

## Kitchen

*Dear Sister Soldier Project,  
Thanks for the wonderful gifts  
It is so hard to get black hair products here  
I have started wearing wigs to protect my hair  
The water, the sun, the dust all broke our hair off  
A lot of the women choose to go natural here.*

nappy

*I recently arrived in Iraq to join Base Balad and the lack of sufficient ethnic products was one of my main concerns, not only for myself but others. Although there are a few ethnic hair products in the base exchange, they are very limited. Additionally, there is a severe shortage of 220V hair appliances, such as hair dryers, curling irons, and flat irons. After only one week of being on ground there was much talk amongst some soldiers referencing the condition/appearance of some of our female soldiers' hair. These comments were very offensive although they were not referencing me in particular I still felt a sense of pity for those they commented about.*

nappy hair

real

Nappy

You swirl around with a three-foot  
Towel atop your head  
An impersonation of Barbie without Ken  
Take your left hand under  
Flip the towel to the other side  
Do it again from right back to left  
No, there aren't any blond bangs hanging  
But all that will take  
Is your best imagination

Forget the aspirations of the nappy-headed.black girl  
Remember the heartbreak of *The Bluest Eye*  
You wore a wig to two proms & not the same one

*The heat here is just killing my curls.*

Ok. Chin up.

You sit & wait your turn  
There's a chair near the stove  
There's a hot comb on the flame  
There's a sizzle when it hits  
The nape of your neck  
Your kitchen is nappy, real nappy  
You're too young to comprehend  
Dr. Miracle is lye-N in wait  
Dr. Miracle has declared war on bad hair  
Dr. Miracle works on women or men  
Dr. Miracle wants to tame your original sin  
Your naps, the bull's-eye target of his confidence-killing capitalist affection

*Dear Sister Soldier Project,*

*Dr. Miracle is a little too strong for my hair, BUT it was the #1 product for some of the other ladies. Many of us suffer the up-keeping of our tresses b/c of the water and lack of ethnic products available to us. We receive mounds of care packages from very supportive and loving people, but rarely ever are there ethnic products shipped. So again, I want to personally thank you and your team for what you are doing to bring smiles upon the faces of those who require ethnic products as we continue to defend freedom.*



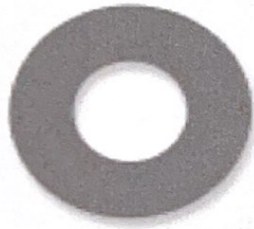


Afro 6"

Hair

Afro 6"

Good &



Hair without lye

high

without lye

high

Hair without lie

Afro 6" high

Your Hair:

raised fists

Dear Kitchen,  
There are some things you should know about hot combs.

- #1 "you know the smell of a hot comb miles away"
- #2 "you should hold your ear"
- #3 "if the comb gets too hot you could burn up your hair"
- #4 "if the comb gets too hot you could burn up your skin"
- #5 "relaxers and hot combs don't get along"
- #6 "a clean hot comb works better than a greasy one"

Dear Kitchen,  
There are some things you should know about me.

Afro 6" high

I cannot lie

Razor sharp bald fade

I cannot hide

Dear Kitchen,  
There are some things you should know about yourself.

Many take offense to your name  
Everyone has a right to self-determination yet many are not amused  
If this nickname of all nick names continues to be used  
Under the false pretense of cleansing the sins of the unholy nap  
Perceived as dirty & un.kept  
Many will resist

In the sixties  
Many black females enlisted in a different war  
Fighting for the right to wear  
Their original hair  
Fighting sickle cell  
the cops  
the man

nappy. hair                      real  
nappy

*Dear Sister Soldier Project,*

*The summer is quickly approaching, and being out here really dries our hair out causing it to break off. Although we are soldiers, we are still women and it's important that as a woman that we always feel good about ourselves.*

Dear Kitchen,  
Happiness  
Cannot be defined by  
stuff others think of you  
O my dear I reclaim my  
image of you like wood  
O soft tangled one  
Truth is Dr. Miracle  
Has made a business  
conniving self confidence  
Truth is Dr. Miracle  
Doesn't care about us  
Could never save a life

#### Note

Kitchen includes excerpts from deployed African American female soldier thank you letters who received donated black hair products from the Sister Soldier Project in operation from 2007 to 2012.