

- THE LIST
- OF SHIT
- THAT MADE
- ME A
- FEMINIST

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Farida D. is an Arab gender researcher and poet, studying Arab women's everyday oppressions for over a decade. Through the process, she broke up with her hijab and set all of her high heels on fire. Farida has been interviewed by BBC Radio London. Her poems are strolling all over social media, and have been shared by renowned artists including Janne Robinson, Willow Smith, and Nathalie Emmanuel. She may be reached for correspondence at: farida-d@outlook.com, or on Instagram at: [@farida.d.author](https://www.instagram.com/farida.d.author)

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*This is for the women
whose blood swims in me-
I won't let you drown.*

1.

Women
and the earth,
have a lot in common.

We endure.

2.

I stitched
roses and rubies
underneath my skin.
I don't want to
wear beauty-
I want it to bloom and sparkle
within.

3.

Her hair is thicker than yours
but your boobs look much better.
Her face is prettier than yours
but your physique is definitely fitter.

Your legs look great in that mini dress
but her skin tone is a smooth dairy.
Your eyelashes are never-ending, nevertheless
her teeth are naturally pearly.

Her waist is too tiny
your hips are too wide
her back is too spiny
you have a larger backside.

As we stand there being compared
by relatives and strangers alike,
both of us unprepared
for this competitive spike.
And I wonder;
who ever gave you the right
to enrol me and my sister,
in a beauty pageant that neither of us
have agreed to enter?

4.

The thing I learned
from *Beauty and the Beast*
is that a man's character
is more important
than what he looks like (a beast),
and a woman's brain
is never as important
as what she looks like (a beauty).

5.

Mirror, mirror, on the wall...

How did you judge me, after all?

How did you find a benchmark to compare,
when I'm the only one in the world
with this face and body that I wear?

How?

Misogyny mirror, on the wall...

Will you stop fucking, with us all?

6.

I wore their hate
on my flesh,
like a second skin
I couldn't undress.
When I looked
in the mirror
I did not see myself-
I saw insecurities,
I saw them.

7.

Cosmetic chemicals
packed in cute boxes
sold at \$100 a piece
by manufacturers of misogyny.

I'd rather
cleanse my pores
with the breeze of the earth,
dip my lips
in the sweet salts of the sea,
let the sun kiss
my skin bronze,
spray the mist of the moon
onto the haze of my body.

I'd rather
do the work
to be at home in this vessel,
than coat every crack
from paint barrels of patriarchy.

N.B. In the United States, the law does not require cosmetic products and ingredients to have FDA approval before they go on the market. (Source: www.fda.gov).

8.

Smokey suffragette
Matte male tears
Slate the patriarchy
Chestnut cock
Uncircumcised stick
Virginal bloodstain
Popped cherry
Whore honey
Nude nipples
Camouflage clitoris
Velvet vulva
Pine-a-pubes
Crimson cramps
Electric episiotomy
C-section scarlet
...

N.B. If I was in charge of naming lipstick shades.

9.

This
smooth
chocolate
mocha
spicy
skin
I'm in-
I won't hide it
under
any other
shade.

And remember,
under the different shades
of skin colour
and the geometric structures
we each wear-
our blood and bones
are one
and the same.

10.

Don't tell me
I am pretty
and end it right there.

Tell me I am
pretty smart
pretty brave
pretty kind.

When you tell me

I am pretty,

make sure you finish your sentence.

11.

Self-doubt is taught
wrongly, as a fact.
Thus, self-love
is a necessary act.

N.B. The beauty industry creates our “insecurities” to sell us “solutions”.

12.

My body grows hair
all over,
like spring grows her flowers.
I am an enchanted meadow.

13.

I don't care that
men prefer my vulva smooth,
this is the way Mother Nature
decorated her home.

The roses that have their thorns
shaved off
to look pretty in a flower bouquet
are already dead.

14.

I am a rose in a woman-
my pubic hair
is the thorn
that weeds out the real men
from the fuckboys addicted to porn.

15.

He runs his fingers
disapprovingly
taking a tour
through my pubic stubble,
his body language loud
yet subtle.

I know he wants me to shave,
like the other girls he's been with.
But I don't want to cave,
for a man.
Each hair on my groin, raves
to teach him,
"I am not a girl, I am a woman".

16.

The grizzly bear told me to shave.

Him with the untrimmed landscape-
the garden untamed on his chest
and on his back
and inside every fold and crack.

He told me to shave.

Him with his tree trunk
buried in a bush-
irritated by a few hairs in my tush.

He told me to shave,
and you know what's worse?
He said it as if the hair on his body was nature-
and mine was a fucking curse.

17.

Don't tell me to shave my legs;
I am spring,
this is my garden.

Don't tell me I must not bloom-
I will cactus the fuck out of you.

18.

When a man shaves his head
nobody bats an eye,
but if a woman does the same it is objectionable
and questionable-
just like many other silly double standards.
So I decided to shave my head
knowing well I'd be slandered.

I shaved my head
because I can
because I want to.

I did it for every woman who is forced into a hijab to hide her hair,
or forced to live up to impossible beauty ideals when exposing her hair.

I did it for every little girl and every grown woman
that is forced to ask her father or husband's permission
before a haircut.

I did it for being sick of hair extensions, hair treatments, and hair dye
for the time I waste in front of the mirror, looking like a lie.

I did it for the time and money we are expected to spend at the hair salons to
look a certain way,
for the women who lost their hair, for whatever reason, and feel utter dismay.

I did it for the double standards we shouldn't endure,
shaving my head is my way to assure,
women who are constantly made insecure;
we don't exist for the purpose of being appealing to men,
fuck their standards and fuck them,
we shouldn't care-
because my darling we are,
much more than "hair".

19.

I put on my bra
clicked the clasps tight
my breasts locked in captivity
until later tonight.

I go about my day
feeling compressed
I have two barbed wires
stabbing my chest.

My lungs heave for air
my cleavage is suppressed
those straps dig into my shoulders
like a cardiac arrest.

There is this myth that says;
“if you don’t wear a bra, your breasts will sag”-
but I’ve worn bras all my life
and my breasts still look like a used teabag,
like an old Christmas stocking
my grandma once had.

I think *Victoria's secret* is meant to be
hiding the fact that rationally
nothing can beat gravity
Sir Isaac Newton,
is laughing at us ecstatically
wearing push-up bras, sarcastically.

All the fun times in life are bra free;
taking a shower,
having sex,
those few moments before
you’re getting ready to get dressed.
When you’ve got cancelled plans,
and your bra is given the day off-
you literally hear the cheer of your breasts
as they swing about clapping on your chest.

Feminists have set bras on fire
they see bras as shackles of misogyny
they have a point to which I agree-
in the name of equality,
why should women spend hundreds of dollars to chain their chests,
while men leave their saggy balls dangling free?

N.B. In 2009, women in Somalia were publicly whipped for wearing bras as they were considered to be sexually enticing men. In 2018, a woman from Canada was fired from her job as a waitress for not wearing a bra as she was considered to be sexually enticing men.

20.

Instead of burning your bra,
use it as a weapon-
to strangle fuckboys
and misogynistic men.

21.

Blood splatter,
hits the shower tile
in a *pitter-patter*.

My insides shatter,
a volcano erupts
of red lava matter.

Cramps like a dagger,
poking my vagina
making me stagger.

That dress I love, doesn't flatter
because my womb is swollen
and it's pressing my bladder.

I don't have the swagger,
of that bitch in the tampon commercials
wearing white, like it doesn't matter.

My pad's hidden under a wrapper,
because a Man once declared my blood taboo
and now it makes all the men scatter.

"She's so moody", they chatter
"must be that time of the month"
I hear them blabber.

It's true I don't feel dapper,
but just because you don't bleed from your penis,
doesn't mean my period is a weakness.
This is how, you were formed into a fetus-
a woman saved you, from going down the crapper.

N.B. A 2018 research reveals that more than one in three women in the U.K. have experienced period shaming, through things like bullying, isolation or jokes about it being 'that time of the month'. Even more shocking is that nearly half (40%) of those who have been shamed said it was their partner

who was responsible for the shaming. (Source: international charity ActionAid).

22.

I bleed each month
for seven days,
168 hours.

My womb is a war
a battlefield
a massacre,
a murder scene-
where all life begins
to fight.

I am pro-choice
and pro-life.
Pro the choice of a woman
to do whatever the fuck
she decides
with her life.

23.

My vagina is the revolving door,
where love enters
and life exits.

24.

There is a world
in my womb
that men are trying to get into,
to regulate
to determine its fate
to extend their misogyny
and patriarchal debates.

There is a world
in my womb,
one that men did not create-
it created them,
and facing that fact
is causing them mayhem.

25.

Welcome to my uterus-
where legislators reside
deep inside
my red ocean,
with plans of regulating
my wild bloody tides
as if my uterus is a construction site
of a holiday resort, by the seaside.

Welcome to my uterus-
where horny men ride
to fill up my body
with their egos
and their lonely nights
as if my uterus was a stop,
to leave behind their semen
their sin, and demons
to cleanse themselves for the virtuous life.

Welcome to my uterus-
the entry is through
the lips between my legs
that speak
without a voice.
When a dick rams inside
to rob my pride
with my abortion rights denied-
I have no other choice.
A child comes outside
into the world,
stealing my flesh.

Welcome to my uterus-
the home
without a welcome mat
yet that did not stop you
from coming in

making yourself comfortable
wiping your feet
leaving me stained, vulnerable
as I stood there
doing nothing,
because I was trained
to be welcoming.
But it's getting late
and I will no longer wait
to tell you to pick up your shit and pull out.

If my mouth wasn't trained to say it, my vagina will shout;
YOU AREN'T WELCOME IN MY UTERUS
now get the fuck out!

26.

She is not yours
to claim.

She is not yours
to tame.

Her body
that honey molasses,
belongs
to wild greens.

Her heart
that soft flutter,
belongs
to butterflies
that kiss
the lips
of her cup of tea.

You are not her cup of tea
never were/ never will be.

27.

They say
never ask a woman
about her weight or her age.

We are expected to be embarrassed
by the things that men are groomed to be proud of;
the more space we take up in this world,
and the longer we live in it.

28.

When I got stressed
and depressed,
I began dropping weight-
people kept saying that I looked great.
No one knew
that those pounds I lost
were my happiness.

29.

I don't understand why
getting older
is something that women
are expected to dread.
Aging just means we're living-
should we feel ashamed, for not being dead?

With age
comes experience and wisdom,
and a woman having both of those qualities
scares the shit out of the patriarchy
because it makes it challenging
to continue to infantilize her!

30.

I won't dye my white hair into shades you're more comfortable with;
I have been spring,
now I am winter.
I will embrace the beauty
of all my seasons.

31.

I have been living behind this skin and bones,
those scars and marks and wrinkles and cellulite
are stories of how my life goes on.

They say cosmetic surgery is a time machine
to travel back, to revisit my youth-
to that twenty year old
where every limb, and inch of her skin
defied gravity.

But I do not want
to travel back in time
to rewind and hit the pause button on my body
while my life is in motion
moving forward.

I don't want to erase
the evidential trace
of life that I live
of love that I give.

I was a blank slate-
now I'm a Picasso.
My body is a map-
every crease and flab
shows where I've been
shows what I've seen.

I have walked many roads,
every stretch mark marks a victory.

Those dents that you call cellulite
they humanize
my sorrows and sighs.

I do not need knives
and plastic,

to succumb into the geometric shapes
you want to cut out of my body,
to mould me into idleness, into a twenty year old
that never grows-
the ideal male fantasy.

I do not need cosmetic surgery.

I am inside, this ship
that has rocked the ocean
been rocked on the ocean tides.
It has tears and scars
and marks, of a life lived-
livid, a memory so vivid
every stroke, spoke
of how I was built,
don't ship up your guilt-
in that place I call home.

N.B. The ancient Egyptians performed cosmetic surgery on the dead- to
preserve for the afterlife the same way they looked while alive.

32.

Eat the cake,
get the tattoo,
fuck the hunk.

So what if these are
permanent,
irreversible,
decisions?

The body which you will do them onto is temporary.

33.

So what if I want to get tattoos
and when I'm older they'll fade into my skin
and I'll have shadows of ink
with no stories to tell?
I'd rather enjoy filling my canvas with art
than worry about when it starts falling apart.

So what if I want that man just to fuck
and I want nothing more than his dick?
No ring or wedding bells or a band to sing
our favourite song for our first dance?
So what if I pick a momentary lust over a lifelong romance?

So what if I sleep when the sun wakes
and stay up all night talking to the stars
instead of dreaming about sharing my bed with the man who plays a guitar?
His fingers experienced in finding melody, but will they find their way
between my legs and play a rhythm that makes me ripple?
I have spent a lifetime in this body, no one can sing its tune better than me.
So what if I prefer to touch myself
instead of marrying a man to touch me just to please himself?

So what if I wore that same dress I wore ten years ago,
wearing memories of another me, when I was another woman?
She was so young and naive and now I can tell her
all that with the confidence of an older woman who knows better.
So what if my shoes don't match my dress?
Life is too short to spend your time focusing on an image of yourself to
impress,
matching the colours of your outfit
while you miss out on the colours of the rainbow.

So what if I don't want to live in a safety net?
If I prefer to be in debt
with money
rather than in debt with myself-
owing myself happiness and joy and times lost that I will never get to live

again,

how can I ever pay this debt off?

So what if I choose to enjoy the moment, over saving it for an imaginary time
in future

that I may never get to see?

So what if above all times, I choose right now to be happy?

34.

“Rest in peace”
they said,
as they buried
my budding body
in blackness.

“But I’m still alive...” I mourned.

I hold the soft fabric
wrap it around my hair
wrap it around my head
wrap it around my mind
wrap it around my thoughts
and then finally
just as I’m about to suffocate-
ever so tightly,
I wrap it around my neck.
That is how I wear my hijab.

I looked outside the window
of my niqab,
I can see the world
but it can’t see me.

And what hurts the most
is that
I want to see the world so badly-
but it doesn’t want to see me.

35.

Do you know why the mini-skirt
is relatively less oppressive
than the hijab?

It's because if I wear a mini-skirt today,
I can change my mind tomorrow
without any repercussions.

But when I wear a hijab,
I am expected to wear it for life-
like a second skin,
and if I change my mind,
I will have to peel my flesh off.

For if I change my mind,
I'm told I've committed a sin
I'm told I'm barred from heaven
I'm told I'm a disgraceful woman
I'm told I broke a sacred vow-
and then I'm punished, slut-shamed,
eternally by men.

Why must heaven and hell
dwell
on the surface of my body
just because fuckboys
question
sin
with the touch of my skin?

36.

