
A photograph of two white radishes with green leafy tops, resting on a grey, textured surface. The radishes are positioned vertically, with their roots pointing downwards. The text 'Sex, Love, Romance' is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Sex, Love, Romance



This zine is a product of
Feminist Studies 150H: Sex, Love, and Romance,
Spring 2012.

The students in the honors section
contributed a variety of works
that illustrate some of the themes of the course,
sometimes as they relate to life at
the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Thanks to Olivia (III) Honowitz and Becca Loux for layout.
Cover by Becca Loux

Talking About Masturbation By Grace Morrison

Masturbation is something I have not felt comfortable talking about with anyone. Until the age of twenty I had never had a conversation about masturbation. Through Debra Tolman's *Dilemmas of Desire* I came to realize that this might not be rare, and that perhaps many people feel more uncomfortable than myself even thinking about their own masturbation.

I decided to interview seven friends and in so doing open up dialogues around a subject little discussed, and often shrouded in embarrassment or shame. I promised to keep the interviews between five to ten minutes, but for five out of the seven interviews we talked for a good thirty minutes, getting caught up in discussions about good vibrators, funny anecdotes, and why it might be that women's masturbation is so taboo.

The following is the data and bits and pieces of the dialogues that were shared (often for the first time) on masturbation.

All interviewees masturbated. They began to do so between the ages of five and seventeen, with the mode age being twelve. The average frequency with which individuals masturbated ranged from three or four times a week to twice a year. Most agreed that they had orgasms more easily and quickly while masturbating than having sex with a partner, opinions on the "quality" of orgasm between masturbation and sex varied greatly.

On first times and early (mis)understandings:

"When I started I felt like there was something mentally wrong with me, so, like, I would have liked it if, like, I had someone to talk to and tell me, 'Oh, no, you're completely fine actually. At one point I didn't...I knew that it felt good, like, but I didn't know what it was until people started describing it, and I was like, oh, okay, that makes a lot more sense now.'" –Melissa

"...And, um, I would like tell my friends, and they were like, wow, and I was like, yeah, it's so weird, like, like where

we pee feels really interesting. And I thought only I knew." –Julie

"I remember discovering this, um, I think it was like sixth grade, um, but I remember, like, one day I was just, like over zealous in my like shower routine and was like, you know, washing everywhere and I just discovered that this, like, felt good." –Bonnie

"And I didn't really know that that's how you did it...it just kind of, like, happened. I don't even know how to explain it. I think it's...like part of instinct." –Ellie

"When I was in high school I was trying to read, like, on yahoo answers like how to masturbate, 'cause I was like, 'How do other people do it?'" –Autumn

On technique, method and comfort:

"...After I stopped being a virgin and felt more comfortable with it, I, um, sometimes, like, I usually stick to the clit because it's just, like, the finger's not gonna really help me, but, like, um...and plus it's very difficult for me to get off vaginally, so, um, yeah, that's usually the way I do it." –Melissa

"Do you remember those, like pillows that had the balls in them that were really hip for a while...that had like a vibrator inside of it...yeah...that's super embarrassing. Wow, I never thought about [how I masturbate]...um, I just use my hands. But, I, not like inside, I don't find that...it grosses me out. I don't like that, so just like clitoral." –Bonnie

"I'm curious to try [a vibrator] out, but, at the same time it seems like such a commitment, and I feel like I would get...I would definitely like enjoy it too much." –Lena

"I feel like the way I masturbate versus the way I have sex is just so completely different that I feel like they're just completely different experiences, it's weird. 'Cause when I masturbate I don't even touch myself at all, it's just, like, all muscle contractions...but I like when someone touches my clitoris when I have sex." –Autumn

On watching porn and/or 'getting in the mood':

"Listening to music is definitely a good way to, like, get in the mood...um, reading erotica." –Lena

"Sometimes I'll just like...watch porn or something, and then there's some times where I'm just laying in bed and I'm like, huh, I'll just masturbate, whatever. I don't like watching straight porn 'cause, like, when I like watch porn I watch it 'cause I know it's like not real, and straight porn I guess is, like, too real 'cause, like, that's the kind of sex I have, and so I kind of steer clear of it usually..." –Autumn

"...At first I really hated [porn]. I actually like girls better 'cause the girl/guy is always just so...just disgusting. But if it's girl/girl I like that better, which...and I've never had a girl, girl experience...so I don't know what that's about." –Bonnie

On talking (or not) about masturbation and/or sex:

"I kind of wish, um, girls would talk about [masturbation] more, um, or even sex more because I feel like in a lot of situations, like, especially the first time [having sex], girls feel more pressure to, like...or they're not okay with something but they keep letting it happen because they don't know what to say. I suppose to the average person sex would be more easy to talk about, but in a closer knit circle I think masturbation. Or even like masturbation where it's just like, um, some girls, like, just don't do it, or they feel ashamed for doing it, or even in my case, I didn't understand it for the longest time, and, like, I couldn't...like, it's not something you really want to talk to your parents about." –Melissa

"I don't like talking about masturbation with guys. I just wish girls talked about it more, like, it wasn't such a private thing." –Hanna

"I guess since masturbation doesn't come up often I'm not sure how comfortable I am talking about it, but, like, sex I'm pretty comfortable talking about." –Autumn

"I have only talked about it once with my best friend, and I don't even think we said that word (masturbation) we just, like, alluded to it...and she had never. She was eighteen. I assume that my other best friend Alex hasn't, but I don't know. I know that I, myself, like, I need it, and I know that a lot of girls aren't that way. And like, even when I'm

even when I'm having sex with Nathan, like, I want to do it. I want to. And for some girls it's 'Oh, all he wants to do is have sex,' but, like, for me it's important too. Like, I want to too, and I have a feeling that it isn't that way for all girls, so I could imagine that not all girls would masturbate because they've never felt that...that I feel. I feel like there's a stereotype that girls don't masturbate, that it's like unladylike or something, and, so, I definitely feel that way, and I feel like I don't want people to think that, like, I am less of a lady. When I'm talking about it with guys it's generally not a big deal...whereas if a girl asked me...I would probably still tell the truth, I would say yes, but I wouldn't be inclined to, like...yeah...'-cause I feel like so many less girls do than guys do. And I don't know, 'cause I've never talked to any of them about it, maybe they do and they just don't talk about it, like me." —Bonnie

"Sex definitely comes up more... 'cause masturbation's just like...people just don't talk about it, especially girls. I think people are just really embarrassed by masturbation. Um, I don't know why. People talk about sex and people just don't talk about masturbation. I think it's more acceptable for guys to be thought of as sexual beings, and like, we're taught that it's on their mind like 95% of the time or something in sex ed., I think, and then, so it's like, we understand that they talk about it, but, then, like, people think it's not on girls' minds as often...and I don't think it is, but, I don't know. I feel like masturbation is kind of a sign that you're secure with yourself, kind of, yeah." —Julie

"I used to read Seventeen and stuff, and they would, like, talk about it, like, 'Oh, is it bad?' A lot of girls would say, like, 'Is it bad to masturbate? Like, I just feel like it's wrong.'...like, I don't feel like it's wrong...Masturbation just seems like, if you're doing it, like, you know, sex is a thing that you kind of 'have' to do in order to like reproduce, or whatever, and masturbation kind of, like, it just seems like that's a thing you're doing for yourself, and that's just kind of, like weird, or, like, bad, especially for women. I feel like, well, I don't really do it that often, but I feel like it's something that girls should definitely try, be-

cause then you can...like, it's your body. And I feel like masturbating, just, like the fact that it's not talked about, like, girls masturbating is not talked about, I feel like it's just part of censoring that part of your body." —Ellie

Concluding thoughts:

The responses and anecdotes shared varied significantly. Though all the women interviewed did masturbate, their reported pleasure and personal comfort with their own masturbation fluctuated immensely between interviewees, and sometimes between individual answers.

