

[Verse 1:]

Mama said, "You're a pretty girl.
What's in your head, it doesn't matter
Brush your hair, fix your teeth.
What you wear is all that matters."

Comment [1]: indicator of physical beauty

Comment [2]: ignoring intellect, not connected to self-worth

Comment [3]: markers of physical beauty, physical upkeep

[Pre-Hook:]

Just another stage, pageant the pain away
This time I'm gonna take the crown
Without falling down, down, down

Comment [4]: repetition of "matter", self-worth, identity

Comment [5]: metaphor: arena, battlefield

Comment [6]: victory over patriarchal forces

[Hook:]

Pretty hurts, we shine the light on whatever's worst
Perfection is a disease of a nation, pretty hurts, pretty hurts
Pretty hurts, we shine the light on whatever's worst
We try to fix something but you can't fix what you can't see
It's the soul that needs the surgery

Comment [7]: repetition of "pretty", paired up with "hurt", pain

Comment [8]: pageant imagery

Comment [9]: negativity, fixation of failure

Comment [10]: indictment of society

(Uh huh huh)

Comment [11]: Healing mental, emotional wounds

[Verse 2:]

Blonder hair, flat chest
TV says, "Bigger is better."
South beach, sugar free
Vogue says, "Thinner is better."

Comment [12]: typical notions of American beauty, standards that are culturally exclusive (white)

Comment [13]: Media

Comment [14]: repetition of idea of media

[Pre-Hook:]

Just another stage, pageant the pain away
This time I'm gonna take the crown
Without falling down, down, down

Comment [15]: conflicting perspectives, double standard

[Hook:]

Pretty hurts, we shine the light on whatever's worst
Perfection is a disease of a nation, pretty hurts, pretty hurts (pretty hurts)
Pretty hurts (pretty hurts), we shine the light on whatever's worst
We try to fix something but you can't fix what you can't see
It's the soul that needs the surgery

[Bridge:]

Ain't got no doctor or pill that can take the pain away
The pain's inside and nobody frees you from your body
It's the soul, it's the soul that needs surgery
It's my soul that needs surgery
Plastic smiles and denial can only take you so far
Then you break when the fake facade leaves you in the dark
You left with shattered mirrors and the shards of a beautiful girl

Comment [16]: can't look outside of self to heal self

Comment [17]: inability of beauty standards to give self-worth

Comment [18]: dark, emptiness, void after standards are gone

Comment [19]: interesting use of "beautiful" instead of "pretty", does Bey see a different connotation between the two

[Hook:]

Pretty hurts, we shine the light on whatever's worst (pretty hurts)
Perfection is a disease of a nation, pretty hurts, pretty hurts
Pretty hurts, we shine the light on whatever's worst
We try to fix something but you can't fix what you can't see
It's the soul that needs the surgery

[Outro:]

When you're alone all by yourself (pretty hurts, pretty hurts)
And you're lying in your bed (pretty hurts, pretty hurts)
Reflection stares right into you (pretty hurts, pretty hurts)
Are you happy with yourself? (pretty hurts, pretty hurts)

Comment [20]: repetition of words meaning "alone"

Comment [21]: moment of reflection

You stripped away the masquerade (pretty hurts, pretty hurts)
The illusion has been shed (pretty hurts, pretty hurts)
Are you happy with yourself? (pretty hurts, pretty hurts)
Are you happy with yourself? (pretty hurts, pretty hurts)

Comment [22]: repetition of illusion, lack of reality

Comment [23]: What dictates happiness if not the standards provided by society?