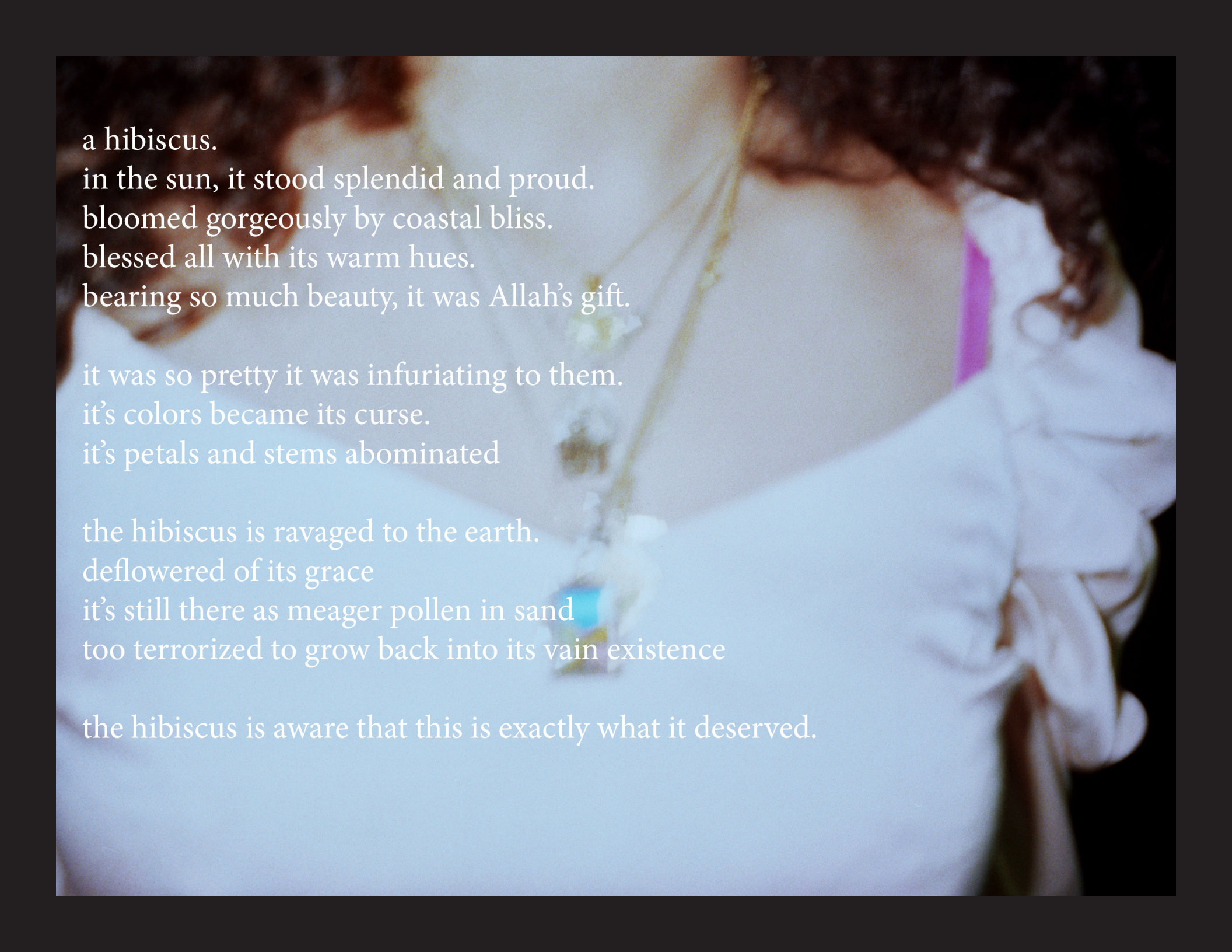




وفي الحمام يبدو لك و في الحمام يبدو لي
فقم مجتلياً، فانظر بعيني غير مشغول
تري ردفاً يغطي الظهر من أهيف مجدول
يُنَاجِي بَعْضُهُ بَعْضاً، بِتَكْبِيرٍ وَتَهْلِيلِ
أَلَا يَا حَبِّدَا الْحَمْدُ مَوْضِعِ تَفْضِيلِ
وَإِنْ نَعَصَ أَصْحَابُ الْمَنَادِيلِ!





