

# Community Literacy Journal

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

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Article 9

Fall 2013

## Man

Zack Taylor

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### Recommended Citation

Taylor, Zack. "Man." *Community Literacy Journal*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2013, pp. 93–95, doi:10.25148/clj.8.1.009325.

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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

Giving up teenage years  
 like alcoholics give up liquor  
 Is that the kind of man you expect me to be?  
 Mom,  
 I can't be  
 I'm not the type to raise a family at 17.

Image your first born  
 a homo.  
 Fathoming that your son would kiss boys  
 play with girl toys  
 trade in pregnancies for adoption agencies  
 fighting  
 for the right of equal marriage opportunities  
 Was that ever the kind of man you dreamt I would be?  
 Overhearing  
 you fear what life is going to be  
 unaccepting school kids  
 who use cruel games,  
 gain power over sexual minorities.  
 If ever being put down as a fag  
 queer  
 homosexual being  
 I would have the strength  
 to stand on my own two feet  
 keep my composure  
 because motherly arms taught me how to do so.  
 Isn't that the kind of man you wanted me to be.

Mom  
 How do you even define a man?

Dictionaries say  
 "Man" an adult who has opposite  
 characteristics of a woman  
 Definition two said  
 "generic use of the word referring to human beings"  
 example: "it is every man for himself"  
 Suggested that a male person has to "play significant role in the life  
 (as in a husband or a boyfriend or a lover)  
 of a particular-  
 -woman."

Not needing shallow Webster's or dictionaries with hollow meanings  
 Telling me what a man is

Mother taught me how to respect  
 not only women  
 but human beings

If definition of "man" is male  
 who loves a human  
 Yes mom  
 I am a man

I love you dearly.