

i WANT YOU

I have eclipsed the age at which my mother became pregnant with me,
eclipsed even more so the age at which she lost her virginity.
I am twenty-eight,
and yet still look like a thirteen-year-old girl entering puberty.
So when men proposition me—
when men my father's age stare too long at me—
I wonder who they are asking for—
the thirteen-year-old with skin leathered by days spent drenched in sun
and hardened by sidewalk scrapes;
the twenty-eight-year-old hospitalized twice for being suicidal—
whose layers of distrust have become stratified with age?
I may have thought too much as a child,
I may have been an old soul in a ripe body,
but I did not know then what I do now.
I did not know that answers are only coveted by the coward.
And so I stand in line,
waiting to buy an overpriced cup of coffee
that I came to buy only so that I could stand beside
beautiful people and feel desirable by proxy.
I do not turn around.
I let them stare at my ass,
let them wonder of the smell of the
skin lining my collar bone,
of the softness not of my lips
but of my inexperienced tongue.
And there is nothing I can do.
Because what do you say to someone who wants to fuck a child?
You can say nothing.
Words do not capture the moment.
And so it passes...
and you progress toward the front of the line.

ARIEL MACCARONE



Born and raised in a Southern California suburb once covered in orange groves, Ariel Maccarone is an author and social media consultant. She has written for *ChinaShop* (Red Bull's arts & culture magazine) and *Yay! L.A.* (the west coast-based arts and culture publication at which she is Assistant Editor). After dropping out of college, Ariel left the United States to backpack alone throughout Australia. To survive, she worked as a gas station attendant, maid, bartender, and ranch hand. She is currently writing a short story about her time spent at a secluded roadhouse in the Australian Outback, where witnessed firsthand the ripple effects of apartheid. In addition to her work in publishing and social media management, Ariel is also returning to school to pursue a degree in clinical psychology with the hope of becoming a therapist. On off days, you can find her wandering around Echo Park Lake and various cafes, reading Joan Didion, and spending too much on hipster coffee. You can read more of her writing at arielmacc.tumblr.com.