You think it's my fault,
that when you see the hair on my head
or the skin on my thighs,
you see sex-
so I must now force myself in a hijab
to force you to see something else.
If, when you see a woman
the only thoughts you have are sex-
you need therapy.
Covering my head won't protect you from yours.

37.

Men were lusting anyway
whether I was wearing a short dress or a tent
I'm not spared or spent
from glares I didn't consent
to, or attacks with full intent-
it's not an accident
by chance
or coincidence.

How many more women in hijab need to be raped,
for us to understand it's not about how a woman's draped?

38.

They say hijab is what religion ordains
but if you aren't so religious
and you want scientific reason
they have one for every season;

Hijab protects you from the cold
so you won't get wrinkly, quickly, and old.
Hijab protects you head to feet
from the cancerous rays of the sun's heat.

I wonder,

so why must we also wear it at night then?

And every place we meet men?

And why don't men wear it too? Can't they get cancer and wrinkles as well?

This piece of black cloth, my abaya
can be made of the softest satin
the silks of heaven,
you can recite verses that assure me it's an arsenal, a weapon,
to protect me from the male gaze
or the sun's rays,
or that Allah will praise
my modesty ways.

But...

but it still feels like oppression-
like I am trapped within,
like iron bars against my skin,
like being a woman...
is a grave sin.

39.

I go out in layers
my identity disguised
I am deprived
from feeling the sun
bounce on my skin,
from letting the air tickle
places it's never been.
I am deprived
from feeling human.

I am not just clothes
on a body
of a woman
waiting for a man
to strip me.

40.

I stand proud in all my glory
for my existence I won't be sorry.
I am the superhero of my story-
but I won't wear a cape
no layers to drape
or be an invisible shape.

I took off my hijab,
my super power is escape.

And then...

I wrapped up my hijab
in yesterday's newspaper,
and tossed it in the trash.

And I decided there and then
I will never ever
wear a hijab again.

I made my decision
and I was not going back.

People said that was a disaster-
but I lived, with my freedom
happily ever after.

41.

And of course, there's this woman
(there's always this woman)
who says
"hijab is my choice,
no one forced me,
don't try to erase my voice".

That is bullshit
because hijab is only a choice until you choose it
look at the women who attempt to lose it
they are condemned
accused of offend
to hell they are sent
disowned
by their own
family and friends.

When I chose to wear the hijab-
I was praised for my modesty ways.

When I chose to take off the hijab-
I was slut-shamed for my strays.

That is why I never believe
those who say,
that hijab is really a choice.

N.B. Women in Saudi Arabia and Iran literally have no choice regarding wearing the hijab or not- it is required by law that they do.

42.

Hide the women in hijabs!
(So the men won't get unwanted erections).
Reveal the women in mini-skirts!
(Because the men don't want the suspension).

It's all about the men and their desires-
as if women aren't made of fire, too
as if women are just objects with legs
covered in dust and cobwebs
waiting for a man, to decide what he wants her to wear instead.

I've come to see
that there is no space for me
outside of his gaze-
mini-skirts reveal me, for him
hijabs conceal me, for him
neither of them protect me, from him.

The short skirt is not liberating.
The niqab is not liberating.
In societies that mandate the short skirt,
defying it is liberating.
In societies that mandate the niqab,
defying it is liberating.
Liberation is never about clothes or lack thereof,
hidden skin or what we show off.
Liberation is about defying mandates
imposed with the sole purpose
of controlling women's bodies.

43.

The Short skirt and the Burqa
walked into a night club
and as their bodies began to sway,
a man approached the Burqa, with something he had to say.
Suddenly, he began to shout
“THIS IS NOT YOUR PLACE
YOU’RE A DISGRACE
GET THE FUCK OUT!”.

The Short skirt and the Burqa
walked into a mosque
and as their bodies bent down to pray,
a man approached the Short skirt, with something he had to say.
Suddenly, he began to shout
“THIS IS NOT YOUR PLACE
YOU’RE A DISGRACE
GET THE FUCK OUT!”.

The Short skirt and the Burqa
walked on the side of the road
looking up at the skies
“where do we go now?” they asked
“Just part ways” the sky shrugged with sass
“but how?” they begged “we’re both the same lass”.

44.

You are what you eat,
they say.
And I have been eating shame.
All my life,
I have been suckling
and greedily gobbling
on the largest seeds
of shame-
thinking they were sweet ripe mangoes.

45.

We were taught to hide;
hide our sanitary pads from boys
hide our heads in hijabs
hide our voices in hushed whispers
hide our vaginas tucked tightly between our thighs-
and that is how girls
grow
to become
women whose way to impress
is by being dressed
in shame.

46.

You want me to be a wallflower,
sitting on the sidelines
buried between the cracks
watching the world pass by
living for whoever stops by
to give me a bit of attention
or some admiration.

You want me to be a wallflower
but I am a tree-
I stand naked and tall
in the middle of your road,
my arms stretched up into the sky
tossing away the blanket of heaven.
I don't want your heaven;
I eat soil,
my roots rise from hell.

I will not be shamed or ashamed
for making you notice me.
After all, I am breathing your toxic bullshit
and giving you oxygen-
I deserve your attention.

47.

They sliced her clitoris
so that she won't feel
her sex appeal.

But she feels...

She feels...
their fear.

They sliced his foreskin
so that he won't feel
he has a hood,
resembling the ones on girls' clitorises.

But he feels...

He feels...
their hate.

N.B. Girls and boys all around the world have their genitals routinely mutilated without consent under the guise of religion, customs, and supposed health benefits. There are no reputable medical associations in the world that recommend such inhumane practice.

48.

Her lips were wide open

ready

eager

but not yet allowed to speak.

Waiting for the night

a penis rips her silence,

as she screams blood onto her wedding sheets.

N.B. In some regions of the Middle East and North Africa, a woman who has sex outside of marriage is killed by her family. It is called an 'honour killing' and not punished by law as a 'murder'.

49.

All my life you taught me it's wrong.
I have abstained all along
and now
suddenly,
I am a bride, a wife
with a new perspective to sex life,
I must spread my legs wide
no shame to hide inside.
Overnight, within a day-
how can sex suddenly be okay?

50.

They taught me
it would hurt,
the worst kind of pain-
blood on my sheets
and on my honour
a stain,
all they wanted
was for me to abstain,
till I was married.

And when I got married-
the right time came,
but I couldn't...

51.

She was born in a virginity obsessed culture
where the ideal woman
is a sculpture.

Her sexual pleasure is sin
because the honour of her male kin
resides within
the intactness of a piece of her skin-
ever so fragile
ever so thin
called the "hymen"
useless- anatomically
valuable- socially
tells you if- possibly,
what a girl has been
up to sexually.

If it's broken outside of marriage, therein
a penis was in
thus her male kin
failed to discipline
rendering her worthless-
like a used napkin.

This is her painful story
so that her father won't worry
about his honour's disdain
she was taught that sex equals pain
no pleasure to gain
just a harrowing blood stain,
and if you lose that sacred blood- you cannot regain
your innocent reign
because once blood leaves a woman's body- nothing stays the same.

So shut your legs tight
sex is not right
it is a fright,
wait for a husband

he will make it alright-
but he wants you to be unused
he wants to see your blood ooze
to guarantee you're his.
He will know if you're used-
you won't bleed- you're damaged- refunded- refused
and no man will want you again.
It was thought this narrative
would encourage her to abstain-
Nobody thought, this was insane
or inhumane
passed from generation to the next
again and again
the myth remains
for unwed women to refrain
from the profane.
Sex isn't something to entertain
sex is a beast, they're trained
to restrain.

Years later,
even when she got married,
she still couldn't unlearn these lies
fostered between her thighs.
She wants to have sex, but her legs tremble
her husband cries
she drowns in his eyes
blaming his own kind, for her demise
until the dark dies
and they realize
they've been mourning their love till the morning's sunrise.

Her vagina
trapped in a mental chain
it wants to maintain
the virginal constrain
of locking up her pleasure
only receiving pain.

And though she's older and wiser
and she knows-
but nonetheless
her vagina cannot trust the gratification of sex.
Because sexual pleasures have never been spoken
she's penetrated yet a virgin- it's complex-
her vagina is sealed, and broken.

N.B. Vaginismus is a condition comparable to erectile dysfunction. It attacks women all around the world, yet rarely discussed.

52.

I can't enjoy this body
I'm in,
because the guilt
of sin
is built
within,
every single
one of my cells;
what is supposed to be sexual pleasure,
feels like I'm burning in hell.

We sexualize women
for the pleasure of men
while denying they are sexual.

53.

She was taught to never touch
her body
it never belonged to her
it was a stranger,
that she lived inside
paying rent in some body,
that is owned by somebody else
a father, then a future husband
who wants a body untouched unscathed
just shaved and well behaved.
She wanted to please her future man
so she did all she can,
to put her body on ban.

She was taught to never touch
the places that twitch
she ignored that itch
she was taught that
the fire between her thighs
would send her to sin; she would burn in, the heat of her skin.
So she ignored her desire, until that fire, began to retire
she thought she won, her lust lost, her morals are higher.

She didn't know
what an orgasm was
what her body can do
she thought pleasure was for men
she was just the means to their end
she didn't know she can have fun, too.

She had her first orgasm
accidently-
her husband took longer than usual
that day, she felt a tickle
and then a trickle
a slow build up
forming faster

inside of her
like a rollercoaster-
slowly going up,
getting closer and closer
to the edge of the slide
quickly falling down
holding tight on the ride.

Her husband thought it was time to get off
but the real fun
fair, hasn't yet begun.
His ticket was a two for one-
and included in the pay
to his shock and dismay
was the forbidden fireworks display,
from her groin to her soul
the crackle was out of control-
she erupted.

She had her first orgasm
accidentally;
she had her first orgasm
when she turned fifty.

N.B. This is a true story.

54.

Don't tell me I have one shot
at losing my virginity-
that when it's given, it's forever gone.

Each lover
that dips himself
in me, is my 'first time'.

I am the sea-
you cannot touch
the same water twice.

The mentality of
not having sex,
to save your virginity
for your wedding night-
is like
not walking,
to save your legs,
for running a marathon.

My virginity isn't a currency to pay
for love, respect, or puppet play.

55.

And remember
the first time you learn about sex,
you don't *lose* your innocence-
you **gain** sexual knowledge.

The first time you have sex,
you don't *lose* your virginity-
you **gain** sexual experience.

When you breathe,
you don't *lose* the air in your lungs-
you **gain** oxygen.

56.

My fingers dare
to take a forbidden tour
to discover
places in my body
where only my mind in my imagination
has visited before.

My nipples sharpen
as I draw circles around them
my vagina moistens
into tear drops, turning to a river
then a gush of pleasure.

Why am I not allowed
to walk on territory that is mine?
What is so sinister
so devilish
about feeling the divine
of my own body
rise in elation,
then collapse in sedation?
Why must I feel a sense of shame in masturbation?

I never understood;
why is it so bad
to desire the places in my body
that feel so good?
Who am I hurting
in my own bed
in my own body
in my own consent?
Why can't I gift myself
my own orgasm?

I lost so many years feeling guilty,
I wish someone told the younger me:
Girl,

you don't need blessing or permission
to touch your splendid organism-
to hell with the narrative of sin
that makes you hesitate.
Enjoy your body and feel fucking proud of yourself-
every time you masturbate.

57.

The first time I touched myself
and felt the pulse between my thighs-
I was scared.

I thought that my heart slipped,
and fell
into my vagina.

58.

When all else fails
and they lost hope
in trying to control
you,
your body,
your vagina,
your sexual desires-
they call you a whore or a slut.
There is no better compliment
than this attempt at insult.

59.

Whore.

Bitch.

Slut.

Are interchangeable insults
that men
hurl at women
but what's so bad about them?
They mean different things
but share a common foundation;
to refer to a woman's sexual bodily autonomy as some sort of degradation.

In Arab culture, the ideal woman
is the pious modest virgin,
who remains invisible
her body biblical
belonging to a man; a father or a husband,
hidden in a hijab, saved in a hymen.

The whore is the antithesis of all that-
she is not invisible
she owns her feelings
and her physical being,
doesn't hide her body for anyone
she dresses however- she flaunts,
doesn't save her hymen for a husband
her vagina is hers to fuck who she wants.

The whore, essentially, at her core
is a woman in control
of her own vagina, her own body
she isn't owned by anybody,
she isn't owned by a man.

Men despise the whore,
because they cannot control
her,
so instead, they punish, shame, and label her-

a whore is the worst thing a woman can be.

Arab men who are obsessed with virginity use the term “whore” as an insult towards any woman who angers them, thinking that if they render her immodest they make her unlovable to other men.

But this insult only works if a woman seeks male validation if she has internalized misogyny in her structural formation.

However, if you realize that when those men call you a whore, what they are essentially saying is “you are a woman I failed to control”- and if liberated is what you aspire to be the label ‘whore’ isn’t an insult anymore it becomes a badge of victory!

60.

He calls her a slut.

Why does he call her a slut?

Because she wears short skirts.

Why does she wear short skirts?

Because she wears what she wants.

Why does she wear what she wants?

Because she doesn't allow anyone to tell her what to wear.

Why doesn't she allow anyone to tell her what to wear?

Because she doesn't allow anyone to control her.

Why doesn't she allow anyone to control her?

Because it's her body, it's her life.

He calls her a slut.

Why does he call her a slut?

Because she fucks so many men.

Why does she fuck so many men?

Because she fucks who she wants.

Why does she fuck who she wants?

Because she doesn't allow anyone to tell her who to fuck.

Why doesn't she allow anyone to tell her who to fuck?

Because she doesn't allow anyone to control her.

Why doesn't she allow anyone to control her?

Because it's her body, it's her life.

So you see, my dear

I broke this down-

when that fuckboy calls you a slut

don't you shed a tear
because it seems
what he really means
by slut
is that
"you are a woman that cannot be controlled"
and I'll tell you this
(if you haven't been told);
that's the way it should be-
it's your body, it's your life.
You were never meant to be controlled.

61.

The whore and the feminist
are both women
that patriarchy detests.
But if one had to be picked
as a favourite,
the whore would win
hands down
no question.

Why?

Being a whore, although frowned upon,
is still more acceptable than being a feminist.
A whore practices a script
that a man can benefit from-
her sexual freedom
is practiced with him
although he resents her
after he comes-
he still enjoys being in
her,
he shames her and labels her
yet he still desires her
because she satisfies
something in him.

But a feminist doesn't
follow a desirable script-
her actions and freedom
have no benefit to man
because she fights with all she can
to liberate herself from him,
she doesn't oblige to him
so he sees no use for her
whatsoever
she prioritizes her own pleasure
and sees him as her oppressor

she disrupts his script
and the roles he's picked
for him and her,
causing conflict
so he wants to destroy her.

In the race between the whore and the feminist-
the whore wins, as the lesser of two sins
even among cultures that are celibate.

