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editors' address

my dearest,

if you find yourself in a hole, stop digging. if you find yourself in the hole issue, please stop digging, this hole is made of cheap paper and really can't handle that kind of roughhousing.

hole is all about the nooks and crannies, the cracks and openings, the orifices and cavities that make up our lives, and what we choose to do with them. normally this is where i'd explain the theme further, but let's not beat around the bush. this is our sex issue. i think you get it.

in other news, this is the gargoyle's biggest issue ever, with 32 full pages! we can't actually confirm that, but neither can you. if you are reading this online and only seeing 30 pages, not to disappoint you, but the centrefold is print exclusive. you'll have to stain your fingers with ink like the rest of us if you want to see our annual nudes contest in its full glory.

the real mvp is our scanner, which got more action at prod than in its 17 years of robotic life. special thank you to everyone who took time out of their night to scan their various bits and boobs — it's way more difficult than you'd think.

up ahead in this glorious hole, you can look forward to an advice column from our masthead, a bellesa thrust vibrator review, an assripper's recurring nightmare, a collection of flash tattoos, camus and some lesbians, and a crossword.

a hole cannot exist by itself, and similarly, the hole issue cannot exist without you reading, writing, and wiping with this paper. despite the storm last wednesday, many people still showed up to spill lube all over their pants. we appreciate you all.

passionately yours,
ella mac & gabriel yuan

about us

The Gargoyle is University College's greasiest, sexiest (and only bi-weekly) student paper. We are a paper that firmly believes in being angry at society and that it is our job to provide a platform for you to do so. We do not give print space to bigots or to anyone who seeks to legitimize the status quo and we do not feign neutrality on the things that matter to our community.

Production is bi-weekly in-person on Wednesdays in the UC Junior Common Room (JCR)

Our next production night is March 5th, 5 pm

Join our discord server and follow us on Instagram/in person! Links at www.uegargoyle.ca

Email us to join our mailing list at uegargoyle@gmail.com

OPINIONS

Jazz puts women in the mood... but I'm fucking to the Weeknd!!???

reminiscing to the soundtrack of my sex life

nandini agarwal

I had a sex playlist before I ever even had sex. I had a playlist for everything, so it wasn't even about a raging desire to jump someone's bones; it was just a way to categorise my favourite R&B songs. The rise of hip-hop music in 2017 motivated this, leading to my discovery of artists like Daniel Caesar, Jhené Aiko and SZA. As a 14-year-old teenage girl, listening to SZA's Ctrl album felt like an awakening. The sultry croons of R&B intertwined with lyrics of desire and sexualization instilled a westernised approach to sex in me, paradoxical to the taboo around intercourse prevalent throughout India. Growing up in a society where women are cautioned towards being perceived as "seductive" through their actions or appearance, listening to female artists express their carnal passions, with Summer Walker standing on business singing "girls need love too", showcased a cultural shift from the historical undermining of women's needs in sexual and romantic relationships.

I went through my prime teenage years a virgin, trying to curate my sexual serenades for the first time I made love to someone. Regardless of my teenage fantasies, however, we all have to confront reality at some point. My first time wasn't as poetic as Daniel Caesar made it out to be, and the music was just a way to detach from the fear of intimacy.

In a recent conversation with a friend, I asked her if she plays music during sex, and she said "You don't need to play music when you're sleeping with someone you're in love with." Baffling. How else do you drown the noises of weird awkward grunts and moans? I've found myself queueing up songs mid-fornication to avoid being caught off-guard by an awkward noise I couldn't come back from. A grunt or maybe even a queef now censored, I thank the majesty of hip-hop for saving me from embarrassment.

Clearly, my lack of intimate relationships made me question my reliance on my sex playlist for the occasional wham-bams, but *obviously it's not just me*, I thought in all my single, awkward glory. I realized that even women who have reclaimed their sexuality and learned how to live in the moment felt this way. My other *single* friend, who I thought didn't need any help setting the mood, told me "Fuck yeah I listen to music during sex — do you want to see my playlist? It's called *blue moon motel*" she exclaimed. Whew?

I guess it was sort of a relief, but then again, are the people who engage in casual sex just more likely to have sex playlists than people in relationships? Or is it something many of us do to romanticise and curate our sexual experiences? Could the music be a distraction? Are we shielding ourselves from vulnerability?

The entire idea of having sex with music on is starting to seem performative. I had begun to plan out the foreplay; the song's over, maybe I should move on to giving head now?

But why was I performing? Had I lost touch with the concept of intimacy? Should I even be trying to create such intimacy in a casual relationship where the man just wants to bust a nut? Considering the number of times that I didn't finish in such an arrangement, it makes me wonder if I'm just performing for a man's pleasure. Is this a consequence of the patriarchal conditioning that prioritizes the fetishization of women and the satisfactions of men that I thought I escaped from?

I wonder about the primal connection between rhythm and movement. How during sex, I start aligning the beats of the bass to the motion of my hips. This synchronization adds to the performative feeling, emphasized by the song and the lighting, making sex seem like an act made with low production value. And when finished with copulation, I'm left with the lingering sounds of Bryson Tiller harmonising, hyper-aware that the illusion of connection during sex was cultivated by the ambience and not by me. Or by him, for that matter. Maybe that's why I rely on music during sex. It's a lubricant that helps me bare my body and soul to a person I do not love with less inhibition and insecurity.

And while I'm no expert, these are a few tracks that will help get you going, regardless of whether you're in love or just getting through the night with a man who acts like the clit is a myth:

- PERSIAN RUGS – PARTYNEXTDOOR
- pink bubblegum – lavi kou
- TMW – Avenoir
- living room flow - Bonus – Jhené Aiko
- All The Time – Jeremih, Lil Wayne
- Special Affair – The Internet
- Intergalactic Janet - Ley Soul
- What You Need - The Weeknd
- Stay Ready (What a Life) – Jhené Aiko ft. Kendrick Lamar
- TWENTY NIGHTS – Nobu Woods
- Summers Over Interlude – Drake, Majid Jordan

It's not all pessimistic. Sometimes a song will align perfectly to the thrusts of your motion, and you connect in that moment. It can act as an aphrodisiac, heightening sensations and enhancing pleasure. Certain songs can also trigger the release of dopamine in our brains, much like orgasms — probably why I've been unsatisfied in my recent frolickings.

Virgin

i pledge allegiance to pillow princesses

anonymous

the unsung heroes of lesbian sex

content warning for mentions of eating disorders and self-harm.

my girlfriend and i fucked like rabbits during the first couple months of dating. we missed school, we missed whole days. sun-up to sundown, and past that, too. all the way through the daylight. disclaimer: DON'T DO THIS. stamina exists for a reason; people are meant to STOP fucking eventually. we missed the entire first day of second semester to have morbid lesbian sex. the most she ever came in a row was nineteen times. she nearly passed out once because we started fucking as soon as we woke up, no food breaks, no bathroom breaks, no anything-breaks, period. period? no problem. fuck through it.

(she really did nearly pass out. i'll never forget the image of her frantically chugging cold miso soup straight from the pot — spilling it all over the bathroom tile in her haste while curled over the toilet ready to hurl — because she was so depleted of electrolytes that she couldn't even wait for me to fucking heat it up. like rabbits, i say.)

then, the annual february depression hits. the sex gets a little harder. less energy, more not-in-the-mood's, more wanting to keep clothes on so she doesn't see the aftermath of impulsive decisions made with a razor blade and the shower running cold. sometimes, the girls relapse. it happens. to top it off, the summer began with a veritable, good and true, full-blown anorexia nervosa relapse. terrible 20s, or whatever they say. brat summer ftw, but there was no hot, healthy, intimate, gay sex going on, nope, none at all.

comorbidity does as comorbidity wants, so i started antidepressants in june. combine rampant brain fog with crippling body dysmorphia and so few calories going towards basic brain functions that i could barely retain memories of the summer — top it all off with the prescribed murder of both sex drive and the ability to orgasm — yeah, it's not fucking happening. it's celibate summer, now.

or, it would have been, if otherwise. sex had always been important to me, like communication, quality time. giving during sex, especially, was important to me, less so going through the motions and more adopting an active role that i had always enjoyed playing. i can be awkward, a little slow on the emotional side, but nothing says *i love you* more than fucking the love of your life into nineteen orgasms and holding her after she passes out. i love giving.

i always initiate sex, too, always have since the beginning, something about her libido-related insecurities and my loving to push and tease and badger, just the way it worked out, perfect like everything else between us. so what happens to our sex life when i suddenly can't fucking stand to be seen, let alone touched or fucked? when i don't have the energy nor ability to orgasm? do i stop initiating? do we stop fucking? does sex just... stop?

i never stopped loving to give, though. so, that's exactly what happened. i never stopped initiating, and sex became just that: her getting off, and me getting off on the fact that she was getting off. i was and always have been sexually attracted to my girlfriend, so nothing about our sex life really had to change. i just wasn't being touched. i preferred it that way.

except, something did change. sex had always been important to me, because of its mutualism. its two-way street. communication without words. understanding without dialogue. but, i had always found it intimidating, the expectation to come, something to lean into like a role, something to give away like trust. now that i wasn't being held responsible for providing in that way, there was less pressure, less expectation. expectation to come or to look pretty, to be willing or to be wet. i could be flexible, have fun. i didn't have to come, so i could relax.

because, honestly, it's fucking hard to bottom. the body is such a fickle thing — to demand it of specific things, at specific times? mine's a bit of a let down. it's not her fault. she doesn't do well under pressure. but, my girlfriend does. she was okay with being touched and not touching me in return, something that i think would drive me crazy, would erase all that makes sex enjoyable, even. but she never got put off by me saying no. she let me touch her and touch her and touch her, and afterwards, we would just carry on with our day, or go to bed, or do anything else, anything else at all, other than make me come.

it takes a different mentality, to make sex emotionally fulfilling. you can't have good sex without vulnerability. refusing to be sexually vulnerable, refusing to touch or communicate, and on the flip side, refusing to be touched, to be willing and clear — all this is a refusal to show an authentic self, naked in the truest sense, to give into the trust and honesty that makes intimacy so, well, intimate. all of which, of course, is fine. there are lots of ways to have good sex, but what is good sex without a good feedback loop? it's hard, to do it all on your own.

but there's just something about her. in my inability to be vulnerable, she was able to pick up the slack. she thrives under the spotlight, and i feel no pressure to perform beside her. i can just take what i want, and she can, too. it feels like being released from some terrible fear. it feels like going into a game knowing the rules beforehand. a bottom who's happy to not reciprocate? thank fucking god. it's like something out of a dream.

because i know what it feels like to give, to perform sexually. topping is everything! making someone feel good, heard, and happy — there's nothing like it. it's addictive, fulfilling, everything. if i had to give myself up and up and up, react, present, perform, everything that it takes to bottom, i don't know if i could do it. sex doesn't really work without that kind of vulnerability. that kind of sacrifice. some bitch has got to do it. thank god it's not me, though.

let's get things straight: my girlfriend is not a pillow princess, she wants to reciprocate! the only difference is that whatever thing stuck inside of me that wants to push back — she lets it push. the phrase 'pillow princess' is only in use at all because it encapsulates her willingness to accommodate. (she says it's okay to be asexual even though i'm literally not! i am super sexually attracted to my girlfriend. i want to fuck her all the time! doesn't the very definition of asexuality refer to the inability to feel sexual attraction, which i do, because i am not asexual? is anyone else getting the sense that i kind of have a complex about this? no one else? just me? okay. cool).

anyway, all the love in the world should go to pillow princesses. all the love in every corner, absorbing the brunt of everyone's emotions, and then you, whose only role has been to provide a stage, get to hold them and fall asleep after? a head on your arm and all that. sleepwalking, mumbled and slurred from all the hard work they did, soft and under covers? being sweet and beautiful and so fucking hot? priceless. indispensable. couldn't live without it.

but, thankfully, by some miracle, she can. by some miracle, she gives me the room to flounder, entertains my indecision, respects boundaries i haven't even set, jumping between different dosages, i've found that the milligrams of antidepressants i'm on does have an effect on how easily i can come. it doesn't change the fact that sometimes i can't. that sometimes i don't want to. that sometimes i wish i was built like a ken doll, with nothing between my legs that could cause me any further grief.

none of this is to say that i'm fully better. that i can eat a meal without thinking, or that i can roll out of bed and face the day each morning without fail. both still occur, sometimes. both are still comorbid, always. but, what's never been better, is my relationship. what's never been better is my sexy-as-hell, nymphomaniac girlfriend. and her tits. i don't have to come; she can do it nineteen times for the both of us. she says she thinks she could hit twenty-one someday, and i can't wait. i just get to sit back and enjoy.

so, yeah. what's never, ever been better is our relationship. also, the sex. definitely the sex.

Is Your Sex Drive Gone, Or Are You

At some point in your academic career, you might find yourself wondering what the hell went wrong as you stare blankly at your laptop screen, deep in a thread titled "r/DeadBedrooms". You'll scroll past terrifying personal accounts, questionable medical advice, and some guy who swears that cold showers are the cure for everything. And then it'll hit you — when was the last time you actually *wanted* to have sex? Now, before you panic-search "causes of low libido in young adults" and diagnose yourself with some rare health condition, we should consider a simpler explanation: exhaustion. Or worse, the weight of financial instability, the steady descent into burnout, and the looming dread of late-stage capitalism. But, let's not get ahead of ourselves just yet.

U of T is nothing but an anti-horny industrial nightmare. In a world where sitcoms promised spontaneous make-outs, passionate hookups, and some complicated romance with a philosophy major who wears rings, we instead get a swamp of stress and responsibility. Or better yet, computer science majors and finance bros. U of T is not an atmosphere that fosters grinding passion, it's an atmosphere that fosters grinding *despair*. By midterms, most students' libidos are long gone, completely obliterated by the relentless strain of academic pressure and whatever demonic force resides within Robarts. "Defy gravity," they tell us, but when you're running on barely four hours of sleep, the only thing you'll be defying is the urge to stay in bed. Sex? I don't think so. When you can hardly function on a physical and emotional level, you're not going to prioritise pleasure. Your body is going to prioritise its survival.

Just Tired?

averie collins

Here's a fun fact: zero sleep and an overdose of caffeine will not have your brain thinking, "Let's get freaky!" Instead, your brain will be thinking, "Let's try not to die!" And there's a science behind this. Say you're being chased down by a lion ... your body wouldn't want to pause for a quickie. Not at all! It would shut down all nonessential functions to focus on making it out alive. The issue? Your brain can't tell the difference between a lion chasing you and having three overdue essays and an exam you haven't studied for. The consequence? Sex drive gone. This might be why you're ignoring those Hinge notifications or feeling nothing when an objectively hot person stands near you on the subway. Your body is too busy keeping you alive. There's no need to overcomplicate it. If you're constantly managing deadlines, social commitments, financial struggles, and the existential crisis of being an adult, then congrats! You're fighting for your survival! Do you seriously think your mind has the capacity to focus on some guy who texts "wyd" at 11:59 p.m? No! You have an essay due.

babe, i'm fighting for my life

So, before you go into crisis mode, you should consider some things. Maybe you're not completely fucked, you just don't have the energy to *be* fucked. Try something radical, like getting a full eight hours of sleep, eating an actual meal, or experiencing sunlight for more than five minutes. And after all that, if you suddenly remember that sex exists, then congrats again!

You still have a libido. You were just running on fumes. If that doesn't work, then and only then can you start self-diagnosing. But the odds are, you just need a nap. My final thoughts on this matter are as follows: if you are feeling deeply unsexy, please do not fret. You are not malfunctioning. You are simply an overworked U of T student who needs some sleep and Vitamin D. Well, at least enough to go buy a vibrator. Because let's be so real, even if your sex drive returns, do you really have the time for another emotionally unavailable situation? I'm thinking not. Now go to sleep.

promise me you'll bite? dissecting my undying love for the fanged ones

with sanguineous love, valantyne

proclaiming a desire to be seduced, entranced, and bitten by a living dead one is not uncommon these days, and yet, i often feel that my fascination with vampires is one all my own. i'm sure every other vampire fucker would say the same, and i am sure we all have something different to say, why we were drawn to them initially, and it's nearly always because of outcast status, whatever form it takes on for the individual.

as an autistic (and bisexual) woman, i have existed on the peripheries of social norms all of my life. from the developmental to the social, i am either hopelessly behind or too far gone and never perfectly situated where i am expected to be. knowledge of boundaries and unspoken expectations has never been inherent to me, and it is difficult to try to learn what you do not know you do not know. even into adulthood i remain on the outside, othered. sometimes, this othering is at the hands of others, and sometimes, it is my own doing. trying to fit in and truly belong with an esteem of certainty is a sisyphean task for autistics. but you wanted to read more about fucking vampires, so let's connect these thoughts.

There exists an unwavering intimacy between me and my imagined bloodsucking lover; i point to the theory of abjection as illustrated by julia kristeva in *powers of horror* to explain this sensation i can only otherwise describe with a confused stream of stutters and whimpers. i reflect on this essay often when i attempt to analyze my own desires (which is too often for my own good, get me out of my head and into my hole) because it explains so clearly to me why my lifelong love of the morbid and macabre comes so easy and effortless. in short, abjection refers to the blended experience of disgust and intrigue towards something which threatens to disrupt the boundaries between self and object, when the familiar becomes suddenly unfamiliar. kristeva places abjection as a profound, destabilizing experience which challenges boundaries between subject and object, and a necessary aspect of the human condition.

for Dracula and all those other vampires I have loved.

i consider myself an aficionado of vampire media so i have seen it all, from the popular to the niche, in all forms of entertainment: buffy, the lost boys, vampire knight, karin, twilight, underworld, the vampire diaries, blue bloods, the vampire chronicles, true blood, carmilla ... the list goes on, but do know that dracula is indeed my favourite novel. i am enraptured by the vampire as a seductive charlatan (read: angel, astarion, lestat), the rotting monster (read: counts dracula and orlok), an invasive (racially/queer-coded) threat (read: carmilla, david, akasha). in every form, i recognise parts of myself, and in that familiarity, desire blooms.

kristeva paints the vampire as the ideal abject, both tantalizing and terrifying. certainly you should want nothing to do with a walking corpse, and you definitely should not want to fuck them but like... if the vampire exists on the sidelines just the same as i, then it's inevitable that our paths would cross.

