

# [in]Visible Magazine

Volume 2, Issue 1  
Fall 2009



## About the Models

**Name:** Michelle Plotkin

**Age:** 20

**Major:** Studio Art and Psychology, as of now.

**Favorite food:** Veggie sushi

**Favorite part of your body:** My chest, not my boobs, the area right above my boobs and right under my neck.

**Thoughts on orgasms:** They're my favorite.

**Name:** Antoinette Myers

**Age:** 19

**Major:** Politics/Anthropology dual

**Favorite part of your body:** Eyes

**Favorite food:** "Shrimp. Shrimp is the fruit of the sea. You can barbecue it, boil it, broil it, bake it, sauté it..."

**Thoughts on orgasms:** Orgasms are like diamonds. Every woman needs to have one.

**Name:** Romy-Michelle Unger

**Age:** 21

**Major:** Psychology

**Favorite food(s):** Phallic ones (jkjk)

**Favorite part of your body:** My breasts, small and humble—don't confuse them with mountains.

**Thoughts on orgasms:** Evolution's little way of making it really fun to pass on your genes.

**Name:** Becky Armstrong

**Age:** 18

**Major:** Environmental Analysis

**Favorite Food(s):** Nutella, bacon, asparagus, pears, grapefruit, hazelnuts

**Favorite part of your body:** My hands. They do exactly what I want them to and I enjoy watching them.

**Thoughts on orgasms:** Orgasms are better than food.

**Name:** Dinah Parker

**Age:** 19

**Major:** Undecided

**Favorite food:** Fresh bread

**Favorite part of your body:** My hands because I can make and touch beautiful things and they look just like my mother's.

**Thoughts on orgasms:** Remember in junior high when kids would accidentally say orgasm instead of organism? I do.

# We are

a group of students devoted to reducing the perceived significance of outward appearances in the community, starting with Scripps College. We acknowledge unique character and voice as essential elements of community that should be appreciated in individuals, not drowned out by the majority. We believe there are qualities beyond physical appearances that define a person. As such, we seek to emphasize appreciation of what is frequently overlooked. It is our mission to bring these essential qualities into focus.



## Editor's Note ✨

On April 24 of last semester, a sunny spring promised a warm and lazy summer while classes were doing anything but winding down. In the midst of this crossroads of spring fever and culminating studies, 150 copies of *[in]Visible Magazine* made their way to dorm and Motley Coffeehouse tables, Sallie Tiernan Field House magazine racks, and Malott Commons paper stands. For some (especially its makers!), the distribution of the first issue of *[in]Visible* was a long-awaited delight; for some, it was a complete surprise.

Possibly because there was such a limited supply of magazines to distribute last semester, there was also a large segment of the Scripps student population that had no idea that the first issue had come out. Even now, many students at Scripps are entirely unaware that there is a magazine on campus that seeks to openly discuss body image issues and promote appreciation of the self and others. This year, we are distributing more magazines with the hope of reaching more Scripps students.

Since last year, our newly born magazine has certainly matured. We've learned from past mistakes and taken on new team-members. I am especially excited about our enthusiastic team of writers, most of whom are new to the magazine.

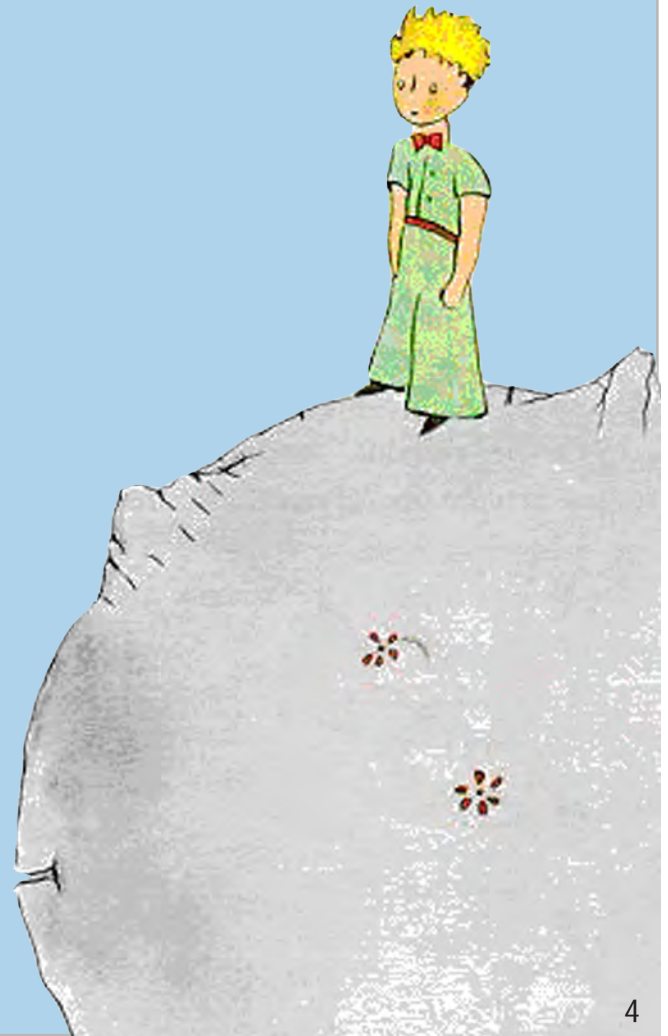
In this second issue, we made a greater effort to look beneath the surface: "What, besides physical appearance, makes a woman beautiful?" We collected opinions from several Scripps students about what makes their friends beautiful and interviewed women like Laura Passarelli, who stopped shaving over the summer and continues to (happily) abstain. In an interview with ARM, a self-identified queer student, we had the chance to learn about body image from the perspective of a queer person. With these and other stories, we were able to explore how body image issues influence different individuals.

To us, these women are more than faces in the crowd. They each have valuable stories to tell, stories that we might miss if we aren't careful. It is normal to flip through the pages of daily life and skim for the important information. But what information gets to be labeled as important? What is made invisible? We hope that these perspectives bring focus to stories that we might otherwise tune out.

It's certainly not warming up to summer this time around, but conditions for this publication of *[in]Visible* have mostly remained the same: classes are still going full-steam and the end of another semester is approaching. In the midst of all this, we hope you have a chance to read through the pages of our second issue. Then, when you're done, pass it on, share the love. Let's keep the discussion going!

Happy reading,

Becca Marion  
Editor-in-Chief



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Photo by Asia Morris

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Photo by Asia Morris

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Photos by Avantika Saraogi



By Guest Writer Antoinette Myers

I never thought I'd have the courage to do it, but here I am, publicly describing the reservations I have about my own hair. See, I have what I like to call, "nappy hair." This hair texture consists of fierce, comb-breaking, neck-snapping, mama-sweating, gut-wrenching naps that make a normal black woman absolutely dread waking up to deal with them in the morning. For those of you who remember the Imus incident, I know that you probably shuddered when you read that last statement. But "nappy" hair is nothing to be ashamed of; in fact, "nappy" simply means that I have super tightly coiled hair. Unfortunately, there are so many misconceptions out there about "black hair" that no one is willing to openly talk about. This is why I started my blog, "Nappy Like Yo' Pappy," and why I am writing this article: to shed light on an invisible but very real issue that faces black women every single day, especially here at Scripps.

I am at a point in my life where I am fed up with the permed ends and the awkward line of demarcation between my natural hair and my permed hair. A perm or a relaxer is a chemical treatment that alters the state of one's hair to be more straight and "manageable." I had a mini nervous breakdown a few months ago because two days before my students for the Scripps College Academy arrived on campus, my hair decided to break as much as it could before causing me to die slowly. I cried loudly, shouted up to the heavens, and then I forced anyone who had a car to rush me over to Target so that I could find any product possible to stop it. My close friend Danyelle told me that it was just simple breakage, something that was normal due to my recent removal of my kinky twists, a hairstyle that I'm wearing currently. I didn't want to hear it. I was convinced that my hair was falling out and that there was nothing I could do to stop it. Now let's fast-forward three months. I am sitting here with an intricately twisted hairstyle known as Senegalese twists, and I don't have to worry about my hair breakage at all. But everyone should know that my hair is super curly and much shorter underneath.

Most black women wear braids and other "natural styles" out of convenience and because they're simply beautiful. The most common question I am asked on this campus is, "Now, is this your real hair?" or "How much of this is your actual hair?" To which I look astounded and answer back, "Why does that even matter?" Why can't people just acknowledge that my hairstyle is beautiful and leave

it at that? And when I take my twists down and decide to proudly wear my afro, I'll get the question, "Well, why did you cut off all your beautiful hair? It was so pretty and long." Statements like these leave me honestly afraid of looking too "black" in a predominately white institution such as Scripps. I will become the girl who went natural: the afro wearing, peace-sign loving, Erykah Badu listening, automatically positive while still being angry, overly independent black woman. I'm not sure I'm altogether ready to deal with that pressure. Will I still be attractive in the midst of these strange beauty ideals in Claremont? At parties, what would I do? I can't fling my hair this way and that. I can't just hop right on into the pool when it gets hot; my natural texture will become too apparent. I can't deal with the silly questions I get like, "Do you wash you hair?" And to those of you who have wondered, the answer is, "Of course, I do." Or questions like, "Is your hair naturally frizzy?" To which I answer, "What does that even mean?"

With encounters like these, I wonder what people's reactions would be to my natural, curly hair.