62.

Here I stand, in the middle,
of no man's land,
trying hard to understand;
why is it that a woman is either
a saint or a slut?
The virgin or the whore?
Are there no more,
types of women?

What is this binary that we are forced to occupy?
Saint city or Slut town?
Pick a lane, and settle down.

Here I stand, in the middle,
of no woman's land,
a place beyond right and wrong;
If I am not a saint and not a slut,
where the heck do I belong?

The names a man calls women;
Virgin/ Whore/ Slut/ Prude/ Dyke.

Why do you think
that your penis
is so important,
that it defines
who a woman is?

63.

The virgin, the whore, and the feminist
walked into a room.

A man who presumed
he knew two
of them, without further ado
approached them;

“Hello, you must be the virgin”
he said to the first one
as she pressed her lips together
shut her legs tight
patiently waiting for her wedding night
her ownership transfer from father to husband
her virginal blood proudly auctioned.
He smiled a seal of approval
for she will make a good wife some day,
he’s already planning the proposal.

“Hello, you must be the whore”
he said to the second one
as she flipped her long hair
you could see through her dress
she wasn’t wearing any underwear
instead, wearing that attitude
of fucking men
to treat them
like they treat her- as a spare,
they desire her, yet she’s their worst nightmare.
He smiled a seal of approval
for a temporary fling or a love affair
she would be useful.

God was created in Man’s imagination.
Woman was created in Man's sensation,
as either the Madonna virgin or the whore
nothing less, nothing more.

And then I stood there, the odd one of the three
he came to ask me
not sure what I could be
“who are you?”
he questioned,
“the virgin or the whore?”
You don’t want male attention
but you go to bars alone at night.
You’ve only ever had sex with your husband
yet you fuck him proudly- while you switch on the lights.
You wear a long dress
and then a short dress.
You follow the rules,
you break the rules - your logic is a mess.
Who are you? The virgin or the whore?
With the way you behave, I can’t keep score”

I smiled at his confusion
and held myself with pride,
“I’m not the virgin and I’m not the whore
I am both
and I am none.
I am your worst taboo
I don’t fit in your world view,
your neat Madonna/ whore guide,
because-
I am the feminist”, I replied.

64.

I tweeze the uneven hairs on my eyebrows,
admire the long hairs of my legs.

I paint my lips a sexy shade of red,
but I don't wear sexy lingerie to bed.

I put on a turtle neck to cover my chest,
and a mini-skirt to show off my curvy thighs.

I'm no super model
nowhere near a size zero
but that doesn't mean I can't be
some girl's superhero.

I am straight
and I love dick
and I march
with the Pride Parade,
because I'm not a prick.

I am not the image of the woman you are used to
I am a feminist, I make my own choices-
and I choose to confuse you.

And note,
just because I'm a feminist,
doesn't mean I don't enjoy being feminine
or that I hate pink
let that fucking sink;
I am a woman
who demands that
you don't treat her as less than
human
just because she has a vagina
inside her lace pants.
Why is it so hard to understand?

65.

We are the society
that was never taught about sex.
Safe sex
straight sex
gay sex
any sex
as if when we don't talk about it
we avoid it happening.

We are the society
that was never taught about the difference between
consent and rape
because if you aren't married
you're hidden from sex in black drape,
and if you are married
you can never say no, you have no escape.
So what's the point of teaching you about rights and wrongs?

We are the society
of virgin girls
who become inexperienced women
waiting for the sex fairy
to leave us the story
of 'the birds and the bees'
under our wedding sheets.

We are the society
of the women
who marry the men
who have no clue
how to please us-
they think
we are things
holes to poke their poles into
to enjoy, while we feel nothing.

We are the society

of women who get pregnant
because we were never taught
how to use birth control
or allowed to abort
the consequences of our bodies in pleasure.
We were taught that it's sinful to attempt
to stop God from planting
a life in your belly-
(as if God is the one that left semen in you,
while you were not ready).

We are the society
of double standards
where men have sex outside marriage
but women are frowned upon
yet gay sex is illegal too -
so with whom are the men having all the fun?

We are the society
of no sex education
victims of dogmatic indoctrination
forbidden from even the imagination
of what out our bodies can do
beyond procreation.

N.B. In the Middle East, there is a lack of sex education in schools and at homes.

66.

I don't use birth control pills for menstrual cramps
or condoms to prevent STD's-

I use them primarily to enjoy having sex,
without having to have a baby.

What the fuck is wrong with admitting that?

67.

In every culture,
women are obsessively treated
as sex objects.

As if it is
during sex,
when we take a penis inside
the hole of our unfinished bodies-
we become complete.

68.

This is my body,
it belongs to me
but I don't own it
the men in their gaze
they control it.

This is my body,
when I look at it I see;
legs- to take me where I need to be
breasts- to feed my baby
vagina- for my blood to shed
hair- to protect my head
mouth- to speak and eat.
This is my body,
a functional system, designed complete
to help me survive
to keep me alive,
and it also becomes sexual-
but only when I am in the mood.

This is my body,
when men look at it they see;
legs- to spread wide for a fuck
breasts- to caress and suck
vagina- to penetrate
hair- to tug while they ejaculate
mouth- to have an extra hole.
This is my body, under the male gaze
it's a sexual system all the time, I am a sex doll.
They see it in ways, out of my control.

This is my body,
in the patriarchy
without my consent, men sexualize me
and then suddenly,
I forget my body exists

as a functional system.
I internalize the male gaze-
I become the perpetrator and the victim.
And I begin to see myself,
to treat myself, too
as a sex object, just like the men do.

This is my body,
it belongs to me
but I don't own it
the men in their gaze
and their objectifying ways-
they control it.

69.

He never touched my body
but I grew increasingly uncomfortable
under his glare.

I don't know how else
to explain it
other than to say
I was raped by his eyes-
I did not consent
to be a subject
of the male gaze.

70.

When I was a little girl
my father wanted to take me to play
he had set his work aside for the day-
I said 'no', I just wanted to be alone.
He was visibly upset,
I had instant regret
I will never forget
that look of disappointment
when our eyes met.

When I was a little girl
my uncle came to visit one day
he asked for a hug and a kiss-
I said 'no', he was clearly pissed.
My parents said I was being rude
this wasn't acceptable attitude
I must kiss my uncle or else
I'm denied my favourite food.

When I was a little girl
my mother took me to get a shot-
I said 'no', to the male doctor
but he gave me a candy stick
and while I was busy, he was so slick
jabbed me hard, with his tiny prick.

When I was a young girl
a boy in school had a crush on me
he told me I was so pretty
he asked if I could be
his girlfriend-
I said 'no', because I didn't feel the same way.
His feelings changed straight away

he said I was a slut and too ugly anyway.

When I was a young woman
starting my first job from college
my male boss, would dump extra work on me
it wasn't my share-
I said 'no', because it wasn't fair
I wasn't paid overtime.
But I was fired, because I spoke out of line.

Today I am a mature woman
out with a man on a date
he wanted to have sex, I wanted to wait-
I said 'no', in my head
I couldn't say it out loud,
my tongue was tied, even though I wanted to shout.

My childhood flashbacks came flooding to me
ingrained in my memory
when I say 'no', men won't listen
and I would end up leaving a bad impression.
They would take what they want by force anyway
perhaps I'll suffer, at my own discretion
that is the lesson.

So like a natural reflex
I grit my teeth through the unwanted sex
I didn't want it, but I endured it, but I never said 'yes'-
Oh, what a mess!
When he was done, he said I was the best
he said he wanted to see me again.
I felt complimented for my compliance, my lack of defiance
if I had rejected him, I would have lost the alliance – it's not rocket science
to understand this.

And I knew there and then
because it was being reinforced for all my life

again
and again-
I have been groomed
to never say 'no' to men.

71.

She said 'no'
but he pushed her body against the wall, anyway.

She said 'no'
but he pressed his chest against her breasts, anyway.

She said 'no'
but he opened her mouth with his tongue,
sucked the air out of her lungs.

She said 'no'
but she kissed him back.

She said 'no'
all along.

This is the script of popular romantic scenes,
played out in a million different Hollywood movies,
on a million different screens
digested all over the world,
by a million different teens.

With this bullshit being passed as romantic content,
no wonder we struggle to understand consent.

72.

Where do we draw the line
between consent and rape?
We started off so fine
and then he wouldn't stop...

I said I changed my mind
he didn't pay attention
he didn't seem to mind
the tension,
that I grew increasingly uncomfortable
as he grew inside
my body
my vagina
my womb.
He came before I had the chance
to violently protest.

I said 'no'
but gently
in the same way
that he would say
I love you.

I pushed him away
but gently
in the same way
he kissed my neck
when my clothes were still on
when I was just getting turned on.

I didn't want to reject him
because I really love him.
I ironed his shirt
and made him a sandwich,
why couldn't he read my body language?

Why couldn't he see,
my body,

was tied in a knot
unable to escape my assault?
He told me to hold on
and then he began to come;
unbeknown
his moment of pleasure
would haunt me for years on.

I didn't push him off me
as hard as he pushed himself inside me
I didn't try to escape.
My question is;
when we're intertwined
blurring into each other, undefined-
where do we draw the line
between what's his and what's mine
between consent and rape?

Why is it so hard to believe
that a man who wears his heart on his sleeve
can rape, too?
That a woman isn't protected
by an "I love you" or an "I do"?

When I was a little girl, I used to think monsters lived under my bed.
Somehow,
they have climbed out
pinned me down while I kick and shout
and now,
they live inside my head.

Now,
I know
that the real monsters are the ones you trust inside your bed, inside your body
the men that are monsters in disguise
made up of skin, bones, and lies.

Now,
I cannot hide from monsters under my blanket
there is no safe escape.
My safety stands shaky in that line
between consent and rape.

N.B. There are still many countries around the world where marital rape is not considered a crime. In some countries, the law allows rapists to escape punishment by marrying their victims.

73.

When he forcefully touched me,
he took a part of me, that cannot be touched
something intangible
at the core, of my soul,
that made me stand happy, and tall.

Now,
I crumble into myself,
with the memories of that morning-
every cell
in my being,
became a trigger warning.

74.

I sat there cold
doing as I'm told
legs on stirrups wide open.
He parted my lips
but no sound was spoken.

He looked, he touched
he inserted his metal device.
I squirmed, I flushed
concentrating my eyes
on the ceilings' white tile,
pretending I'm the crack in the ceramic for a while.

My tongue is tied
my body abides
to whatever he decides.
I wish I do not try so hard to hide
how I'm really feeling inside.

To my gynaecologist;
your expertise in anatomy
doesn't rule out my autonomy
this is my body
although I came for this essential pelvic exam
and you have to do all that you can
(insert stuff in my vagina or run a scan)
although I came for you to see,
to check the health of intimate parts of me
please remember-
there is person attached to this vagina,
a person attached to this diaphragm,
this picture on the sonogram,
and you don't know this person
or what she's been through in the places you touch,
you don't know who I am.

What I'm trying to make you see

the way you're touching triggers me
please ask if I agree
check that I am okay
narrate what you will do next
assure me I have a say.

Just because you're my gynaecologist
and I'm your patient,
doesn't mean it all goes your way.

Just because you're my gynaecologist
and I'm your patient,
doesn't mean anything is okay.

Just because you're my gynaecologist
and I'm your patient,
doesn't mean I don't have a say.

Just because you're my gynaecologist
and I'm your patient,
doesn't mean consent doesn't apply, doesn't mean I'm prey.

N.B. All around the world, many gynaecologists are found guilty of raping patients.

75.

When you dip your fingers
into my jar of honey
without asking first-
make sure you are ready,
for the furious swarm of bees.

76.

He emerged from a vagina
the day he was born
and now he sees his exit
as nothing more than porn.

77.

He forces the women in his life,
to wear black
covered from head to toe
and then he would go
to watch porn-
to see women strip from all shades of colour.

78.

They want to get us convinced
that to be a feminist
you can't dismiss
you must accept another woman's choice-
she chose to expose her body
for an invoice.
They use that card, play it hard
isn't feminism about, giving women a voice?

Yes it's her choice-
I already accept what a woman chooses to do with her own body,
what I don't accept
is the disrespect
in your eyes
after you're done with being erect,
to treat her as an infraction
a tourist attraction
a product, a transaction – she's a person.

The problem isn't women in porn,
it's the way men objectify them.

79.

The biggest lie that porn sold to us is this;

You can turn a woman
into a perfect melody
of moans,
without touching her clitoris.

80.

When he craves pleasure
he leaves the world
and
comes crawling back,
into the womb.

81.

He dove with force
into me
like a steak knife
on well done meat.
He was famished,
just wanted to eat.

But I am not dead meat-
I am rare
raw,
red oozing through my veins.

Take your time,
grill me, tenderly.

82.

Does he do it for you?
Or to feel good about himself?
That he shook a woman
down to her knees
hearing her roar
and beg “please
give me some more”.
When he makes you come-
does he do it for you?
Or for his ego?

83.

His job
is to please you
to fuck your body endlessly
to touch all your senses
until nothing makes sense anymore.

His job
is to run his tongue in circles,
around places that when touched make you see circles
in your brain's eyes.

His job
is to touch you with all the tenderness and roughness
of raindrops that begin with a soft *pitter patter*,
and end in a lightening thunder.

His job
is to light on the candles of your groin,
and then blow them away into fireworks.

His job
is to turn his body into an instrument of pleasure
so that you can play all your favourite tunes,
to turn his body into an amusement park
so that you can hop on all your favourite rides.

His job
is to get down on his knees and make your body his temple,
and then make you tremble,
like an earthquake.

You deserve to feel your soul ripple.

His job
is to love you, to please you
to fuck you
in all the ways you imagine-
not use you, as a glory hole.
And if he does not do his job well enough-

your job,
is to tell him to fuck off.

Did he do his job today?

84.

Some men are confused
by feminists
who enjoy being submissive in bed-
how can a woman fight for equality
during the day,
and then want it taken away
at night?

Is this some sort of green light
that she secretly, actually, really,
just wants to be controlled
do as she's told,
in all aspects of life?

Let me explain this;
the sexually submissive feminist
gives up control of her body
to her orgasm.

Yes,
again,

I repeat,

TO.HER.ORGASM

not to a man-

she isn't submitting to you
she's submitting to her desires,
sure, you provide the mechanical tool
to extinguish her fire,
but she is giving in-
ultimately

not to a man,

to parts of her body that feel good
because she's taught her pleasure is sin-
she destroys that idea, by submitting to her skin.

If you get your head out of your dick, you will realize this;
she's not doing it for you- it's for the throb of her clitoris.

So do not draw up assumptions

and please don't flatter yourself,
because the submissive feminist in bed
is not submitting
to the fantasies in your head.

85.