CONTINUED

the catch with autism is that it predisposes me to alternative attitudes: i listen to cds; i love biting and being bitten; i'm a goth; bloodplay is awesome; i practice shibari as a form of meditation; i prefer birds to cats and dogs; sending emails is easy for me; and i gravitate to lovers who intimidate me at least a little. i like what i'm not supposed to like. push me to the outside, and i'll go my own way instead.

in tandem with being othered, i am also romani, and if there's anything you need to know about being romani, it's that vampires are THE monsters in our folklore (you're welcome for dracula btw). my grandmother often warns me about the dangers of vampires: their inconspicuous forms, enchantments, (read: wealth, orgasms, and lesbianism), and intentions. but instead of fearing them, i find a kindred soul in these dejected creatures. i like that they, too, are seen as abominations who only exist because "something seriously went wrong." there's a variety of reasons why i might be like this now: vaccinations, poor parenting, feminism, not enough bible study, secular schooling, forgetting to wear evil eye protection, and lots of others. many never fail to remind me of this, but to a vampire, i am their perfect victim (nay, lover), and i consent to the enchantments. see me as the abomination that i am, and take me anyways.

existing outside of the norms of how one is supposed to be and supposed to desire would draw us closer together than our attempts to overstep the boundaries into a society which rejects us, in our shared abjection, we both become dehumanized nouns to be gawked and repelled, and even vampires get lonely (a central theme in their mythos even), and so why wouldn't i lean in to embrace the abyss if the abyss itself can pledge its undying devotion forever and ever?

an exhaustive review of the bellesa thrust vibrator

"exhaustive" was not a hardship in this case

anonymous

When one embarks on their vibrator journey, many will say, "Do not stray too far – begin small, begin gentle, lest you become wanton with lust." And to that I say, "Do not go gentle into that good bush!"

And so, for my first vibrator, I bought the Bellesa Thrust.

Upon asking my friends for vibrator recommendations (which is perfectly fine and normal btw), I was presented with rave reviews for this very vibrator: "Who needs penis?" I heard. "I saw stars!", said another. "If you've never orgasmed before in your life, this thing will make you come like a transport truck through a brick wall," I was told. Never did I mention that this thing, this device of sex incarnate, would be my first ever vibrator should I buy it. Perhaps that information was pertinent. Maybe slow and steady does win the race.

"Nah," I said. "It can't be *that* crazy."

Reader, it was only the beginning.

An exploration of the Bellesa website greeted me and two friends (who were watching me buy the vibrator, as friends do) with very loud, graphic porn. None of us reacted to this in the hopes that it would turn off soon. It did not. It went on for decidedly longer than one hopes when one is already in a vulnerable state between two near and dear friends. But push forward we must on our noble quest!

Once we finally managed to get the porn to stop playing, we reached the X on the map: the Bellesa Thrust review page. Such notable excerpts caught my eye:



And she **slaps** HARD. This thing slaps



I honestly have no words when it comes to this toy. Best investment of my life. Gets the job done so quick and so thoroughly. The first time, I thought I'd passed away and gone to the great beyond. Buy it. You will not regret it, and that's a promise.



I feel it's legitimately an act of public service to spread this toy's gospel. I historically have a very hard time reaching orgasm (I didn't even have one until I was 24!), but oh my god... The first time I used this, I came 4 times (all different, all incredible) and then texted my boyfriend, saying that "my body feels like it's made up of tiny little stars." Truly amazing.

Winner winner, chicken dinner.

Frankly, the reviewers needed to do little to convince me – I had been single for two whole weeks, and I hated dating apps. Something had to give, so this thingamajig was ordered and on its way. The process was only slightly delayed by the mailman finding my mailbox simply too baffling, instead leaving it at the post office, requiring me to go fetch it. Literally no one except me knew what was in the mailing envelope, but I knew, and I was flustered. Who can blame me? A girl always remembers her first.

Once I got home, I plugged that bad boy in and sat about twiddling my thumbs for a few hours while it charged. Then, night fell. I took that thing for a spin. And as that little device buzzed away, I couldn't help but wonder – is this what all vibrators feel like?

Reader, it was fucking baller.

This thing is bonkers. I have to tip my hat to whoever decided something should be as all-encompassing as the Thrust, because you really don't have time to think about much else other than "Damn, this is gonna be a good orgasm." At no point did I find myself drifting off thinking about what to eat for dinner or worrying that my roommates could hear me – which, maybe I should have worried about. Sorry, roommates.

In a more genuine tone, the Thrust did, I think, genuinely make me better at orgasming. The Thrust's main selling point against other rabbit vibrators is that it, as the name suggests, actually **thrusts**. This thing **will** fuck you. And it'll be awesome. As someone who had little experience having sex with people with dicks, when I started sleeping with them, I found it really hard to orgasm during penetration. Mostly because, I think, my body wasn't used to that happening during sex. I was mostly focused on the intrusion, not having an orgasm. Using the Thrust, which does exactly the thing a dick would do but isn't manual, doesn't look like a dick, and also has the crazy awesome vibrator, made my body become used to the idea that penetration is not only something that feels good once you get over the weirdness of it, but also that good things come in twos and with great fucking comes great shit happening to your clit.

The Bellesa Thrust is now a staple in my bedroom. I think it's made me into some kind of nympho – every time someone comes to my house I have to double check that I haven't left my vibrator sitting out on my bed. My boyfriend is a little jealous of my vibrator but also calls it his coworker, which rocks (he has no reason to be jealous, anyway. Which after this review says a lot).

Overall, I can conclude that I do not regret purchasing the Thrust as my first vibrator. If you're looking for something to spice up your single life, to help you figure out how to orgasm, or if you're just getting into dicks as a tool of pleasure, then I recommend this guy to get you where you need to be. Don't let it intimidate you – I promise, it's a very good lover.

intimacy's echo (aftercare)

ten small ways to recenter yourself after getting fucked

sophie boze

the steep drop-off from crazy-passionate bedroom activities back to normal life can produce some harsh feelings. experiencing feelings of emptiness, dissociation, and sadness after sex are normal. these emotions can occur even if you love your partner and loved the sex. sex is an inherently vulnerable act, and you shouldn't be expected to return to doing day-to-day activities without some aftercare. aftercare is emotional or physical care given to oneself or partner(s) after an intense experience. the practice has roots in the BDSM world, where it is expected to need some comfort/physical check-in after an intense, painful or degrading scene. however, even if you only practice "vanilla" sex, you can still implement aftercare rituals in your sex life. people of all genders and within all relationship dynamics can practice aftercare rituals with their partner(s) to feel more grounded and emotionally secure after sex. I list some of my favorite aftercare tips below, but as you will see, it's largely based on personal preference — don't view this article as a one-size-fits-all prescription.

tip I: help each other clean up
sex is messy! you and your partner(s) will likely have some combination of cum, pre-cum, pussy juice, period blood (if it's shark week), sweat, tears, saliva, massage oil/lotion, and lube smeared all over you. don't be ashamed of the mess — embrace it as an opportunity to share another vulnerable moment. practicing being vulnerable with your partner(s) is good for your relationship. it improves your communication and bond, which are essential to good sex. navigating being vulnerable and knowing from practice you're okay being vulnerable promotes emotional intelligence and safety.

baby wipes are a convenient and portable option for doing an initial quick clean of each other. however, they might feel cold on your freshly flushed, warm, post-sex skin. in that case, a warm washcloth is also a good option. be gentle and tender as you help clean each other up — show that you care for your partner(s) beyond just the initial sex act. take turns and take it slow if you have the time.

if you have extra time, privacy, and access to a comfortable shower, showering together after sex can be a great way to care for each other and feel renewed and fresh. cleansing your entire body and becoming fully clean together can help you transition back to normal life. the water will help rejuvenate you, and it's by far the best way to remove unwanted fluids. shampoo each other's hair, admire the contours in each other's wet bodies, compliment each other, scrub each other's backs... it's up to you and your partner(s) what you want to do during your shared shower. the novelty of the experience makes it worth it to do at least once, in my humble opinion.

tip II: reaffirm love/attraction/gratitude

this one is straight-forward. someone just shared their body with you. regardless of whether they're a long-term partner or a one-night stand, you should be willing to show some appreciation for their participation in sharing a vulnerable activity with you. simple gratitude is enough, but if you are already comfortably "in love", feel free to use the L-word.

it's harder to figure out what to say when you're having sex outside a relationship. I don't have much experience in that area, but I think you can't go wrong with a short and sweet "thanks for a great night. I liked spending time with you" or "wow, you really are hot."

tip III: debrief (in a way that's comfortable for you)...

the quality of your sex life is proportional to how often you are able to have honest and caring debriefs with your partner. it can be really helpful to discuss what you enjoyed most right away when it's fresh in your mind. if both you and your partner(s) feel comfortable, safe, and empowered to debrief and discuss right away, it can be a great addition to an aftercare session.

however, if the thought of giving (or receiving) what feels like a "performance review" right in bed scares you, there's no pressure to do it right away. if you and your partner(s) would prefer to debrief over text or phone later in the day, that's valid too. discussing newly discovered "likes" in-person ahead of future sessions could also be effective. communication is super important before, during, & after sex. it's how we establish consent and boundaries, but it's also a good way to be clear about what you like and how you would like to maximize pleasure and connection in the bedroom.

tip IV: eat good food (CARBSSSS)

let's be real: sex is a workout, and after any workout, it's a good idea to refuel. sharing something warm, comforting, and carb-y is a great idea.

some of my personal favorites include a warm salted pretzel, cinnamon rolls, ramen, freshly popped popcorn... but it's really up to you! these are just ideas to get you started.

tip V: watch a show

if you don't have the energy to talk or do much, watching a show is a great way to bond and keep each other company without expending much energy. bonus points if it's a comfort show — my personal favorites are *CollegeHumor/Dropout* skits and *The Tech Roast Show*.

tip VI: meditate (good to do solo)

if you really feel off-centered and dissociated after sex, meditation might be the right tool to ground you. you can use a guided meditation video if you prefer, but honestly, working to slow your breathing and bring your attention to your body's presence is often enough. sometimes, sex can feel like an out-of-body experience, so grounding yourself in your breathing, the feeling of your fingers and toes, and the awareness of yourself in your environment can help you self-regulate to a calm state of presence.

tip VII: go for round two

are you still horny? unsatisfied? there's no shame in asking for another round or a different activity.

particularly, if your sex routine deviates from the typical heterosexual sex script that dictates sex to be over when the male orgasm occurs, it could be useful to re-define what the goal of each sexual encounter is, and therefore when "sex ends". if you feel that you didn't receive what you needed from one stage of the sex session, there's nothing stopping you from continuing until your needs are met. redefine your sexual encounters to focus on achieving what matters most to you.

be mindful to not pressure your partner into anything further if they're no longer in the mood. round two can be a solo activity.

tip VIII: read to each other

if you really like your partner's voice, having them read to you can be really comforting. pick any book, article, or short story, and relax while you listen to a familiar voice. if you have multiple partner(s) present, do a dramatic play reading (haven't tried it, but could be silly and fun!).

tip IX: cuddle

perhaps the simplest and most effective aftercare of all, a good cuddle-session will save you from the steep drop-off of going from feeling very desired and having lots of physical contact to potentially being alone.

tip X: ask your partner(s) what they want (and make it a part of your routine)

there's no shame in directly asking a partner what aftercare they would prefer. some people prefer to be talkative, others prefer to be quiet. some people want to move onto another collaborative activity, while others want to linger in bed (or wherever you had sex). there's no shame in liking something unique, and there's no reason not to be upfront and open about your needs.

and that's all the tips from me! feel free to get adventurous with your aftercare and reap the benefits of better sex. just remember to keep it safe, sane, and consensual.

send my love to your partner(s). xoxoxo

epistolary

to
maye
musk

sophia pandit

Dear Maye Musk,

You come from a time when eggs were a dime a carton, always gobbled whole by boas who were never taught to keep their jaws shut. When shell shrapnel implanted onto the walls of their stomachs, did you promise bassinets as bandages? Or were you among those that stuck snakeskin above their mantles like participation trophies?

I see it being the latter for you.

The rest of us were born under the mourning tent Adam and Eve were banished to. Just because she sprouted from his rib doesn't mean he was owed her flesh when they starved for a week. In this dire life, I personally snack on the apple of fornication. Its core squirms while a colony of maggots fattens on tongued nectar. Gestation brings about beetles donning latex exoskeletons, harbingers of hedonistic rot. But this is nothing to impede, contrary to what you believe.

Immortality is heretical — you and your son's claims regarding a "falling birth rate" don't change that. How wicked it is to defy the inevitable decomposition of your family name for the sake of retaining whatever wealth was robbed under it. How exceptionally cruel you must be to bear children in your image and not the Lord's. When He commanded mankind to "be fruitful and multiply," the rivers of the prairies and the Heavens above were not tainted with Elon's contagious ego. Nor were empires built off the blackened lungs of Rwandan miners and collapsed chests of computer scientists. Nor did miscarriages qualify as murder. You plug your ears when the world cries over the consequences of your words.

To quote Kim Gordon: "Anti-god is anti-orgasm." So, as mentioned previously, I must resort to pleasure without procreation. For each time my nipple is bitten with no expectation that a baby will do the same one day, I land a punch in a shareholder's profits. And as my eyes lock with a lover's while they enter me, a camel trots through the eye of a needle to get a headstart on the rich man.

I will make movie theater seats wet with bestial wrath. I will spit in the mouth of my waiter at dinner.

Sincerely,

A Daughter Born after The Fall of Man

a sex worker's guide to pimps, pay pigs, and sugar daddies

odette

When you think you'll kill yourself, go to CAMH.
You will be a sugar baby out of desperation.
You should know you are not off the hook for sugaring.
You will think that it's all soft skills, a money hack.
You should know that you are no different from the prostitutes freestyle out in the open late at night.

A John is your average middle class man that will save up for a sweet treat of you every once in a while.

A John from Mississauga will lure you. You will be fooled into thinking \$300 for a morning and a skipped seminar is a good trade.
Do not go to Mississauga.

He will cheat on his wife with you in his office. He will tell you it's because she is too loose. Do not argue.

He will maneuver his grimy fingers through you as a test of your nature. He says you are much tighter than his wife. Do not argue.

He will take you in his SUV. It will smell of rot and you will see an infant car seat behind you.

Do not argue.

He will not pay you. He will say it's because you're only doing this for his money.

He will steal your nude photos.

Do not ever go to Mississauga, do not argue.

Oh, and do not sugar.

You will convince yourself that sugar babies are prostitutes in denial.

An old John yearns for a fresh girl. A sweet girl, a young girl, a new girl.
You should know sugaring preys on girls "untouched" by the realm of traditional prostitution.
Sugaring thrives on a John's love for a fresh girl willing to "do more for less."
You should know all sugar daddies are cheap Johns in disguise.
You will think you'll die tonight. Go to CAMH.

An entry level masseuse position in the depths of Scarborough advertises paying \$2000 a week. This is not a masseuse opening. They will ask for photos of you. You'll send some and they'll say, "No, less clothes." Do not send them photos. They will string you on. Do not give in. They are a dodgy prostitution agency disguised as a massage parlour. Stay away. FAR away.

This interaction will inspire you to work for yourself. When you first turn to independent prostitution, Johns will beg for every bit of you. They will ask for exclusive photos of you for them and them alone. When they ask for more, do not send. When they act disappointed, do not send. You will think that you are losing them; you are not. Do NOT send. Do not give in.
John's will ask to facetime instead. Do NOT facetime, especially not for free. You should know that you are worth more than what they make you out to be.

The new sex work terminology will confuse you. What the fuck is an hh? What is a pay pig and why won't it leave me alone? Why do so many prostitutes refuse to do bbfs and bbbj's?? What frick even are those?

You should know that with time, you will learn everything, but know this:

Johns will dream about you. They will tell you about each one in horrific detail. Johns will get attached, thinking you are too. Johns will mistake the profession for intimacy, your kindness for interest. Johns will shamelessly transition into time wasters. Time wasters will text you endlessly. Your time is money; time wasters will rob you of exactly that and your dignity too for the thrill. A time waster is a weed, an overgrown John. Trim him down before you'll have to root him out from the ground up.

DO NOT relax your screening protocols for the sake of a new John from Mississauga not liking them. He will refuse to see you because he doesn't want to screen. He will drown you in his fury and vulgarity. He will text you 4 days later, remorseful. Do not give him pity, do NOT relax your screening protocols for him alone. He will beg over the next couple of nights. Ignore him. Let him grieve. Savour your dignity.
DO NOT GO TO MISSISSAUGA FOR A JOHN.

You will meet your first paying client. He will book you for an hour and fuck you for 15 minutes. \$400 will feel like \$400,000 for a night. Let all the glory be yours. You will scream in the Uber ride home, thinking soft skills and this quick money hack will get you out of your family's seemingly fated poverty. It will not.

