

from the mouths of wolves bellowing
forth:

—ask, and all
doom forfeit, though the
cannons
aimed so perilously
stand—
staunch unrelenting,
a voice apart
the havoc,
halting, sprinting—
driven against teeth,
glinting—

if we must run;
 like wolves into,
 the fray
 and forever lost
 —a song.

from the mouths of wolves bellowing

forth:

ask

Trigger Warning:

This zine contains material about rape and sexual abuse.

Please read in a safe space.

I would like to thank all my editors and people who supported me while writing this zine. Wren for always editing it again and Cea for always being there when I needed someone and pushing me to write this.



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I love hearing from you!
Please send comments, suggestions, letters, your zines, other zines, feelings and riddles to: Joey.mountainlion@gmail.com or

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Or visit
www.homeiswhereyoufindyourfeet.wordpress.com

Resources:

Zines: "Support", "Learning Good Consent", and "Ask First!", available online at [zinelibrary.info]

For trauma,
[theicarusproject.net/resources]

"Goodsex/Badsex" [email Kyla at joybeatsoppression@riseup.net]

"See no, Hear no, Speak no" [zinelibrary.info]

"Girl/Boy"

The Ethical Slut

Phone Numbers:
1.800.799.SAFE: The national domestic violence hotline. 24hrs

1800.656.HOPE: The rape, abuse, and incest national network's hotline. 24hrs.

Ask: [ask, ahsk] *Verb:* A way to derive consent for an action towards another thing; an inquiry made that understands and accepts no as an answer; no being the absence of yes.

I've been thinking about writing something like this for a while now, but have been really reluctant to. It's not because it's something that's triggering for me, but because I was nervous about writing the zine poorly. I wasn't sure if the words would come out and mean anything or if people would want to hear them. It's at the urging of my old partner that I've decided to write about my experience with rape. We were both interested in reading a male assigned person's account of sexual abuse. Sometimes I feel like it's overlooked how males are pressured. Males carry a lot of privilege and power. Despite this power, males can be raped even when physically they are enacting upon or 'the one thrusting' their partner. In some radical circles I have not felt accepted as a survivor because I am male. People will recognize what has happened, but always with a slight belittlement that makes me feel like they're not really taking it seriously. Like when I confide that I've been raped, I've had people assume that it was from an older male and are shocked to learn it was from a female assigned person my own age. Outside radical communities, rape crisis centers don't offer a lot of training on how to support male survivors and there is no legal definition that contextualizes my experience as even being rape. When I go to get tested I get told how responsible to my partners I am for being there at all. There is no thought that I'm there because I'm scared, because someone did something fucked up to me. I understand that the experience is different for males, but there are similarities when male-female power dynamics are reversed. Patriarchy is not the source of rape culture, though it fosters a huge portion of it. Not just boys fuck and thrust, and even when we do we're sometimes coerced and manipulated. We can find ourselves in demeaning positions and wondering what we're doing, especially when lied to and promised acceptance and warmth.

I am a cis-gendered white, middle class male. I'm also queer and an anarchist. A lot of the commu-

nities I talk about in this zine are anarchist communities. That is the perspective that I'm coming from. And I feel like this perspective is important to recognize, because it creates the conditions under which these situations were possible. I was raped for three months by a girlfriend that was two years older than me and on coke most of the time, but I didn't know that then. These are how I remember these events. I haven't spoken to this person about them or tried to build a perfectly accurate chronology because I haven't been brave enough to confront this person yet. I wanted to write this zine because I didn't have it, and hope that others will.

I hope this zine can help people of all bodies identify triggers of their own and offer an account of how they can be deconstructed and healed from. I want to describe what abuse feels and looks like. I understand that it can be far more difficult for others than it was for me, and that some things cannot be healed, but I still hope this zine can offer comfort and whole hearted resistance and be a story to tell.

Trigger Warning: This zine can be triggering for people with histories of violence/physical abuse or sexual and emotional abuse and suicide. Please read with caution and in a safe place.

I've tried to the best of my ability to give descriptions of what each section contains in case any subject is particularly triggering

Vocabulary:

In this zine I'm going to use the word 'cunt'. I realize that many people call their junk many different things. I'm using the word cunt because I don't like the word vagina or thinking about reproductive organs as sheaths. I know a lot of female bodied people trying to reclaim this word and want to support that. I realize this might also not be my place and am sorry if it isn't. Intentionally talk about your junk!

my experience is something that I could heal from. For many others it isn't. For many their experiences have meant physical and emotional crippling, triggering every day, always feeling unsafe. For many their experiences have meant death. Survivors think about triggers everyday and have to constantly cope with an oppressive world both from the normy muggle world and the radical world. The anarchist world is not perfect because consent exists more predominantly in it than other cultures. There is still oppression and there are still rapists and perpetrators. Pick up a zine on practicing consent or supporting survivors. I have a list in the back of this zine that I've found helpful for this. Talk to each other and remember to ask!

really important to practicing consent. For me, consent was a healing praxis that as I started to practice consent more and understand it more fully I was able to get passed a lot of the fucked up things that had happened to me and also had healthier relationships. Polyamory helped me understand that it was okay that relationships were noncommittal, as long as that was mutual. It was okay to be cute on people and not want a serious relationship. I think polyamory helped a lot with being afraid of commitment or afraid to tell people how I felt if I wasn't in a position to be in a serious relationship (if one was even wanted). Consent is definitely something that is realized more as you experience more. Now I realize that sometimes I need hyper-consent to be practiced. I no longer get nauseated by getting close to people or their smells. I can talk to partners about everything we're feeling and feel good about it. Sometimes when someone that doesn't know anything about consent tries to do things with me, I get really uncomfortable and feel a little sick, though.

