A BOOK FOR BLACK WOMEN BY BLACK WOMEN

HOW TO LOVE

By MIA ALMOND & AISHAT JIMOH
About Us

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Aishat Doyinsola Jimoh is also a sophomore at CMC where she studies International Relations with a regional focus on Africa. She also plans on doing a sequence in Data Science. After college she hopes to start her own non profit organization focused on feeding her community back in Lagos Nigeria. She spends a lot of her free time cooking and trying new dishes.
She is beauty. She is smart. She is strong. She is imperfect. She is art. She is loved. She is \textit{here}. She needs to be heard.
Prologue

In so many instances society has failed Black women. Has failed to recognize the struggle we have to endure constantly. Failed to support us even though we support everyone else. Has simply failed to appreciate and value us as we should be appreciated and valued. We need a new narrative. People need to see us. Need to hear us. Need to understand us.

In this book we will give snippets into the lives of a few Black women. You will use this space to relate, to understand, to support. Black women we want you to leave feeling like you have others who are similar to you; who understand your struggles and triumphs. Others should leave understanding the challenges us Black women have to face.

*Enjoy. Reflect. Relate.*
Love

Seasons

I let myself fall in love this summer
Prior to I had been fixated on just doing my thing
Talking to anyone and coexisting with people never getting
my feelings too invested
Always with the idea that they might just leave anytime
But this summer
This summer I let myself fall in love
I was tired of not feeling emotions
I wanted to feel the intensity of love.
I wanted to know what something felt like
Feeling something felt like
I let myself fall in love this summer.
I still can’t believe I actually did it.
How did I let him in?
His words were smooth
His skin as soft as his way with me
He was gentle he took his time
He always looked me in my eyes and really understood me
He was my person
Always kept me laughing
Always would see me for who I was.

I let myself fall in love this summer
But it seems like being in love is like another season
The weather changes as the time passes
And whether he was in love with me or not changed
As the time passed
So eventually...
I was heartbroken this fall
Trying to tell myself that I’m okay
Trying convince myself that the hurt that I’m feeling will soon go away
Trying to remind myself that big girls don’t cry over a man.
But oh was I so heartbroken this fall
I thought I’d be able to start this new journey of understanding myself
I thought it would be smooth sailing
I thought everything would go great
But things came crashing at once
The waves from the sea, sunk my ship-wrecked heart
Tasting the salt that fell from the ocean of my eyes
I look myself in the mirror and realized I was actually heartbroken this fall
This is the feeling.
The feeling I was always trying to stay away from
The feeling of defeat
The feeling of someone breaking their promise.
How could something so good end up being so destructive to my sanity
How could someone who said they were in love with me tell me they couldn’t come to terms with seeing my face
I fell in love this summer
Why did I allow myself to fall in love this summer
Read my mind
Read my mind
And I mean actually read my mind
Understand the intricacies of my being
Why I talk the way I do
Why I laugh the way I do
Why I breathe this way
Why I exist how I am

Read my mind
I did not expect you to get it right on the first try
But somehow
Somehow you have seem to have the beginnings of it figured out
Taking the time to genuinely understand my little quirks
While also letting me in on yours
Bro just read my mind and I promise all you want to know is there

Read my mind
I told you.
And you
you read my mind
you read my body
you read my soul
you read me

These feelings I feel for you just makes me want to scream
I fucking love you so much
While holding you in my arms
body to body
soul to soul
I want to be connected to you