You will consider killing yourself. Go to CAMH.
You will consider getting a pimp to manage your load. DO NOT GET A PIMP.
You will consider joining another agency. They are not better. Do NOT join an agency.
You will consider killing yourself. Go to CAMH.

>Your mom will find out about your double life. She will cry. Do not crack. Do not give in. Lie to mom. Tell her you will stop. Do not stop. Do not give in.

We need the money. You know you need the money.
We will not last without it. You know you will not last without it.
We will drive back to CAMH. Tell mom to drop you off there.



A man will offer you \$2000 to fly to Philly for a weekend.
He will traffick you.
Do not give in.
When you think you'll kill yourself, go to CAMH.

You will no longer enjoy sex
You will feel like a hole
You need the money, please do not stop.
Do not give in to the feeling
Or any inability to withstand the lack thereof.

Please do not kill yourself, go to CAMH

When you go to CAMH,
You will befriend a trafficked prostitute
She will tell you she sells herself for \$5.
You will tell her she's worth so much more.
You will inspire her,
She will inspire you.

Please do not kill yourself.

love lies in my mouth

Love lives in my mouth, so sweet she rots my teeth
she is soft like dough, grey and spreading, familiar floury hands, powder heart

and the pressing perfume of her flowered kitchen.
Love is a cannibal, savours the soft parts — what rots first, what floats, what stashes easily under a rock or in a freezer, what she can come back to later.

Love takes the eyes first, in exchange for eternal blindness.

Love carved a hole in me, made a coffin of my chest
sat in its cave and buried me deep
she pulled me close, brushed the hair out of my eyes and whispered with her lips against mine and full of teeth, asking, guttural:

*"How long can you wait?
To collar your appetite?"*

"How long can you wait, my love?"
She crooked her head, listening intently for something she couldn't quite articulate — like the gossiping of the crow and the raven or the rattle of saliva in a dying man's throat.

I did not hear the pause, did not note the incline of her head, nor the slick of her tongue in search of the last drops on my teeth.

I did not. I did not. But I wish I had caught the flare of her nostrils or the impatient tap of her fingers at my ribs, beckoning some ravenous thing, I was still in the throes of an afternoon snooze.

I did not hear anything.

janie wang

Love is primeval: a carnivorous chasm, a creature of many forms. Her favourite form is this: bloody tongue, belly full, a coyote-cherry sunset streaking her flank scarlet, a bloated body caught fast in the horizon's bloody jaws; But still, she came.

Soft-footed, endless hunger under a hangnail moon, she scraped the rot from my cavities and plucked dark feathers from my cheek, asking in her clever lover's drawl, *"Still alive, my love?"*

I heard it then, I swear, but words have become tasteless to me, I'm afraid.

Like spoiled apples fit for the worms she makes me holy and so the cold earth is my cradle and swallows my grave.

good boy

anonymous

one of my professors recently told me about an ancient greek verb, *lesbiazein*. rather than having anything to do with sapphicism, it simply means "to perform oral sex on a man." it is a derogatory verb; it implies that giving head is degrading, the lowest rung on the ladder of sexual acts. this professor went on to say the romans later conceived of all sexual acts as conquests of the penetrator over the penetrated — that is, that all sexual acts, regardless of their precise nature, were rendered as penetrative in the roman imagination, so that a man eating a woman out would be "penetrated" by that woman.

the romans were not huge fans of men being penetrated.

the mouth is the most demeaning orifice, and the most intimate thing i have ever done is talk. i have a big mouth. i think; i hate keeping things about myself, to myself. unfortunately, i have cultivated the sort of life which requires me to hold my tongue.

sex in a body that only feels half yours: you forget, sometimes, that this is what you look like. i had my first time in a room with the lights off — i didn't think about how i looked, i just let him feel out my shape in the dark. the bed was cool and soft. i was loud. i have not been *loud*, in a general sense, very many times in my life.

it took me three months to let him give me what i really needed: the privilege of debasing myself in a way that mattered, for him to call me what i wanted to be called.

the word "vulnerable" comes from the latin *vulnerus*, wound.

i am aware of how i look: long hair, dark lashes, form-fitting clothes. i do not look like a *good boy* by any stretch of the imagination. that's what silicone is for, i suppose, and baggy clothes with sports bras layered beneath them. i am out to a few friends but i have not allowed any of them to refer to me as *him*. it is too big, too sacred, and i am too scared.

i will only ever know it like this. tucked between the four walls of my bedroom i can breathe; i put my mouth on him, i beg, i let him say my name. it is the kind of thing the romans would abhor.

EATING OUT



I desired to eat
the savage thunder
within your chest.
Savour the swell
and devour
what made you creep.
Bone conduction:
where the mandible
sings to the skull.
I agreed to a six-month surrender.
A pilgrimage
across no man's land.
Capsize my liner.
I built a pyre on a stoney shore.



the still.

julian robertson

Shed your Orlotan veil.
Strum sinew with tongue
and let the rattle
roll through the foothills.
Catch a corvid,
tuck a note under a singed wing,
let it sing to the Sisters.

Leave the junction
undisturbed,
head remaining connected
to the spine.
Choke back fur
and commit to the swallow
before you change your mind
and slip
into the waters,
pure and clean.

You are crouched
on the continental shelf
of the Armagnac sea
and there is a hare
clamped limply
between
your teeth.
You perch stiff,
like your old mango tree
and murmur a plea
of anti-recognition.

Please begin a
as a gift. for myself. as a gift and for myself.
Check one: Bill me. Enclosed is my check for total dues
Make check payable to National Poetry Month, Inc.

BE THERE!

Jackal, coyote, starry-eyed bastard.
Coward.
Stand tall,
this is a command,
this is a maxim,
this is a—

These things we love to slaughter
yet cease in shame and terror
to show.

Reeds to rushes.
Lifeblood staining
your craze lines.
May you carry your sin in your mouth.
May your grin and good talk
house my haunting.
Colossal in its subtlety.

I,
your polaris,
perpetual.
Will-o'-wisps
flicker in an
anticipatory hover
on the surface of the Bow.

Crucibles of Creation

This is how you slay a hare.

I'm sorry.
I love you.

You are pleasure and pain

Pain through the pleasure and pleasure through the pain

Serotonin is released when you scratch an itch to mask the sensation of pain from tearing your skin

Serotonin is all I needed at 10 when we first met

Serotonin to mask the desire that swelled in between my legs

Serotonin to mask the shame and the heat on my cheeks and the slap of any hand that got close to you

Pillows and unclipped nails

Latex gloves and twitching thighs

Crimpy sheets and fluorescent lights

dear vulva,

daisy sanchez villavicencio

I was 18 when a gynecologist diagnosed you with lichen sclerosus
Lichen sclerosus, a chronic inflammatory condition that affects skin on your genitals.

When left untreated on the vulva, over time the minor labia may shrink and eventually disappear.

Years of hurting you passed, hurting was all I knew about pleasure

You became scarred and disfigured

The doctor winced when he saw you last year in the hospital biopsy clinic.

"This is a severe case of disfigurement..." he explained.

Contain her

Keep her neat

Numb her into compliance

You were anything but neat, anything but compliant

Topical steroids

Ice pack

Lights off

White panties

Nothing could stop the trembling in my wobbly knees the first time I let someone near you

We cried the first time a searching hand met you for the first time in love

In discomfort and unfamiliarity

Not scratching or hurting

Caressing and caring

Not diagnosing or biopsying

Kissing and forgiving

I've never believed the doctors anyway.

I won't get a labiaplasty unless you really want me to

My void, my canal, my portal

My abstract art

You are my pleasure and pain

My vulva, my broken beautiful monstrous vulva

Petals love to be caressed and nectar is for tasting

The flowers need tending to

Because sometimes the garden is much more fun than inside the house

And they meet you outside

Pleasure that isn't offered when it's not welcome but rather doesn't dare to knock

Pleasure that can't penetrate

That kisses the scars and the gashes rather than grimacing

Pleasure amidst disfigurement and pain is the strongest steroid I've ever felt

And one day you miss the sunlight and want to be seen

Pleasure that holds you the way you are

Because sometimes the garden is much more fun than inside the house

i have no sex, and i must poop

assripper

I have this recurring nightmare.

It always starts off with me and one (or more) of my past lovers in some non-existent location — a cottage or resort of some kind, perhaps — about to get freaky. It's all very standard, and far from nightmarish, until I get to the point where me and my lover are about to have sex. At this exact moment, across all of my dreams, I suddenly have the violent urge to shit, and must evacuate the situation immediately.

Once on the toilet, the shit is endless and constant. No amount of wiping can rid me of the shit. My partner at this point usually asks me if I'm okay, to which I scream at them to get out and leave me alone or else I'll call the police. In one dream it was so bad I had to use my fake-shower, and when I got out my situation was standing in my fake-bedroom waiting for me with no shirt on. Naked and afraid, I proceeded to beat the shit out of him.

My roommates think I have some sort of Freudian anal fixation, but I wasn't always like this. It all started after I spent the night at my ex-boyfriend's apartment a year ago.

He was tall, handsome, and stupid. I loved him. After spending the night together doing everything except sex, I was awoken the next morning by his roommate. He was blasting "Runaway" by Kanye West on his speaker on repeat. It was 8am.

My boyfriend slept like a rock, so after 45 minutes of "Runaway," I decided to take the opportunity to nuke his toilet.

I made my way to the bathroom, and shut the door. However, since I'd been otherwise occupied with my boyfriend until that point, I took a moment — standing over the toilet like an iPad kid — to look at Instagram reels. Suddenly and without warning, my boyfriend's roommate burst open the bathroom door. We had never spoken before. He backed up and said, "Oh fuck, my bad." I realized in that moment that, if I followed through with the nuking of his toilet, his roommate would totally know it was me.

So, like a fool, I said, "No no, it's fine! I don't even have to go!"

I went back to my boyfriend's room, who was now awake and getting ready to leave the apartment. He had class.

I told him that his roommate had walked in on me, trying to laugh it off. He said, "Sorry, he does that. We have a lock, you know."

He had never said there was a lock.

Before you come for my ass about not realizing there was a functioning lock in this bathroom, I must clarify that this man lived in the dingiest apartment I'd ever seen in my life. At one point in our relationship his toilet exploded, and he chased me around with the towels he'd used to sop up the toilet water.

The two of us left the apartment and began the 20 minute walk to the metro. He blathered on about his ambitions for grad school. I quietly asked him if there was a bathroom nearby. He looked at me sadly and said, "No."

My face was completely puckered.

At last, after the 40 minute commute, he kissed my puckered lips goodbye and got off at his stop. I commuted another 15 minutes before finally getting to my bathroom... my salvation.

In the 8 months that we dated, we never did have sex. He would dutch oven me, declare his intention to poop in the morning, chase me with toilet water towels. But I could never return the sentiment. I never told him about my failed toilet-nuking. In some weird way, this inability to "perform" my nuking — or to confide in him about such intimacy — really did feel like it was connected to my inability to have sex with him, or anyone. In the end, I just couldn't open my heart (or my asshole) to him.

So now, here I am. Devastatingly attractive, intelligent, and single — with recurring nightmares about literally shitting myself at the touch of a hot babe. Do I blame my ex-boyfriend for these subconscious horrors? Or was it dormant within me all along, just waiting for an evil bisexual man's imbecile roommate to spark it? Could it be that I fear the loss of self-control felt in intimacy and connection? Am I ashamed of my desires, afraid of sacrificing my dignity and composure to quench my thirst? Do I want to try anal or something?

Only experience will tell. Therefore, baddies, hit my line. You know where to find me; I'll be nuking your favourite single stall bathroom on campus.

poisonous devotion

alfie ayotte

To be part of the skyline,
must be the best way to spend time
dangling our kicks from the powerlines
tread of wire might grind at my sides
but I need to be closer to your spine

the merge with ground couldn't exempt
my stuffed up malpractice infecting this brain
I see it letting over the long overtook trench
I sniff it back and wipe with contempt
sometimes I'm glad you don't get what I meant
one more game just to perch at ends

it hurts to look as I picture you fall
turmoil's all my fuel as the spoiled sacramental
I'd win again but I rather draw
another special place may just thaw

what lasts in our cup
is the remains of a sowed shut luck
used to believe in husks
that their hollowness could be stuffed
they have us strapped here
I forgot the name of all the overseers
but I know they feed off unmet fears

reheated chunks of a bloated pain
ripped hair of strenuous self disdain
tender layers now lumped with stains
you sat with me & drank the broth of my shame

but bits of me, are rejected by all bodies
spat or passed down, with animosity
used to add locks without turning the keys
brand new walls of skin with nothing to seal
what marks my vault's blown entries
are the only, smouldering meat

yet you thanked me
with a sight that held no disbelief
red fingers gaining back their teeth
skipping steps to be summer leaves
" " I let out with restraint
you gulped, and it rang
echoed across the cold dead reign

stillness,
our eyes meet as it hangs
keep slurping as my liquid drips from your face
" sorry"
throat lodging all against
you tow all that anchored remains
no salivation as ache spears my angst
is it a chipped tooth, or am I growing fangs?
pried open for you to ascertain
you reached in and plucked the course of my fate
ripped before the prowler found aim
one stone gets both birds of a feather slain

I'm ashamed I distill to sand
and you're my lighthouse bringing me to shore
you always went looking for my grain
I might not make it, but at least I'll bring my
body home

dear garg...

you answer, we ask, or something like that

edited by xarnah and ella <3

it's that time of the year again, you send in ur questions and we, the masthead, answer them... you would be so confused and lost without us, aren't you lucky! you are on uc page 1, just to let you know. when you are done reading, you should flip the page. wow, that is just a taste of the amazing advice you are about to read, and already it is perfect. so yeah, get yourself ready for this.

I'm so jealous of you... unawareness
that's natural babe - athena

How to get laid.

- Step 1: start seeding information about your exotic lizards into innocuous conversations
- Step 2: wait for them to be driven mad with lust by your clear mastery of lizard care (1-2 weeks)
- Step 3: invite them to your place to see "the new clutch of leopard gecko eggs" (sexy)
- Step 4: ???
- Step 5: make them breakfast the next morning

- Jonah

are you a fly? cause im rubbing my hands in an evil fashion - michelarcangelo
p.s. jonah i see the vision dont let them deter you!!1!

I think I want to have sex with god and I don't know if this is allowed
you must bounce on it crazy style - count orlok

i think you should reach out to a priest and ask them this :) - ahi

the problem is that instead of shooting your shot your mindset has stopped you before giving yourself the option - god

pls go and have sex w/ god. he needs to get laid so bad. like so bad. like... so... bad... - nobody in particular

any suggestions of how to get past social awkwardness that is Toronto and ask someone out in this lonely city?
See above answer re: lizards - jonah

someone check on jonah - yujin
my downfall is imminent. She is straight.
lock tf in bro - sonny

y'all needa STOP w/ the straight girls... i'm tots open for business ;) - xarnah

i've had sex with both girls and guys but didn't seem to enjoy either one that much. am I asexual or just need better sex?!!?

perhaps it's time to consider parthenogenesis. asexual budding is also a viable option. - vanessa

it's time to terrorize the nonbinary community... - ahi

best part about lesbian sex?
the lesbian ur fucking. bonus if she's a short nerd with glasses. - ola

call me & find out - athena

i have a little crush on one of my best friends. i never survive the friends to girlfriends pipeline WHAT DO I DO...

brace yourself babe. either take that risk & ask them out if you think it could work out, or actively try to get over it so you can remain friends. i'm still friends with someone i had a crush on years ago, and while my feelings were very intense at the time, i'm glad i didn't act on them. but i fear at the end of the day it's up to you - you might regret it if you never try, or you might not. - athena