This is an unrecognized battle that black women go through in a world that constantly barrages them with images of Eurocentric beauty ideals and forces them to put into question their own beauty every single day. Most people don't understand that black hair is just another one of those issues that black women have to face. As a woman, hair is one of the standards of beauty, and for black women, there is an immense pressure to have "good hair," or hair that is straighter, longer, and arguably more white. It is a strange fact, but it is very true. And after years of straightening one's hair, the hair follicle is ultimately damaged and left limp from the extreme harshness of these chemicals.

Most black women receive their first perms or relaxers as young as 8 years old. At that time, young black girls are keenly aware of the difference between their hair and the hair of their classmates of other races. Think about it. When is the last time you saw a kinky-haired Barbie doll? This is not by any means a new phenomenon. There are some women who walk around with their hair natural and others who walk around with "natural" hairstyles, i.e. any braided/twisted style that doesn't require chemical alteration of the texture. And then there are those of us who think that our hair is either unmanageable or too difficult for constant upkeep, so we rely on the relaxer to keep up an "I have good hair" image.

With that said, everyone has a different hair journey. Even while talking about the issues of "good" hair versus "bad" hair, generalizations still occur because not all black hair is the same and not everyone thinks that their hair is "nappy." Approaching someone without knowing certain information about how they talk about their hair can be very damaging. One reason why incidents occur and become racial controversy is that it just isn't the same when "other" people are labeling your texture. And while this issue is far more complex than one article can cover, the truth of it is that even something as insignificant as hair can directly define a person's experience in the world.



# Hairy Shame

by Liz Lyon



Hair. Leg hair. Sophomore Laura Passarelli smiles as she rubs her fingers lightly over her shin. "It's fuzzy," she says, "but it feels natural."

Laura's hair, which has grown four months without blade, wax, or cream applied to it, is hardly noticeable. As she sits on a couch in the Dorsey living room, she is completely comfortable with her legs, which look natural.

Her demeanor is easygoing, her body language casual. Instead of staring at her legs, you focus on her face and the way she casually wraps her hands and wrists around her legs, neither displaying nor hiding them, but, rather, letting them be a natural extension of herself. After all, her legs are a part of who she is.

Laura's decision to let her leg hair grow developed from her final project in Core II: Feminist Theory of Body, Yoga, and Dance, which examined how American society views bodies, how they move, and what messages about the body are projected by the media. Her project, in conjunction with Hailey Hartford ('12) and Jesse Klekamp ('12), consisted of dissecting television advertisements for shaving products for women and men and analyzing the messages they project.

While one men's Gillette ad insists that their razor is "the best a man can get," implying that the man chooses the razor, a Venus ad tells women that they can "release the goddess within" only by relying upon their razor. Laura felt that the Gillette Fusion razor was complimentary to men's pre-established confidence in a society that favors the white male, adding to their natural masculinity, while the Venus razor emphasized that women had the potential to become feminine, even goddesses, but could not reach that point without the razor. She says, eyes flashing and hands out for emphasis, "It felt as if these ads were saying that I was not okay the way I was already."

Laura believes that individuals must decide why they shave, and that it should be an autonomous decision and not because of social constraints. She understands that some women like the feel of shaved legs or dislike body hair, amongst a multitude of other reasons, but she feels that a woman should shave for herself, not to please her partner or conform to societal expectations.

Laura looks down at her legs. "I'd shave and then touch them, and it wouldn't feel like me I was touching," she says. In her last relationship,

she always made sure she shaved her legs before seeing her boyfriend. "If I didn't," she adds, "I would feel self-conscious and ashamed."

"Shame is something you're not responsible for, because it's when other people tell you that you're not right the way you are. I didn't want to be ashamed anymore because I hadn't shaved." Before she stopped shaving her legs, Laura wondered where it would be acceptable to have leg hair. In a more lasting and involved relationship, such as one with a spouse, she wonders what areas of her body she would leave unshaved. "I don't want there to be any part of my body that I can't accept."

The notion of shaving is so gendered, and Laura says that all she could think about while shaving was how everyone was going to look at her legs and how hot they would be. At the end of her Core II course, she decided to stop allowing herself to feel ashamed, and along with that, she stopped shaving. She decided not to shave again until she got over the shame, and then, if she wanted to start again, she felt it would be her decision completely.

In her estimation, unshaved legs are no embarrassment, and she is now less critical of her body in general. "My legs are fuzzy and nice. I like the way they look - my legs are Laura-legs!"

"The beginning was difficult," Laura reminisces. After a few weeks of letting her hair grow, Laura was at work at a children's educational camp when a five-year-old student wanted to draw on her with face paint. The counselors had already let the students draw on them, and Laura's face and arms were covered. However, she still had space on her legs. "I hesitated for a moment, still feeling a bit of shame and wondering if the student would notice my hair." Nevertheless, Laura stuck her leg out so that the student could scribble on it. "She didn't notice. At five years old, the children in our society have not yet been primed to respond to hair or hairlessness; to them, hair is completely natural, so why shouldn't it be so for me, too?"

Now, as Laura continues not to shave her legs, she no longer feels ashamed about her hairy legs. She accepts them as natural and feels that her legs are hers completely. "They're not on display for anyone."

*I don't want there to be any part of  
my body that I can't accept.*





## The Evolution of the Tan

By Ann Mayhew

Photo by Michelle No

One would assume that Coco Chanel did not realize that she would be setting a decades-long international trend when she stepped off her friend's yacht in 1923. As the famous fashion designer stretched her dark, suntanned legs on the mainland again, explaining that she "had been in the sun too long," a slowly evolving trend was finally set. Coco Chanel shall forever be credited as the first among many tanned Malibu Barbie-like women and men. Looking back through time, however, this changed ideal of beauty was a recent development for the issue of body image because pale skin had been prized for centuries before.

Pale skin was considered a necessity of beauty even as early as ancient Greek and Roman times, when people would use various skin whitening methods to get the look, including lead paints and chalks. Light skin continued to be valued up until the Industrial Revolution because tan skin indicated that a person was poor and thus worked many hours outside as a manual laborer. In the Elizabethan Era in England, women carried parasols to protect themselves from the sun and powdered their faces with white makeup. Such fashion techniques spread to the United States during colonization.

The Industrial Revolution led to a reversal of roles, and many distinct industrial characteristics led to the equation of suntans with beauty. First, the connection between working outside and poverty could no longer be completely justified. Many workers moved from farms to factories, where they performed indoor labor, which naturally led to pale skin. Women began showing more skin during the Jazz Age in the 1920's, with miniskirts and sleeveless tops that exposed limbs to the sun.

Another important factor was the invention and increased popularity of the automobile. Owning an automobile became a sign of wealth and allowed the rich to go on vacations, which included trips to the beach. Chanel merely confirmed this trend, giving herself as a celebrity to whom people could point and exclaim, "Look, she's tan, too!"

Another interesting development during the early 20th century was a sudden interest in exposure to sunlight as a cure for certain diseases. Dr. Auguste Rollier opened a sun clinic in 1903, claiming that exposure to the sun could cure many illnesses. Although the sun does have some health benefits, especially its provision of vitamin D, it is now known that over-exposure can have dangerous con-

sequences. Too much sun tanning can lead to skin diseases, especially skin cancer. People can generally consume enough vitamin D through their normal diets, so going to a tanning salon or lying outside too long should not be solutions to vitamin D deficiency.

Tanning also has evolved along with American society. The bikini was invented in the 1950's, allowing women to get an "all-over" tan. Today, there is a cultural conflict between the realization of the health defects caused by sunbathing and the pressure placed upon the youth through advertisements and images that idealize images of beaches, California, and tan models.

Unfortunately, this trend is not only unhealthy but unfair to many people. Because of the large variety of complexions, many women and men cannot join their peers on the chaise longues in the sun because their skin is naturally more likely to burn and therefore they are at higher risk of getting skin cancer. Plenty of people have to wear sweatshirts and lather on the sunscreen when they go to the beach, while others choose to wear the least amount of clothing possible in order to avoid undesirable tan lines. There are also men and women who are proud of their paleness and their ability to properly take care of their skin despite fashion trends and media pressure.

There are many beautiful celebrities who are notably pale, which demonstrates how beauty is all objective. (Want proof? Look no further than Nicole Kidman, Evan Rachel Wood, Rose McGowan, and Gwen Stefani.) Not only that, but the attractiveness of tanning itself is questionable—sure, tanning is an accepted norm, but ask around and it will not take long to learn that most people find unnaturally tan people less attractive. The health and naturalness of you and your body is what matters because health is the most appealing aspect of your outer beauty. If your skin is naturally lighter, keeping it healthy is what will radiate beauty—if your skin is naturally darker, this is equally beautiful.

