

# milk and honey

rupi kaur



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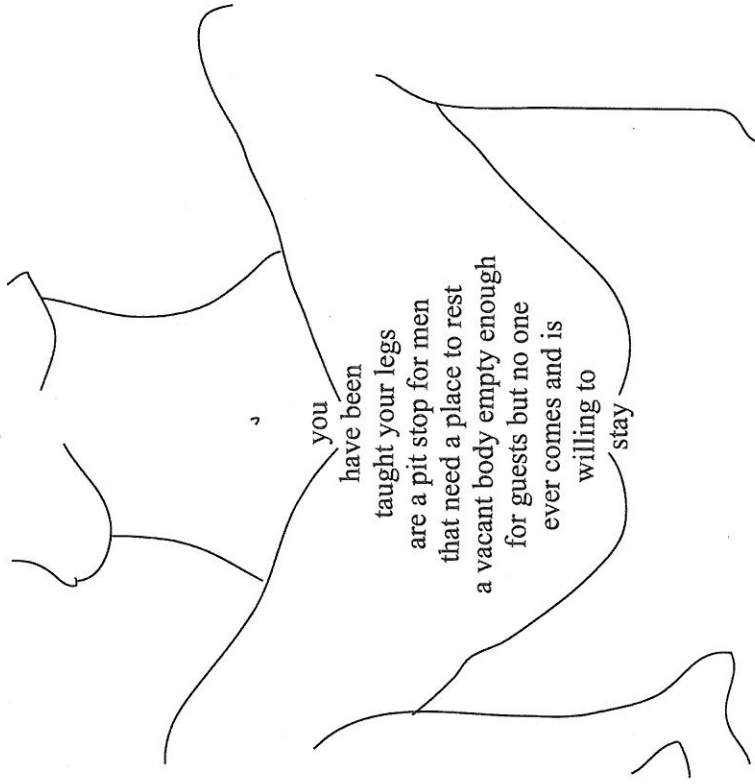
for  
the arms  
that hold me

the first boy that kissed me  
held my shoulders down  
like the handlebars of  
the first bicycle  
he ever rode  
i was five

he had the smell of  
starvation on his lips  
which he picked up from  
his father feasting on his mother at 4 a.m.

he was the first boy  
to teach me my body was  
for giving to those that wanted  
that i should feel anything  
less than whole

and my god  
did i feel as empty  
as his mother at 4:25 a.m.



he was supposed to be  
the first male love of your life  
you still search for him  
everywhere

-*father*

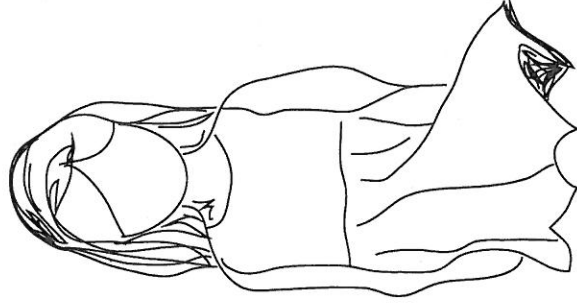
you were so afraid  
of my voice  
i decided to be  
afraid of it too



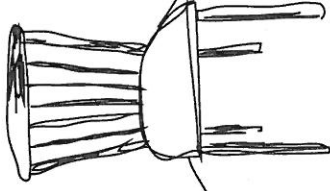
she was a rose  
in the hands of those  
who had no intention  
of keeping her

every time you  
tell your daughter  
you yell at her  
out of love  
you teach her to confuse  
anger with kindness  
which seems like a good idea  
till she grows up to  
trust men who hurt her  
cause they look so much  
like you

- *to fathers with daughters*



a daughter should  
not have to  
beg her father  
for a relationship

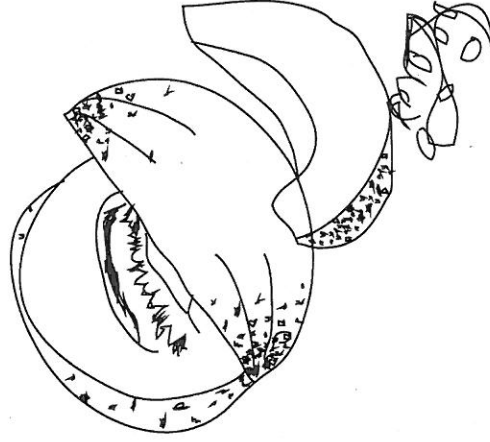


trying to convince myself  
i am allowed  
to take up space  
is like writing with  
my left hand  
when i was born  
to use my right