Men are promised
72 virgins in heaven
to have endless sex
(if they lived as believers),
and a river of wine
to get drunk while they dine
(if they spent life sober).

I don't want to go to heaven
the ticket is too expensive for women-
I have to live with my body tucked
under layers of clothes
I cannot fuck or be fucked
by the man I chose
the one who makes me drunk on stars
making love all night
waiting for the sunlight
to plant more kisses
on my naked skin.
I want to define my own boundaries of sin
I don't want a religion
to control me
with the promise of an ending I cannot guarantee.
I pay rent on this earth,
my life is happening now- and happiness is free.

I don't want to live with a promise that when I die,
I'll end up in a heaven
where drunken men rape virgins
where the rules of consent
do not apply
and no one hears victims cry.
I'd rather enjoy life right now where I'm at
and when it's all over
when my life ends
I want to go to hell-

with all the lovers, rule breakers and rebels
who lived life so well.

86.

There is a God that men adore.

The one
on the edge of their tongues
all day and night long
in centuries old traditions
rendering women to submission.

The one
with misogynistic scripts,
in dusty books of religion
haunting Holy buildings
and beating the hearts of innocent beings.

There is a God of the assaulter,
the oppressor,
the misogynist
the homophobe
the sexist
the racist
the demon.

There is a God
that men created
to use
as an excuse
to abuse women.

That is not my God.

It took me years to realize this,
I was worshipping at the wrong address-
for my God doesn't live so far outside,
the heartbeats of my chest.

87.

If
you
listen
carefully
to
the
rhythm
in
the
pitter
patter
of
the
rain-
you could hear the Gods,
reciting poetry.

88.

Superman is
just another
vain male
starring in his own book-
trying to save the world
when he can't even cook.

89.

He told her he was God
his body a temple,
that she must get down
on her knees to worship.

So she began to pray
and to his dismay
she confessed:
Dear God,
Save yourself-
for I am an atheist.

90.

He told her
she was created
from his rib.

She told him
that he was the one ripped
from her womb.

91.

“Boys will be boys”, they say.

But what happens when
those boys become men
who are accustomed
to hurt
abuse
use
and reduce
girls and women?

What happens when
the innocent pulling of a girl's pigtails
becomes harassment,
trolling, stalking, controlling
women into mini-skirts and veils?

What happens when
the innocent name calling of a girl crush
becomes ambush,
verbal abuse and physical violence,
while we taught girls who became women
to avoid defiance
that you protect yourself through silence?

When we excuse the inexcusable
behaviour of boys
as ‘boys will be boys’,
when we train girls
to take the high road
because girls must have poise-
the world gets filled
with fuckboys
who become men that feed on their power to attack,
and broken girls
who become women that don’t know how to fight back.

92.

I don't know why
I vividly remember
the things that don't really matter-
the green bows in my hair
that match the green pleats on my skirt.
My white tights.
My black polished T-bar shoes
the ones my mom allowed me to choose,
they were pretty, grown-up looking-
I wish I could refund them,
for a childhood without abuse.

I remember being a little child,
sitting on a big brown leather couch
my lips not making a sound
my feet not touching the ground.
The soles of my shoes
pointing at the adults
kicking away,
their questioning of my assault.

I remember my hands were tucked,
under each cheek of my buttocks
I didn't want anyone to see
I was shaking while they were asking me;

“Who did this to you?”
“This bruise has turned blue!”
“When were you hit?”
“And how did they hit you?”

I remember I was sent to the principal's office
for coming to school with bruises
I don't remember how they scarred my body
or where exactly they were,
but I remember teachers asking my parents “who did this to her?”
While my tiny body was hiding

under my school uniform,
I had an entire platform
an opportunity, to speak
but I didn't know what to say,
those injuries were a norm in my life-
they can't take them away.

That is the thing about child abuse
sometimes,
you remember the details that are of no use.
You block the actual account that caused you pain
that's your mind's defence mechanism, to keep you sane.

But in the end, those repressed events
shape a pattern-
for your future,
for what you accept as okay.
They are the reason why you excuse,
men who abuse
and why you forgive, and still stay.

N.B. Violence in the home is widespread in the Middle East and North Africa region. An average of 88% of children under 5 years old experience/or are impacted by some forms of violence. (Source: UNICEF).

93.

What do men mean, when they say;
“I treat you well all along,
and when I do something wrong,
you get upset?”

What do they expect?

Golden star stickers for good behaviour?
To tally them up, for when they fuck up,
then use as a waiver?

I won't reward you, for being nice to me
because that's the way it's supposed to be
in a relationship,
partners treat one another respectfully,
it is a given, not a luxury.

So, don't you dare try to make me feel
that treating me well,
is a favour from your end-
thinking it's a valid excuse, to use,
for forgiveness, on being a fucking bellend.

94.

He tells you he will
never hurt you.

But when he gets upset
he punches the walls
and breaks the furniture.

Violence doesn't have to leave
a mark on your body-
he's still demonstrating
how hard he would like to hit you.

He's the kind of abuser that's a passive-aggressor.

95.

“Why don’t you leave him?”
they ask.
She’s wearing her sunglasses
like a mask
to cover the bruise
around her eyes
to cover up for him,
a disguise
for his series of lies.
That’s her life.

“Why don’t you leave him?”
“Why don’t you see?”
“This isn’t love”
“Where’s your dignity?”
“Don’t be a victim-oh what a pity!”

Fuck you.

Fuck you,
for making her feel shame.
Fuck you,
for pointing at the wrong person to blame.

It’s not her fault-
don’t question her
question the system
that allows men like him
to get away with abuse,
nothing to lose.

You fucking know why
she can’t leave that scum,
he’s her source of income
her food and shelter-
because you didn’t allow her
and he didn’t allow her
to study, have a career, her own money

to be independent, to prosper.
You taught her that man is her protector
and now look at her-
she's broken
and you ask her why,
he's cut off her wings
and you want her to fly.

You want her to stop him
but her defence mechanism
is trapped somewhere in a harem.
She depends on him
to survive
she's stuck, she can't choose.
Don't ask her why she doesn't leave him,
instead ask him
why he thinks it is okay to abuse?!

N.B. Global estimates published by the World Health Organization indicate that almost one third of women worldwide have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by their intimate partner.

96.

Money is power-
and in a relationship
the one who has the money
has all the power.

So study,
get a job, any job
do whatever you can-
so that you never ever depend,
financially on a man.

N.B. The best relationship advice. (Source: my mother).

97.

When a penis
is required
as a prerequisite for the tasks of this job-
I will accept unequal pay.

N.B. Equal pay remains a global issue. Women are also excluded from various jobs on the basis of their sex.

98.

It is threatening to some husbands
when their wives earn a bigger pay check,
they worry this means their wives now wear the dick in the relationship.

I just want to say to those Fragile Husband types;
Don't compare,
learn to share-
she can enjoy her success,
while you strap-on a pair.

99.

Maybe women and men
are just people
who happen to be
carved out of the same star.

How can one piece of stardust
be superior over another?

Imagine.

Woman and man
like the moon and the sun-
they have equal
time and space
to shine.

Imagine.

Woman and man
like death and birth-
they have equal value
and worth.

100.

There's a woman
down the road
walking behind a man;
her father?
her brother?
her husband?
her boyfriend?
her friend?
I don't know. It doesn't matter.

What matters is-
why are women so accustomed
to walking behind men?

He doesn't know,
where you want to go-
lead.

101.

I don't want to
look for my rights
in the pockets
of men
or beg for them from the edges of their tongues.

My rights are not owned by men,
they do not belong to anyone-
they are soaring in the air.

I don't need permission to breathe.

102.

“My father will kill me-
if I stay out late”,
she said, as she laughed and left the dinner party at half past eight.

“My brother will kill me-
if I talk to boys”,
she said, as she laughed and left her friends flirting at the mall, honouring her family’s protocol.

“My husband will kill me-
if I cut my hair so short”,
she said, as she laughed and warned her hairdresser not to go beyond a trim.
She didn’t want to upset him.

“My son will kill me-
if I travel alone”
she said, as she laughed and went home. Proud of her little boy, now a man
all grown.

We laugh it off as a joke when men often say
shit like “I’ll kill you if you wear that short dress,
because it would kill me if another man glanced your way”

We laugh off the overprotective suffocation masked as affection,
we laugh as a coping mechanism
we laugh because if we didn’t laugh
we have to face an ugly horrible truth to which we are destined;
the fact that we cannot exercise basic autonomy, without being threatened.

So we laugh instead of getting angry and making a big fuss-
we laugh, and in the end, our laughter is what really kills us.

N.B. Saudi Arabia operates a “male guardianship system”, whereby a woman
needs approval from a male relative (father, brother, husband or son) for
decisions impacting her life (e.g. applying for a passport, travelling outside
the country, studying, getting married, etc).

103.

To overcome
the fear
of standing up to your oppressor-
your desire for freedom
has to be bigger
than the fear.

It is as simple
and as hard
as that, my dear.

104.

To the men angry at feminists;
do you understand
what you fight against?

You inherited
your bones and blood
from a woman who turned you
from seed to soul
now you're out of her womb
you're out of control
now you want to control
her, do you think because
you left her body
now she can't be whole?

Did you forget,
before you entered this world
a woman was your home?
It seems when you made your exit
you forgot that without her
you wouldn't exist.
Is it just a game of revenge?
For the time you spent
locked inside her uterus
voiceless
helpless
so now you rob her rights, senseless?

Did you forget,
a woman carried you with love
and you grew to be a tumour?
She gave you life in her womb
you came out carrying her tomb.
She planted your seeds
but you buried her roots.
She stood tall like a tree
then you told her she can't move.

She still gave you fruit, to prove
that she can still do well,
a forbidden apple-
you wanted that too,
and without a dwell, you took a bite
went straight to hell
now you blame her for that as well.

To the men angry at feminists;
do you understand
what you fight against?

You fight against yourself.

N.B. #feminismiscancer

105.

Dear Man,

Do you realize that if patriarchy was overthrown
you would, also, be free...

to be a man, however you want to be?

You wouldn't have a problem with feminism-
because your masculinity wouldn't be so desperately dependent
upon female oppression.

When a man reports
being raped by a woman
he is laughed at,
intimidated
humiliated
emasculated.

They say: how can a man be raped by the "weaker sex"?!

But if we actually eliminated,
the patriarchal idea that women are the "weaker sex",
male victims of rape, won't be invalidated.

It's a simple equation-
when you free women from patriarchal prejudice,
men are also emancipated.

106.

He says he's a feminist.
Supports women's liberation
from hijab and niqab
and whatever other form,
of imposed hibernation.

He says women must be free
to make choices about their life,
their careers, their vaginas, their dress.

To be honest, I was really impressed.

Up until...

Until

I discovered that he thinks open-minded women
would open their thighs more readily for him.

He was using feminism, to serve himself all along.
He says he's a feminist
but he's got it all wrong.

107.

When I was in high school,
girls would write warnings
for one another
on the light pink walls
of the dirty toilet stalls.

Stuff like;

"Jamal from 9th grade is the best kisser"

"Rashid is the worst sex ever!"

"Kareem's penis tastes like salty chicken"

"Khalid has no clue where he should be licking"

And that is how
I learned about
the sisterhood.

108.

“You’re not like other girls” he grinned
at his own attempt, to compliment.

“You’re exactly like other boys”
I said, annoyed.

“But I just meant
you’re different,
from the rest” his face dropped as he insisted.

“And I meant you’re exactly like the rest” I persisted-
“separating me from my friends,
my sisters, my mother
by telling me I am better,
laying the groundwork
so that you and your fellas
can swoop in, to divide and conquer.
If you want to compliment me
tell me I am part of the mountain-
where girls stand taller together”.

109.

I am that woman,
that odd statistic
who was never raped by a man
or sexually assaulted

(So far).

I hear the men exclaim in glory;
“See- not all men are rapists, not all women get raped!”
But brace yourselves,
what I am about to tell you is not a happy #MeToo story.

I still look over my shoulder
I still leave in fear
of wearing the wrong length of skirt
the wrong shade of hijab
walking into the wrong part of the night
to the wrong bar
talking to the wrong guy
laughing in the wrong tone
dancing to the wrong song
I know that in the end
no matter what I do
I will be in the wrong.

I haven't been violated (so far)
but
I still live in the trauma
of my grandmother, my aunt, my mother, my sister, and my best friend-
Those women I love,
whose lives are forever changed
because they cannot get rid of
a moment of assault.
Those women who struggle to heal
who relive the ordeal,
and this is the result;

I have a best friend's wedding that will never happen,

because she can never trust men again.

I have nieces unborn I'll never get to see,
because my sister vowed to never be
a mother.

I have a mother who taught me,
that sex is the worst thing that can happen to me.
Because like many,
she confuses her rape with sex
I wish she could see,
that rape is not about sex-
it is about power and control
and robbing,
stealing from a woman the one thing that belongs to her soul;
her body.

So yes, you happy fuckers;
not all men are rapists
and
not all women
get raped or assaulted
BUT
all women live affected
on the edge of fear-
we know that rape and assault know no time, race, or age.
We live forever haunted by your inability to control
your fucking male rage.

N.B. #MeToo

110.

My bell rings
and like Pavlov's dogs
I salivate.

It's been a long wait
Adam is finally delivering my food
according to the app update.

I get up from my couch
on the way to the door
I catch my reflection
on the mirror in my corridor.

I'm wearing my pyjamas-
a Hello Kitty tank top and shorts
braless with the contour of my nipples
poking at full force.
And I know that no matter how I dress
the world will blame me for any consequence.

So I stop for a second to ponder
I know I am home alone today.
If this Adam turned out to be a rapist/murderer
will I be able to fight or run away?

I put on my biggest rain coat
and devise a backup plan.
I hide a knife in one pocket
in the other, a pepper spray can.

I open the door for Adam
not all the way, just ajar.
Wide enough for him to slip me my food
narrow enough to slam, if he went too far.

Without him seeing me or me seeing him
he slips his hand through the opening of my door
holding out the bag with my food,
I grab it quickly, my heartbeats protrude

scared of what could happen
even with my precaution
I worry he would intrude.

Now my door is tightly locked
I breathe a sigh of relief
my food on my table
I devour my takeout beef.

That Adam, whom I never met, turned out to be just a regular person
but that doesn't mean I'll trust the next delivery guy.
Being a woman, means I can never be certain
or take for granted, how I could die.

N.B. In Canada, a man posed as a delivery person and shot a woman with a crossbow hidden inside a package. She will be in recovery for the rest of her life. (Source: CNN).

111.

I open my inbox
and run through
my list of new
emails.

Urgent stuff to reply to
reminders of tasks to do
and then
in between my mayhem
I get a friend request
from someone I don't know
perhaps he's someone I used to know
but we have no mutual friends to show.