I try to reinforce consent whenever I can now. I just helped teach a workshop on consent at Anarchy Summer Camp with Scout. I don't think a lot of the kids that attended really knew that much about consent. A lot of them were punk kids. I've realized a lot recently that the punk and radical communities are not the same thing at all, even though punk sometimes claims to be. Punk existed as a reproduction of normative culture and was definitely still rape culture. I was from North Carolina, and I feel like consent is something that the North Carolina radical communities do very well. The communities I'm part of always make consent a big deal. Consent saved me from normative culture. More than smashing things or playing shows, I think consent is one of the most important things that separate radical culture from normative culture and the muggle world.

Consent is resistance. Once we start talking to each other it's easier to breach other barriers. Consent was the greatest resistance I could think of to world that could have easily killed me and does kill many others every day. I'm really thankful that

First kisses and other fucked up things: (Section contains instances of emotional abuse involving pregnancy and some nonconsensual acts. Not graphic.)

When I started middle school, the town I lived in didn't have one, so I got bused to the neighboring town. Elementary school was hard because I didn't have real friends, just kids that made fun of me. We got into fights sometimes that no one really won, but there were more of them, so it always seemed like I lost.

Like a lot of kids that got made fun of by muggles a lot, I got sucked into punk music. There were kids that liked me at this new school because I was into punk music. It felt good. I had friends for the first time that actually liked me. We had things to bond over, like being angry that we were constantly made fun of, or Hot Topic, or some shit like that. It made me feel normal for once. My friends weren't making fun of me the whole time that we hung out or tricking me into crawling through tiny, steel construction pipes and then banging on them with sticks when I got stuck.

In the winter of that year, I started seeing a girl named Taryn, I think she was the first girl that ever liked me. There was someone in fifth grade named Kirsten I 'went out with', but it turned out to be a big joke for a few of the girls in my class. Kirsten and I held hands once. It made me so happy until I realized it was a joke. After that I was afraid to go to school. Taryn seemed really cool to me. She didn't give a fuck. When kids threw rocks at us, she laughed with me at them with the same crazed invincibility that silly punk kids seem to have in middle school because the world doesn't seem real.

Things went really fast. It was our first date. She asked me out via a piece of paper that her friend gave to me before I got on the bus one afternoon. She came to the park across the street from school with a bunch of friends and me. We were skateboarding off the roof of a picnic shelter. The cops ended up coming and confiscating our boards.

They were hella over the top about it. Even in middle school I had funny instincts. I started to run when I saw a cop rushing towards us. The cop whipped his gun out and trained it on me, belting orders. I was eleven. It was the first time something like that had happened and eleven year-old punx me thought it was cool.

Later that day, Taryn and I ended up in my room alone. The first time we kissed it was hard and with tongue. I was really happy, but shocked and kind of disappointed. It wasn't cute like I wanted it to be. After kissing for a minute, I felt her hand going down to my pants and she unzipped them. Taryn started to go down on me. I don't even think I knew what a blowjob was then. We stayed after school sometimes to hang out. I never told my parents I had a girlfriend. I didn't think they'd let me see her or let us hang out alone. I told them I went skateboarding with friends all day. For some reason they were okay with that. Looking back, I feel like my parents let me do a lot of things that other kids would have never been allowed to do. I don't think it was because they didn't care, but were wrapped up in work and taking care of the house. Or they just didn't suspect anything *could* be wrong. It didn't make sense that there would be a problem because we weren't the kind of family that had problems.

One day after school, we were at the park across the street from school. We weren't supposed to be there because we got banned from it the previous time when the cops came. People were playing basketball and tennis. When it started to get dark, Taryn lured me into one of the plastic tubes on the jungle gym. She wanted to have sex. I asked about getting pregnant and she told me it never happened the first time. So we had sex and I came in her while her best friend James watched. About five minutes after we were done and walking around the park a man came running up to the park. He said someone said some kids were having sex in the park. I think they worked at a church. We said we'd seen some older kids on the other side of the park and he ran off in that direction.

A couple days later, Taryn was freaking out on the phone, telling me she thought she was pregnant. When I repeated what she told me before we had sex, she called

Consent was the tool that I needed to get around the nausea that I felt when I got close to people. I realize that this meant a lot more than asking if I could kiss someone or if I could touch them a certain way. After Scout and I kissed for the first time, we talked about how we felt about each other and where we wanted those feelings to go. We ended up in a loose open relationship because we lived far away from each other and I didn't think that I was ready to be primary partners with someone, or that I actually wanted to be.

