

# **The Beautiful People? The Standard.**

by Darnishia Bolden

At first it begins with a glance - quick but sure, giving way to a steady gaze. Suddenly your eyes are transfixed into an admiring stare. I've seen men do it, sitting beside their wives or girlfriends - significant others. Unashamed, some. Staring. Me too. Yes, I do it from time to time and if I am caught, I feel a bit shy - shamed, a mixture of self-glorification and sadness tempered with an undisclosed amount of vanity. To be caught staring at my own reflection.

Who am I to think such a thing? Again, I ask what is this Beauty - possessed by the beguiling powers of Medusa? Who am I to hoard this cup of savoir-faire? Mmmm, yes and I drank the whole damn thing. I made a sacrifice unto myself and swallowed something sweet and true. Who would see it if there was no mirror, no water to catch a glimpse of my reflection and print it on a wave? Who would have tasted it, if I had not been awakened by whispering winds and decided to share?

Nobody.

I had to find it myself, even though it was never lost. I had to seek it inside of unfolded arms, cracked mirrors, reflections from store front glass, bottles of wine, lipsticks too red, skirts too tight and short, and heels too high to walk. Traveling far for words . . . to hear it spill from selfish lips, when all along the wind whispered God's words to me. Saying - you are not the standard, but the exception. Like the sunrise and sunset demands the attention of all things universal, so shall you. Still I cried 'cause I wanted to be. I needed desperately to be normal, "the girl next door." All women do, even those in India and Asia dream of lemon curls. There are places that outlaw uncovered women because their copious bodies make fools of sanctified men. Yet, it is a wonder, the imminent beauty of women, that is stricken from the wonderful list. Such women truly exist, placing fear in the hearts of strong men and whipping up a mean batch of envy inside the intimidating minds of confident women.

When I was a little girl, I had hair that twisted and spiraled around the comb like baby snakes. It was natural - obeyed the sun, wind and water instead of the hands of my mother. Plaits unraveled like the ends of untamed ropes. I was different.

It was my desire to be like everyone else that forced me into tears. I wanted the hair style that made women stars and set the standard. I wanted something that belonged to someone else. Yes, I wanted Farrah Fawcett Major's curls. Yeah, you know, the chick from the original Charile's Angels. I wanted to be like everyone else - normal?!?! to blend, fit in.

So I cried and cried - kicked and screamed - hollered and shouted. Pouted. Each time my sisters sat down at the kitchen table to endure the ritual of having their own "kitchens" pressed out with heat, I felt like I was missing something. I wanted an invitation to the table. So I straightened

Barbie's hair, Skipper's too. The hot comb cooked that hair causing it to sizzle, crack and burn - giving me something else to whine about. After years of crying, stomping, and burning up doll hair, my mother put the heat to my head and VOILA!!! I had me some long, straight, black beautiful hair. Oh yes, I said, shaking it free. I charged into the bathroom with a new type of haughty arrogance and peered into the mirror. I shook my head again watching the hair on my head bounce and fly - freely - my fingers sliced through it with ease and I thought: "I'm so beautiful (giggle, giggle). Now I'm just like everybody else."

Everybody else . . .

That was then...when I needed to fit in, when I thought straight hair was all the rave (found it hard to behave, that's for sure). When I desired to meet the standard, did not understand I had exceeded it. But I let it go. I turned my beauty loose and found that goddess Medusa waiting, lurking behind heavy locks that people said resembled snakes.

Just the other day, an opportunity presented itself. Two females accompanied by a "Jethro Bodine" type fellow! He was a big guy. Sturdy, in a country type manner. But it didn't bother me as my heels quickly, sternly announced my arrival. One woman turned, then the other and next Jethro. Their look turned into a frozen wide-eyed stare. I smiled and they, hesitating, continued with their journey and conversation. Again they turned, to see how close, how fast, just how different I was - not once, not twice but four times. Ah, yes, finally, recognition. The first lady stopped walking altogether and stepped aside. I could have been pissed. Maybe I should have been pissed. But that is what the possessive power of Medusa does, claims the street as her own, takes over without an elbow used, jostles up and down courts without having to run or chase a ball, walks into a room and makes the crowd part like God did with the Red Sea. This type of beauty forces people to step aside allowing her to pass, if their legs will allow movement.

I laughed, bewitchingly, as I strolled past this frightened creature then turned and flashed a smile to set her on fire as well as set her feet free. I turned again, a fourth time to glare at the woman and the other woman and of course, let us not forget, Jethro. I narrowed my eyes to slits, their feet glued to the same pavement that allowed me free passage. Is it ever proper to walk in front of a queen? Isn't that against the laws of nature?

Beautiful is the Medusa goddess, big thick black locks waving in the air, heavy breasts bare - reducing men to statues and stares. And someone, somewhere outlawed beauty then set a standard - something simple, skinny and too weak to toy with the head on a solidier. Beauty replaced by a standard, airbrushed within an inch of its life, plastered on slick, polished paper then ejaculated on. No, that was never Beauty, standard settles for the quickies.

Standard is for the average and beauty is for the exceptional. In my Medusa fashioned curls, I serve intimidation and you can't help but eat it. But that is natural for a goddess queen, just step aside when you hear heels click on pavement, like brown or red hands beating drums.

The Beautiful People.  
by Darnishia Bolden

Vanity? No, common sense. For dogs barking at strangers are the standard. Alley cats wagging their tails for attention and ten dollar bills are the standard. Unnecessary fake boobs have become the standard.

That's what the weak, faint at heart call beauty, the standard, accepting of things that look alike. But if beauty is such an average, set at a standard, like some sort of high school standardized test then...what do you have to fear when you see me? If beauty is so common, such an easily cloned thing, then the world is an ugly place.

Still, there is nothing standard about the heavens, oceans, mountains, and seas, snow flakes - each different in its celestial beauty. There is nothing standard about the seasons, each one holds the reality of colors and still there is not one thing standard about me.