

In 2013, a study by the University of Cape Town found that more than one-third of women in South Africa bleach their skin because they want to have 'white skin.' Nigerians are the biggest users of bleaching agents, with 77% of women using the products on a regular basis. Skin bleaching has been linked to skin and blood cancers as well as an increase in burns, and skin damage.

About 7.8 million women and 1.9 million men use tanning beds. Although the numbers have been decreasing overall, there is a 177% increase in tanning among men between ages 40 to 49 and a 71% increase in usage among men 50 and up. Indoor tanning increases the risk of melanoma up to 75%.

***"You have pretty eyes. They look almost like amber."***

Nearly half of all Asians have an epicanthal fold, a skin fold of the upper eyelid that covers the inner corner of their eyes. East Asian Blepharoplasty, or eyelid surgery, reshapes the skin around the eye with incisions and sutures to create a defined crease on the upper lid, or a 'double-lid' common in Western people. This cosmetic surgery is one of the most popular Asian cosmetic surgeries in America and the most common surgery in Korea.

***"Do you just not use mascara?"***

***"So are you just getting fat or what?"***

***"I'm sure you two would make a good match;  
he likes personality more than looks."***

***"You just need to eat healthier."***

***"You used to have such a cute little dip in your sides..."***

***"Your hair looks so stupid did you cut it with a fucking razor  
or something?"***

***"You just need to lose a few pounds."***

***"You have more of a coke figure."***

***"You should wear nail polish more, you'd look nicer."***

I look into the mirror. Tweezers in one hand. My face inches from the mirror. Below me are is an assortment of makeup; foundation, cover-up, blush, eye shadow, several different sized brushes. My straightener slowly heating up to my left along with several acne washes and a washcloth set off to the side. My phone buzzes and I look down from my daily routine to read it.

***"Good morning beautiful."***

# SEASONS OF THE DAY

PATRICK McSHERRY

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In the world of an eight-year-old boy  
in East Texas  
in Burlington, population eight  
seasons are marked by time of day not year.

Ben Fox is repairing a tractor in his shop  
a rusted weathered farm implement  
that stands on the dirt floor soaked in sweat and motor oil  
that stands under the tin roof soaked in morning sun  
that stands surrounded by wooden beams and shiplap.  
In the morning season,  
beside my grandmother's home.

Rubin Fox works in his store tending the coke box  
a vat of frigid water holding cola bottles  
that stands on the oak floor painted with tobacco juice  
that stands in the noon-time air smelling of bubble gum and kerosene  
that stands in view of the towering gas-pumps filled with ethyl.  
In the heat of the day,  
beside my grandmother's home.

Mondo and Chico are playing in the yard  
two brown sons of migrant farm workers  
they shape play-things with clever hands rough as brown cinder blocks  
they speak a language that I don't understand  
they seek out fireflies to hold in a clear glass jar.  
As we play in the last hours of daylight,  
beside my Grandmother's house.

Aunt Mo smiles as she looks out from her porch  
an angel with large arms that remind me of wings  
arms that hold everything with care

*(Continued)*

Arms that can dispatch a chicken for our dinner  
Arms that protect and guide an eight-year-old boy.  
In the evening moonlight,  
beside my Grandmother's house.

In East Texas, in Burlington, population eight.

# I WANT A COUNTRY

## NATALIE FRANCE

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I do not want a country  
where residing in prison  
is more permanent than a home,

nor a country  
where minorities are easier to hose down  
than wildfires

I do not want a country  
where bodies are as disposable  
as plastic bottles, piling up  
in urban streets

I do not want a country  
where getting richer  
is the only means  
of getting ahead

I do not want a country  
where shortcuts are taken  
for big corporations,  
leaving destitute lives forsaken.

I want a new country  
where we won't have to be reminded  
that *anyone's* lives matter.

I want a new country  
where headlines of black names  
are for the Nobel Peace Prize,  
not about the irreversible death toll rise.