One recurring theme was that many women, even while admitting or talking about their own sexual desire and agency while masturbating would often return to speculation that maybe other women do not masturbate as much as them, or ever. By all masturbating, these women challenged the misconception that women don't usually masturbate. However, they did not all see themselves as challenging that idea, instead tending to think of themselves as anomalies or strange exceptions with unusual sex drives.

Most women identified a gender binary between men and women's masturbation, believing masturbation to be something "talked about over lunch" (Hanna) by men, while hardly ever (or never) discussed by women. They all wanted to talk about it more often among close friends, or wished it was a subject that could be talked about without embarrassment or shame. Many reflected that this had to do with a general social discomfort with imagining or recognizing women as sexual beings.

When I asked for final comments about masturbation many chose to talk about the fact that masturbation feels taboo and pondered why that might be. Others wanted to talk about vibrators and the best sexual positions to reach orgasm. I believe this reflects the general theme of conflicted feelings and messages that the women shared as they spoke about negotiating their own sexual desire and exploration of pleasure, and the general perception that on some level this was not socially acceptable or truly okay. Yet all

the women continue to, very privately, challenge this social taboo in favor of their own personal pleasure and sexuality, exercising their "erotic voice" (Tolman) even if they believe others will not be comfortable listening.



“Dilemmas of Desire”



Who's in Dilemma?...

Drawing by Cindy Nguyen

The Horny Good Girl

by Sarah Puckette

I'm here to tell you, girls,
That it's okay to have sexual desire,
It's normal.
I know you think we live in a world where women are sexless,
Passive,
Only objects of the unbridled sexual urges of men.
But you can want sex as much as a man, if you want.
I have consciously felt sexual pleasure since I was 8 years old,
Seriously, I remember.
"I'm not masturbating, I'm just simulating sex!" I reassured
myself.
How ignorant I was.
I knew it was something to be ashamed of,
I remember thinking "I hope I grow out of this habit before I
have a husband because I don't know how I can hide it from
him. What will he think of it?"
Again, how little I knew,
How little I knew about husbands.
One time my mom caught me: infinite embarrassment.
Is anything worse than that?
Luckily, she said it was okay,
In private at least.
She did it too when she was a little girl.
What? You mean I'm not a freak?

This sexual awareness at such a young age really helped me.
I knew myself,
I knew what felt good, even though I knew very little
About sex with a man.
I was in control of my desire,
I had power.
In junior high, I used the blog site xanga,
When xanga was cool.
I had a secret xanga,
Used just for exploring the sexual frontier of THE INTERNET.
My username: thehornygoodgirl.
Yes, I was a good girl,
But I was horny and knew a lot about sex.
I was comfortable with my own horniness and understood it,
But I kept it to myself.
I wasn't going to share it with the first boy who came along.

But I love sex,
I find it fascinating.
I love learning about it,
I love talking to people about it,
I love helping others with their sexual problems,
And I even love doing it.
I've only slept with one person,
My former partner of almost five years.
Now that he's out of the picture,
Who knows what will happen next?

But, because I am a woman,
No, not just that,
Because I am an introverted, intelligent, quiet woman,
A nerd,

People make assumptions about me.
"She doesn't do that kind of thing. She'll be shocked if I say
this. She doesn't even know what a penis is. She's so prude.
Definitely a virgin."
And that hurts.
No, I don't want to be called a slut by the ignoramuses either,
I just want recognition
Of my right to be the sexual being
That I am by nature.
Even if I am too shy to talk to strangers sometimes,
That doesn't mean I'm shy about discussing sex.
In the hook-up culture of Isla Vista,
I feel the need to defend myself.
Yes, I'm a nerd,
Yes, I get horny,
Yes, I might have sex with a man if I choose to!
Gasp!
Little do they know I was the one who taught my friends every-
thing.
In elementary school, my Barbies were already doing it. (At
least they tried.)
On the other hand,
Living in Isla Vista has allowed me to see
A number of other women
Who are proud to be themselves: sexual beings.
Growing up, I often felt alone
Like I was the only girl who had sexual feelings.
Society portrayed women as anti-sex,
Only objects of male horniness.
Cultural constructs made me feel isolated.
Only as I got older did I see,
Yes, many women do experience arousal,
And they touch themselves, too,
And it's okay.
But society won't tell you that when you're little
And confused,
And ashamed.
You have to gain access to that secret information,
That's why I'm here,
To tell you all this.
So girls, get to know yourself,
Embrace your desires,
It gives you agency
When you decide to share your desires with a partner,
Not to mention,
More pleasure.

Just know that women have the right to feel sexual desire,
Women have the right to want sex,
Women have the right to not want sex,
And women definitely have the right to masturbate like men
do,
Although the right will probably be exercised less frequently.
So try it: it's free, easy fun,
And unlike a partner,
Unlike society,
It will never let you down,
Or say you are wrong.
Its sole concern
Is your satisfaction.



Lesbian

bisexual

g**A**y

straigh**t**

Boy

as**e**xual

trans**vE**stite

Travestí

lover

gir**L**

hetero**S**exual

LABELS.

By Emily Berg

That awkward moment when.....

At one point or another, we all experienced situations that have been less than ideal. A large portion of us have had at least one of these 'less than ideal' situations while hooking up, or attempting to hook up, with someone. If you can relate to the previous statement, here are a few stories from your peers to let you know that you are not alone. If you can't relate, congratulations on dodging the bullet, here are a few stories from your peers to let you know that, yes, these things really do happen to people. Either way, enjoy.

