

Apology to My Body

Part I: Dear Legs

Harmony Button

Dear leg-unit, joint-compound composed of Fischer Price parts, indestructible, interchangeable, un-rollable cartilaged non-creakies —

I'm sorry I've resented you. It is because of your *By Mennen* solidarity that I have been ashamed. Baby elephant, your knee-caps coated in quad-thigh, your patella practically recesses in stability. If only all girls had such Rubbermades, the surgeons would throw up their hands or sit around and diddle their own ACLs and we'd say suck it, we'll play more competitive soccer if we want.

Dear deep-seated calf, sweet cankle, I never should have doubted you, not when I fell down breakdancing a whole dorm of college stairs and popped up for another drink. How many Dansko cloggers have you twisted out of and not clocked? How many crock-pots have you bumbled, avoiding the egg-pop of the most vicious Schnapps?

I surrender: strappy sandals & stiletto heels are not for your potatoes, no. But dang, girl — take a look at that lateral collateral ligament! Have you ever seen such gorgeous gastrocnemius? No more wishing

delicate or dainty things upon you. Dear leg-parts, you
are the Detroit of my post-TARP bailout,
the diesel to my Dodge, the mint crop
to my garden patch. Behold,
girl-harvest, run rock-wild. Behold,
a fortune poured.

Ode to My Body Part II: Puddin' Paw

Harmony Button

*For such a small woman
you sure take up a lot of space —*

Even as he says it, I invade, ducking in
for another clutch hug, a whole parade
of fists in the air & grande pli e all
over the frickin' place. He knows
I have the fortitude of a tiny person
in a big girl body, all petite and Tonka truck
delicious, wrapped up in a size who knows
these days, what with designer labels shrinking
us all down to single digits. Watch the girls
go negative: concave bellies, minus thighs.

Me, I'm all slack jaw and puddin' paw. Wowzer,
what a ride. Nobody can figure me
how these here hobbit pods are supposed to fit
in those pointy pointies. I'm all broad and
swerve, a simple meal of what the hell
and second chance. When I'm

on top, a mirror is nothing more than
a playpen for light and I can hip-check
and hooray like you's have no idea. But
then, when some mugwump wakes up
squatting on my self-to-self byway,
oh, Lordy. Those are some puddin' in the
dump truck, elbow fat and celery munchin',
swag bag glut and sad, sad face-hole days.

Stupid mugwump. This is not a compromise.
I demand custody of this body all the time.
After all, she's mine, and I am the only
puddin' to paw in this joint for all the long
and lonely time. So bugger off and find
some other face to pucker with your
mirror-glut distort and your pocket ways.

Who do you talk to? — he asks, about
my face. No body, no body, defines
this girl's harvest, no familiar loiter
pestering in this bod's pudding place.

Harmony Button's work has won the Larry Levis Prize. She is the English Department Chair of the Waterford School in UT, as well as a contributing editor at *PaperTape Magazine*. She has published in lots of places—look for links at harmonybutton.wordpress.com.