

# girls get busy

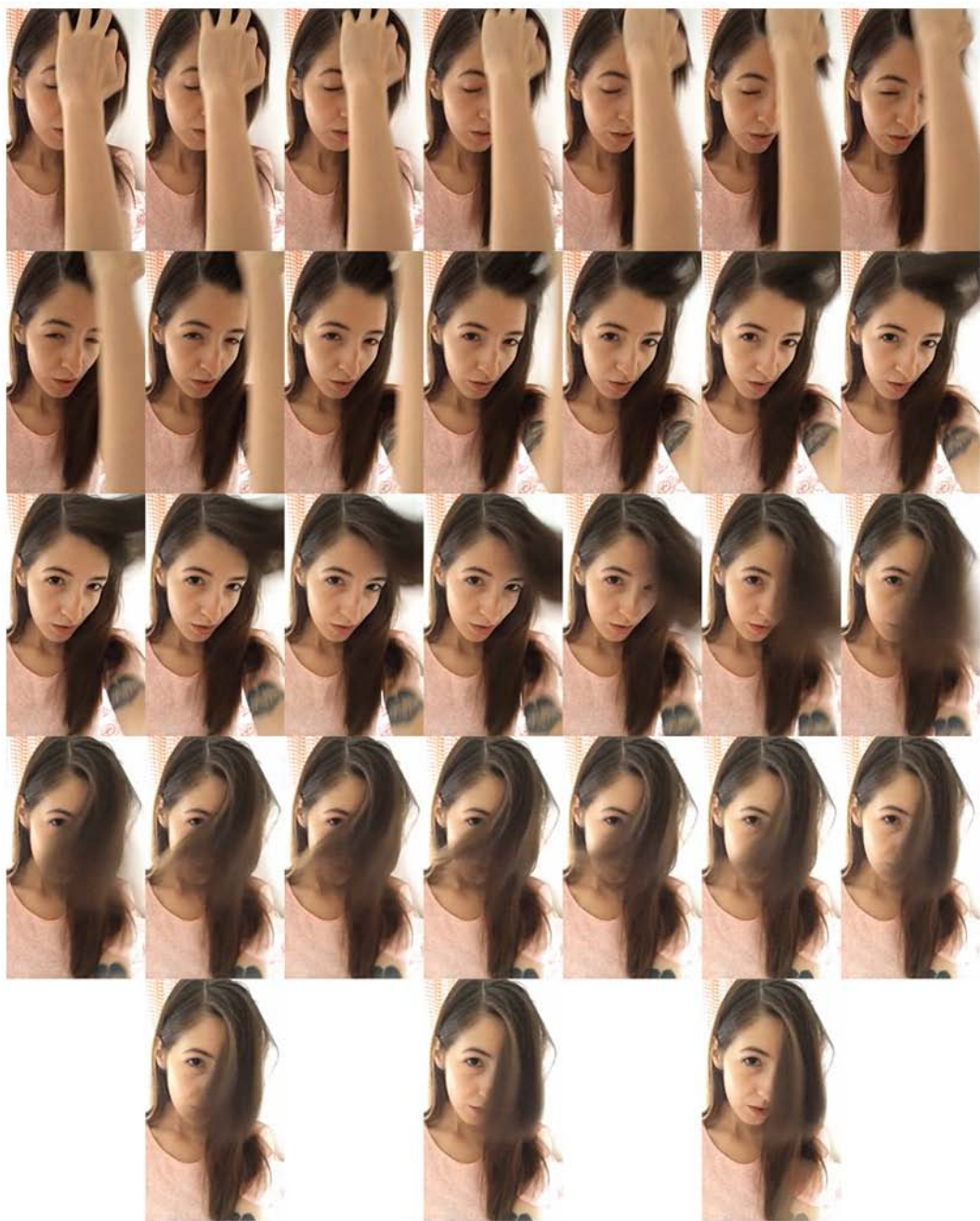
feminist art and writing



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Curated by Beth Siveyer  
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Stills from hair flicking GIF



## Ornamental

Ornamental,

The word itself four syllables

provides slight linguistic deviance

as if deigning to be elaborate, decorative, flamboyant, outlandish, extravagant  
kitsch, fussy, unnecessary.

An embellishment, a gesture, a tailored excess

The meaning, disguised in the same number of syllables as other objective adjectives is always a  
criticism,

Ornamental not essential

Desirous rather than required

fluffy not firm; 'folly', 'frivolous'

and not frank

Ornamental stinks of supine surfaces

and nothing beneath the surfaces

and ornamental says form and not structure

a basis to resist and no mouth to

oppose. Ornamental expects no repose and is

largely inseparable from it's associated literal definition:

Ceramics on the mantel piece

Sightly

bought on a whim

gather dust, cold

most un-caustic, most un-biting

asked not to pay their way

pay anyway



## Weekend Meals

Sick bees came frothing  
from behind my knees  
I was carving deep sketches  
in soft suds  
cleansing when violence in my best  
friend's breakup came like bean sprouts  
from her mouth.

I was a free write in the  
loudest concussion and she  
sweet tinkling of worms  
beneath cool grass

She thinks laughing is  
substitute for screaming,  
but my anger's true artist makes  
fake meat in techno prose.

*Is it real?*

*Is it typed?*

*Is it artificial light?*

I'm carbohydrates weak  
vegetarian soy bonds in some  
bland tofu can she cook like  
my leftover surprise?

My ex-girlfriend's sweet girlfriend  
makes a mean stir-fry  
and the same in bed.

My microwavable lethargy  
my mistakable lust  
is dusty in the evening,  
and indigo at dusk.

My friends wanted  
running jokes between  
egg yolks over easy  
the morning after meal. I wanted  
stale sheets, skin cells,  
hair clumps,  
bad underwear.

I'll keep her tangles  
in the front of my head.

