

Pocket-sized Feminism

by Blythe Baird

The only other girl at the party
is ranting about feminism. The audience:
a sea of rape jokes and snapbacks
and styrofoam cups and me. They gawk
at her mouth like it is a drain
clogged with too many opinions.
I shoot her an empathetic glance
and say nothing. This house is for
wallpaper women. What good
is wallpaper that speaks?
I want to stand up, but if I do,
whose coffee table silence
will these boys rest their feet on?
I want to stand up, but if I do,
what if someone takes my spot?
I want to stand up, but if I do,
what if everyone notices I've been
sitting this whole time? I am guilty
of keeping my feminism in my pocket
until it is convenient not to, like at poetry
slams or my women's studies class.
There are days I want people to like me
more than I want to change the world.
There are days I forget we had to invent
nail polish to change color in drugged
drinks and apps to virtually walk us home
at night and mace disguised as lipstick.
Once, I told a boy I was powerful
and he told me to mind my own business.
Once, a boy accused me of practicing
misandry. *You think you can take
over the world?* And I said *No,*
I just want to see it. I just need
to know it is there for someone.
Once, my dad informed me sexism
is dead and reminded me to always
carry pepper spray in the same breath.
We accept this state of constant fear
as just another part of being a girl.
We text each other when we get home
safe and it does not occur to us that our
guy friends do not have to do the same.
You could see a woman in half

and it would be called a magic trick.
That's why you invited us here,
isn't it? Because there is no show
without a beautiful assistant?
We are surrounded by boys who hang up
our naked posters and fantasize
about choking us and watch movies
we get murdered in. We are the daughters
of men who warned us about the news
and the missing girls on the milk carton
and the sharp edge of the world.
They begged us to be careful. To be safe.
Then told our brothers to go out and play.

<http://www.vagabomb.com/This-Powerful-Spoken-Word-Poetry-Brilliantly-Addresses-Sexism-and-Violence-Against-Women/>