Exposed
My first hater was my mama
She hated me so much that she also became my first heartbreak
She says she loves me
I’m sure she believes that
My mother shouldn’t feel she’s in competition with me
She shouldn’t turn the light off while I’m in the middle of my homework
She shouldn’t call me a bitch
She shouldn’t list the things she hates about me every time she inconvenienced
She shouldn’t take my bus card and make me walk from the south to the west side of Chicago from school
She shouldn’t slam my head to the floor and throw blows until she’s tired
She shouldn’t kick me out and get mad when I find sanctuary
She shouldn’t call the police on me
And she shouldn’t be surprised when I finally leave
You see how she hated me
And you see how she broke me
Cause now I feel I’m in competition with everyone
But now I’m not scared the light will turn off at 1am
Now I hate being called a bitch
But now I think of how unlike the list of things she used to show she hated me
Now I always keep money in nooks and crannies
But now I don’t fear getting my shit rocked every time someone’s mad
Now I seek sanctuary in myself
But now I don’t fear getting my shit rocked every time someone’s mad
Now I always keep money in nooks and crannies
But now I don’t fear getting my shit rocked every time someone’s mad
Now I seek sanctuary in myself
But now I hate seeing police cars
Now there’s no surprise on me not wanting to come back
Because she did hate me
And she did break me
But now I’m trying put myself together

Him
you told me when you see me you can only think in poems
I fell for you I wanted to be with you
you became my home
you became my safety
you became my peace
you became everything that I didn’t know I needed
you reminded me of what loving someone romantically felt like
but you also told me not to fall for you
you said you weren’t a good person
that one day you would just leave
but I didn’t believe you
I couldn’t believe you
I wanted you to be perfect for me
I had already started falling and even if I wanted to stop it was to the point where I would be hurt again not only by you but also your best friend maybe that’s my karma? maybe I don’t deserve the love maybe i’m not ready to be loved the way that I want to somehow with all of these thoughts in my head i’m still stuck on you all that I imagine is you valuing every time we speak excited to spend time in your arms being able to be vulnerable with you I am falling for you and I don’t know how this will turn out but I am falling for you and I hope you will catch me
Coping

stuck
I'm stuck
I'm at the end of a tunnel that has no exit
staring at a blank wall
that's black
that has no vibrance
no color to distract me
I'm just here
waiting
waiting for maybe a opening to light up
cause I hate it here
but I also love it?
I hate how I cry every night
But I love how I'm making up for those tears that never
drenched the pillow for those other 19 years
I hate how sensitive I've become
But I love that now maybe someone can relate to
something that isn't cold and hard anymore
I hate how i pretend everything is okay
But I love that it keeps everyone here
Waiting
Waiting for the next time Mia might crack a joke
Well I am the joke
Have you noticed
All the jokes I crack is like a unsitcky Band-Aid on my trauma
Have you noticed?
The glossy eyes
The tear stained cheeks
The smell of a light throw up on the tip of my tongue
The red burning lips
I didn’t think so, only the blank tunnel exit writes them down
Writes them down so only I can see
Only I can remember
Only I have to face this truth
This tunnel looms around me all day and waits
Waits until the late depths of the night to swallow me whole only to spit be back out in the morning to resemble the Mia from yesterday
Sometimes there’s a glitch in this tunnel though because the drugs and bottles of alcohol that enter these fragile walls lets other people peak in
They see
They notice that Mia is sitting, in agony watching this tunnel wall
But its only for that single hour because the old Mia will be back tomorrow
With the jokes
But still with those invisible glossy eyes
Tear stained cheeks
Smell of throw up on the tip of my tongue
And red burning lips
And I will still be stuck in that dark hollow tunnel that waits for me in the depths of the night

Black Girl Gone
Ramya Herman
Black Girl Gone
I bet
When she died,
It looked like black girl magic
for the last time
Wafting from her skin
Expelling the graces of her being,
the eulogy the world never wanted to give her
I bet that beneath her cries and pleas
You could hear Double Dutch ropes
And 90’s BET
The wistful lamentations of Etta James
harmonizing with earthy, unrestricted black girl laughter
It must’ve felt like something along the lines of a two-step with old folk ad-libs and six hours in a salon chair.
Intricate high fives, sorority step moves, and whoopings that taught manners
I bet it looked like 4C hair Bantus
And the color yellow
Ruffled church socks and kente cloth patterns
I know it had to taste like soul food and cookout smoke,
Coconut oil and gold medal athlete sweat
I wonder if the coco butter and shea moisture shrouded the smell of blood.
Chocolate makeup palettes and Louisiana spices wrapping their arms around her senses
To give her the last hug she will never know
I hope that when they killed you,
Sandra Bland
Dana Martin
Cynthia Wesley
Joi Harris
Black girl
Black woman
Black girls
Black women
Your black girl magic rose up
And said everything they never intended to
Grabbed them at their core and told them that no court could level this kind of injustice
Kissed you gently on each eye lid
And showed you the kind of love this world never wanted to,
never did
I know,
When she died,
Her black girl magic remained.
My Trauma