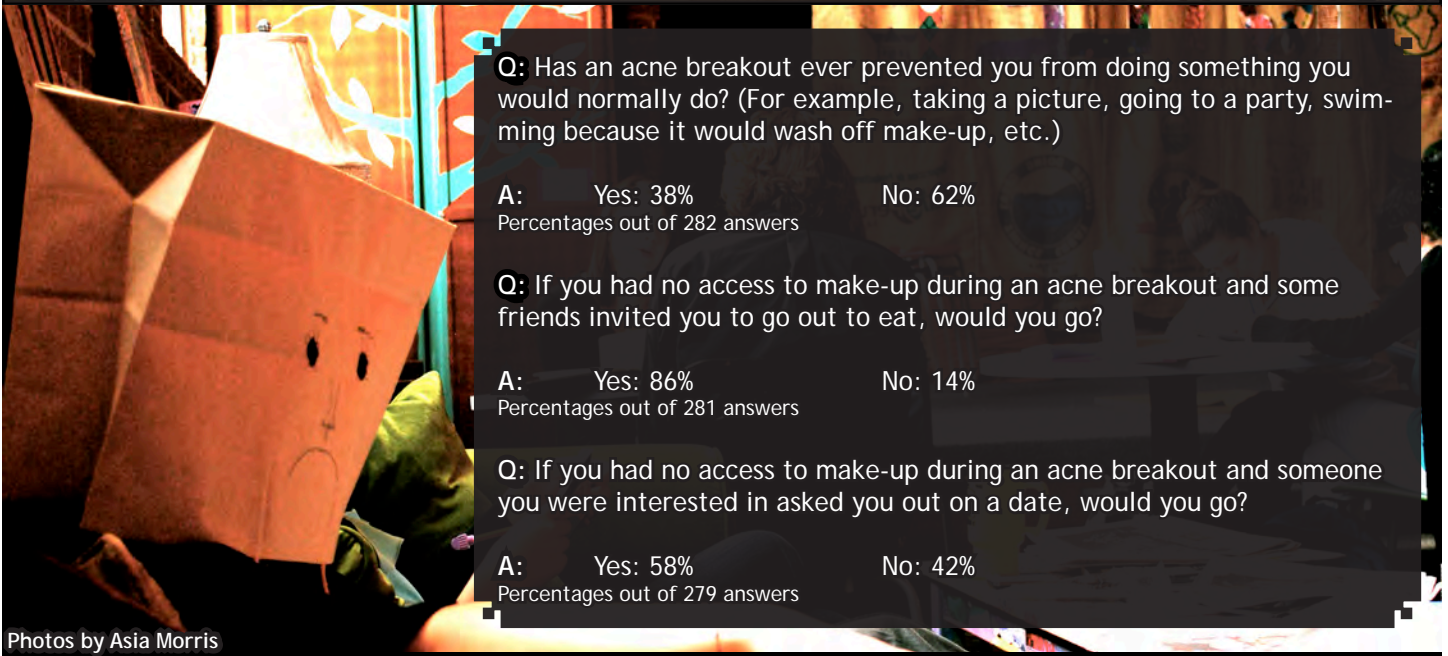
Tanning should be seen as the discriminating and recent trend it is, instead of one of the fundamental aspects of beauty some consider it to be. If you ever feel self-conscious about the tone of your skin, keep in mind that beauty is truly about health and your self-confidence. Take the words of Scarlett Johansson, a notably pale and gorgeous actress, to heart: "If you're comfortable with yourself, then it's sexy."

# Breakout Blues

By Lisa Kau



From the end of September to the beginning of October 2009, *[in]Visible* sent out links to a survey by way of emails, the mail digest, and a Facebook group. 287 current Scripps students participated. These results do not claim to accurately represent the entire student body of Scripps College and do not take acne severity into account.



**Q:** Has an acne breakout ever prevented you from doing something you would normally do? (For example, taking a picture, going to a party, swimming because it would wash off make-up, etc.)

**A:** Yes: 38% No: 62%  
Percentages out of 282 answers

**Q:** If you had no access to make-up during an acne breakout and some friends invited you to go out to eat, would you go?

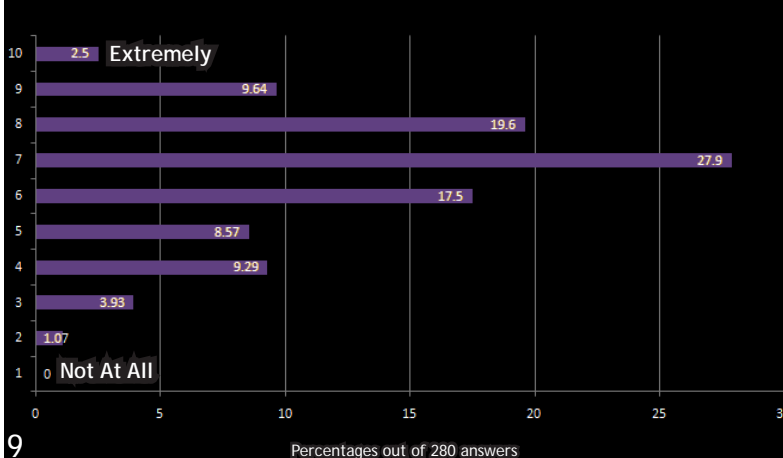
**A:** Yes: 86% No: 14%  
Percentages out of 281 answers

**Q:** If you had no access to make-up during an acne breakout and someone you were interested in asked you out on a date, would you go?

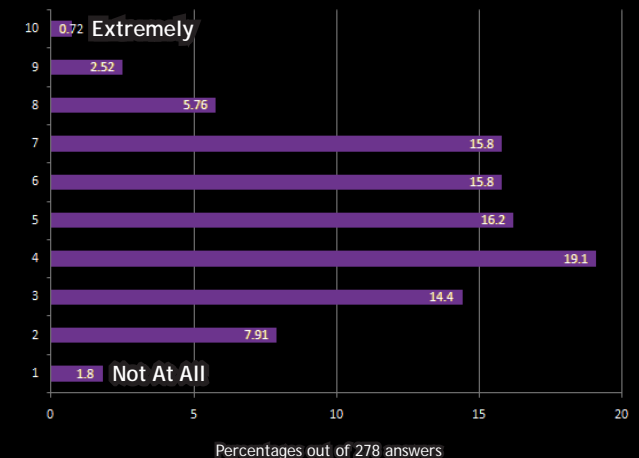
**A:** Yes: 58% No: 42%  
Percentages out of 279 answers

Photos by Asia Morris

1) On a scale of 1-10, how confident do you normally feel?



2) On a scale of 1-10, how confident do you feel during an acne breakout?





# HAPPY, HEALTHY, QUICK FOOD

By Kristina Hennig and Emma Jaffe

Sometimes when we think of healthy foods, phrases such as time-consuming, hard-to-find and expensive come to mind. This is often true because of our Claremont College bubble and our near-empty bank accounts, but there are many easy ways to find a yummy, healthier alternative to dining-hall food. One way is to walk or bike to Trader Joe's on Foothill Boulevard, where you will find a grocery store filled with delicious and healthy food.

Of the many great options, we have found three nutritious snacks that can be eaten during the day. So, instead of getting food from one of the Claremont College cafés (or making Easy Mac in your dorm room), grab something healthy from Trader Joe's. The following items are easy to store in a fridge and make whenever you are out of meals or if your flex dollars seem to be quickly disappearing or gone...

Daily Nutritional Suggestions for an average 135-pound woman:

Nutrition	Amount
Calories	2400
Carbohydrate	130.0 g
Fiber	25.0 g
Protein	47.0 g
Vitamin C	75.0 mg
Vitamin D	200.0 IU
Calcium	1000.0 mg
Iron	18.0 mg



## Morning Snack

Yogurt and granola bar

Cost: \$2.49

Yogurt: 11 grams of protein per serving

Granola: 7 grams of fiber per serving



## Afternoon Snack

Chicken wrap with pesto vinaigrette

Cost: \$3.99

Chicken: 26 grams of protein per serving

Wrap: 63 grams of carbohydrates per serving



## Dinner Appetizer

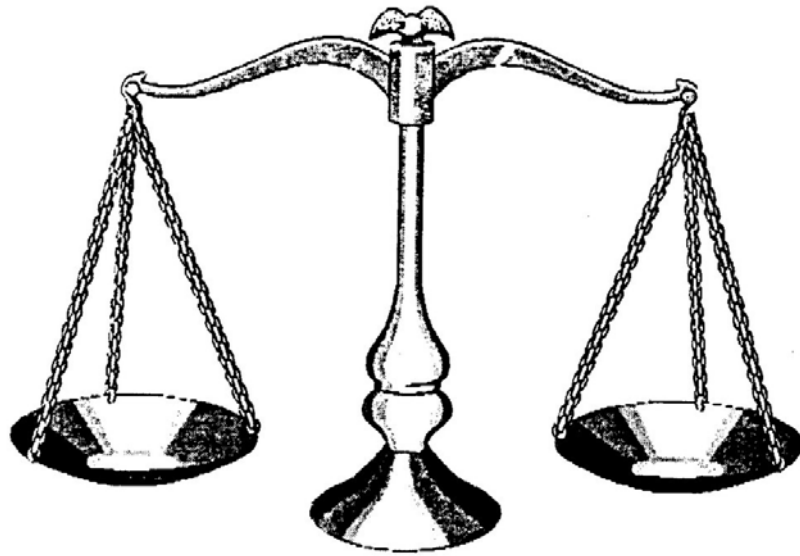
A French-style flat bread with ham, caramelized onions and Gruyère cheese

Cost: \$4.39

Ham and Gruyère: 8 grams of protein per serving

Thin wheat crust: 11 grams of carbohydrates per serving

Photos by Emma Jaffe



# The Balancing Point

By Michelle No

## Why size doesn't matter and why moderation is key in discussion of health.

Skinny is to beautiful as obese is to... Ugly? Repulsive? Lazy? The ease with which such words come to our minds speaks to the embarrassingly seamless connection that has developed between fatness and all of its negative connotations.

However much our obsession with appearance has progressed since the olden days of powdered wigs and foot bindings, we can't ignore the culture of impulsive judgments and first impressions that still dominates today's social interactions. The standards of normalcy are cutting, and their biggest victims are the overweight. By mainstream logic, skinniness goes hand-in-hand with happiness and glamour, and, inversely, obesity with laziness and illness.

But harsh as the associations may be, are they factually incorrect?

