Consent

James-Oliver Mack  
*College of DuPage*

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CONSENT

They did not tell us that their catcalls were really just compliments
That we were being oversensitive
They did not have to
We told each other these things
Not because we believed them
But rather because we didn’t
We knew that their jabs were predatory
We kept it to ourselves
We felt the phantom sensations of hands
Stroking, touching, searching, finding

They did not tell us that we were just asking to be groped with our choice in clothing
That we shouldn’t have been teasing if we didn’t want to have our ass slapped
They did not have to
We told each other these things
Not because it was true
But rather because it wasn’t
We knew we did not consent
We kept it to ourselves
We experienced the spectral conversation with an authority figure
Disparaging, judging, blaming, belittling

They did not tell us that it was our fault for being too drunk or too high
That it was their right as our significant other
They did not have to
We told ourselves these things
Not because we felt this way
But rather because we didn’t
We knew that it was rape
We kept it to ourselves
We lived the illusory court case
Probing, shaming, besmirching, wilting

James-Oliver Mack