



56

%

Stop being a pussy." "Fuck you."

My first kiss took place
in Rite-Aid.
No. Seriously.

Sometimes scary movies
and noses touching lead to
awkward kisses.

Summer camp, seventh grade. Now she has like, thirty tattoos.

In the dirt. Behind a car. Under the stars.
Romantic, no?

56% SPRING 2009

Head Editor • Alicia Johnston
Editors • Risa Griffin • Abby Wardell • Adrienne Wolter

Athena (cover) • Megan Llewellyn

“What is Feminism?” • Risa Griffin • 2

Lily (photograph) • Rita Seabrook • 4

Anonymous • Vivian Buchanan • 5

Package/Packaging • Jim Katz • 6

Thoughts on a Diving Board* • Sarah Dougherty • 7

White Flower (photograph) • Alyssa Van Denburg • 8

Alarm Sounds Too Early • Laura Paul • 9

Pony Bowls (pottery) • Robin Nordmoe • 10

Polymer Ashes • Adrienne Wolter • 11

The Patriarch (photograph)* • Lainey McFarlane • 12

The Stereotype We Don't Talk About* • Johanna Ralsten • 13

Wireframe • Adrienne Wolter • 16

Erick (photograph) • Eva Ceja • 18

Tears • Anonymous • 19

Manipulation (artwork) • Elizabeth Bailey • 20

Conclusion • Sam Hoeffler • 22

Feminist Sonnet 4 • Hannah Markley • 23

Passed* • Carling FitzSimmons • 24



First kisses, told in ten words or less,
are distributed throughout the magazine.

* Contest Winner

“ What is Feminism ? ”

Risa Griffin

“My idea of feminism is self-determination, and it's very open-ended: every woman has the right to become herself, and do whatever she needs to do.”

- *Ani DiFranco*

The above quotation, by feminist musician Ani DiFranco, in which she defines her own brand of feminism, aligns very closely with my idea of the movement and the cause. As simplistic, and, in some ways, anti-radical, as this definition of feminism may seem, if actually applied it has an immense reach and significance. The creation of a society in which every woman, or for that matter every man or child, has the “right to become her (or his) self, and do whatever she (or he) needs to do” would mean the complete overhaul of nearly every existing political and social structure in practically every society, as well as the questioning of gender, race, class, sexuality and other boundaries and institutions.

The feminist movement in the United States has undergone countless renovations and transformations, well beyond the oft-mentioned “waves” that are used to categorize it. It began as a struggle to attain the same legal and political rights (to vote, to employment, to property) for women as held by men. Later, especially during the 1960s and 70s, the fight shifted to allow women to have sex (through birth control, legal abortion and shifting social norms) with some level of equality with men, and a degree of personal choice, as well as to question the inherent sexism of many political and social institutions. Today, feminism is inextricably intertwined with movements to end race, class, sexual-orientation and other forms of systematic inequality and domination.

The prompt for this essay asked us to explain feminism to someone who is hostile to it, afraid of it, or dismissive of it as irrelevant. I am sure that every feminist could write much longer papers on their own experiences doing just that. From the age of thirteen, when I first self-identified as a feminist, I have been explaining feminism, and defending its intentions and relevancy to an audience that included classmates, parents, professors and friends. However, as my understanding of feminism, and its further inclusion into my own definition of self, have developed, the way in which I go about this discussion has changed drastically. The usual line of argument by feminists, for feminism, seems to be to claim that feminism is not actually so radical, and that really, most people are feminists, they just don't know it. It is to claim that feminism is simply a “stigmatized” word, and that it isn't really as scary as everyone thinks it is. Though I once touted this line of thinking, I have more recently come to take a very different route in my explanation and defense of feminism.

