



AVALON CLARE

Last week two men in a black SUV stopped to leer at me while I walked my dog on 12th street near Tasker, only a couple blocks from my house. I asked them to please keep driving and the driver said, "We're just admiring you." I then flipped them off and continued to do so until they drove away. They were stopped for so long that the car behind them was honking. As they sped off the man in the passenger seat yelled, "You aren't even that sexy, bitch." This was the first time I had left the house that day. I can get pretty anxious about leaving the house anyway, but after my interaction with those men I felt nauseated, unsafe, and really un-sexy. Later that same day I decided to ride my bike to do some errands. While I was riding home in South Philly a man leaned out of his truck window to say, "I almost wish I was your bike seat." At this point I was very angry, so I screamed at him from my bike for as long as we were next to each other, which was several blocks. Still, a feeling of powerlessness crept over me that was unshakeable. When these harassments occur, I feel endangered and disrespected. I feel frustrated that even if I had taken a photo of his license plate, who could I have shown it to? What repercussions would there have been? Probably none. I hate street harassment because it has the power to ruin my day. It can turn an empowering bike ride through my own neighborhood into a frightening ordeal that leaves me feeling exposed and vulnerable. Men need to be held accountable for the ways they intimidate and emotionally disturb women walking and riding our bikes in Philadelphia. We have a right to do so without being subjected to sexual harassment.