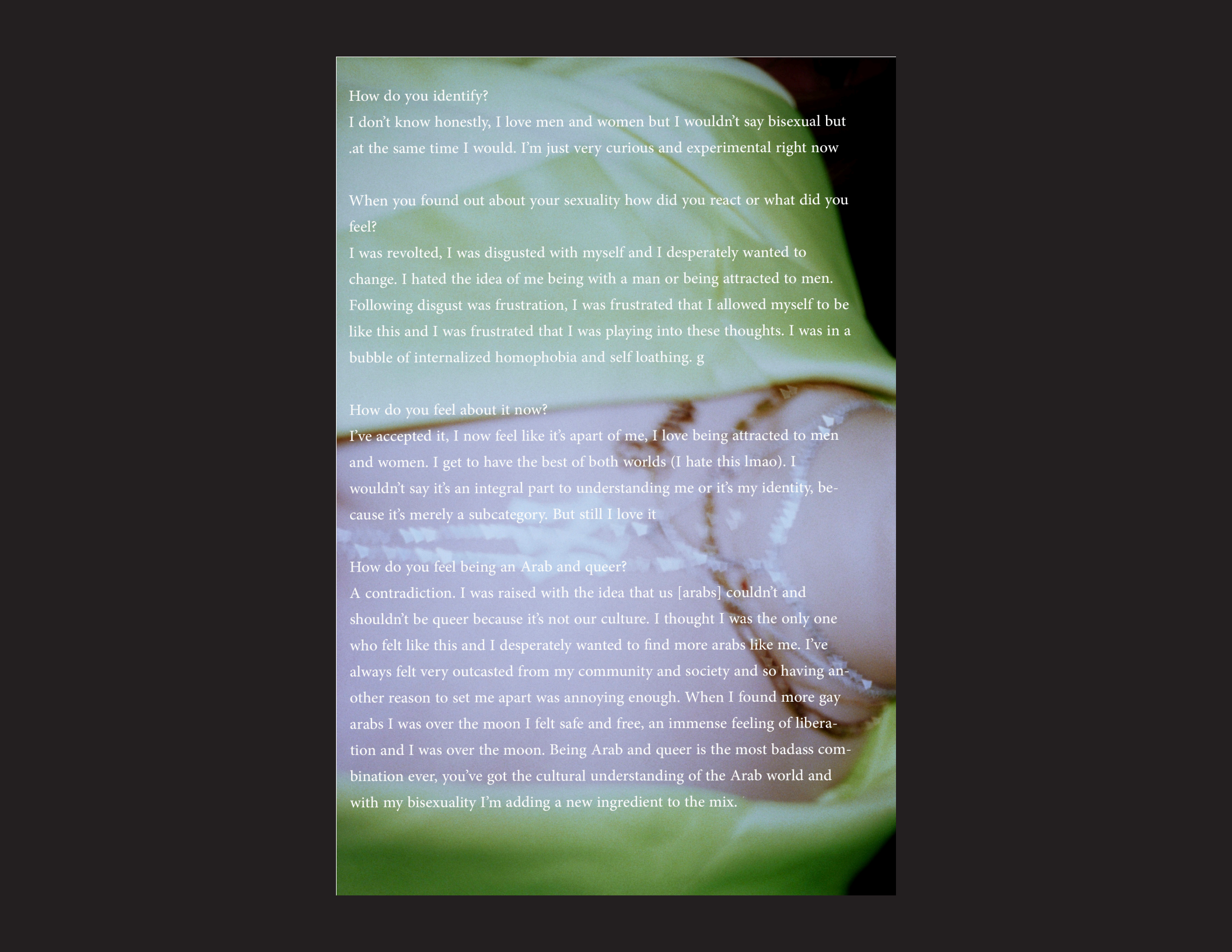
a hibiscus.
in the sun, it stood splendid and proud.
bloomed gorgeously by coastal bliss.
blessed all with its warm hues.
bearing so much beauty, it was Allah's gift.

it was so pretty it was infuriating to them.
it's colors became its curse.
it's petals and stems abominated

the hibiscus is ravaged to the earth.
deflowered of its grace
it's still there as meager pollen in sand
too terrorized to grow back into its vain existence

the hibiscus is aware that this is exactly what it deserved.





How do you identify?

I don't know honestly, I love men and women but I wouldn't say bisexual but .at the same time I would. I'm just very curious and experimental right now

When you found out about your sexuality how did you react or what did you feel?

I was revolted, I was disgusted with myself and I desperately wanted to change. I hated the idea of me being with a man or being attracted to men. Following disgust was frustration, I was frustrated that I allowed myself to be like this and I was frustrated that I was playing into these thoughts. I was in a bubble of internalized homophobia and self loathing. g

How do you feel about it now?

I've accepted it, I now feel like it's apart of me, I love being attracted to men and women. I get to have the best of both worlds (I hate this lmao). I wouldn't say it's an integral part to understanding me or it's my identity, because it's merely a subcategory. But still I love it

How do you feel being an Arab and queer?

A contradiction. I was raised with the idea that us [arabs] couldn't and shouldn't be queer because it's not our culture. I thought I was the only one who felt like this and I desperately wanted to find more arabs like me. I've always felt very outcasted from my community and society and so having another reason to set me apart was annoying enough. When I found more gay arabs I was over the moon I felt safe and free, an immense feeling of liberation and I was over the moon. Being Arab and queer is the most badass combination ever, you've got the cultural understanding of the Arab world and with my bisexuality I'm adding a new ingredient to the mix.



Being a young gay woman in a religiously conservative context was mentally challenging without the emotional support I received from friends, I don't know how I would've survived. Being a woman already came with constraints that are inescapable unless I am passed down to a husband, which isn't an option anyways because of my sexual orientation. I've never successfully deconditioned myself from the homophobia I internalised growing up because the consequences of homosexuality were extreme and likely violent, therefore almost dooming me to a lifetime of mental instability, paranoia of being outed, and insecure-attachment styles with close familial figures that explicitly reject and express hatred for gay people.