Feminism is “stigmatized” by existing social powers with good reason, it is dangerous. It threatens a system and an ideology that have been in place for many years, and one that provides powerful individuals (men, people of the racial majority, the wealthy)

a great deal of privilege and control. Many argue that feminism is denigrated because “people don’t understand what it means,” namely, that feminism isn’t as scary as everyone thinks it is. While I agree that many people don’t necessarily know the aims of the feminist movement (even many feminists don’t know, as they seem to be constantly shifting and debated), I would also assert feminism is, in fact, very scary, to the hegemonic system of inequality. The fact that many people, especially those who currently experience some form of privilege as a result of sexism, are “scared” of feminism is both natural and rational. However, to try to deny the fact that their fear is justified, or to deny the truly revolutionary goals of a developed feminism would be to weaken the movement. Instead, the aim of feminism must be not to make itself seem less radical, less threatening or “less scary,” but instead to convince people of why this drastic and radical movement, as scary as it might be, would in fact liberate and benefit both genders, all races, all classes, etc.

Charlotte Bunch, a feminist, activist, and fellow North Carolinian once said that “Feminism is an entire world view or gestalt, not just a laundry list of women’s issues.” This statement defines, for me, both what feminism is, and what it is not, despite many accusations to the contrary. Feminism cannot simply attempt to tweak, or even to subvert, the existing system of inequality through small changes. As long as any sort of hierarchal system exists, feminism, and feminists, are not done. Much of the apprehension of feminism, at least outwardly, is based upon the fear that feminists seek to simply reverse existing systems of inequality, putting themselves on top, and historically dominant groups (men, whites, heterosexuals) on the bottom. This, in fact, would be a very faulty feminism. Instead, the movement must seek to reject any sort of institutional or social inequality.

Feminism is, in many ways, a humanist movement. It fights for the end to structural and institutional inequality, created and maintained by a patriarchal, capitalist state. I recognize gender inequality as a building block, and tool for enforcement, for a plethora of other hierarchal, constructed forms of oppression. A successful feminist theory and movement must include a recognition of the importance of race, class, and a superfluity of other tools of inequality that both benefit from, and help to enforce gender oppression. Therefore, feminism is relevant to everyone. Race and class oppression are often enforced through gendered means (the supposed “hyper sexuality” of African Americans, the feminization of Asians, the accused irresponsible reproduction of the poor, etc.). Moreover, women suffer at elevated degrees from other forms of discrimination.

Arguing that feminism isn’t scary defeats its purpose. The goal of feminism should be to help people (women and men) question the existing system, as well as virtually every force that has gone into the creation of their gender, race and class identity. This is, rightfully, a very scary proposition. Instead of denying how terrifying this can be, feminism needs to recognize and embrace just how radical, how revolutionary, and yes, how scary it is. Then, it must show people how, as scary and discomforting as the questioning and challenging that feminism prompts can be, it is even more frightening to allow the current system of inequality and oppression to continue to exist. Feminism must help people (of both genders) to see that, under the existing system, no one is free to “become herself, and do whatever she needs to do,” and that the ability to do this is worth fighting for.



It was like what I expected,
except with a girl.

A n o n y m o u s

Vivian Buchanan

I move to the table
by the window, in the sun
when it's former occupants depart
(I have had my eye on it)
and immediately my body
begins to soak up the warmth
haloing it. At first my eyes
squinting to slow the change
of light, I am some sort
of reptile, absorbing the
heat my form cannot seem
to produce on it's own.
But then, a quick glance
at the rest of the coffee shop
reminds me I am nothing
like a chameleon blending
into it's rock, for the
cloudless day can only reach
this table, my table, and
my presence is thus shining
in the otherwise dark place.
In fact, it is the others, here,
who I cannot see, my eyes
blinded with my spotlight.
If I wait, let the slight
pain jump in my eyes as they
adjust to see the environment
outside my heating pad, I'll
see that no other coffee drinker
notices my illumination—the
glow of my table concerns
no other. I am still anonymous,
still cold-blooded and quiet,
alone attempting homeostasis.

*Pressed lips to mine,
Postage-stamp style.
Signed! Sealed! Delivered!*



Package / Packaging

Jim Katz

Climbing down, the charm of magpies scatters.
Adjusting the bandage, s/he is
a collage of genitals.

The Sky dropped snow. S/he
picked a flake off her shirt, squeezed
her thumb and forefinger together: caving,
changing form. The living
room is full of packing peanuts.

I show the audience
only the closed curtain
of my body.

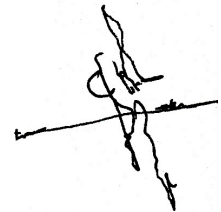
Her pulse throbbed against
the gurney for six hours:

rounds are flattened
folds are cut,
length is formed.

