

Community Literacy Journal

Volume 8
Issue 1 *Fall, Special Issue: Youth, Sexuality,
Health, and Rights Guest Edited by Adela C.
Licona and Stephen T. Russell*

Article 8

Fall 2013

Public Speaking

Niki Herd

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Recommended Citation

Herd, Niki. "Public Speaking." *Community Literacy Journal*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2013, pp. 91–92, doi:10.25148/clj.8.1.009324.

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Poetry

Public Speaking

Niki Herd

You want to know why there aren't
more cute girls in speech class

and I feel like I should offer a history
lesson on the objectification of women, or

suggest more attention be paid
to your grades, which are miserably sore.

Instead, I'm reminded of the boy
from this morning's commute

how he model-walked his freedom
down that thread of a bus aisle

in his bright purples and pinks, and who
like you girl, is confident in youth

and a young sexuality in a world
hesitantly unraveling itself towards

progress while still clinging to the easy
pronunciation of words like:

bull-dagger, faggot, sissy and dyke.

A world never safe when one brick
inches itself away, how the rest

of the wall fears more will follow
and the institution come tumbling down.

Next week you will visit again, this

time with a pretty girl on your arm
and while the office workers avert

their eyes to this unsealed romance

we will talk class and grades and plans

for spring break. And as you leave
the office with your hand in unison

with the hand of the woman you're with
you will never hear the words lurking

silent behind averted eyes.
You will never get to see my ever so

discreet, but proud smile, tight like
some kind of fist raised in the air.

Man

Zack Taylor

Mom,
Just 17 laying in a hospital bed
Cradling me
What kind of man did you hope I would be?

Creating illusions
plans
presumptions
Your premeditated predictions
dream and fantasize the man wanted out of me
I'm seventeen years old
trying to figure out what "man" means.
Society got me twisted
deadbeats to heartthrobs
drug dealers and political leaders
overly famous sports men to businessmen in suits

Mom,
What kind of stereotype of a man did you want me to be?

I never thought you'd want me to be
immoral
useless
philandering
A man using sugar coated kisses
treating women like bitches
Squandering for cash in empty pockets
Pockets empty
Checks flying away
Like my dignity
Supporting unforgiving ex-wives
fatherless children
Suspected you wanted a
ladies man
out of me

I believed dad was the perfect man
I could be
Owning mistakes
like pastors own beliefs
Taking responsibilities
instead of taking risks