*Are you real?*

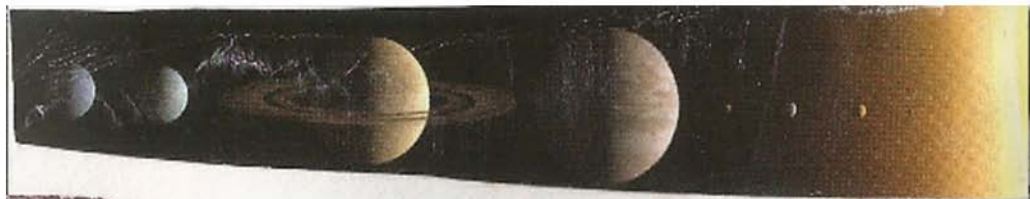
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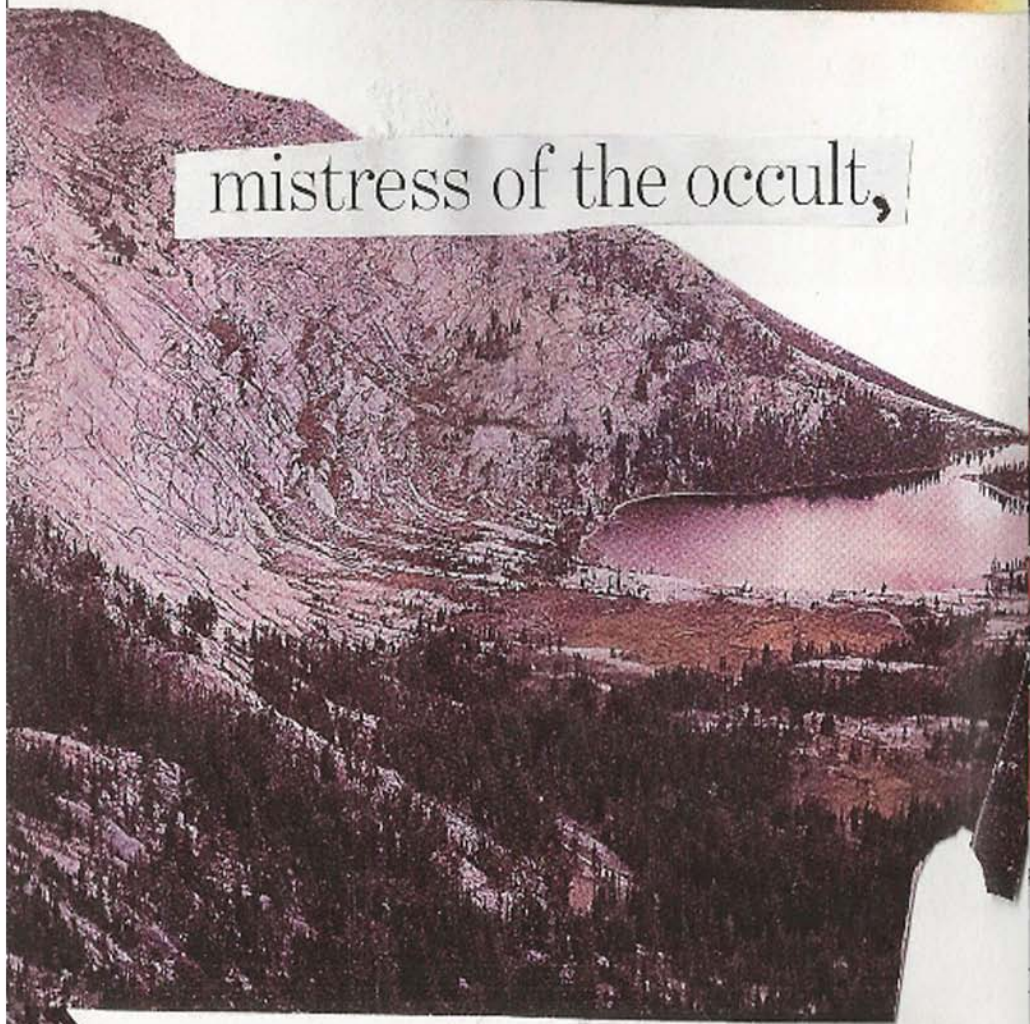








mistress of the occult,



Excerpt from:

Feared, Yet Not Equal:

A Feminist Analysis of Puccini's *La Boheme* and Shelley's *Frankenstein*

In the time period in which both of these tales were written, women were certainly not considered the dominant sex. Women were supposed to be submissive and maternal, not at all like the characters featured in Giacomo Puccini's *La Boheme*. The women in this play were –for the most part -- autonomous and raunchy compared to other women living in France during the 1800's. They were looked down upon for their unique, bohemian lifestyles, and they were even made out to be a monstrosity towards the rest of patriarchal society. Similarly, in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, the monster created by the main character Victor Frankenstein is also made out to be a monstrosity to society. In this comparison, the fear the monster instilled in Frankenstein and his community is representative of the fear Bohemian women instilled in nineteenth century France. The rise of the autonomous female was to be feared, hunted down, and destroyed by angry villagers with pitchforks and torches.

**a trend's lifespan is shorter than your ironically purchased tamagotchi's**

art gallery boys wear new balances,  
run pastel grid blogs, run in nike socks,  
say things like "drown me in reverb"  
post fiji water instagram pics,  
collect food stamps like they're pokemon cards  
collect pokemon cards like they're full meals,  
wear cammo as a joke, laugh at rape jokes (as a joke)  
niche market poverty, niche market ugliness,  
etsy bought adidas everything,  
early 2000s nostalgia is the only valid emotion.



I've been drinking about you





## Paralipsis

The poet defined grace  
as that which is uncanny in force.  
Were you there for that reading?

In the dark,  
you said  
just lay there  
like that

I wanted to think  
of soft, graceful things:  
the rocking chair in my childhood home  
my mother reupholstered,  
the woman at the convenience store  
who takes my card  
calls me baby

*There you go baby*

*That's it baby*

xx

I couldn't kiss you properly  
though we kissed in similar dialects.  
I saw the image of you  
refracted by the panes  
of the bay window.  
One fraction was winking—  
you told me you have your father's eyes.

xx

That night,  
I dreamt I was the goddess Isis.  
I drowned you in the Nile  
only to resurrect you again.

Again, again,  
this painful necromancy.

xx

After,

I thought I saw you in parking lots,  
in the back row of lecture halls,

when I fell asleep on the New Jersey Turnpike  
and woke to warehouses and cranes,

warehouses and cranes, the image of you refracted  
through two layers of laminated glass

ineffable as the Holy Ghost.

xx

Somewhere  
between Trenton and Newark you take the aisle seat.  
Your chest rising gives me motion sickness.