The answer can be found in the same scientific evidence that is used to support a slim waist. Essentially, a small size is encouraged because of its relation to a small and, consequently, healthy diet. But when size zero espouses the one-size-fits-all formula for health, the logic trumping the small begins to fail. Not only is a supermodel waist size



unnecessary for well-being, it is also physically unattainable for some and, as such, must be rejected as a definition of health.

Numbers speak volumes about the correlation between weight and health. Although the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* states that average weights for the population have been steadily increasing, average ages of death have also been following in their stead.

This is not to suggest that more pounds don't come with their own slew of physical illnesses. Heart disease and type II diabetes are but two cholesterol-related diseases that all the larger individuals of the population. But a 25-inch waist is not an essential component to living a heart-healthy life.

Ironically, it may even be detrimental to health. In fact, the *JAMA* defined a healthy weight as having a body mass index (the measure of body fat based on height and weight) between 18.5 and 24.9, proving that the elusive perfect waist size is but an unnecessarily extreme solution to a problem that can be met halfway.

First, we must learn to sort through the health advice that is profusely marketed to the general population. Rather than tuning our ears to our own bodies, we are being forced to shape our eating and exercise habits after advice that actually only caters to the physical predispositions of a fraction of the population. The majority of this propagated information relies on the faulty assumption that bikini-body lifestyles are both readily attainable and essential.

Studies from the American Psychological Association actually reveal that socioeconomic class is strongly correlated with obesity. The wealthier a person is, the more fancy, green, Whole Foods groceries she is able to purchase, and vice versa. Racial inclinations also show that appetite is an inherent predisposition. Some ethnic groups are more prone to gain weight as suggested by infant studies.

The list goes on and on, suggesting that weight management is perhaps one of the most individualized courses of maintenance we must

adopt. Perfect proportions are physically impossible and, more importantly, unnecessary requirements for long and happy lives—which goes to show that, while magazine features and friends' weight loss fitness regimes may motivate us to get active, they should not hinder us from developing a personal, and not canned, relationship with our bodies.

The human body is also an individuated machine that does not respond to demands and changes consistently among people. Contrary to popular belief, appetite is elastic. As defined by an article in the *Atlantic*, the elasticity of appetite pitches the idea that "we have no idea how hungry we are, so we respond to growing

## The elusive perfect waist size is but an unnecessarily extreme solution to a problem that can be met halfway.

portion sizes with growing appetites."

This explains that while portions offered in public diners have grown, Americans' appetites have grown with them, instead of plateauing at a healthy volume. Following this train of thought, establishing good eating habits must involve shrinking our appetite more than our plate. One person's idea of a smaller portion may be a plate of pasta, while another's may be a colorful salad. Nevertheless, that diet change must adhere to personal body proportions and eating habits, not this month's new diet fad.

But how do we go about reworking psychological associations that have become embedded into men's and women's brains since their first Barbies and GI Joe dolls? Somehow, that primeval connection between weight (the number) and health (the state of well-being), must be broken.

Some thinkers out there, both frustrated and motivated by the social prejudices at hand, are already at work. Originating in the 1960s, the "fat power" movement has worked to change the beliefs that buttress many contemporary cultural and political norms. Weight-based discrimination occurs on several levels and in various

environments; whether it's workplace bias, denial of public access, or hiring discrimination, overweight citizens everywhere are being treated unfairly and not for concern of their health.

And although the media may be an easy outlet to blame, other factors are also at fault for stagnating the debate on weight and health. Primarily, ourselves.

Some "fat" activists, for example, have gone to the extremes, burning diet books and verbally bashing fellow skinny friends. But certainly such activism is not activism at all.

The problem with such militancy is that it has increasingly gravitated toward victimizing the people, and not the system, that underlies this faulty belief system, unwittingly persecuting an innocent stratum of the population. In the midst of this dialogue, it is especially awkward to be an individual at either extreme of the scale.

If we make the argument that weight is a biological trait over which we have control only up to a point, shouldn't skinny colleagues alike be equally respected for their weight? While the social and biological predispositions of some may mean more flesh to go around, for others, it may equate to the longed-after stick skinny body. Either way, the translation of health must not involve cursory judgments of either extremes of size.

The real culprits responsible for confounding the relationship between health and weight are the cultural practices, which, through habit and practice, have sneaked upon our subconscious and compounded our harsh judgments of others. Celebrity worship, devious fast-food practices, and superficial nutrition education are just some of the institutions that must replace the scapegoat position that skinny and fat individuals hold in this dialogue.

Rewiring a size-obsessed culture will be difficult, but we can each contribute to a change for the better if we really ask ourselves: since when did being healthy necessarily mean being a size zero?

# DECODE THIS!

By Claire Calderon

**Hallelujah! We are finally starting to talk about it. Sex, that is. We're admitting that it's out there, that it happens, that we're curious. Women are proudly declaring themselves sexual beings beyond the roles of wife or mother.**

While it is important to celebrate this discourse and recognize the progress made in past years, one should also remember to consider how the issue is addressed and what kinds of messages about sex are fighting for (and winning) our attention.

If you've glanced at a Cosmo recently, or for that matter, practically any magazine seeking a female audience, you've probably noticed titles offering "8 Things That Drive Men Wild In Bed," "Body Language Decoder: how to know what he really likes" or "263 Juicy Answers from Guys." It seems that from every direction we are being urged to decipher the ever-baffling behavior or desires of men so that we can better suit their needs. This discussion of sex doesn't feel too liberating, but rather uncomfortably familiar.

Many of these articles bear a striking resemblance to the format of advice features or advertisements offered to women over fifty years ago regarding how to be a better wife and caretaker. Many of which, both past and present, employ the same use of idealistic pictures: a couple sharing a Kodak moment or a woman offering a coy sideways glance like she has a dazzling secret.

They also share a tongue-in-cheek instructive style, designed to make the audience feel that the advice is both informative and devilishly fun. In a 1948 advertisement for a facial cleanser entitled "How to Escape the Dreaded Phone Call: 'I Won't Be Home Tonight!'" a woman is depicted

(adjacent to the column of advice) smiling in her form-fitting dress and heels as she gracefully chops at a telephone pole. Both these and contemporary sources urge their readers to prepare carefully for an interaction with "their man" and to present themselves as flawlessly as possible. Both are guilty of an injurious perpetuation of male and female stereotypes.

The fact of the matter is that sex is both more and less complicated than popular magazines make it seem. Where these magazines fall short is in portraying and valuing non-heteronormative relationships. The bright, capitalized titles screeching at us in the supermarket checkout line assume a very narrow range of experience. If you don't aspire to achieve Katherine Heigl's cleavage or find yourself unable to relate to the uncannily handsome heterosexual couples merrily flirting in their best sets of undies, you're plum out of luck.

Popular culture also convolutes the act by trapping consumers in a perpetual quest to disentangle the desires and intentions of the opposite sex. As women, we are constantly being told that we need advice and guidance to "arouse him like crazy" or "find out his true feelings." Regardless of our sexual orientation, this is a slippery slope.

The back cover of a 2006 revised edition of Tim LaHaye's book *Understand Your Man: Secrets of the Male Temperament* boasts, "Bestselling author Tim LaHaye has the answers. In *Understand Your Man*, he explores the four distinct personality types from a male point of view. He shows women that these traits are ingrained before birth and that it is hopeless to try to change who a man is." *Women's Health Magazine* is among one of the many resources to which women turn in order to solve such behavioral mysteries, perhaps using the "Decode Him" feature on their website, which provides instant translation services promising to provide "your guide to guy talk."

Last year, the U.S. Department of Labor published a survey announcing that women account-

ed for 51 percent of all workers in high-paying management and professional occupations, a strong affirmation that American women are proudly establishing themselves outside the home. Although most of us consider ourselves under significantly less pressure than our grandmothers to domesticate, we should still be wary of the forces urging us to see our partners and our bodies in a specific light.

At the recent "I Heart Female Orgasm" talk, speakers Marshall Miller and Melissa Lopez drew our attention to the sad reality that many women know far more about male pleasure and bodies than their own. While we can likely name the most sensitive areas of the penis, our own clitorises seem to occupy some irretrievable space, maybe floating around with all sorts of lost socks and Pokémon cards.

It's time to be more critical of the images we consume everyday that urge us to be very specific types of women with particular kinds of partners. It's time to learn a little more about what goes on down there and not for anyone's benefit but our own. True, we may have to do it without the aid of 12 simple deciphering steps, but we can handle that, right?



Photo credit: Glamour, Cosmopolitan



# Take a Bow

By Jenna Tico

The train conductor smiles at me, completely unaware that anything is amiss. He reaches out. I hand him my ticket. And then, out of nowhere, I flash him a grin: only where my left front tooth used to be, there is now a substantial hunk of broccoli. I continue smiling as though nothing is wrong, as is my custom on public transportation. He, however, is put in the unfortunate position of telling me that half of my lunch is staring out of my mouth, or averting his gaze. He opts for the latter.

Under normal circumstances, I would have spent the rest of the day smiling like a lunatic and only discovered the truth once it was much too late. At that point, the various times at which my teeth had been exposed would flash through my mind, stirring up a healthy mixture of humiliation, social resignation, and horror. This afternoon, however, was different: the misplaced broccoli was of my own doing. Though it seems a little dramatic to contemplate social quarantine over a vegetable, the feeling that others are paying attention to our appearance is a universal phenomenon—officially titled the Spotlight Effect. In self-imposing my own spotlight that day, I hoped to answer a few questions: how do different people react? Does anyone notice? And at the end of the day...does it really matter?