By: Brooke Hofhenke

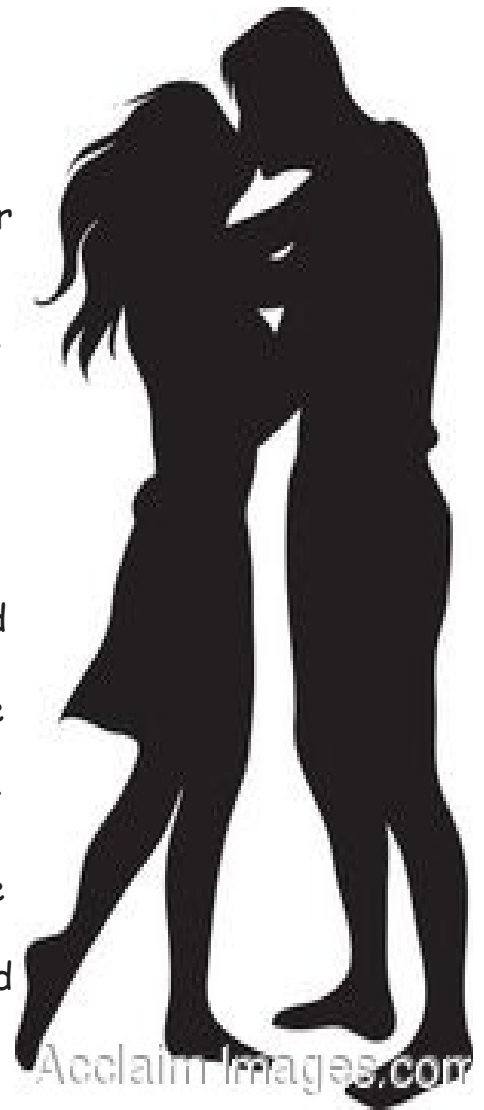
“ In high school when I was hooking up with my boyfriend one time I decided I was going to try to act all sexy. To do this, I was going to keep eye contact with him while I gave him head. I stared into his eyes and started to move towards his penis, but as I lowered my head, still keeping my eye contact with him, I found out that I didn't have very good aim because I ended up stabbing myself in the eye with his penis instead! ”

“ **My girlfriend and I wanted to hook up so we decided to go park out in the country. It was getting really hot and the windows were all fogged up when we heard a knock on the window. Where I'm from, kids always got busted for this by the cops and we knew that was who must be at the door. My girlfriend covered her body with her clothes and I opened the door half dressed to find out that it wasn't just any cop who had busted us but it was my uncle. He saw us and, without saying a word. immediately turned around and walked away.** ”

“ Well, this one time freshman year, I was hooking up with this guy for the first time back in my dorm room. After a while I kinda got to the point where I realized that I did not want to hook up with this guy anymore and just wanted to sleep. So, I was like, 'ok well...see ya later' and he responded with, 'hey, you should give me dome.' I was shocked and just said, 'oh should I?' As you can guess, that was the end of our hookup. ”

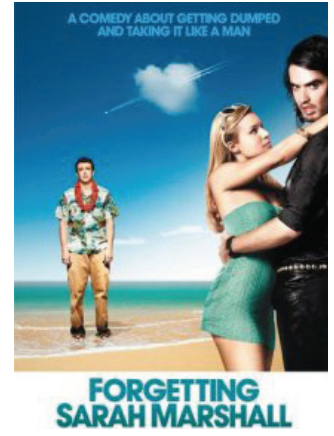
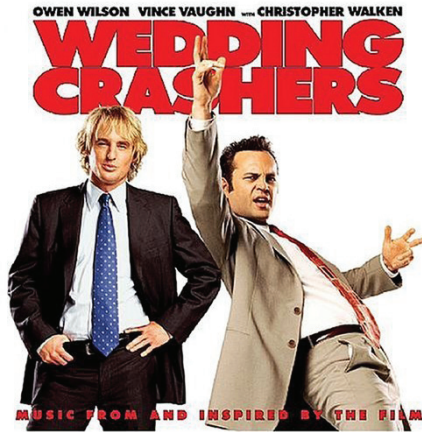
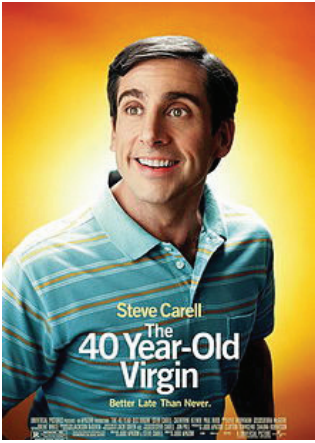
“One night I went out with my friends and I met a cute guy that I started to make out with. We were behind his house on some old couch and making out when all of the sudden I saw him pull his dick out of his shorts. He noticed my obvious surprise and almost as if he were doing me a favor by offering me some great deal he said, “just go down for a little bit.” In my head I was like, “WHAT THE FUCK!” I grabbed my phone and pretended my friend was calling so it would look like I absolutely ‘had’ to leave, but when I stood up to go saying that I was sorry but my friend needed me, he caught my hand and in the creepiest whisper I have ever heard said, “just the tip.” After taking a split second to make sure this was real life, I yanked my hand back, ditched my friend excuse and got out of there.”

“Ok so my dad has a trailer in his back yard that is pretty big that sometimes he uses as an office or we use for guests. One night I called my ex-boyfriend and told him to come meet me in the trailer at a certain time. I checked to make sure my dad was sleeping and went to wait for him at our meeting spot. Five minutes later he showed up and we started to hook up. Mid hook-up we see a light shining around the trailer, I thought it was just my dad’s girlfriend so I told him to ignore it because I figured she was just looking for something outside. We start to hook up again and we hear a loud banging on the door. I thought for sure it must be my dad so I freaked out and told him to hide. I straightened myself up and opened the door to find a police officer, who was someone that I went to high school with by the way, with a flashlight in one hand and a gun in the other...both pointed at me. Naturally I let out a little yell and then asked what he was doing pointing that at me. Apparently my dad had woken up and seen some man going into the trailer and thought he was a burglar and called the cops. Straightening the matter out with my dad and a police officer that was only a year or two ahead of me in my extremely small while my ex-boyfriend stood in the doorway behind me was definitely the lowest point of my summer...and probably my life.”



Acclaim-Images.com

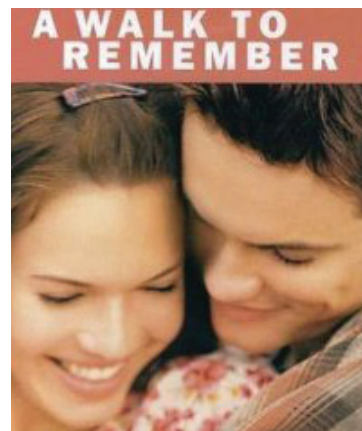
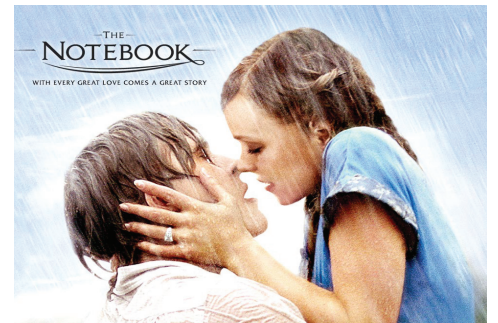
Thank you to all of the people who shared their stories!



What is Sex, Love & Romance?

When I asked 10 UCSB students what movies they think embody these 3 categories they said...