Now, I am Antigone,  
a great empty space  
is being hollowed out.  
Maybe it is the cavity in my pillow  
where your cheek used to be.

No, I won't bring it up—

I may have conjured these things too.







## It Wouldn't Have Fit Anyway

Occasionally I work up the energy to sew something again. I'll get out Rach's machine and my limited collection of bright thread.

Lay out the material to be sacrificed,

I'll cut  
with my little pink cotton-scissors,  
I lost the big  
ones years ago.

pieces.                      What fresh and precious  
I eschew patterns,

because I don't need a map.

Snagged-

The material is all torn; I had to rip  
it from the needle on which it was caught.  
There is cotton all through the cogs and the machine is  
jammed.

Never mind, I don't think it would have fit anyway.  
I forgot to take any measurements, you see.

I'll wait a while  
before I have another turn at it.

## Gays, Males, and the Male Gaze

I had an interesting and engaging encounter in my studio the other day. I was working in on a project and I have the door of my studio open. I am one artist in an art center that is a city-sponsored co-op. The arts center houses ten artist studios, a gallery, and workshop area. One has to walk through the workshop area in order to get to my studio. There are three other studios that can be accessed from the workshop area. The printmaker was working in her studio at the time.

A man approached studio door and asked if he had met me before. I told him "No." He asked if I had met him before, I told him "No." He introduced himself as the head of the Housing Authority and that the center was under his management as far as the maintenance was concerned. He was a tall and muscular man. A middle-aged, former military man, the kind that sees the world as right verses wrong. He told me that he had opened the door of my studio for the maintenance workers in the past, but he never entered the space himself.


I am standing in the middle of my studio, mind you, my studio looks as one would imagine with finished and in progress works of art covering the walls. He stood in the door jam as he faced me and looked around the space. He had one question for me, "Where is the art?" I was a bit taken aback by this question and paused for a moment as I figured out how to respond. I simply asked him, "Well what do you see?" He responded by telling me that he saw a woman with a target image on her but he didn't quite understand it.

*Okay, great so this is where we can begin!* So I told him that my work comes from my personal experiences. I decided to make work about being accosted in the streets and being rendered down to the idea of a possible conquest. I told him a short story about one of these incidences: last year, I parked in front of the center in the closest car space to the door of the center. I couldn't make it from the car to the door without a young male passing by me and saying "Nice nipples".

The man from the Housing Authority responded, "Well, that's just one ignorant person."

I countered with, "This was not an isolated incident and this has happened to be before. It doesn't matter if I'm in Florida or any other state, this experience is not solely my own and other people have experienced too. The real questions are what makes him think that this is okay for him to say something like this and where does this type of behavior come from? This is where the work that I create stems from. By creating a target image," I explained to him, "I put the viewer in the position of being the perpetrator, of being the one who is guilty. "





He asked me how old I was and told me that I was a very intelligent woman. He left my space to talk to another artist. He returned a few minutes later asking me a question. I believe he imagined that my response to his question would be equal to his beliefs.

The art center where my studio is located also has a not-for-profit dance studio as a neighbor and he had observed some young boys in the dance studio learning how to dance. As he discussed his observation with the other artist he presumed the sexual orientation of the boys was homosexual without any factual data, beside that of observing them in the dance studio.

The artist that he was speaking with paralleled the Gay Rights struggle with that of the Civil Rights struggle of the 1960's in America. He came back to ask me if I believed that both struggles were equal. He said that his religious beliefs told him that homosexual behavior was not okay. He began his argument with reproduction logic. I questioned him and asked him about the married couples were unable to conceive or myself, as a person choosing not to conceive and whether or not these instances would be wrong in respect to his rigid beliefs.

I reminded him that everyone wants to be able to walk down the street expressing themselves without the fearing threats of violence and harassment. This points back to the target images that I make. It is not solely about orientation, gender, or race.

This man shared an experience that he had when he was younger. He told me how he was interested in a woman. She wanted to go to a party where all the men the party were homosexual. He went with her to the party. Although the men were at the party were nice enough to allow him to ask them questions about their lifestyle, he told me that he felt uncomfortable at the party. He admitted that he was trying not to show his discomfort.

I told him, "I understand where that uncomfortable feeling comes from." To bring it around to work that I create, I informed him about the male gaze and that the male gaze makes one feel uncomfortable because you don't know what that person is thinking. "A man could be looking at you and thinking about what he would want to do you in a sexual manner, what you would look like without clothes, or even taking mental pictures for which to masturbate to later. It is an unnerving and unsettling feeling to be under the male gaze." I reminded him that this is the same gaze that the target images are confronting. He responded by saying he understands the target images because that's the way men look at women and I interrupted him. I pointed out to him that is the same gaze, whether it is a gay man to man or from man to woman, the feeling of anxiety and being uncomfortable is the same. The objectification is the same. If it's wrong to be the subject of the male gaze, then the male gaze is wrong. He thought about my words for a moment. The conversation and the artwork made an impression.

## **I don't care if some of these words aren't words**

I can feel myself opening and spreading vastly across multiple people and I'm all these personalities in one to accommodate each expanding relationship and individual specific need. The feeling of progressing towards being better understood is overwhelming and a bit frightening. The thought alone of someone seeing my patterns and being able to pull the right words out of my run-on sentences, or matching the correct shapes when I'm all mixed broken pieces on the floor, waiting to be played with.

