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My body of dissidence

by Rhea Ashley Hoskin

Where I once wished you would shrink, you continued to grow
And where I wished you would grow, you shrunk.
When I needed you to be brave, you were vulnerable.
And when I anchored my self-love in your strength,
You became weak and fragile.
Ached under the weight of your years.
I can rip out your hair, wax, pluck or shave,
but you will regrow.
I will regrow
And I always already am.
When I wanted to quit, you kept going
Air in my lungs, blood in my veins.
The ultimate rebel, my body.

Your aches, your pains
that expose a lifetime of war upon you.
Still you persist
In a world that subdues your rebellion at every turn
And host to a mind that befalls to toxic beauty culture
You never gave up,
To grow and exist precisely as you saw fit,
And to resist every restraint the world has put upon you

Thank you for showing me all the ways that I am resilient,
For keeping time through the lines on my face,
So that I never lose track,
So that I don't take tomorrow for granted.
Thank you for teaching me the ways that I persist,
The ways that I am resilient
And the ways I prevail despite myself.

My body, the ultimate rebel
Who will not kowtow to the dictator that infiltrates and occupies my mind
Who, even when falling into line, is always already planning its revolt
A body from whom society has tried to distance me
To separate *me* from *it*
Mind from *body*
To keep me from knowing
The rebel I am

Dr. Rhea Ashley Hoskin is an interdisciplinary feminist sociologist whose work focuses on Critical Femininities, Femme Theory, and femmephobia. Her work examines perceptions of femininity and sources of prejudice rooted in the devaluation or regulation of femininity. Dr. Hoskin is an AMTD Global Talent Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Waterloo, where she is cross-appointed to the departments of Sociology & Legal Studies, and Sexuality, Marriage, & Family Studies. She completed her MA in Gender Studies and her PhD in Sociology from Queen's University. In 2019, she was awarded the Governor General's Academic Gold Medal at Queen's University for her doctoral work.