

SORRY, NOT SORRY

STEVEN GONTARZ

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

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.