They send what of my body
isn't me
to Mount Rumpke.

Outside, the flakes broaden
into wide white leaves, melt into
stomped grass.

He throws away
old stripper clothes, but the living
room is full of packing peanuts.



CONTEST WINNER

Thoughts on a Diving Board

Sarah Dougherty

The water below clustered together like a pack of silver beads. Up from the pool hummed the silent cry of silence; a drumbeat against the silly wind. Who knew how many blades of grass, stacked one top of another, it would take to reach the plank from which I stood? Maybe less if you used Bermuda grass, which is the thick kind that fathers spend a fortune on removing from what they hope to restore as their purebred, Bentgrass lawns. My knowledge of grasses is pretty narrow, frankly, but I learned a bit about it from my neighbor, Ms. Cornwallis, back in the days when I mowed my father's lawn for eight dollars an acre. It wasn't much, but it would be after a few good rains— enough, I gauged, to buy a replica of a Mark Rothko painting I wanted for my room. Ms. Cornwallis was pretty nice I guess, but her elderly habits often interfered with her likeability. I would come bumping noisily down the slope of my lawn towards her greenhouse, and almost immediately, she would produce herself from what looked like the sweatiest, mossiest building I'd ever seen, and scuttle towards my tractor, weighted, it seemed, by the enormous hat that flopped like a pancake over her head. No, it was very kind of her but I couldn't accept a glass of lemonade at that point, but enjoy the gardening!—what? ENJOY YOUR GARDENING. There embodies the nature of our bi-weekly exchange, which continued only a year until her wealthy, five-car garage son swept her away to the Friendly Center Retirement Community, which I'm confident has a decent meal-service and attends to whatever scraggly ferns she has sprawling from the shelves. They make good lemonade, too. Now, when my tractor flies down the slope, bucking over gopher-holes and other anonymous trenches, I peer into the empty greenhouse and think how glad I am not to be watching Golden Girls in a reclining bed in Friendly Center. How very strange. And how very strange that my toes, curled tightly under the edge of the board, should ache from holding on so tightly. My fifth toes barely boast the capacity to move at all, but, determined not to be delivered to the genetic island of exile for vestigial limbs, clutch tightly. A bead of sweat rolls over a toe and plops into the pool. Soon I will be swimming, I think, because it is one of my favorite things.



Chlorine drenched, toes
clenched, wet skin on wet
skin.

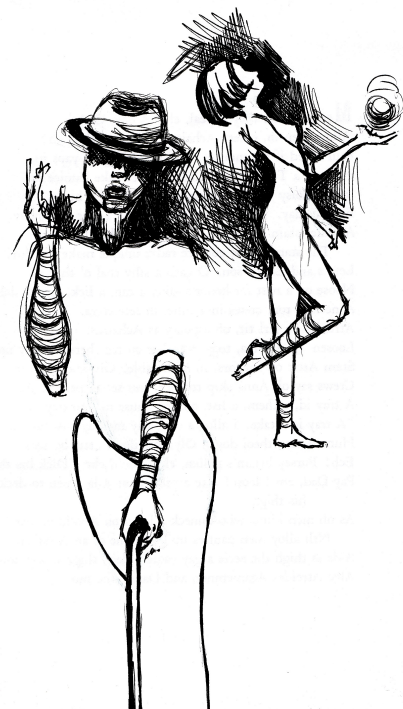
We rolled around central park,
swapping spit and touching tongues.

Grinning, she whispered: "Let me teach you how to kiss."

Alarm Sounds Too Early

Laura Paul

The Breakfast Toast and Frozen Juice met at sundown The Night Before
no one really knows what Trouble Ensued but
the next day Toast was burnt out with Grief
crumbling at the Least Mention of what had happened
(when was the last time I read the fire hazard warning
I pulled the appliance packaging out of my Pantry just to be safe).
Juice, sloshed and Under the Table
was an unreliable source
and therefore I hesitated leery of the Sticky Floor.
The newspaper on the Kitchen Table read NATION MOURNS SPILLED MILK
Shocked I called my family and friends they Hadn't Heard--
Teapot shrill in the Background who knows what they actually were saying
("Wonderful! I'm thrilled with the silk, Honey!"
oh why did I even bother calling her).
And thus I finished the Raspberry Jam
(with a plain, grey Earl fuming across from me
the geraniums in the Green Glass Jar wilting under his gaze)
spreading the last of it with Spoon
because Knife all bent out of shape was of no Help.