We've all experienced it. There is the toilet-paper-stuck-to-shoe and Marx Brothers moment of frantic foot scuffing that follows. There is the mortification of smiling in the mirror and discovering that the majority of your blueberry smoothie never made it down your throat. There is the quintessential failure to notice a grapefruit-sized pasta stain over your left boob. For some reason, the identification of these blunders convinces us that the world has us under a high-definition lens; we feel every station tune into our trauma, and imagine that they are fiendishly judging us.

Perhaps the lovely I'll-never-show-my-face-again monologue begins its tragic loop. One way or another, the moment the spotlight zooms in is a moment of agony. The feeling is not limited to unexpected blunders, either—in a recent study by Tom Gilovich, participants were told to

wear a Barry Manilow t-shirt and approximate how many people noticed. Turns out that almost no one did. The participants, however, grossly overestimated what they believed was a negative response. The Effect takes hold and we immediately isolate

ourselves from the people we feel are scrutinizing us; still, we're dying for someone, anyone, to peel the kick-me sign off of our backs. Alas, the likelihood of this happening is directly related to the closeness of said person to you, and whether or not you've reached the stage in your relationship when you can do things like fart and forget the words to the Pledge of Allegiance. If not, you can guarantee that strangers will address your gaffe in the exact same way: not at all. Take my broccoli experiment.

It was no surprise that the conductor remained mute, considering my competition for freakiest passenger came from a man three rows behind me playing "Stairway to Heaven" on his bare stomach. But no one else said anything either: were they just afraid to tell me? The next step beyond staring would be the point-to-the-mouth, a.k.a. repeatedly indicating the same place until it appears he or she is experiencing a mild fit. The bolder ones might include a variation of "you've got something right there." Either way, the stranger who speaks up is probably doing it to earn a little Karmic collateral—cosmically insuring that the next time his fly is down, someone will stop indulging in schadenfreude long enough to tell him about it.

On the other end of the spectrum, there are always those non-strangers who have no qualms about telling the truth; in my family, food in the teeth is pointed out at a thunderous volume and accompanied by a rude joke. I had only to step off the train before my friend told me about the broccoli. If I had waited five more minutes to see my mom, I'm sure she would have skipped that step altogether and picked it out herself...lovingly, of course.

So why do we spend so much time obsessing over the opinions of the general public, people we have never seen before and will probably never see again? We self-impose a universal magnifying glass that makes it seem like everyone is looking, judging. It's all the more confusing when we go through an entire day without being alerted to our faux pas. However, if someone appears as though they do not notice you, it's probably for the perfectly good reason that they don't.

Research surrounding the Spotlight Effect has deducted that we overestimate the amount others notice us, and everyone is far more focused on themselves than the minor flubs of the people around them. What we consider to be an apocalyptic pimple does not, contrary to the world of 80's teen movies, disrupt anyone else's hectic life. And even from this egotistical conclusion, we can take comfort in the fact that any time a gigantic "L" is stapled to our foreheads, a select group of people will never hesitate to tell us.

We may be our own biggest interests, but we are also our own biggest critics; if we take it easy on ourselves, there is a good chance that everyone else will too. It's like the Brazilians say: no pain, no pain. But because the Spotlight Effect is a part of human nature, until we all reach that day of self-actualized inner peace, we can continue checking ourselves out in every reflective surface to eliminate the possibility of wayward broccoli. That, and carry around extra dental floss.

Just in case.



Original Artwork by Avantika Saraogi

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# Men and Weightlifting

By Valerie Latimore



Photo Credit: <http://sportsebooks.com>

Countless forms of media have been devoted to exploring the female body ideal and to highlighting the extremes to which some women will go to achieve these socially accepted expectations. However, little information is readily available addressing how men feel about their perceived obligations to fulfill a certain body ideal. Do men experience the same pressures to look a certain way as women do? Is the psychology of male weightlifting comparable to that of exercising for women? To gain insight into these questions, *[in]Visible* asked men from all 4C's about their personal experiences with body image issues.

What do men think women are physically attracted to? When asked to describe the type of body they thought women wanted, moderation was thought to be key to getting female approval. However, it was assumed that the majority of women would be more into muscles than not. One participant, when asked what kind of male body he thought women wanted, answered, "One with a six pack... not necessarily a six pack but a nicely flat chest and stomach...a very tight muscular body. Maybe women have a tolerance for guts or flabbiness but not much. Arms are important too." Most of the men expressed the belief that women generally evaluate the physical appearance of men more subjectively than men do. One respondent stated, "I think it varies a whole lot. A lot of women think Brad Pitt is

really hot, but some women think Vince Vaughn is hot."

But personally I don't see why for Vince Vaughn." Another stated, "I don't know if I'm convinced that women care as much as males think."

In terms of motivations for weightlifting, the majority of interviewees reported both aesthetic and practical incentives. The men who participated in sports or who had hobbies that necessitated strength stated that weightlifting granted practical benefits in these activities. One interviewee stated, "I think it's not necessary to have super huge pecs as long as your arms don't look all bony and you look resilient enough to do something that requires some labor. As long as you look dependable, not useless." When asked whether strength or looks was more important to him, one contributor answered, "I definitely care more about strength, probably because I'm trying to be a good athlete. But for guys who aren't trying to be good at sports, it's about looks." Aesthetic appearance is a heavy motivation for weightlifting. One participant, in explaining his motivations for weightlifting, stated, "It seems like the average person at my school is really jacked. There's peer pressure to lift weights. Everyone is really conscious of their image. They want to look good, and they are really motivated." However, some men expressed an entirely different motivation for working out, one saying, "Exercising is a way of escaping, especially from the stress of academics. You feel free. It feels really good."

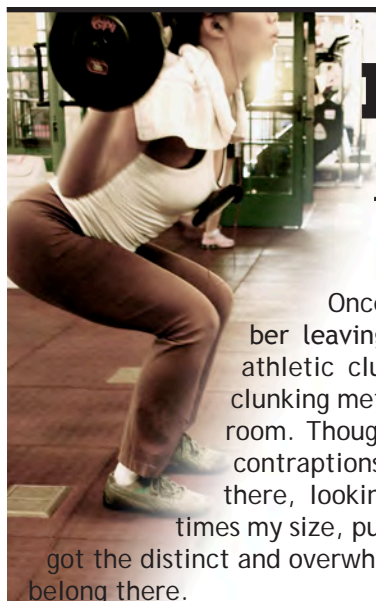
Whether it be to attain their ideal bodies, gain strength, or just let off steam and relieve stress, men visit the gym for a variety of reasons. Many of the men interviewed feel societal and peer pressure to look a certain way. While all of the participants acknowledge that society projects a particular standard of masculine appearance, many men also acknowledge that women generally evaluate men in the real world with subjectivity. Many men observe that women seem to "accept" a broad range of male body types. It would be difficult to determine if this male assumption of female subjectivity is valid or not, but it is certainly worth thinking about.



# Harder. Better. Faster. Stronger.

Why women and weights make a great combination

By Jody Goldberg



Once, in high school, I remember leaving the fitness center at my athletic club to follow the sounds of clunking metal and peek into the weight room. Though I recognized many of the contraptions and movements practiced there, looking at the bulky men, three times my size, pulling, lifting, and grunting, I got the distinct and overwhelming feeling that I did not belong there.

My feelings about those heavy weights have since changed. This past summer, while working at another athletic club, a co-worker encouraged me to try lifting. He pointed me in the direction of a website devoted to women and weights called [www.stumptuous.com](http://www.stumptuous.com), the title of which refers to the webmistress Krista Scott-Dixon, PhD's pre-weight-lifting body—something between "stumpy" and "sumptuous." I e-mailed Ms. Scott-Dixon to ask why lifting was so great for women (or people in general). She responded with an enthusiastic list:

"Functional strength for everyday life and sports. More effective movement. Better balance and coordination. Better bone density. Better metabolic regulation—nutrients do their jobs properly, and the body's ratio of lean tissue to body fat is optimized. You're stronger, leaner, and fitter for life, and everything just runs more efficiently and effectively."

While I can't vouch for what's happening inside my body, since I started lifting about twice a week three months ago, I've felt stronger than I've ever been, able to do things, like rock climb and move heavy objects, that I once struggled to do. I can hike further in hotter weather. For the first time in my life, I can see muscles when I flex. And personally, the more I lift, the better I feel about my own physical appearance and attractiveness.

I know that probably none of this is news to girls who have participated on sports teams their whole lives and have coaches who push them to weight train. For some reason, though, weight lifting is far outside the social norm for women's fitness, so for the rest of us, breaking in can be extremely intimidating.

One of the main things stopping women from lifting is a fear of how it will change their bodies. As Scott-Dixon puts it, "There is a persistent myth that weight training will make women huge and grotesque, even though I don't think anyone's ever actually seen one of these mythical beasts in person." Many women have heard that doing anything more than "toning" with small weights will cause women to "bulk up."

There are several problems with these notions:

First, the only way to build lean muscle that is functional—as in, strength helpful for tasks outside the gym—is to lift heavy weights. Second, there are two things that women need to "bulk up" that almost all of us at Scripps lack:

1) Testosterone (and those of us on hormonal birth control have even less than the normal population) and 2) Anabolic steroids. Without those two, it is almost impossible for women to reach the unnatural proportions shown in *Pumping Iron 2*. Our best models for healthy women who devote their lives to lifting are reality TV stars Jillian Michaels and Jackie Warner, who claim to receive countless love letters for their muscular physiques. There's simply no concrete evidence that lifting can have any considerably negative effect on physical attractiveness.