I don't expect a game but when it comes down to where I fit in, I feel like it's not in your hands. I'm comfortable with the box I've put myself in and as soon as I open it I let the vulnerability get the very worst of me, and I'm terrified and feeling like I require someone else to sustain my joy and fulfillment. Thoughts of getting temporary relief in numerous lovers happens to rest easy with my spirit and I'm wandering but I'm not lost because you can't be lost unless you don't appreciate where you are. As soon as that appreciation for all the beauty, ugliness and unfamiliarity is gone, you find yourself confused and uncertain of where you belong. There is no place to belong. We only have these bodies that we must learn to accept as unacceptable as they may seem to anyone else, and we can begin understanding the complex emotions that are ever changing with every smile or gas station door held open or the awkward silence with a stranger in the waiting room or the way someone's sadness feels like your happiness or how you will never love your mom the way you loved your dog. Because the dog was better. Actions don't really define us because someone's opinion and perception of your action is irrelevant unless they have any significant influence over your life anyways. Which isn't usually more than one or two people if that. There has to be a point when you stop looking for every small judgement someone has upon you. It's of course great to consider your actions and how they might negatively or positively effect people in your life, but there has to be a line you draw where you no longer base your decisions and feelings on others opinions that directly effect your emotions and circumstances. Don't let your happiness be situational, take control of whatever area is in chaos and put it in whichever cubby hole feels organized in your mind. If someone belongs in the ignore forever hole, very purposefully put them there nicely.

ARE YOU

GONNA BE

OK BY

2

4

YOURSELF?

1

4

## SWEET NOTHINGS IN YOUR EARS

every atom of my being shouts back  
i will not silence myself  
cannot be confined  
to footnote sidekick  
back up dancer  
with my high heels  
going click clack on the dance floor  
doing the flamenco of female

i am too much even when  
you bury me in your beer bottle blonde ads  
story ending on page three  
until i'm staring into a mirror to remember that once upon a time

i existed  
i was whole  
until i fall out of love with myself  
so there's more left over for you

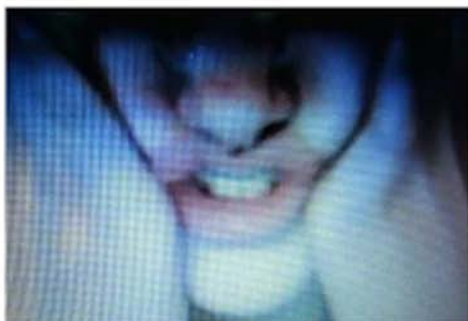
too much  
alive in a place  
where my breath is toxic  
because it trips the wire of  
the loaded gun in my  
mindbodycosmos

i am a weapon  
that is too much  
for a woman  
who will not

destroy herself

for you





Stills from video singing along to Christina Aguilera's "Beautiful" whilst creating a different distortion of my face; changing my vocals and image

# ME & MY DOG

by BARBORA TOBEL



WE HAVE  
THREE THINGS  
IN  
COMMON



WE  
ARE  
FLAWLESS



WE  
ARE  
FLAWLESS



WE HATE CATS

WHEN YOU LEAVE US IN APARTMENT  
MORE THAN EIGHT  
HOURS WE TAKE SHIT  
ON YOUR CARPET



## On How I Named My Daughter

There is a cavity in my tooth and it needs to be pulled  
from all those men I've been gnashing away at  
like the bubblegum I chewed on while in the shower,  
with black water surrounding my feet  
from when I kneeled in the tub,

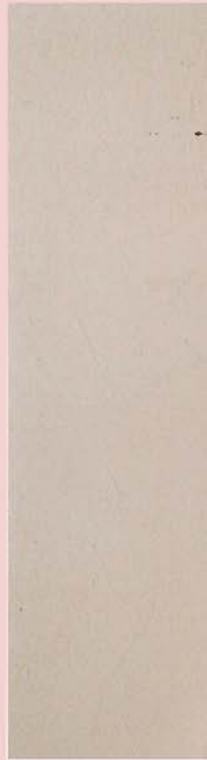
and my sister dyed my hair.

I felt like I was sinking in warm wet tar pits  
and thought how La Brea would be a pretty name  
for a girl, put together, with her fists  
where she could sink men and suffocate them  
I would want my daughter dangerous. So

*no*

*one* could hurt her.

Her mouth a deep and plunging  
cavern full of fingers to pull them in, and swallow them  
whole like sweet things—the way water is like cool  
velvet cycling down a throat. An ocean spillway  
filled with trash, an empty sink that smells of  
mold and lemon soap.



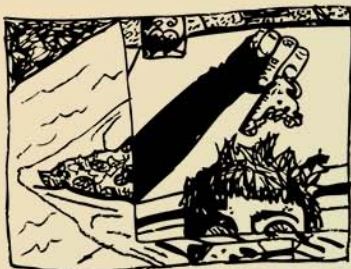



I picked up the prism of lipstick, purple and transparent in my fingers.  
A new color, *Berry Blast*.

I wonder who names these hues. Perhaps the same lot that write horoscopes and the fortunes inside fortune cookies subtle yet sweet. Probably not. I plucked the top off. It smelled like a brand new crayon but deeper, as if it had been dipped in grape juice. I thought about how, after months of use, I would round out the angles and edges of the tube's point.

I dared to wear it on this grey, muggy, windy, unexceptional day. I dared to wear it though my hands were shaky. I've never been any good at coloring inside the lines. I liked to imagine I could taste the color on my lips. I liked to think the bright violet represented the vibrancy of my unspoken thoughts. A purple puddle in the middle of my face. you would need galoshes up to your eyes to splash in. I like staining the white coffee cup lids, the orange filters of cigarettes flashing like signs for hazardous waste, your stubbly cheek. Most of the time, I feel invisible. and others it seems I am naked with everyone's eyes glued onto my body. Where is this middle ground they speak of? I wonder if that's what it means to be xx instead of xy. You might try to erase me with rubber, erase me from your memories and feelings. I'll continue to paint my open lips, to stain my panties. Staining the world with these enveloping kisses. I have been told on many occasions that they are not enough, but maybe they are more than you bartered for. You wipe them off. You wear them with embarrassment. what if I am more than a gift, more than a burden? It frightens you to know that something can ripen and burst in my mouth. I tried to wear them on my sleeve, the colors of a feminine sunset, but now they coagulate beneath my polka dot nose. As if to say without words: *i am here, i am here, i bleed.*






 mysoul = coldpizza

get it?  
it's a metaphor  
for my soul  
is  
cold  
pizza

sy  
ism

#neopussyex  
@sxytk  


in the sh  
my cheek  
rests  
a series o  
thorned  
and able  
leaving  
traces o  
and gold





pressionism

adow of  
bones

f words

to scratch

f bleach  
d paint



#fashun #700

i scream and throw  
my hands  
the spirit in my  
tumblr likes  
knows all too well  
i borrow time  
to shop online



Maggie Dunlap

## concerned about insomnia

dreams fume between inches of thickness to bear nothing  
but fragmented eyelids, only patches to separate  
desire from this ache in my mouth and fingernails  
this delta of carcinogens from heart to capillaries

//

days float apart between nondescript evenings  
running into each other like sharpied letters on canvas  
carving initials of belongings; *you belong to me*  
but beyond the bleeding I am unsure.