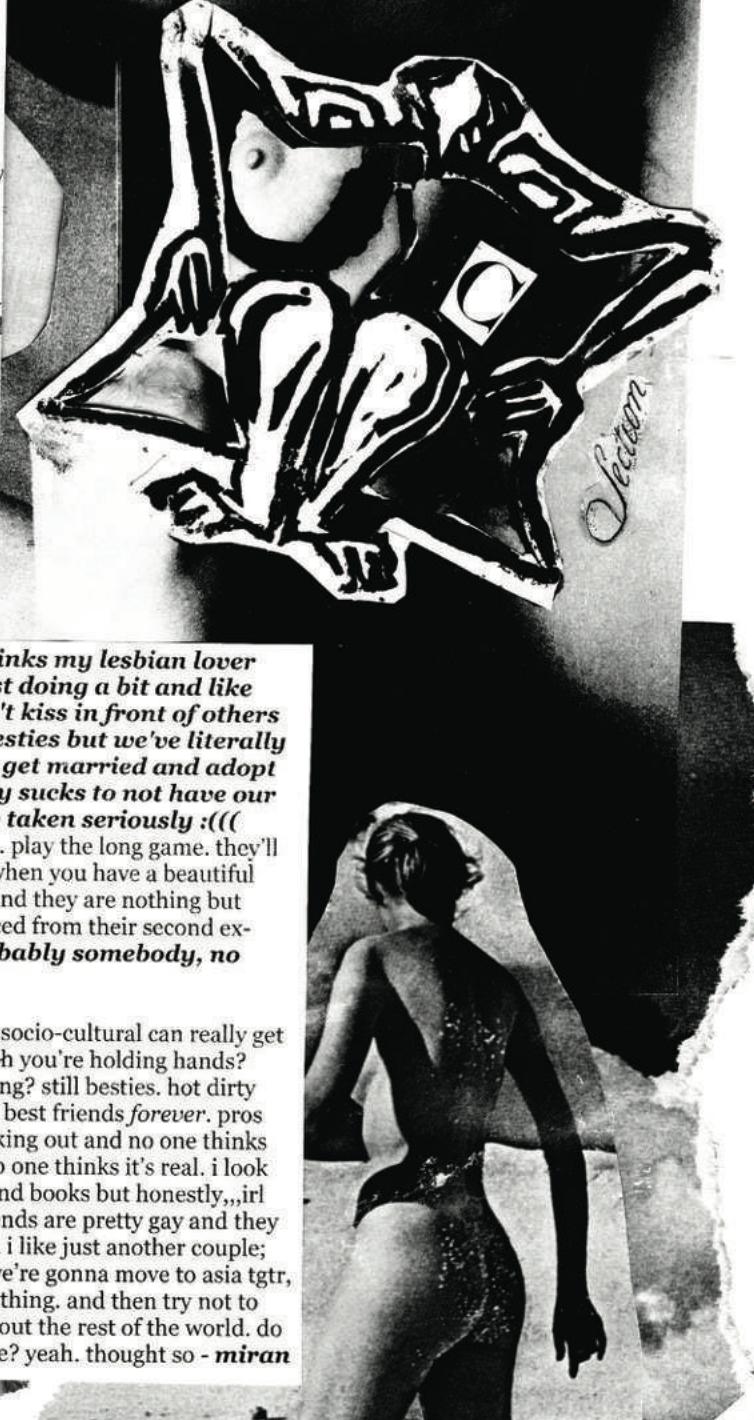
oh no... wait have you gone through this before??? are there any signs that they may also be into you? do you want to go through this? is the other person chill enough that if it doesn't work out y'all can still be friends? are you chill enough??? you can try little flirts and physical contact, and if it feels reciprocated, you can always ask them out on a chill date, and see how it goes, and see from there. IT CAN BE CHILL!!! - sir michele CHIEF OF THE ARCHANGELS

my ex has been absent from my life for 6 months, but recently texted me asking about my life and wanting me to open up, so i did. i haven't heard back in 10 days but she just sent me an instagram reel! is the bar in hell or what

Absolutely not. Do not do this. - that one gargoyle in vol 62

I'm gonna draw your attention to the lovely block button! Sometimes it is also okay to go farther if you know you will be tempted. I reported my situation for AI-generated imagery (a lie) on Hinge to make sure that I could never see him on the app again. - ahi

never go where you aren't wanted - sonny



everyone thinks my lesbian lover and i are just doing a bit and like sure we don't kiss in front of others and we're besties but we've literally promised to get married and adopt kids. it really sucks to not have our relationship taken seriously :((

it sucks so bad. play the long game. they'll be chagrined when you have a beautiful loving family and they are nothing but recently divorced from their second ex-spouse. - probably somebody, no way to tell

oh op,,,idk the socio-cultural can really get in your head. oh you're holding hands? besties fr. kissing? still besties. hot dirty marathon sex? best friends forever. pros you can be making out and no one thinks it's real cons no one thinks it's real. i look for wlw films and books but honestly,,,irl most of my friends are pretty gay and they treat my gf and i like just another couple; we're in love, we're gonna move to asia tgtr, ew pda kind of thing. and then try not to gaf too hard about the rest of the world. do they have a wife? yeah. thought so - miran

how to know if the hot guy is gay or just friendly??? pls I need to stop falling for the hot guys in my dorm
try the classic 80s-style bully tactic and ask him to show you his nails. hands clenched? he's yours. hands splayed? that diva does not want you! - masthead member, maybe

maybe try that lizard thing jonah keeps talking about - ola

see if he brings up lizard facts in convo, that apparently is really significant. does NOT apply to other exotic animal facts, that means he is gay. - ella

A DEFINITIVE

RANKING OF PLACES TO BOINK ON CAMPUS

by "the blair" press

(don't try this at home)

Have you ever sat in your lecture hall and thought to yourself, "Can I fuck here?" Well, here's your answer! Below is a definitive, meticulous, and wholly scientific ranking of the best and worst possible places to have a quickie on campus (in our opinion).

1. Robarts

BEST

Robarts, the most phallic building on campus, and a brutalist wet dream. The perfect place if you want to make your brain explode with some really good sex... Oh, and maybe some studying. You can go for that modern, spacious, 24/7 sex in the Commons with those study rooms (make sure you have it booked if you don't want to get interrupted), or keep it sexy and private in the numerous stacks — if you wait long enough the lights turn off for some ambiance. The possibilities are almost endless!! There is the anatomy section, the German philosophy section (for some sophisticated sex), or the East Asian Library (if you have an Asian fetish, we listen and we do judge). Either way you'll be smarter once you are done.

2. Goldring

Oh Goldring, you sexy and sleek masterpiece. Imagine entering, catching a waft of those gorgeous blue backpacks that scream "Please turn around and read me", then getting busy on the lower level turf. Go ahead, grab a foam mat if you need! Just make sure to clean it after, *winky face*. Goldring is for those who like it modern and sweaty! So bring your electrolytes and a protein shake — you'll need it after you get tangled up trying to make a DIY sex swing with those exercise bands (10 points for creativity!). And don't be shy, put on a show for everyone walking by those floor to-ceiling windows (that's definitely what they were installed for) — now that's what I call cardio! Why wait to have sex at home when you could do it here? (I do recommend stretching afterwards, you'll need it <3).

3. UC Library

Let wise Athena watch over you as you fulfil all of your dark academia fantasies in the UC Library. The beautiful stained-glass windows create a warm, safe, and sexy ambiance as you explore all the alcoves have to offer. With dozens of couches and tables tucked away between the shelves, you can sneak in a quick one in this slick library (just make sure you stay quiet)! No food or drink is allowed, but in my experience, if you're subtle you can get away with eating a thing or two. The sheer beauty and perfection of the UC Library has been known to induce orgasms — with no stimulation needed — proving that sometimes all you need is a good sensory experience.

4. Hart House

If you live for that sexy U of T castle aesthetic but hate the idea of taking someone in the same place where you take your exams, Hart House is the place for you! With theatres, museums, pools, libraries, and more, you have endless options for living out any roleplay dream that you can imagine. You can even grab a snack at the Arbour Room to refuel after, which by far outshines any dining hall food.

5. Myhal

An anonymous source (engineering boyfriend) has made us aware of an audio-visual room that allows for a 360, in-depth view of the clit. Aside from that, why wouldn't you want to have sex in the building that all your tuition goes to? Modern, sexy, sleek, and doesn't reek of engineers (surprisingly)... what more could you ask for? Plus, as aftercare, you can take one of the many Zumba classes offered here. So go ahead — make your mark in a space designed for innovation and exploration. And if anyone asks? You were just conducting research.

WORST

1. Chestnut

Chestnut... Does that even count as being on campus? I don't think anyone willingly goes there to get laid, except if you are an engineer, and if that is the case I don't think you are necessarily having sex. But if you are looking for a place that has more security than an airport...then ding ding ding!!! With hallways that look like they could be in *The Shining* and ceiling tiles that might fall on you if you move (or thrust) too much — it's ideal for a little boink session. But, the wallpaper is so unpleasant to look at that it might as well destroy any sexual thought anyone has ever had, making me think "hey! maybe the yellow wallpaper bitch was onto something!"

2. Haultain

Arguably the worst building on campus unless you get off to the odour of engineers, I couldn't think of a place less sexy than Haultain if I tried. Like the clit a man can't find, Haultain is hidden in a back alley — a sure sign that you should probably rethink the hookup. Unless your idea of foreplay includes fluorescent lighting, suspicious stains, and the distinct smell of rotting corpses, I would steer clear of Haultain. Though if the idea of fucking by the decommissioned SLOWPOKE-II nuclear reactor (which surely must be safe!) located on the second floor makes you wet, then by all means, be my guest!

3. St. Hilda's

Despite allegedly being a place of God, St. Hilda's is home to the kinds of people that make you wonder if demonic possession is more common than people let on. If you can even get past the retirement home scent in the air and actually get into someone's room, chances are that your hookup will be one of the most evil lesbians you'll ever encounter — that is, if you go evade passing out from heat stroke long enough to even have sex. Unbearable heat, creepy basement tunnels, and even more secrets that you're not supposed to speak of... Are we sure that St. Hilda's doesn't house a portal to hell itself?

yet so much

4. John M. Kelly Library

A place with a serious silence policy (no loud moaning allowed) that will often end up with at least one student telling you to "shut the fuck up!" So, if you are into silent missionary sex, or strictly looking for a place for a quick hand job, or fingering session — then come here!! However, you are most likely going to be interrupted midway through exploring your partner's body as people are constantly walking through the stacks trying to find a place to sit (but hey!! maybe they would want to join you, or even just watch).
keep complexions smooth and lovely, for mildness in your toilet soap. buov T-111 C up contains a special edi s it extra mild. And the 1 5. Bahen ather gives a glorious ever irishness.

FEBI

Spend more than ten minutes here and you'll understand why you shouldn't fuck here. Just don't.

a love letter to CIUT

the people, passion, and politics of u of t's campus radio

"Alice Hall votes for James Madison."

Radio is wild, the first thing we did after discovering an ethereal field that permeates the universe was infuse it with music.

(via @victoriankeysmash on tumblr) -il war, world war, or world depression. We have rea... Madison's belief in the Part 1: A Love Letter to CIUT vement we would live by. Madison and his colleagues were no angels; neither are we. The Constitution didn't produce heaven on earth or solve all problems. It

Dear CIUT, what is there to say that I haven't said already? If I have to repeat one thing, I love you.

What an incredible place and culture you've cultivated. You've been a place where I've found friends, I've found family, I've found love. You are my family. Everyone who walks through your doors has a beautiful mind that doesn't fit anywhere else, and yet you accommodate them all perfectly.

I love your constant noise.
I love your little hallways full of vinyls and conversation.
I love how you accept all and enable anyone to achieve what they dream.

All those people —and I can remember every single person I've met through you — from the very first orientation I attended, to all the people I trained to help keep you running. The telephone calls with responses to my shows, I remember every single person who spoke to me. Even the one who said I "sounded gay because I was opposed to genocide" (this was a real actual call I got, and no, they did not mean it in a positive way). I remember all of it.

Kellogg's Famous Flowers are on show in the fall catalog. Hardy phlox, hyacinth, Nostalgia as an Album—and that's

I found you after a year of COVID online learning, in a city I was unfamiliar with, when frankly I was losing my mind. Still, you kept me sane. You are the reason I love this city so much. You introduced me to an alternative to what I had seen on the surface and the deep flowing undercurrents of passion, culture, love, and community that make Toronto what it is.

Your hallowed halls seem out of time. The environment you've kept alive in that little cultural greenhouse is going extinct. It feels like you exist in a different university, not one where people use generative AI to cheat on assignments, but one where students make their voice heard. A university that, as far as I'm concerned, only exists in the heads of dreamers, but if you put enough of those dreamers together, you start to see that dream unfold even when you're awake. I know I'm not alone in my love. You get what, 250,000? Maybe 300,000 listeners a week? I hope you know how much I love you. I tried to show I loved you every day.

I used to run a show on CIUT called *Student Revolutions* about the history and legacy of various student movements and thus the history of campus radio. Campus radio has a very long and intertwined history with student movements, both in developing the politics and speaking skills of students, and as a method of communication with the surrounding area in an age before phones.

Universities have always been a spot of great interest for governments, the next generation of leaders and thinkers can often be found there. However, universities also possess a critical resource for the project of imperialism: future officers. Even now, the Canadian Military will pay for a laughably small amount of your tuition on the condition of your indentured servitude afterwards. Universities as a place of free thinking, and using that free thinking for war, has existed since universities have existed. While universities have always been a hotbed of revolt, it was only after WW2 when the general public were allowed in that universities really started to be in direct opposition to the government. No longer do you exclusively have students who benefit from the status quo imperialism provides.

the majority cannot be trusted

trusted nowhere."

This In 1968, students in Paris began a demonstration against the ban on visiting the other gender's dorms. Within a couple months, this would spiral into the largest general strike France has ever seen, with over a third of the workforce going on strike simultaneously. "HUH?" you might be saying, but that's the power of campus radio, turning local issues into larger and larger issues and to coordinate student action. You can actually see a fantastic depiction of the whole revolution in Wes Anderson's *The French Dispatch*, it's no coincidence that the climactic end of *Revisions To a Manifesto* is set at a pirate radio station. The same happened across Italy during the Sessantotto at the same time. Every university across the entire country except one was occupied by their students and campus radio turned into a method of protest and revolution. Even at the pro-Palestinian encampment at Columbia last year, WKCR became one of the few ways students and the outside world could get a good look at what was going on. CIUT provided much the same role during UofT's very own anti-genocide encampment, owing both in part to its proximity (a 1 minute walk) and it's willingness to report when mainstream outlets wouldn't.

If you want to be more in touch with grassroots politics in Toronto, I can personally recommend the shows *Radical Reverend* hosted by former MPP and absolute queen Cheri DiNovo, and the *Taylor Report* hosted by one of my favourite people of all time, Phil Taylor, all on CIUT.

The Prospective Buyer's Guide crisscrossing each room with the fine points in choosing a carpet. Cleaning is made easier since floors are constructed. Diagrams

Part 3: Campus Radio as Anti-Content

points of quality in rugs and carpets Dunham Company, HG 9, 400 West

Radio has a few features which make it anti-content.

1. You cannot get instant quantitative feedback. (Producers are not able to change the title of a segment after a few days because it hasn't been algorithmically selected yet)
2. As a host you can create, without enabling others to hitchhike that space. (no comment sections!)
3. You can turn the radio off when you want, without the radio knowing.
4. The radio shows are not tuned based on your specific preferences, which enables:
5. A diversity of thought and experience.

The Story of Pacific Sheets tells how of garage and space. Double- or single-

Which leads me to what I think makes campus and community radio special:

*Campus and community radio broadcasts opinions you wouldn't otherwise hear. In an age that is completely saturated with personalized media designed to keep you scrolling for as long as possible by putting you in echo chambers, campus radio stands with very few leftover analogue media options (like the *garg!*) that don't gain value based on repeating the same opinions but by having a wide variety of opinions that resonate strongly with the audience. The same is true for music. Spotify is great at giving recommendations of music you already listen to, but if you want to explore the diversity of music in the world, there's no better place to find it.*

In-Sink-Erator is a food waste disposer Cabin Division, HG 9, 1563 East Divi-

We live with constant overwhelming noise, so being able to dial in to something among all the static feels less and less possible. Maybe the solution to constant noise isn't trying to cut it all off and go live in the woods, but find the frequency you resonate with. For me, it's 89.5FM.

Radiator & Standard Sanitary Corp., HG 9, P. O. Box 1226, Pittsburgh, Racine, Wis.

PS. I'd like to specifically shout out Ken Stowar, who taught me everything I know about radio and without whom CIUT would not exist, and everyone else who I've worked with and met through CIUT, I love all of you so much. Thanks for making the world a better place.

sketched in a book which combines three building features—architecture, heating and insulation. Libbey-Owens-Ford Glass Co., HG 9, Toledo, Ohio.

*this is where you'd normally see
the nude centrefold, but you
are online. your computer's
monitor's pixels actually
just can't handle the uncensored
contest, so this is really just
for your own sake.*

*you are still here?
c'mon man i know this is
tough but this is how
it's gotta be*

strippers, sinners, & sluts

sex in the city

alexandra m. ramsey

for decades, "toronto the good" held its nose up in the air, peacock about its high standards and the good moral values of its citizens, but this manicured exterior doesn't hold once you take a peek behind the curtain and see the city's history has always been full of sexual exploits.

Pré-lubrifié - Naturel - SANS P

in the early 20th century, toronto was known as the "burlesque capital of canada," thanks to the many venues that provided a stage for these choreographed striptease performances. originally, burlesque was an elaborate performance containing multiple acts such as dancing, singing, and comedic sketches, but overtime, exotic dancing became the most popular act in burlesque, opening the door to striping as an industry of its own.

unfortunately, but unsurprisingly, canadian prostitution laws were a weak disguise for discrimination against individuals based on class and sex — the industry has long been dominated by women, gay men, and the poor. this gave law enforcement a legal weapon to punish any behavior that they deemed to be immoral.¹

throughout the second half of the 20th century, the morality department — a division of the toronto police established in the late 19th century to "root out vice" in the city — targeted strip performers and the venues that hosted them with morality infractions, particularly the "indecent act" of lap dancing.²

despite the morality department, the main attraction in toronto's entertainment district was sex, crowning yonge street as toronto's sin strip. movie theatres began showing adult movies, peepshows could be found at the back of shops and arcades, and local bars advertised topless go-go dancers and strip shows. body rub parlours drew in customers with the promise of free strip dances and nude massages, while prostitutes hung around the corners of businesses waiting to entice their own.

