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## Jesus, Squirrelly and Starbucks

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# Skin-Pleasure: Mother-Genetics

Tiffany Herron

This skin does not please you?  
The way I am  
Drenched  
In the inevitable outcome  
That Mother-Genetics soaked me in?

My green eyes only  
Fill that river dancing side.  
But! For my hourglass curves  
You say it does not please

38 • You?  
• You want EVIDENCE, please.  
• Because every introduction  
• Is a violation of your cookie-cutter's  
• Pamphlet information.

While I soak  
In the brand of a mutt; a mix  
I remain a proud Latina.  
A pale Latina.

So, this skin does not please you?  
The way you are  
Jealous  
With the fact I stand an  
International Diva

My blood, while crossing oceans,  
Colliding with your envious waves on the  
American shore  
Is all the evidence I have  
To please you.



LIMBO Mirtha Aertker

# Jesus, Squirrely and Starbucks

Julia Calderara

AVA HAD OVERSLEPT. AGAIN.

Her childhood plastic pony alarm clock flashed in bold, block red digital numbers 7:32. Ava needed to arrive at work by nine, no later. She knew she couldn't be late, not for the fourth Monday in a row. Of course, Ava had amazing excuses for her constant tardiness and absences: food poisoning from undercooked shellfish, a broken axel after driving her pick-up into a ditch, and excruciatingly painful menstrual cramps. Normally, Ava wouldn't complain to her boss about her cramps, but she needed a good excuse on that particular Monday because her boss had just found out his boyfriend was cheating on him with another man. The second she said "...and the cramps just kept coming and coming..." her boss stopped asking questions. She remembered his fierce blue eyes bulging and his mouth stretching into a huge 'O'. But she didn't dare arrive late again.

Ava forced her thin body up and out of the bed to the mirror. She checked both sides of her face, smiled to see her teeth and flipped her long natural blonde hair forward and back once. For her job she was expected to look her best, but she couldn't go without her usual cup of Starbucks coffee.

Every morning before work she got her caffeine fix from the siren in green. Besides, she didn't really need to take a shower or put on makeup. Unlike some of the girls at the university, Ava didn't damage her skin by using tanning beds. With a quick cherry-flavored lip-gloss application, she was ready to get to Starbucks and then to work.

Ava fumbled for her keys in her purse as she skipped to her apartment door to leave. She kicked the heavy door open and let it shut hard behind her. Her silky hair almost got caught. She touched the thick blonde strands with her hands and looked at the freshly cut ends, just to make sure. The next door neighbor's kid lost his finger that way. Ava felt the kid deserved it after all the screaming and fussing and racket he made during his temper tantrums.