- the idea of shrinking is hereditary

you tell me to quiet down cause  
my opinions make me less beautiful  
but i was not made with a fire in my belly  
so i could be put out  
i was not made with a lightness on my tongue  
so i could be easy to swallow  
i was made heavy  
half blade and half silk  
difficult to forget and not easy  
for the mind to follow

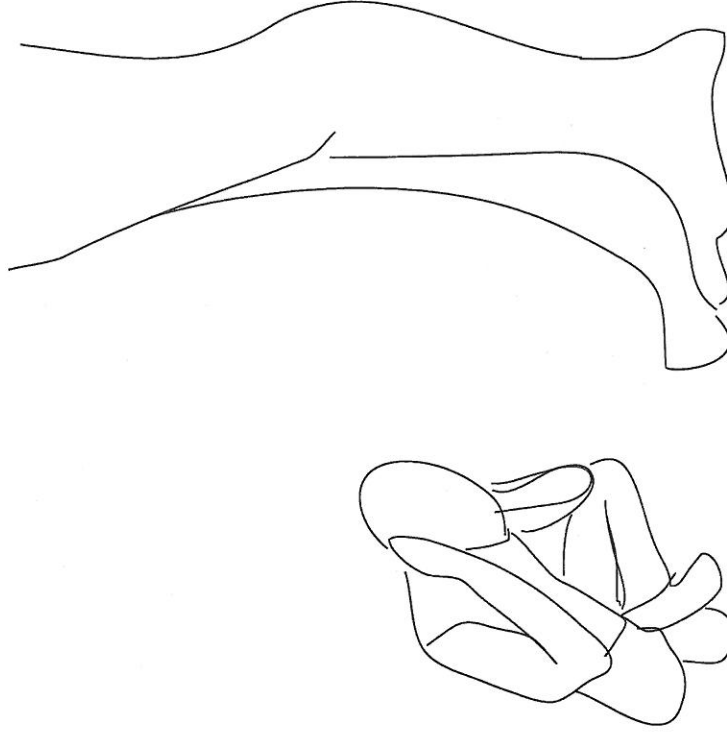
he guts her  
with his fingers  
like he's scraping  
the inside of a  
cantaloupe clean



you are in the habit  
of co-depending  
on people to  
make up for what  
you think you lack

who tricked you  
into believing  
another person  
was meant to complete you  
when the most they can do is complement

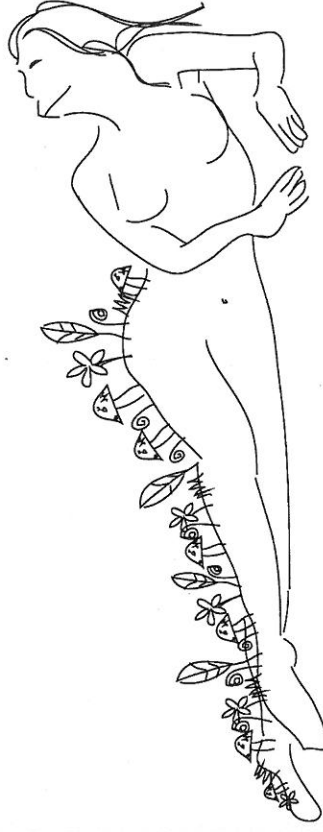
do not look for healing  
at the feet of those  
who broke you





you tell me  
i am not like most girls  
and learn to kiss me with your eyes closed  
something about the phrase—something about  
how i have to be unlike the women  
i call sisters in order to be wanted  
makes me want to spit your tongue out  
like i am supposed to be proud you picked me  
as if i should be relieved you think  
i am better than them

the next time he  
points out the  
hair on your legs is  
growing back remind  
that boy your body  
is not his home  
he is a guest  
warn him to  
never outstep  
his welcome  
again



losing you  
was the becoming  
of myself

other women's bodies  
are not our battlegrounds



you were a dragon long before  
he came around and said  
you could fly

you will remain a dragon  
long after he's left

i want to apologize to all the women  
i have called pretty  
before i've called them intelligent or brave  
i am sorry i made it sound as though  
something as simple as what you're born with  
is the most you have to be proud of when your  
spirit has crushed mountains  
from now on i will say things like  
*you are resilient* or *you are extraordinary*  
not because i don't think you're pretty  
but because you are so much more than that