Aretha Korsah

I tell my trauma to move on
That it cannot hold one to one event and use it to taunt me
Rather haunt me
I tell my trauma to move on
To try and be friends with peace or happiness or make
acquaintance with forgiveness
I tell my Trauma that it is just not that special
If my happiness doesn’t last forever neither should it
If the sun doesn’t last forever neither can it
I tell my Trauma to shove it where it hurts so at least it can
have an idea of what it puts me through

My trauma replies with anxiety attacks, depression and
isolation
It adds a touch of despair and nightmares
My trauma tells me that it cares for me
That its more of a teacher than happiness and peace can
ever be
It tells me that it’s been there for me more than many
And that when time comes, it will hold me through the
night, never leave me lonely, it will keep me company
My trauma questions me—asks me what I’ll do without it, be
without it? It’s all I’ve ever known
It tells me that without it I would never be as nice as I am, as
strong as I am, that I wouldn’t be me without it
My trauma tells me it loves me and never meant to hurt me
It apologizes and buys me gifts such as temporary happiness and moments of peace
And for a second I believe it
Until the next time

 مشيرا

**Late Night Thoughts**

Today was a good day
I lay at night thinking about the sequences at play
what exactly made today such a good day
and then I remember
people.
the people that I have chosen
who for some reason have chosen me back
have made today a good day.
I am content.
I am happy.
I am blessed.
today was a good day

ursions

**Mirror**

Something’s wrong. A mirror is a reflective surface, a glass covered in metal amalgam, it reflects a clear image.
What I saw was clear, but if it’s supposed to be a reflection it wasn’t doing its job. What I saw could have been a bad version of a mummy, whose wraps had all fallen except the ones that covered the arms. Mummies don’t bleed. The
arms had specks of pink, blood that was diluted by the white wraps.

Something’s wrong because what I was supposed to see in the mirror was me. But whatever was looking back at me could not be a small innocent girl with unmarked brown skin. One who had never needed bandages because she never went outside, never got scraped, never got hurt. One who was always told she was pretty by the boys at school, by her family, by her friends. One who always had a line of pink lip gloss covering her lips which she begged her mother to give her instead of the greasy, basic formula called Vaseline.

Somethings wrong because the mirror portrayed me as a monster. A monster with pink scrubs with blue polka dots. But pink isn’t my favorite color, so it couldn’t be me.
Black Men’s Role

