

## **I am the American Heifer.**

A poetic monologue for one woman.

The Drawing Room, Observatory, South Africa 2019

You know.

I've never been this far from home.

And I'm learning a lot about myself.

I learning that it's hard to transport self-care and coping mechanisms.

I'm learning that you can feel so lonely even though you're constantly surrounded by beautiful, loving people.

I'm learning that somehow I now get drunk off of two glasses of wine instead of ten.

I'm learning what it's like to be so far away from the life that I built around myself and knew how to live inside and how vulnerable that feels.

Sometimes I feel like I don't know who I am here.

I'm learning about my own ignorance and how truly American I am.

And how that doesn't always feel great.

I keep learning things about Apartheid that I can't believe I didn't know.

Apartheid didn't even get its own chapter in my American high school history books.

And I feel like I never really understood what the big deal was until coming here.

What is that about.

Learning about the struggles here makes my struggles in America seem so small.

Suddenly I'm annoyed with all of my Facebook friends back home protesting about whatever is fashionable in the news this week.

But I'll still like their posts.

What is that about.

I'm missing my two-year anniversary with my therapist to be here.

And that's hard.

And it's strange to go from having someone tell you that: "no, actually, you're not crazy, you're okay" every Wednesday of every week for two years to being left alone with the voice in your head.

A voice that isn't always kind or sure or quiet.

A voice that I was sure I had under control and that I had moved away from.

A voice that I thought for sure was buried somewhere in America.

But here I am with that voice.

And here I am back to hating my body.

All I want is to be able to wear a pair of high waisted jeans and not feel disgusting.

All I want is to go to the mall with everyone and to feel included and not have to sit outside by myself while everyone else has options.

It's hard to be the biggest person on this trip and I don't think anyone knows that.

I mean why would they.  
And it's not them, they're great and amazing and supportive.

It's that voice.

I hate always having to ride in the front seat because I'm too big to fit in the back.  
I hate the side eye the women next to me on the plane gave me because I was spilling into their space.  
I panic every time we order an uber.

I mean, I want to go hiking.  
But I don't want to hold everyone back.  
I'm not fit enough. And I know that.

I mean, I want to go skinny dipping.  
But I don't feel comfortable in my skin right now.  
And it's even fucking called skinny dipping.  
What is that about.

Suddenly I'm in high school again.  
This is my fault, right?  
This is how I deserve to feel.  
Right?  
That's what that voice tells me over and over and over again.

Do people just talk to other people about their bodies?  
Fat people certainly don't.  
Unless they're talking about weight loss.  
Compliments only come when we look smaller.

I am aware that I am a fat person  
BELIEVE ME I COULD NOT BE MORE AWARE  
I am reminded every day that I am fat and what that means in this world.  
but even fat people don't like to be called fat.  
It carries too much shame.  
And it's a shame that you wear in public, and you can't hide it, and it makes you a target for everyone else who can't deal with their own private shame.

I left the country feeling like I was finally feeling good about myself and comfortable with who I am and making progress and man was that just a wall I built around myself and an armor that I apparently can't carry.

And then I buy some data and turn on my phone and I get zero messages and I realize that no one misses me.

And I know that you're bad for me and that we haven't talked in five months but I wish more than anything that you'd message me.

To see your name pop up on my phone would make me feel less disgusting.

To feel missed and wanted is powerful.

Look at me pretending like I'm over it.

I've realized that I haven't actively been trying to get over you

I've realized that I just wait every night for you to get too drunk and message me.

Even though I know you won't

And I still get sad every night when it doesn't happen.

Isn't that fucking stupid?

But. Listen.

Way to go.

You chose safe.

You got yourself a tiny new girlfriend.

Another skinny, smiley blonde.

How typical.

Six years of telling me you didn't want to be in a relationship when really you just didn't want to be seen in public with me.

What about the skinny, smiley blonde made you change your mind?

Bet I can guess.

And I bet you guys have boring sex.

No. I know you do.

You probably only like her because she can get on top and then you don't have to do anything.

And I KNOW you thought I was hot

But did you not want to be with me because the rest of the world didn't think I was hot?

Could you not stand the idea of being attracted romantically and especially physically to a fat girl?

Fine then.

Go with the skinny blonde who you can show off to your other shallow fuckboy friends.

I don't need you to love me to prove that I am lovable.

I don't need you to fuck me to prove that I am fuckable.

But actually I totally do and that's just what I've been repeating to myself for months in hopes that it'll stick and I won't need you anymore.

I remember the first time you kissed me in public

And I remember the first time you kissed me in front of my friends

Why does that have to be a special memory?  
Why couldn't that just be a thing?  
Isn't that just normal?

I remember the first time we had sex and you kissed my stomach at its most sensitive most  
biggest place and I almost cried.  
Did you know what that would mean to me?  
Did you know that after you did that I would never be able to love anyone else?

But you're gone.  
And I refuse to text you.  
And I'll be okay.  
And I'm proud to say I'm the one who cut you off.

But I just had to get this out.

Africa is beautiful.  
I'll never forget my time in this magical place.

Love,

An American Heifer