

free
press

the  sex
issue
2020



letter from the editors

*Hey, I think there's something wrong with this issue...
it doesn't have your hands all over it.*

Thanks for picking up (haha) the annual Free Press Sex Issue! We're so excited to share some fun and flirty pieces our contributors submitted this semester. This issue is all about sexuality, gender, dating, relationships, intimacy... you get the idea. Let's talk about sex, baby.

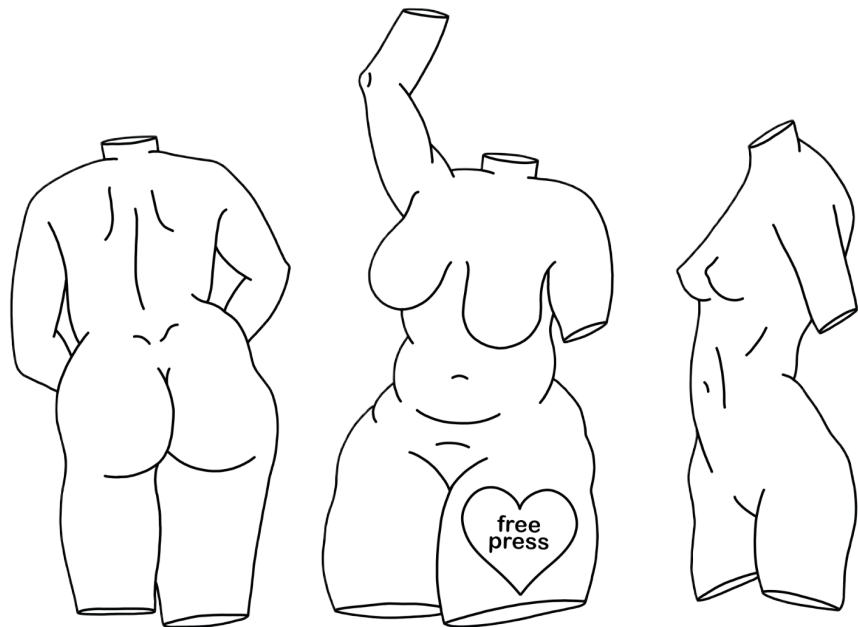
Inside, you'll find everything from tingle-inducing poetry, to informational resources, to relatable personal stories. And the pièce de résistance: the compiled data and stories submitted by you via our Sex Survey. It's time to see what your Binghamton peers are up to in the sheets!

If you think this drawing is cute right now, wait until you see it on a big, sturdy, canvas tote bag that we are selling for only \$12.

DM us on Instagram (or email editor@bufreepress.com) to buy one and we can meet you on campus to pass this beauty on to you!



@bufreepress



art by plamena

meet the e-board

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Thank you to our incredible E-board who work so hard to keep this magazine running, thank you to our lovely student contributors who submitted work to be published, and thank you to our sweet models who posed for the cover.

Feel free to take as many copies as you'd like, and let your friends know about the hottest thing to hit the newsstands (until our next issue, of course)!

Stay sexy,

Jason & Plamena

Do you want to contribute to Free Press? We are always looking for new writers, poets, artists, graphic designers and photographers. Email editor@bufreepress.com and we'll make sure you get the memo about our upcoming workshops and meetings. The full color version of this issue is available online at binghamtonfreepress.com!

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queer lingo quiz!

What's a U-Haul lesbian?

- a. A lesbian who moves on too quick
- b. A lesbian who knows how to drive
- c. A lesbian who will move in after two months
- d. A lesbian who works for U-Haul

What does it mean to Kiki?

- a. Eating kiwis
- b. Having a good party and spilling tea
- c. Having sex
- d. Doing drugs

Who/What is a Bottom?

- a. The Shakespeare character
- b. Shawn Mendes
- c. The one carrying the relationship
- d. The one receiving in sex

What is a Twink?

- a. A small, hairless rat
- b. A slender, hairless gay man
- c. Gays who love to wink
- d. Someone who likes twinkies

What are poppers?

- a. The best thing in the universe
- b. A life changing sex-drug
- c. The feeling that the world is going to end
- d. All of the above

What's a Pillow Princess?

- a. A girl who only receives and never gives
- b. A lesbian with way too many pillows
- c. A girl who calls you princess in the sheets
- d. A needlepoint pillow of Princess Diana

What does it mean to have "Top Energy"?

- a. Having a dominant, assertive aura
- b. Being way too energetic
- c. Being the head bitch in charge
- d. Always being on the top of your game

What does Hunty mean?

