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## Me Too

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prose editor's choice  
**me too**  
laura gray hopkins

The first person who called me a slut<sup>1</sup> was my dad, because I wore lipstick. I wasn't allowed to wear makeup until I was sixteen, six more years I had no desire to wait. I snuck into my older sister's room while she was practicing her saxophone downstairs. I could feel the musical vibrations through my feet as I padded into her room. I found the lightest, softest pink lipstick Anna had, so dad wouldn't notice. I smoothed it on, trying to replicate the ease and grace Anna had when she was putting it on. She looked like Audrey Hepburn when she did her makeup. I was camped out in Anna's room, in front of the long mirror propped on the wall. The hardwood chilled my bones; I'd have to dress warm for the festival. We were going to an October festival with my homeschool friends, and I'd been thinking about how cool I'd look with my lipstick compared to them. After putting it on, I admired myself in Anna's mirror, wearing Anna's hand-me-down sweater, and jeans that looked just like Anna's, and her lipstick. My lips had the softest glitter<sup>2</sup> on them. I looked like a fairy<sup>3</sup>.

Anna's saxophone playing stopped, and I heard her call me to the car. Halfway to the festival when dad looked in the rear view mirror, and said those words that made me both hot and cold, made my face burn and my throat go dry. **You can't wear lipstick, makes you look like a slut.** I rubbed it off with the sleeve of Anna's old sweater, and she held my hand the rest of the ride, but we said nothing the whole time. My friends ignored the way my lips were bright red from being scrubbed too many times and how my sister stood between me and my dad.

I had heard those words before. Late one night, I was nine, and Anna a freshman in highschool, I heard yelling downstairs, and I slunk down to see what was happening.

I couldn't see dad, but I could hear his resonating voice, shaking the wood house so much I thought it would fall apart. We had a split stair, and if I sat just right, I could peek around the corner and see everything that was happening in the living room without them noticing. Not that I needed to bother. Dad was hidden, and Anna was too upset to notice anything. Her face shone as bright red as her hair, and tracks of tears streamed down her face. A fire elemental, flames circling her<sup>4</sup>. She looked powerful, but also helpless. They were fighting. Anna wanted a ear piercing. She had asked dad, and dad said no. She already had her lobes pierced once. It's just a tiny hoop on the cartilage. And then that word.

### If you get that piercing, you'll be nothing but a slut.<sup>5</sup>

I remember Anna turning to run, me dashing back to my room, praying I wouldn't get caught, too cowardly to go comfort my own sister<sup>6</sup>. I heard the front door slam, and I remember thinking she'd be gone forever. She had just gone outside to cry where there wasn't a ceiling above her.

The most recent time I was called a slut was walking to class. **Someone yelled for me to get on your knees and do what you do best, slut.**<sup>7</sup>

Freshmen year of high school, in my physics class, I sat next to the bad kids. Apparently, having a kid who made good grades and was quiet<sup>8</sup> in between the two loudest students was the best way to control bad behavior. Four weeks, before I'd had enough<sup>9</sup>. One kid was grinding on my chair. Another wrote the word **whore** in my notebook. I stood up, pulled my army coat<sup>10</sup> closer around me, and marched up to the teacher. I can't recall what she looked like. When I imagine her, I see a doughy blob, the vaguest suggestion of a disinterested face, and a brown wig sliding off her undercooked head. I asked her to move my seat, because they kept trying to grind on me. I whispered it, so the other kids wouldn't hear. **Hey, you two, stop sexually harassing her,** she yelled across the classroom, **surely you can do better than her.** And I sat down. They didn't touch me for a day.<sup>11</sup>

1 Slut - /slat/ - noun, derogatory.

1. a woman who has many casual sexual partners.
2. a woman with low standards of cleanliness.

2 "What's the best lipstick to make yourself look really slutty for a friday night on the town? Crimson, but make sure you overrun it beyond the lips a little as this will send out the message, you don't mind smearing it as you indulge in late night games." "Well I would say buy a cheap red or bright pink one but remember it must be CHEAP!" - Lipstick Reviews

3 "The fairies like to dance on the tops of the rocks in the springs and enjoy watching nature at its most beautiful." - How to Find Real Fairies.

4 "Just remember that not all fairies are nice, and so when you find real fairies at a spring, be sure to take caution not to disturb them while they're playing." - How to Find Real Fairies

5 Slut - /slat/ - noun, derogatory.

1. a woman who has any piercings outside of the two standard ear piercings
2. a woman with short hair
3. a woman who wears makeup
4. a woman

6 This is still one of my biggest regrets. I'll never forgive myself for looking after me, and not helping Anna as much as she protected me.