By Courtney Wetherell



I

clearly queer
and queerly here
what is my representation of queer-
ness?
my queer representation of queerness
reproducing myself and you
and you, and you
every boy I've ever loved
every man I've ever touched
what is my representation as such?

it's clear we are just like everyone else
special snowflakes like everyone else

or are we the homo-superior
while every "no homo" straight
is just denying his humanity
melancholy heteros cling to sanity
some of us cling to stereotype vanity
too

so we are just like you
"we are just like you" needs to be erased
pointing out differences till we are put in
place
but where is our safe space in
a heterosexual matrix of oppression,
dodging slurs
in a hegemonic patriarchy
appropriating our culture to the
point where stereotypes emerge

turning us inside out while
identity questions burn us out
until we are reversed

leading us to violence
and only we are hurt

II

so what is queerness to me?
what's up with my identity?

you know I'll still say
it sets us free

but in this world it's limiting
can I be everything I want to be?

and how to act with company?
these endless questions bother me
and damn it still confuses me

yet in the face of all this strife
my queerness still feels
oh so right...

with all the questions, all the trouble
all the personal & social struggle
always building up the rubble
all the labor and bursted bubbles
all the looks and stares and glances
broken hearts & lost romances
all the pain

comes with good, with free
with me

and that just may be
queerness to me

- RJ Thomsen

Big Sexuality by Abrahan Monzon

We have been taught that we are unhealthy.
We have been told what we can and cannot wear.
We have been treated as if we were a-sexual.
We have been ridiculed.

This is a homage to all the plus size *QUEENS*.
It's time to stop listening, and start loving.

We are curvy, sexy, bootylicious.

We are big, beautiful, AND sexy.

We can, and should, love ourselves.

Because as RuPaul said:

"If you can't love yourself, how the hell are you gonna love somebody else?"

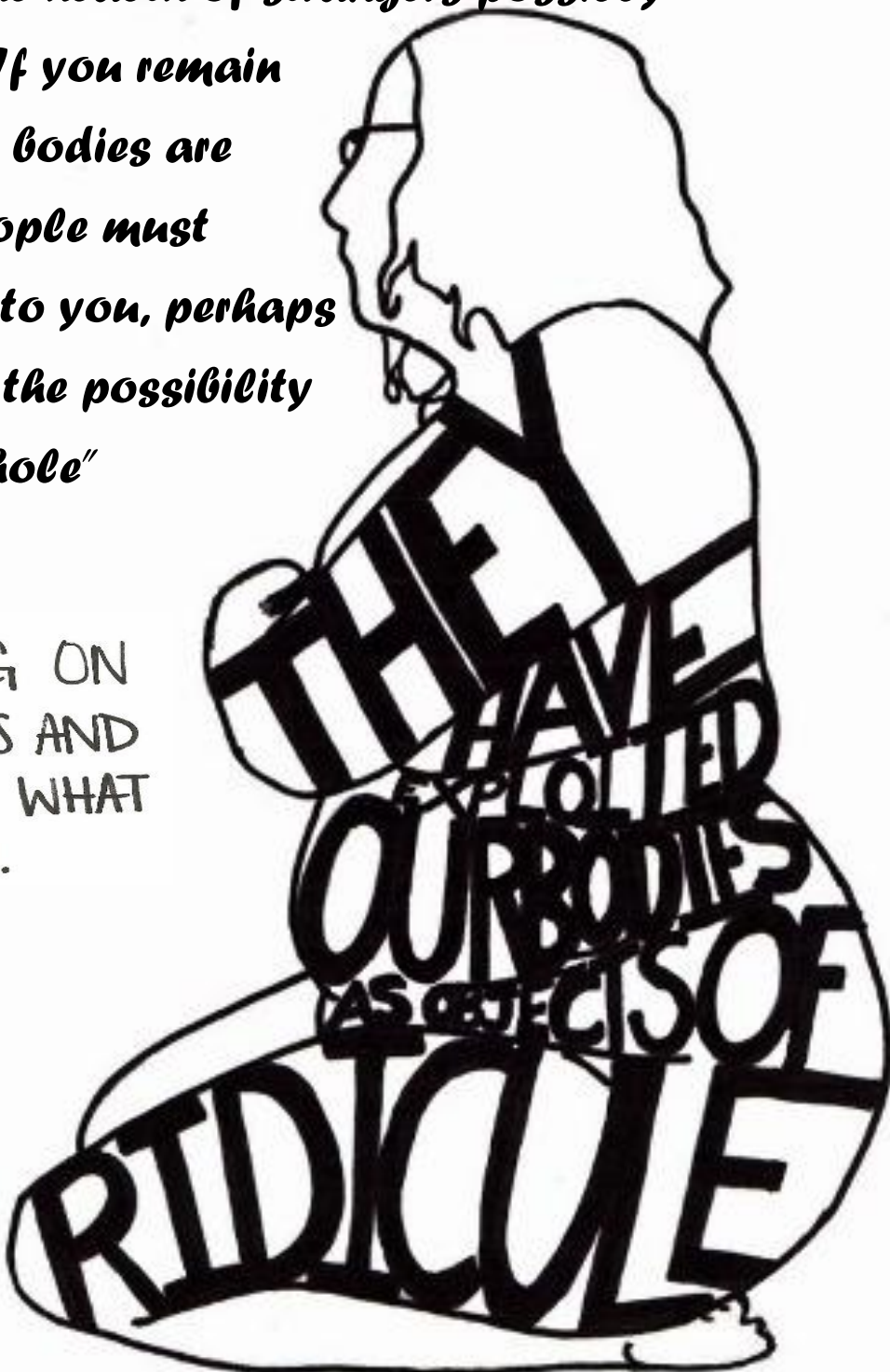
**THE SHADE
OF IT ALL!!**

*"Even if all fat people are the way they are due to their bad choices, even if every single fat person is **unhealthy**, that does not justify sub-standard treatment. How can the health of strangers possibly inspire such vitriol? If you remain convinced that others' bodies are your business and people must justify their existence to you, perhaps you should consider the possibility that you are an asshole"*

—Frances Lockie

STOP HOLDING ON
TO WHAT HURTS AND
MAKE ROOM FOR WHAT
FEELS GOOD.

All of these quotes and images
have been found on Tumblr
and can be found at
<esamarimacha.tumblr.com>
and traced back to the
original source.



"somehow as women, we connect our various sizes to our self-worth. Lets look closer at the size of our hearts, the width of our souls, and the length of our spirits". -Sark

"Fat women are expected to dress in ways that are **ostensibly minimizing** but that, in reality, are really about us occupying *less visual real estate*.

No bold colors, no stripes, nothing that would ever make us look

b i g g e r

It's not that some of those rules are genuinely about looking slimmer - it's that we draw less attention to ourselves when we comply with fashion rules. We occupy less space, meta-

phorically if not physically. We minimize ourselves for the comfort of other people. -- Marianne Kirby at The Rotund, I Spy With My Fat Eye: On Seeing And Being Seen



“**Fat** people who love themselves

scare the shit out

of people who don't love themselves. Even fat people who are

TRYING

to love themselves scare the shit out of people who can't do the same. We force people to have to look at why they hate their bodies because we are “supposed” to hate ours and we don't. And sometimes they have no idea what to do with that, so they act like assholes.”

