

**CW: Body dysmorphia / psychological abuse**

Poem In Which I Never Had Low Self-Esteem

*Inspired by Denise Duhamel*

I'm pleased with my weight like a spelling bee champ proud of his win throughout elementary school. In middle school, I celebrate my love handles like Americans celebrate the Fourth of July. My father never reminds me before eating dessert that he's *never seen a fat person happy*. My mother insists I eat a second and third helping of dinner instead of asking, *Do you want a miserable life?* I never spend the summer after high school doing cardio three times a day or living on a diet of Slim Fast, green apples, and a drug recalled because of a Dateline special. I still date A[REDACTED]. His grin and pearly whites a siren song moving my ship gayly forward. I never respond with a smile or blowing a kiss each time he says, *You belong to me*. And when A[REDACTED] shows up that night, like Laurie Strode in the *Halloween* reboot, I am ready.