7 I assume they meant sucking dick. I'm rather amused that they could tell that I am amazing at this artform.

8 Don't worry, I was only a good kid and quiet because I wanted to survive school just long enough to read. And if I got a b in a class, dad asked who I was fucking. Not with that word, because bad words are a sin.

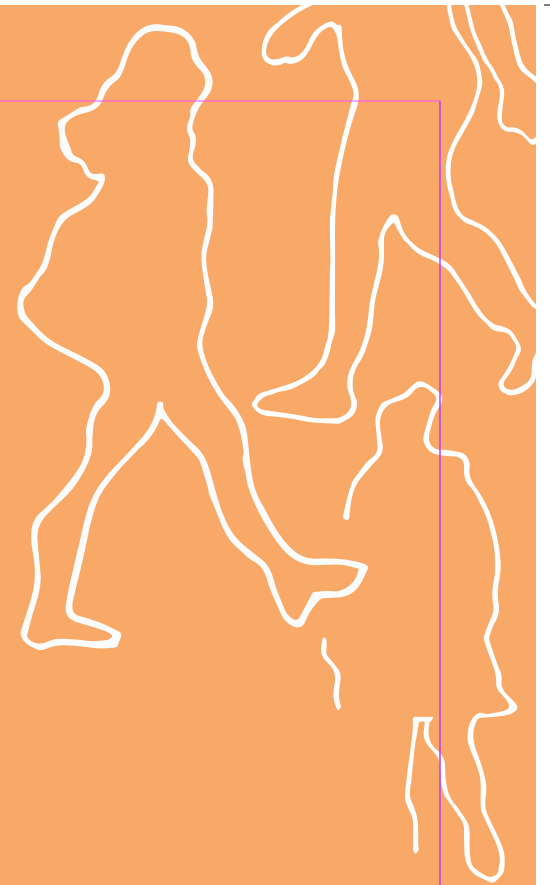
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## me too continued

I wore red lipstick<sup>12</sup> one day. Thirteen, a freshman. I put it on in the school bathroom, so dad wouldn't see. I walked into my chorus class, and the teacher said he didn't want to do anything today. He sat at his desk, looking at his phone. One of the kids said my face offended him.<sup>13</sup> I shrugged. He knew I was ticklish, and he pinned me to the ground, tickled me, and managed to get a hand under my shirt before I could call out for help. The teacher didn't even look up, just said **get a room**. I excused myself to the bathroom, took my bags, and dumped his bathroom pass in the trash.<sup>14</sup> I spent the rest of the day in the principal's office, explaining I needed out of that class, and no I did not provoke him.<sup>15</sup> **He's a good kid, slow but sweet. It was just a misunderstanding.**

Walmart with my mom; 10 years old. Sweatpants and a sweatshirt, trainer bra. First time out of the house with any kind of bra on. I hated it, and kept fidgeting. I hated how pressed into my ribs, how I could feel it move every time I shifted. I tugged at the strap while my mom glanced over the shopping list again. Almost done, we kept saying, but the list seemed to be growing longer each time we put some useless treasure in the basket. Mom put her head in her hands, she'd grabbed the wrong brand of toilet paper, and my dad's spoiled ass couldn't deal with cheap paper. I grabbed the wrong paper, said I'd be back in a second, and marched off to the toilet section. It didn't take me long to find his brand. With paper in hand, I hurried back to where mom should be. On the way, a guy started following me. I didn't think he was following me, because he could have just also been walking to the food section. But then he called out to me. An older man, he noticed my bra, and thought he would be a kind gentleman by telling me it was the wrong size. He'd be happy to measure me, as he could generally tell what bra a woman should wear by fondling the breasts. I walked quicker, and when he saw my mom, he left me alone<sup>16</sup>

I've gotten better at dealing with people telling me how to handle my body.<sup>17</sup> When my dad called me to inform me that a picture I had posted on facebook was inappropriate, and that a friendly former church friend<sup>18</sup> told him that I was exposing too much cleavage, if I didn't dress better I'd get myself in trouble don't you know you're gonna get raped don't you know you're gonna get it at least I'll be here to pick up the pieces when you get yourself raped and that I should really respect my father more, and understand how having a slut for a daughter looks, I didn't yell. I didn't scream. I said I'd take the picture off facebook.<sup>19</sup> And I did not apologize.



4 "Just remember that not all fairies are nice, and so when you find real fairies at a spring, be sure to take caution not to disturb them while they're playing." - How to Find Real Fairies

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