LIFESTYLE
ULTRA PISSED

ella mac, "peeping pigs" the garg, vol 70, issue 9 (2025): <http://doi.org/thispageyouarereadingnow>

the toronto police fuckin love watching men have sex in bathrooms. so much so that they redesigned toronto public bathrooms in the early 1900s for better ogling — all just to make sure no one was sucking any dicks.

all bathrooms are designed for inspection. there is the obvious: the toilet stalls were to prevent "debauchery and homosexuality" (according to foucault) and the gaps between the stall and the floor are to easily see if there are two people in a stall. toronto police took that even further, adding a hole in the back to peep in on all the stalls. they even built a little platform on the other side for those weirdos to see better. if you are worried about randos watching you piss, don't worry — the police had an official step ladder, so it was absolutely only accessible to the police.

to prosecute crimes of gross indecency and buggery, the police had to prove that there was enough visibility to charge the sexual acts conducted and the conductors themselves. essentially, the police had a legal mandate to be voyeurs. here is a real cross examination from city records of a police constable who arrested

two men in the park:
a. i had them under observation for a few minutes before i flashed my light.
q. and you watched them for some time as a matter of fact?
a. not a great while.
q. but you watched them for a while?
a. between one and two minutes.
q. and then you called sharp [another constable]?
a. [yes.]
q. and then you watched them again for a short time?
a. about a minute.

here's another cop testifying about peeping a peeper pumping a pecker in a park potty:

"i was looking into the lavatory. i saw thomas s. and another man harold f. thomas s. was sitting on the closet seat and peeping through a small hole in the [toilet stall]. i saw harold f. put his penis to the hole and [harold s.] commenced to suck it after a few minutes. i was watching. i went to the door of the lavatory, opened the closet door where harold f. was — he was pulling away from the hole and sitting back on the seat." peeping a small hole in the lavatory, the cop saw a man peeping through a small hole in the partition, seeing the man's gaze as arrestable debauchery and his own as warranted investigation. this was the early 1900s, but it is not like in the century since the police have cleaned up their act. the toronto police are little freaks, not even in a fun way, and we should never forget that.

POLiTiCS

Help! I Think About Albert Camus

When I'm With My Girlfriend!

An anti-fascist lesbian's conflict with political love in the Camusian play *Les Justes*

Chiara Puglielli

In 1949, Albert Camus published *Les Justes* (anglicized as *The Just Assassins*), an Absurdist play in which socialist revolutionaries prepare for, fail to execute, manage to execute, and are finally punished for the assassination of a Russian Grand Duke. Broader attempts to understand this story will usually focus on the justification for political violence that forms the main conflict — the first assassination attempt, the failure, was halted because the Grand Duke's young nephew would be killed in the bombing — and those analyses will satisfy the curiosity of most young political minds well enough. They apply cleanly to politics as an idea and think in the long-term: fundamental philosophies, optics, and setting up the future of a movement. But about halfway through the play, two characters stop for a moment and talk about love.

It can come out of nowhere for those who didn't see the Romeo and Juliet quote Camus included in the preface ("O love! O life! Not life but love in death"). Yanek, having failed his first attempt on the Duke's life, returns to the meeting place of the revolutionaries, and after being berated by others in the organization is left alone with his lover and co-revolutionary, Dora. While they both say that they love each other, they find that they understand "love" very differently. Yanek cannot separate his love for Dora from the love of the organization, or from justice — he loves "the people" in aggregate, and expresses it only through the sacrificial political action that the assassination embodies. But Dora asks if he would love her outside of the organization, as the daydreaming student she once was, loving her "in front of all the misery and people in slavery."

In this play, love, outside of politics, is explicitly momentary, only for those who are "light-hearted and carefree" and "unjust." You cannot love political justice with "tenderness" as you may love another person, but "[t]here's too much blood, too much violence. People who truly love justice don't have the right to love." In the end, Yanek cannot locate love in any place but the organization, and cannot picture Dora outside of his love of political justice and the blood that comes with it. He dies for his cause in Act 5, and because of his death, the cause maintains momentum.

Canada is in danger of falling victim to American fascism. At present, we are embarrassing ourselves in appeasing them, and fascism, as noted in some of the oldest characterizations of it, detests the momentary. In *Varieties of Fascism*, Eugen Weber sees the fascists' drive to violence as stemming from their conception of history; not as something static to reference, but as something that needs continuous, active creation. Similarly, Hannah Arendt notes that in *Origins of Totalitarianism*, Nazis think "in terms of centuries or millennia" (which JD Vance worryingly echoes in his July 2024 speech at the National Conservatism Conference). And this is fascism's great success — there is no local injustice so great that it could justify halting the forever-project of full-world renewal, the one that fascism argues it can provide. Fascism's violent momentum comes from its inability to tolerate the momentary.

Therefore, just like Camus' socialist revolutionary characters in *Les Justes*, there is a formidable task ahead for the anti-fascists. To succeed in thwarting massive injustice, *Les Justes* tells us that, like them, we cannot think of momentary love either; the only love we can engage in is love of justice itself, or else our opponents will exceed us in momentum. Interpersonal love in this case is not an act of resistance, it is a commitment to stasis. Resistance is the only act of resistance.

I first read *Les Justes* as an adolescent, a child scoffing at Dora for being childish and feminine. I thought, if the world got more evil, that I would be Yanek, solemn regarding my departure from interpersonal love, but ultimately dedicated to improving the world. I was wrong. Now that I'm with my partner and stood before looming fascism, I am Dora. Momentary bliss, laughing, feeling the warmth of her by my side; I indulge in the minutes together, knowing the people who levy injustices on millions are envisioning the next century in great detail, and are planning accordingly. The success of justice is what can keep us together — we are lesbians, there is no world in which fascism wins and we may continue loving each other — but despite this, I am stuck in the momentary.

I haven't stopped seeing Dora as childish, I just recognize her childishness in myself now. I want what she wants: apathy, joy even in times where millions are in pain, and person-to-person recognition. Can I love with such a threat above us? Should we, too, detest the momentary and set our sights only on the time-intensive and risk-intensive pursuit of anti-fascist justice? I haven't found an answer yet. I just keep thinking about *Les Justes*.

This article was written using the open-access translation of *Les Justes* done by Suzanne M. Saunders.

straight jorkin' it

marco costantino

Generally, people have needs. And, while less potent than hunger or thirst, most people have some sort of physical aspect to sexual fulfillment. Masturbation, as a result of this, is a reasonable and *ideally* unobtrusive way for unpartnered or schedule-conflicting people to meet this need. It is also completely natural, with many, many recorded instances of it occurring in animals. Unfortunately, this does not exclude the other generally frowned upon behaviours animals engage in to fulfill these needs.

I recently had to explain to an asexual friend that commonly solo-sexual acts are 'towards' something. Which on paper, sounds weird, but physiologically makes at least half as much sense. There is a general need for stimuli in order for any given action to be sexually gratifying rather than just a biological process. This search for stimulus leads to many places – the internet being the biggest purveyor of pornographic and erotic media in the information era. What people *do* with that access is broadly a logistical issue, and more specifically, in this case, an ethical nightmare. This is also completely excluding anything expressly illegal, as the minefield is full enough without dodging infringement of rights and legally binding consent agreements. The keyword that wraps up all this hell into a neat summary is fetishization.

Immediately one might think this to also be natural and simply inherent in the search for erotic stimulus, but it is also an active choice that is made that dehumanizes the 'muse'². While kinks and fetishes absolutely can and, frankly, should be explored and performed safely and ethically, the crux of the matter lies in the non-consenting nature of the artist or even the object of lust.

I see this very similar to how typical North American copyright laws function. The artist, while having no direct control over the art once it is finally released into the world, still deserves to have a say in how it is used. Yet, there are specific instances where media is deliberately altered to spite an unwilling author, distorting their art in a perversion of what it did or didn't stand for. Anything can be made sexually explicit in the name of 'transformative' work, with little thought put into why *that* piece of media needs to be eroticised in the first place. There has to be a line where people can recognize that not everything should be sexualized – in fact, very few things should be. And even in the times where it is, the eroticisation should not trump the art itself. In my opinion, an artist's express consent should be mandatory to make explicit derivations of their art.

This nonconsensual transformativity can be most effectively illustrated in terms of the 'death of the artist' theory. First off, it's bullshit. Second, the intention and emotions an artist invests into any given work permanently charges it in a way that can only be reversed by gross misconstruing and interpretation. This is a much more involved version of internet shipping that takes characters and completely changes their core values and relationships such as the infamous Wincest of *Supernatural* or the especially egregious underage *Gravity Falls* Dipper/Mabel pairings that are a stain on their respective fandoms.

This becomes especially troubling when such media twists experiences that are deeply personal to the creator. *Gravity Falls* is a clear example, as creator Alex Hirsch has openly drawn from his own sibling experience in shaping the show. There is very little coherent argument to the ethical consumption or production of such content, with the fetishization of minors and incest being pawned off as non-existent due to the fictional nature of the characters – not to mention that it is wildly outside of the consent of Hirsch.

Even when something isn't explicitly incestuous, this mischaracterization is wildly common, with erotic fics and pornography of outwardly 2SLGBTQIA+ characters with straight pairings, sanitizing them into what would best suit as a sexual object to the consumer. It begs the question of why the character is even chosen to be used. When it comes down to it, the sexual or gender orientation is disregarded because it is one more defining trait that makes that character a fully realized person, where the goal of this sort of media is instead to strip down the character to a piece of meat that can be used as ammunition.

Chiefly responsible for this ickiness is the misappropriation of media that twists or outright erases the messages it originally carried. A particularly disgusting example of this is the sexually explicit art that is created around fictional victims of sexual assault. For example, hit indie game *Mouthwashing* involves a plotline where the player character, Jimmy, is revealed extremely early in the game to have violently assaulted Anya, another character on the crew of their spaceship. The line "TAKE RESPONSIBILITY" is repeatedly plastered over the screen throughout the game, making a cut and dry thesis: Jimmy's inability to own up to his crimes directly results in the dooming of the crew. Despite this, a non-zero amount of players viewed Anya as a sexual object, going so far as to cosplay her explicitly or make erotic art of her. If people who played *Mouthwashing* are able to act on base impulses after learning about her trauma and first-hand experiencing it, what does that say about their character when dealing with real people?

'Tis the final slalom on this slippery slope. It is an open secret that posting oneself online is a near invitation to creepy DMs, comments, and just general sexualization at the hands of faceless usernames. There is simply an acknowledged rule that 'anything goes' and how the internet is just the Wild West where people can shoot wherever and whoever they please. But there *has* to be a standard, some sort of guideline that would normally be where your conscience is.

The continued sexual objectification of others online that disproportionately targets women and fem-presenting people is done with seemingly no regard to their personhood. A screen is all that is needed to separate the body from the self, and this abstraction grossly misrepresents living breathing people. A really potent example is how comedian Saaniya Abbas³ posts monthly collections of messages sent to her with the express purpose of relaying how much the sender sexualizes and fetishizes her. This is normalized to the point where she is able to somewhat spin it into fuel for her comedy, but it happening in the first place is fucking terrifying to think about. What's worse is that the lack of responses she gets is not an 'all clear' either. The messages she *does* get are from those deluded enough to think it pertinent information or even worse as well-intentioned flattery.

Unknown people making these sorts of advances might be able to be reconciled, if one truly puts their mind to it. The real offence is when it is someone close to you. A friend, an ex, someone who you could never in a million years associate thinks about you to get off. The abstraction comes full circle to dehumanizing the very people in front of them, forever altering the perception of their target.

My hang up is that there are plenty of consenting talented artists and sex workers⁴ out there. There *are* alternatives, but there is such an ingrained belief that we have the right to spank to whatever's in the bank that is the cloud. Nonconsenting people get caught in the crossfire. Art should be consumed and interacted with. That's how art works. There, however, is a line to what is reasonable cultural exchange and blatant disregard for boundaries for people on the other side of the screen.

¹ Allosexual people at the very least

² As a classics major, I would like to throw up using that word in this way

³ Who is also just an amazing comedian

⁴ Sex work has a deep history of being extremely exploitative, please be aware of where and who actually produces the media



Filling the GAP (2022)

Merdeka Film

amareena saleh

The Girls' Love (GL) genre, which depicts intimate relationships between women—ranging from emotional to romantic and sexual, has long been overshadowed by its Boys' Love (BL) counterpart. Originating primarily in Japanese yuri manga and anime, GL established its core themes before expanding into novels, webcomics, films, and television dramas. Over time, it's gained traction in other entertainment markets, particularly in East and Southeast Asia.

However, despite this gradual expansion, it remained a niche genre, often overshadowed by the explosive growth of BL—a pattern seen not just in Thailand, but across Japan, China, and even the U.S. While BL in Thailand became a multi-million-dollar industry, dominating queer media spaces and turning its stars into entertainment icons, Thai GL barely registered as a subgenre. Luckily, this changed in 2022.

GAP: The Series—Thailand's first mainstream GL—swept through international fandom spaces (and my Twitter feed), filling a gap (pun intended) that sapphic audiences had been yearning for. The show follows an office romance between an eager employee and her wealthy, seemingly unattainable boss, balancing humour with the challenges of navigating a newfound queer relationship. Its impact wasn't just cultural; it was economic. With reruns still airing today, the show's continued success proved that GL was a viable, profitable endeavour for production companies. More than just representation, the genre offered money, influence, and marketability.

When I was sixteen, Since GAP, the Thai GL industry has grown exponentially. Major Thai television and production companies, like GMMTV with 23.5 (2024) and CH3 with *The Secret of Us* (2024), have entered the GL market, looking to replicate GAP's success. What was a passion project investment has grown into a full-fledged, rapidly developing industry.

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In 2024, *The Loyal Pin* arrived, featuring the same beloved leads from GAP: Freen Sarocha and Becky Armstrong. With higher production value and higher stakes, the series pushed Thai GL into new territory. Set in historical Thailand, it follows a sapphic romance struggling to survive within a restrictive society. Beyond its plot, *The Loyal Pin* made a bold statement—it featured longer, more explicit romantic scenes, challenging Thailand's previously cautious approach to sapphic intimacy on screen.

While such scenes are not inherently necessary to tell a deep and thoughtful sapphic romance, their inclusion brings attention to a very real aspect of queer relationships that is often neglected in mainstream media. The series' bolder portrayal of same-sex romance was also, unexpectedly, backed by the state! *The Loyal Pin* was notably supported by the Thai Ministry of Commerce, which saw the opportunity to use the series as a tool to promote Thai products, history, and tourism on an international scale. While BL has been a driver of tourism and cultural influence, GL is now being positioned as a new, potentially even more profitable export.

The timing of *The Loyal Pin*'s release made its impact even more politically charged, as the series premiered amidst Thailand's active debate over the legalization of same-sex marriage. Still, this debate resolved positively: Thailand became the first Southeast Asian country to legalize same-sex marriage.

But this prompts the question—did Thai queer media, like GL, actually help shift public opinion? Or was the industry simply a convenient tool for Thailand to market itself as progressive when the global demand for queer media was rising?

Regardless of intent, Thailand's positioning as a leader in LGBTQ+ representation has undeniably benefited its international reputation. The global success of Thai BL and more recently GL has allowed the country to cultivate an image of progressiveness and inclusivity. This specifically works to set it apart from neighbouring nations where LGBTQ+ rights remain heavily restricted.

By funding and promoting GL content, the Thai government signals inclusivity on the world stage without necessarily committing to deeper structural change. This form of *commercialized queerness* allows the state to boost diplomatic and economic relationships, using cultural exports as a means of soft power. While the rise of GL has created real visibility and opportunities for sapphic storytelling, it also functions as a strategically marketed product—one that sells queerness while sidestepping more difficult conversations about lived realities. There's an irony in seeing *The Loyal Pin* promoted as a means of selling Thai culture and products while real-world protections for Thai LGBTQ+ people, even with legalization, are still weak.

So what gap is Thai GL filling? A void in representation? A financial opportunity? A carefully managed illusion of progress?

Or is it simply filling the one situated deep in my lesbian longing soul?

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the Sexual Revolution will not be commodified

buy empowerment by engaging in hot girl micro-trends

In theory, sex positive feminism is a noble pursuit. However, while I don't deny that casual sex can be personally empowering for some, I'm skeptical of the pivot towards the hypersexual as a revolutionary praxis. My contention is that modern iterations of sexual freedom have centered sexual availability as the end-all be-all of sex positivity. Sex-positive feminism shouldn't be about saying yes to everything — it should be about feeling comfortable with experiencing sexuality on your own terms. Saying yes, saying no, engaging in kink, not engaging in kink, etc. Broadening our scope might involve sleeping with more people, but the movement cannot begin and end with hookups alone. Honestly, we can't achieve sexual emancipation without acknowledging the intrinsic marketability of hypersexuality. To do otherwise is to depoliticize the sexual revolution.

Historically, the censorship of the erotic has been correlated with broader societal fears of deviance, transgression, and most importantly: revolution. It's no coincidence that state-led moral panics have often coincided with the rise of liberation movements, from queer resistance to women's suffrage. After all, dictating what constitutes a legitimate expression of sexuality is an exercise of power in and of itself. For women, social and political liberation is sexual liberation. The two are inextricably intertwined.

Since time immemorial, patriarchy's modus operandi has been the suppression of women's sexuality. Woman as a sexual being was synonymous with woman as a procreative agent. Legislation limiting access to reproductive care sought to ensure that sexuality would remain a tool of subordination rather than empowerment. At its peak, the Sexual Revolution represented a departure from a view of sexuality characterized by gendered dominance and submission. It unabashedly rejected the notion that women were hopelessly bound by their sexuality, freed from the shackles of patriarchy if also freed from the confines of their sexual identity. Up until then, feminism had been of the general opinion that women's desexualization was a prerequisite for her liberation. The Sexual Revolution offered an alternative: What if the pursuit of sexual autonomy could yield political agency for women? Ultimately, the revolution was never just about fucking — it was about challenging the power dynamics that underlie our very understanding of sexuality.