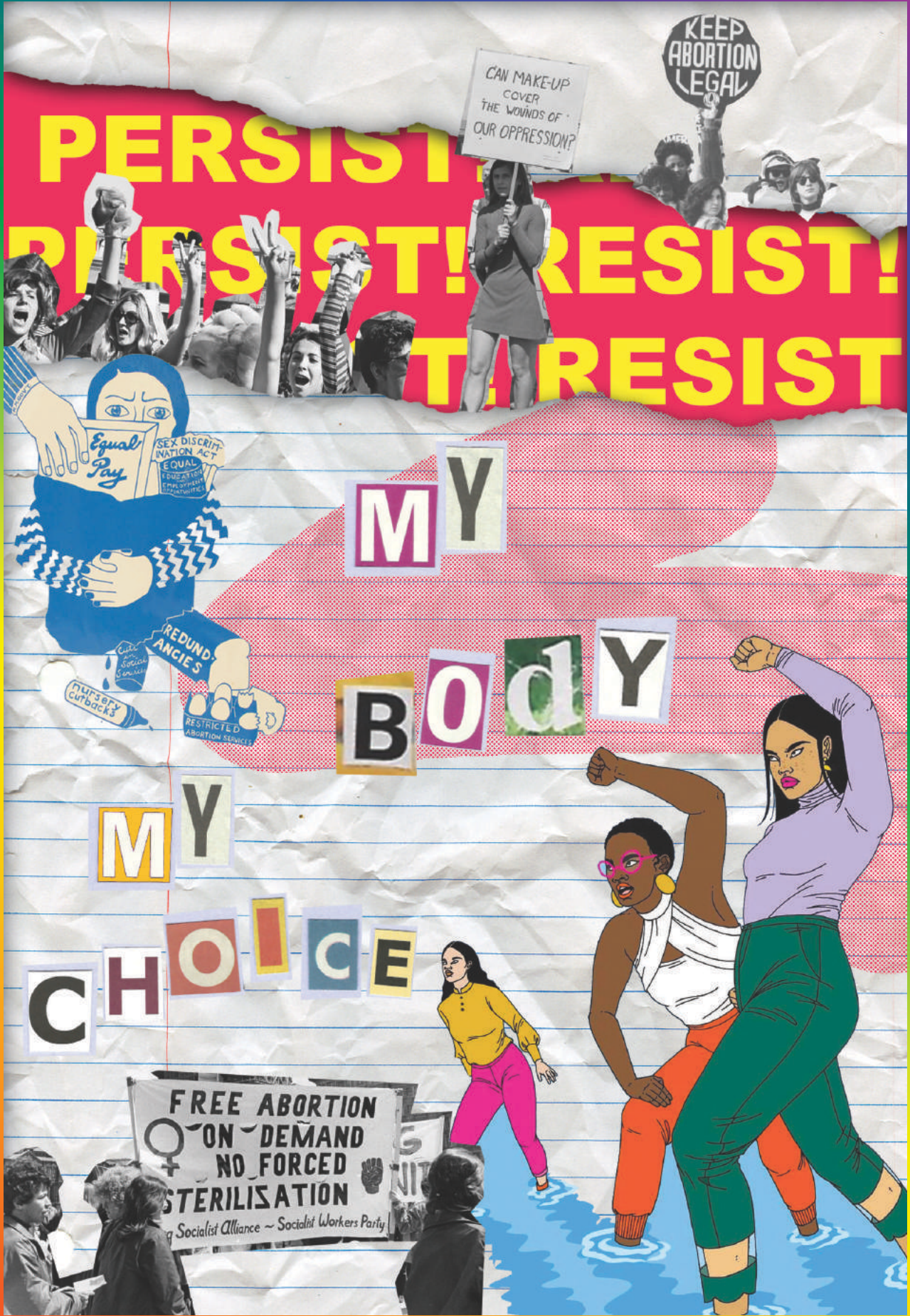
- a. A top looking for its bottom
- b. Another way to say Auntie
- c. A term of endearment, combining cunt + honey
- d. It's a LGBTQ+ makeup line

What does "heterrifying" mean?

- a. Alarmingly heterosexual
- b. A gay man who is terrified
- c. Literally is that even a word
- d. That is not a word

What is a Bicon?

- a. A genetic coding in gay people
- b. Elon Musk's new electric bicycle
- c. An iconic bisexual
- d. The neuron in the brain that helps produce homosexuality



Collage by Laurie Azoulai. Image Credits: Instagram - @lauracallaghanillustration

sexual resources *(in binghamton)*

Family Planning (like Planned Parenthood)

117 Hawley Street, Binghamton NY, 13901

fpscny.org

(607) 723-8306

- Many contraceptive options
 - Consultations for PrEP
 - \$15 Plan B*
- HIV, STI & pregnancy testing
 - Cancer screenings

STAP: M4 Project

208 State Street, Binghamton NY, 13901

(607) 651-9175

- Free rapid HIV testing

STAP Prevention Services (Main Office)

22 Riverside Drive Binghamton NY, 13905

stapinc.org/services

(607) 798-1706

- Provides communities of color with free HIV & STI testing
 - PrEP navigation
 - Free condoms & other prevention services

On Campus: Decker Health Services

- Free condoms & lube packets
- HIV, STI & pregnancy testing
 - \$20 Plan B*

Thank you to Women's Student Union for compiling these resources!

**A Note on Plan B: The morning after pill decreases in effectiveness for people over 165lb. A double dose may be necessary. Do your research and make an informed decision for your individual body.*



DATING APPS:

5m ago

Superficial or Super-helpful?

by Amanda Doulos



Tinder, Bumble, Plenty of Fish, OkCupid, Hinge - we've heard of them all. These apps are gaining popularity with young adults, especially in a college setting, and shedding the social stigmas that used to surround them. Even Facebook has come out with Facebook Dating, just in case you need access to more hot singles in your area. So what is the deal with this phenomenon? Are they really for dating or just hookups? Well, that depends. With Tinder, there's a wide variety of people with different wants. It may take some effort to wade through all the ones you don't want and get to the ones you do, but it can work. By making your goal clear in your bio, you should eliminate a lot of people who don't want the same thing- be it a relationship, hookup, or friend with benefits. Bumble especially makes this easy. On Bumble, there are some pre-set likes when you set up your bio, making it easy to explain what you want. The most important thing is to just be honest about what you want; it's a lot easier than trying to change someone's mind. In the case that you're unsure of what you want, that's okay too, and still just as important to communicate to people.

Why are dating apps looked down on so much? Most people have no problem telling their friends they met a new guy on tinder but telling your family at Thanksgiving is uncomfortable. The younger generations, which are the ones using these apps, fear judgement from older people who think that in person is the only way to find a significant other. In college you meet so many people online. In fact, you can find people to dorm with based on their housing profile online. So a lot of the stigma surrounding these apps is fear that other people, particularly family, won't approve. As our lives have become increasingly internet-based, it makes sense that our dating lives will follow this trend.

These apps make it easier for you to find exactly what you want. People can have a hard time

starting relationships, especially ones that are casual. You may not want to start a relationship with a friend for fear of the dynamic shift affecting your friendship, but starting one with a stranger can be intimidating and uncomfortable. Dating apps really can be the answer to avoiding uncomfortable friendship and stranger pursuits and uncomfortable stranger pursuits. In today's age, it can be hard to just start talking to people around campus; a lot of people are always looking at their phones, and going up to a stranger can be unnerving. Apps can alleviate that pressure and make talking to people feel much easier. Apps also allow you to control how fast or slow you take it with someone. You can get to know them as much or little as you want before meeting them. That being said, it's always important to be safe when meeting up with people. It's best to tell a trusted friend where you're going and who you're meeting, and you can even share your location with them to make sure someone knows exactly where you are. Meeting in a public place rather than entering an unfamiliar private environment is always safer.