//

I am unsure  
I am sick  
and I am tired

//

I am desperate to feel some sort of comfort to reaffirm  
that this could be something more than transient, shallow  
that there's an image of me inside you on a loop  
but maybe *je t'aime* can't exist off of winter's lined paper

//

and I'll admit, my floor admits, my hands admit  
I can't look at my body without thinking of you  
in its solus it's naked, dissociated, dark  
sporting scars from fingers only I can see

//

only a leaving I can feel, like the night, you are gone  
when I decide to resign to a reflex that hasn't quite ripened  
it casts a shadow twice my size, haunting me and saying  
*I'll take care of you*, but I am forgotten.

Hey now, it can't be that bad," said a voice as I passed by, striking me out of my determined walk, my tunnel-vision. I had been walking home, the route so familiar that it was little more than muscle memory by now, my day's to-do list cycling through my head.

Bank. Bike. Groceries. Some time with my cat.

It was beautiful out, with visible sun and a slight breeze. I was finally out of work, leaving me with the determined adrenaline I needed to be truly productive. There was certainly nothing wrong. In fact, this was what would be considered a good day. My confusion must have been apparent, because he pressed further. "Come on, let's see that pretty smile." And then it occurred to me what was wrong. In my hasty eagerness to accomplish the day's tasks, I had, almost completely, failed to consider how I was presenting. In fact I hadn't even glanced at my reflection in a window as I passed. I had been carrying out my errands, my day, God knows how long, without even wondering how pleasing I looked. I hadn't stopped to think about what my face displayed, about how pretty I seemed. Without really any consideration to my looks whatsoever, in fact. The thing about having a prerogative is that it distracts you from maintaining your appearance, which is paramount. I knew how women were to act and look, and it was clear that I had failed, and this observer had been inconvenienced in the process.

I realized then that I had been walking far too fast, an unfortunate symptom of determination and long legs. I can certainly see how this would be off-putting. A woman walking with such vigor could make her seem independent, or at the very least disinterested in some well-placed male guidance. A fast-walking woman is scary, authoritative, and most importantly, nonsensical. Women don't have anywhere that they must get to quickly; everyone knows that.

And then there was the issue of what I was wearing- a second-hand sundress with a frayed hem. I guess that probably wasn't great either. Truthfully, I had thrown the dress on because it was hot and pants are a hassle, but I hadn't considered all of the elements that go into wearing a dress. In general dresses are good, I suppose. They're distinctly feminine and good for looking pretty, but they do come with the issue of length. Too long and you're invisible, a shapeless length of fabric lacking access to important girl parts. But once you get into the territory of too short you meet a whole new set of problems. You don't want to look loose or cheap. Girls like that don't have value either. Really, it would be best if someone just gave me the dimensions. Lord knows I'm no good at math anyhow. And of course there's my face, which had clearly been contorted into some distressing expression of un-dainty disparagement. Everyone knows that sadness should be expressed by a single tear resting upon one's delicate cheek and a burning desire for male comfort. Perhaps a man broke her heart, or she is concerned that a man will never desire her, perhaps on account of her short dress or purposeful walk. But even so, she should always express her sadness as beautifully as she can, because that is the function of a woman's face. As such, there is simply no place for my unchecked sour expression. If your natural resting face happens to stray from wide-eyed loveliness, it is simply your responsibility to keep it in check, lest you make a passing male uncomfortable.

But perhaps some good came of it after all, because through my grimace, my tramping, my general aesthetic negligence, I had advertised my pressing need for a savior, and thankfully a kind soul was willing to rise to the occasion. Sometimes, especially through all the detractions of financial independence and long-term aspirations, I forget that all women want to be rescued. And worse yet, sometimes I forget to be pretty. But luckily I can always trust that there will be a man around to let me know.

Young <sup>man</sup>  
ON STREET  
Just shouted  
'I LOVE YOUR HAIR',

Cool **BUT**  
he ruined it by  
THEN SHOUTING  
'IS IT THE SAME  
DOWNSTAIRS ?'

LOST in

YOU  
SNUCK  
YOUR WAY INTO ME



YOU



## 2 truths and a lie

never have i ever: run into the woods  
taken a shower in brown water  
thrown a glass across an empty room

believed in starving myself  
lit my hair on fire  
worn a push-up bra

bought or loved a reptile  
kissed a person on a motorcycle  
confused a human being for a ghost

died  
written a letter to my state representative  
bled on a taxi seat

felt someone touch my vagina without permission  
felt guilty for not calling the cops

cried on a stage  
stained my sheets with sharpie ink  
been followed home

fallen on the ice  
puked in public  
eaten a dead animal

painted over the blotches on my skin  
been afraid to dance with the lights on





## She

Now, we are brave enough to disown our bodies.  
The skin is diaphanous. The skin is nonexistent. Like the shadow of a flame,  
flickering and weightless. Like gaps between blades of a ceiling fan.

Now, we are brave enough to believe that we have not been touched.  
Never:  
That the rind dissipates at intrusion.  
The antigen of our grief. Attack the foreign.  
Devour it.

Brave. What a word.

What did it mean to the women before us:  
to those from the war—  
to those who made their wombs host to violence—  
to those who threw themselves into wells to avoid that other death—

Brave. Must have tasted like phlegm. Must have had hands crusted with blood.

Perhaps they spat it out. Slime and rust. Disgust.

