

Woman

When am I allowed to call myself a woman? A *woman*. Not a girl. A *woman*.
When do I get to go from telling boys that I am not the kind of girl that will-
Eat a bug on a dare, to telling men that I am not the kind of woman that-
Well, I still wouldn't eat the bug, if that's what you were wondering.
When did my dear "Mommy and Daddy" become good old "Mom and Dad"?
And when did "Mom and Dad" become just a grunt for food or money?
Do I start calling them Mother and Father now? I don't think so.
Mother says she feels old when I call her that. Father just laughs at me.
"Mommy, Daddy, I'm a big girl now, right? I get to wear makeup and a suit,
I get to wander wherever I want, checking in with no one, answering to no one,
Looking up to...no one." Is that what a woman is? Someone with...no one?
No, that can't be right, but how long do I have to wait to hear a poor boy say
That I am the only woman who could make an honest man out of him?
Whoa, back up a little- I just want to be called Ms. I am not ready for the M-R-S.
When do I get to be a *businesswoman*, a *saleswoman*, a *working woman*?
No more minimum wage, no, I'm talking a salary as high as my highest high heels-
Which are killing my feet right now- actually, can I stick with flats for a bit longer?
When do I get to be a strong, independent, young woman? A powerful woman,
A shrewd woman, a worldly woman, an experienced woman, a tired woman...
A broken woman...a sad woman...an old, tired, sad woman...Oh dear, is it soon?
Can you give me the exact date? Like an expiration date on old, sour milk...
Oh dear God, tell me I have a moment left to scrape my knee on the play ground,
To ask Mom how to survive bullies and to let Dad teach me how to ride a bike-
Let me hang on to that school girl crush and believe that he hung the moon and stars,
Let me believe that the world is open to me, that I can do anything if I just work hard,
And eat my vegetables, while sneaking pieces of candy without counting calories.
Dad, don't ever let me call myself a woman, Ma, tell me I'm not nearly ready.
No. Stop. What am I worried about? I was a confident, smart, idealistic young girl-
No one ever gave me permission to be a scared, confused, hopeless young woman.