

Participant 2. Dedicated to All the Others: Leeds, with Una

SHAME- (her silent voice)

Shame talks to no one. She struts her stuff, flaunts her wares
And takes no prisoners. Shame plays the lonely-hearts game;
Sells herself short to whoever wants her. Any Tom to fill the void;
Any Dick to staunch the loneliness inside.
Shame is rough-lipped, with swaying hips and itty-bitty clothes.
She laughs in the face of those who dare come near.
Shame has boundaries; only true love can penetrate.
She numbs out, too afraid to feel. She is the girl that nobody talks to,
But always talks about. Their voices could break through
The armour she wears. She could wither and die from their words.
Shame yearns to be heard, to be enclosed in a soothing
Cloak of love. This broken child longs to be seen,
Hides from silent inner terrors. Wakeful nightly mares
Walk her spirit through the wild winds of her dreams.
She wanders her wilderness alone. Do not mistake
Her fierceness for anger; it is forged from the fear of being maimed.
Her survival depends on it. Softness sits
In her bones. Shame will strike you right between the eyes,
Humiliate you into submission. She shows you where you're selling
Yourself short. In righteous judgment, shame will show you your lowliest self.
Her sensuality is not here to serve you. Her ally guilt is always close behind.

Body-shaming started early, leery fingers grasping at her developing
Breasts. The laughter at her growing hairy mound,
The constant teasing at her changing form. She is the unloved
Unpopular girl, ridiculed for blossoming too early.
'Easy prey,' they say. 'Easy! Pray!'
She has a growing woman-body that calls the wolves to the
Door – the ones who want to darken the portals of her temple
With silly white lies – the kind men tell to make her vulva
Swell.

Mother would banish her to her bedroom on Sunday evenings
After church, coercing her to open herself to verses from the
Bible about the ills of intercourse.

Sermon 1:

*All problems start and end with the female body. A temple,
To be policed at all times.
Mother made it clear that a woman's worth
Is determined by the extent of a man's desire for her.
Her gift
Was to hand over her power,
Her only goal to satisfy her man at all costs.*

Mother taught that
'Man' has the power to claim and shame her and
For a while she thought it to be true.

Sermon 2:

*One must always partake in the daily ritual
Of squatting over the bowl.
Ya just gotta wash that man right out of ya hair.
Keep it squeaky clean.
No frowsy mousses here please.
Disguise your curves.
Cover up.
Become invisible.
Better to be scorned than desired or slain.*

Mother taught that the magical
Bermuda Triangle that lay between her thighs
Was a passageway to trouble.

With that kind of pressure, she might have rebelled and become one of those girls that loses her virginity at twelve, runs away from home, and becomes the proud owner of a tantric bordello for discerning ladies who, like to wear nothing but fur-lined knickers, and have their fancies tickled. Mother's warnings about the happenings between a woman's thighs, her persistent preaching, and her cautionary tales, lay waste to that.

SHAME – (HER MAKING NOISE)

Shame can break you; shake you to your core, shackle your
Ankles to the floor; bare secrets that will make you quake until
The day you erupt from your enforced slumber and utter a
Resounding 'NO!'
Then you wield your voice in a world that runs from your
Wild truth:
This is Pussy Reclamation!
This is a searing retrieval.
Reclamation as rebellion!
This is the nomad claiming home.
This is the mistress slave that carried the banner of repression,
Reborn.
Plucked and fucked within an inch of her life.
She has shaken loose her collusion with silence.

*You took from me what did not belong to you
Trampled my sacred spaces
Opened my buds of longing
Too young to bear your prising
Too early to blossom into my harvest of plenty
You carnal fool, eyes too big for your belly
You the inflictor of my wounds
Coveting the purity of innocence.
I now take back my power from you
From the torrents of your narcissistic urge
I navigate back to a safer shore
In the shadows of pain, I found my light
I am catapulted home to true north*