I am a Black woman
Stop asking black women to educate you
Cause to be really honest, ion know what the fuck goin on either
You see, y’all hide so much from us, but expect us to be on the frontlines whenever a problem shows itself
Those same niggas that be rapin’ us want us to put on a smile and protest for your boy
Nah yo boy couldn’t handle a no last night, how he gone handle the police
Don’t say Black lives matter if we not talkin’ about all Black lives
I am a Black woman
I am two minorities
I’m not trynna brag
I don’t want to brag
These aren’t bragging rights
But always remember no one gives a fuck about me, no matter how much I provide to this ugly ass world
No one cares about the words that are spitting out of my mouth right now
You’re thinking when is Black bitch gonna be done
But you’re not hearing me
Because if you listened, if you listened
Maybe y'all would care
Maybe I would feel safe around my “brothers”
Brothers and sisters protect each other
They uplift each other
It's feeling really one-sided right now
Cause I only hear from y'all when you want sex or advice
I'm no more than that?
I am a black woman
I am two minorities
I'm not trynna brag
I don't want to brag
It seems as though the only black women you hear have lighter skin and curly hair
Well my hair is course, it grows up, I'll catch a coil or two on a good day
Depend on it as much as dark skin woman depend on black men, we don't
We'll catch a good one a good day
I am a black woman
I am two minorities
I'm not trynna brag
Stop telling me nothing's wrong because you don't wanna listen
I'm asking, pleading for you to stop raping me in every sense but I hear a but
While your dick hasn't entered my vagina, he continues to gag my throat so I can't speak up
Because you know
You know that it was ya boy
Ya boy that couldn't handle a no, thought my silence was a yes
I am black woman
I am two minorities
Stop laughing when I'm not being funny
Not everything I say is a joke, actually none of it is so stop laughing
Don't search up angry black woman to get a good gif
After all you value the white woman, no?
Otherwise the black women that have gone missing that we're not talking about wouldn't have gone missing
I am a black woman

I deserve more

i didn’t have a father figure growing up. i’m sure psychologists would have a field day trying to interpret how it effects my love life now. the only encounters i’ve had with older men is catcalls, weird comments, or them following me for blocks seeing if i’ll fold and get in the car. “you getting thick mia”
“i bet all those lil boys chasing you”
“she trying to go fuck some ugly lil boy”
“hey baby can I take care of you tonight”
i’m 132 lbs
i have no boys chasing me
i’m a virgin
i'm not a prostitute, respectfully though
i don't want a father figure, but people continue to try to
force one upon me. both my mother and my godmother
feel it’s a necessity for me to forgive and forget the wrongs
of the man who placed his sperm in my mother. I'm okay. i
don't need the constant reminder of the screams and yells
of my mom. or his big, calloused hands wrapping around
my small, smooth neck.
i'm fine with holding this grudge, i'm fine with
remembering. it shows me what i don't want. but it also
makes it easier for me to accept the bare minimum. a man
who doesn't beat me, doesn't make me feel minuscule,
treats with the smallest amount of kindness. that sounds
great to me. but i deserve more. i deserve roses. and
laugher. and to feel loved. to feel cherished. i deserve more.
“Pitzer College” I read in my head on someone’s sweatshirt. I was grabbing my checked bag when I approached this white woman asking her if she wouldn’t mind splitting a Lyft with me. She agreed and we added two destinations to our Lyft and on our way we went. Since I was moving in early I had to go to public safety to get my ID activated so that’s where I asked the destination to be set to. I got there and as the woman upfront was helping me get situated I kept running through my head how I would ask for a safety ride so I wouldn’t have to carry a 50 lb luggage down the street. I finally worked up the courage to do so and into the truck my luggage went. Three minutes later we were in front of the towers. I walked into my building feeling uneasy. I began to remember all that I went through just the semester prior and why exactly being at home made me feel at peace. I tried to push those feelings aside and tell myself that this semester would be better. I pushed the button for the elevator and went to the 6th floor. I took it in again, but this time I felt secure. I remembered all the women that lived on my floor and remembered that when the outside world was too much I could come here and be at peace. I walked into my room and started to unpack. I put on music.
and got to it. Nicki Minaj then a little bit of Meg and there I went to twerking and working. About an hour later I was done putting away my stuff and I went to the lounge to relax as I normally did. Suddenly the elevator dings and exits one of my floor mates. I was genuinely excited to see her and we were catching each other up on how our breaks went when the elevator dings again. This time a person I never met came out. She came over to greet us. Then suddenly a conversation that began with just my original floormate and I became a conversation between two white women that I was being ignored in. I stood there with nothing but my thoughts. “Are they gonna ask me?” “Do they not see me here?” “Who is this white woman interrupting my peace?” Suddenly the two ended their conversation and we all went our separate ways with me still sitting in the lounge. I felt uneasy after that conversation, but I was convinced it was in my head. They weren’t ignoring me on purpose. I snapped out of my thoughts when the new woman walked into the lounge with her friend. They both greeted me and went about their conversation. I then asked them a question which they looked at me and completely ignored me. At this point I thought this is why I hate my school. Why would a white woman come on this floor and make the one place I felt truly comfortable in unwelcoming? I was so nervous that
this semester would be worse than last semester and went to my room and thought myself into a hole.