Consent helped me be able to have sex and be physical with people again without feeling nauseated. There was still something else that lingered, though. As Scout and I got closer and saw more of each other, I noticed that they liked me a lot. It began to scare me a little bit and I started to push them away even though I really wanted to be in a serious relationship with them. They ended up going traveling and I went back to college. They were going to come through Asheville and visit me. They had started to push me away as well. When they did, I realized how much I liked them. I wasn't afraid of feeling something for someone anymore. When they passed through Asheville I was planning on telling them how I felt and that I wanted to be partners with them. The kid they were traveling with didn't want to come through Asheville, though, because he and Scout had become involved. I got a really disappointing phone call from Knoxville. Scout said they weren't going to come through Asheville and it devastated me. I realized that I was still pushing this person away from me because I was afraid of feeling things for them and getting in a situation where we would be in a relationship and would eventually break up. I hung up the phone and cried because I thought I would just keep pushing people away. I ended up sending them a text message, telling them exactly how I felt. It was the first time I felt brave enough to tell someone I loved them or be able to admit that to myself. Scout said they would come back to Asheville when they were done traveling and we'd see if we both still felt the same way.

I feel like communicating things like your intentions and how you feel about potential partners is

turned off by her being adamant to have sex, though that I couldn't come and didn't really want to. I just wanted her to stop going down on me because I didn't think it was safe. I ended up asking her to stop and we went to sleep. I wasn't letting myself be raped anymore, but I also wasn't feeling comfortable or okay about my sexual interactions. There was something missing and without it, I couldn't actually have sex or stay aroused.

II

The next summer I started traveling. I didn't really know how and didn't have anyone to go with, but did anyways. In Atlanta, I met Scout. They were going to a show in Asheville. I was trying to get back there. Scout ended up staying with me that night in Asheville. We flirted and talked all night. In the morning, as we sat on the fire escape watching the sun rise, I asked if I could kiss them. This was the first time I had ever done that. They said yes, and it felt so good to know that that was exactly what they wanted. It was the first time anyone had ever used consent with them either and we ended up talking about shitty ex's for a while.

When Scout and I had sex, I felt great. There was no worrying about pregnancy or disease. I was doing exactly what I wanted to do, and so were they. And we both knew it. All the uncomfortable feelings and associations I had with smells, fingers, and commitment disappeared. I didn't feel nauseated by their smell and actually immersed myself in it, wanting to bury myself in them. I was worried that I wouldn't be able to come, because I hadn't been able to since having sex with Taryn, but everything worked like I wanted it to. Whatever sense of normalcy I had been looking for I found in consent, with being able to talk to my partners and listen to them. We both knew exactly what the other wanted. What is better than that? We could ask for anything without being worried about being embarrassed, or having to trick the other person into getting into a situation where they had to do what we wanted. We just had to ask.

me stupid and said it actually usually happened on the first time. She told me about condoms. I asked her where to get some, and she said I couldn't get them. It was weeks fighting and being terrified before she got her period. It seemed like every conversation we had was about her getting pregnant. A couple days before she got her period she told me I needed to punch her in the stomach until she had a miscarriage or she would throw herself down the stairs. I just wanted to listen to NOFX and skateboard with my friends. I don't think eleven year olds are equipped with the right tools to deal with these situations.

I remember having sex ed. classes in fifth grade, but they only said that abstinence prevented pregnancy, and that was all they said.

Positionality: Being on Top and

Hating It: (Section contains instances of emotional abuse and mild descriptions of nonconsensual sex)

My twelfth birthday was coming up. Taryn and I hadn't been fighting for a while and I really wanted to have sex again, but this time in a bed and with a condom. Because of how far away we lived from each other and our parents' work schedules, I didn't see that happening. Taryn thought it was stupid. I also had no clue how to get condoms still. The party was at my house. It went fine until nighttime when Taryn pulled me into the bushes beside the house and started to make out with me. I really wanted to go back to the party because I was scared of getting caught by my parents. I tried pulling away, but she got angry and kept trying to pull me back into the bushes.

We built a bonfire behind the house and I almost burned the woods down with a bucket full of gasoline. Taryn and five or six of my friends were hanging out around the fire. Taryn started to try and make out with me again and I was okay with it, but then she unzipped my pants and hers and stuck

me inside of her. I felt her touch my pants, but then all of a sudden I was inside of her. I was really embarrassed, but didn't want to stop because I knew she would get really angry with me and my friends would all laugh and I would have to explain to them everything. I was on top, so I just kept humping her even though I didn't want to. A minute later, my brother, Jed, came running out of the house saying that he could see us from the deck. My parents were watching a movie and hadn't noticed, though. I can't remember if I came or not, but I was still terrified Taryn was pregnant. My friends laughed and said how lucky I was to be having sex. I didn't want to explain to them how I felt about not wanting to because of the bed and the condom thing. I thought they would think I was weird for wanting to do something that was normal.

Later that night, there were five or six kids hanging out in my room and Taryn tried to go down on me in front of them. I just wish she would have asked, but it was always at the strangest times. I feel like it didn't matter that other people were around to Taryn, as long as they weren't adults. I don't think she thought she would get other chances. The second an adult wasn't around we were making out or she was trying to fool around. There were definitely times that I was into it, but it embarrassed me when without any kind of notice my pants would be unzipped and my junk would be out. Taryn used to joke that you couldn't rape the willing. I don't think I realized then that being embarrassed meant I wasn't willing and I wish now that I hadn't laughed at her joke every time she said it.