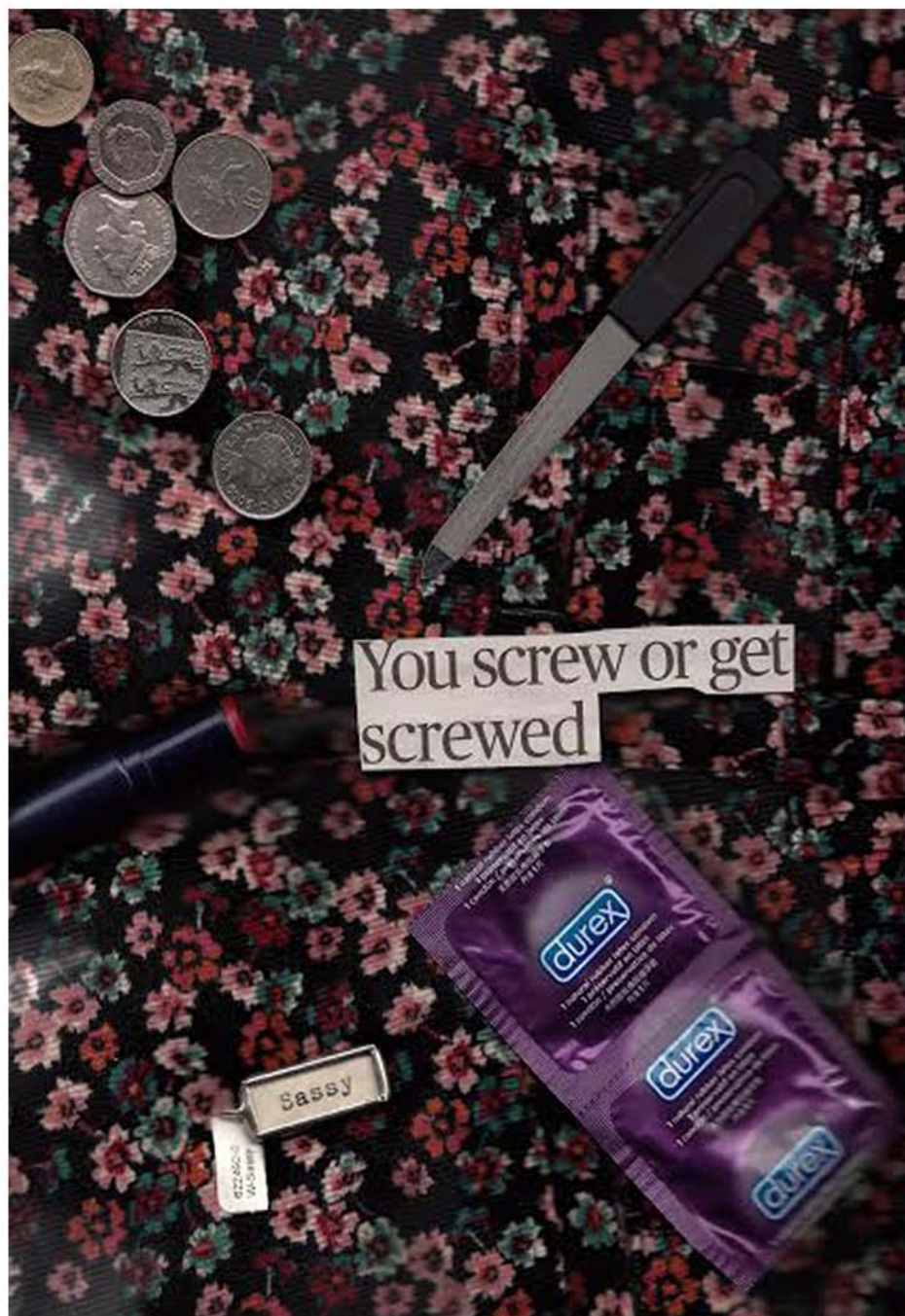
Now, we are brave enough to say that we do not belong to those from our past.  
Regardless of the same hair that grows from our scalps.  
Regardless of the same kohl underlining the same eyes.  
But— no—  
what of this new tongue? This uninherited bite?  
This word: modern.  
This word: I.

What of the grime in our poetry?  
What of these disorders that came after them:  
the stomachs flat and blue from pinching, the fear of ugly, the fear of death.

Brave. What a word. How it is as fluid as time itself.

Once, they snickered with daggers clenched in wrists. Now, the mirror makes us wince.

Brave. How we wear it like a sash. How it brings pride before defeat.  
This word: woman.  
This word: she.







Self portraits looking at my own identity and struggles with chronic pain

Aisling Keavey



## SAMANTHA

Sunflowers grow as contempt is bred: slowly.

I grew weary of sweetness,  
I grew weary of being sweet,  
marigold butter can grow stale  
so quickly.

Sew a button cap,  
put it on the button girl  
reading bad literature with  
her blanket eyes.

Tell her she's a gilded brooch  
Tell her she's morning dew  
A sticky girl, an icky girl  
Tell her she's a rarity.

Who is she? A veritable source?  
A stiffened, quick slit for you to pass down,  
a nothing,  
a mark in your belongings.

While you're my personal farrow,  
an incidental litter  
something I wished too hard for  
something for which I repent.

May God save me from this mess.

Did you ply her with your muteness?  
Did you ask her for forgiveness?

One day I'll be an honest beauty,  
One day I'll claw the earth,  
an authentic Peter pansy but a hue darker  
shooting my shade into your underworld.



Emily Smit-Dicks





Jazmin Jones

Pretty girl, pretty girl, ugly boy

I once met a guy at a performance I did, and he said, "wow, you're so beautiful. A true beauty." He kept his hands on my body in a way I didn't mind, in a way that helped me feel sexy and valued. I didn't mind being a temporary treasure. He kept running his tight hands over my unpadded ass, he kept stroking my hair, my store-bought hair "You're so beautiful," he said, "you're like the best of both worlds." He kept lightly stroking my arm, over my tattoos- "I've never seen tats like this- so unique. You're one-of-a-kind." He kept twirling his fingers in my hair, my store-bought hair "I liked your show. Can I take you out for dinner some time?"

