

# SORRY, NOT SORRY

STEVEN GONTARZ

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I'm sorry for the way I  
look at you  
from the bottom up  
I'm sorry I don't look at your face  
I'm sorry I don't see you.

I'm sorry I whip my head around  
when I hear the clacking of your heels  
hoping the sound matches the  
image in my head of  
long, sexy,  
*legs.*

I'm sorry for the skintight pants  
and low cut shirt all the  
fashion magazines tell you  
to wear for me.

I'm sorry for the red lipstick  
and mascara, the nail polish,  
the scent of your perfume and  
the way you have to style your hair.

I'm sorry for the beer commercials  
and burger ads with  
their bikinis and bust lines burning images  
of what they want *us*  
to see as beautiful.

And why are my shorts long  
but yours are short?  
My jeans are baggy  
and you wear second-skin  
pants to

work out,  
to school,  
to the grocery store,  
to go shopping.

I'm deeply sorry  
American culture taught me  
to look at you like this.

I'm not sorry I'm a man.

# HONEY BEIGE

NATALIE FRANCE

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My tan brown different,  
heavy-to-wear skin.  
I didn't look like them.

Worry  
slipping my thought process  
with a drug called anxiety  
What do they think  
What do they see

Who even cares?  
They don't even know me.

But apparently they do.  
It's written on my locker.  
This humiliation,  
felt all the way through...  
my skin.

But from that event  
I've learned not to be angry  
with my God-given complexion  
if asked what I am,  
to show them without any objection.

My honey beige sun kissed  
celebrated skin.  
I don't look like them.