It took me a long time to realize that sex was still rape even though I was on top. The physical position is what bothered me and made me think that it was consensual for a while. I was doing it, so I must have been okay with it. No one was forcing me to keep going, but it was still nonconsensual and still rape. The power dynamic here was reversed from the normative conception of rape where the male bodied person is on top and physically enacting upon the female bodied person against their will. When I say enacting, I mean that I was the person doing the physical action, which would imply decision and

that isn't the zine's purpose for me. It made me angry because her statement made me feel excluded from victimization. I didn't feel like she thought male bodied people could be raped. It made me feel like rape was exclusively something men did. I understand that rape culture is dominated by men and patriarchy, but I question the binary that keeps people from realizing that anyone can rape and anyone can be raped. Gender is not a specification for doing fucked up things.

I want this zine to be a guide for anyone. I want consent to be more fully realized and how when it's lacking in areas that we wouldn't normally think about it needing to be, people are oppressed by its absence.

Realizing Consent: (First section contains very mild description of nonconsensual sex and mild coercion involving condom use. Second section contains awesome.)

I

Two years ago was the first time that I tried to be physical with people again since the two people in high school. The first time was with a girl that I didn't really like, but was attracted to. Neither of us wanted a relationship, but we were both horny. I was living in the dorms at UNC-A then. We were fooling around one night and I asked how far she wanted to go. She said she wanted to have sex. I asked if she had a condom, and she said no. I didn't have one either, so I said that I didn't want to. She said she was on birth control and I said that it didn't matter because I wasn't only afraid of pregnancy and she hadn't been tested recently. I told her I didn't want to have sex, and she seemed really disappointed. She reminded me that she was on birth control, but I remembered to be persistent and said again that I didn't want to without a condom. I didn't know this person that well. We just kept making out, and I rubbed her through her underwear. Then she went to go down on me, which I ended up not objecting to, even though it wasn't safe. I was so

what happened. I thought that this perspective was important, especially in queer communities, because queer communities helped me understand a lot about gender roles and how healthy and unhealthy relationships functioned whether they are polyamorous or monogamous. I don't think that polyamorous relationships are necessarily the 'right' choice. I've seen poly relationships that have just as fucked dynamics as monogamous couples. I think I've seen more discussion about how relationships can be healthy with poly people, though. I go between being poly and monogonogs with people. It tends to be fluid, like relationships. I think it's important to keep fluidity in mind when talking about sexuality and even serious relationships. I think queer communities are also the space I learned the most about consent in. A lot of what happened to me, I feel like was because of a hetero-normative straight world dominated by a rape culture. I also know other male assigned people that have had similar experiences and didn't know how it affected them, or if this zine could support people going through those things deal with it better.

She asked me a little more about it, and I felt like I explained what I was trying to do fairly well, that it was a zine about my experiences with rape. She said that she actually had a zine about exactly what I was writing about. She got it for me out of her pack. I started to flip through it and noticed that it was actually a zine a male assigned person had written about men trying to work to defeat sexism and men unlearning rape. She then went on to say that she was so happy that I was writing this zine because she was so happy that women could have the support of some males.

I know that I probably didn't explain what my zine was about the best, and I want to give that person the benefit of the doubt about that, but her statement made me really angry. I wasn't writing this zine to necessarily support female assigned survivors. I want this zine to be a form of support for female assigned people and all survivors, trans, gender neutral and male assigned folk alike, but

power. This role is normally filled by the perpetrator where the victim is the person the physical action is being done to. In my case, I was a male bodied person enacting upon a female bodied person. Because of the power dynamic where males had power, literally males with swords thrusting them into females, I felt like I was in control of the situation. If I felt uncomfortable, it was my fault. Years later when I really learned about radical consent I realized that when Taryn coerced me into fucking them by putting me in a situation where it was extremely difficult for me not to, it was definitely rape.

Position is key to a lot of roles, especially roles that involve power.

I think there's a similarity with the above role reversal when Taryn would go down on me at inappropriate times. I feel like if anyone had witnessed those scenes, it would have looked like I was making a female bodied person go down on me in a public setting, because even though Taryn was doing the going down on I was still in the position of enacting upon her. I still had something I was putting in her. I feel like blow jobs in popular culture are a perfect example of how male assigned people subject girl bodied folk and queer people to demeaning positions. The position of Taryn and I made it difficult to think it was nonconsensual. I was on top. I was being pleased by an act that culture taught me girls didn't even like to do. How could I think that was rape?

There's so much pressure in the punk community for being punk and being ridiculous and absurd, to look a certain way or date certain people. Punk represented a rejection of whatever was 'normal' even if it's healthy. I think that's what drew me away from that scene eventually, was seeing the scene reproduce a lot of the social constructs it was supposed to be rejecting. Years later at Baltimore Punx Picnic, I would get called a 'pussyfag' by a punk kid drunkenly yelling something about smashing the state.

Normalized violence: (Section contains instances physical violence from a sibling. Intensely descriptive, but not graphic.)

I had to be careful around my brother after my birthday, because he knew something that he could hold over my head to my parents. That year Jed was really emotionally unstable. He took a lot of his emotions out on me. He was in high school and going through a goth phase where depression and social frustration meant anger. I used to listen to my parents and Jed fight all the time. I'd have to leave the house whenever it happened. The fight usually ended in everyone having to come look for me. It was like that until they started sending me to therapy, and then I tried to disappear more frequently to miss the appointments. I'm not really sure still what was going on with Jed. Maybe he was just angry at the world for being emotionally confusing.