-Tigress Osborne

I am not going to have any more 'fat days'

I will not be dictated to by patriarchal media bullshit which tells me I'm not good enough.

I will wear what I like, eat what I like, fuck who I like and identify however I want.

Excerpt from “Letter to Myself” written after attending a retreat for trans* folks *Abrahán Monzón

remember that it is possible to love yourself, *in that body full of contradictions.* you have always lived at the border, *and you always will.* that night, when you were still young, was just a test of endurance, and you are passing, but it is not over. *And that's why i remind you, you are fat, femme, butch, brown, light-skinned, healthy, beautiful.* Remember

, i love you.

Sex Play, Bonobos and Humans

By Becca Loux



Izquierdo and her friends



Bonobos engaging in sex play

Isabel Behncke Izquierdo knows how important it is to play, and she owes much of that knowledge to a group of laughing primates in the Congo.

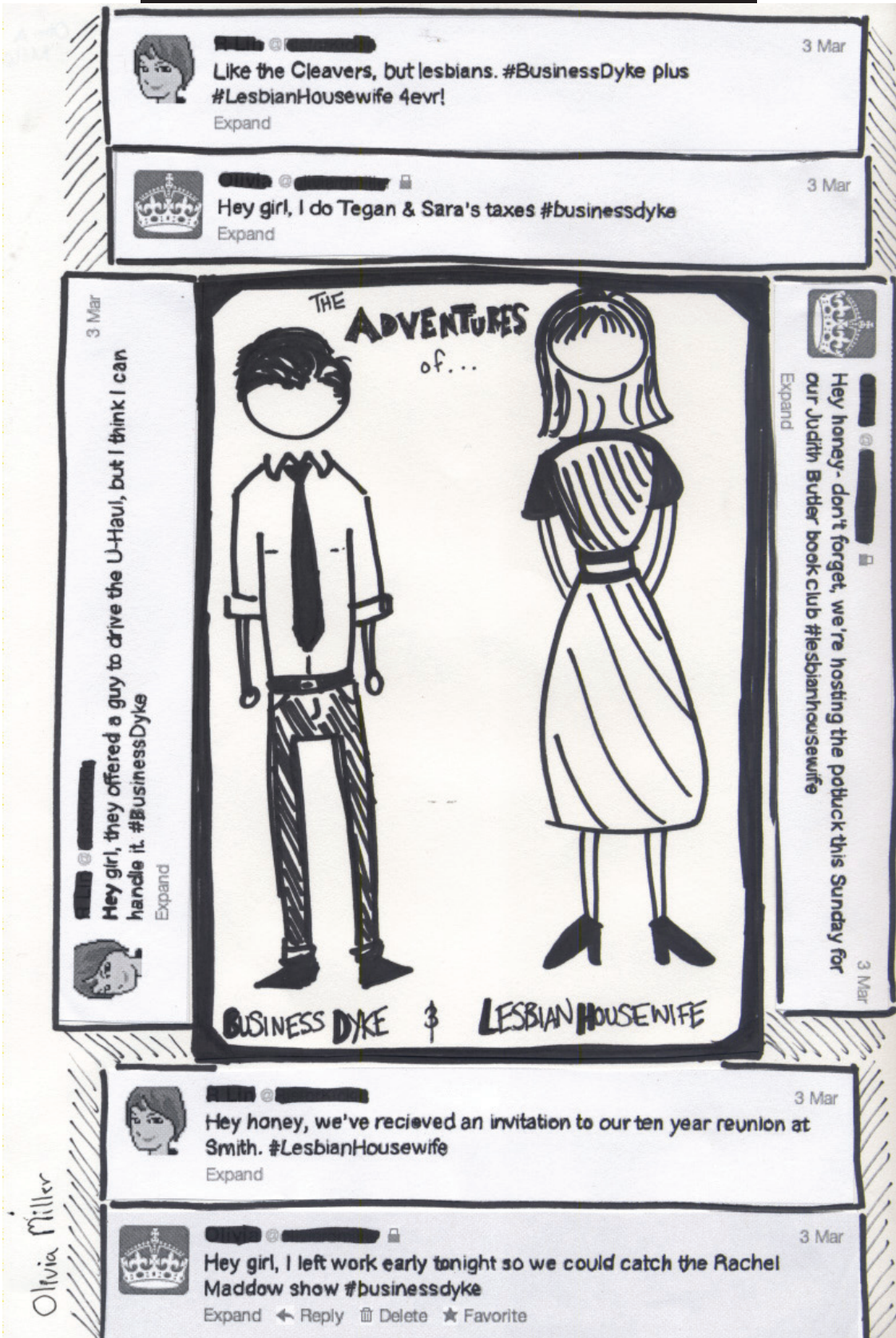
A primatologist, Izquierdo has focused her research on one of the closest living relatives to humans: bonobos. The dwindling society of mysterious primates that live deep in the African Congo are the least understood out of all groups of primates, yet she believes they show us an important part of our evolution that we haven't been able to understand previously. In a TED talk entitled "Evolution's gift of play, from bonobo apes to humans," Izquierdo elaborated on her findings about sex play among the bonobos and what that might mean about humans, both evolutionarily and looking towards the future.

Chimpanzees, the second-closest human evolutionary ancestor, are prone to violence and use physical prowess to maintain control in their colonies; this aspect of one of our closest ancestors has been emphasized by many evolutionary scientists and connected to the formation of human society. However, Izquierdo believes that our closer cousin the bonobo shows us the "other side of the

coin" (TED talks) with their play-based society in which they solve conflict with sexual frivolity. She says they are "highly tolerant" of each other and her research has never observed conflict solved by physical violence. Izquierdo believes that these qualities in bonobos are just as much a part of the human evolutionary scheme as the propensity for violence in chimpanzee group behavior.

For bonobos, the secret to their utopian society is sex—lots of sex. "They have frequent, promiscuous and bisexual sex to manage conflict and solve social issues," Izquierdo explained. She does not believe that the solution to humanity's problems can be as simple as the way bonobos deal with conflict, but she points out that they also incorporate play into all aspects of their lives. She feels that humans, who also participate in both sex play and other forms of play, share a lot more with bonobos than has been previously noted. If we humans could embrace the open and playful attitude about sex and sexuality that our cousins seems to be naturally inclined to, perhaps we would not have so many problems in dealing with sexuality in ourselves and in others.

The Adventures of Business Dyke & Lesbian Housewife



by Olivia Miller

A Feminist Manifesto

by Andrew Miller

Based on common media depictions, and the ideas of many of my male acquaintances, I once had the suspicion that feminists are a group of pepper spray-toting, male-hating women who convene for the purpose of mutilating cylindrical foods. After taking a feminist studies course, and a little bit of maturing, I have come to realize that this is not an accurate description. More realistically, feminists are simply advocates of female agency and liberation. With this in mind, I just might be a feminist. However, I do have some gripe with many common practices.