If you don't know what you want and are looking to explore, apps also give you access to a variety of people looking for a variety of things. You can meet many different types of people in a low-stakes situation. If things don't work out, there's a good chance you'll never have to see them again. When I started college, I was getting over someone from back home. I wasn't sure what I wanted, but I loved meeting new people. Lots of my friends were using Tinder and convinced me to try it. Over a few weeks, I met plenty of great guys.

It's perfectly fine to meet people in person, but apps should not be ruled out just because they're apps. Don't be afraid to give them a try instead of just walking up to someone at a frat party.






**how to spice up
ur long distance
love life**



**by
Masha
Morozov**



Having been in a long-distance relationship for the last month or so, I've decided to share some of my secrets that help spice up my love life. Some may seem obvious, some may seem corny, and some may seem absurd. Whatever it may seem like, it sure works for me.

sexy photo shoots

These can be nudes, or they can just be sexy photos alluding to certain acts ... whatever you're comfortable with, your partner is sure to love them. And if you want to give your partner a pick-me-up? Send it at any time of day (maybe when they're working) ... though it might be best to send these with invisible ink ... unless you live on the wild side ;)

facetime sex

You've heard of phone sex? Ring ring, FaceTime sex calling! Don't have FaceTime? Make it a Skype Sex session. Give your partner's inner voyeur a little treat, and talk dirty. Masturbating together over the phone can be a cute way to give each other pleasure, even from so far away. It's not sex sex but, you work with what you've got!


send love letters

While this may seem corny, it sure means a lot whenever you receive a handwritten love letter. Want some extra spice? Make it a "sext" letter!

plan a trip



Plan a short (or long) trip to surprise your partner. We've got two breaks folks, use them well. *You know what's sexier than all those things?*

sexting



Speaking of sexting, why not do that? It's fun, it's easy, and it'll get to your partner within seconds! Make it as hot and heavy as you want, as long as you're having as much fun with it as your partner's getting pleasure out of it!

communication



Y'all gotta communicate and agree on what you want! And then, phone sex.

OnlyFans:

If you have any internet presence, you've probably heard about OnlyFans accounts, camming websites, and premium Snapchats. If anything, you might have recently taken notice of the 20 year old model, Kaylen Ward, otherwise known as the "Naked Philanthropist." Kaylen became the first ever OnlyFans creator to make national headlines after she raised an estimated \$1 million for the Australian Bushfire Relief by selling her nudes on the internet. For comparison, Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos- who is worth \$117 billion- only donated around \$690,000 to the cause.

Kaylen's rise to fame shows us just how influential digital sex work has become. With its rapidly expanding rate, I believe it's the perfect time to have a conversation about the ways internet-based sex work is changing how we consume sex and bodies, and most importantly, how sex work has the ability to set us free.

After hearing about Kaylen's massive success, you might be wondering how these platforms work and just how much money you can make on them. Maybe you've even thought about making an OnlyFans or a premium Snapchat, yourself. I know I have. Basically, an OnlyFans creator sets a monthly subscription rate or they can create multiple month package rates for their "fans" to access their photos and videos. The monthly subscription rate is commonly around \$10-\$25, but can be as high as you would like. So let's just say you have 100 fans at a subscription rate of \$15/month- you could be making upwards of \$1,500 a month- and that's not including extra tips that fans can give. On top of that, many creators also have a link available

to an amazon wishlist, leaving it open to fans to send something a little more specific- you know, if they're into that type of thing. Premium Snapchat accounts work similarly, except Onlyfans accounts seem to be a little more secure, since the Onlyfans website is designed for the safe and reliable transfer of money straight to the bank account.

Though sex work constitutes an incredibly diverse field of work, I think it's safe to say that women involved in sex work simultaneously receive high amounts of praise and hate for their work. It's absolutely no secret that slut-shaming women is an enterprise of its own. Young girls can't go to school in a tank top without being singled-out and harassed for showing their oh-so-sexy shoulders, sleeping with multiple partners is treated as womanly blasphemy, and even women

who are breastfeeding are supposedly asking for attention as they 'flash' their life-sustaining breasts in public. Simply put, women can hardly wear anything, date anyone, or take pleasure in themselves without at some point hearing that magical word. S-L-U-T. It comes in different phrases and forms, but if you listen closely enough, it's always there.

Where there is slut-shaming, there is also always the inescapable consumption of women's bodies. From the minute a young girl first starts to develop breasts, her body becomes an object for consumption by others. This is a truth all women live with. We all know that feeling in your gut when you get cat-called on the street, that feeling of sickness when your DM becomes haunted by an unwarranted dick pic, and that self-conscious sweating that begins when you become aware of

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THE NEW AGE OF SEX WORK

by Karaleigh Saar

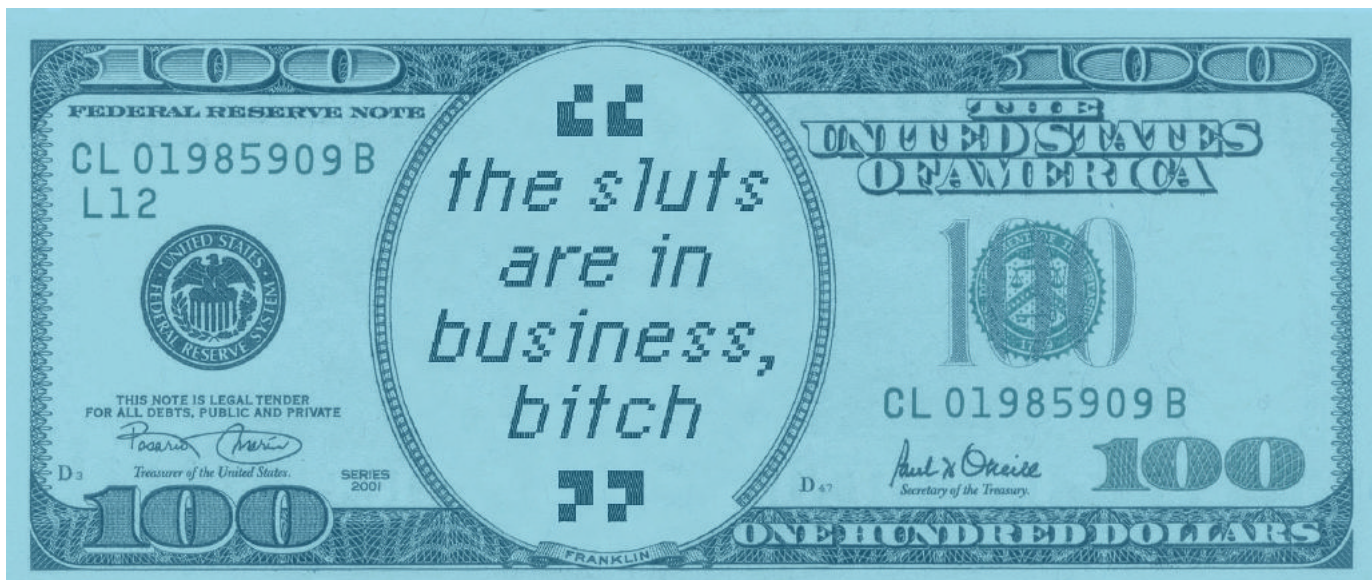
how your body is being touched or looked at in a public space. People can't get enough of the female body and I mean...it's pretty great but come on, let me take the subway in peace! That being said, the new age of sex work is so spectacular because, for the first time ever, women are able to decide completely autonomously how their bodies will be consumed and at the same time, they are often making enough money via these sex work platforms to financially take care of themselves and their families. Some may even make enough to donate to charitable causes on a larger scale, just like Kaylen did.

