



Young Girl

Melissa Wong

young girl
she turns around to see
a reflection that doesn't match
the girls in the magazines
they look different from her
lighter skin
smaller waist
tall as supermodels always are
as beautiful as they come

she puts their photos on the wall
they gaze back at her intently
seeming to scan her up and down
there as a reminder to be ingrained
when she dresses each morning
'this is how a beautiful body looks'

she believes that goal is possible
attainable
achievable
if she just deprives herself a little more
and eats a little less
it's so close, almost there
just suck in harder
'don't eat something you'll regret'

young girl
school's out for the summer
but she's not dreaming about the sun
she's idealizing, glorifying
having a body that fits in a bikini
the way the girls on TV fit in a bikini
wanting nothing more than to be loved like them
to feel like she is wanted

every day is a mental battle
to drown out her feelings of shame
to overthrow the words of men
that play like a mantra in her ears
'your stomach should always be flat'
'your stomach should always be flat'



on days when the scale
refuses to be on her side
no matter how many times she steps off and on
guilt knocks her down
like a crashing wave
it feels impossibly hopeless to resurface
it's all over if her body gets bigger
she goes to sleep those nights without dinner

she fears that the only thing
attractive about her
is her body
'do the other girls struggle this hard?'

through online platforms, she connects
with others who have felt the same guilt
models, brands, and artists alike
by sharing their stories, they help her to build
a resiliency
to body shame

same girl
she sees the world through different eyes
as a young girl
she wishes she had realized
to honour her body
to celebrate this body
that she knows is deserving of love

standing taller and stronger
she has found a sense of solidarity
her online atmosphere is now filled with pictures
of women that are honest and real
diversity in colour, shape, size
that make her feel
okay in her own skin
they inspire her to change her definition
of what it means to achieve perfection