With regards to liberation, I believe it to be an absence of restraint from another party (in the case of feminism, the other party is most generally men), which is most certainly a wonderful state of being. However, it has occurred to me that many believe it also to be an absence of restraint on the part of oneself. In the wonderland of free-flowing booze and beautiful girls that is UCSB, it pains me to see this sense of liberation translate to a lack of responsibility. In the interest of agency, girls spend their weekends basking in the power-tool hum of Skrillex, or the monotonic rhymes of Drake's misogynistic "The Motto," and hit the high seas of hedonism with Captain Morgan and Sailor Jerry. Any given girl might be introduced to Captain and Sailor's first mate, Joe Douchebag, and, in a moment of vulnerability, say yes to his proposal of spending the night at his place, which is acceptable in the hook-up culture our microcosm of a college community has cultivated. Come daylight hours, she may undertake what is known as the "walk of shame." I am sure my peers are familiar with the term, but it most certainly does not take a college student to realize that the "walk of shame" does not constitute any sort of agency or liberation whatsoever.

What I am getting at is with liberation comes a need for responsibility, and with excess comes consequences. This brief rumination from a 21st century Archie Bunker is by no means an imperative. I am in no position to tell others what to do, nor do I have the ability to know what is best for my peers. I also cannot say that this description of a "typical" night at UCSB applies to everyone. This is merely a suggestion, not to remain an ingenue throughout college, but simply to consider moderation as another option, or choice, if you will, in the interest of agency. Take control of your evenings, which, in my opinion, is true liberation. Frankly, I believe you should do whatever you want – just as long as it's done cautiously and consciously.



"sex"



"love"



"romance"

... according to

Google

by Becca Loux

Hopelessly In Desire

By: Dahlton Grover

Sweet sensations, deep desire
Or is this just fire?
To soon to know
So lets just start slow

I simply couldn't resist
After we first kissed
But now I'm so afraid,
That I may have strayed
What will they think
If I'm no longer pink?

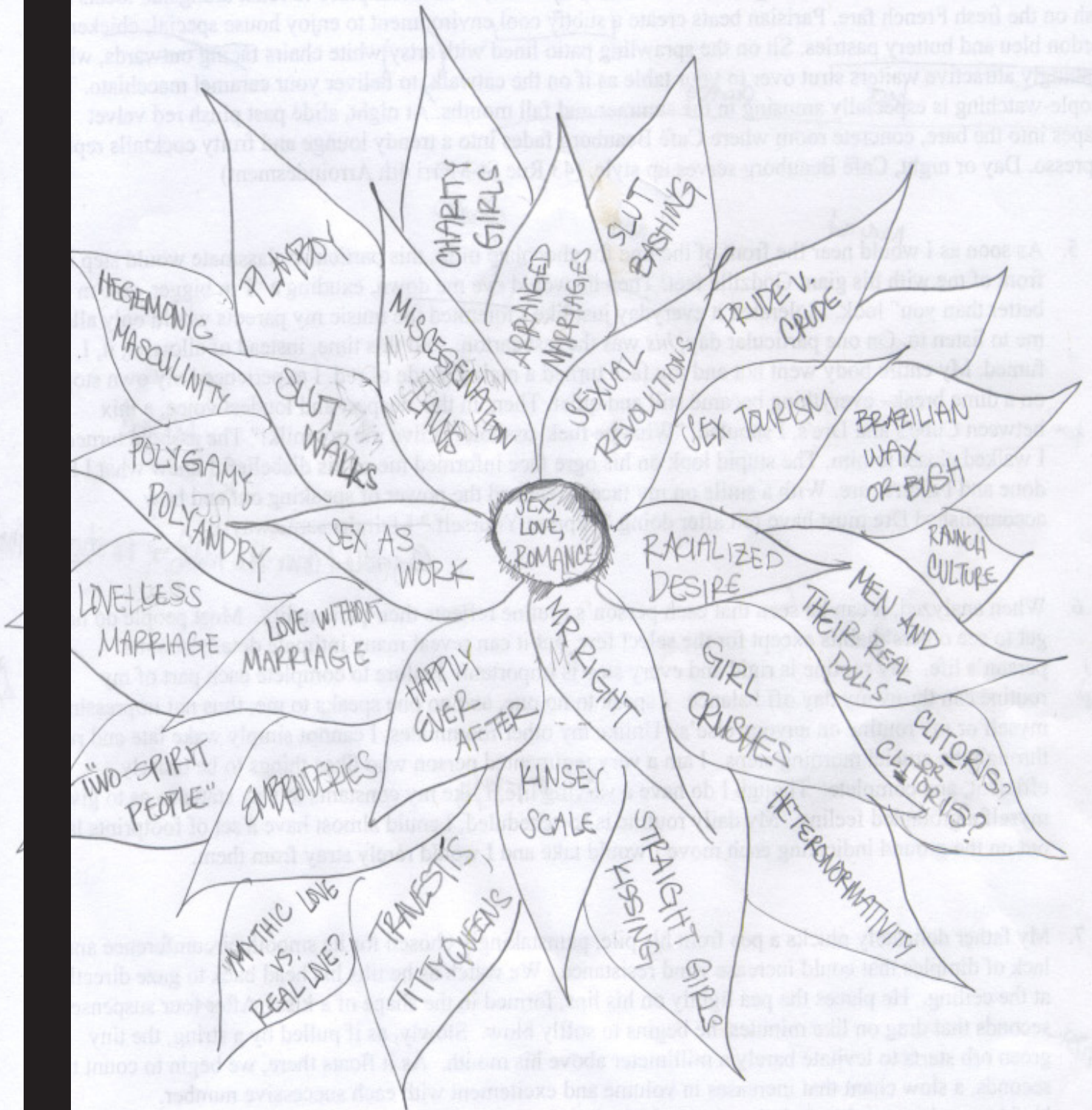
Perhaps I shouldn't worry
Though reality is getting blurry...
Now I'm extremely conflicted!
Why must we be restricted?

Danger and pleasure
Don't give away your treasure
That's what I've always been told
But now I feel so bold
So, what to do now
Listen or break my vow?

I don't know what to do,
Do you?

6/7/12 6:01 PM





"DeFlowering Sex, Love and Romance"

by Liv Cvitanic

Liv Cvitanic

VOCAL FRY

BY PETERSON PHAM

The following is a work of fiction. Any resemblance to persons living or dead is purely coincidental.

Especially you, "Andrew". Bitch.

Dean and Charlie are best friends. Although separated by distance as they go to different schools, they catch up online through Facebook. This is their conversation about love, sex, and romance.

Dean Vo is 20-years-old. He is gay. He is also a hopeless romantic; and in his eyes, he is still a virgin (he's saving it for someone "special"). Dean's boyfriend (well, now his ex), Andrew, recently broke up with him because he wasn't willing to reciprocate effort into their relationship. Andrew S. Sanchez, who recently came out 7 months ago, self-identifies as a slut. Naïve and young, he wanted to find comfort in a simple relationship. However, priorities allowed Andrew to selectively recall that he was in a long distance relationship with Dean when it was convenient. The waste-of-time seems to not be phased by the end of his first relationship, and continues with his life as the campus slut. It was Dean's second romance; he suffered through a month. His previous boyfriend, Ivan, (his first love) broke up with him due to distance and an insecurity of a concrete future together. Dean is still bitter about love and is remorseful about hopefulness in romance, but he's getting over it...or at least he thinks so. At the moment, Dean doesn't want to see anything that reminds him of Andrew.