Of course, not everyone will make millions on Onlyfans, but for some, the website has become not only their prime source of income, but also their savior. It's not a site solely for young women paying off college loans, either. OnlyFans has truly become a safe online porn conglomerate where everyone is welcome and able to make some coin. Take for example a creator, Michelle, who goes by TerryTownGal on OnlyFans. Michelle is not your typical idea of a 'pornstar'. She is 68 years old and struggles with chronic illness. However, through OnlyFans, Michelle has been able to support both herself and her disabled son, while at the same time creating content that she admits to really enjoy.

It's with people like Michelle and her son in

mind that I urge readers to really think about who their porn habits are benefiting. The majority of us probably access most of our porn from free and exploitative sites such as PornHub. PornHub and other sites like it are full of videos that have been posted without consent, there's upsetting amounts of porn that fetishize extremely young girls, and most of the money being made is going straight into the pockets of producers and porn company execs instead of the actors and actresses who get passed around like pawns. With OnlyFans, the money goes straight into the pockets of those who create, and creators don't have to feel forced to do anything they're not totally at ease with. Plus, you can even make custom requests of creators that you follow. It's a win-win situation.

The way I see it, it's super empowering to be able to take your body that has been oversexualized and consumed against your will for the majority of your life and say that if you want to consume me, then you are also going to pay my bills. In an age where nudity is not only celebrated but also expected amongst women, it's invigorating to see women using their bodies as tools to put themselves ahead in life. Remember, when you pay for access to an OnlyFans account, you could directly be helping that person pay their school tuition, their medical bills, their rent. It's 2020 and the sluts are in business, bitch.



on realizing i'm a lesbian



You're 14 and your boyfriend won't stop making out with you, you make him set a timer for 20 minutes to leave you alone before going near you again. He respects the timer and you play Fifa. You keep staring at the clock waiting for your parents to pick you up, thinking of excuses to leave early. You break up with him soon after and think, "well maybe I'm just not ready for a relationship."

A while later, you and your guy friend consider being friends with benefits. You still hate relationships, so FWB seems like a good deal. The first few times you guys hook up, you freak out, and you guessed it—more excuses! Then it, *The Sex™*, happens and it's not too bad, but it wasn't something you want to do again anytime soon. Whatever, you think, girls don't like losing their virginity, right? Isn't that common? Your hangouts with your FWB are full of anxiety and prayers for time to move faster. There's a clock on your bedside table, and you stare at it whenever he's over.

On the other side of things, you've known you were into girls for a while now, and you finally decide to come out as bisexual. As far as you know, there are no queer girls at your school, and after a while you're feeling like you aren't gay enough. You've created criteria for yourself that you cannot meet, a bar you cannot reach. Your sexual experiences aren't gay enough, somehow the bi part of your bisexuality is invalidated

by your heterosexual experiences. You also don't look gay enough, how would the WLW find you when you don't own any flannel!? You like how you dress, but you don't look the part you're playing and that makes you feel like you don't deserve to call yourself gay.

An exchange student starts at your high school and it's obvious you like her. You hang out a lot and don't even realize she's flirting with you until she just straight up tells you that you're "fucking oblivious." Soon after, you guys are making out and you're not looking at the clock or thinking of excuses to leave. You both know that she has to go back soon but neither of you want to talk about it. You hang out every day and you're stealing glances at the clock to make sure you two still have time. She writes you a letter with memories and songs that you loved together. She goes back home and you miss her.

A little while later, you and a coworker develop a friendship. You know he likes you, he's not subtle. You're uncomfortable, again staring at a clock while you two hang out. He asks you out after you've been drinking and you say fuck it. At this point you're 18 and most things you see about hetero relationships is a trope about how men hate their wives and the wives tolerate their husbands. So this is normal, you think. I don't actually like who I'm with, just like everyone else. You hate sex, you hate your boyfriend, and

you break it off a few months later, swearing off relationships indefinitely.

A few years later, you meet a girl in college. You hang out every day, and it gets late before you realize the sun even went down. You turn off your phone so you can't see the time. It's been a month and you definitely like her, and you think she likes you too. Her hair reminds you of Goldilocks and every day she lets you pick your favorite curl. You're too scared to express your feelings because what if this is just another part of the cycle? You might like them, you date them, you hate them, you break up. Relationships leave you feeling like you're a bad person, you're wasting their time. You're having an identity crisis because everyone else is motivated to find a relationship, why aren't you? You've explained all of this to her because, well, you care about her, and you care about the friendship you've built. She says let's try it anyways.

Your first date is at an aquarium in Toronto. Neither of you realize how much time has passed until the security guard tells you they're closing. You're at dinner drinking wine and thinking about how different and right this feels, but that anxious knot in your chest doesn't go away. She asks you to be her girlfriend, and you excitedly and anxiously say yes.