*crazy eight champions present: a kiss.
Atlas, a dead fish.*



close your eyes
I have something for you
peck
GASP.

Polymer Ashes

Adrienne Wolter

Your memory slips between my thumbs like clay
softened by my palm's heat,
unchilled dough clinging and chipping
onto the rolling pin.
I was soft, then sour,
and I'm still spitting lemon seeds
even as I bring you up laughing. This
is who you were
and who I failed to be,
derogatory, intoxicating, senseless, sexless,
spilling your identity across the cutting board.
Or maybe it's just me--
your polymer transience rolls over my eyelids
as I watch branch silhouettes whip my window;
your black curtains, smooth French oozing
into guttural German, Phoenix, Rammstein,
mother-drone, queen size bed--
for the longest time I thought you broke me
and sometimes I still do,
but mostly now
I just miss you.



Unimpressive, uncertain, unremarkable-
should have been with him, not her.



The Stereotype We Don't Talk About

Johanna Ralsten

One of the downfalls of the fabulous Taft Cottages (or the “senior retirement housing,” as my friend Rob says) is the “one bathroom” feature. One toilet, one shower, three loofah sponges – if you haven’t taken your QR course yet, I’ll tell that this is a problem of ratio. While you don’t have to wear flip-flops, timing becomes the new, pressing issue. Our solution has been an informal schedule with the fastest (myself) going first. Despite the impeccable simplicity of this system, lo-and-behold, the first Monday after Spring Break, there was a glitch in the matrix.

We’re still not exactly sure what happened. Room #2’s occupant, who has requested – for unobservable, irrational reasons – that I call him Mitchell throughout this article, claims he always conscientiously waits until my normal end shower time of 8:30 AM before using the bathroom. Whether this is my “normal” time or not, the bottom line is that if I don’t get in the shower before Mitchell, it is over. Mitchell takes a good fifteen to twenty minute shower, whereas I take a great deal of pride in my maximum-eight-minute routine, and although I seem laid-back, when I have a plan, I like to stick to it. If you f- with the plan, I become, in the kind words of my mother, ruthless.

To top it all off, Mitchell has given me permission to inform you that he is gay. So ten minutes after knocking on the bathroom door, when I’m still sitting in my room, unwashed, I begin thinking about how his shower is not just frustrating but is actually doing the entire gay population a disservice because it reinforces condescending, simplistic stereotypes. Typical, I mentally mutter, and continue thinking about how bad I smell and what I’m going to use to cover up the smell before work at 9:00 AM.

Eventually I give up and start smearing on the deodorant. Suddenly, I am struck with a guilty thought: I made his shower a political agenda. How limiting is that? Furthermore, am I frustrated by the superficial homosexual stereotype or, knowing my roommate is gay, did I angrily ascribe the cliché? And just how angry would I be if my roommate did the same thing to me?

For those of you who don’t know me, I have a personal vendetta with parking, but it’s not my limitations that frustrate me so much as the fact that my sex is “known” for this problem – and I conform to it! Knowing many women who can park, I hate to think that my behavior represents a negative stereotype rather than my own inability to conceive of how much space a Toyota occupies. However, here I was, in my room, thinking my roommate shouldn’t be allowed to take long showers because of his sexual preference. Despite my own hatred of the double standard, my unwashed head stuck to the party line, even if it only as a means going against the alleged grain.

Maybe this is where the majority of my frustration is born, in this paradox of believing so strongly that stereotypes need to be contradicted that I use those stereotypes as a litmus test for what people should not do. I want straight males to cook, and girls who understand football get extra points in my mind. In my quest for equality, I make stereotypes into rigid un-truths which are just as restricting.