Dean's best friend, Charlie Figueroa is a year younger. He is also gay and identifies as a hopeless romantic, too. After his first (and only) relationship with Eric, he is not

ready to completely be in a commitment again. In other words, he likes a good dick...especially the ones on the good-looking boys (Charlie finds extreme importance in aesthetics). This story begins as Dean and Charlie excitingly plan their week leading up the BadToro Music Festival, doing so instead of each writing their essays.

Dean and Charlie are best friends. This is their conversation about love, sex, and romance.



C: I made out with that girl at the dance! She's so cute! One of the few lipstick lesbians here.



D: She's cute! ...I think I'm bisexual. I cuddled with a girl this weekend...

C: LMAO! I kissed three girls and apparently bit two.

D: Nasty ho.

C: Hahah, right!

D: UGH. FUCK THIS SHIT.



Joe Cool I love my new school, you can only find the very best people here.



Dean Vo I mean you did meet me there, so I guess it's partially correct. ;D



Joe Cool mmm, I was talking about Andrew S. Sanchez. But yes, you are also in the picture. :D

C: Who the fuck is this bottom? I've seen him in y'all's Facebook newsfeed and comments and shit.

D: In coming freshman. I'm deleting my comment.

C: Uh... gross... Thirsty much.. Like seriously...

D: I'll pretend that didn't happen. Apparently, Andrew was helping the kid with a family problem, which is nice, but thirsty ass bitch would be doing anything but what he should be.

C: I know right... Ugh... so over all this shit and thirstiness.

D: OVER IT!

C: And like Sally (Charlie's "other" bestie) and I always say... "Over it and onto the next."

D: Onto the better.

C: So... the shirt I was going to wear for BadToro doesn't look the way I want it. It was this super gay girl tye-dye fringed, but very scandalous, tank top I got from the girl's aisle. We should make some tye-dye though!

D: We can! I was expecting to wear tye-dye, too.

C: Omg, I just realized BadToro is next weekend! Gasp!

D: I know! We got to get through this weekend first...

C: <http://img.sumsite.com/hotguy-intyedyeshirt.jpg>

I LIKE HIS TYE DYE SHIRT!

D: Oh, yum... You can have the shirt. I'll take him.

C: DEAL! I'll never pass up a cute shirt!

D: ...ironic.

But, I do really like the shirt.

C: Hella scandalous!

D: ...You don't mind me venting to you right?

C: Nope, I'm free tonight. Vent all you want!

D: So, I posted the quote that you and Sally say on my Tumblr (a blogging website).

Andrew liked it, and went on to post... "Never felt this way for someone before ...

with so little said you've said alot.

Only takes those few words to get the butterflies going. "Hey you." #Sitting #Waiting #Wishing #ASK ME ALREADY "

I'm fine, but I can't help to feel like... I don't know? ...feel something.

C: I think everything you're feeling is

all so raw and tender still. And since you and Andrew kind of parted with him not saying much, it just hurts even more. And the audacity of him to say and do little things is irking you. And when he's going out of his way for others, you question, "Why couldn't he do that for me?" You didn't want nor ask for much to be pleased, like that simple "Hey you" would have been fine.

I just think he's so naive and does not know what the fuck he wants, so he's going through that "slut phase." However, I am left to wonder why he told his friend he had crushes on the both of us. I'm confused by him and guys in general. Like honestly, Dean, my ex keeps texting me. And I'm just like "Why? Why are you doing this to me? Why don't/didn't you want to be with me?" But then I sit there and think about how young Eric is and how we are too and how we don't want to settle down just yet... but I think that's just me being hopeless and justifying why he left me.

D: Can I just be straight and marry someone to get this over with?

C: Ugh, hetero lives are so complicated though.

D: I get the part where I ask, "Why couldn't you do that for me?" and the fact that he's naive... but I don't understand why we both are left feeling hopeless and have to justify our own feelings of being alone and abandoned, and to keep longing for what could have been.

C: Ugh, gurrlllll, I just thought of that today. My birthday would have been a year anniversary with Eric. Then BadToro would have been an anniversary, as well: it would be a year later that we both went to Bad-Toro together.

Why must we suffer?

D: I felt so empowered just saying that I'm over Andrew, but the fact that he liked that I said it... I don't know, maybe I felt as though my power was just absorbed, and taken away again. And on top of that, him

showing that he's "moving on" so quickly takes more power away from me.

C: Yeah, I think it's that! You were getting over Andrew, but he's not giving you time to completely heal. /-: I mean, if you truly "loved" him and were over him, you'd be able to be happy with seeing him happy. That's according to my housemate, something she told me today.

D: But I don't like the idea that he's happier than me, as selfish as that sounds. I think I'm also upset 'cause I don't see him mourning the loss of something that could have been great. Maybe I want to see him suffer.

C: Ugh, yes! You suffered in the relationship and are suffering now out of it.

D: I don't deserve this.

He didn't deserve me.

UGH. Life is suffering.

C: He didn't deserve you.

He didn't know how to appreciate you.

D: I wish he knew that.

C: You have so much to offer as a boyfriend, and I don't think he ever saw it. I know Ivan did, but I don't know what happened there... distance maybe.

But I do know one thing for sure, you give and give and give but don't receive.

D: That's so true.

My mom told me this would happen in my life...that I'd give but I won't get anything back.

C: Mommas always know best. /-: I still believe there's hope out there, though.

It's like my last clinging onto being a romantic.

D: I want it to be in hand's reach.

My hand's reach.

C: Is it Bernard (someone who's been talking to Dean)? Since he's so close?

D: He could be.

C: Maybe's he's been right in front of you all along?

D: This right now could also be my

last clinging onto being a romantic. I've been thinking about just getting rid of romance, "losing it", and that all I am right now is the last of my naivety.

But then, I keep thinking that it's not the end.

And I'm so conflicted and torn between the two options. I just don't want to regret anymore.

C: I feel like you shouldn't regret, I feel it's also all in the experience.

You're learning what you like, what you want, what works, what doesn't, your limits, and so on. I feel you should, in the end, try to take this all as a learning experience. And ultimately grow out of that "naivety."

D: Should I be associating my virginity with naivety? I still feel like I do through my little mentee: he's really innocent. He's a hopeless romantic too, and he keeps me in check with everything. But even so, I'm not sure what naivety really is anymore, and I can't tell if I am.

C: Maybe there's a reason he came into your life and you need to listen to those closest to you. I think we go into these relationships with all of our hopeless romantic ideologies without really thinking things through, thinking if something is really possible, and thinking if is this something we really want.

I feel like I'm barely understanding that... and that's why I'm shutting myself out from dating anyone. I know I'm not ready to commit to something just yet. I have other things to worry about: school and my family are my main priority.

D: That word "priority" again... I think that's what I need to do: reprioritize. I don't need these emotions. I won't hide them away, but maybe I'm not supposed to care as much as I am right now.

