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## Venus' Arms

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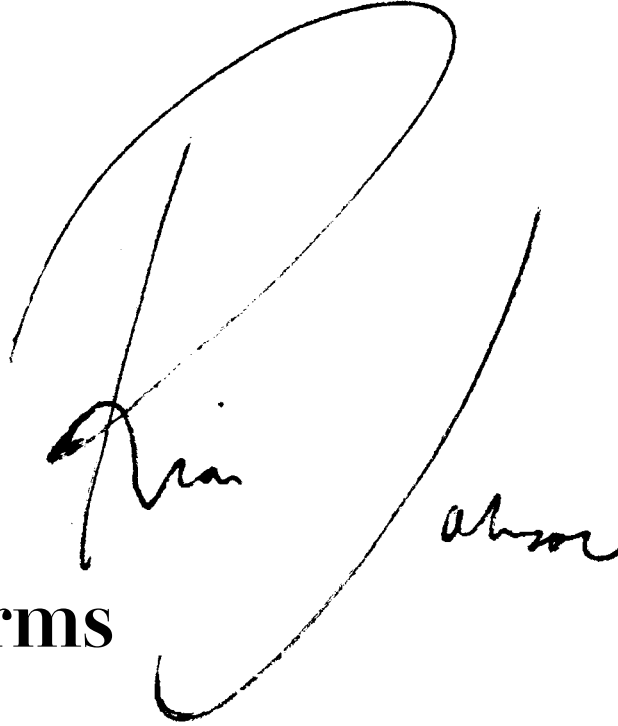
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RIAN JOHNSON


## Venus's Arms

Psalm 139:14

I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderfully Made...

He made me out of Parian Marble in the likeness of myself when I emerged from the foam of the sea. My creator captured my likeness from the details he gleaned from my stories. The way my hips melted with the curve of my waist...The way my breasts sat up perfectly on my chest...The way the marble was able to mimic my perfect porcelain skin...and even then the sculpture pales in comparison to the impossible depth of my beauty. Alexandros of Antioch molded his idea of feminine perfection into a 6 foot 8 inch tall statue that, in his mind, was the ideal standard for divine feminine beauty...in his mind, I was his Venus.

He, along with most men, decided what would be the epitome of beauty for all women to strive for and really saw no issue in making the standard for a body and gender he was not born in...my question is...when he made his creation without human error did he forget that humans have error?...Did it slip his mind that the standard of perfection was ever changing and not something he alone could determine...Better yet...did he discover the same peculiar irony that the world has discovered when not even the goddess of beauty can reach the standard of beauty forged by man...And that when I was found on the Island of Melos, I too fell short... quite literally, actually, for when I was found I had no arms...and the world would grow to love me because of it.



I'd like to think of human self esteem as a soft, malleable piece of clay. Something natural that can be easily manipulated when in the hands of man. There are so many outcomes for this piece of clay and each outcome is different—as the artists of this material vary. The misconception about self esteem is that everyone expects their piece of clay and its finished product to reach perfection. The original lie.

Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder but beauty can never equate to perfection considering everyone beholds beauty differently. I learned that when my body hit the ground...the hard way. One may be superficially and objectively beautiful on the outside—to you, but this may not be what that person believes or what they have heard about themselves. So what happens to that piece of clay that believes they are lesser than the other pieces of clay they compare themselves too?

In my journey around the Sun, I can unequivocally say that a constant battle in my life is having to accept the fact that there would never be a box I would be able to fit in. Many have said that standing out becomes me—

In my mind I've wondered if I ever had a choice.

*(This is an excerpt from a longer piece.)*