

# Excerpt from Finding Angela Shelton

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Angela is quiet. I listen to her take a few swigs and drags.

"I guess that's what my alcoholism is, it's the total blanket I'm hiding under." She pops open a new can.

"Wow, you phrase that so well. You should write that one down."



"I wish I was a writer like you."  
"Just write then.

You can do it.  
Why do you hide under the blanket of alcoholism?"

"Because when I'm drunk I can speak."

"You don't have to use alcohol," I say but already know that is easier said than done. I'm a hypocrite. Angela has her beer, I chain smoke and I beat myself up and tend to go after men who don't like me. They are all secrets we hide so well.

"I have to be drunk. I'm not pretty or intelligent or artistic. That's why I'm attracted to people like you, Angela Shelton." She sighs quietly like she's

letting our name sink in for the first time. "I'm so ugly. And stupid. I'm just lower than a dog." That's exactly how I feel right now but I don't tell her that.

"Good grief, Angela. I wish you'd shut up about that. I'm so sick of hearing about the lower than a dog syndrome. You are adorable and you can do anything you want. You're just stopping yourself." I should say all of that into a mirror a hundred times.

"But you're so pretty, Angela."

"Oh please. You always say that, but you know what, when I walk by the mirror my first thought is ewww," I confess.

"Really? Me too."

"That is just sad. I wish you could see yourself. We need to get those negative voices out of our heads." I take a drag on my cigarette.

"I wish I could get better," Angela says quietly.

"I know, me to." We sit there and smoke for a while in silence. I wonder what number beer she's on. I just want to go to sleep while the man in my living room cuts my movie together. I realize something while sitting here in my backyard, holding the phone, and talking to myself. "You know what? Beating