So far, any experience with sex has been less than fun, to say the least. You can't stop thinking about how scared you are for your first time together. Does anyone else in the world feel like this? Or was it just you?

The first time was a head scratching, unbelievable experience. Sex could be fun! Who knew? Not just fun, but actually really awesome.

The next 10000 times confirmed that fact, and another I had always hoped to be

true: That there is nothing wrong with me, not physiologically and not mentally. I like sex. I just don't like sex with men. Not just sex; I don't like relationships with men, either. More importantly, I love all of those things with women.

The feeling of finally belonging is a beautiful one, especially after believing you didn't throughout your whole life. But with my liberation came anger. Time is precious and I have spent too much of it staring at a clock wishing the minutes away. It's pointless to sit here and speculate on what I would have done with that time if I got it back but how can I not? It's too tempting a thought.

With liberation comes regret. I regret how I felt about those past boyfriends who did nothing wrong but try to love me when I just couldn't let them. I couldn't love them back, and did that deserve my hate? Misplaced anger was central to all of my relationships: me angry at them for something they didn't even know. I would love to say that I'm at a place in my life where I could reach out to them all and apologize for all of the excuses I made and the way I can only imagine I made them feel, but I'm not.

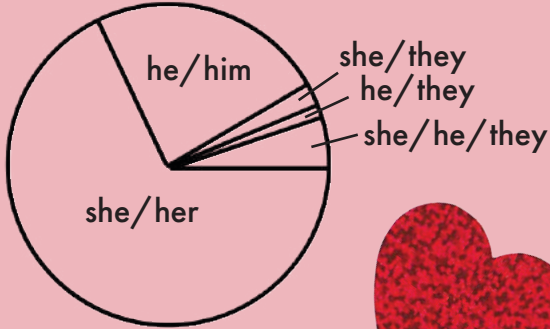
Identity is a process, and it's okay that I didn't know I was a lesbian right away. But part of that process is forgiveness. I have to forgive myself for taking time to figure my sexuality out, and also for being a shell of who I truly was along the way.

My early relationships were spent setting timers and wishing moments away. So what can I say on realizing I'm a lesbian? I say that the L's in the LGBTQ+ are a beautiful and supportive community of people I've found myself a part of, and that I vow to spend the rest of my time searching for the moments when I wish for time to stand still.

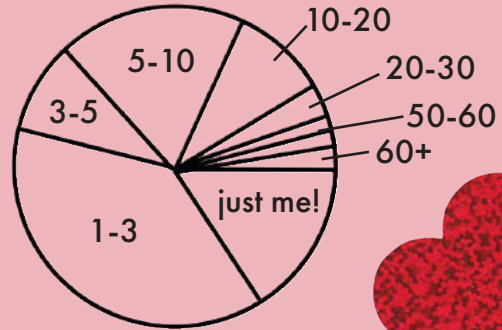
SEX SURVEY results

Nearly 150 of you responded. So here's a cute summary.

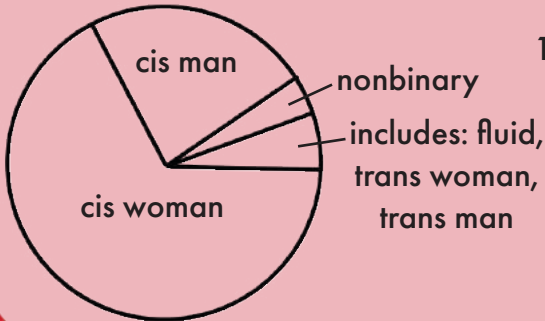
Let's get your pronouns!



Not to sound like your gyno, but how many sexual partners have you had?



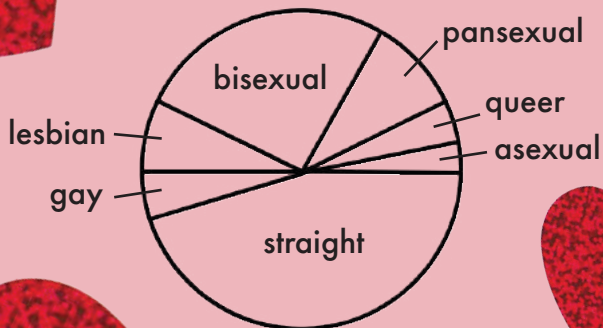
Gender is a construct, but you would describe your gender identity as:



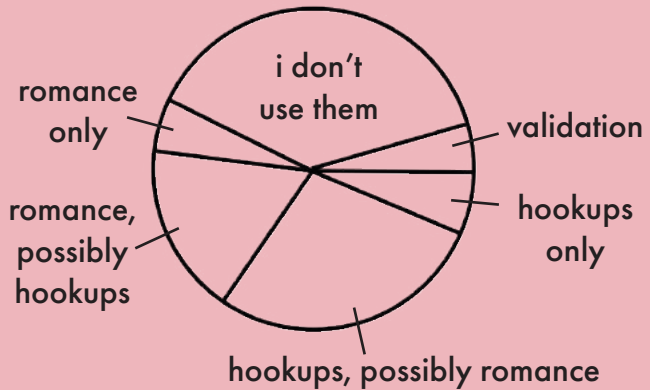
If you're a virgin, that's cool. Is it an active choice for you?

2 people said: Yes, waiting for marriage
 6 people said: Yes, I just don't want to have sex
 19 people said: No, I wan't to have sex but just haven't found the right person

You would describe your sexual orientation as:



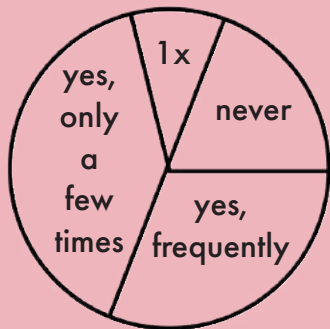
Why do you use dating apps?



Which dating apps do you use?

75 people said: Tinder
 25 people said: Bumble
 12 people said: Hinge
 7 people said: Grindr
 44 people said: I don't use dating apps.

