

(excerpt - *From the Notebooks of Melanin Sun*  
by Jacqueline Woodson) p.27

## Alone

Some days I wear alone like a coat, like a hood  
draping from my head that first warm day of spring,  
like socks bunching up inside my sneakers. Like that.

Alone is how I walk some days, with my hands  
shoved deep in my pockets, with my head down,  
walking against the day, into it then out again.

Alone is the taste in my mouth some mornings,  
like morning breath, like hunger. It's lumpy oatmeal  
breakfast when Mama doesn't have time to cook  
and I still don't know how much oatmeal and water  
and milk will make it all right. It's Ralphael and  
Sean, my supposed-to-be-homeboys going off without  
me to catch the new Spike Lee flick in Manhattan,  
then running up to me in the park where I'm shooting  
hoops by myself, and having the nerve to tell me all  
about it. "But why didn't ya'll come get me?" I ask,  
and they shrug, say, "We figured you were in your  
house wanting to be alone."

Some days alone creeps between my shoulder  
blades and hollows me out.

Today, alone is a pair of new Calvin Kleins  
wrapped up in white tissue, folded neat inside a  
brown box from Macy's. Today, alone is this empty  
house and a tiny note beside the box: Dear Melanin  
Sun, I miss you. Love, Ma.

↑  
alone is what  
he's trapped  
in.

↑ alone is ~~what~~  
a feeling that he has  
no choice of controlling

→ this alone overshine up completely for net  
enjoying the warm day of spring.

• He seems  
like he doesn't  
want to be  
alone but  
has no choice.  
It's like some  
thing that he  
just has to wear

↑ He doesn't  
have a choice  
to have or not  
to have in his mouth

↑ Alone has become  
him, like he's so  
used to it because  
others are seeing it  
come out of him