



AWE (A Woman's Experience)

Volume 9

Article 56

9-2022

On Divinity

Amy Griffin

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



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

Recommended Citation

Griffin, Amy (2022) "On Divinity," *AWE (A Woman's Experience)*: Vol. 9, Article 56.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/awe/vol9/iss1/56>

This Essay is brought to you for free and open access by the 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 ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.

On Divinity

IT'S A WORLD-FAMOUS CATHEDRAL, AND I'M THERE, ALONE. Alone except for the tourists around me, who don't count because I didn't come here with them. Didn't fly over the Atlantic with them. Alone except for the Instagram influencers next to me at the prayer candles, one on-screen talent and the other there to make the magic happen. On-screen has taken off her cardigan to reveal large breasts, leaning forward to make them pop. She opens her mouth slightly to let the candle glow reflect off her lip gloss. She turns her head from side to side, letting her camera-woman's phone-in-hand take in every angle, and for a moment I'm disgusted. The light from the small candle I lit for the friends I've lost glints off her eyes, and I resent her for turning my sacred into her screen time.

It's a different type of worship, I suppose. The kind that glues eyes to it in awe, watching the video play over and over again, analyzing details like her perfect skin, his smooth motion, their eye-catching facial expressions. I've done it. I've saved videos to my phone so I can return to the perfection. To the millions of people like me with pockmarked faces and thinning hair and clothes that pill up at the armpits, these are our saints. Our manifestations of everything wrong with us but right with them. The patron of skincare, the demigod of dance. The saints multiply, too, as the algorithms take on the role of the Polish pope and beatify dozens on the daily.

Shadows flicker on centuries-old walls as photos are snapped in every corner of the chapel. What are the criteria for a halo? Lighting, posing, properly applied filters? What must you sacrifice to be considered a martyr, how many features must lie on the altars of cosmetic procedures, of Photoshop? And how far-reaching must your miracles be to provide for beatification?

As the content creators pray in their own way around the glowing stands, I look upward to a painted ceiling. It's uncertain whether in a world of so much beauty, I should be looking to join their ranks or praying for a savior from sainthood itself. I was never one of them—I sought the divine in other kinds of attention. I was a firework early in life, turning heads everywhere I went, like my AP English teachers and the school counselors and my friends' moth-

ers. “Look,” they’d say, eyes shining. I’d burst and somersault, they’d watch me burning, hear me screaming. “Look at her shine.” Until I faded away, mere embers, ash falling to asphalt. And before I touched down, those heads returned to their earlier conversations. It’s difficult to maintain divinity of any kind.