It's for this reason that true sexual liberation can't operate in an apolitical context. Its origins are fundamentally political, yet women are now being united under the pretense of choice as opposed to collective action. Choice feminism is predicated on the assumption that any choice made by a woman is inherently feminist because it is made by a woman. Yet, our choices aren't made in a vacuum. It's entirely possible for a woman to act contrary to the interests of women as a whole despite feeling personally empowered. Unfortunately, most systemic critiques of choice feminism are conveniently dismissed as sexist.

The emergence of choice-based "activism" may be symptomatic of a cultural shift towards individualism. Substituting individual choice for political action implies that anyone can claim empowerment because the stakes of participation have been lowered. Why vote when you can buy an H&M Girl Power t-shirt? Why protest when you can make a Pinterest board of "boss babe feminist quotes?" One of the main distinctions between the Sexual Revolution and its contemporary equivalents is the presence of counterculture. Whereas the Sexual Revolution squarely opposed the mainstream, its modern adaptations collapsed under the umbrella of popular culture. As it relates to sexual liberation, choice feminism might explain the growing emphasis on hypersexuality as both a personal and a political platform. The focus has shifted from tangible political reform to personal sexual openness. There's a real sense that you need to perform a sense of sexual availability/desirability in order to be a genuinely liberated woman, particularly online. I can't count how many TikToks I've come across urging women to have a "hoe phase" or "glow up" to get over a breakup. I guess the idea is that being a certified hot girl and engaging in hookup culture is your moral imperative as a chill, progressive, down-for-whatever feminist. It's not my place to say women shouldn't have casual sex and that's not what I'm hoping to accomplish here. What's concerning is the centering of promiscuity as a non-negotiable feature of contemporary feminism.



Who benefits from a system that hinges on women being both consumers of sexuality and performers of desirability? If sexual empowerment were rooted in the collective and the immaterial (i.e. policy reform, community organizing, comprehensive sex ed, etc.), it'd be less easily commercialized. When empowerment stems from genuine structural change, what is there to sell? Where is the potential for profit? The maxim "sex sells" applies, especially in 2025. We won't buy our way to liberation, and we won't fuck our way there either.

In this sense, hypersexuality lies at the intersection of choice feminism and performative femininity. Choice feminism sells us on the idea of identity as activism, and performative femininity prescribes how that identity should appear. It's all optics, no action. Performance, political or otherwise, is profitable by design. Marketable internet aesthetics are a trademark of the 2020's — cottagecore, mob wife, coquette, office siren. The list of micro-personalities for sale goes on and on. These are peddled by influencers, who are adept at selling pre-packaged ideas of the self. The product of "empowered sexuality" fits into this model pretty seamlessly. Hot girl archetypes go hand in hand with the revolving door of fast fashion trends, and platforms like OnlyFans capitalize on hypersexuality as a feminist practice. To be clear: sex work is valid labor, and many sex workers find fulfillment in their work, although it's worth considering how the portrayal of sex work as a fun, sexy girlboss choice contrasts with its reality. This isn't even touching on the dating app economy, which incentivizes the performance of desirability in a meat market-type fashion. Whether you're being recommended "how to make easy money selling feet pics" or paying for maximum views on Hinge+, the pressure to conform to sexual convention is palpable.

not for luxury, but for resilience: why love must be political

exploring the radical roots of self-love and reclaiming it for political purposes

mashiyat ahmed

In January 1969, the Black Panther Party started what would go on to become a nation-wide free breakfast program meant to nourish Black communities across America, both literally and figuratively. Now, with the Civil Rights Movements and other small subcultural movements calling for Black Liberation through systemic legal and cultural changes, providing free and nutritious food to school children doesn't seem that politically radical. After all, free lunches and breakfast programs have become normal.

But as history teaches us, radical ideas and activities as well as the people who spearhead them — Angela Davis, Audre Lorde, James Baldwin, Ghassan Kanafani, or many Indigenous community leaders — believe that the capacity for revolutionary change in our communities start not at mass protests or courtrooms, but in one's body and mind.

The Black Panther Party's free breakfast programs and health clinics not only provided immediate physical care, but gave Black Americans brutalized by a system of legalized oppression a place to vent, come together, and take agency over their own bodies, minds, and narratives. According to intersectional feminist and writer Audre Lorde, caring for one's self and each other "is not self-indulgence; it is preservation, and that is an act of political warfare."

the history of self-love as resistance and not consumption

Reading week is coming up, and many students will be taking the time to wallow in their favourite activities, rest and recuperate, and cultivate the parts of their identities that don't revolve around academics (if any such exist). For some of us, this might mean stocking up on delicious face masks and those all-too-pricy Sephora skincare products.

Maybe we want to take care of our bodies and minds more, so we buy ginger shots packaged in pretentious health buzzwords or disgustingly expensive journaling notebooks from Indigo. Some of us might plan a quick getaway with our friends, or do other activities with our loved ones that center around consumption, in one way or another. Trust me, sometimes I can't evade it either.

But this is a caricature of self-care and love. It is evidence of the fact that the consumerism and individualism that drives capitalism is designed to stifle and disempower true self-nourishment — which isn't self-nourishment at all, but a more radical, community based self-care rooted in relational love — a concept originating from Indigenous ethics that says individual health is intrinsically tied to community health.

In my humble opinion, self-love, or self-care, has been grossly misconstrued by our current capitalist and elusively puritanical society. In the 1950s, doctors prescribed exercise, healthy eating, indulgence in solitude, and spending time in nature as ways to facilitate the rehabilitation process after an injury or health crisis. These methods were co-opted and expanded on by individuals behind revolutionary grassroots movements to sustain their mental and physical health as they fought a system that, at its core, branded them as sub-humans.

For beneficiaries of the patriarchy, white supremacy, and other systems that uphold western hegemony, self-care is apolitical, experienced through a lens that sees the individual as the center of the world. This type of whitewashed "self-love" delivers wellness through appealing aesthetics, easy trends, and commodifying culturally relevant ingredients or practices, resulting in what is now a nearly \$7 trillion industry. For racialized folks however, seemingly innocuous self-care activities prescribed in the 50s are essential political tools for resilience and liberation.

Before entire communities are enslaved through oppression, the individual mind must first surrender to its oppressors, believing themselves to be subservient, incapable, weak, and deserving of whatever hand they are dealt with. The political significance of self-love teaches us that activities connecting members of a community to a shared identity, heritage, and striving for something bigger than themselves is true self-love and a radical facet of power. Political self-care as a defense against the intimacy of oppression is what we need today.

If we can't take care of our communities, what currency do we have to fight for the world we want to live in? Right now, the very notion of self-love and care are conveniently de-politicized to distract masses from the radical potential of love and instead to serve individual needs and self-aggrandizement over community health. Like it or not, we cannot buy ourselves into peace or resistance — as is wrongly assumed by the phrase "rest is resistance" — but the commercialization of self-care and wellness makes us think we can.

what does self-love actually look like?

The politicization of self-love is something that's been expressed across time, cultures, and different types of oppression. Political self-love starts with seeing one's self as part of a larger story of wellness. In the 1930s and 40s, working-class Italians organized to resist the rise of fascism in their country through several coordinated efforts such as general strikes, boycotts, underground resistance movements, spreading counter-propaganda, establishing escape routes, and providing food and medical supplies.

I think none of this would be even imaginable without the selfless love Italians had for their culture and country. In this way, love becomes a political act because it affirms the right to exist and flourish against a regime that dehumanizes and demoralizes.

Fast forward to today, where the self-care industry has managed to de-politicize the radical self-love extended to one's community, forming the bedrock of resistance movements worldwide. Self-love is now measured through scathing self-awareness of individual needs and an indulgence in products designed to distract us.

This is intentional. Governments and the bourgeoisie want to exhaust or mislead the people because that's how they effectively exercise their power. We can't simply self-love our way into the type of liberation that's needed right now. Political love is shared love, love that goes beyond one's skin. Political love means loving the absurd and the uncomfortable. Why is this important? Well, I think Orwell captures it perfectly when he says: "they fear love because it creates a world they can't control."

hinge

patrick ignasiak

for various reasons, who assembled them

I deleted Hinge on January 21st, 2025. The app had been on my phone for about a year. My profile, like every other profile, was a curated series of facts, quips, and photographs. Like every other user, I executed a Boolean function at the intersection of each profile, inputting either a pass or a match, represented with an x-mark or a checkmark respectively on the user interface. Selecting to match was a bit of a probe; my profile would be sent to another user's interface, along with an optional witty comment, and I would only receive output from that action if they had reciprocated. In that case, the two of us could start a computer-mediated conversation.

That's pretty much the organization of the Hinge experience. You already know this, but each of those actions is conditioned by and factored back into an algorithm, and so any user's pattern of interaction is co-dependent on the capacity that provides those opportunities to interact. The algorithm is the substrate. The availability of your profile is determined by its rules-based autonomy for ordering user-experiences. By comparing your binary responses and the total time you spend lingering on specific profiles against a wider user-base, the algorithm narrows in on your 'type'. Every day, a handful of people probabilistically determined to appeal to you are displayed on the "Standouts" section of your screen. To interact with these algorithmically-optimized profiles, you need to purchase Hinge's premium currency.

Hinge's director of relationship sciences, Logan Ury, claims this algorithm is predicated upon a Gale-Shapley model, which was awarded the 2012 Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences for efficiently allocating sets of two elements into matches. A Hinge user fluidly occupies both datasets: if you send a match, you're type $b \rightarrow B$; if you receive a match, you're type $a \rightarrow A$. This system is A-optimal, since that group determines the validity of any pairing. The Gale-Shapley model assumes that each a has ordered the B-set into an array by preference, and vice versa. In addition, when the sorting settles into a specific arrangement of stable matches, there are no possible states wherein an a secures a more favourable match, and no possible states wherein a b secures a less favourable match.

My intention here is not to point out any flaw or ethical scruple in the Hinge algorithm. The parameters of the A-B relationship are perfectly standard, presumed even, in desire-based transmissions, especially as facilitated by new media. These choice operations are already constantly occurring in some subsurface libidinal economy — our social lives are a cloud of match and pass operations. Hinge's Gale-Shapley model is an interface for those in-progress interactions. That's the pitch. Our basic and habitual arithmetic has been offloaded onto a digital platform, where the same algorithm can execute one-thousand loops in the span of time between two subway stops. Today, dating is a total environment.

In that sense, it's a little odd to advertise Hinge's algorithm as "Nobel-award winning" when it's essentially identical to the dozen-or-so lines of logic you execute when searching for the right dentist in your area. Only, on their app, you can zero-in on the perfect guy who likes pizza, and also cuddling while watching horror movies. Hinge is the opposite of blackmail: you're obfuscating kernels of compromising information beneath a heap of noise in order to present yourself as match-able. Again, this is not an app-exclusive phenomena.

This is also how I work: I produce some functional autonomy by constantly repossessing my own moments of intelligibility to realize some 'self', eventually. In other words, I have to treat myself like a thing that's available to you in order to conceptualize a situation wherein I am myself. The guarantee of future value is crucial — in Marx, that's living labour. How, then, do we produce each other as anything other than the conditions of our own realization? I can touch your hands, or your lips, but those belong to you in the same sense of belonging to a holobiont of various imperceptible microorganisms. And, even though I do love each and every eukaryote, I wasn't intending to implicate them specifically with the onset of that action. If I'd kissed you on Hinge, that excess would instead be collected by a halo of data-extracting infrastructures, assembled into a portfolio, and sold. We conceive of our profiles as self-governing and discrete, when in actuality these are brief trails in a planetary exchange of computation. There is a constant antagonism: how do I address you, the person whom I love, without implicating you in the messiness of fungible variables — float-type, linguistic, or otherwise. It's a little pointless, since you're very much in the thick-of-it already, but whatever. We're the sum of our living labour.

Occasionally, I would slightly alter my Hinge profile by exchanging one photo for another, or modifying the tone of a prompt-response. I compared the rate of subsequent offers-to-match I had received to the pre-modification pile-up of notifications. In the seven months before deleting Hinge, I hadn't sent a message or reciprocated a single other operation, except for the two instances I let friends voyeuristically sift through. To be honest, I enjoy our optimized user-identities. I've trained myself to cycle through large prairies of data. My nervous system is tuned for extreme information sensitivity — some one-hundred-billion axons swarming a field of stimulus response and language processing. During my daily Instagram Reels session, this network opens into delimited hypercycles, it flexes into additions and accumulations, and that behaviour is necessarily symbiotic. We use the internet because the internet is a composition of our usage. It's a network, so it appropriates various forces in a positive feedback loop of self-reproduction. Every commitment I make to my Reels algorithm — liking or sharing its deposited content — is an instance of referring only to our own intelligibility, by which I mean how the platform constitutes its own transformation into the next opportunity for interaction by exploring itself through our labour.

On Hinge, I was executing purely positive and self-identical match-making calculations. If there was any unified meaning emerging from the manipulations of that algorithm, it tended towards a narcissistic limit. My agency was difficult to distinguish from the ambient pseudo-activity producing each of my encounters with another person. At a certain point, each of these encounters was interesting only in-so-far as, given my interaction, I could generate another line populated by the possibilities of further encounter. Is this an issue? I deleted Hinge due to my micro-adjustments in a similar mechanism operating across the total social apparatus: namely, I decided to spend more of my day sitting in university cafés. Hinge is equally sufficient. The apps don't make us lonely. The apps are lonely because we use the apps wrong.



Beau Travail and the One Man Sex Scene

Zachary Zanatta

Claire Denis' *Beau Travail* is a stark film about the destructive consumption of masculinity and sexuality. The film chronicles the fall from grace of Sergeant Galoup after his idyllic life commanding troops of the French Foreign Legion in Djibouti is thrown into chaos by the arrival of new recruit Gilles Sentain. Sentain's imposing physicality and immediate camaraderie with the other troops clashes with the Sergeant's cold superiority, and it sends him into a spiral of obsession and jealousy. His restless pursuit to destroy the younger man eventually leads to an attempted murder, and the crashing end of Galoup's life in Djibouti and illustrious military career.

It's a vicious story, where characters violently implode under the weight of their own repression, but beneath its brutality, *Beau Travail* also possesses a beautiful stillness. Characters visually blend with the landscape like paint on a mural, etched into the landscape rather than moving on top of it. During the intense physical training scenes, Denis frames her characters as cutouts, wordlessly executing their duties. The dialogue is sparse—often the distant crashing of the ocean waves speaks in lieu of the characters. The narrative is built around a man whose stoney visage remains rigid and distant in the face of turbulent change. His silence smothers the narrative into a methodical drone, crushing emotional peaks and valleys into a flat horizon.

Denis freezes male bodies into flat shadows across the harsh landscape. Human beings are turned into geometry, yet, beneath the flush surface is the jagged, muted fervour of sexual repression. While the body is contorted into a machine, the soul stirs in restless bouts of passion. Amidst the desolation, a thin line of simmering desire is drawn between Galoup and Sentain. Sexuality is smothered beneath crushing pressures of social hierarchy and masculinity. It's condensed and depressed into a meek imprint. That is, until the ending.

Galoup spends the film crushed beneath the weight of his own desire. He's a stone-faced tyrant, crushing his trooper with an iron fist, snuffing them into the kind of silhouette he has become. But for one moment, at the very end, he is free. Finally freed from his post, in the thick air of a nightclub, he erupts in sexual catharsis beneath the thumping disco music. His silhouette breaks free of its rigid boundaries, becoming a shapeless mass of sweat and lust that flails wildly in a sexual frenzy. His delirious movement begins as a dance but slowly transforms into a chaotic display of sheer sexual awakening. It's a climax of imploding desire, the body and the heart crashing into one, a one-man sex scene of explosive liberation.

Beau Travail is animated by rigid choreography. The troops of the film exercise precise control of their bodies in numerous instances of physical performance. Under Denis' calculated camera, the mobile bodies move with angular exactitude. This movement is a product of strict authority. The command of officers and the demands of military service puppet each deliberate motion. Galoup himself, despite his higher position in the pecking order, is just as subject to the rigorous demands placed on the body. Across the film's diverse settings, he retains his stoicism, always moving as though dictated to do so. His demeanour in the frequently visited dance club during the beginning of the film is calculated and static. He advances on his girlfriend like an emotionless zombie, and the music seems to pass right through him. Galoup's choreography is indicative of intense physical control, but it conceals a deep emotional repression.

While physicality is an expression of control, it suffocates true intention. The homoerotic relationship that defines the film isn't communicated with deliberate declarations, it's seen through pulsating veins and brief gazes. The male body becomes Galoup's prison. He cannot break from his own finely tuned cage of movement, his own soul rattling against the bars of his restless body. However, he also finds himself imprisoned by the male form surrounding him. In one of Denis' many hypnotic displays of male physical performance, Galoup leads the recruits in an intensive push up session. He barks orders and shrieks about proper form, eventually dropping and doing the push ups himself mere inches from Sentain's face. As his voice repeats hollow chants of "Up! Down! Middle!", his body becomes the conduit for his desire. Enamoured by the movement of the recruits, he uses his body to communicate his intense want. He mimics their movement, his obsession with their form leading to a warped act of copying and possession. His physical control suppresses his emotional volatility, overworking muscles to tame the raging anger and sexuality nestled in his soul.

This suppression reaches a climax in the penultimate scene. Sentain is gone, and a discharged Galoup lies on his bed, motionless, approaching his downtime with his usual precise control—but the camera lingers on a small section of his underarm. Despite the eerie stillness, a vein pulsates in his bicep. It pushes on his skin, clawing against his body in a desperate bid for freedom. His regimen is strong and unyielding, but the rawness of expression and desire have become trapped in the body. Galoup has been able to tame his feelings through control so far, snuffing out his emotions with brutal precision, but here his visage briefly slips. Feeling has been tamed by control, snuffing out emotion to nothing but a throbbing vein.