When we women want to lift, there are still many fears and obstacles towering menacingly before us. Lifting is something most of us have never done before, and personal trainers are expensive off-campus and nonexistent in the 5C fitness centers. It's a lot easier to use the weight machines (which interfere with natural body movement and stability and make it almost impossible to gain functional strength) or just stick to a solid 45 minutes of cardio. Also, when lifting heavy weights, we look funny. It can be embarrassing to stick your butt out in a strange direction or exhale audibly or make a straining face if your surrounding peers look like elegant gazelles, prancing along on elliptical machines behind you.

I decided that to come to terms with this dilemma, I had to face my original fears about weight lifting and enter a weight room where, rather than having the comfort of blending in with my peers like at Sallie Tiernan, I simply did not fit in. I decided to seek out the weight room behind the gym at Claremont McKenna, where, even to my surprise, there was not a single Athena to keep me company. I found myself a lone doe in a sea of soccer-playing Stags. I went through my typical workout of squats, dead lifts, and overhead presses, and as I lifted my legs for the excruciating abs workout only a "Nelson Chair" can provide, I scanned the room and realized that not a single person was looking at me. I was invisible.

I realized that if I were invisible at a gym where I stood out by my gender alone, exhaling loudly under the strain of Tiernan's dumbbells probably wouldn't turn too many heads either. Now, there is nothing stopping me from getting as fit as I can with free weights, and I hope there's nothing stopping you. So go, now. Be brave and lift weights so that when you say you're a strong Scripps woman, you'll have the (lean, gorgeous, powerful!) muscles to prove it!





# A Disembodied Voice

By Claire Palermo

Nobody looks at me and assumes that I have an eating disorder. I am larger than what is acceptable by most societal standards of beauty. I avoid form-fitting clothing, because anything that pinches makes me more aware of my body than I'd like to be. While the fight between my desire to be healthy and my habit of comforting myself with food rages on internally, I survive from day to day by keeping as much of a distance from my body as possible. My body is not representative of who I am – it is a vehicle to keep the rest of me going.

Keeping a distance helps me deal with the fact that I go through the same emotional struggles that an anorexic person does, my problem just isn't as recognized. I have non-purging bulimia, one of the much-derided eating disorders that make you fat instead of thin. This is said as if having an eating disorder is perfectly okay and worthy of sympathy, as long as it makes you skinny. The idea that "thin is better" is so strongly ingrained in our society that it is often articulated by the people who are being trusted and hired to treat people for disordered eating – perhaps unconsciously.

In the spring of 2008, which was my sophomore year, I was very sick. My lack of energy and depression had gotten so bad that I would only stay awake for a few hours each day. I have hazy memories of getting up at noon, going to class from about 1 p.m. until 2:30 p.m., and then getting back in bed by 5 p.m. with my homework unfinished. My main source of comfort and stress relief was food

– lots and lots of it.

On some days, I would have five or six big meals with snacks in between. I was constantly buying new clothes and getting into fights with my parents about my addiction. They arranged for me to join a local support group. I went to two meetings and stopped going because I felt isolated being the only non-anorexic person there. Getting better would require putting my unhealthy lifestyle on hold.

In the summer, I was admitted into a residential treatment program in San Diego. Contrary to what most people think, this is not the same as being put into a mental health asylum. No white windowless rooms were involved. My fellow patients and I jokingly called it "rehab" instead of "eating disorder treatment center," but, regardless, it was a place that was meant to be safe – and yet it wasn't. As the only non-anorexic in a group of eight women,

I experienced judgment and prejudice on an almost daily basis.

One of the first things I noticed was the amount of food that they gave us.

The eating program was clearly designed for anorexics or people who refused to eat, because they forced us to eat constantly – three meals and three snacks per day. I started requesting coffee, because our huge breakfasts would send me into a food coma. That's saying something for a woman who unintentionally trained her body to handle large amounts of food. Something about that seemed wrong. If I was there to be treated for my eating disorder and to learn to eat reasonably, why was I being stuffed full?

"I still felt powerless in this 'safe' place where  
I was supposed to be regaining control"



I talked to my assigned therapist about it, and she said that they couldn't make "special accommodations" for "people like me" (read: fat girls) because the anorexic girls would be jealous that they "weren't allowed to go on diets too."

Maybe it seems selfish, but all I kept thinking was: what about me? What about my treatment program, and the money that I was paying? Why does it have to be sabotaged to protect the feelings of others, just because they are in the majority?

Throughout the entire program, I was amazed at the anger that came pouring out of me. I hadn't known what real anger felt like until then. And to this day, I'm not entirely sure what or whom I was mad at. I would throw pillows and take advantage of the opportunity to rage every chance that I got – at my parents for teaching me to suppress my emotions as a child, at my ex-boyfriends, and at society in general. Most of all, I got angry because I still felt powerless in this "safe" place where I was supposed to be regaining control. I made my therapist promise that she wouldn't let me gain weight or make my problems worse. She smiled and said, "Of course."

The program held three or four group therapy sessions for us each day. For the first few weeks, I noticed that no one would ever sit directly next to me or make conversation unless I started it first. Then, one weekend, I was called out of my bedroom for a special session. Each of the girls apologized to me in turn and explained that they had been afraid to associate with me because of my larger size. They thought that having a "fat friend" would make them appear fatter in the eyes of others. I was so stunned that I just started crying. Part of me wanted to laugh at their paranoia, but I was stunned at how the idea that "thinner is better" remained so real and so powerful even in a therapy setting.

Looking back, the other instances of prejudice that I experienced were almost laughable. All of the girls saw the same psychiatrist one after the other on Saturdays, and they reassured me that she was really nice, and would ask me to talk about my hobbies. My session ended up being about how my size wasn't healthy, that I was seconds away from getting diabetes, and about how religion was the answer to my problems. Why? Because she'd heard that I was "the fat girl." She didn't say it quite that literally, but the sentiment was clear. Thankfully, no one made me see her again.

Two weeks later, I left, six pounds heavier than when I arrived. For a little while, I continued to rage about how my therapist had lied to me. Eventually, the whole experience made me determined to prove to myself that even "fat girls" can recover from eating disorders and that this destructive idea that thinner is better needs to be stopped at all costs.

I was stunned at how the idea that 'thinner is better' remained so real and so powerful even in a therapy setting.



Original Artwork by Allie Nilsen

In the time since then, not a lot has happened. I have tried to adopt healthier eating habits and attitudes about my body, but I haven't received any revelations or made sudden recoveries. In one way, I wish that the ending to this story could be a happy, neat one; but, in another, I'm glad that it isn't one, because people often enter treatment

for eating disorders with the expectation that they will be cured by the end of a certain program or period of time. This is rarely, if ever, the case – and I'm living proof of it.

The one epiphany that I have come to after this whole experience is that no one can cure me of my eating disorder but myself. I do not know when and how I will recover, but I do know that it will not be because of a therapist, treatment center, parent, friend or romantic relationship. I have a feeling that it will happen when I am fulfilled and at peace enough in my life that I do not need to eat to feel comfortable anymore – and that I may very well wake up to discover that I have new strength and that my voice has returned. In the meantime, I am going to continue doing the only thing that I can: working on it bit by bit, every day.





Original Artwork by Skye Olson

## Engagement Ring? Check. Diet Pills? Double Check.

By Guest Writer Claire Richmond

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**After officially marking her engagement on the popular social networking site Facebook, Claire Richmond ('10) is welcomed with more than just congratulations.**

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Here is the thing: I'm not unhappy with the way I look. Sure, there are things I'd like to change, but nothing I want badly enough to, like, WORK, on it. Plus, I kind of hate working out. I mean, I have no objection to daily physical activity – riding my bike to class, etc.

But I have never been much for doing repetitive motions on a sticky mat while surrounded by lots of other, fitter people. Beyond that, I'm a busy person; it's not like I've got a lot of free time I want to spend on the non-chased variety of running. Given all that, you might think I would be one of the last people you would find in a gym. But you'd be wrong. And oddly enough, it's because of my wedding to the man who loves me no matter what I look like.

To clarify, this actually has very little to do with my fiancé. He is 100% consistent in affirming that he loves me no matter how I look (which, if you've seen me when I'm sick, you know is a good thing). Like I said before, it isn't really about me, either. Until I started planning my wedding, I thought about my weight approximately never.

What it IS about is the fact that, once I was engaged, I found out that the already-ubiquitous "only-skinny-is-pretty" message is thrown at brides-to-be even harder than it is at women in general. In the bridal and wedding planning magazines, on websites, in stores and especially

in the ads targeted toward me, the message is the same: "It's your big day, and you want to look your best. Better start shedding those pounds!" And while I would have thought I'd be the last person in the world to be affected by that message, it has had a surprising and negative effect on my self-esteem.

For better or worse, weddings are an industry. Honestly, that's part of what makes them fun: buying the dress, the invitations, figuring out all the little specifics, and deciding how to tweak all the details to make it an awesome celebration. But obviously, the industry has a negative side as well. A lot of people are highly invested in getting future brides and grooms to spend money, and a good way to do that is to convince said brides and grooms that they need what is being sold.

This is nothing new – creating markets is how capitalism continues to function, and products to make you "look better" (whatever that means) comprise a pretty lucrative market. For some reason though (naïveté?), I wasn't expecting such a bombardment on the wedding front. A lot of the advertising is really easy to turn down; I feel confident about getting through my wedding day without the aid of a monogrammed plastic cake slicer or confetti that spells "Congratulations!"