I remember doing something totally innocuous one day and it set him off. Usually when something like this happened he would yell at me, or punch me in the arm really hard. It was never anything serious. My parents called it hard brotherly love.

Something was different about this instance, though. I saw some look of rage in his eyes and knew that it wasn't a good idea for me to be there. If I could get to the staircase, even if he grabbed me, I could wiggle out and roll down. Then I would be in the kitchen where I could smell my dad cooking sauce. I tried to run out of the room towards the staircase, but he grabbed me before I could get half way there. He kicked me in the gut a couple times and threw me to the ground. While I was on the ground he jumped on top of me and took his knife out. He held it to my throat and yelled at me for a minute while pressing the pretty dull, but still terrifyingly sharp edge down on my skin. I didn't say anything because I knew he was beyond reason, or I was scared and had no clue what to say. Also he said he would cut me if I said anything. When I made no response, he got up and stomped out of the room

really heard people talk about like identity politics, gender, and race. The anarchist world suddenly meant a lot more than listening to punk music. In fact, punk started to sound really silly after hanging out at the house.

There was another person that I tried to become involved with early in the year after Aster. I met her during Food Not Bombs. It was my senior year of high school. I became really confused after she started to not want to hang out with me as much. I really liked her and felt like I could actually commit to being with her and not get scared. I didn't get nauseated after being around her or kissing her. I think she was the first person I really felt okay kissing. Everything felt really good. I feel like I might have acted creepily towards her for about a week. I didn't know a lot about consent surrounding interactions, communicating intentions, or polyamory then.

Defeated Binary?

While writing this zine, I ended up in a strange situation. There were these people staying at the same warehouse that I was in Baltimore. It was my friend Ellis' space. One of them seemed really excited when my partner asked about what their preferred gender pro noun was. It was always really nice to be around people who have been exposed to that and are really receptive to those politics and preferences. Their reaction gave me the impression that they were really down with queer politics. I'm not sure why I thought this. I think it might have been because most of the people I know that care a lot about gender pronouns are queer.

Her partner ended up asking me what I was writing a zine about. I was trying to have this ready for the Baltimore Radical Book Fair, but ended up not. I said I was writing a personal zine about rape, because I felt like I hadn't ever seen it from a male assigned person's perspective. The zine *Good Sex/Bad Sex* also prompted me to want to write down my experience to try and deconstruct a little bit of

talked and it wasn't a fight! We listened to each other and deconstructed what we were feeling.

Aster used sex as a way to cope with their self-image and self-esteem. They told me about previous abuses. It was the first time I had ever heard someone talk about being abused, and it made me realize that I too had been abused.

Aster was the first person I ever told about Taryn.

I started to realize that a lot of the things they went through affected me in similar ways. Listening to them and talking to them about what happened to them helped me piece together that I had been raped, that I had been abused and manipulated by Taryn. We talked about my relationships since then and how I reacted to getting close to people, how I had reacted to getting close to them. Aster thought I was afraid of committing to people and could probably never be with anyone because of it. That made me feel bad, because I wanted to have a partner, but knew it would be really hard. We decided that it wouldn't be a good idea for us to keep seeing each other, but still hung out every day and cuddled at night and gave each other massages when we felt like shit. They made me realize that it wasn't okay to feel the nausea that I felt around people I got close to. They made me recognize what it was. I still didn't have any tools for getting passed the nausea, but I knew it was there and I knew that fucked up things happened to people and it could affect them over years. I knew that I was able to be raped and had been. I also knew then that as far as common experience went, what happened to me was totally normal.

I learned about consent that winter. I had never necessarily heard people talk about it before. We put on a really awesome puppet show about it at the collective house during a show. I didn't realize how important consent was or that it really existed until then. I felt so good to know that you could simply ask your partners if they wanted to do things and that it was perfectly okay to say no. The collective taught me a lot about things I'd never

after kicking me in the chest again. I coughed for a while on the floor, cursing at him and crying. I didn't pay much attention to it, though, because it didn't seem like a big deal. I thought everyone's brother was like that. I didn't dare tell my parents because then Jed might tell them about Taryn and then I would be in a more uncomfortable position. I just avoided him and for years after I would flinch every time I walked past him in the hall.

Until writing these events down, I never realized how intense they were for me, or how violent my brother's attack was. I think my brother's violence desensitized me to a lot. A couple years after that night, I had a gun pointed at me for the second time. It was a kid I got into a fight with after school and it didn't mean much to me then. I'm still not sure what the fight was about or why it escalated to him pointing a gun at me. I was just skateboarding with some friends. I never asked or questioned it. I don't even remember being afraid. I thought it was all some joke he'd concocted because I called him an asshole for taking my hat. I don't remember how it ended or how I got him to put it away and how neither of us ever spoke of it to anyone at school. The school tried to get me to testify against him once because him and his friends tried to beat me up after school one day. Scrawny me punched one of them in the face really hard and after that they called me crazy stood up for me.

I told the school I wasn't going to snitch on anyone.

I think negatively associated violence was something that wasn't real for me, because it only happened to other people, even when it happened to me. It wasn't part of the middle class narrative that I knew. It was something exciting that happened in the narrative of punk. It was alright to be okay with this, because nothing bad happened because of it. Luckily I never got beat up too badly or suffered serious injury. Luckily I was never killed.

