

Elijah Easley

My Hair

My hair. So luscious and long, my hair. For the longest time, I was trying to figure out why I was so obsessed with my hair. Fathomed by my hair and its radiant beauty, I knew the world was mine to take.

While beautiful, I want to cut my hair. But I can't. Nobody will like me with short hair. They've already told me I'll be ugly with it, and I see it all over social media too. The short-haired girls have an essence to them, but I can never picture what that looks like in reality. The beauty standards of celebrities are always so unrealistic. If only it were that easy for me too. Maybe it is.

I decided to go to the shop. I mean, you only live once, right? Nervous to my core walking in, I didn't know what to expect. What if everyone thinks I'm ugly now? What if I'm not deserving of anything I once had? Ew, what if my head shape is bad too? Too many rampant thoughts flooding. I just sat down in the chair and took a deep breath.

Clip. The first clip was honestly ... relieving. I can feel the years of pressure leaving my body and radiance soaring to a new height. Let's see what happens the next time. Clip. Clip. It's starting to feel weird by this point, but I like it.

Wait no. This was a fluke. I want my hair back. Picking up the pieces, I no longer knew the woman I once was. Was this a good thing? No, it couldn't be. I should've stuck to what I knew.

Clip. I have now become overwhelmed and want to stop. I decide to just close my eyes and let go since there's nothing more I can do at this point. Clip. Clip.

When I open my eyes again, I am immediately faced with a mirror, but I don't recognize the person I see. Who is sitting in this chair? I was thrown off for a second, but then I became immediately fascinated once again. Just thinking to myself "Okay but who exactly IS she?". As I left the shop, I had a new essence to my walk.

Still couldn't pinpoint what it was, I showed my friends and family the cut. They were astonished to see I went through with it, but they loved it too. They said I looked happier than ever before, and I was glowing. Nah, they had to be pranking me. I kept venturing out to see if this change was permanent. Turns out, it was more than just the hair that changed; I did too.

I didn't realize that the power of my hair came from within it was my unharnessed beauty that I could never seem to place. All those times I was thinking about what everyone else saw with my hair, it consumed everything I wanted to be. It didn't matter what anyone else thought, it's about what I feel within. The only thing I really should have always acknowledged instead of my hair is my true and whole beauty.

My beauty. So ethereal and unreal, my beauty. For the longest time, I didn't understand why I wasn't so obsessed with the whole picture. Fathomed by my beauty, I knew the world was mine to take.

Treatment

Blackness exists in a world where the very thought is criminal. To be Black and free is an ideal that we rarely get to see. Throughout time, we see different ways of accessing freedom. While each one is more transformative than the last, we find ourselves struggling with consistent freedom. Every time a glass ceiling is broken, there just turns out to be another one lurking in the distance. As a creative, I know that we strive to curate unwavering methods against the madness so we can truly experience life. It starts with resistance.

This project is an imaginative outlook of resistance, serving to push Blackness beyond the modes we typically know. In this ever-changing time, we must acknowledge our subjectivity of being with grace and confidence. While it's always easier said than done, advancements that morph our freedom are always at the forefront of changemakers' minds. As an aspiring changemaker myself, the biggest task is highlighting that everyone is a changemaker in their merit. Each set of skills, experiences, and possibilities paves room for a tropical future full of color and love. However, we have not fully pushed into a realm like that yet. It is not until we challenge stereotypes of Blackness that we can see those new horizons.

“My Hair” is a challenge against the SuperExploitation of Black women as we know it and allows a transformative story to highlight their grace outside society's gaze. Fascinated by her hair, the woman doesn't realize that she is being looped in the gaze. The symbolization of cutting

her hair is significant to releasing trauma, one of the underrepresented facets of our community. We, but more specifically Black women, are expected to hold the weight of their trauma while still acting like a superhero daily. The journey of finding worth is present throughout the mood swings of the haircut but ultimately leads to a newfound self and identity. It is important to criticize stagnant behavior within our community and push back against the foundation of what Black women should be.

As we navigate against the negative thought process of Blackness and all its facets, we must understand that we can act beyond the norm. We are deserving, and every part of our Blackness is unique and inherently valuable. There must be an innovative mode of resistance through action, and Dr. Brown does a great job highlighting this during her last module of the HIST-04301 – Coll: Music, Resistance & Black Diaspora course. She provides a way to the conversation about Black Futurism and the radical exploration of fighting against societal pressure with imaginative futures and advancements. It was an encouraging act to ultimately take with you: understand the significance of your power and being and use that to push back against what the world wants you to be. Who you are matters all the same.