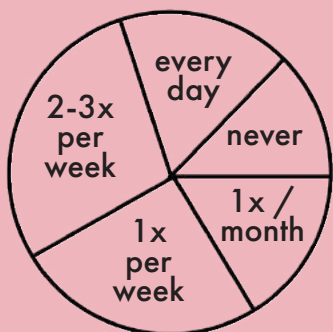
Sexting: have you done it?



Would you say it's easy to find a sexual partner in Binghamton?



How often do you masturbate?



Where do you get your porn from?

The majority of people said Pornhub, but there were also many mentions of Bellesa, Redtube, OnlyFans, Private Snaps, and XVideos. Tip: Bellesa is really focused on women's pleasure!

Would you ever consider making your own porn?

73 people said: Nah, not for me.
 7 people said: Yea, that's my dream job!
 46 people said: Maybe, if I could really make some money.

What kinks are you into?

- 77 people said: Dom/Sub
- 70 people said: Choking
- 74 people said: Spanking
- 25 people said: Spitting
- 52 people said: Bondage
- 32 people said: Roleplay
- 33 people said: Daddy/Mommy
- 20 people said: Temperature play
- 13 people said: Voyeurism
- 19 people said: Pegging
- 19 people said: Degradation
- 6 people said: Wax play

Would you ever consider being in an open relationship?

68 people said:
 No, monogamy is the one for me.
 49 people said:
 Yes, depending on the situation
 5 people said:
 Yes, it's the relationship I want
 3 people said:
 Yes, but only cuz my partner wants it

Would you ever consider getting a sugar daddy or mommy?

70 people said:
 No, not for me!
 50 people said:
 Yes, I'm actively searching for one
 4 people said:
 Yes, I already have one

story time

we asked you to tell us your
funniest sex story...

"in the middle of sex, my partner and i fell off of my bed and broke my drying rack full of clothes."

"One time I swallowed cummies on an empty stomach and puked ;-)"

"I was having sex with a guy and he said he was putting on All Star by Smashmouth because 'it's funny.' I guess it was kinda funny."

"My hookup forced me to climb through his basement window so his landlord wouldn't know he was gay."

"Probably desperately trying to clean post co-ital menstrual discharge off of my carseat with a leaf behind an unspecified building on campus."

"I'm a virgin! But once was hooking up with a guy in his house and asked to use his bathroom and got locked inside and the doorknob literally fell out of the door and he started sliding notes underneath the door because his family was asleep so we couldn't talk out loud."

"Accidental Halloweekend orgy with a Garfield costume."

"Once fucked to Fergalicious for 40 mins straight without realizing it was on repeat the entire time, I couldn't listen to that song for months after."

"My boyfriend at the time and I went camping with my best friend and her boyfriend. They were in another tent but both of them left to go night swimming so we decided to get it onnn. He was inside me and before we were about to finish we heard snuffling in the campground. It wasn't our friends. It was actually a bear."

"i once watched shrek with a guy (i know) and

then after the movie finished he was like "that makes me want to kiss someone" and then we hooked up."

"I met him while skinny dipping at the 20 Hawley hot tub during daylight savings one night and proceeded to hum the C major scale on his dick."

"Being reminded every year by Free Press that I am a virgin."

"my boyfriend and I wanted to have sex so we went into the men's bathroom at Whole Foods but someone walked in right after us so I had to stand above the toilet so the person wouldn't see my feet and then my boyfriend had to take a shit..... as I stood above him. Afterwords he didn't want to have sex but I got mad that I had to sneak into the bathroom in the first place so we had sex above a toilet."

"I hooked up with a guy on New Years Eve who was wearing the same outfit as me. We had sex in my friend's roommate's bed and in the end he took my shoes and I took his."

"I didn't realize until after minute man shot his shot that he kept his America socks on. That's right - one sock with stars, the other with stripes. He is now known by my friends (and my mom) by his pseudonym, Captain America. He certainly failed to save the day."

"to summarize, squirting is very real and my boyfriend now calls me his little fountain."

"When I lost my virginity — we were at a hotel and the sun started shining and "You've Got the Magic In Me" started playing on tv (Pitch Perfect) as soon as the magic was in me (lol)."

"a dude ate me out with gum in his mouth and i got a yeast infection."

The hetero-normative assumption *by Masha Morozov*

Until a year ago, I was pretty sure my life partner was going to be someone who identifies as female. Honestly, I was pretty sure since I was ten years old. And, hey, I sure struggled with my sexual identity growing up. My formative years took place during the late 2000s, early 2010s for god's sake. When I met my partner, I began to slowly fall for them, which ultimately resulted in us starting our relationship. My partner is nonbinary and AMAB (assigned male at birth), and that's where the hetero-normative assumption begins.

This isn't an essay asking for pity about my circumstances; for all intents and purposes my relationship makes us appear like a cis-het couple, shielding us from a lot of potential backlash and homophobia.

For example, if we were to visit my home country of Russia, we'd be able to show each other affection without anyone batting an eye, because we look like a hetero couple. On the other hand, though, it can be upsetting in other interactions. My partner is not a cis male; I will correct anyone who misgenders them any and every time. But to the outside eye, it looks as though we're just another straight couple. Whether we're attracted to any other gender is often disregarded because of this assumption. It's usually manageable, until I get to interactions with exes or ignorant friends, most often with the question, "if they can make you cum, how could you consider yourself a lesbian?" I like to think of it this way: if I used toys with previous partners, because we both enjoyed the feeling of penetration, then it shouldn't

be that different from being penetrated by my partner, who does not identify as a cis-male.

In the last year, I've learned a lot more about myself, and have gotten comfortable with where I am now. But I also know how dismissive our queer community can be sometimes of hetero-normatives. Hetero normativity in society means that couples that appear to be cisgender and heterosexual are often looked down upon in queer spaces for similar reasons that I mentioned earlier—they have a "passing" appearance, that has never been "taboo" or outside of societal norms.