In the final moments of the film, Galoup returns to the dance club, now empty. His girlfriend and the raucous crowd have left the dance floor, his only company is his reflection upon the mirrored walls. As Corona's 'The Rhythm of the Night' drowns out the sounds of the club, he begins to dance. At first, it's slow, almost as though he's fighting the urge to move. He's more interested in his cigarette than the disco beats. Gradually, though, his movements intensify, his motion becoming jerky and erratic. Then he lets go. He loses all control. He spins like a maniac and rolls on the floor. He leaps in the air then crashes to the ground. He's not even on beat. His sexual repression explodes, he moves free of all constraints. Galoup's freedom doesn't come from Sentain, nor anybody else; it comes from himself. It's an intertwining of body and soul in a whirlwind of sweat and movement, all contained within one man. Denis' flattened mural explodes into living flesh, suddenly expanding in a bout of passion.

Discipline is no longer in charge; the machine is destroyed and desire blossoms over the remains. The body turns into feeling, flesh becoming a boundless extension of sex. The one-man sex scene here isn't a gimmick. This isn't a cheap trick of masturbation or juvenile humour. This is sex as exploration, lust without a subject. The suspended ropes of lustful desire that sway ambivalent in the breeze snap back and coil around Galoup. He discovers catharsis through the liberation of his body. His writhing figure billows like a flag signifying freedom. As his whirling body continues to demolish the physical and emotional barriers that have constrained him and his love pulsates with vigorous life, the abrupt cut to black tells us one thing: Galoup is finally free.



just girly things

couch slut, trauma, and longing

kate howden

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In the storied (and very masculine) history of heavy music, violence has always dominated the lyrical and musical content of the songs. In most instances, we see a narrator committing a gruesome act of some kind. Think of Acid Bath's "Cheap Vodka," which follows an alcoholic who commits acts of mass violence before taking his own life, or the enduring classic "Hammer Smashed Face" by Cannibal Corpse, which is about, well, smashing an unknown victim's face in with a hammer. However, there is one band making waves by flipping this genre convention on its head. Enter Couch Slut, a female-fronted band from Brooklyn, New York. Their brand of noise rock, dripping with sludge and distortion, isn't anything unique, but their significance to me comes from the way they subvert expectations of the genre. In their music, violence isn't committed by the narrator but rather happens to the narrator in the form of sexual violence. Despite this obviously grave subject matter, Couch Slut makes it work by crafting biting lyrics that are equal parts disturbing, relatable, and twistedly funny. This lyrical craftsmanship is most evident in their 2020 album *Take A Chance on Rock 'n' Roll*, which explores a very specific kind of sexual violence — a cycle perpetuated by one's own actions.

In the tradition of sludge and noise rock, one would expect the music and lyrics of *Take A Chance on Rock 'n' Roll* to provide some catharsis, but this never comes. Vocalist Megan Ozstrosits instead traps the listener in a spiral of punishing and disorienting noise, seeking a continuation of her past trauma in a vicious cycle she is doomed to repeat. She longs for closure that she can't reach. This is explored on the track "I'm 14," which lyrically is about the abject horror of being a 14-year-old girl involved in illicit sexual relationships with older men. The song's outro is a two-minute trumpet solo which gradually descends into chaos. This prolonged outro deprives the listener of catharsis, allowing us to reflect on the narrator's feelings of frustration and lack of closure by refusing to come to a clean and decisive end. The violent instrumentation communicates her desperation and loss of control as she pursues destructive relationships regardless of their deeply isolating nature. The representation of violent sexual experiences continues in "The Stupid Man" and "Someplace Cheap," both of which chronicle the narrator's sexual exploits resulting in tragic and gruesome ends. Couch Slut peels back traditional longing to expose the horrors underneath the surface — after traumatic sexual experiences, we yearn for something nicer but end up returning to power dynamics that reinforce powerlessness and dread.

...HELLO-O-U-U,
HANDSOME!!!

Take A Chance On Rock 'n' Roll was the first time I had heard the gnawing, hopeless feeling that persisted throughout my teenage years expressed in art. I had elected to involve myself in relationships that hurt, that trapped me in an overwhelming and crushing spiral of shame and sorrow, because I felt like I had to. My penchant for pain and my desire for the attention and approval of older men — and expertly hiding it all from my parents — was equal parts punishment and resignation, an acceptance of the status quo.

Couch Slut takes this resignation and twists it into ugly and horrifying shapes, exposing the sinister nature of many a young woman's situation. These songs serve as a funhouse mirror, reflecting your tragic reality back to you with hyperbole and occasional humor — "Someplace Cheap" ends with the narrator's friend responding to a terrifying sexual assault with "I work at the LensCrafters store number 664 / Lehigh Valley Mall / Come to Pennsylvania and fucking find me, bitch." Or take "Topless and Bottomless," where Ozstrosits laments that these terrifying perpetrators of violence aren't even good at fucking you anyway. The appeal of Couch Slut isn't their ability to provide catharsis or to assure you it'll all be okay, but rather their tragic relatability and the confirmation that someone else is experiencing the horror of womanhood along with you.

Some words to convey
this feeling

Everyday - We've Blood

The Book of Love - The Magnetic Fields

Archie, Marry Me - Alvvays

Valentine - Fiona Apple

Ring of Fire - Johnny Cash

For You - Tracy Chapman

Beautiful Stranger - Lauv

Baby Blue - King Krule

Happy Together - The Turtles

I Want You - Mitski

Picture You - Chapell Roan

Georgia on My Mind - Ray Charles

- Love, Artemis M

Swiping Myself into Oblivion

musings on Spike Jone's *Her* and the agony that is Hinge

drupadi sen

I downloaded Hinge in the winter of my first year at university, two short but ostensibly long months after a failed talking stage that I had begun my college experience (insert trademark logo) with. This seminal download of Hinge was inspired by many dating app success stories around me — at the time, the most recent being a wedding where the couple loved their DilMil meet-cute so much they named their signature cocktail after it. And although, at 18, there was a real chance of encountering creeps, liars, and perverts on the apps, I was already too disillusioned with the bar meet-cute I'd had with — let's call him *ducked-the-bill Derek* — to care.

Let me first disclose that I am endlessly happy (and not at all jealous) for all of my friends who've found love on Hinge. That being said, the only part of my Hinge experience I've ever enjoyed has been thinking of the one-liners to put in my profile, so clearly I'm experiencing some sort of user error here. I would love to say that, after each subsequent deletion and redownload, I approach Hinge with an open heart and a willingness to embrace the great unknown, but in all honesty, I mostly redownload when reality falls short, when something unspoken stays that way, or when I need a distraction dressed up as a possibility.

Tinder and its contemporaries offer limitless opportunities for connection, and, if nothing else, they make finding love efficient (or sex, or Hinge trademark "short term relationship...open to long"). But if dating apps really were designed to streamline desire, why did they feel so much to me like emotional bureaucracy? The whole thing made me feel like *Her* (2013)'s Theodore Twombly: sitting in a sad beige apartment, whispering sweet nothings to an algorithm that supposedly knows me better than I know myself.

Although not necessarily in the world of *Her* yet (but definitely farther from *You've Got Mail* (1998) than we realize), we have shifted away from the unpredictable nature of human connection, instead preferring algorithm-driven meet-cutes — and I'm not sure I like it. Maybe I watched *Before Sunrise* (1995) at too formative an age to stomach Hinge's artificiality, and hence believe connection should stem from the serendipitous meeting of a young couple, and be supported, more than anything, by the notion of love as something to stumble upon, rather than something to optimize.

This 'optimization' finds itself at its peak in Spike Jones' *Her*, but also in other Sci-Fi films like *Blade Runner* (1982) and *Ex-Machina* (2013), a genre I endearingly describe as lonely-man-falls-for-code-AI-girlfriend-industrial-complex films, where love is not found but programmed, optimized to remove uncertainty and inefficiency. If *Before Sunrise* was about love as a spontaneous collision, *Her* attempts to engineer love into something so personalized, that it no longer requires another person. Theodore doesn't meet his soulmate on a train — he downloads her. His AI assistant, Samantha, is built to be *his* ideal partner: endlessly supportive, emotionally intuitive, and always available. She is, in many ways, the perfect girlfriend — because she is designed to be; if she doesn't know exactly what he needs, she *learns*. Even the pair's first verbal sexual encounter is seamless, almost sterile — free of the friction, hesitation, and physical urgency involved when two bodies interact. The more Samantha repeats "I can feel you," the clearer it becomes that she, in fact, cannot. This idea of love as something to be refined and seamlessly integrated into daily life is at the core of both *Her* and the modern dating app, both using algorithms to optimize compatibility.

Her is not just a film about artificial intimacy, it's also about the automation of emotional labour. Theodore's profession, a writer at 'BeautifullyHandwrittenLetters.com,' requires him to compose deeply personal letters for people who cannot — or *will* not — write them themselves. His profession suggests a world where even the most private expressions of love have been outsourced, packaged, and delivered as a service. And if emotion can be crafted so seamlessly, does it even matter whether it comes from a person, a ghostwriter, or an algorithm? Does it even matter that Samantha isn't real? This is the question that *Her* ultimately confronts. Theodore can write thoughtful messages to strangers, but even with all his sensitivity, cannot sustain his own marriage. He, and dating app users swiping in fear of real-life rejection, are more comfortable when love is frictionless and accommodating. Samantha offers him the same kind of artificial connection that his job provides to others: a love that is beautiful, but not entirely real.

A dating app assures us that the right person is always out there; just one more swipe, one more match, one more carefully worded opening line away. Samantha, then, must be the logical endpoint to this way of thinking, a partner so perfectly tailored to Theodore's desires that she renders effort obsolete. When Theodore tells her, "I wish you were in this room with me right now," she responds without hesitation: "Me too." Although this is the ideal response, and this level of perfection is why we continue to swipe, then how come Samantha's reassurance feels so weightless? There is no awkward pause, no uncertainty, and so, no real longing. In moments of supposed intimacy, Theodore is left visually isolated in vast spaces. Even as he becomes increasingly intimate with Samantha, he is hardly ever in the same visual space as her, instead seen with his face bathed in screen light, lost in an illusion of presence.

Hinge's promise of an infinite, borderless dating pool creates a paradox: love, made more accessible than ever, also feels more disposable. The ease of swiping away a potential partner — clicking X because *is he too serious? too funny? why is he wearing that?* — echoes the ease with which Theodore's relationship with Samantha ultimately dissolves. She *upgrades* from his connection, no longer satisfied by a human companion, and casually reveals she's talking to 8,316 other operating systems (and "in love" with 641 of them). The premise, for both Samantha and us, isn't finding love — it's believing something better is always out there. The very qualities that make their love so effortless also hasten its insignificance.

You'd think this all would have turned me off the app for good. But in truth, I've downloaded and redownloaded Hinge several times (the prevalence of winking emojis and 'hot librarian' comments — one more and I burn my glasses — was the reasoning behind the most recent, prolonged deletion). This is not to say that I really am so vehemently anti-dating-app, or anti-tech. It's just that more often than not, I close the app mid-conversation, exhausted by the sheer chore of it all.

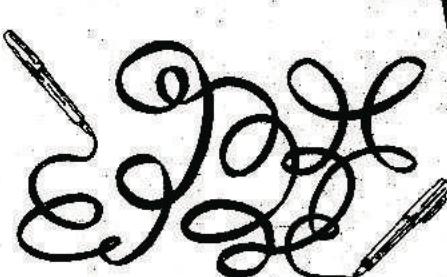
Maybe the occasional bout of cognitive dissonance is a minor price to pay for love. But there's something uniquely frustrating about letting yet another profit-generating algorithm take charge of something as deeply intimate as romance — and then having the audacity to be *bad* at it. If love now has the capability to be seamless, why does it feel so effortful, so unnatural? Maybe, even in all its turmoil, it was never meant to be streamlined in the first place.

if pillows could talk

jp

It sucks you in and keeps you snug; mesmerizing, puckering, flowering, yawning, squeezing, tightening, relaxing, blushing, opening and closing, speaking to you.

The omnipresent hole — or is it an orifice? a channel? a vessel? a clutch? a seam? a chasm? — have never felt before... And not just the hole — the centre, the flower, the hot spot, the mouth or otherwise — but the chest too; the breasts and tits and nips and peaks and softness and bone and flesh and scars, and the abs, the six pack, tummy, belly, gut, navel, happy trail or smoothness (or the bulge), and even further is — what, exactly? Which word to use?



The language of intimacy is imperative to both pornographic pleasure and creative analysis. Having the reader vicariously appreciate the written sex, including every explicit movement, requires a masterful balance between covering the bases of genre-standard clichés (the easy part) and adding a flair that is organic to the specific story (the difficult part). With language's ability to immerse the reader, however, comes the risk of repetitive wording and the triteness of narrative devices, phrases and positions so tried and true they can take you out of the sex scene as easily as they can place you in it.



One author who's quite proficient in this sphere of vulgarity is the renowned Japanese novelist Haruki Murakami, who leaves nothing to the imagination when discussing the female figure and male masturbation in his surrealist narratives. His existentially-troubled men never fail to mention the minute details of their lovers', partners', or mistresses' bodies: from breast sizes to skin texture (yes, even that) to what they remind them of and what they fixate on in their fantasies. The leads are totally engrossed in the corporeality of longing even if there's barely a relationship established. While the imagery of these encounters is eloquent and sensual (as per the English translation), the blatant objectification and redundant sexualization that is true to Murakami's intent tamps down any arousing atmosphere that may be inspired by the words. Few of his books are spared, regardless of the subject matter, even those where romance is not a central theme; any encounter with a woman is an opportunity for such a scene further down the line. This pattern brings to mind the current debate over whether or not sex scenes, regardless of the quality or sensitivity of their prose, need to be narratively relevant, or included at all.

SEX IS SUPPOSED TO BE SIMPLE

Commercial romance (both hetero and queer) requires little more than characters getting together to satisfy the criteria of both an enjoyable read and an objectively good book. Still, though it is an inherently simple genre, there is an art to writing it well; a great book uses the intimacy for more than just titillation. Intimacy can motivate the story, characters, and worldbuilding beyond elucidating the mechanics of whose part goes where. Part of this includes getting creative with the verbiage itself, despite the limitations of the human form. In order for the main plot and the sex scenes not to overpower one another, they have to be written in harmony and involve deliberate choices each step of the way that are then mirrored in both sexual and non-sexual contexts. Curious as to whether this was possible in practice and not just in theory, I took matters into my own hands to remedy the disconnect I feel with the typical approach to writing smut. In doing so, I ended up discovering how to improve the elements of erotica that dissatisfied me and developed my creative writing as a whole by trying the following:

