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I'm Wide Awake

Sydney Springer

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I'm Wide Awake

When I was 19 I had my political awakening.
I was looked in the face and told that I was a woman
And my privilege, therefore, was stacked with limitations.

Men in suit coats with shiny balding heads
And more persuasion over my body and my safety than
My own self; they expected me to listen, agree, side with them.

When I voiced my concerns, when I cried out for change
They read a thesaurus for words to go after my name:
“Sydney,” they said, “is silly and dramatic. She is letting fear dictate

Her actions. She doesn't know what's good for her.
We know what's best; we are men and we are her leaders.”
Let's not forget I was a grown woman with a head on two strong shoulders.

When I was 18 I was more careless and free.
I saw no need to raise my voice when things didn't affect me
Directly, so I chose to stay out of the political side of things.

I now see my privilege as a white female in America, yet still
There are many times my words are ignored, even diminished until
My veins pop out and my voice becomes shrill.

“Listen to me, I know what's best for my body,”
I cried as men turned off hearing aids to ignore me.
No pedestal was large enough to be taken seriously.

If we let one person decide our futures, when does it end?
The world keeps spinning, we keep losing, again and again.
I was only 19 when I could no longer sit back and pretend.

They forced me to ditch my shell and walk alone.
To fight back, unarmed and opposed.
To learn that I am my own voice, case closed.