Lost
In a world where I have been able to navigate with the compass of comfort
I feel lost when navigating without any sense of direction
I told myself “let’s find out who you really are”
And now I’m actually afraid of the answer
I’m afraid that I’m not as strong as I present to be
I’m afraid that this... this... might just have broken me
Why is it that such an idea that has been made up
Have been made to make me feel pathetic, useless, unworthy.
I go back and forth with do I belong here with God ain’t never make a mistake
But then I remind myself that I... I sometimes do.
I make mistakes and maybe taking up such a challenge isn’t something I want to do
I’m tired of having to take up spaces
Where spaces aren’t even made for me to begin with
I’m tired of feeling inadequate
I’m tired of measuring my worth with my failures
I am tired of existing in my body constantly conscious of my being
While still not believing that I deserve to be here
And on top of being a Black woman at a PWI I am a Black woman in America
I am expected to act like things are normal
I am expected to be okay with the realities of our world
I am expected to not break
But I am here to tell you fuck your expectations
fuck you for making me feel so inadequate
fuck this country for the exploitation of Black people
fuck your standards
and fuck anything standing in the way of Black liberation
Which embodies the liberation for all people
yes I am lost
but because of my consciousness
I will always find my way
As a Black woman

My Skin
I never wanted to change my skin because of the way it looked
I wanted to be lighter because of the way y’all looked at light skin
looking at light skinned women
admiring the yellowness of her complexion
telling her she’s remarkable regardless of substance
I wanted that attention
I wanted to be someone’s token
and not so surprisingly
do little Black babies
experience this before they experience their teens
the world has told her what she needed to aspire to.
the world has told her what she needed to be
the world has told her what she is.
but fortunately some Black babies encounter” ooouuu she’s Black baby” and it sticks
they get to navigate the world with love
admiration for their Blackness
it’s what makes them beautiful
their melanin
it’s what protects them from the rays of the sun
the darkness of their skin
it’s their shield against the world
my darkness is what makes me beautiful
my existence as a brown skin woman is golden
I am the blueprint
I never wanted to change my skin because of the way it looked
I wanted to be validated by society and it seemed like being lighter skinned was the way in
Self Love

Hair like wool

Hair like wool.
That’s the phrase that my mother voiced every time she had to comb my hair out. When I didn’t have a fresh perm burning my scalp. She liked the silky but thin strands that were easier to manage than the nappy knots that fled my kitchen. That fresh perm resting on my scalp every first of the month like clockwork. Moving from kiddie to adult perms started leaving burns on the roots of where my hair follicles lied. Those hair follicles were always screaming for health, to be placed back into their coily state. But alas were forced by someone other than its host to bend backwards to be straight.

You can train your hair to be straight.

After 4 years of being natural this is what my madrina told me when she’d only been with me for 3 months of this passage. 3 months gave her enough time to evaluate the state of my hair and say... it needs help. The coils that hold tight to my scalp, that give the illusion of a small afro needed something. My hair needed to be trained, needs
something to guide it from whatever its natural state was. It wasn’t that fun and playful 3b/4a hair, this was worse, this was an atrocity. We have to apply heat so as to not ever be mistaken that we are ‘baldheaded.’ We have to the show the world that we indeed have ‘good hair.’ My hair doesn’t give a fuck what y’all think of her. She barely listens to me. So, the insult of wool makes no difference because it is not. The threat of training her to be something she is in fact the opposite of is disrespectful. All of the negativity comes from everyone but the person whose hair it is. Mind the business that pays you, it does wonders. And hair? Please listen to me, I promise I won’t dye you again.