I clicked on his message
a picture begins to load
I'm waiting, maybe
when I see it I'll remember
the time we crossed roads.

Excited to meet
my long lost friend
or an old crush, or an ex-boyfriend?
Once the picture is ready
all my hopes are spent
because there-
on my large laptop screen
an erect dick stares at me
veins bright so green
like a freakin' Frankenstein.

As I pull out my anti-histamine
I hit the reply button
open a fresh screen
my mind still cannot erase,
what my eyes have just seen
I begin to type;

Hello Stranger,
I see you've sent me an unsolicited pic
of your dick.
Do you need help? It looks like it's in danger
like it might be choking
I'm not joking-
the way you're tugging your shaft
stretching your penis all out
to maximize your inch count
in hopes my desire would mount,
makes me worry about your blood flow.
Please let go-
your dick has become blue
your only hopes for a booty call now,
is 911, to the rescue.

Stranger,
I'm just curious to know
did you think this was the way to get me interested in you?
You had several check points to reconsider,
several chances to think this through;

1. When you snapped the picture
2. When you opened your inbox
3. When you clicked on new message
4. When you typed my email address
5. When you attached the picture
6. When you clicked send

You had SIX CHANCES to change your mind
yet you went for it in the end?

Stranger,
are you genuinely trying to make a new friend?
Or are you just proud of your godsend?
I have some advice for you
because it seems you have no clue
next time you want to grab a woman's attention with a pic
show her your dog, a frog, a log!
Anything else, except your dick.

Signed,
Every Woman In The History Of Womankind.

112.

They say ladies don't swear.
But I say, I can teach you how to swear like a lady.

Fuck
you,
father
fucker.

I'm sick of hearing 'motherfucker'
time to flip the tables,
because women can do
the fucking too
of fathers, and not just be mothers
waiting to be fucked by you.

You're
weak
like
a
dick,
afraid
like
a
cock.

Time to turn the clock
I refuse to mock
a wimp,
by calling him 'pussy' or 'cunt'.
Let's keep it blunt
it's dick that goes limp
while pussy brings life to this world.

You
son
of
a
bastard.
Keep that plastered

I won't call you 'son of a bitch'
because that's a compliment which
you don't deserve.

You say swearing isn't lady-like
you're right it isn't -
because we've been doing it wrong
using females and their body parts
as insults all along.
That's not lady-like for sure.

From now on when I swear
I'll talk about bastards and dickheads,
because those are proper insults
to despair.
From now on, I swear
like a lady I'll swear.

In a world where women
aren't allowed to be profane,
saying 'fuck',
is a sense of liberation, a form of meditation-
that keeps me fucking sane.

N.B. Swearing is good for you. (Source: Dr. Emma Byrne, scientist).

113.

“Not all men!”

he screamed out loud
feeling proud,
wanting to make it clear
he’s not someone to fear
that he isn’t one of them.
He never hurts women
he doesn’t want to be lumped
with the lot of them- “all men”

“Yes it is all men!”

I shot back.
As the debate persisted
he still insisted
that it wasn’t all men-
“are you saying that your father?
your husband and brother?
your son?
are harmful too?
because when you say it is all men
that includes all of them too-
look how much they love you!”

He took a cheap shot
to prove a point
thinking now he’s got,
me on his standpoint.
“You can’t possibly still believe it’s true?
that all men are harmful to you?”
he tried to push his view through.

“Yes it is all men”

I insisted.
“Even my father, my brother
my husband, my son
the ones that love me
the ones I love

more than anyone.
It is all the men.
Every single one”
I’ll tell you why;
All men exist in a system
that allows them to abuse,
they may decide not to use
that patriarchal privilege,
they may decide to be kind to women-
but they know
deep down
(and we women know, too)
consciously
or subconsciously
explicitly
or implicitly,
that should a man
decide to hurt a woman,
should he decide to abuse,
he’s got nothing to worry about
and certainly nothing to lose.

The system
is designed in a way
to make the men,
all of them,
entitled.

How many times have you heard men- all men- say,
in an upset sort of way;
“I gave her a compliment, but she ignored me”
“I am a nice guy to her, but she didn’t want to go out with me”
“I paid for dinner, but she didn’t want to have sex with me”
“I am her husband, but she isn’t putting the effort for me”

ME. ME. ME.

There’s a pattern
can’t you fucking see?
The system allows men, all men,

to be
entitled.
It allows men, all men,
to be
offended,
when they don't get what they wanted.
And in return it allows women to feel like shit
or pay the price if they didn't submit.
This system allows men, all men, to do something about being rejected
when they feel hurt or neglected
from a woman they respected,
they can't handle it- how dare she?
She needs to be corrected!
They could hurt her
hit her
rape her
kill her
any kind of attack
to get their sense,
of entitlement back.

The system excuses
all of their abuses
and somehow, somehow
it becomes the woman's fault anyway!

You were harassed?
You wore that short dress!

You were raped?
But yesterday you said yes!

How dare you deny,
spreading your thighs
for a husband who wants sex?

He broke your heart?
You chose the bad boy-
you always reject the nice guys.

He killed his wife for cheating?
That serves her well for serving him lies.
It's not murder- it's an 'honour killing'
he is protecting
his dignity.
She was HIS wife-
a man's dignity is more important
than a woman's life.

All men, yes all men,
benefit from this system
even the kind sweet men
who never think to harm a woman
KNOW
that if they do change their mind one day- they will be protected anyway,
safe to abuse, nothing to lose!
Look at the United States-
look at the president they chose!

So yes it is all men
women are afraid of all men
even the ones we love
our fathers, brothers
husbands, lovers
we know that it CAN
come from any man.
We know that it can go from zero to 180
and that if it does happen
nothing can protect our safety.

Until you can overthrow
that fucking system
don't come and tell women
"It's not all men!"
because yes, it is all men-
every single one of them.

114.

In real life
when you kiss
a frog,
you won't get a prince-
you will get salmonella.

It's not your job to save him.

115.

I think the reason

Fifty Shades of Grey

is so popular

with women,

is not because we are all into BDSM.

It is because it in the end-

an ordinary woman,

saves the prince.

116.

I rolled out the red carpet
and he thought
he could walk,
all over my heart.

117.

The sheets
we made love in
yesterday,
sat twisted and tangled
today.
They, too,
think things
have become complicated.

He pulls up the blanket of the night over him,
just as I began to strip down for the stars.
Like the sun and the moon in the sky,
we share the same bed-
yet we never touch.

118.

It's not me

or you-

you didn't know how to love me

and I didn't know how to keep on pretending,

that you do.

119.

Long after you are gone
I still struggle
to unlearn the way you feel on my skin
to erase your memory from my cells,
I think I'm doing so well
up until
I allow a new lover in-
onto my flesh,
then it suddenly feels like there are three of us.

Every night,
I scrub you off my skin
I wash the prints of your fingertips
from my body
with soap and warm water,
as if it were that simple-
to cleanse my soul from your sin.

120.

“What kind of woman are you?”
he asked.

I am the kind that swears at the sun, and opens my doors for the stars
to stay up all night talking to the lovers, the dreamers, and the sky.
The kind that makes love to the moon
like a hot sweaty June.

I am the woman that doesn't believe in leaders and followers-
only dreamers and rebels.

I am the kind of woman that cherishes new beginnings;
the first blush of the sky at the kiss of dawn
the first raindrop of spring turning the greens on
the first trace of hair on my groin
the first trace that I've grown
from girl to woman.

I am the one who prefers to walk grounded
planted
in the earth
barefoot
over standing tall in 12 inch *Louboutin* heels.
The one
who will never get silicon
in her chest because my breasts,
are perfect in their imperfect real.

I am the kind that doesn't hide under an umbrella when it rains
I'm not afraid of getting wet and leaving footprints in the mud-
it reminds me what I'm moulded of; water and clay.

I am the kind that slides down rainbows.
The kind who would walk naked in the forest,
giving the trees a sneaky strip show.

I am the woman who doesn't want to be saved,
because I don't need to be saved.
I am not lost.

This is exactly where I want to be in life.

I am the kind of woman a man can never own,
because I am owned by me
and I am not male property.

I am the kind of woman that won't kiss frogs looking for a prince.
The kind who,
when I can't find the man I want-
I become the man I want.

I am not afraid to tell you
that I have fallen in love, over and over,
with me...
and that if you want my heart, it would have to be on shared tenancy.
For first and foremost, I am my priority.

I am the kind of woman that makes men afraid
because they cannot control me,
so instead they call me
a whore or a slut
while I laugh and turn their insults
into compliments
with my feminist wand,
because being a whore
means I am in control
of my sexual desires-
and that is my fucking goal.

I am the kind of woman that has done wrong in her lifetime.
Oh so many wrongs for a lifetime...

The kind that if you told me the ocean can wash away
all of my sins
and my mistakes
and my faults-
I would never swim in it.
For if I did, I would never be
the woman I am today.
My immorality is sacred to who I have become.

“What kind of man are you?”

I asked.

“The kind that just fell

in love

with you”,

he replied.

121.

He placed his head
inside the hollow of my neck
and like long lost
pieces of a jigsaw puzzle,
we immediately clicked.

122.

He reached for my body
but touched my soul,
and the boundaries between the two blurred.

For I could feel my soul,
rise outside of my body
and rest,
in the goose bumps...
on the edge of my skin...
under his fingertips...

123.

I think I have loved you before
we met.

No,
I know.

I know I have loved you
a trillion light-years ago,
when we were the same star
long before we burst
into human dust.

124.

I split my legs wide
apart,
as he buried himself deep-
into my
heart.

125.

And then he asked
the inevitable question
wanting to know
how many tenants
have rented my heart out before him,

so I said:

You don't need to know
my *number*
how many men have been here.

Don't you worry about
touching me in places
where ex-lovers have been.

For I am the sea-
you cannot touch
the same water twice.

126.

And so,
he buried his face in the hollow of my neck again,
resting his peaceful heartbeat into mine.

My body became his graveyard,
his soul, my divine.

127.

Those moments of insanity
when you lose yourself in another person,
and only God can find you.

128.

The stars trickle down,
on my forehead
I am glistening,
with a glow
before he does anything,
I anticipate
what his love will bring
that familiar feeling,
I know-
My curtain's up, turn my lights on,
it's time to begin the show.

I can feel the breeze
of his breath
attempt to tease
my tender nipples
turning them from
soft petals
to hard twigs.

In fact,
the entire softness of my body
becomes hardness
and all my strong willpower
becomes weakness.
That is his uniqueness.

The meadow between my thighs
decorating my vagina,
stands up, growling, erect
to overprotect
me, from his intense effect
when his finger
lingers
a flickering flame

I cannot tame-
the fire in my soul
sets my groin aflame.

The entire globe rotates
inside my tiny clitoris
he spins it around
as I twist around
the centre of his universe.

Everything he does revolves around me
I stand still and I can see
the moon and the sun,
I am spring and summer and autumn
and winter all in one,
and the peace of the heavens and the fire of hell
and God, and an infidel,
my body is a temple, and a prison cell.

Behind the walls of his strong built chest,
is a cosy cottage
that I have longed for, to settle in
waiting for a lifetime, to begin.

His lips let out a soft sigh
with the warm aroma of apple pie
and fresh coffee brewing
inside the kitchen
on a cold rainy day
sending a butterfly,
between my thighs.

I am the cold rainy day
he is calm and warm today
he makes me perspire

steamy clouds of desire
on his windowsill
I can't be still
sweat and wet...
I whisper "keep going, not yet..."
And then,
the rain turns from drizzle to thunder
I am on top
of the clouds, he is under
in his home
I am the storm
that erupts
into magic
bold
lightening
once
twice
three times
it strikes- my soul is tightening.

The glass holding his windowsill shatters.
The cottage crumbles, it doesn't matter.
This is the happily ever after-
erupting love,
with the man I love.

Now
the earth is still wet,
but my tears have dried
into a rainbow of debt
to the thunder inside
a man who won't rest
until I'm satisfied.

His eyes

become the stars
this loving man
and an afterglow, ends the show-
exactly the way
it began.

129.

His tender
fingers
linger
onto my skin's history.

Leaving prints
etched
sketched
into my DNA memory.

One day,
my children
will inherit,
the greatest love story
ever told.

130.

We live in a culture
where hate speech is freedom of speech.
Racism fills our streets.
Violence is broadcasted through our TV screens-
bloody, gory scenes.
News of women being murdered
excused as a way to clean
a family's honour from whatever shame-
not a crime, no one charged to blame.

All of that is not censored
everyone, anyone can see
even children aren't sheltered
from all this hate,
unfiltered.

And then
when
a love scene in a Western movie
shows a man and a woman
using their bodies
to express
falling in love
or having sex,
the censorship police cry in chaos
"how can the children see
naked bodies and sex on TV?
We must protect the morals of our society!"

And they edit out the scenes
or better yet ban the movie.
And if they see a man and woman in the street,
imitate such behaviour, not being discreet
a peck on the lips, or cosy in the backseat
of their car
they are arrested for
public display of affection,

pay up a fine, or spend time in detention.

The lesson they teach is clear
they want our children to see,
that hurting or killing someone is more acceptable
than loving them would ever be.

131.

Today I saw
two men kissing,
and all there really was
to see
was love.

How can love
cause
phobia?

N.B. Homosexuality in many countries is punished by the death penalty.

132.

The biggest fucking lie
is when they say
if you sin in this life,
you would go to hell after you die.

This is hell-
we live it now
our sins are the only thing, getting us by.

133.

Our love
is like the hurried raindrops
racing down to the windowsill.
I stand still-
wondering;
can we run away from everyone's expectations?

Instead of getting married,
let's sit barefoot
on the patio and watch our years pass by
while the raindrops tickle our toes.

Let's laugh
draw wrinkles on each other's faces
and turn our tears into shooting stars.

Let's chase our demons
until they stumble on the waves
and drown in the ocean.

Let's take the ashes
of the witches who were burnt
and sprinkle them over our hopes
to make them shimmer.

Let's tiptoe
into each other's dreams
pull one another outside of the shadows
and move mountains to make space for our goals.

Let's dance
and twirl into each other's limbs.

Let's sit in silence
read each other's subtitles
and learn the native language of our heartbeats.

Let's get naked

and press our skins together
until we become one.

Let's sleep
in unconditional love
sink into each other's arms,
listen to our hearts beating
like fire alarms.

Let's take a breath
enjoy the small seconds of nothing in particular
brew fresh coffee and watch old movies,
and grow old together.

Let's not get married
because that piece of paper
doesn't promise us any of those things.

Let's ditch the solitaire and the white wedding and all societal expectations
that got accidentally wrapped around romance.

Let's not fall for their construction of love-
let's not fall,
at all.

Let us rise, my love.
Let us rise, in love.

N.B. In many Arab countries, it is illegal to have a romantic relationship or
live with a partner without marriage.

