

# Brown Skinned Beauty

I grew up in a time where little back girls weren't pretty enough.  
I remember attending my white catholic school with my two inch braids steaming from my head  
Hair short and stumpy from a fresh cut I never asked for.  
These small girls looking at me funny.  
I didn't know why.  
I felt like an insect  
Slowly dissected by the observing white eye.  
I never grew out of that phase, the observation phase...  
That school taught me I wasn't beautiful, Television taught me that nobody would love me,  
And society taught me I'd have to change my look, my attitude, and my skin to be loved in this life.  
The first man I ever loved, told me I wasn't being myself.  
He told me that he knew I wasn't as "white washed" as I pretended to be.  
He made me feel ashamed.  
Ashamed that I had assimilated into a culture of people who just wanted to be like me.  
Ambitious.  
Proud.  
Oriented.  
And most of all...  
BLACK.  
So the first time, I found a white man interested in me,  
I over compensated.  
I found the need to prove to myself exactly why I couldn't love him  
Why he was no good for me...  
Why his history contradicted my own.  
Then when I fell for him, I made ever excuse as to why he was different, the exception, not the rule.  
I believed him when he said "I love black girls" and forced myself not to believe it was a fetish--  
Even though that's exactly what it was.  
You see, society has an interesting way of making the best of us feel broken.  
Misunderstood.  
Lost.  
It has taken so long to say so very confidently that I love the skin I am in.  
I love the rough texture of my brown hair.  
I love the kinky curls of my roots.

And the glow of my soft skin.

I am proud.

I am strong.

I am independently grown and loved.

I am a young, intellectual Black Woman growing up in a time where loving “me” is a constant, never-ending battle between myself...

And society.

And yes, I prosper anyway.