It was hard to admit my silly anger, but for some reason, I felt like it was important. When I begrudgingly told my roommate why I was so mad, he shook his head and wryly told me, "Johanna, I take forever in the bathroom because I'm not getting any younger. This," he continues, gesturing to his face, "takes longer every year.

"Plus," he added, "I tend to fall asleep in the hot water. I have to hold onto the bar so I don't fall." My irritation disappeared behind a huge smile. Even though nothing was really solved, in that moment, there was a chance for me to confess, for Mitchell to explain, and for both of us to laugh.

I'm not saying that my paradoxical, love-hate relationship with, and reliance-
abhorrence on stereotypes is gone. I still hate to be boxed-in but find myself holding fast to social norms. But what I did discover in that laugh is that when we begin to discuss what we're honestly thinking – even when it's ugly – something is helped. Mitchell didn't excuse my reaction but he didn't criticize me either. Instead, he clarified his shower-time in a way that did not deny the behavior but freed him from the narrow-minded political agenda I had crafted for his bathing routine. My rigid thinking was corrected, but that only happened because of the open, albeit sometimes freakishly dysfunctional, relationship Mitchell and I have developed.

In 1935, Gloria Steinem attacked the advertising industry's presentation of women, stating that when women "stop being comparatives ... [they] begin to be unique." Seventy years later, I couldn't agree more – for everyone – but the fact is, until we talk about how we think and acknowledge our horrible compulsion to compare and reduce, we won't go very far. However, when we do face those awful, dark, illogical thoughts together – in other words, when we live in place where people are both honestly curious and openly empathetic – we find room for understanding and maybe even some comedy. The worst stereotype becomes the ones we leave unexpressed and, consequently, unexamined. Only when we feel like we can say what we think and have that thinking honestly examined can real change can happen. Or maybe we'll all just get to shower before work. I know my co-workers would be happy either way.

Fifteen. Living room. Goodnight kiss- I asked for it.

I just wanted to get it over with. bad idea.

Game night
Cold stairwell
Warm lips
Wet tongue
What game?

Anticlimactic,
and wet.

Movie theater. High school English teacher two rows ahead. Gross.
He was drunk, and I was not. I was seventeen.

I was so in love... he was so much older.



at bar mitzvah party.
love boys in yarmulkes.

W i r e f r a m e

Adrienne Wolter

Smith stared down into the box of wires, mesmerized by the coils splayed before him. This had happened before: helplessly, he tried to follow a wire, any specific wire, in an attempt to locate the connections and disarm the bomb, disable the explosion before it ever happened. The bombers didn't use color-coding anymore; they trained their squads in the quick sorting of their own devices, taught them to evaluate and sift through the tangles of their own weapons. He swore they included unused, extra connections just to add to the mass of confusion shoved inside the tiny box. They used the same colors and thicknesses of wire for each connection, and their stark whiteness in the dark shell of the explosive burned any untrained disabler's eyes and confused them into hesitation, which was never good in this particular area.

The commotion behind him had seemed to pause; the sounds of gunshots, the loudest of anything, were muffled by the cloud of fog surrounding him. He needed to disable this bomb. Smith glared into the box, desperate now to follow the connections thoroughly and accurately. Bad things happened to sloppy agents.

He couldn't concentrate. Squeezing his eyes shut, he fought back a wave of nausea.

He opened his eyes to his wife, his children, himself: they were tangled in wires, wires like pythons, squeezing around every joint, pressing on his neck. He struggled against their binding control, the same that was cutting off his air supply and forming deep grooves in the skin of his arms and wrists. His wife appeared unaffected, still standing before the mirror, carefully washing her face with a red washcloth. His son's white, bloodless fingers gripped a tennis racket, and the yellow ball rolled off through the white wires. Did Nathan play tennis? Smith couldn't remember. His daughter's ipod cords tangled imperceptibly with the others, and she had her eyes shut; Danielle rocked her head to the beat as blue lips mouthed ingrained lyrics, her tapping foot unrestricted by the writhing mess around them.