134.

I never wanted the mosque
to get involved in our love,
to put me in a white dress
that declares my virginity,
as I sit there silently,
dressed in my sexual history.
Why does the whole world need to know
that I haven't been touched?
Why does my past matter so much,
on that day,
when it is my future that I am giving away?

I never wanted the mosque
to get involved in our love,
to have a ceremony
where my father signs a marriage contract
on behalf of me,
before handing me,
over to you
like some sort of cattle
sent off to her new owner.
You already know, I belong
to the melody of our love song.

I never wanted the mosque
to get involved in our love,
we were just young teens
carving stardust out of our dreams
exchanging 'I love you's'
that touch in the air
because it was forbidden
to touch the shadow of your skin
without a marriage witnessed by the mosque.
How can the mosque be our witness,
when it is the stars and their moon
that gaze at our love every night?

I never wanted the mosque
to get involved in our love,
to tell us to contain our passion
behind walls and a white picket fence-
our love extends
beyond boundaries.
Why must we declare our commitment
to mullahs,
when we have already carved it on the trunks of trees?
The leaves know this love will never leave.

I never wanted the mosque to get involved
or the church or the synagogue or any other temple.
I never wanted rules and traditions
and centuries old oppressions.
We share the same bed,
so why must we also share the same last name?
Will our love last longer that way?
Longer than the tickle
of the orgasm you left
inside my body?
The one that I blew
life into,
and turned to a human body?
Does the unity of our signatures
on a piece of paper
mean more,
than the unity of our blood and bones
in this baby we adore?

Mosques and churches are not for love,
they are for preaching
on who is better,
separating us from the other,
what do they know about love?

I never wanted the mosque
to get involved in our love,

this love is none of their business.
Let the air you breathe
into my lungs
when we kiss,
be our only witness.

135.

When will you
find a nice man,
to put a ring on your finger
and plant his seeds
between your thighs?
The theory of independent women
is a whole bunch of lies.

When will you stop
playing the dating game?
It's time you were locked
inside the marital home,
like a mantel frame.

They ask my empty heart,
my empty uterus,
as if the recycling
of my blood in those vessels
without a man,
was a waste.

As if the taste,
of my freedom
was bitter on their lungs.

As if they suffer
from a phobia
of seeing single women.

When will you
settle down into,
the kitchen
of married life?
They ask 'when' not 'if',
as 'if'...
As 'if' I exist
ultimately,

to be some man's wife.

Why can't it be
'happily ever laughter'?
And it wouldn't be about
finding someone-
it would be about you finding yourself
and doing whatever
the fuck it is
that fills your life with joy.

136.

He asked for her hand in marriage,
and then he took
her name
her voice
her body
her choice.
He took and he took...

He asked for her *hand*,
but he took everything.

137.

My body buried in a white dress.
My black mascara running,
further into this mess.
Tonight
I'll be someone else's wife-
my love,
tonight I am attending my funeral,
while I'm still alive.

You choose-
the handbag that holds your hands
the shoes that take you everywhere
the jewellery that hugs your neck
the accessories kissing your hair.

You choose-
because those items would live on your body.
You choose-
because it's your body.

But when it comes to marriage
when it comes to choosing somebody
to love, to want, to put inside your body-
you aren't allowed.
Suddenly you're seen as incapable of making a sound
decision.
You have to wait to be chosen,
to be sent off, all arranged.
You can choose a handbag, but not a husband-
this fucking concept needs to be changed.

N.B. Arranged marriage is the typical way that most people get married in Arab countries. It is believed that love comes after 'happily ever after'.

138.

I won't marry a man on timeshare
I won't invest in a dick that rotates
between me and three other women,
waiting for my turn on, every other weekend.

What's the difference between that
and wearing someone else's dirty underwear?

Marriage is a monogamous commitment,
polygamy is just a legalized affair,
if you want more than one woman at a time,
then "you're a whore who isn't marriage material"-
isn't that what you call women who enjoy
trying on different men?

N.B. Polygamy is commonly practiced by men and permitted by different religions. It is often enforced without the consent of the women involved.

139.

Fairytales are
factories of misogyny,
weaved
onto little girls' pillows,
so that they dream
only of
becoming women
who perfectly fit into
glass slippers,
instead of shattering glass ceilings.

140.

Father, wait!

Don't arrange my marriage!

I will marry the man

who can,

catch the fireflies in my belly.

141.

In Arab culture,
when a girl is born
her father cries
with the burden of misery.
Her mother cries,
for repeating history.

142.

I got pregnant
and I got confused
with pro-choice, pro-life
so I kept the baby-
and aborted my life.

N.B. There are at least 28 countries around the world where abortion is completely illegal, even if it was necessary to save the woman's life. (Source: www.worldabortionlaws.com).

143.

When I was pregnant
I got rashes all over my body-
so I went to the doctor for a solution,
for I was as itchy as a Christmas sweater
dumped in the half-sale bin promotion.

He prescribed me an emollient
for pregnant women,
'twas the safest kind.
But what he said next
completely blew my mind.

“Medically, I don’t care about your rash
as long as it isn’t harming the baby”
he smiled.

I thought I didn’t hear him well maybe,
but he continued (as I riled),
“so moisturize...or not,
the most important part of your body,
is the fetus you’ve got!”

And there it was
the ‘misogyny rash’-
the itchiest it has ever been.
Breaking me out from ‘human’,
into a baby-making machine!

144.

My worth
is not hidden between my legs-
it is not counted
by how many eggs
I carry, to be potentially reproduced
into males who become boys who become men
who end up oppressing women.

145.

You were the ice cream
in the sunshine,
I was the cone
carrying you.
It was beautiful and warm
but I was struggling
to keep you from melting,
dying
ending
in a hard splatter
hitting
on the hard stone gravel.

Within seconds, it happened
there was no ice cream anymore
just an empty cone with remains,
of nothing sweet worth living for.

It all began
the way your parents teach you
when you ask them
where you came from
and how you were made,
'the birds and the bees'
or whatever other stories
like "your dad bought pills that your mom planted inside her belly"
they say
anything but the truth.

This is my version;
your father and I, owned
the sweetest candy shop
made of our history
it inspired *Willy Wonka's* chocolate factory

and the nature to birth
rainbows and raspberries.
And on one lovely spring day,
as flowers were rising from their graves
reaching out for the heavens above
we made an ice cream
out of our love.
We left the store
(our bedroom door)
with you-
tucked safely in my cone

And then the sun began to shine
through no fault of yours or mine
you began to melt
I felt
I was losing you, and I haven't even tasted you yet.
I licked on the edges
frantically attempting to hold you
your father wrapped the cone in a tissue.
We both did all that we can do
until there was nothing left to do.

We even prayed for the winter to come
steal away the rays of the sun
to freeze you
to freeze us
to freeze this moment
to freeze this lifetime.
We were too whole to be broken.
You were too alive for this condolence.

Nothing.

Nothing
kills
like that slow spill

that turns into
a massacre
that turns into
a miscarriage
that turns into
a mourning-
mourning the nursery you painted
mourning the names you picked
mourning the onesies you bought,
mourning everything you have
while
you have nothing.

Nothing.

We never talk about miscarriages
we hide the stories of our uteruses
in shame
as if it is us to blame
even the word 'miscarriage' is misleading-
as if we didn't carry it well
we let it slip
drip
out of our bodies
carelessly
like we should have done better,
under all the pressure.

This is your story, my little one
one day, I'll read it to you in heaven-
it's not your fault
it's not my fault
it's not the fault of anyone,
ice cream just melts
in the sun.

N.B. Research shows that as many as 50% of all pregnancies end in miscarriage. (Source: March of Dimes).

146.

Scars are but stories,
that our skins write
to remind us of our victories.

That badass c-section scar
sitting right above
the place we make love-
reminds me of the life
our romance created.

147.

“So you had a c-section?”
he snickered
at his question,
“so you chose the easy way out?”

This coming from a man
who was never pregnant
and never will be,
my trauma flashed again
before me;
a breach baby,
with the umbilical cord
wrapped around his neck twice.
A doctor telling me
I would need surgery,
no time to seek more advice.

My heart shivering,
with fear,
my baby quivering-
struggling
to get out of here,
out of this body that gave him life
and now trying to take it back.
“He will die, you will die”-
the Gods began to cry.

And like a truck has run over me,
my soul was pulled out of my body.
Within seconds,
the air that left my lungs
screamed life on my baby’s tongue.
He’s safe!
And I’m still alive!
The Gods were impressed-
after all, we survived!

That's that- they stitch me up.
But then
I couldn't walk for weeks
that turned into months
that turned into a forever scar
to remind me how far,
I've come.

"Yes I chose the easy way out"
I responded to his sarcasm,
knowing there's no easy way to give birth
"I had to have a c-section, because..."
I trailed,
then I cut my cord of a rational reply,
I decided I won't explain my decision
or respond to his crude question,
instead, I asked him to justify-
"why are you shaming a woman,
for choosing not to die?"

148.

They say man is stronger than woman
because his body can carry more-
but have you seen a woman carry a seed
till it grows into human,
and turn her vagina into a fucking door?

149.

She created a life
from her body,
how is she
not God?

150.

It's not right to celebrate Mothers just for a day-
for what it's worth,
you were born from the womb of your Mother,
into the womb of Mother Earth.

151.

Here he is-
he arrived into this world
wearing our flesh and bones.

His heart beats
from the heat
of our passion.

His pulse is
our orgasm.

Here he is- our son
this is what it looks like,
when you and me are one.

152.

I wrapped my arms
around his limbs
like an umbilical cord,
as I continued
to give him life.

153.

If you are offended
by the sight of a woman breastfeeding
in public,
next time when you're out
go eat your food in a public restroom.
There is no other room,
fit for your shit, in our world.

154.

Why is it not an accomplishment?

That I have born
and raised a child?

That I carried it inside
the soul of my womb and,
I gave it a life, like a magic
trick I turned it from bean
to bone, my body its first home,
and then I held it for more than
nine months, for the rest of my life.

Why is not an accomplishment
to be a stay-at-home mom?

For I deal
with work that's not ideal, not taken really
seriously, but it takes all my thoughts,
my health, my life.

When my grandmother turned 90, on her death bed,
no one said
she accomplished something, worth remembering, yet she raised and fed
children who then flew from her nest,
and painted the world with the love in her chest,
now it is her time to rest
for all her life, her job as a mother and wife, she did her best, but she has no
degrees or a CV to attest.

Why is it that we just see, the jobs of men as important and worthy, of all the
glory?

When a woman goes out into the world, does the things only men have seen
and heard- we praise her
but when a woman stays at home, baking cookies and vacuuming and trying
to sing a bedtime story- we feel sorry
for her,
it's not an accomplishment,
there is no acknowledgement,
or respect for those who don't do the job of a man, we measure a woman's

worth with how much she can, become a man,
how much she can earn financially-
no one values her unpaid labour, the years she labours,
next time you undermine, a stay-at-home mom, don't you forget
your rest is from her sweat, no one pays her debt-
it's time you change your outdated mindset.

155.

Darling,
you are not useless.
You are being a mom and wife-
it's the most difficult job
in the fucking universe.

156.

I'm struggling in a mind
in a body
that's struggling to heal
I can't believe this is my life now
it just doesn't feel real.

There's a baby screaming
and a husband proudly beaming
I'm supposed to be grateful
but I can't stop wishing
that I am just dreaming.

My regular clothes don't fit
my c-section wound makes it hard to sit
I don't want to wear
mesh maternity underwear
but I also don't want my old briefs.
I want my old life.

I know I don't sound reasonable or fair
I am a mother now
I have a baby and responsibilities
and a shower drain
bloated with my hair.
I wish I did care.

I wonder if my child already hates me
he keeps wanting to wake me
I thought after 9 months, he won't need my body
but I am still his food and his comfort
and he doesn't want anybody
else
I love him dearly
but I lost myself
in this never-ending phase
of trying to be the best
mother,

to buy him nice clothes and toys
and prepare healthy snacks
and diaper backpacks,
I entered a new world and I'm tired
but I can't afford to slack.

I can't express how I feel
in this postpartum depression-
the feelings are unstructured
they clash, and then coincide, without succession.

I just wish that someone prepared me for what I'm going through
I wish the people who shame me, knew
That all I need to hear them say
is not "be thankful and pray"
but rather "it's normal, it's okay"
"we are here with you"

To all the women experiencing postpartum depression;
"You are not alone-
it's normal, it's okay,
I am here with you"

N.B. One in seven women experience postpartum depression. (Source:
American Psychological Association).

157.

A minute in a mother's head:

What shall I prepare for dinner tonight?

Yesterday we had fish.

Why won't he just drink his milk?

He doesn't like it plain or flavoured

maybe I should get some honey?

Do we have enough milk for tomorrow?

It's okay, he won't drink it anyway.

Diapers!

I need to get more diapers

which reminds me, I need to pee

I have needed to go for the past 30 minutes

let me just finish this-

folding the laundry

then I'll go.

Shit-

that deadline at work

I forgot all about it.

What's the date today?

Ok I still have about 25 hours before it's due

I'll start working after I finish folding laundry,

no after I pee.

Is the kettle done boiling?

I forgot I made tea.

Every day I wake up and think oh today no matter what

I'll have my cup of tea hot

and it ends up being bitter ice.

Speaking of ice

I won't give the baby ice cream today

no dessert at all

he had an entire scoop of ice cream yesterday.

I'm a terrible mother

I'll fix it,

no dessert all week, no matter what

I won't give in

to his whims.

One of my work colleagues says he doesn't give his kid any sweets at all
he probably doesn't do any of his kids laundry either-

maybe I should try that anyway,

no sweets.

I should change my diet too

how can I expect my kid to give up candy

when I stock it in the house

like it's Halloween tomorrow.

I should stop using my laptop as well

if I want him to stop using the iPad.

He always asks for his iPad when he sees me on the laptop

I have to teach by example.

But I have work and deadlines, I'm not on watching *Baby Shark* for the
millionth time

(baaaaybyyyy shark doo doo doo doo...)

I'll work during his naps,

even if it means no me-time.

As if any me-time I schedule is ever enough anyway

I need 243 years of me-time

to make up, for everything I gave up

I always forget about me-

Shit, I still haven't gone to pee

great, now I need to shit too

might as well do both

who knows when I can get another toilet break

or any break.

Did I put the kettle on?

I'll order pizza for dinner

veggie pizza, practically counts as a salad

with carbs

and oil

[loud sigh]

I will never go back to my pre-baby weight

I still have pregnancy cravings

somehow,

I don't eat for two anymore

I eat for ten now.

Yep, my tea is cold – again.

It's okay I'll make hot tea when he naps
while I work.

It seems like I schedule everything during nap time
as if he would nap for 243 years

he naps 30 minutes and he's up buzzing like a bee.