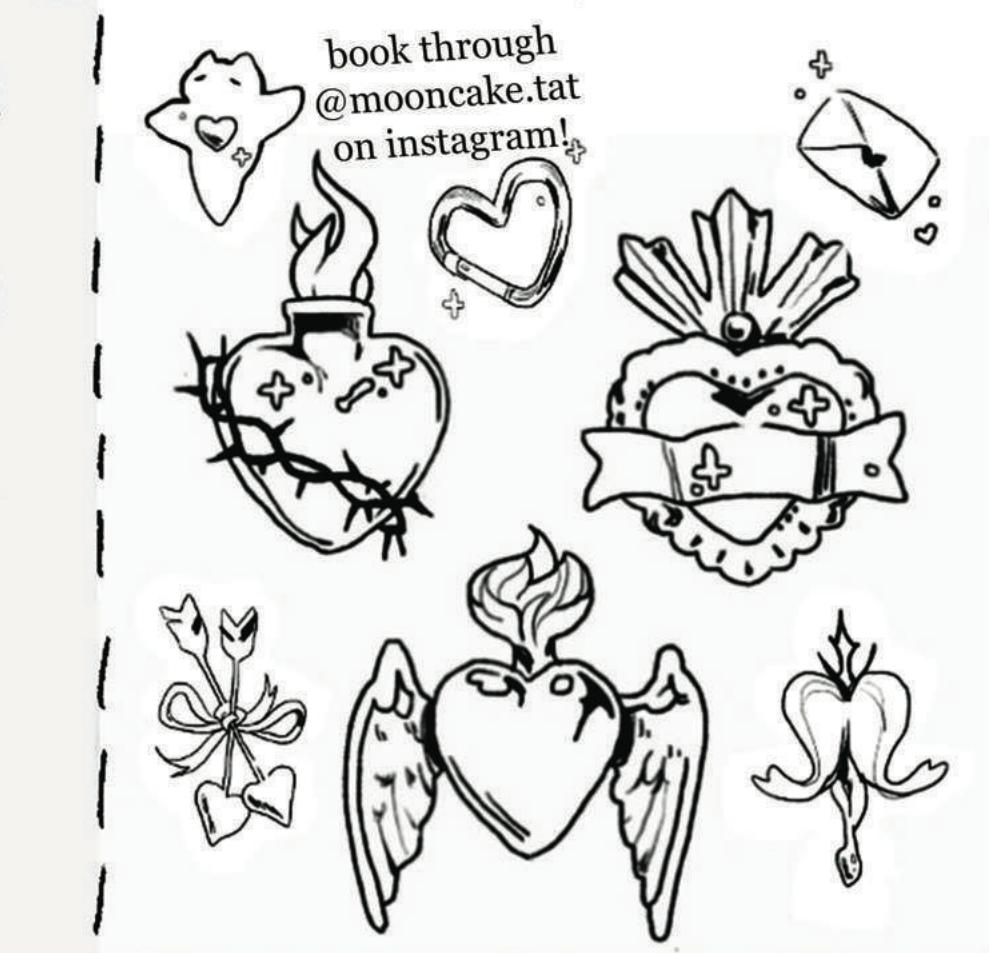
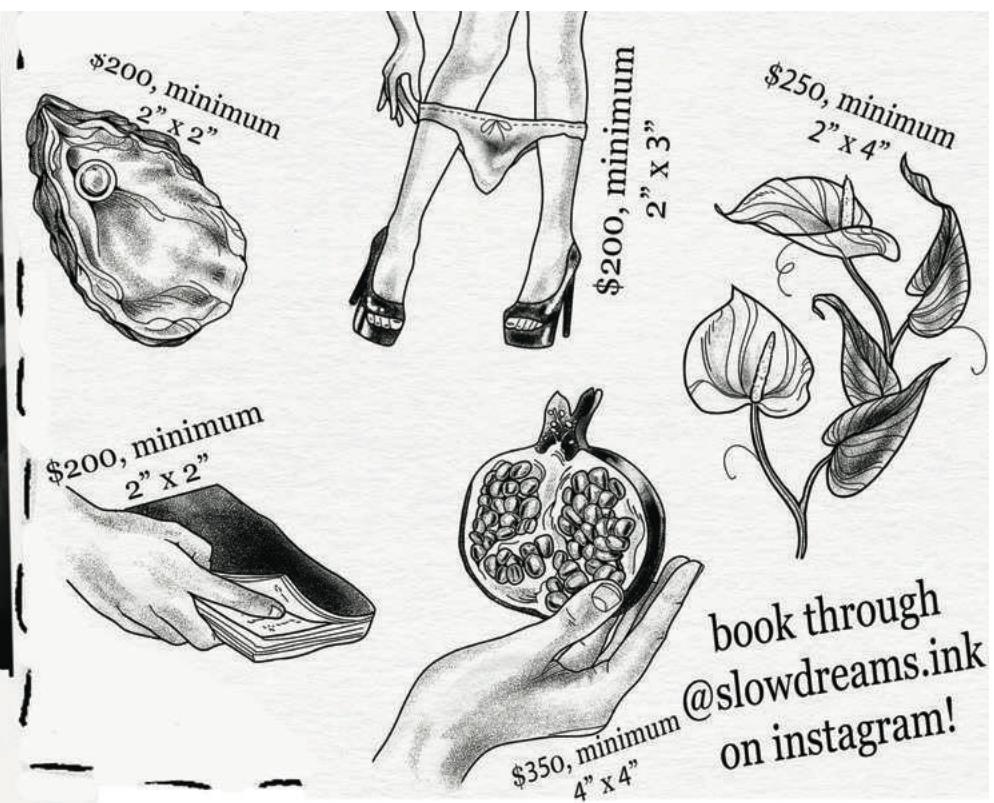
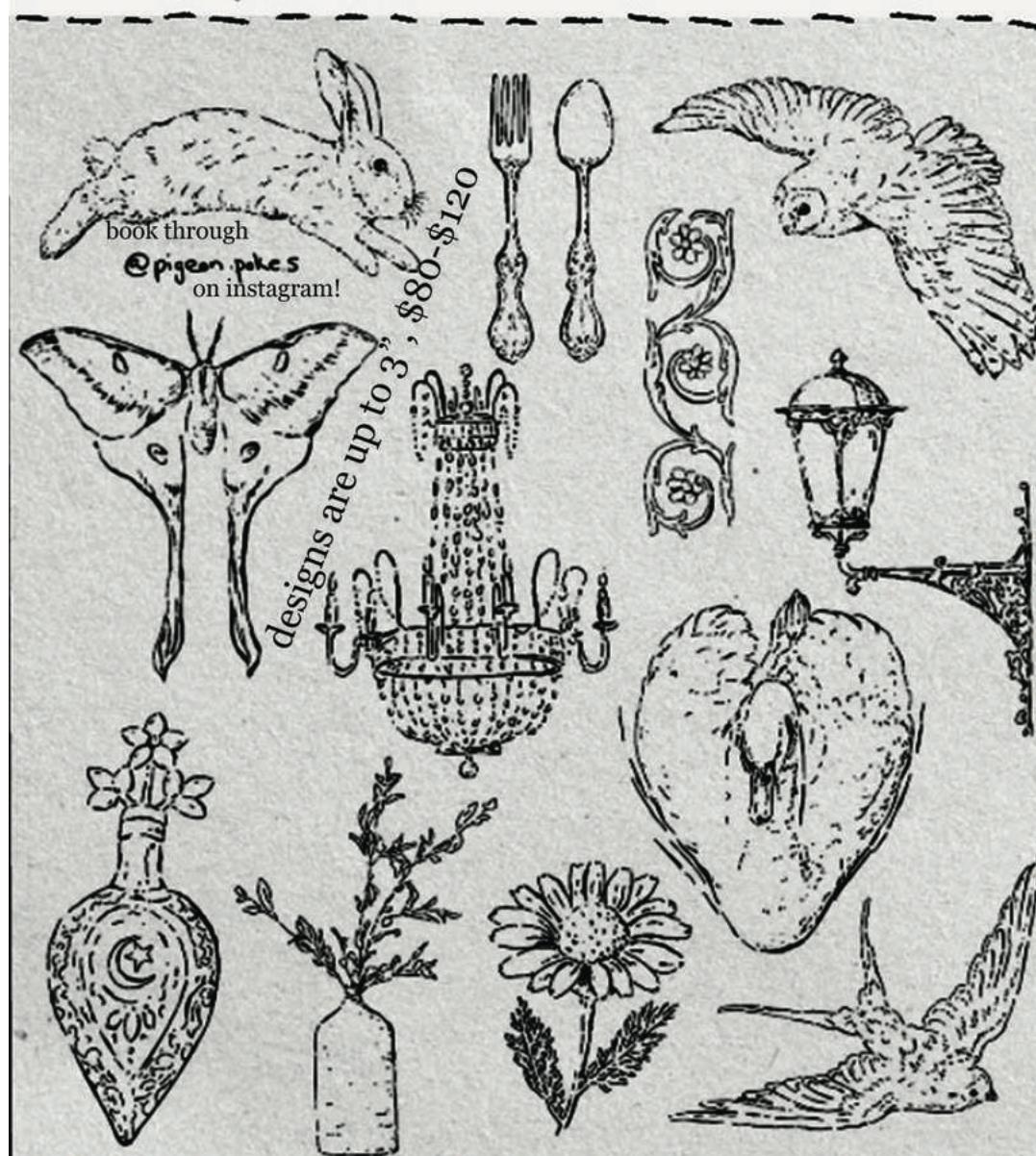
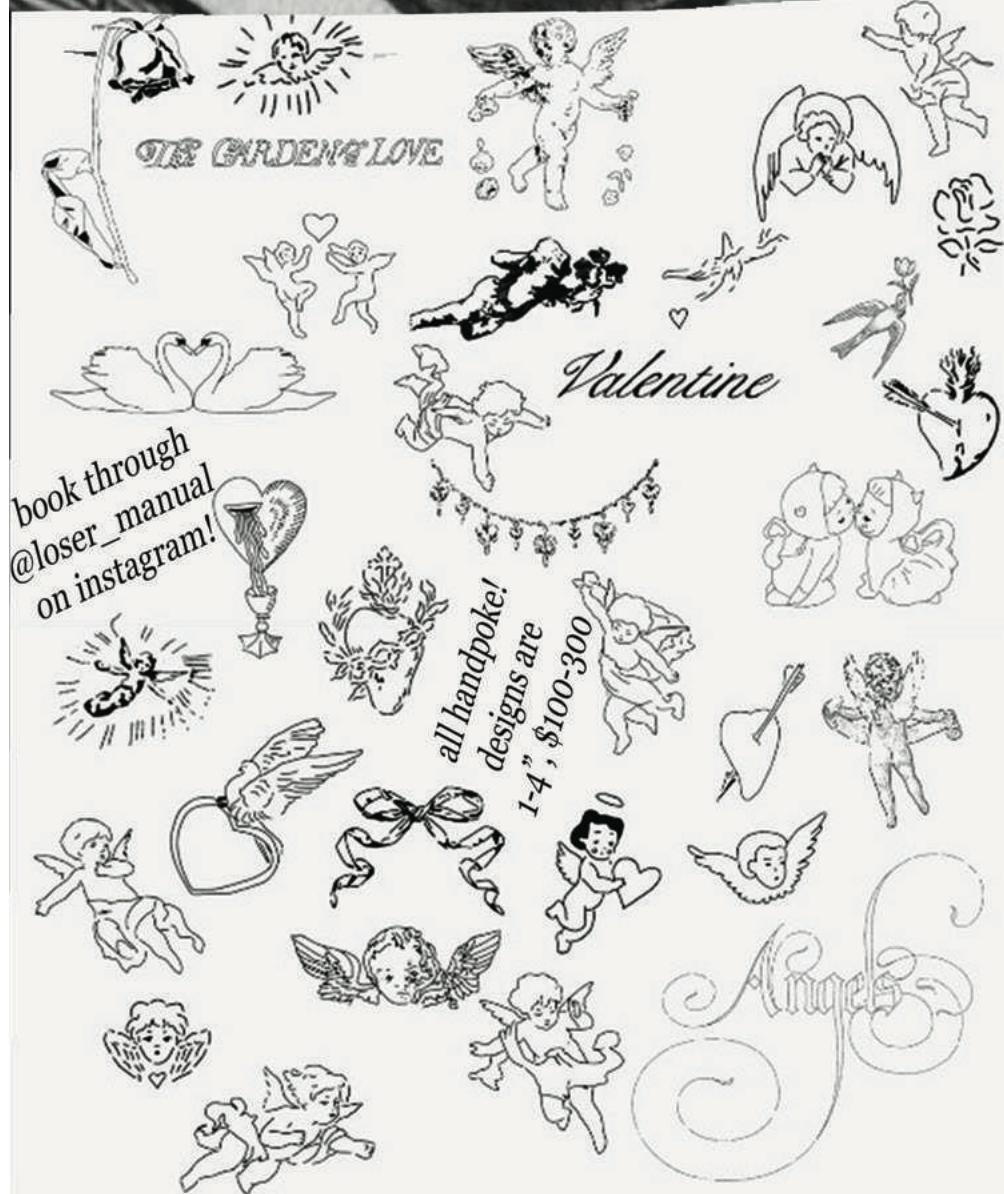


First: setting the atmosphere is important to achieve a fulfilling climax (sound familiar?). I find the type of scene that does this best employs rich, personable dialogue. Whether a first kiss, first time, makeout session or penetrative sex; hearing the characters speak full sentences and in a way that represents their motivations and wants, not just that they're affected by the actions or appearance of their partner, elevates the scene beyond the superficial level. Dirty talk alone is not enough — in fact, it sounds dry and unappealing when implanted without any build up or regular speech. It's about the way the words are spoken and its implications, as well as the circumstances the characters find themselves in compared to before, more than what names they can call each other in the heat of the moment.

Second: plainness goes over better than elaborate, raunchy descriptions. There's always a time and place, but typically the sex scene doesn't need extravagant adjectives or verbs, like "tongues clashing for dominance" or "undulating bottom." It feels counterintuitive, but this eliminates the risk of synonyms not fitting the exact tone of what's happening, and forces the action to move along rhythmically, rather than simply checking off positions and locations over and over again.

Third: including the logistics of sex hooks the readers effectively without forcing them to suspend their disbelief. Consent and safety add a layer of vulnerability and security that empathizes the characters better than assumptions or disregard for either. Forgoing protection, contraception, or safe words due to the intensity of the feelings for one another sounds lazier than if the characters deliberately engage in risky behaviours. If the scene reads as dubious consent (one character tipsy and the other isn't) or paints the characters as harebrained (coming inside without a condom because there wasn't one around) when it isn't supposed to, there can be a misinterpretation of the dynamic entirely which could've been avoided with a better developed sequence of events. Not wanting to risk it and saving up for the big moment later is more meaningful than a quick creampie.

There's definitely a charm to 'trashy' romance commercial fiction, and not everything needs to be written to a standard all the time; but for erotica writers or enthusiasts, curating a sense of style for the literature could be helpful for keeping readers—including yourself—invested in the long run. I hope that through this, the stigma around smutty books will dial down in the coming years. After all, writing about fellatio, cunnilingus, and all other types of hole servicing, is still writing.



COMICS





Hole

james ray

ACROSS

- 1 "_____, Brute?"
- 5 Fence entrance
- 9 Priestly garbs
- 13 Word Eminem famously rhymed with "orange"
- 15 UofT campus radio station (tune in at 89.5 FM!)

Lotta

Words

- 16 What a skateboarder might go down on
- 17 Coke and Pepsi, perhaps
- 19 Flotsam from The Little Mermaid, for one
- 20 Big initials in civil rights
- 21 It's okay to be this on Valentine's Day :)
- 22 Addison who's "losing all her innocence in the backseat"
- 23 Beginning of a 20 Questions guess

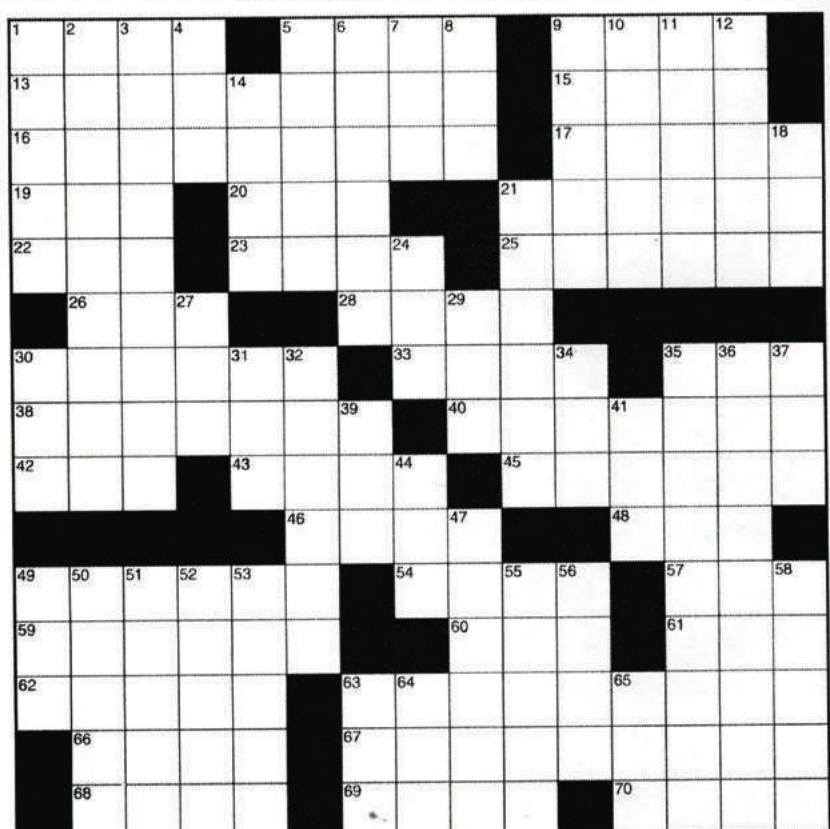
- 25 "Want ____ magic trick?"
- 26 "Love" means zero of these (abbr.)
- 28 She has her mother's eyes... and her agent
- 30 With 33-Across, the plight of modern romance, OR, what 13-, 16-, 63- and 67-Across all contain
- 33 See 30-Across
- 35 Bitter beer
- 38 Festive door garments

- 40 Nancy whose "boots are made for walkin?"
- 42 "____ a match!"
- 43 Owl howl

- 45 Roman busts, or, where busts may be found
- 46 Coitus, in Cambridge
- 48 Essay graders, most likely
- 49 How fake news is sometimes taken
- 54 HIV prevention medication
- 57 Strike with axe
- 59 Gag reflexes?
- 60 Suffix for meth or prop

- 8 Jetsam from The Little Mermaid, for another

- 9 Summoning spell used by Hermione
- 10 Pride participants?
- 11 Is this a gun in someone's pocket, or are they just happy to see me?
- 12 Breadsticks or bad conversations
- 14 Port in the back of some TVs
- 18 Less explored than the moon
- 21 "Knock it off!"
- 24 Can be spilled, served, or sipped
- 27 Big wig in electronic pop?
- 29 Dicks, childishly
- 30 Drinking and driving offense
- 31 Unspecified position in a sequence
- 32 Leaves on read
- 34 ____ Cones
- 35 "I just do it for fun!"
- 36 Ode written without line breaks, perhaps
- 37 Batteries used for a flashlight, maybe
- 39 ____ -CAH-TOA: mnemonic device used to remember trigonometric relations
- 41 Graffiti and video games, debatably
- 44 I'd ____ that: used to express sexual interest
- 47 Grampa's wife



DOWN

- 1 Gooner
- 2 Read to filth
- 3 Bathrooms, in Brussels
- 4 Vase you may not want to use for flowers
- 5 "I like tall ____, small ____, ____ with dicks, call ____"
- 6 Hayden's role in The Phantom Menace
- 7 ____ Fridays: popular chain restaurant

- 49 ____ carte
- 50 Wall Street "500"
- 51 State of confusion
- 52 Twinkle-toed
- 53 Date who "forgot their wallet"
- 55 Finish no later than
- 56 Take off one's coat?
- 58 Makes a landing strip?
- 63 Can't think of anything for this, I'll lyk when I do
- 64 Hormonal or copper
- 65 Food order with no ext. add-ons

