

Feminine Labels*

Pausing for a few moments after she signs her name,
She can't help but feel his staring eyes invade her,
Causing her to take a moment to slip a glance his way,
Then cringe as she meets his eyes and wishes for a cover:

Something to save her from unwanted whistles and gazes,
Something to let her choose her actions, partners and words
Without having to consider the judgments and phrases
That wanting the unpopular or "abnormal" option could stir.

Tired of being Hysterical if she ever shows emotion or tears,
Of being a Nympho if she dares to enjoy sex without shame,
Of being Frigid if she ignores the invitations, lame lines, and leers,
Of being To Blame when she doesn't know her date can commit rape.

Tired of being Unnatural for not wanting to ever have kids,
Of being a Lesbian if she doesn't give any priority to marriage,
Of having Provoked It when he swears and raises his fist,
Of being a Typical Female on the days she acts passive,

But Loud & Unfeminine when she forms and voices opinions.
Then, gazing at her freshly-written signature, she decides to add "Ms."
Before her name—as if to recognize it is okay to be a woman—
Yet she still feels violated when he keeps staring and slides closer in.

Feeling forced to abandon subtlety, she turns to face the invasive man—
With a provocative look on his face that he doesn't even try to hide—
And summoning her voice, asks him, "What the hell are you staring at?"
Not really wanting his response, but enjoying the shock in his eyes.

And, giving him the once-over as she leers at him a bit herself,
She tells him, "You shouldn't bother looking; you don't have a chance."
Then turning on her heel, she smiles—unsure of what compelled
Her to reach her limit at last and stand up to Just Another Man.

Yet, as she starts to walk away—Intelligent, Empowered, Proud, Feminine, Confident—
she still can't drown it out when he laughs, saying, "I like it when they play Hard to Get."

*Inspired by the Feminist Manifesto

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