Cis-het appearing couples have not had to fight for the right to love each other, or to get married. And if you're queer, you

probably know all too well how annoying it can be when straight people co-opt Pride and use it as an excuse to post pictures on Instagram (I sure hate it!). It's more than understandable why queer communities can be defensive of our spaces when it comes to couples who appear straight, so I guess the message I'm trying to get out is, don't pass judgement too quickly on a cis-het appearing couple, because being nonbinary is not synonymous with looking

**being
nonbinary
is not
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with
looking
androgynous**

androgynous, and their current love life does not dictate their past. And don't be quick to dismiss how they identify - it's a confusing world out there, and we want to spread love, not judgement. What it really comes down to is providing a community that serves as a safe space where people feel comfortable expressing themselves. <3

sex toys: a guide

by Lacey Baretsky

Sex toys! They're not a necessity, but they do help to make a great time even better. But there are so many! How do I know which one to choose? How do I know how to use it? Well, here's your crash course on various sex toys, including information on how they are meant to be used, if they can be used solo or with a partner, and how to use them safely!

Toy: Dildo

What is it?: Phallic-shaped toy, sometimes closely resembling a penis but it doesn't have to. It's often used with vaginas and anuses. It can come in many different colors, styles, and materials.

How do I use it?: It's typically used to penetrate either the vagina or anus. It's your go-to for when you want to be penetrated but don't have a spare penis on hand. It can be used alone for masturbation, and should optimally have a suction cup base so you can play with different positions, but it can also be used with a partner. You can also buy a dildo that is compatible with a harness, usually referred to as a strap-on. This is especially helpful if you or your partner don't have a penis, and still enjoy penetration.

Safety Tips: If you're planning on sharing your dildo with someone else, be sure to use a condom. Using a condom with a dildo can also make for an easier cleanup during periods or when used anally. Clean your dildo regularly, after each use. Make sure to read the information that comes with your dildo, as different dildos have different cleaning instructions.



Toy: Vibrator

What is it?: They are often phallic, but don't have to be. They can be battery operated, rechargeable, or wired. Some newer, more expensive models can be controlled with an app on your phone, which can be especially useful when you have a long-distance partner.

How do I use it?: They are typically used with vaginas, but depending on the type and shape they can also be used with penises and anuses. Rabbit vibrators can be used for penetration, but wand-shaped vibrators can be used to stimulate the clitoris or prostate. Bullet vibrators are small and a great intro-level option for someone who has never had a vibrator; they often come with finger attachments that you can wear like a ring for easy comfort during play, and some cock rings even have space for a bullet vibe. All types of vibrators can be used alone for masturbation, with a partner during sex, or during mutual masturbation.

Safety Tips: This is a product that you should be willing to spend a bit of money on, mostly because it's electronic. Clean it after each use to prevent bacteria build up and keep all your parts happily buzzing.



Toy: Stroker sleeve aka the Fleshlight

What is it?: They are often artificial vaginas or anuses, sometimes flesh-colored, but not always. Some sleeves are encased in a plastic tube that's reminiscent of a flashlight (hence the famous Fleshlight name), but others are open ended sleeves that can be used to further stimulate the penis during oral sex, and there are even some that are cheaper, single-use, egg-shaped masturbators that stretch to accommodate any penis size and shape.

How do I use it?: Used with penises. It's primarily used for masturbation, though you could use it with a partner during mutual masturbation.

Safety Tips: Clean it after each use. If it is a single use toy, dispose of it.



Toy: Cock Ring

What is it?: A ring for your (or your partner's) penis

How do I use it?: It's used to restrict blood flow and make an erection last longer. It can be used with a partner or during masturbation.

Safety Tips: Don't leave it on for too long, usually no longer than 30 minutes. If your penis or your partner's penis starts feeling numb, take it off. Don't get a size that's too tight. Don't fall asleep or be under the influence while wearing it, because it's important to maintain safe blood flow during and after use. Clean it after each use.



Toy: Butt Plug

What is it?: They come in different shapes and sizes, but they most often are phallic with a smaller tip that gets wider towards the bottom. They have a flared base to ensure safe removal.

How do I use it?: Anal penetration. It can be used with a partner or alone. They're often used as a way to introduce sensation for those who want to try anal sex, or they can be used to add anal sensation during fingering, vaginal sex, or oral sex.

Safety Tips: Use plenty of lube. Clean after every use. If this is your first time using a butt plug, start with a smaller size and work your way up.



Impact & Restraint Toys (often associated with BDSM):

General Safety Tips: It's highly recommended that you practice with these before incorporating them into sex – you don't want to hit someone in the eye by accident, or tie a tight knot that hurts and is impossible to undo. Test different speeds, levels of impact, and impact areas with your partner. Try out different areas and positions of restraint. This way, you can learn how your body and your partner's body best receive pleasure, and feel safe about what you're doing. Have a safe word and remember it. Communicate with your partner, not only to make sure they have a good time, but to make sure they're mentally and physically okay.



Toy: Paddle

What is it?: You know those table tennis paddles? Yeah, pretty much that. They can be made from all sorts of materials, including wood or plastic.

How do I use it?: Often used for spanking. It can be used with a partner or by yourself.



Toy: Whips and Floggers

What is it?: Indiana Jones

How do I use it?: The pain from a whip is more intense and it's localized on a small part of your body, while a flogger delivers a less concentrated and wider surface area of pain. These often used with a partner, but floggers in particular can easily be incorporated into masturbation.



Toy: Handcuffs/Rope

What is it?: Handcuffs, sometimes they're fuzzy. Rope. Need I say more?

How do I use it?: Used for restraint. Should only be used with a partner.

Safety Tips: Have a way to quickly get out of the restraints in case of an emergency. Keep scissors close by for rope and make sure you keep the key in a safe, known location when using handcuffs.



