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## While I Am a Woman\*

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## While I Am a Woman\*

### Author Bio

Nicole has lived in South Florida her entire life and completed her undergrad at NSU, clearly, she loves change and yes, she still complains about the weather. Some of her passions include reading, writing, defending the Oxford comma, and critiquing unsatisfactory book-to-movie adaptations.

# While I am a Woman

Nicole Chavannes

While I Am a Woman  
While the choices I make  
Are subject to your scrutiny,  
While the clothing I wear  
Dictates your views of me,  
While the curls of my hair –  
Which grow from the root, naturally –  
Are judged as lazy and trashy,  
While the blood I lose monthly  
Is deemed dirty and disgusting,  
Corrupting my judgment and leaving  
Me unworthy,

I am not your equal.

Speak you to me of equality?  
Honey, you don't know the meaning.

But I won't stop *choosing*,  
and *wearing*,  
and *curling*,  
and *bleeding*  
until I'm sure that you do.

I'll choose my words carefully –  
Making sure not to bruise  
that delicate ego you hold so dearly –  
With the fire that burns beneath my simmering tongue

I'll wear down your prejudices,  
Like the salty waves that slowly but surely  
Erode their stony oppressors,  
A constant barrage of knowledge to combat  
Your hateful resistance to change.

I'll curl around you like smoke,  
Make you breathe me in like the inescapable  
Atmosphere I am  
Fill your lungs with my fragrant essence  
Until I am all that pervades your thoughts  
And I'll bleed for my place on this Mother  
Of all mothers.  
I'll bleed, and I'll burn like  
you'll never have to  
Until we finally understand one another.