




8-1-2018

# MeToo

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/awe>

 Part of the [Fiction Commons](#), and the [Women's Studies Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

(2018) "MeToo," *AWE (A Woman's Experience)*: Vol. 5 , Article 6.  
Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/awe/vol5/iss1/6>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the All Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in AWE (A Woman's Experience) by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact [scholarsarchive@byu.edu](mailto:scholarsarchive@byu.edu), [ellen\\_amatangelo@byu.edu](mailto:ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu).

# ME TOO

Civil rights activist Tarana Burke started a revolution by using the phrase Me Too to raise awareness about sexual violence toward young women of color. She created solidarity between women and a community for survivors, with the vision of "empowerment through empathy." In 2017, the same phrase was used in the form of a hashtag (#metoo) to raise awareness of sexual abuse and assault, encourage women across the globe to share their stories or the simple phrase, and to show to each other and the rest of the world the magnitude of these issues.

\*Eric.

I never felt safe with him. He always wore button-up shirts, but they were wrinkly. His hair was gelled, but it was too crunchy. His eyes were always watching, paying attention, but it didn't make me feel like I was being listened to. It made me feel like I was being watched.

He was just supposed to drive me home, drop me off. I could have walked if he had let me. He opens my car door the way a good southern boy should, but he is no gentleman. He asks, "My place or yours?" I'm confused. It's late, and I only wanted a ride home. I think of a polite way I can say "my place, just me" without offending him. Before I have time to answer, he reaches into his cup holder and hands me a quarter that's too shiny. "Tails is left and heads is right. Let's see where we end up." I have never heard of this game, but this quarter is my steering wheel. I begin flipping it and giving him directions before he can see what side it lands on, hoping to get myself home and make it seem like a crazy coincidence.

He misses a turn. We were supposed to go left. I said left. But he keeps driving. I've never seen this part of town before. I tell him that.

"It's kind of creepy out here," I stutter as we go over railroad tracks. We're on a dirt road now, only railroad tracks and trees in view. I'm shaking now, trying to act nonchalant as I continue with the comments.

"It's a little scary over here, we haven't seen any other cars or anything for a while." He doesn't look at me. When he does, he doesn't say anything. Just looks. Finally, the highway comes into view.

"Oh, good! Here's the highway!" I say as we approach a turn. If we turn left, we can get on the highway. Ahead of us is a little turnoff, vacant of the usual semi-trucks and parked cars with prices painted on the windows. Ignoring my audible relief in finding a way onto the highway, he goes straight and, without a word, parks in the turnoff. I've seen this scene in movies. My heart is racing, now pounding. I try to be chill.

"What are you doing?" I ask.

"You can see the stars really good out here," he answers. I've heard that in movies, too.

I press my head against the window that he won't roll down. I let a little attitude and suspicion slip out when I report that I can't see any stars. I turn to let him see my look, that I'm not oblivious and aloof, as I say this. He tries to kiss me before I turn all the way around. My reflex is to flinch, lean back toward the window, and turn away. I am horrified, but my anger gives me confidence. I want him to see the disgust in my face, so I give him a second to back away. I turn my head back around, starting to ask a second time, "What are you doing?" He cuts me off again, and I am too slow. He gets me on the lips this time. I freeze, petrified. I'm shaking and it's not from excitement or nervous butterflies; it is in fear. He obviously has no problem touching me without asking, and clearly against my will. What else would he do without my consent?

Those movie scenes come back into my head. I look at the door; I want to jump out and run, but I'm stuck. My seatbelt is still on. He is stronger than me, faster than me; it would be a feeble and useless attempt. I sit rigidly, too upright, staring straight ahead. I try to control my quivering upper lip and flaring nostrils that are doing all they can to control my emotions. The harder I try, the harder it is to breathe, and the harder I shake. I feel his eyes on me, always on me.

"Do you want me to take you home?"

*That is all I ever wanted*, I think, but can't get any words out. I give a little nod; it's all I can manage. He starts the car, and I try to loosen up. He starts talking to me about animal shows he watches on National Geographic. *You're the animal*, I think, but keep up my rigid nodding. I'm still mute. When we get to my apartment, I try to get out as fast as I can, hoping he will just drive off. But he gets out and follows me to my door. I mumble, thanking him for taking me home. He wraps his arms around me. I stand there, frozen again. He releases my stiff body awkwardly. I open the door and lock it behind me. Still shaking, I find myself on the floor in the other room, my roommates asking if I got kissed. I know I'm lucky—not because a boy kissed me, but because that's all he did. I'm shaking because I am seeing myself in those horror movie scenes now. I was in the right setting for any of those to play out—the ones that make me wince and close my eyes. How did they play out in his head? How did the one that actually happened play out in his head? Did he realize that he put me in a horror movie, or was this a romantic comedy in his mind?

A week later he sent me a text, asking why I hadn't answered his calls or texts when things started out so well with us?

Marcos.

†This wasn't a blind date; we used to be friends. I had rejected him before because things didn't feel right. For him, that wasn't a real reason. For me, it was the only one I needed.

I agree to meet up with him because it has been over a year, and he is only in town for a wedding. Dinner on a busy street sounds perfect. We get out of the car and start walking toward a restaurant. I slip my phone into my pocket and, once empty, my hand is grabbed by his. It's a tight grip, my fingers forced between his. If I wiggle my fingers, would he release them? Would he squeeze tighter? Would he get upset? I act like nothing has happened and walk a little faster across the street. We eat, I laugh nervously through small talk and avoid his attempts at intimate eye contact. On the walk back to his car, I make a comment about how cold it is and bury my hands securely into my coat pockets. We both have early mornings, so I figure he is bringing me home now.

But once he starts driving, he asks, "What can you show me around here?" I sigh and think of a place close by, where there are always plenty of people taking in the view of the city. We catch up, swapping awful date stories. I rest my elbow on the middle console. He takes that as me extending my hand and asking him to grab it again. He is wrong.

Too many hours later and at my request, he drives me home and asks if he can get out to give me a hug. We are friends, so I say yes. When I try to release the embrace with my head down, his grip tightens around my waist, against my back. All I am able to pull away is my head, and when I do this, he kisses me repeatedly. My lips remain limp.

"I know I didn't ask," he shrugs, "But, I could tell you wanted it."

He is wrong, again.

\*

Landon.

We both agree that it's too late, he had better just stay here. He can stay in my bed; it would be nothing more than an extended version of one of our couch naps. It's November in North Dakota though, and I can't feel my toes, so we share my two biggest blankets: an old comforter and a T-shirt quilt one of my teachers made for me as a graduation present. It's uncomfortable sharing my twin-size bed with my boyfriend, who is almost six-and-a-half feet tall, but I like him, so I don't mind being close. I manage to fall asleep but am woken up in the middle of the night as his hand wanders to places I don't want to remember anyone else's hand ever reaching on my body. I'm a heavy sleeper, but I wake up quickly as his finger begins poking around in the dark. There is nowhere for me to scoot away to; I'm the one against the wall.

"Landon?" I ask, to see if he is awake and aware of where his hand was. He promptly retracts his hand and rolls over, his back to me. Did he stop and turn away just because he realized I had woken up? I am confused, but he is the one who starts crying. He apologizes and tries to give me the space he can no longer offer.

My childhood bed is still too crowded. I am still confused.

\*All names have been changed

\*