How can anyone nap for 30 minutes?

It takes me that long just to fall sleep

I miss sleep.

It's play time now

I'll get the puzzles today

and the colouring book.

He has settled, I'll go pee

[as I walk away]

“Mommy, I coloured our sofa! Look look!”

158.

My body is stimulated
and over stimulated
all day,
my breasts are nursing
my lap is cuddling
my hands caressing.
The last thing
I can think
of doing at night
is more touching.
Not tonight honey,
I have been a mother all day.

159.

One of my single friends
once asked me this
“the thing that worries me
about marriage is,
how do you balance between your husband and kids?”

“I don’t” I told her honestly
“I used to focus on my husband
but when the kids came along
my focus shifted to them”

“Oh my”
she let out a sigh,
“doesn’t your husband get upset?”

“Not as much as me” I said
“because no one seems to see,
the real fucking tragedy,
that ever since I got married,
it’s always about someone else-
I’ve never had time for me”.

160.

Description of the 'useless husband':

He doesn't cook
he doesn't clean
goes out
without permission
doesn't tell you where he's been.

He's not a size zero
not a superhero
not a super model
not a Robert De Niro.

He doesn't watch the kids
he doesn't watch what he eats
he wants a career outside the house
refuses to take the backseats
always complains about
folding the fitted sheets.

His body is hairy, never groomed
he isn't worried about getting bald;
he thinks he's sexier now that
he is getting old.

He is unapologetic
loud and proud,
he won't speak softly or walk behind you
when you're in a crowd.

He won't change his clothes
when he wears something you haven't allowed
something exaggerating, how well he's endowed.

He doesn't want sex every day
his orgasms are fake
"not tonight honey", he would say
I have a headache"

You say it's ridiculous
to set such expectations
for a 'man'.

Yet such behaviour would be shamed for life-
if the 'useless husband' was actually the wife.

161.

When I finish my job at the office
I have another job at home
I am the employee, I am the mom.
There is a myth
that women can 'have it all',
tell me how?
Because I'm starting to fall...

Some days
when I'm feeling tired
or weak
with a headache
or period cramps
and I don't want to speak
to clean or cook
or play with the kids,
someone will come
and tell me this-
"I know you're tired,
but those times won't last.
enjoy the moment,
because, kids grow up so fast"

That is the most common
and worst parenting advice
to give to someone
who is constantly giving everyone
and she just feel she's had enough
for a second or two
she doesn't want to answer to
her husband, her kids, or you
she wants time to herself
to have a coffee
to take a rest

to go to a spa
to step out of her nest
simply to get stress
off of her chest.
Then you barge in with advice
disguised
to guilt trip her
she deserves time out
to put her needs first, to give herself the best
like she always does for everybody else.
Please don't shame her for what she's expressed
you can't expect her to live for investing into others
she's a person with needs, not just a wife and a mother.

So when a woman complains she's had enough
don't tell her to endure, life is tough
and certainly
don't tell her to enjoy the moment
kids will grow up so fast-
she just wants to fucking sleep
it's not too much to ask!

N.B. Research shows that one in four working mothers cry alone at least once a week due to the stress of 'having it all'. (Source: ww.care.com). Women cannot 'have it all' when men are not doing their share at the home. Men 'have it all' because they don't actually 'do it all' - a woman is caring for the home, while they focus on their careers. When we say women can 'have it all', we are expecting them to literally 'do it all'. This expectation is unrealistic.

162.

It's okay
to let your kid stream
more than 20 minutes of shit
on the iPad
while you take a break-
you need a break for fuck's sake.

It's okay
to get takeaway food
to not be in the mood
to cook
or read that story book
for the 100th time.
Pizza makes everyone happy-
your kids will turn out fine.

It's okay
to leave your child
content in his playpen with his toys
and step out of the room
to get away from the noise
to shed a tear or two
or scream.
Do what you have to do
to stay sane.

Dear Fellow Mother,
Taking care of yourself
is not selfish
or a luxury fetish-
you are just as vital.
Taking care of yourself,
is necessary to your survival.

163.

I was once having
the most terrible day,
the boy I had a crush on
told me yesterday
that I was a fat ugly cow
and now,
my confidence has all gone away.

As I walking with my head down
feeling like the ugliest girl in town
trying hard not to breakdown
or have a meltdown-
a woman comes around
and says before walking away
“Excuse me,
you look beautiful today”.

I was once having
the most terrible day,
pulled an all-nighter
with a cranky baby
that wants things his way.

As I was walking through the crowd
baby crying nice and loud,
my tears clogging my eyes in a cloud
while people were pretending they don't hear a sound-
a woman comes around
and says before walking away
“You're a good mother,
you're doing okay”.

I was once having
the most terrible day,

the job I worked in
for night and day
were letting me go,
they said I'm too old
I've become too grey.

As I was walking out of my office
with a box of my stuff and all my losses
trying so hard not to hear the gossip
or the laughter of my male bosses-
a woman comes around
and says before walking away
"You've done a great job; it's their loss
if they won't let you stay".

There's something about another woman's validation
no man can level up
to this elation.
It's a genuine remark
no mistaken flirtation,
when another woman pulls you up.
Because you know a woman has been
through the same frustration,
her words rebuild
your breaking foundation.

To the woman
who saw through me
who saw me
looking down
for what's missing
in me, thinking
I can't be tough
when life has been rough;
Thank you-
for lifting me up,

you made me feel, that I am enough.

164.

I am suffocating
in this society
where women's issues
on TV shows
are presented
as fashion and makeup
and cooking classes
and whatever new yoga trend.
I just can't fucking comprehend,
that those are the issues we defend
playing pretend, to not disrupt or offend.

I am suffocating
in this society
where trolls
attack women
online with hate
comments
hate speech
and it's seen as freedom of speech.
Why does Twitter consider death threats as merely violating tweets?
That is the message they teach:
women's lives don't matter!

I am suffocating
in a society
that punishes
my every offence
with a thousand lashes
my hopes for freedom
before being touched
are
burned down to ashes
my tear drops hang onto
my eyelashes
as the rest of my life

before me flashes.

I am suffocating
living in the year 2019
with the life of pre 1920
I fought plenty
yet
my constitution is empty.

I am suffocating
still waiting
for when I can breathe
not this polluted oxygen you breathe-
but raw air
that is liberating.

165.

I am a woman
borne from a woman
into a world
that sold me to men.

My name, belongs to my father.
My vagina, belongs to my husband.
My body, in a hijab, belongs to God.
My mind, censored, belongs to the state.
Oh and what a state,
I am turned from woman to silence-
what is left of me,
for me?

Etched in my DNA memory
in my maternal lineage
is the power of a gypsy
made of whiskey
that turned me from seed to soul,
her energy was out of control.

Her name, belongs to mythical Goddesses.
Her vagina, belongs to the sweet nectars of nature.
Her body, belongs to the lust of shooting star dust.
Her mind, uncensored, belongs to oceans and skies.
She belongs to a world
that exists
beyond all patriarchal lies.

I am a woman
borne from a woman
into a world
that sold me to men
who turned me to silence
to darkness
to nothingness.
I exist, as an image

imagined by man
as a less than
my roots buried deep
in the sand
I stand
in silence-
as they kill the gypsy
as they kill my resilience.

166.

He bought her silence
with diamonds.
She sat there shiny
sparkly
so pretty
like a trophy on the shelf-
gathering dust,
gathering her thoughts,
quietly.

167.

If you want to know
what it's like being an Arab woman,
imagine an 18 year old
a 30 year old
a 50 year old
or [insert whatever mature age] year old...
all being treated
as if they were still 6 year olds.

Yes, six.

Grown women are treated as infants,
to halt their development
of being independent.

You are trained to think you're still six-
when you need permission to go anywhere
when you are told what to wear
or how to hide your hair,
and when your vagina is expected
to be sealed onto your underwear
like your sexual desire is not yet there.

You are trained to think you're still six-
when you get rewarded for behaving well
and for your obedience,
when you get punished if you dwell
if you're mischievous or deviant.

You are trained to think you're still six-
when the rewards include money, gifts, shelter, love, and acceptance.
Although you realize you're not six-
when the punishments are shaming, beating, stoning, and honour killings.

You are trained to think you're still six-
each night
when you're tucked under a blanket of silence
when the patriarchy reads you bedtime stories
about alliance and compliance,

while molesting your defiance.

You are trained to think you're still six-
until you believe and act like it.

You are trained to think you're still six-
until you internalize the script.

168.

My grandmother always gives
advice that is outdated,
advice that makes her sound as if she hated
women, and wanted them isolated
she never advocated
for women to be celebrated.
Some of the things she constantly stated;

Women are created,
to be dominated.

A good woman is regulated,
if she dated
outside of marriage,
her family honour is terminated
for that she deserves to be mutilated.

A good woman
is a virgin who awaited
a marriage to be consummated
because the status of her hymen is affiliated,
with the honour of the men of which she's related.

The goal of marriage is to provide sex for a man, and for a woman is to get
impregnated
sexual pleasure is for men, good wives endure, never say no,
even when they don't feel lubricated.

A good wife never asks
for her abusive marriage to be terminated
she must pray and be patient,
and not trigger her husband to be aggravated
for it is a shame to be separated.

A woman must hide
whenever she menstruated
her blood is dirty, and
makes her contaminated.

A woman must hide
her body, like religions dictated
it is her job to not make
men, sexually frustrated.

A woman shouldn't expect
to be compensated
equally to man-
it is not mandated
for gender to not be discriminated.

A woman doesn't need to be educated,
or a career to keep her stimulated
women are naturally domesticated
a woman's place is located
inside the home, between the kitchen and bedroom
with cooking and cleaning, she must be elated.

A strong woman who is too emancipated,
too opinionated
makes a man feel emasculated,
intimidated
she will end up alone, invalidated.

Religion articulated
from a divine source they originated
all these perfect rules for women, which men dictated.

A woman, who attempts
to fight this system, is responsible
for making her own life complicated.

My grandmother didn't like to be debated
or her ideas updated
she wasn't motivated
to be liberated
in fact, she would become extremely devastated
when feminists are celebrated.

I love my grandmother, but I can't love the life for women she advocated

I don't blame her for what she indicated
for I know, they are not her ideas-
she's the perfect example of how internalized misogyny is cultivated.

169.

Can't you see?

When you silence women,
you empower misogyny.

And when you empower misogyny,
you silence women.

170.

I was born with all this stuff
all this luggage-
constructs
of baggage.

I've been travelling with it for a while,
I'm still unpacking.

Perhaps I was born
to spend my life travelling and unpacking,
all this toxic misogynistic bullshit.

I don't need the love
of a community
that oppresses me
represses me
in exchange for acceptance-
to sell my soul,
in exchange for reverence.

I won't live my every day
like it's Judgement Day.

171.

My mother,
dug her grave
with her fingernails.
She accepted
expected
this life where she has no say-
dialed down the tone
of her rowdy beating heart
to live as the dead do.

My mother,
like my grandmother,
like the lineage of women
from which I inherited my bones,
they were all born
from wombs into tombs.

I,
dug my way out
of my grave
with bloody fingernails
with my teeth
with my sharp
resilience.

With the gravel of the earth-
I carved my will
to live this life,
my way.

You laugh in victory
thinking you buried me
but I rise,
because I have been planted.

172.

We mistakenly think
that all women
will take decisions
in support of feminism.

We mistakenly think
that all decisions
made by women-
are some sort of female liberation.

But we are wrong.

Patriarchy is created by men
enforced by men, all along-
but it continues to survive
continues to thrive,
from the support of women.

Yes.

Patriarchy is born from men,
but it is raised,
fed,
dressed,
by the women
who accept being raised,
fed,
dressed,
in oppression.

By a mother who doesn't save her daughter
or worse, forces her into
a hijab, a marriage, a genital mutilation
or whatever other subjugation
she breaks her wings-
that girl grows up to become
a soldier of patriarchy herself, and a victim.

Patriarchy is sustained

by those women who don't fight.
It should come as no surprise-
that the silent, obedient, passive women
are the ones that keep
patriarchy, well and alive.

The most dangerous women
are those who have internalized misogyny
those who sold their souls to the patriarchy
whether intentionally or unintentionally
in exchange for crumbs of power
crumbs of control
for approval
acceptance
love
affection
for money
shelter
protection
for status
class
social recognition
for whatever
benefit
or position
they put their life, rights, and bodies
under male submission.

Men pay them with money and shelter and love and sex
and God knows what else
to buy their alliance, sell their defiance
they sign a deal and pay with compliance
they sell their voice to men
who want to buy silence.

They become soldiers of patriarchy

an army
a police force
they internalize misogyny
and then they enforce
it on themselves and other women
because of them
women can never be free.

N.B. #womenagainstfeminism

173.

A woman once asked me;

Why do you always

argue

that women

under patriarchy

are oppressed?

I can attest

I have a great father

an amazing brother

a wonderful husband

and a loving son

I don't experience any of the oppressions you talk about

not even one-

they don't control me

I do whatever I want

go out whenever I want

I dress in whatever I endear

I have a job and a prospering career.

Why are you always angry?

And why do you always

assume

that women under patriarchy

live in doom?

I smiled back at her and said;

I have fantastic men in my life, too

but this isn't about me or you.

If you step out of your Ivory Tower

you will see

not all women enjoy this power.

Furthermore

you will see,

my friend

that sadly,

in this patriarchy
in the end
that we, as well, aren't actually free
we are just lucky
yes- it is all pure luck
we just happen to be
born into a family
where the men in our lives
happen to be "enablers" ...
They "gave" us the freedom
they "allow" us
to do whatever we want
to go out whenever we want
to dress in whatever we endear
to have a job and a prospering career.
Trust me, my dear
if they change their minds one day
(and they can)-
they can take all that freedom away
the patriarchy would support them
and all your privileges
will be snatched in a day.

So tonight when you sit down to pray
thank the mystical Gods
for we are the lucky ones
and remember our sisters
who weren't born as lucky
who live their lives in fright
because their hushed prayers at the moonlight
are burned down by the sunlight
for them we must scream
we must fight
we must fight
we must fight.

174.

They tell me;
you're upset
because you can't get
a pixie haircut
without your husband's permission?
There are women who
had their clitoris cut
as girls, legs held wide
without their permission
while they couldn't fight.
What exactly are the women's rights
that you serve on your table, tonight?

They tell me;
you're upset
because you can't wear
that mini-skirt
without getting glares from men
whose wolf whistle, makes you cripple?
There are women who
can't show their hair
to the air,
to the moon, to the sun
they live like shadows
of the men, that run
the shows,
their lives are the shows
that they cannot show
to anyone.
So tell me now, do you think dress up is for fun?

