Steffany Herndon (Steffanynicole11.wordpress.com) is a young poet who attends Emory University. She writes for the people who can relate to having relevant and valid opinions, but may be too shy or introverted to always express them. Those thoughts and opinions are still important, they still matter, even if they are not heard by as many. She values the spaces and the culture that Black people have created for themselves, and seeks to contribute to the Black body of work, using her personal experience, as well as her reactions to current events.

This poem, *Hourglass*, is a poetic reporting on one of the many contradictions that exist in being a Black woman. A topic that we like to cover often, being a Black woman is not easy. They are seen as savage, but exotic. Intelligent but base. In this circumstance, their bodies are depicted as excessive and offensive, yet desirable. Herndon recalls her adolescence, which was spent constantly having her body commented upon by those around her. She expresses how her body shape began to develop long before she was a woman old enough to know what to do with them. As a young preteen and teenager, she, like most adolescents, did not ask for the attention that she was getting, and did not necessarily want the body that she was blessed to inhabit. Then, in the final six lines, the poem turns, representing the realization that is so important. **She has what they want.** Her body, the source of so much embarrassment, the source of so much ridicule, was the body that people craved to have. She realizes the irony, as an adult, of what her body meant, and thus, unlocked many of the true ironies of being a Black woman.

In conversation with Herndon, she wants the reader to know, that although this is her story, she recognizes the similarities between her story, and those of her counterparts. “Even though I discuss my curves personally, it’s really about any part of our bodies that black women struggle accepting, be it curves, stretch marks, or a pudgy stomach. The poem’s about finding a way to love parts of yourself that you deem “displeasing” based on society’s beauty standards and learning that criticism from the outside (primarily Eurocentric criticism) is irrelevant and sometimes even rooted in jealousy. We’re gonna look different from the white women that grace magazine covers, and TV screens because we were made differently, and it’s that difference that holds all the beauty, in my opinion.”