As a kid growing up in a suburban environment that had gentrified a less suburban area I didn't get exposed to a lot of violence. The way they build the neighborhoods around 'problem areas' is pretty

good at making things outside the perfect setting of the neighborhood difficult to see. I only saw violence in movies and video games. Nothing else was real. It was only at school that real violence happened crept out from behind the blinders. I remember there being a lot of racial tension at my school. The kids who threw rocks at me were all people of color and the kid who pointed a gun at me was as well. I'm not in any way trying to say that all people of color are violent or that all neighborhoods that aren't white suburbs are more prone to violence. I'm also not trying to say that violence doesn't exist in white suburbs or that white kids at school weren't violent as well. I think violence is much more out in the open in mostly low-income of color neighborhoods than in white middle class neighborhoods. In my neighborhood it was hidden and not even recognized as violence. So when violent things happened they just weren't talked about.

I think there was a lot of racial tension at my school. All of the white kids were in higher level classes and the school cop once tried to get me to testify against a kid of color from the low-income neighborhood because they were a 'problem child' and needed their third strike to get them out of the school system. I think that as a kid not being exposed to violence except in unreal settings made it very unreal to me. And so I didn't question it when it happened to me because everything was always very easily swept away and then out of sight. The school made sure of that.

Fingers: (Section contains instances of coercion and less mild descriptions of nonconsensual sex. Mild physical abuse, not graphic.)

After my birthday, I decided that I didn't want to have sex anymore. Sex was too hectic and seemed far too unsafe. Every interaction was hoping that Taryn and I didn't end up alone. Pregnancy became a constant worry and I had no clue how to avoid it. I started to be afraid that Taryn would be angry at me for not wanting to have sex and also yell at me because she thought she was pregnant and didn't want to be.

me feel like I would be stuck with her forever because breaking up meant her hurting herself. I didn't want people to be hurt. It wasn't okay for people to break up and bad things not happen. My relationship with Taryn, being my first relationship, set a precedent for all future ones that if you were with someone you would break up and it would be terrible for everyone. I didn't want to get into relationships with people because I was afraid of eventually breaking up with them and didn't just sleep around instead because I couldn't physically fool around with anyone without getting nauseated.

In my junior year of high school I was introduced to the radical anarchist community in Raleigh via a collective house. I'd identified as an anarchist before, but didn't really know what that meant until finding this house. It was the first time that I'd met radical kids. I'd seen some at punk shows in Carrboro. They were crimethinc kids that handed out zines before I knew what crimethinc or zines were. I met Aster at the collective house. It was kind of the center of Raleigh punk things. They lived there. I became involved with them shortly after we met. They were the first person that I had sex with after being with Taryn. It was a terrible idea for both of us. The first time we had sex I couldn't come and just got tired out and frustrated. It was also a million degrees in the house. I was nauseated by their smell and the heat and felt like shit. I also felt amazing at the same time. Everything that I wanted was happening, but it felt terrible for some reason. The second that we started to have sex I began to get scared and wanted to not see them anymore.

The second time that we tried having sex was at my dad's house while he was out of town after a really cute night at a show. I couldn't come again. Aster's smell nauseated me still, and they had fresh cuts on their chest that I couldn't deal with. After I got tired and we stopped having sex, we took a very awkward and quiet shower. I was afraid to bring up what I felt to them, but after we finished showering and ate cereal I finally did. We stayed up all night and came out to each other about a lot of our shit. We

she used more drugs. During that conversation Taryn told me that she was on drugs for most of the time we were dating and fooled around with other people. Taryn ended up failing eighth grade that year. We became friends again when I was in eighth grade and continue to be friends. Taryn got married a couple years ago and had her first child. We've never talked about our relationship, though. It took me a long time to qualify what had happened to me as being rape, or even emotional abuse. Somehow we just never brought up that anything bad had happened. If I was traumatized then I didn't let myself know it, because I was so set on my privilege level and knew that traumatic things didn't happen to people like me.

The anarchist world and feeling okay to be fucked:

After I learned about privilege and started to get into radical politics, everything changed for me. It took me years to really get over my relationship with Taryn. It might have been four years before I tried dating someone again—my sophomore year of high school. We both wore green and brown a lot and had messy hair. Sometimes people asked if we were siblings. I became so terrified of that person liking me too much, though, that I broke up with them before it ever became serious, even though I really wanted it to get serious. It wasn't until my junior year of high school that a friend that I almost started to date made me realize that I had a problem and was psychologically terrified of relationships. I really wanted relationships, but whenever they could happen I ran from them. The second that I became close to anyone that I liked after months of crushing on them, I convinced myself that I hated them and broke it off. I wasn't afraid of being raped again, just someone getting hurt over me and getting stuck in a relationship. Getting stuck is what hurt, more than the physical abuse. The emotional trauma of not being able to leave someone even though they were hurting me, gave me more anxiety than thinking about physical abuse. Taryn made