my mind and my body
they say that mind and body has a connection
the most divine connection
what you put in your body will surely affect your mind
and what you consume into the mind will surely affect the body
but what happens when my mind and my body battle each other
my mind hates my body
my mind constantly attacks my body
sometimes I think of my body as the trojan horse
on the outside it seems like a gift
but the world doesn't know the enemy is within
waiting to attack when i'm the most vulnerable
with ideas that cut like swords
“you are simply disgusting”
“no one will ever find you attractive”
“I don’t even know why you try”
with every thought I hold back an attack on myself
until
the moment is right
then it all comes out
and my body that was once this beautiful gift
becomes the tragedy of the nation
the fall of a place so powerful
i become my biggest enemy and the reason I fall

when my mind and my body don't coincide
and everything I feel inside
doesn't align
I can't help but to think that something is wrong with me
I sometimes hate existing but I don’t want to die
I just want my mind to transcend this body
where my image wouldn't matter
i am tired of my mind battling my body and winning
I am tired of existing in an image I do not like to see
my mind plays tricks on my body or is it my body playing
tricks on me?
My mom told me I made up a song in Kindergarten. She would say, “It was to the tune of ‘Row, Row, Row Your Boat’...but it wasn’t about the boat.” I don’t have any recollection of this song, but the topic of this song was something I remember tore me apart starting at 4 years old.

My remix to the childhood nursery was about my desire to change the color of my skin. I may not remember the lyrics, but I remember the hatred I had for being brown. I scrubbed my skin in the bathtub and cried when my skin failed to match the whiteness of the bubbles. I screamed and cried while my mother painfully brushed through my thick, brown, curly hair. I saw my father hurt us and leave. I wanted to erase my brownness more than anything. My classmates, teachers, and friends had straight hair and happy families. In my youth, I associated these things with whiteness. I wanted my hair to not hurt me and my father to come home and I thought being white would grant me these things. At 5 years old I knew that in Amerikkka, whiteness means purity. It means safety, protection, and success. At 5 years old I was not ready to face the fact that I would have to fight for that.

In middle school, I was not any happier. Irish Catholic private schools do not foster a love for
brownness. I endured 3 additional years hating myself because boys didn’t like me. Despite my wearing Lululemon’s and straightening my hair, my brownness was not pretty enough.

It was not until high school that I learned. I found the representation I needed to help me finally see myself through my own eyes and not through the approval or acceptance of my peers. My mother tried her best for years to teach me to love myself, but it was not something she could teach me. Her skin nor hair match mine and because of that, her experiences could not resonate with me. I needed to see myself through other Black women like me and I found that. I stopped straightening my hair just to please my peers, I stopped wearing expensive ass Lululemon’s, I stopped doubting my capability to excel among my white counterparts. I stopped hating my brownness. I started laughing while watching people burn their skin to achieve my color,

Street corner
Annette Njei
Street corner
Midnight walks remind me of the stain glass in the Vatican
Colorful with cracks in between
The holiness unmatched with the levels of anonymity that await on the next street corner
In twelve steps
I’ve managed to fall in love with secondhand smoke
Hum the melodic tune of Survivor
And lose myself among the usual nighttime chaos
The sounds mimic that of my failed documentary
High in fantasy with a pinch of reality
The standard recipe for disaster birthed from my genetic code.
A tragedy that led me to find sanity on the corner
Buttery biscuits and a cold sprite
Unlocked a gateway to a rekindling
One that included an assimilation back into my own body
Without the fear of losing it
Last night was full moon
And I learned how to love myself again.

5·5

Floral Symphony
Annette Njei
Floral Symphony
writing love letters to exes,
in hopes of invading their dreams
as an act of reclaiming the stolen pieces of her heart.
she sits at her window,
basking in a series of failed fictional futures and what could have beens.
unaware of the conversation that appears before her,
she indulges in the beauty of her mother’s second prized possession.
chrysanthemums enjoy the game,
exposing their bud in hopes of igniting chaos among a congress of bees.
lilacs learned to be still and sit pretty,
to compartmentalize all feelings and emotions.
where do you draw lines on a canvas that does not want to be seen?