And suddenly Smith stood invisibly amidst them, still entangled, in their kitchen. Out the bay window he watched in horror as his daughter ran to meet a jeepful of twenty-something men. Beside it, Nathan smacked the tennis ball in a repeating, mindless motion, again and again, against the garage wall. Twap. Twap. Twap. His wife, Samantha, stood before the huge mirror in the bathroom, rubbing moisturizer on her face in tight, tiny circles. The jeep backed quickly out of the driveway, past Nathan and his mindless serving, jerked to a stop, and then drove back in, so close to the boy it made Smith cringe. Danielle flew out of the car. She ran through Smith to her mother's purse, dug through layers of cosmetics to locate the tiny black change purse, and removed three crisp twenties. She then returned to the car full of predatory men, all sporting shark teeth and squinty eyes and shady, smooth grins, each out for his own slice of Smith's beautiful teenage daughter.

Twap. Twap. Twap. The patter continued. His son, fourteen, as tall as Smith, smacked the ball with every long swing of the racket, glared in the face of the yellow globe, grunted with every strike like it pained him to go on. Twap. Twap. Twap. Samantha applied foundation, rolled on pink blush, rubbed the apples of her cheeks blankly. He looked on helplessly, trapped in wires in the center of everything.

Twap. Twap. Twap. With every shot, his son panted. When his right shoe became loose, he kicked it off onto the driveway, never missing a beat. He stood in a sock and a shoe on the burning blacktop and whacked the tennis ball between every rattle of breath. Twap. Twap. Twap.

Smith's emotionless wife swept a curved mascara wand over long lashes after painting lines above them with a pencil; she lined her lips and smeared on scarlet lipstick.

Night fell in fast-forward. Nathan had lost the other shoe and it lay face-down in a bush beside the driveway. The ball had faded to a cracked gray sphere. Sweat rolled into his eyes, and every few hits he swept it to the side. Twap. Twap. Twap. He yelled with every hit now, threw stringy arms at the tired and beaten ball in near-anguish. Twap. Twap. Twap.

Then something changed.

Someone eased off the speed, slowed everything down to punchy, short increments of time that seemed to run like a heartbeat.

His son screamed, at last swinging uncontrollably at the defeated ball. It flew past him, and he stared over his shoulder at it—he didn't even raise an exhausted arm to prevent its majestic arc through the wide bay window, which glittered in the sunset of its explosion. It came directly at Smith, in the middle of everything—he tried to dodge, but the wires prevented the motion—and it soared straight through his forehead, crashing into the mirror. It, too, shattered slowly, almost drizzling to his wife's high-heeled feet, and she screamed as it carved gashes in her pantyhose, drawing blood. He watched layers of makeup crack with the strong show of emotion, peeling like paint and floating in waves to the floor: a broken mask, a shed skin.

The jeep had rounded the corner, had climbed the driveway where his son stood isolated, and Danielle was out of the vehicle before it stopped moving, stumbling unseeingly past Nathan to the door and yelling incomprehensible things to the jeep's occupants; she ran back and gave the driver a sloppy kiss before entering the house. Samantha was still screaming, crunching circles over the glass with tipsy white, scarlet-streaked shoes. Smith watched silently as his son collapsed, hugging the worn racket to his chest; he gasped as the jeep screeched out of the driveway, but it missed his son by an inch, instead rolling mercilessly over the first kicked-off tennis shoe. His daughter opened the door in what she must have thought was a very sneaky fashion—it would have actually been rather disrupting had anyone been asleep—and had carefully clicked shut the door before her mother's screams registered.

Smith heard his heartbeat in his head, to the tune of the tennis ball on the concrete wall—the wires pulled and pressed and he breathed in punctuated gulps and shut his eyes to the struggles of his close and distant family.

Then his eyes were opened to the field, to the case open before him. The battlefield seemed once again almost entirely silent, like it was underwater, and above muted yells, louder than anything, he heard now the tennis-ball-heartbeat.

Blankly, he plucked a wire at random from the box and lifted it gently. He nestled his wire-cutters around it and pressed.

Nothing happened.

He knew what could have happened. And it didn't. Suddenly the world was full of aching, blistering noise. He heard gunshots, booming voices, guttural commands, pounding footsteps, the cut-off thunder of a chopper overhead; everything was on fast-forward again as soldiers ducked around him in a line. The lifeless bomb and its shell lay beside him. He picked his radio up in a shaking hand and alerted the higher-ups, still feeling the tennis-ball-heartbeat, reminding him of his responsibility.