Everything settled down for a little while and we started getting along again. One day, we went over to James' house. Taryn led me into James' bathroom and made me sit on the sink. She unzipped my pants and started to go down on me. I knew James' mom would come check on us soon and so I didn't want to do anything. I also didn't want her going down on me to lead to sex. I tried to say I didn't want to do anything, but she didn't listen. Luckily James came and knocked on the door and said we had to come back to his room. Back in his room, Taryn tried to get me to finger her. I told her I didn't want to and she got mad and said she loved me and that she just wanted me to make her feel good. She started to put my hand down her overalls. Right before I got to her cunt I tried to pull my hand back out. Taryn smacked me in the side of the head and grabbed my hand, forcing my fingers inside of her. I kept rubbing her until she came. I knew if I could make her come quickly, it would be over. She moaned and clenched in my hand, squeezing her legs shut, as I wrenched my hand free. James looked over jealously while I tried to look at anything but Taryn. I read my friend's zine about sexual assault and rape a few months ago, *Good sex/Bad sex*. She described the idea of getting raped with just boys' fingers. It made me think about what happened with Taryn and how she raped me even though I was the one fucking her with my fingers. Taryn raped me with my own fingers. Physically I was the one doing things to her. I was humping her. I was fingering her. I was not helpless, and physically I could stop doing those things. In the traditional sense of being a victim I wasn't having anything done to me. Why would I think that was rape then? Why would I think I was a victim if I was the one doing things to someone else? I think it's easier to assign blame when you are the one being enacted upon. There were times when Taryn enacted on me by hitting me or grabbing my hand, but I ignored those things because they seemed small then and the acts themselves weren't sexual.

I knew it would be over soon if I could make her come. Then I wouldn't have to do it anymore and

we might have cuddled. Or Taryn would have been satisfied and said nice things to me. I was dependent on those things and couldn't speak out against not wanting to do something. I didn't know someone could really say no and have it mean no. Cute, silly, normy couple things were important to me then, because having a girlfriend just made me feel normal and accepted like punk music first did. Growing up as a kid without friends, all I really wanted was friends. Growing up being 'weird or abnormal' made me just want to be normal, or at least have healthy relationships.

Alone:

There weren't any references growing up to being happy alone or of empowering yourself to be by yourself. I got sent to counseling in elementary school because I liked to be by myself. I knew that the kids at school didn't like me, and I was okay with that. It was okay for me to have adventures in the woods by myself. It was okay for me to play basketball with all of the tough kids because it toughened me and I could play just as well as them. I wasn't a wimpy kid, but was made to feel like that sometimes. After a good game where I did something really unexpected I would just get shoved off afterwards while kids said mean things to me. I knew I had resisted, though, and that was enough for me until the counselors told me I was depressed and sent me to a therapist. After that I wanted friends and it wasn't okay to be alone anymore.

If you can find it, the zine *No Gods, No Ma-tress* has some really nice stories that always make me feel really nice and empowered when I'm feeling lonely or lost. Mostly Enola's traveling stories, but they're awesome!

Phones: Section contains instances of emotional coercion and manipulation.)

Taryn called me a lot. She knew when I got home from school and would call me usually only minutes after I got off the bus. At first I liked it. I loved talking to her for hours, but eventually it became uncomfortable. I wanted to talk to her, but I got sick of doing it for six hours a day. Sometimes

want to be around them anymore. I was constantly triggered without knowing what a trigger was. Smells were one of the reasons it was hard for me to get close to people after Taryn.

Afraid to break up: (Section contains descriptions of emotional abuse involving suicide. No suicide or self abuse is described.)

After that day, I definitely decided that I didn't want to be with Taryn anymore. I started avoiding her in the morning, getting to school late, or lying that I had. I stopped answering the phone at home and pretended like I wasn't there if someone else did. I would hide, or suddenly run down the street because I didn't even want my parents asking why I didn't want to talk to Taryn or if something was wrong. All Taryn would talk about is how much she loved me and how bad it would be if I ever left her.

Taryn had a long history of suicide, and so when she said she would kill herself if I left her, I believed every word of it. And so we kept dating, as I hid from her more. I would tell her I was in trouble, so I couldn't go places or get my parents to give me rides.

Eventually, Taryn started to get angry, and as much as I was afraid of that, I encouraged it. I tried to make her as angry as possible at me, so she would break up with me.

In my head, if she broke up with me and hated me, she wouldn't kill herself.

One night I finally succeeded in tricking her to say the words and jumped on the opportunity. I think she meant it as a joke, but I said yes to it and hung up the phone as quickly as possible.

Taryn didn't end up attempting suicide. I stopped seeing her at school, so I don't know how she acted after we broke up. She did tell me a couple years later that shit got really bad for her and

When we got to the school, I saw my mom's car and she was livid, yelling at me for being late and inconsiderate. Taryn wasn't crying anymore, but looked like she had been. I secretly hoped my mom would ground me so I wouldn't be able to see Taryn for a while.

The smell the smell the smell of: (Section contains discussion about physical marks of abuse. Doesn't describe any marks, but brings up the idea of them. Not descriptive. Not graphic. Very mild.)

I climbed in the car, reeking of sex and knowing my mom smelt it as she yelled at me. Taryn cowered in the back. I'm sure that my mom thought Taryn was probably sad because of the yelling. All I thought about the whole car ride back was the smell and Taryn being pregnant. I was covered in her smell and I didn't want to be. I think the smell upset me more than being raped because it was a visible sign that I had to deal with. I felt marked and the smell nauseated me as I sat trapped in it and I knew my mom could smell it.

