

**Excerpted from “Women Like Me”
Lindsay Young**

Me and the ground I flatten
Have always been enemies
One calling the other a threat
How I carry myself like a weapon
How the world around me made it so
Neither one relenting
So I live relentless. Move relentless
Every breath turned fightin’ words

How I must learn to defend even the air around me

Women like me learn to wage war before the war comes
Before it finds me alive. Before it can fix its mouth to call that a crime
Hesitation has no place here when the grave I drag behind me knows
When to swallow at the sound of all my wrong names

Like dyke Like bitch

Like my fist gotta be big enough
To crush a casket closed. Women like me know
How hungry they be. How easy I get caught in its teeth
How no one comes looking after me in its full belly

Women like me so tired from attack
That we become it

Learn the stealth of how to hunt a world
Always dripping at the mouth for me
Grow bigger teeth Keep a wall of myself
Sharpened to a blade At the ready
Always waiting to bend an enemy over it

Always knowing its either their blood
Or mine
And I choose me

Every time.

Lindsay Young is a poet from Long Island, New York. She competed at the 2018 Women of the World Poetry Slam and represented the city of New York as a member of The Nuyorican Poets Cafe's 2018 National Poetry Slam team. Lindsay was crowned a 2018 NUPIC (National Underground Poetry Individual Competition) Co-Champion. She was a member of the 2019 Brooklyn Slam team, and was part of their poetry production that premiered in Antigua in the Summer of 2019. She is the author of "Salt to Taste," her debut book of poetry, which was published the Summer of 2019. She is a Winter Tangerine alumnus, a 2020 Watering Hole fellow, and her work has been published in *The Fem Lit Magazine*, *The Offing Magazine*, and featured on Blavity and SlamFind. She currently works for nonprofit organizations as a counselor and workshop facilitator, largely servicing youth of color.