Very Honorable Mention: Lube

Lube isn't necessary with every sex toy, but it often makes sex more enjoyable. Whether alone or with a partner, you should always have a bottle of lube on hand. Who wouldn't want to have better sex? It's important to note that there are different types of lubes that can be used for different reasons. Every body is different and every sex toy is different. What may work for someone else, may not work for you. Experiment with different types and brands of lube. Research what lube is best for your specific sex toy, or specific condoms.

lube guide

	water-based lube	silicone-based lube	oil-based lube
latex condoms?	♥	♥	Using various oils as lube is just not a good idea. Oils don't interact well with latex and polyurethane condoms, which results in a higher chance of a condom breaking. Oils also increase the risk of vaginal and anal infections, and are difficult to clean off of sex toys. This isn't a juicy stir-fry, this is sex, so why not just use lubes made specifically for sex? <i>by Plamena</i>
polyurethane condoms?	♥	♥	
silicone sex toys?	♥	✗	
non-silicone sex toys?	♥	♥	
vaginally?	♥	♥	
anally?	♥	♥	

dear period stain,

you are the loveliest thing about me. this sounds wrong, maybe because you were never supposed to be here in the first place but i have a good feeling about you. i look at you and see a tender part of me. your misshapen splotch, the body's graffiti on empty white cotton. it's been maybe a week, i am too tired. when i discover you in the softened valley of mattress, i know beauty exists. in the same way the construction outside wakes me at dawn and hummingbirds redefine home each september, you are proof that something lived here. you tangible mark of my mother, her mother, the mothers i recognize solely by name. here, life loosened-- you, wild thing. before sex, the boy asks if you are from me or just spilt wine. i promise i will never hide you, shame has no place in the folds of where i sleep. shame has no place in the body. you are not metaphor, testament to girlhood. you are not what they say. you are just blood, that's all.

by Samantha Boucher

by now, i've been awake for about twenty minutes

in bed, i hold your cheek like a bright, precious thing. when you are watching me watch you, here is what i note: the baby blue walls. two maps of the world tacked next to one another. a torn piece of paper, limp on your desk. no blinds, instead a cotton sheet hangs. you do not own much because you do not need much. my jeans crumpled on the floor beside your closet. my hands, lazy on the nape of your neck.

i write down all of this, memorize the crack in the window sill and hole in the wall. become a disciple of your unwashed t-shirt. make love to the static air and september morning light. this light, which remembers me, like an old friend coming home after years gone. a part of me- the part that believes in ghosts and wishes on birthday candles- believes you are forever. like, maybe if i stretch out this moment, with your heartbeat hooked into my rib, it does not have to end.

by Samantha Boucher

but it does. it does.

An Epitaph for the Hands on My Body: Or, A Hoe Phase

by Juliana Riedman

*This is a guide
To running from the mess you made,
(the mess you were made to think you were responsible for)
To feeling the way you felt before you knew what you know now,
(the things you'd rather not, bitter medicine and battering rams against
gritted teeth, work your throat)
To letting it all fall apart according to plan
(as your clothing falls to the floor, you went down with your zipper, jet
wash and gutted propellers)
This is a guide
(this is an echo between the lines that track your palms, meant to
dictate life and inform lovers).*

*I would follow you blindly if I knew which of us were the shot and which
the dark,
but instead I stumble on the tightrope between caution and devotion with
a lukewarm drink in hand.
(are they clammy? are they just wet?)
The strobing light bleeds like the immeasurable blur of memory
and my hips are pressed to yours, mingled breath tinted red with longing.*

*Your name sticks to the tip of my tongue like plastic film,
but I fishhook it from between my teeth.
(I only hope that it belongs to you)
There is an arm around my waist
(I only hope that it belongs to you)
and I haven't found time to meet your gaze since our irises exchanged
pleasantries across the formica bar.*

*I rest my head against the windowpane and watch the night flit by with
unbridled apathy
(the billboard reads JESUS SAVES in neon white)
and I wonder what he knows about cheap vodka and tunnel vision.
Salvation hasn't worn his face in ages
but for tonight yours will do.*

*Your back is bare and freckled in sunlight,
(for a moment the gaping jaws of beauty bury their teeth, unassumingly
bladed)
I am shrouded in the blanket that your mother insisted you pack,*

*(shed your second skin)
And I've come to accept that here, there is no antidote for the past
film reel flashes of recollection and rings of condensation where the
glass necked bottles tower.*

*This is a guide,
To fitting last night's blouse over your shoulders and relenting to
the morning fog
(Is your skin clammy? Is it just wet?)
To the body that stares back from the glass
(You only hope that it belongs to you)
To choosing to tread water
(the billboard reads SAVE YOURSELF in neon white)
To burying your regrets in the frozen soil of your mind*

for the record

i pay for your food at the dining hall
every time because i know you won't
ask, plus i eat all the cereal in your house

when we sleep in bed together
on a sunday afternoon, i rustle the sheets
folding my legs into yours because i know
you hate sleeping in, but you never set an alarm

in the street, it is dark and i stumble
out of the bar to meet you. we go
for a walk, when i get cold
you offer two options, i choose the grey
jacket because i know you prefer
the red one. sometimes

i think of you, still, sitting on an air mattress
with wet hair, wearing a cotton t-shirt
bloodshot eyes ask me questions and i wish
i knew your answers. forgive me
for sneaking pieces of you into my subconscious

i've never been good at moving on
but i'm great at the little details

by Samantha Boucher

THE MORNING DANCE

and -
the 9 am light dribbles its way through the tattered blinds
pooling only on the parts of you that turn insides out
and i blink so many times because i want to remember
the way you're posed like the promise that it is

all i think about then is the morning dance
the way our legs lay in a mess under the duvet
how my arms stretch till they're sore to reach you
and the pads of your fingertips always manage to feel rougher on my skin then
but still, the things you know about tenderness are more than any physicality

the morning dance -
the way the distance always closes
and the closeness always manages to be the kerosene
to our two flames
the way we never can just flicker around each other
the way it must always be a constant slow burn

the morning dance -
where skin is just skin
but it's also so much more
the way it's always better to be connected than to be without

the morning dance -
right before before we shed our hurt
throwing it out the door with everything in us
which is to say - when your lips connect to mine
it is always like something blooming

BY NIKITA NARSINGH

CAPRICORN

*i long from the backs of my
eyes and the top of my
lungs. there are flutters and jabs.*

my torn

*tissue is as soft as the kisses
i will not receive, as soft as
fingertips on a smooth
back, as soft as
hair sprawled on a pink pillow in a
childhood home where the
walls are painted with a
familiar faint blue. in this home, on my
bed,*

*she, the object of my desire, holds
herself up in the air, a
bridge from one
year to another. with her
palms flat against the mattress and her
knees pressed against the sheets, her
head hangs above me,
hair falling around her
head, black snow being blown off of a
roof and floating, gently, to the
ground. but as
i go to touch her,
she leaves, and
i am back to staring at a faint blue
ceiling.*

BY AMBER CHERICETTI