T e a r s

Anonymous

O,
You
Took it
From her body.
You made her fall,
Yet the problem still
Lies within the situation.
Now only you can fix her pain,
Though you cannot give her it
Back, she always will still cry.
She needs a single word,
A word from you:
Sorry.



*Soulmates finally together again
across time and space.*

Wet pavement, willow tree. Girls kiss better.

He blushed, laughed, went "eww," and kissed me back.

Clicked (directed by = bottle), our
faces barely on target.

Wet red jolly rancher

In clenched fist

Cherry chapped lips

He'd just eaten cheetos at a
6th grade block party.

He ate cigarettes.

Then he kissed me.

Senior Exercise Conclusion

Samantha Hoeffler

From:

An Examination of the State's Role in the Constriction of Women's Choice:

A Comparative Analysis of Female Genital Cutting in Mali and Abortion in the U.S.

The women in Mali and the United States are facing their own, unique challenges. But they can recognize the similarities in their struggles and come together. I have argued that women's issues may seem starkly different across cultures—abortion versus female genital cutting—but the battles are in fact the same. In both countries, women must fight for their right to visibility. In both countries, the state has become in many ways not an ally, but an enemy—an institution that women must challenge or circumvent. In both countries women's needs are seen as inferior to men's. Malian and American women face the same problems; the issues are simply manifest in different ways. These two issues—occurring in very different contexts—are linked through the state, the law, and choice.

At the crux of each of these struggles is the intersection between the law and society. In these cases, the law can work to help women. Yet, I contend, in its current form, it does not do so. Women who work to raise awareness about the injustices legitimated by the law are taking the first steps to change. As Bourdieu wrote, the path to change requires “turning the weapons of the strong against them” (1998: 32). If women are forced to work within the dominant field, then they must wield the weapons of the strong. They must use the law as an avenue to empowerment, not oppression.

I maintain that for women's rights to progress, the state must be inherently altered. Men monopolize and concentrate dominance over women. To achieve sex equality and demand the state's accountability to women, the state itself has to be dismantled. Its foundation, in its current form, is one based on sex inequality. Moreover, both Mackinnon and Bourdieu suggest a new system, an abandonment of the old. They both agree that to achieve sex equality we must have a new conception of the state. The hierarchical, patriarchal state, present in both Mali and the U.S., cannot in its present form facilitate sex equality.

This confrontation with the law is not possible, in neither Mali nor the U.S., without unity. The global women's movement is segmented and inconsistent. Through the legal and social connections emphasized in this paper, women can come together. They must realize and celebrate their similarities. For transnational alliances to be fortified, women across cultures must first see their struggles as larger than themselves, and women across cultures as counterparts. The movement is ready for a progressive shift; it is up to women to make it happen on an international scale.

From :
A Feminist's Progress:
A Brief Response to the
Pilgrim and the Harlot

Hannah Markley

Commencement day came and I back to school
To get my degree in femin-ist lit,
Relay the word to a new college pool,
Help shape young minds just a small bit,

Girls to women, boys to men without rage
Ending oppression in all shapes and pairs,
Feminists regroup in this nuclear age!
We'll fight the good fight for our sakes theirs. ¹

This, my choice, woman, feminist scholar,
To change the life I first beguiled,
Think not on bra-burners or man hating cholera,
But upon the promise of mother to child,²

All join together, weakness aside,
Exchange hate for letters and let 'er ride!

¹ This sonnet focuses on a more recent development in feminist studies and academia in general which attempts to understand the multiple, intersecting vectors of power and privilege that are not distinct. That is to say, as scholars use intersection theory to understand the complicated nature of identity which is never singular, so too has feminism begun to address issues of class, race, nationality, and region as they structure gender oppression and, indeed, give rise to other modes of oppression which become hard to distinguish. bell hooks describes feminism as a “movement to end all oppression everywhere regardless of race, class, or gender (hooks 1). While hooks’ definition is quite the tall order, it signals an attempt to move away from identity obsessed politics, building instead a new kind of politics based in a concept of social responsibility and humanity.

