He builds Mud pies, but she solely softly replies, 'Boys will be Boys.'

i sit upright, writing my paper, as my 8th grade teacher speaks of literary features. we are all focused, as i prioritize my A's, but Snickers behind me prove They're "Distracted" anyway.

my tears hit my mother's side  
while i cry as i try to aside  
how His Hands stained  
more than just  
my Curvy  
thighs.

her heart  
hurts for  
me, but  
His *un-  
hate wo-  
rthy* ways

are dis-  
missed  
like a  
kiss that  
"meant  
nothing  
anyway"

my spirit  
is defiled  
as i am  
filed into  
the lady  
They tell  
me to be

Filtered.

**freckles**

Look in the mirror. I love my freckles. Look past the freckles. They don't ever like their skin. I like my skin, doing this feels like a sin. I like my freckles. Why would anyone want to cover their freckles? Why would they conceal what makes them unique? My glasses accent my eyes. I love their color. I am so lucky to have found glasses like these. I love my eyes, I like their collage of color. But my eyes aren't blue, they all comment on how lovely blue eyes are. Are mine not pretty? I still like my eyes. I love my hair. It's smooth and soft and a perfect brown. They dye their hair to keep it away from brown, I don't think I need to. I love my hair. But they add highlights, they complain about their hair when it's brown. Is it improper to love my hair? I like my hair. I love my body, it's healthy. But it's similar to theirs, and they claim theirs is ugly. They say it must be changed. Must mine be changed? I like my body. I love my nose, but they don't. I like my nose. I love my cheekbones, but they claim they must become more accented. I like my cheekbones. I love my teeth, but they say they should always be whiter. I love my eyelashes, but they say they should be blacker and bigger. I love my hands, but they must be thinner and softer. I love my nails, but they must be perfectly painted and long. I like my collar bones, I shouldn't. I like my lips, but they aren't full enough for this to be allowed. I like my arms, but they aren't muscular. My eyebrows aren't perfectly groomed. My face has red dots. My glasses are too colorful My eyes aren't blue My hair is just brown My body isn't skinny When they see me they won't love my cheekbones When they see me they won't love my fingernails When they see me they won't like my lips When they see me they won't like my dotted face. Grab the foundation. Conceal everything that makes me different. Delete every blemish. Hide every freckle.

**flowers, mountains, and the sun**

my story is that of secret flowers  
those that grow when you least expect  
my story is blossoming by the hour  
stems thriving when They believed I was wrecked

my story is that of mountains sky-kept  
trampled just for One to prove they can climb  
my story is strength stolen from Their steps  
healing more than could ever be destroyed

my story is that of the rising sun  
persistent with the bringing of pure hope  
my story is a dream never outdone  
only shaded by beauty it invoked

my story is that of great creation  
creation built to brave desolation