They tell me;
you're upset
because you are expected
to have a certain body weight
an ideal state

not more, not less
than what the men debate?
There are women who
have bodies
that were isolated
violated
mutilated
and now they relive the trauma
every day
because they live inside the body
that endured abuse and rape
and they cannot escape.
Tell me now, do you feel out of shape?

To the women who have it worse than me
I hear you
I feel you
I've inherited my skin and bones
from your lineage, too.
We share the same blood
we were planted in the same mud.
I may have never lived through
what you now go through
but we fight the same evil-
we may come from different worlds
but they're both medieval.

They try to shut me up by saying;
"look at the women who have it worse"
but if I stay silent, while they have robbed your voice
there will be no one to speak for either of us.

175.

I came into
this world screaming-
what makes you think
I'll live in it
silently?

176.

They want me to be silent,
still,
like bottled water
that they can trap,
enclosed
screw on the cap,
around my neck
to keep me composed.

But I do not fit in such a tiny space
the entire world, is my place.

For I am not bottled water, after all-
I am the stream, that dreams
of being a waterfall.

177.

We cannot afford
to be silent anymore-
the problems we face today
are because the women of yesterday
remained silent.

Speak! Speak!
The future of our daughters,
hangs onto your vocal chords.

178.

Speak for the homeless woman
on the street,
bundled in washed out rags
parking her sleeping bag,
next to the shiny glossy department store
the one that looks like it was cropped out of a magazine,
and people would walk out of it, looking pristine
carrying bags worth hundreds of dollars of shiny glossy clothes,
that fashion experts said they must wear,
and they throw whatever spare
coins they have, at the woman dressed in her despair.

Speak and reflect
on how much we value glossy materialism
that has washed out our humanity.

Speak for the injustices. All the injustices.

179.

What is this world
where misogynists
and bullies
have safe spaces
to exist?

While there aren't
any safe spaces
for women to resist?

180.

I am a woman
born between
right and wrong
all along,
like the trees-
their arms stretched up
praying for a God in the heavens,
while their roots
are the chandeliers,
flickering in the hells of Satan.

181.

All I want to do
is listen to my thoughts
without the sirens
buzzing in my head.

All I want to do
is write down my thoughts
without the handcuffs
nailed into my wrists.

All I want to do
is find a way out
of this jail,
out of this life sentence
for the crime of being
a woman,
who just wants to live to think to write to speak...

N.B. Not all countries have freedom of speech laws. Activists and thinkers can be jailed for critical writing and/ or peaceful protests.

182.

The trees stand firmly
holding their ground.

The crickets are singing
loud and proud.

The moon is stripping
baring her light.

And here I am in my shadow,
with a broken chest-
yearning for their bravery, tonight.

183.

You don't have to study feminism
to be a feminist.

Just study the bones you inherited,
from your mother and grandmother.

You don't have to look so far for feminism;
it is in the stream of blood swimming through your veins.

To be a feminist,
just study yourself
just love yourself.

N.B. A vagina is not a prerequisite for being a feminist.

184.

And I waited for them
to give me back my freedom
that they stole.

And

I waited

and

I waited

and

I waited...

And then

I got tired of waiting,
so I began running
after them, one by one.

And then

they called me an angry feminist.

185.

I don't want to sit in the lap of my father's house
plaiting my pigtails
waiting for another man,
to split my lap apart and fuck me
while he yanks my ponytail to claim me.
I am not owned by men
handed over by them.

I don't want to wait for a white picket fence
to live behind
and leave behind
this whole big world where there's so much more I can do
and so many more places I can be.
I'd rather walk on the soil barefoot
let my feet get dirty
than wear 12 inch *Louboutin* heels
looking all sexy
when all I feel is pain.

I don't want to hide the contour of my body in shapeless clothes
to exist as invisible
with the false notion that this way I would cure men from lust.
I don't want to be blamed for their erections
while they get boners
from anything that walks on two legs.
I don't want to stop walking
late into the night
alone, in the company of stars
just because werewolves hide behind the moonlight
waiting to pounce.
It is not my fault.

I don't want to reproduce children with a man I never loved
who chose me for my father's name or some sort of financial gain
my marriage arranged like a business deal or a prize to claim.
My eggs aren't expiring waiting for the man of my dreams
to fry them up-

and so what if they do?
Why do you value
the souls of unborn children
over the happiness of my life?
I am the one here right now
I am the one alive.

I don't care about saving my reputation
if it means I can't save myself
from traditions and customs and laws and regulations
that aim to write the story of my life
with no space for me to fill in any details
and force me to believe it's all fate.
Fuck off- it's never too late
I own this body, with the soul in it
and I write the book on how to live in it.

I don't want to be a well-behaved woman
I want to strip
make love
get drunk
get tattoos that mark my skin
with vows to myself of how I will live.
I want to write stories of the scars I got from the battles
that I fought to own custody of myself.
This body is mine
I decide who to let in
if because I don't want to obey you, you outcast me as sin
I will smile and nod and approve of your decision-
because it means you now know,
I choose to follow my heart, wherever it desires to go.

186.

The Crazy Cat Lady
is a woman who
in the end
chose the company of
felines
over the company of men.

She ditched the script,
the white dress
the picket fence
baking pies, making babies
spending her day cleaning the mess
spending her night sharing a bed.
She chose to live with cats instead,
dozens of them.
We see her behaviour as being shady
thus we call her the 'Crazy Cat Lady'.

Crazy...
Crazy?
Wait....why crazy?

We call a woman
"crazy"
if she couldn't find a man
worthy of her love
if she gives up on men
has had enough
of dating and the lying and the crying,
now she is "crazy" because she chose to stop trying
to stop searching for the illusionary prince charming
to live in his castle happily ever after-
she chose cats over a man, what a disaster!

Man is now offended, so he calls her "crazy"
but she just doesn't want to live
on promises so hazy-

cats are more trustworthy than men,
she discovered a truth that makes patriarchy shaky.
The Crazy Cat Lady
is not at all crazy.

187.

Crazy, crazy, crazy.

I grew up around a lot of women who were called crazy.

Crazy because she wanted a divorce.

Crazy because she had to be forced
into a marriage with a millionaire-
couldn't she see she would birth the next heir? Crazy!

Crazy because she wants to study

to vote

to have a career

to drive a car

to wear a short skirt

to fall in love.

Crazy because she was never enough.

Crazy because she swallows her feelings
like a pill prescribed to be tough.

Crazy because she objects
to a husband treating her as a sex object.

How crazy!

Heck at some point I was crazy too
for cutting my hair so short
and getting a tattoo.

Crazy was not just a loose label

men are actually able

to go as far as using their connections

to get psychiatrists to forge official papers that mention
that this certain woman is crazy

and without conviction

they would lock her up in a mental hospital for everyone's protection,

that is the extent of patriarchal corruption-

our mental hospitals are full of women

who are crazy for daring to question,

all this fucked up patriarchal deception.

But you know what's really crazy?
It's crazy that women still survive
fight to stay alive
still scream, even though they go unheard.
It's crazy to be a sane woman
in this crazy, crazy, crazy world!

188.

I want to heal.

Every Arab girl, once born
has her bones broken
and moulded
into the shape
of a woman
that fits into a patriarchy.

I want to heal.

I want to go back
to the time
before they broke mine-
to let my spirit grow
untempered
into the skin
of the woman
that I want to be.

I want to heal.

I want to go back
in time-
take back my time
and set myself free.

I want to heal.

Don't tell me it's too late
to be,
for every Arab girl born today
and unborn yet,
is me.

We will heal. One by one.

189.

“You’re white-washed”

“You’re embracing a white feminism”

“You’re practicing a white femininity
because that’s all you see in the media”

Those are the arguments used,
to accuse,
to confuse,
women of colour, who want to escape patriarchal abuse-
when we say we want out
they build up our guilt, our doubt,
they say it’s not right, accuse us of going white.
Remind us we’re being white-washed.

I want freedom.

I want freedom;
I want the wind to shatter my shackles,
I want the rain to pour into the pores of my hair,
I want the sun to taste the warmth of my skin,
I want my existence to soar in the air,
with no one to question where I’ve been.

I want freedom.

Freedom.

I want to own myself, be myself,
don’t let nobody else
control me-
and if you tell me that it seems
I’m washed into white girls’ dreams,
I’ll tell you you’re wrong.
I’m not deluded, you’re confused-
I want freedom.
And I want you to know,
freedom is not white,

it's a fucking rainbow.

Some men they think
the more freedom for me
the less for them
so they'd rather deny
my rights,
they'd rather I'd die
than fight.

We're different, they imply
believe the biggest lie
to end a gender outcry-
somebody please tell them,
freedom isn't a fucking pie.

190.

We need a mental revolution-
to rally up, protest,
march,
on the roads in our heads
and overthrow our brain cells.

We need a mental revolution-
we need to vomit dogmas
open our minds,
and eat common sense for breakfast.

We need a mental revolution-
we need to see
that the real poison we feed our body,
is not whiskey or cigars
it is;
internalized misogyny
insecurities
self-doubt
self-hate.

Fast food goes into your mouth and out your asshole-
but what happens to the bullshit that you are spoon fed daily?
It lives in your head. You take it to bed.
Your children inherit it,
like a genetic disease.
We need vaccines against stupidity.
Save yourself, please!

We need a mental revolution-
a format/reboot
evolution.

191.

Laugh, at the patriarchy.
Laugh, at the misogyny.
Laugh, at the sexism.
Laugh, at the racism.
Laugh, at the homophobia.
Laugh, at the irony
of the men in beards-
who say they are messengers of peace
shattering innocent lives by the piece.

Laugh, my dear.

Laugh, at them
and rise through your tears.

Laugh,
and rise like a lotus
laughing at the mud.

Laugh,
because when all else fails
laugh to try your luck.
Laugh,
because in the way you mock-
they may finally realize
that they're stupid as fuck.

192.

When a woman uses
her sex appeal
to strike a deal
or when she cries
white lies
to get even with the guys
to get her way
to get away
from whatever bullshit
ruining her day,
the world will say;
How dare she!
For sympathy
she intentionally
cries
and lies,
trying too hard-
don't believe her
she's just using her
'woman-card'!

To those I say;
Let's see
what's in the 'man-card',
shall we?
The list includes (but not limited to):
-Misogyny
-Use and abuse
of any woman they choose
-Getting away with domestic violence
-Let women suffer in silence
with no escape
-Rape
-Sexual assault
without fault
-Slut shaming

- Victim blaming
- Objectification
- Degradation
- Female Genital Mutilation
- No women's rights legislation
- Discrimination
- Unequal pay
for the same work day
- Leave it to women to handle childcare
(yes that is seen as fair)
- Forced marriages
- Shamed miscarriages
- Discourages
abortion rights
- Less fights, for women
- More rights, for men
and the list goes on...

It's not even called a 'man-card'
when men pull all this shit
it's a man's world- after all
just deal with it!

In a man's world
I can't be empowered
when I'm overpowered
by tools of oppression
applied with aggression
causing me depression
no hopes of progression
afraid of transgression,
leaving behind
this shit in succession
for the next generation
of female suppression.

So in this fucked up world
where a woman lacks basic human rights
and one way she peacefully fights

is to reclaim the sexist stereotypes
of her being a hormonal, emotional sex object-
when she pulls her 'woman-card'
she's saying "Fine I won't object- I'll be the subject"
she then unpacks her patriarchal baggage
to work for her advantage
but apparently she wrecks havoc
causes too much damage!

When the world gets angry
with a woman using the 'woman-card'
it's simply saying it is angry
with a woman for having that tiny bit of power
that tiny crumb of fake superpower
to try to escape
to try to empower.

I say fuck you misogyny
you stole away my dignity
you set the rules; I'll play the dirty game
you've got only yourself to blame.

In a world where I fight long and hard
my attempts are jarred
but I won't be scarred
when I need to-
I will proudly pull out my 'woman-card'.

193.

Raindrops
resting,
on the silk of leaves.

Rose petals
blushing,
from the kisses of bees.

Tall trees
tucked,
between the clouds.

Hummingbirds
floating,
uttering no sound.

Sunrise
eating,
misogyny.

A world
free,
from patriarchy.

194.

I feel free, from misogyny
when I strip off my clothes
at the end of the day
to set my body
free
from any social expectations
to dress or undress
to be more or to be less.

I look at my reflection with naked eyes
not judging my truth
not telling lies-
this is me.

Unhidden
the folds of my skin
my virtue and sin,
I love the person
I see
free,
from the outside
and within.

195.

I am a revolution,
in my quiet rebellion
digging my fingernails
into honey wells
knowing the risks
oh so very well.
It took me a revolution
to taste the sugars
of freedom.

I am a revolution,
in my rejection
of hijabs and heels,
stripping my being
from objectifying sex appeals,
and refusing to hide behind makeup.
It took me a revolution
to make up
with myself.

I am a revolution,
quite simply,
in my every day existence.
I am a revolution,
in a woman
with bones,
joint with resistance.

196.

With pink glitter made of fairytales
and on perfectly manicured nails,
with all the power vested in me
by the feminist foremothers before me,
I now pronounce to you that I will;
Divorce the patriarchy.
You may kiss my ass.

197.

And I know,
I wouldn't be here
to hear
the crunch of autumn leaves
under my boots,
if it wasn't for
the crunch of the bones
of the women who fought.

That crack, rattle,
crinkle, crackle.

That crunch on the earth-
is composed
of revolutions.

Pass this on:

Thank you
to the brave women before us-
who rocked the boat,
climbed up the high waves,
and bounced on top of the moon.

Thank you for paving the murky oceans,
for the stars.

198.

Once,
when I was about ten
I was out late with my grandmother when,
suddenly,
a man stumbled towards us drunkenly.

He tried to touch my grandmother and run
but she swiftly spun,
and smacked him on the head with her purse.
I didn't know what was worse-
the fact that he came crashing down,
or that her cursing travelled all over town.

I stood there in awe, as the man struggled to flee,
I was impressed by the way she "hit like a girl"-
and on some level,
so was he.

199.

Reminder:

You don't have to be nice to sexists
you don't have to endure the misogynists
the racists, the rapists,
the homophobes, the fucking dictators-
being 'nice' is not a tax you owe this world
to live in it as a woman.

200.

“But you’re a feminist, shouldn’t you respect all different views?”
said the bigot
the misogynist
the sexist
the homophobe
the racist
the two-faced pervert who looks down upon women in porn
and all he does is watch them while masturbating at home.
He wants me to respect his hypocrisy.

“But you’re a feminist, shouldn’t you respect all different views?”
said the woman who sold her voice to the patriarchy,
and now she wants me to respect her
choice of betraying her sisters.

Those are not different views
on whether pineapple
is viable,
as a pizza topping.
Those are my human rights
on which you are shitting.

Yes I’m a feminist
not a toilet brush-
I don’t have to eat your bullshit.

To the one holding this book:

Let go...

Let go of all the shit!