-or heard?

thoughts developed from a silhouette of her sorrows,
waning down on the image of self.
“her soul no longer present in her reflection,
wrestling with the admiration of what it meant to be her own teenage girl.”
the flowers spoke to her.
narrating a biography, she didn’t know was hers.
a mockery, maybe a hypocrisy, to yearn for the love that exists beyond the horizon.
but those eyes knew that the urge to love came from within,
as her body regurgitates daily affirmations of self-liberation.
no cards left to fold.
she treads lightly through the garden.
Beauty Standards
I’ve been brought up in a world where my ugliness shines
How can I see the beauty of brightness when my beauty is
dimmed by the grotesque world
How can people say that beauty is subjective
But whatever angle you take to look at me you still can’t see
my beauty
I question the reason for my existence almost daily
praying that I’ll end up beautiful someday
Similar to the praised models on the internet

The internet
where my worst nightmares come to life
Actually better yet
It’s supposed to bring us together, right
But I spend my time comparing myself to women that I can
never look like
Intaking every single one of their features and trying to
to double tap enough that I would no longer have a double
back and finally realize that if I’m no longer fat I’ll be
beautiful right?

No no no
No matter how much weight I lose or how much weight I
gain the world will never be able to accept me.
Because I am not beautiful
So I use filters to make me feel better about myself.
Yea put the flowers on my head
With the pretty eyes
Give me the heart eyed filtered one next
Because the real love of people have been eliminated to create a synthetic version of love
An image in which I photoshop my happiness on me.
If I don't have the figure 8 then I’ll never get the likes that I deserve
I must have clear skin and straight hair or else no one would ever notice me.
I'll never understand why I can't be good enough for society

Maybe that’s where I have it wrong. Maybe I am too good for society to realize that my beauty doesn’t rely on what their image on me is
Rather my beauty comes from where ever I place it
My beauty from within will shine so bright it’ll burn the eyes of those who has ever ignorantly judged me
My beauty will shine so bright those people who struggle like me will see the light that’ll help them find their own. the light of my beauty doesn’t dim anyone else’s
It shouldn’t dim anyone else’s
Although we shine in different forms we can shine together.
I am beautiful
I.
I saw you
tall and fine
palms drinking the skies,
sturdy and sublime
looking like home,
all cozy and warm
in your hoodie, no skittles
call you
call you baby
baby blue.

II.
I saw you
all tall and fine
looking like royalty
in your crown, no perm
throned
in melancholy dreams;
my baby all black in baby blue.

III.
I saw you
your dark shining in the light
all shiny in the light
looking like soft wet kisses
dew in the morning
and honeydew melons.
I held my tongue out to taste –

IV.
call you
call you water
call you
call you god
a voice said drink
drink, no thirst
all steady, like rain
all beauty, no gas
my baby all black in baby blue.

V.
I saw you
lighting the night,
   bright night
mothered by moon –
a flash of light in the dark
dark light
call you
call you
call …

VI.
I saw you
all air, no breath
   all whisper, no touch
all white, no life
my baby
baby
cloaked in baby blue.

~ ogunbesa
Dear Black woman,

Dear Black woman,
I love you
You have had to be the main practicer’s of self-love because
no one else seems to give it to you
Society as a whole fail to tell you this
Forgets that you are the,
That you are part of a community that you strive to keep
together
If no one is going to show their undying love for you, you
have to
How every soul doesn't swoon at your feet is beyond the
knowledge that we all may hold
The way your skin soaks and bathes in the sun like it was
made only for you
The way shea butter glides across your milky casing
The moisture that heals the body, mind, and soul
The way your hips sway,
The way your bust sits,
The way your lips are filled with the utmost juice,
Will always be features others try to imitate.
Imitation isn’t the same as authenticity.
Dear Black woman,
I love you.