However, some of it is a little harder to ignore. It

was really surprising to me how much I found myself being drawn in by the ads trying to convince me that I need to lose weight, especially because most of the weight-loss ads really are stupid. On the scale of legitimacy from “confetti” to “a well-made dress,” the weight loss ads tend to fall way down on the confetti side.

If I’m going to lose weight, it’s not going to be with “Strip That Fat,” “Bridal Bootcamp” or “AcaiSlim” (I didn’t see a single one suggesting the old “moderate diet and exercise” regime). In fact, I’m pretty sure that there’s a rule book for writing weight-loss ads, because they all follow pretty much the same formula.

They start by featuring a sad, pathetic “before” photo of the “fat” person who is “miserable” because of her (and it’s almost always her) weight. Then come the outlandish promises about fantastic success with no effort, and the talk about all the health benefits of weight loss in general and the product in particular. Next, they announce what a fabulous, money-saving, one-time-only deal the product is. Finally, there is the prominently displayed “after” photo of the made-over, better photographed, airbrushed “skinny person” who is so much happier, thanks to this wonderful product!

The particularly devious aspect of these ads isn’t that they are so convincing; it’s that they are everywhere. As you might expect, I first noticed these ads on Facebook, after the all-important switching-of-the-relationship-status to “engaged.”

I didn’t notice right away, probably because I was responding to the thousands of “Congrats!” wall posts, but at some point, I realized that all the ads that used to encourage me to see a movie or become an egg donor (a whole new can of weird, weird worms) were now making helpful suggestions about losing “all that weight” before the wedding. I’m talking about 95% of all the ads Facebook shows me. While I get the occasional advertisement for a photographer or wedding planner, the overwhelming majority are about weight loss. And since they only appeared once I was

“engaged,” it’s clear that they’re targeted towards the wedding crowd.

My fiancé, by the way, has gotten no similar ads on his Facebook. Not only has he not seen any ads about losing weight, he hasn’t seen a single one about anything to do with his appearance. Mostly, his ads are about movies, with the occasional photographer or honeymoon suggestion thrown in. He does get those emails advertising various “male enhancement” products, but that’s a whole different kettle of proverbial fish.

Of course, wedding weight-

**The particularly devious aspect of these ads isn’t that they are so convincing; it’s that they are everywhere.**

loss ads are not limited to Facebook. Wedding magazines and wedding planning websites are only two of the other most obvious examples. Interestingly, I haven’t seen any ads for weight-loss in or near any wedding dress stores. I would guess this is because these stores are already trying to sell me something, and they don’t want to encourage me to spend money on anything else.

Don’t worry, though: these stores make up for the lack of ads with a surfeit of size zero models, gleefully prancing around in the dresses I’m about to try on. There are very few advertisements featuring “plus size” women, or any women above a size zero, and, of those, none of them appear in ads with the same degree of polish and couture that the “regular” women receive.

Granted, this is true of any clothing advertisements, but wedding dresses receive special scrutiny. “The most important dress you’ll ever buy” is just one of the terrifying titles a wedding dress gets, and dress advertisers do their best to reinforce that message. In other words, wedding dress shopping hardly provides any relief from the self-esteem barrage.

Clearly I’m aware that the presence of these ads doesn’t mean that I, personally, need to lose weight. I should pretty much be able to say, “Give me a break” and move on. But for some reason, since I’ve been en-

gaged, my self-esteem has taken a distinct downturn.

And despite my long-standing dislike of gyms and having the busiest semester since I came to college, I have started going to the gym twice a week with my fiancé. I know that exercise is good for me – it gives me more energy, keeps me healthy, all that good stuff. But knowing all that has never made it worth my while before. The fact is that common romanticisms about the “beautiful bride” can seem like a lot of pressure when they’re turned on you. And sometimes, all the knowledge about unhealthy gender expectations in the world doesn’t make you feel any better when you look in the mirror.

Let’s take a moment to revel in the irony here. Isn’t the point of getting married that you’ve found someone who loves you unconditionally, at your best and your worst? I mean, I’m all for looking one’s best in any situation, and, ok, let’s be clear: I’m certainly planning on looking my best for my wedding. But I don’t think “looking my best” should require the sacrifice of my peace of mind.

A wedding should be about celebrating the fact that two people have decided to commit themselves to each other. It isn’t about proving to my future spouse, or anyone else, that I’m pretty enough to marry him. If I’m supposed to spend my time preparing for it by making myself as beautiful as I can be, a wedding sounds like a pretty shallow celebration of love.

As much as I can, I try not to let the pressure get me down. I know I should be too self-confident to lose weight just because a wedding magazine tells me to. Still, on my bad days, something about the experience of being targeted by weight-loss ads makes me feel like maybe I’m just not quite good enough. Overall, the “be skinnier” message is only one message among many other positive ones, and the bad days are pretty rare. Still, I think it’s worth noting that it is a message at all. In the midst all the joy a wedding entails, this is one message I haven’t quite been able to tune out.



# MEET ARM

By Lisa Kau and Laura Passarelli



Photos by Asia Morris

*I'm only speaking from my own experiences—I'm in no way speaking for the whole queer community.*

## WHAT IS YOUR SEXUAL ORIENTATION?

Queer. I personally hate the word lesbian and don't identify with it. To me, a lesbian is a person who lives in Greece on the island of Lesbos. But, people can identify however they want. For me, it's too restrictive and limiting because it conflates gender and sexuality. I look at them as separate from each other, but working together at times. My gender identity has been evolving. When I first came out, I would have identified as a lesbian. Over the summer, I began to explore my gender identity more and started to identify as a soft butch. I've recently started to embrace the terms gender-queer and transgender. You can see how the term lesbian, as an identity category, doesn't work because I don't feel comfortable identifying as a woman. With the word queer, you can be who ever you want and love whoever you want.

## WHEN DID YOU FIRST REALIZE THAT YOU WEREN'T STRAIGHT?

There are several stages in the "typical" coming out. I went through the first stage around age 12. I had a crush on my science teacher. I was just really obsessed with her, but back then, I didn't recognize it as a crush. Growing up, I had crushes on guys because that's what was expected. I had them on girls at the same time, but I didn't recognize them. My attraction to people was never sexual. It was just this intense obsession, wanting to spend time with them.

I went through the second stage during senior year of high school. I went back and forth between identities. One

week, I'd feel this great internal pressure to tell someone that I thought I was gay, but the next week I'd convince myself that I was straight. When I got to Scripps, my peer mentor's roommate was gay. In meeting her, I began to talk about my sexuality more and went through the third stage. At the very beginning of freshman year, I came out to my mom and home friends. My coming out story in a nutshell: before frosh year—"gay?", frosh year—"gay", end of frosh year—"gay!" I took Intro. to Women's Studies, and that kind of blew my mind open. I decided to major in Gender Studies to have a better understanding of sex, gender, sexuality, and how they inform one another.

## HOW DID EVERYONE REACT TO YOU COMING OUT?

Basically, it was like "duh," or "finally," or "I knew that." No one was surprised. It was anti-climactic. One friend pretended to be surprised. Everyone was supportive and happy that I was embracing my sexuality, and I am extremely grateful for this.

## HAVE YOU EVER CLASSIFIED YOURSELF AS GIRLY?

I've never really thought of myself as girly. I've always wanted to be androgynous. In elementary school I had really short hair and got called a boy. I decided to grow it out in middle school. That was me conforming to societal pressures. In high school, that's what you do because you don't know any better. I always hated long hair. The only person who ever really liked it was my dad. It used to be halfway down my back, and then I cut it shorter and shorter. Each time I cut it, I was like, "Oh, so much better." At the end of senior year, I had really short hair. If I didn't wear earrings to work, I would get called "sir" a lot.

#### **HOW DID YOU REACT TO BEING CALLED A BOY IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL?**

It was interesting. I'd never say, "I'm a girl." I'd say, "I'm not a boy." Instead of affirming my female identity, I denied my male identity.

#### **WHAT IS YOUR REAL NAME?**

Aimee Renee-Mills. My first year at Scripps, this senior started calling me ARM as a joke, and it stuck. Over the summer, I was meeting new people and introduced myself as ARM. I thought to myself, "Why am I feeling more comfortable with this name than my given name?"

#### **DO YOU LIKE YOUR GIVEN NAME?**

No. I've never liked it for many reasons. I've always wanted to change it, mostly because it's spelled weird and no one spells it right (Aimee is pronounced like Amy). ARM is much more fitting for me now.

#### **HAVE YOU EVER BEEN DISSATISFIED WITH YOUR BODY IN ANY WAY?**

Yeah, growing up I was a chubby kid, so I always had negative body image. Scripps really did change my life and continually does. Before coming here, I had low self confidence. I never really found myself attractive because I had been trying to portray this image of someone I wasn't. I never really felt comfortable in feminine clothing. Now, I only shop in the little boy's section. I think I look hot and I love it! I have so much self esteem now. At the same time, I've become more dissatisfied with the female aspects of my body. It's hard to conceal my large chest—I can't pass as male. Today is the first day I'm wearing a chest binder. It feels like a tight hug all day. I feel like I'm loving myself.

#### **HOW HAVE YOUR PARENTS INFLUENCED YOUR BODY IMAGE?**

My dad was really critical of my body. He once said, "Oh, you're starting to get a double chin" and made me cry. He'd say stuff about my hair when I cut it short. My mom herself has really bad body image. Growing up in that environment, I had no role model to say, "You look great, don't even worry about it."

