

Junior Division, Poetry

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## **What Does It Mean To Be A Woman?**

What does it mean to be a woman?

Well, if you ask a girl she might say

“It means applying extra blush on your nose when doing your makeup”

Or “trying on your friend’s worn out silver jewelry.”

She might talk about

Using the hair tie on your wrist that you didn’t buy,

Going to washrooms in hoards,

And feeling the heat of the hot sun tan into your back when wearing a sundress.

Being a woman is about unspoken solidarity and undefined femininity.

It’s about looking like your mom when she was your age

And listening to the echoing “click” that heels make.

It’s about the sweet smell of floral shampoo

And dancing around your kitchen to the pounding sound of old love songs.

Any girl would talk about losing her voice to Taylor Swift

And plucking weeds instead of flowers for her mom as a gift.

It’s about falling back in love with the colour pink

And watching the stars wink at you from the night sky.

It’s braiding each other’s hair like you’re fabricating a promise,

Kissing strawberry chapstick to your lips every five seconds,

And intertwining your fingers with your friend when you’re in a crowd.

To a girl, being a woman means womanhood.

But if you ask a woman

“What does it mean to be a woman?”

She would say

“It’s about sharing your location to make sure someone always knows where you are”

Or carrying a can of pepper spray to use as self defense, “just in case.”

It’s about not being able to walk home alone at night in fear of being kidnapped or killed

Because you are a woman.

It’s being judged and stereotyped from a man’s perspective

Because

I can “carry the weight of the flesh on my chest”

But I can not “carry the weight of an equal paying job.”

It's about men being so afraid of your power

That you decide to be afraid of it too.

It's about being told you're "too fat!" when you eat too much

but then being told you're "not curvy!" when you don't eat enough

Because that's what a woman is.

It's never achieving the standards that society has set for us.  
Any woman would talk about  
How we claim "girls support girls"  
Yet women will still take any opportunity to criticize the people they call "sisters."

Swallowing my voice in my throat because people  
Objectify and sexualize and dehumanize women.  
So tell me,  
What does it really mean to be a woman?