It's like what Roman (Dean and Charlie's mutual friend) told me when I first met him after being broken up with Ivan: I was asking him if I should get a Grindr (a mobile app to meet guys), and he told me that

I should be talking to friends, the ones closest to me to build that relationship, rather than trying to find something new and foreign. Grindr would just keep my mind busy, not happy, and it won't give me time to heal.

I think I should just get away from all thoughts of Andrew, and be surrounded by thoughts of friends. And maybe take things slow with Bernard. Real slow, if anything even happens.

C: Yes, definitely! Try to purge yourself of anything that will bring your ex into mind. Dean, I didn't talk to my ex until about half a year later until I felt as though I was ready, and I still can't take it and it's almost a year now.

Use Bernard as a distraction, if need be, and if something happens, it happens. But be careful with using him as a rebound.

D: Bernard won't be a distraction though. He'll help me feel better, maybe he'll act as a catalyst into something, but he won't be used as a tool to get over someone.

I swear. I won't use anyone as a toy.

C: Perfect! I love and appreciate your ethics and how true you are.

D: I'll just forget "him", and remember who I am, who I was, and who I should be and want to be.

UGH. Thanks for talking it out with me.

C: You are stronger than yesterday, my dear. Remember that. And you have so much more to offer than "he" ever will. As fucked up as that sounds, I feel like Andrew is just so naive and is going into this spiral of queerness that is going to get too messy for him. And he'll soon realize what an amazing person he lost. And fuck it, we're still single, bitch! And I'm always here for you. Even if I'm 219 miles away from you. I just looked that up.

D: I fucking love you, Charlie. Always unconditional.

And through the thick and thin. Whether that be dicks or troubles or good times. :)

C: Hahahaha, Imma cry! (: You's my gurrlllll.

D: I'll just tear up a little bit. We all

deserve that once in a while.

C: Uh... yes! We need to be able to recognize our emotions and what we're feeling at times. Know when to suppress them and know then it's good to release them, in healthy ways, of course.

D: I'll deal with that, too. But right now...I'm deal with my essay, k, boo?

C: Ugh, me too! Mine's due on Thursday, but it needs to be bomb. It's for my queer class!

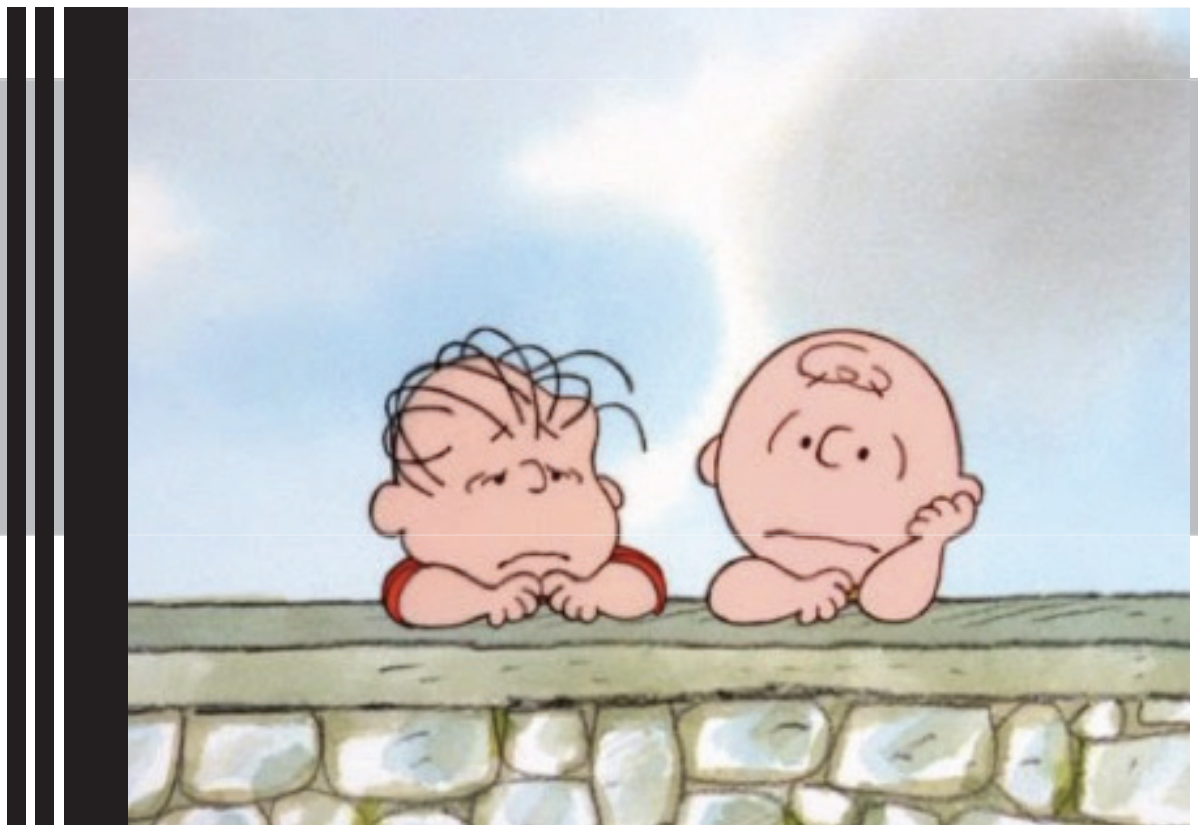
Good luck to the both of us! #SelfRetention

D: Good luck, love.

*"Me, Myself, and I,
that's all I got in the end...
that's what I found out."*

Dean and Charlie go on to try writing their essay, listening to Beyoncé for some self-lovin'.

Dean today is a lot happier. He's still single, hence technically alone, but never feels lonely.



Ally.

by Olivia Honowitz

I'm a girl. I'm attracted to guys.
As in male, men, penis. Preferably with panache.
But I love gays. I am sincerely humbled by their struggle.
I want to support, I'm ready to help.
Ok so I'm "pro-gay."
But "pro-gay" sounds so political.
Hmm well, I have plenty of gay friends.
Ok, so as they say on Sex and the City, I'm a fag hag.
Wait, that's way too offensive. Ok, I'm a... Political Lesbian!
Sweet now I don't feel like such an outsider.
But this isn't the 80's.
And I don't want to be heteronormative, homonormative, homophobic, or reinforce compulsory heterosexuality in any way.
I need something all-inclusive. Pansexual. I could go for that.
I could love anyone who has certain qualities that I find lovable.
Except, I don't want to have sex with everyone I love.
Definitely straight. Damn.
But I want to support, I'm ready to help!
What's the name for someone who wants to end hatred, ignorance and oppression and can accept and love any lesbian, gay, trans, or queer individual who comes her way?
Ally.
I like that.

The students of Feminist Studies 150 Honors (Sex, Love and Romance) would like to sincerely thank Professor Leila Rupp for organizing this magazine as well as leading an interesting and lively discussion section to add to the already thought-provoking lectures. We hope you enjoy our work, and continue to critically analyze issues of sex, love and romance in your own lives.