#### **CAN YOU DESCRIBE YOUR IDEAL BODY THAT YOU WOULD WANT TO HAVE?**

I would have really buff, but defined, arms. I love my legs. I would leave those as they are. I'd want less hair on my toes, but more armpit hair. I'd want a flat chest and narrower hips. My face is great. I love my hair. I wish my hair would just grow in purple. I want a tattoo somewhere, someday, and more piercings.

#### **CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE IDEAL BODY THAT YOU WOULD WANT A ROMANTIC INTEREST TO HAVE?**

I like them to be around the same height as me. I'm not really that picky. I like someone with a little meat on their bones—something to grab onto, someone healthy, who

takes care of themselves. I also really like girls with hair on the shorter side. But you can't help who you fall for. So I could say this stuff and fall for someone who is the opposite. Facial piercings are hot. I like girls that are a little more feminine in style than me, but I'm just generally attracted to queer people, no matter what their gender. What's most important is that she feels good about her own body. Last year, I dated a girl who had really bad body image. I tried not to let it affect my own body image, but at times it did. I would think, "If she has those standards, what does she think about me?" It's easier to compare and contrast bodies when you are a same sex couple, which could lead to unhealthy body image.

#### **WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING YOU LOOK FOR IN A SIGNIFICANT OTHER?**

They have to laugh at my jokes. They have to get my sense of humor. That's a big part of who I am, and I see myself as funny. I like to laugh and be laughed with.

#### **WOULD YOU SAY THAT YOU WANT TO BE BEAUTIFUL OR WOULD YOU RATHER EMBODY A DIFFERENT ADJECTIVE?**

Studly, handsome, or gorgeous, that's gender neutral.

#### **WHAT MAKES YOU FEEL THE MOST STUDLY?**

I just bought my first tie the other day. I tried it on with a shirt—I rolled up the sleeves—and a sweater vest. I loved it. I looked like an English school boy with purple hair and piercings. I love preppy clothes that are usually worn by straight, white men. I like subverting norms. As for an activity, impromptu dancing is my favorite—the kind where you're not trying to look good or get with anyone.

#### **WHICH OF THE ACTIVITIES THAT YOU ARE INVOLVED IN WHILE AT SCRIPPS COLLEGE WOULD YOU SAY EMPOWERS YOU THE MOST?**

The Motley, duh! The Motley has been such a catalyst in my transformation here at Scripps. So many of my mentors and greatest friends have been a part of the Motley. Being a manager has helped me to gain confidence with myself and my opinions. Before, I didn't really like to speak up as much, but now I talk in class and am more confident in what I have to say. The Motley is just a great welcoming space, and you can do with it what you want. I'm really exploring that this year. I have a plan to start a subversive T-shirt company. I'm going to apply for a sponsorship and display the shirts in the Motley. The shirts are going to have slogans that I think of when I'm bored in class, like "This is what queer looks like," "Don't be a patriarchal tool," and "Scripps is a single-sex institution, not a girl's college." That's going to be my final project for my Queer Studies class.

#### **WHAT IS THE NUMBER ONE THING YOU WANT TO DO BEFORE YOU DIE?**

I want to go over the rainbow and get the pot of gold, then bring it back and disperse it equally.





While developing positive self-image is essential, it's also important to think about the world outside one-self. As Scripps students, we owe much of our great opportunity to learn and become beautiful, empowered women to the endless work of the staff at Scripps. Whether it's the housekeeper who cleans the blackboards three times a day or the dining hall worker who cooks our food, these people, whom many of us don't even think about, enable us to live amazing lives.

Raina Ramirez, member of the Malott Dining Hall staff, always seems to be smiling and cheerful as she swipes student meal cards each week. Just like a Scripps student, she loves art and foreign film, dances her ass off, and even has a Scripps-like fondness for squirrels. Despite this, her position as a worker sometimes keeps us from getting to know her as our equal. *[in]Visible* interviewed Raina so that the Scripps community could better get to know a valuable member of its community. Raina—who is just as much a part of the Scripps community as we are—is more than just a woman who swipes our meal cards.

**Q: What's your name?**

A: Raina Ramirez

**Q: How old are you?**

A: 24.

**Q: Where are you from?**

A: Upland. I still live there.

**Q: How did you come to work at Malott Dining Hall?**

A: I started working as a temp here—in the offices. Before that, I temped at Pomona and CMC in secretary and office jobs. I wanted to go back to school, but I wanted to take classes during the week, so that's when I found out about this job. I go to Junior College right now. I plan to get my GEs out of the way and then transfer. I don't know where yet.

**Q: When you transfer, what are you thinking of making your focus?**

A: For a lot of years I was thinking of Women's Studies, but I'm not sure what I will do with that. So, now I'm thinking either that [Women's Studies] or Cultural Anthropology. I just love learning about other people's cultures, their languages, their religions. If you have a better understanding of people's cultures, you can get along with them better and not judge them as much.

**Q: What do you do for fun?**

A: I love independent films; I love foreign language movies. (I don't speak any other languages.) My dad is hard of hearing, so I grew up with captions. I make post cards with these watercolor pencils. You color just like [usual] and brush water over them. I send them to friends and family. I also love to crochet. I'll start making a lot of hats and scarves soon, and you can buy one if you like—I sell them for about 5 dollars. I love fairies! I have a pixie tattoo—it's me, with wings attached. My friend drew it. It didn't hurt, but I laughed a whole lot. I also model for artists. But you don't get health insurance, so that's why I work here. I'm not allowed to model for Scripps, but I model for a 5C group, CMC, Pomona, Mount Sac, Cal Poly Pomona, APU, the Daw Center, and another artist during the week. I like it a lot. I'm not a good artist but I love being surrounded by art.

**Q: What's your family like?**

A: Some of them can be a little crazy—big, loud, lots of fun. I went to Mexico once for a fam-

ily member's quinceañera. I found people on Facebook I didn't even know I was related to. My family's big. I have a sister. I'll take pictures of squirrels when eating and send [them] to my sister. Once I was eating on a break from modeling, [and a] squirrel came close and closer, and I threw my sandwich and ran. My sister and I love Eddie Izzard. He does this bit about squirrels. I've seen him live. He's really funny live. He wasn't dressed up [in drag] as he usually is.

**Q: Do you see celebrities often?**

A: I've met several people in LA. I had a friend who worked for some type of zine—he was able to get us into parties, and we'd get introduced to people. I ran into Flava Flav, and he smelled really bad. I couldn't help bumping into him because he was intoxicated and hugging everybody. Once I went to a concert, and after the main event, Sir-Mix-A-Lot came on stage and started singing "Baby Got Back," and I went up on stage to dance with a bunch of other girls and got a picture with him. If you go out to a lot of places you're bound to run into somebody.

**Q: Do you go into Los Angeles often?**

A: I don't go in as often as I used to. I go in every couple of months. I love going to Chinatown—I'm big on tea. I buy it [from] a store in Chinatown. It's like a Chinese version of Costco and they always have tea samples and looseleaf teas in bulk. My favorites are the ones that are flowers that open out. I also love going to LA to get tacos. I love eating tacos. And the Fairfax market, that's always fun. And Saturday movies on the lawn in Hollywood where you bring your own picnic basket....

**Q: If you could be any superhero or have any superpower who/what would it be?**

A: I'd be Batman. I liked Batman when I was little. That'd be fun. I love comics. I loved reading *Calvin and Hobbes* when I was little and *Family Circle*, *Charlie Brown*, and *Pearls Before Swine*.

**Q: If you could fill a swimming pool with anything, what would you fill it with?**

Not Jell-O! I don't like Jell-O. Probably a bunch of miniature sized everything. I always get stuck in Target in the travel section. "I want this. I know I don't need it, but look how little it is!"



# as a GLANCE



**Name:** Callie

**Name of Friend:** Kathline

**Describe the way she dances at a party:** The same way she would dance if she were all alone. But sometimes we play a game where I say an object and she has to dance like that object...then she usually ends up dancing like a pickle.

**What is one animal she is not?** Well, she is a koala, but she for sure is not a goose because those creatures are mean!

**What Motley drink would she be?** Mexican hot chocolate: warm and comforting but with a little spicy surprise, the kind of drink you could curl up on a couch with every day and always enjoy.

**Most memorable object in her room?** Her Dwight poster.

**Preferred footgear?** Her Birkenstocks.



**Name:** Chante Cruse

**Name of friend:** Jennifer

**Describe how she dances at a party:** It's a small jovial bounce and a stank face deep in "the groove."

**Favorite music?** Jimmy Nedham, Israel, D.A. Truth, G-Shock.

**What is one animal she is not?** Bear cub

**On a catwalk, what would her strut look like?** Authoritative march.

**Most memorable object in her room?** "The Funktion."



**Name:** Maureen

**Name of friend:** Jamie

**Any unique personality traits?** She's like a boomerang: she loses everything, but then it comes back.

**Why do you think she's beautiful?** Because beautiful rhymes with Jamutiful!

**Describe how she dances at a party:** Creatively – she totally takes interpretive up a notch.

**Describe her in one word:** Jamayers!

**Most memorable object in her room?** Spuddy the futon and his recent weight gain...

**What is her preferred dining hall?** CMC because she pretty much is a CMC student. FACT.

# [in]Visible

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## "What is real is the essence of things"

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"Bird in Space" is a synthesis of Brancusi's belief that "what is real is not the external form, but the essence of things." "Bird in Space" represents the essence of flight. A recurring theme in Brancusi's sculpture is that of the bird. Over a period of years, through elongation and simplification, all superficial likenesses to the bird were eliminated so that what remains is soaring form.

-Norton Simon Museum



“The essential is invisible to the eyes”