Luckily for me, when Taryn hit me, she didn't leave marks. When she fucked me, it wasn't so hard that I was sore afterwards. When I was on top I could control the speed and force. She just left a smell on me that was really hard to wash off. After we had sex I always took a shower as soon as possible to get the smell off of me. It always lingered, though and made me feel awful whenever I smelt it again. The next time I slept with someone the smell reminded me of that night. I avoided going down on people because of it. It took me a few years to be okay with that smell again. With other people, smells became deterrents. I would always find a way to not like someone anymore because of a smell that they had. When I smelled something unpleasant, it wasn't triggering in the sense that I remembered being raped, because until I overcame the smell I didn't think I had been raped. Smells were triggering in the sense that when I smelt another person I felt nauseated and didn't

she wouldn't let me get off the phone with her until I went to bed or had to go eat dinner.

When we were talking at night, Taryn would ask me to tell her about having sex with her. She wanted me to describe what I wanted to do to her. This was okay. I liked it at first, until she started to make me talk about it at inappropriate times and until I didn't want to do anything to her. I shared a room with my little brother and she would make me talk about fucking her while I was going to bed with my little brother only a couple yards away. Can talking be rape? I'm not really sure how I feel about this, but I felt like Taryn expected me to fuck her with my words and I didn't want to.

Most of what Taryn talked about was sex. She was obsessed with it and I wasn't. I remember wanting to talk about something that happened at school once, but instead she made me listen to her masturbate on the phone. I think that I was playing a video game at the time, so I just focused on that instead until she came. I didn't want to hang up because then she would just call back a bunch and yell at me.

The phone eventually became something I dreaded and still dread now almost ten years later. I still avoid talking on the phone to people. I'm not afraid of someone trying to get me to do sexual things on the phone. I just don't like talking on the phone at all now. I avoid calling people even though I want to talk to them. It's a little easier to deal with now because I can text people with my cell phone. Abuse and rape can still happen over the phone. It can be verbal, and just talking can be as nonconsensual as touching.

There are all of these pressures to saying things to partners. We're so afraid of talking to each other. Normative culture is consumed with a rape culture that exists even within our words and expectations of sexuality, existing in all facets of our lives. I didn't realize how important consent for talking was until I started to see someone that

asked if it was okay to talk and more specifically if was okay to talk about certain things, instead of forcing the topic out into the open so it had to be talked about.

Holding hands: (Section contains instances of physical coercion and drunken step dad's being stupid. Mild)

I remember loving to talk to Taryn on the phone when we first started dating because we didn't get to see each other a whole lot. One Sunday, Taryn started to tell me that she thought her step dad, Marty was going to burn the house down. He was super drunk and trying to cook, but mostly fucking with the stove and burning things. Taryn's mom was at work and wouldn't be back until later that night. Taryn was scared he would hurt her or her sister. I told my mom about it and we decided to pick them up and go to a movie until Taryn's mom got home. During the movie, Taryn looked like she wanted to hold my hand, but when I gave her mine she started to put it up her skirt. I felt my fingers touch her cunt instead of resting on her leg and I pulled away. She glared at me. I thought we would get into an argument right there in the theater with my mom sitting a seat away.

I knew what it was this time and the horror: (Section contains descriptions of a rape. Not graphic, but is described.)

About a week after the movie, Taryn and I stayed after school again to hang out. I'd been starting to avoid her phone calls because she would keep me on the phone for hours and get mad if I wanted to get off. She mostly said self deprecating things now that made me feel bad for not wanting to talk to her. We walked to James' house and then started to head back to the school. My mom was going to pick us both up. We had gotten lost and I was already nervous about being late when Taryn tried to

get me to go behind a church with her. She pulled me along and said she wanted to have sex. I said no, and that we were late. I knew my mom was going to be angry.

She said she only wanted to have sex for a minute and I saw her starting to get mad at me. I agreed to having sex for a minute. She was on top for the first time and after a minute I was afraid that I was going to come, so I wanted to stop. I asked her to stop and she pushed me down and kept humping me. I tried to push her off and yell. I even tried to hit her, but she only smothered me and held me down. I could feel myself coming and yelled at her to please stop. I managed to push her to the side, but only after I had just came.

Taryn immediately started crying. In a panic, I got dressed, trying not to look at her. I knew we were really late, but Taryn kept crying, saying how awful she was and that she would kill herself because of how awful she was. Because she had just raped me. I said I didn't care, because I didn't think it was rape and didn't want her to kill herself and was more worried about getting back to the school on time.

It's weird to me now that Taryn thought that this was rape, but that none of the times before that we had sex were rape, or that my fingers were raping me. Taryn wasn't raping me when she forced me inside of her when she knew I didn't want to, and wouldn't let me stop. Taryn wasn't raping me when I knew nothing about sex and she knew a lot and lied to me. Taryn wasn't raping me when I didn't want a blowjob, but I let her do it anyways because I knew that if she was going down on me then it would take up time until we weren't alone anymore. But, her forcing me down and fucking me definitely was her raping me. I didn't think so, though, because boys didn't get raped.

As we walked back I asked if she was going to be a mess when we got to the car. Which, might have not been the nicest thing to say. She hit me again and cried more.