Pretty girl, pretty girl, ugly boy

I felt good, I felt loved in that way you can feel loved in a fantasy- in a fantasy where you wear his ring and have his baby in 2 seconds, that love you know isn't real, but gets you high- you know it's not real, but it gives you momentum and courage- you know it's not real, because if you think about real, you fall and hit the ground hard and your mind tells you this moment isn't special, but it is, because even though you're a feminist and an independent bitch, feral pussy dressed up in corsetry and long legs, stilettos and painted brows, eyelashes for days and cheekbones, sharp cheekbones, connected to a jaw where words like knives don't fuck around with trivial shit like, "OMG you guys, he thinks I'm hot", they cut their way through the world, like, "OMG you guys, I shut that shit down because the pain of this dynamic is real".

Pretty girl, pretty girl, ugly boy

He took my number and called me a few days later. My stomach got tight and my mind slowed down, dropped into his words, "you're so beautiful", and I relaxed, and then I remembered how this all really works. Makeup is a glamour- Heels that raise your ass and accentuate your legs are a glamour- eyelashes, fake, hair fake, contour fake, tiny, 26" waist forced- Heart real, mind real, touch real, the battle in my head to accept a compliment with this glamour in place, real-

Pretty girl, pretty girl, ugly boy

It's time to go meet him. I'm wearing jeans, tight ones, doc martens- righteous fuck-off boots with steel caps, ladder laced with acid green- I put on a black shirt emblazoned with the words, "She and hers, please and thank you" in stark white. I see him approaching the rendezvous point. He's on time. I'm early. That's how it works. He's wearing tight jeans, white beefy tee, equally big fuck off boots and a black flight jacket. My teenage, anti-racist skinhead dream. An ass for days and a dick for the gods pressing against his levis. He's tall and bearded. Fuck. He squints his eyes as he gets closer. "Hey", I say, "good to see you again." He looks me up and down. "Oh. You look so different". A weak hug.

Pretty girl, pretty girl, ugly boy

My heart drops and my stomach releases .My mind screams,“I told you so, dumbass. You should have left this shit at the show, because now it's a shit-show. Clean-up will take weeks”. I know my mind is speaking truth.We sit silently and awkwardly in uncomfortable chairs. I'm fidgety and keep accidentally tapping my foot on the toes of his and saying I'm sorry in a meek voice.“yeah, so, uh- You should come over sometime and meet my boyfriend. He loves drag queens”. Stab and twist. My mind knows how this goes, but my heart keeps trying. Keeps believing that this repeating scenario is just a coincidence, but it's not.

Pretty girl, pretty girl, ugly boy

I resist and crush the urge to tell him that I'm not a drag queen. I'm not a man in a dress, but a transwoman with incidental hair on my face and a balding head that cripples my self-esteem daily. I'm a woman floating in space in between the space between my ears, floating in those words,“I told you so and now it's too late.You're too queer, too old and too ugly to do anything about it”. He isn't making much eye contact with me, but I can't stop looking at him.“I did drag a couple times when I was younger, but I make an ugly girl”. Handsome man, ugly girl.That's another one. I leave deflated. He says goodbye without a hug or a backward glance. I stay and order some chocolate monstrosity with cocoa shavings on it and I think about myself like that. There's a whole identity in me somewhere that's dark and strong and delicious if you like that kind of thing, but I keep shaving off little bits of that and mixing it with something more palatable. I keep dressing up the dessert to make it more interesting and beautiful, but it doesn't work

Pretty girl, pretty girl, ugly boy

I forget sometimes why I let them touch me in the glamour.And then I remember that when a man says I'm beautiful, it reminds me of who I really am inside, a woman.A woman who has been seen, if only for a little while.A woman who has been touched, if only a little.A woman who has been fantasized about and sexualized, if only for an hour. I remember the time I bargained with myself that if I add up all of the hours a man I didn't know pretended we were a couple or married- every time a man held my hand and stroked my store-bought hair or touched my bare, shaved, tattooed legs and said I was unique, even if he did those things in secret or only in his mind, that I would have been loved and cherished by a man for long enough that it might change me. It is then that I remember the glamour.The lie that's not really a lie and the truth that's not really the truth-

Pretty girl, pretty girl, ugly boy.



***DEFIANT***



***ANTICIPATING***



***TENTATIVE***



***DOUBTFUL***

## Contradictions

\*\*

this is me being older  
and being immature  
being proud and a sold out  
being generous and narcissistic  
this is me being healthy and sick  
careless and paranoid  
accompanied and sad  
lonely and happy  
this is me being quiet and loud at the same time

\*\*

contradictions are bad  
no  
contradictions have love and hate equally inside  
contradictions are different  
yes  
they are shocks that consume the soul  
from their killing quietness

\*\*

and they bring surprises  
and they bring spontaneity  
and they bring joy  
and they bring beauty  
and they bring company  
and they bring love

\*\*

and they take away the freedom  
and they take away the passion  
and they take away the anergy  
and they take away the novelty  
and they take away the energy  
and they take away you

\*\*

contradictions are a heavy weight to cary  
and a light load into pleasent crazyness  
contradictions are hard fighters  
and lovely companios  
they become nothing on me  
but in the darkness  
they own everything.

they keep telling me to put my faith  
into the world, and into the word of

god

please, i pray,  
*and may the lord be with you*

amen?

my hands search for some stability  
in the structure of a wooden pew,  
and i list the names of all of my new  
idols in my head: jesus, etc.

jesus, etc. jesus, etc. jesus, etc.

one for the son, one for the father,  
and one for the holy spirit

dear god, i pray  
but i've lost my words already







Amongst the isles of a popular and yet reasonably priced clothing store, I found shirts, blouses, and skirts. Such a pity to ignore, so many beautiful items. I spent my fingertips touching before the mirror and beaming, *You look better, no you*





re—two blonde heads bobbing up and down in between rows of pants,  
as when they don't come in pairs, but a greater reward it is to stand, fin-  
ou do.





*Funny Girls*

*(or; At Least I Never Rabbit Punched You in the Kidneys)*

This piece is concerned with human biology and the way it links with our personalities. Working from the ancient theory of the four humours, the idea that there are four fluids which make up the human body and determine temperament, this piece discusses how who we are is so much down to what we are made of, and how that can be pre-determined by our genetic make-up, and in this way we carry our family past around with us at all times. Each piece represents an aspect of a person's personality as well as a function of the body; each facet of a person's character can only function when supported by the others, much like how the organs in a body rely upon each other.