² This stanza works to destabilize and decenter stereotypes of feminists, revealing that feminists are not cold-hearted, manipulative, political upstarts like the Senator from *GI Jane*, but rather, that feminists are born out of communities and experience like any other human. Feminists must be understood as such because the label “feminist” only hints at the possibility of an individual’s values and like many words is multifaceted.

CONTEST WINNER

P a s s e d

Carlina FitzSimmons

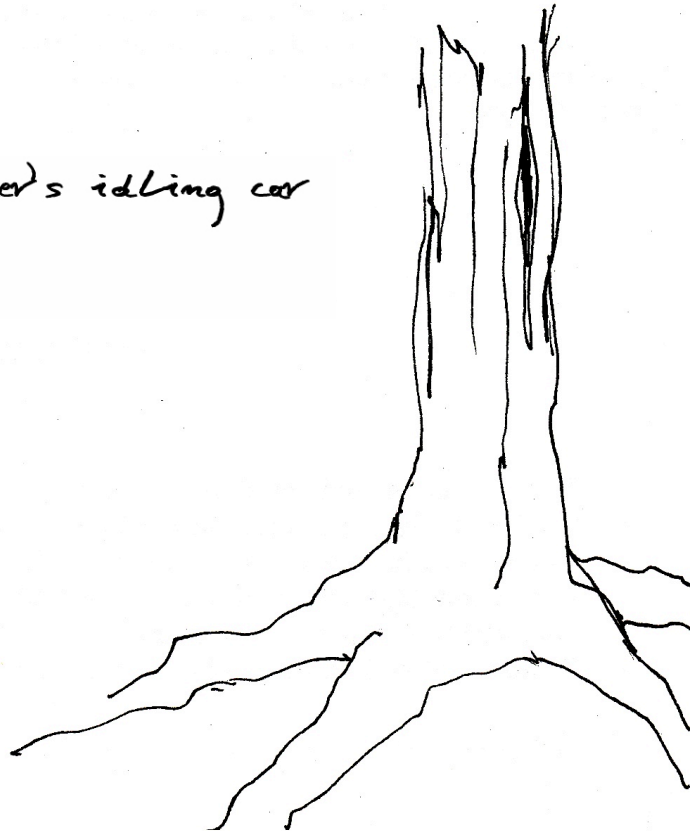
Teddy and I, we used to think it was
the funniest thing. At camp that first year,
when the Jessicas ruled the kickball diamond,

Teddy and I held meetings in the dugout,
exploring the shapes of shitake and funk and pitch
in our mouths. We held them between our lips
like cherries. We broke them open slowly
and let them bleed between our teeth.

We spent that whole week thinking of new curses:
dam (like a beaver) and bitch (like a dog). But it wasn't until
Friday afternoon during the sixth inning, right after I whispered
H-E-double hockey sticks, that Teddy blurted out the word
passed, and we laughed until she started crying,

because she had learned it for the first time
the weekend before, at her grandmother's grandmother-less house.

*Exhaust from your father's idling car
mingles with our breath.*



Leaning against a pool table, arms wrapped
around her neck.

Doing "homework," sister walked in on us,
fucking awkward!

He ate my face; I
decided to eat pussy

Met my first love on junior prom night; cliché bliss.

Superbowl Sunday: I climbed on top and planted it.

kneading my training-bra breasts, he asked, "is this okay?"

How could he miss?

Tomorrow's headline: LIPS CRASH! NO SURVIVORS.

Tall and thin, slightly awkward,
he halfway missed my mouth.

Rain and a brunette in Paris.

Too much tongue.

Storage closet with boy.

Tongue in nose. Out of closet.

His tongue is like a dog's. I need a shower.

All I could think about
was clams.

Behind the bleachers. Not unlike kissing a St. Bernard.

Gross.

Jeremy:

Came on too strong,

Didn't last long.

Slobber.

stairwell. first day of high school.
big caterpillar eyebrows.

His enormous tongue ruined the movie,
but I still swooned.

*thirteen, young, naïve, you missed, it
was the grossest kiss*

Best friend, on the school bus, too much tongue.

HE SUCKED UP MY LIPS LIKE
A CELESTIAL VACUUM.

**"That was awkward, we should
try again sometime," I said.**



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