


October 2015

Mine

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Recommended Citation

Sharpe, Carlynn (2015) "Mine," *Pamoja*: Vol. 5 : No. 1 , Article 5.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/pamoja/vol5/iss1/5>

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Carlynn Sharpe

It's not what we expected.
Expected it to be like those crime shows,
Expected it to hurt physically, a lot,
Expected to feel angry and sad,
Expected to want justice,
Expected to refrain from sex for years,
And to go to church.

But we didn't feel anything at first,
Except regret.
And then we felt sick.
Not about them,
Not about how sick humanity can be,
About ourself for repeating the same mistakes,
Not saying no loudly enough,
Being weak,
Being a slut,
Being flirty,
Being human.

The next day or the next week we felt mad at ourself.
Maybe even mad at our friends who we thought should have known,
They should have protected us.
They ditched us,
Were hooking up in the other room,
Were busy fighting with their boyfriend.
Maybe we were angry at our mom who drove us to our boyfriend's house.
Our sister who didn't tell us not to go and who didn't want to know.
Our dad for not teaching us to be unashamed to want and unashamed to disappoint.

And then maybe we felt sad.
Very very very sad.
And then destructive
And ugly
And used
And needy
And owned.

And then maybe we spent years punishing ourself,
For the sin we never chose to commit,
For refusing to repent,
For not crying, not praying,
Not being a lady,
Not bruising like a lily,

Our punishment was long,
Getting drunk and getting touched,
Getting used.
Entitled hands of strangers all over our body,
Entitled lips telling us who we were,
Telling us we were communal property.
Reliving our past every night,
By day pretending to be who we had been,
And then one night we said it.
No.

Three, four, five years had passed,
We finally felt angry at the right person,
All the right people,
All the ones with entitled hands.
The one who put their fingers inside of us while we were sleeping in our friend's bed,
And then when we stopped them said "I didn't think you would wake up".
The coworker who said hang out when they meant coercion.
The partner who criticized our lack of purity,

Who said we should have waited,
Who never knew that we had intended to.
The one who took us out to dinner and said “Let’s take things slow”,
Before deciding slow was relative.
The one who dedicated “Drunk In Love” to us every Saturday,
And forgot to call during the week.
The one who took us out to their car to “get some air”.

They smelled it on us.
Knew our body belonged to anyone who touched it.
Knew our words meant nothing.
Knew our mind was easily changed.
They knew we didn’t feel much.

But most of all,
We saw the fault now.
Saw the one who whispered love before ruining love,
Who took what wasn’t his,
Even years of waiting didn’t make our body belong to you,
What you took from us didn’t make our body public property.
This is our body.
Never yours.

Mine.