Media: Ceramic with oxide and raw clay decoration

supper's really lonely

you're ok with it really

ok ok ok ok

fine fine fine fine

great great great great

thanks, alright I guess

this is pretty easy

I mean you're pretty traditional

it's nice we don't have to

discuss it in agonizing detail

in my coming-out café

blank expression, foreign thoughts

an attempt at personal questions

hmmm

I like soft, I say

soft is my type

as if I'm talking to one of my girlfriends in middle school defending attraction decisions

soft? yeah

I think you'll have two sons

mom

I can feel it nelly, my intuition

tells me so

mom, you need to understand

it's my intuition you can't

argue intuition

with science, maybe

religion

safety

security

comfort

but this

your Machiavellian serves

when I was younger all I had

to do, all I had to say

all all all I had to

I don't want to have to

life

are you sure, I think so

nelly, ok ok ok

you fix your lipstick

and when I smile you say

the left half of my face

angles weird

fix it, you say it's not nice

it's just a little bit

just think about it

just

I AM IN THE  
MOOD FOR  
TAKING  
WHAT I WANT  
AND ENJOY-  
ING IT EN-  
TIRELY

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My practice deals with the re-enactment of an existing social phenomenon: the promotion of the self via digital photographic platforms. I'm interested in systems of representation that lead to expose the paradox inherent to (self) portraiture: the performance of the self as 'other'.

I am interested in the hyper-sexualised representation of the self (myself) and the hybridization between human and new technologies: the way they have culturally evolved and changed our understanding of how we want to be perceived in our contemporary society. As we spend more time facing our computer screens, Internet and social networks have become tools aiding the progression of online identities. The loneliness of the being in front of the computer screen is combined with the ability of choosing the images used to portrait who we are to invisible virtual audiences.

Whilst the mainstreaming of pornography is considerably influencing women to construct hyper-sexualised versions of themselves, together with digital photography, the Internet offers a platform where micro-celebrity can be developed with exceptional potential of image diffusion.

This newfound visibility produced by the online world extends possibilities to the digital representation of the self to be performed as re-defined identities.

This work points to the awkwardness of the public display of the sexualized self for the camera. It is conceptually grounded around me, my body and around perception of women - mainly in the media, online and onto the photographic surface.

Here the process of making the work has evolved to an absolute let go of the image-making control by putting myself in the context of having visuals done by external contributors. I offer my services as a model, for different genres of visual productions, all connecting to sexually loaded (or further more) imagery. The outcome is a digitally constructed identity.

I interact with the visibility and development of its online existence made exclusively through the perpetuation of promotion, sharing, retweeting, etc. The result is the dissemination of the images online that are later taken (re-appropriated) from their original online context, using

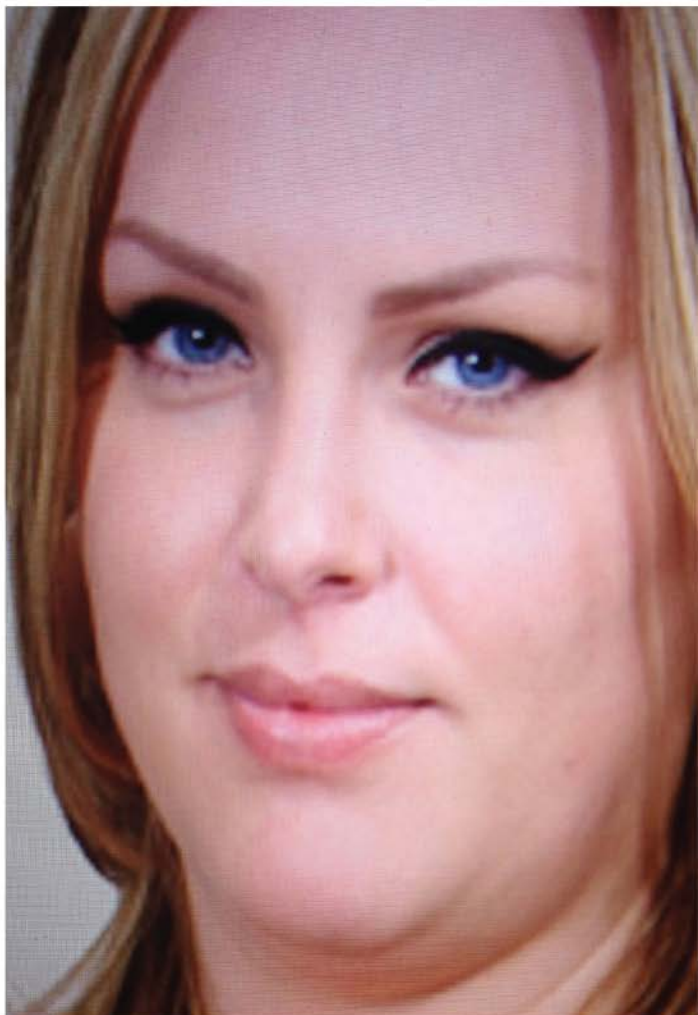
screen-captures or by re-photographing the images from the computer screen. The pixelated texture of the images ultimately reminds the viewer that the work originates from the screen, the direct interface between the viewer and the image.

Although the work undeniably references ideas pertaining to exhibitionism, it simultaneously points to an insecurity of visible public display that resists the anonymity and partial invisibility inherent to individuals' common online presence against a wide audience.

This body of work is partially concerned with authorship and online identity, we are also reminded that ultimately the work exists as a succession of small-scale performances executed exclusively for the camera.







Emma Gruner





## I Am, I Am Not

My mother told me that I am a treasure,  
that I should never let anyone treat me  
like anything less.

I told her that, while I may be a treasure,  
I am not a prize  
because while I may be one of a kind,  
I am not something to be won  
and treasured for such a material reason.  
Nor am I a trophy;  
you cannot win me away from myself  
as I am immune to your selfishness  
and you cannot keep treating women  
like goblets of water,  
taking what you want  
and considering the container  
to be your own belonging.

to submit to the next issue  
please send your work to  
[girlsgetbusyzine@gmail.com](mailto:girlsgetbusyzine@gmail.com)

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