




## SARAH ATTAH



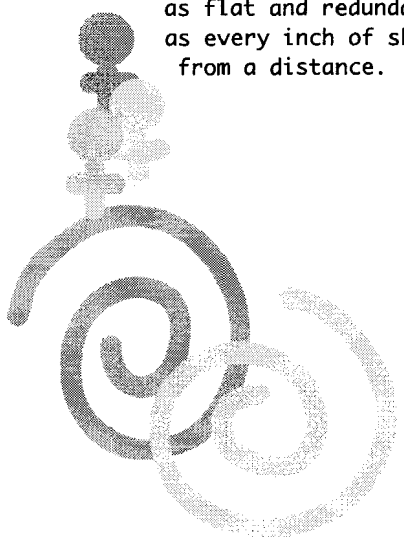
I'd thank-you sir  
to stop talking to my breasts  
they have nothing to say to you  
but I do  
(with my mouth)  
and don't expect poetry.

because there is nothing poetic  
about hunchbacked mountains  
or plucked angel wings  
and tar babies  
waiting in the middle of the sun  
for a bus on route  
to seven thirty-five an hour  
-late.



meanwhile a perfectly respectable gentle-  
man,  
who wouldn't need  
following around in your convenience  
store,  
is asking my breasts for the time.  
they sigh  
and mountains fall right over

I still don't want to hear it though,  
another poor black girl turned poor black  
woman story  
with a hunch on her back, heart, face,  
family, destiny  
and those down turned volcanoes,  
fire tongues spittin'  
excuses  
as flat and redundant  
as every inch of skin  
from a distance.





I don't want to hear, speak, feel  
a pain that's stuck  
that I can't press into the paper  
release or validate  
God,

let me not be reminded today  
have it jungle my mind  
back and forth between other people's  
words  
that lie  
because least of all is this thing  
poetic

although it should be  
according to prize winning novelists  
and nine PM on the learning channel  
like I need to reassess  
or be rationalized out of  
my everyday truth

...See, this would be just another per-  
formance,  
perhaps a dry rendition of the blues  
but I am not here to entertain  
or educate,  
carry your tears out  
on my head  
like a market woman,  
calling out their price.  
like I would put this out for sale  
the object embodiment  
closest thing you can find  
to what we are talking about  
big lips  
used hips  
hair singed at the tips





And don't make me your tragedy  
the fight won on behalf of the powerless  
the powerless  
the less

what's more is:


I never asked for poems  
upon my conception  
the script already written  
how I supposedly feel  
-it's cause she has things on her mind  
expect the bitch tone.  
I'd have it too if I were you  
but I'm not.  
sista.

understand it/ allow it  
-cause her man don't treat her right  
and her daddy probably beat her or run  
off  
and her mother can't support them all  
so dey dirt poor an' greedy as hell  
and dey kids come early, wid runny noses  
because somewhere along the line they  
were  
...well

...  
slaves...

but We didn't do it  
and don't bring it up  
it's embarrassing.  
it was so o oh long ago



that it doesn't matter  
I mean  
I didn't do it, she's my friend  
or even my lover  
although I know her love's been handled  
I understand, the poems  
and the songs  
I've read the books.



Not now,  
I'm not poised to go through this  
leave my pretty little white friends  
down the river  
because our hair don't straighten the  
same  
and "beautiful" is closer to its creator  
and my body is closer to dust and earth,  
moving mountains  
the shadow and valleys upon valleys of  
evening  
ground underneath  
the feet  
of many travelers  
I grit my teeth

We live in a society that is protected  
by rights  
so when a gentleman asks my breasts  
for the time  
I have the right  
to ask him to stop  
while I lick my wounds;  
while they sigh  
the volcanoes crumble  
a little further into the sea

because He probably read the poems too  
or heard them somewhere  
so anything I say  
will be attributed to my breasts.  
and moving mountains  
dust underneath the feet  
runny nosed kids  
and someone else's run off daddy  
plucking away my angel wings.



*Sarah Attah is an 18-year-old student at Ursula Franklin Academy in Toronto. She enjoys writing poems and short stories that magnify the complexity of moments in everyday life.*