

2006 – 2007
CBC Writing Competition

CBC Entry
Category: Nonfiction
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My Body Hopes

My body wants to be appreciated. She wants me to stop hating her, hiding her, changing her. Things would be different if my body were in charge. She would demand change. She would march for change, kick for change, scream for change. But she wouldn't change herself. She would change the world. She wants respect.

My body is mad at me. She wants me to let her be. She doesn't want to shrink, she wants a presence. This summer I took away her curves...I stole thirty pounds, threw them out, no remorse. At last I could disappear in new found autonomy, won in my battle against her. But she refused to stay down. She began to hoard every small piece of food I allowed inside, sticking it to my bones, rebuilding her fortress. She refused to stay small.

I can't make her behave, so I hate her. I wish I didn't, but what besides hate can I possibly feel towards this recalcitrant entity. Nobody ever told me she was supposed to be my friend. Nobody ever suggested that I cooperate with her.

I remember when I still welcomed her input, when I regarded her as my queen, and respected the actions she took. In the beginning I loved the bumps she put under my shirt, the sacred hair of adulthood she presented and the egg she sent once a month to remind me that I was a woman. I remember when I wanted people to notice her.

Then I stopped letting her exist according to nature and I started changing her, stifling her, correcting her. I shaved her soft hair, baked her exterior, and masked her scent...disguised her true form. I sucked in, squeezed and picked. I belittled, criticized and disapproved. I remember when she first fought back sending dozens of red bumps through the surface of my skin. I could feel them when I smiled, when people looked at me. I scrubbed her, medicated her, and pleaded with her, but it took years for her to forgive me. Even today I can see remnants of her anger; the blotches of crimson on my face, the pits in my skin, the round purple scars that forever mark my cheeks. She hasn't forgotten.

My body wants me to realize her power. Every month she tries to escape the cast I keep her in. She pounds hard against it, causing a pain so deep that I can't move. She wants me to understand. She wants me to let her sweat, run, yell, stand up and be seen. She doesn't want to be hidden. She doesn't want to be separated, divided, picked apart. She doesn't want to be labeled. She wants to be recognized. She wants to be respected.

I have hurt her, changed her, hidden her; she has no reason to trust me and she fears the future. She fears injections, incisions, bleaching, lasers, waxing, tucking, lifting. I fear stretching, drooping, wrinkling, thickening, graying. We fear each other.

My body knows I am trying; she appreciates my tennis shoes and t-shirts. She's grateful that I decided to start letting her breathe, that I threw away my polish, concealer, curler and cover-up.

My body has hope. She hopes to be recognized. She hopes to be pampered. She hopes I will feed her rich chocolate, drape her in soft fabrics and allow her to be covered in soft hair. She hopes I will praise her, approve of her, accept her. She hopes I will hold

her, massage her and soak her in warm water. She hopes I will dance with her, climb with her, run with her. She hopes I will create something with her hands and help someone with her strength.

My body hopes I will use her to create change, that I will march for change, kick for change, scream for change. My body hopes that I will stop trying to squeeze her into my cast, that I will fit my world around her curves. My body hopes one day the world will see me, appreciate me, and realize there is more to me than her.