

## Hydrate, moisturize, and mind your own business

Ashlee Haze performs her poems at Longwood

By Taylor O'Berry



Haze reading from her book, "Land of the Living".

Lankford Ballroom filled with the sound of snaps at the Lancer Productions (LP) sponsored event. 15 girls stand on the couches and watched Ashlee Haze perform.

Haze is a spoken word poet and talked about womanhood, feminism, being plus sized, and people of color on Friday, Sept. 22.

"I started writing when I was 10 years old," Haze said, "My teacher entered me into a poetry competition in high school and that's when I really started competing."

She spoke about her biggest inspirations, mentioning the women in her family and Missy Elliott.

Haze said, growing up, there weren't many women in the media she could relate to who looked like her. She one day found Elliott's music.

Haze wrote her poem, "For Colored Girls", which talks about how Elliott is her inspiration and empowering black girls, was noticed by Elliott.

Elliott showed up at Haze's house one day to hang out with her and talk about the poem.

"It was crazy," Haze said, "It's one of those things where even as I tell the story, it's like, 'that really happened?'"

Elliott was someone Haze could look up to because she was "a thick, black girl" like Haze.

Haze also spoke a lot about feminism and what it means to her.

"Feminism is the ability a be whatever type of women you want to be," Haze said, "Without apology."

"To me, a good feminist is someone who hydrates, moisturizes, and minds their own business," Haze said.

Haze read her poem, "Ode to Fuckboys", a poem about the kind of men who don't respect women.



Along other poems she read were "Self Reclamation In 3 Parts", a poem about reclaiming her body for herself, "Shake What the Motherland Gave You", about her being plus sized and "Alligators", about police brutality, saying before she read the poem how performing it gets harder and harder to do.

Haze was born in Atlanta, Georgia and told the audience how when she would wake up on Sunday mornings to her mother playing music, she knew she'd be cleaning all day.

At the end of her set, LP gave her time to have a meet and greet. Haze also told her audience how awesome they were.