

THE CLITORIS IS SMALL EXCEPT WHEN IT IS NOT

- ♦ Often I have longed for a single exquisite fuck cataclysmic enough to permanently snuff all the *other* needs of my body: eating, sleeping, not sleeping, shitting, or, for one, the need to be touched all over, all at once, when there is no one but me in the apartment.
- ♦ The clitoris possesses 8,000 nerve endings and consists of three major parts: the glans, body, and crura. The erectile portions are composed of the cavernous and vestibule bulbs.
- ♦ When in the midst of an otherworldly migraine, or eight-day insomnia haze, I endure a near constant communion with my body: I am aware of its immense powers, limitations, ability to humiliate my intelligence entirely. No sooner do I feel as if I have “figured it out,” could predict the onset of a migraine down to the most infinitesimal detail, do I find myself leveled out in bed, face spangled with sweat, hair slicked with vomit. I must submit, let myself go with it, knowing I will emerge, as with many of life’s most lonely and degrading things, having learned nothing whatsoever.
- ♦ If there is any sort of epiphany, “convalescent euphoria,” that accompanies such pain, it does not stem from the ache itself,

but rather, my release from it. What no drug, practiced “mind over matter” technique can accomplish: I let my finger linger over and around my clit, and with the first flush, feel the happy little ants dancing in the tip top notch of my cunt, down my legs, onto my feet. No matter that the pain will return in mere minutes. To have felt such freedom, any release at all.

- ✦ The clitoral shaft, which feels like a piece of cord, is attached to the glans and rises underneath the skin towards the mons. When aroused, I roll my finger across it for extra pleasure. At the top of the shaft, it splits; two legs curve downward, like a wishbone. These are called *crura*, or legs. It is not possible to see or feel the legs. Although I have tried.
- ✦ After years of consciousness-raising workshops and research, the Federation of Feminist Women’s Health Clinics (FFWHC) published *A New View of a Woman’s Body: An Illustrated Guide* (1991) in which the term “clitoris” encompasses all eighteen structures that undergo changes during the orgasmic cycle.
- ✦ Studying two fresh and eight fixed human female adult cadavers, using MRI technology, Australian doctor Helen O’Connell discovered that the clitoris extends far into the body, its spindly nerve endings spooling out, a swath of erectile tissue lining the vagina walls, vestibule.
- ✦ In 1998 O’Connell published her results in *The Journal of Urology*: “The vaginal wall is, in fact, the clitoris. If you lift the skin off the vagina on the side walls, you get the bulbs of the clitoris—triangular, crescental masses of erectile tissue [...] current anatomical description of female human urethral and genital anatomy is inaccurate.”
- ✦ O’Connell’s research was a breakthrough not because it asserted the existence of the “complete clitoris”; feminists had been arguing that for decades. Rather, it was viewed by a skeptical

medical community as proving, for the first, the existence of the complete clitoris via the hard science of MRI technology.

- ♦ The size of the clitoral hood varies from complete coverage to wide-open visibility. When the clitoris is turned on, it swells, often emerging from the hood. Shortly before you climax, it retracts. At the onset of puberty, the clitoral glans becomes on average one-and-a-half times larger, and after menopause, it can grow as much as two and a half times larger than at age nineteen. During menopause the clitoris may also retreat, disappearing entirely beneath the hood. None of this effects how it *feels*, only how it looks.
- ♦ In his novel *Tropic of Cancer*, Henry Miller claimed he could see the whole of the world in the fucked out cunt of a whore.
- ♦ When I gaze deep inside a pussy, that's all I see: a pussy. That is enough.
- ♦ As Gertrude Stein might have said, a clit is a clit is a clit.
- ♦ Except when it is not. Consider the female spotted hyena, an animal known for its "enlarged clitoris," extending, during childbirth, up to seven inches from her body. Spotted hyenas live in clans and are a matriarchy. They have sex, urinate, and give birth through their clitoris. In order to attract a female hyena in heat, males adopt submissive behavior. Hyena sex isn't easy: it takes careful positioning for the male to crouch behind and point his penis up and backwards to enter the female's clitoris. Much of the medical literature refers to the hyena's clitoris as a "pseudo-penis" with dominant behavior often described as "male-like." Such aggressive behavior is thought to result from an influx of androgen, an "androgen bath," during the last phases of gestation.
- ♦ The hyena's transgressive nature was known to pre-Islamic Arabic poets. In such texts, hyenas are routinely depicted as

breaching a vast array of social mores: killing and feasting upon gracious hosts, menstruating out in the open, laughing all the while; when a pack of hyenas wander upon a dead warrior, they pleasure themselves with his still stiff cock.

- ✦ In *The Physiologus*—written in Egypt around 200-400 C.E., translated into Greek and Latin and widely available throughout the West—the hyena is portrayed as an “alternating male-female[...]unclean because it has two natures.”
- ✦ In the early 2000s, a research team, Berkley Hyena Project (BHP), led by Dr. Laurence G. Frank, received ample funding to trace the role of androgens in the development of the spotted hyena’s “female phallus.” Early in their studies, BHP concluded: “it has become clear that the spotted hyena’s genitals are a result of a prenatal exposure to androgens.” Instead of viewing this “androgen bath” as an evolutionarily beneficial aspect of the hyenas, BHP tends to interpret it as an evolutionary oops. A team of German researchers, meanwhile, argue that the erectile clitoris was selected and functions to restrain male control of reproduction: forced copulations for the female spotted hyena are impossible because they have sex via *penetration of the clitoris*, which requires a great deal of patience and precision. Females thus gain control over the mechanism of copulation and male mating success becomes dependant on the relationships they develop with females.
- ✦ Researcher Anna Wilson writes, “The hyena has moved from being the dangerous, unknowable other into a position of that which can be known, studied, and dissected but that is still other.”
- ✦ Human anatomy is often thought to be a dead field of inquiry, one in which the essential truths about the body were established long ago. But what of the art of anatomy? A creative practice subject to the same joys, prejudices, and false revelations as any artistic undertaking.

- ♦ For years I lived under the delusion that the way I viewed my body was identical to the way that doctors, cultural theorists, lovers, et cetera viewed it. That is, I struggled to understand that the body I had inhabited for years—that I had come to see as *mine*—was not at all the same body that others saw. Many did not even see it as “mine.” Once aware of this disconnect, however, my delusion did not end: I thought it did not matter.

EJACULATION?

- ♦ Before the explosion of internet porn, The British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) was responsible for regulating films seeking classification as R18, which meant they could be sold to licensed sex shops. On May 2001, the BBFC passed *Squirt Queens* (retitled *British Cum Queens*) only after excising six minutes and twelve seconds of an actress ejaculating during orgasm. According to the committee, the scene constituted urolagnia, banned since 1959 by the Obscene Publications Act. The BBFC board stated, “expert medical advice informed us that there is no such thing as ‘female ejaculation’ and that the fluid present in *Squirt Queens* was in fact urine.” They did not believe that the film showed female ejaculation because, to them, the very act itself was impossible. Their loss.
- ♦ The first pussy I saw up close belonged to an aging barfly named Alana, and it looked nothing like my own. While my cunt was the definition of a slit—long slim lips shoring up a compact clitoris, puritan in its lack of ornamentation—Alana’s pussy was a florid, almost hairless, forest of folds. I wasn’t sure what to do when I pushed her panties to the side, how long to continue. I simply licked each fold till they began to wriggle, fan out, then circled back to her clitoris. She tilted her head, “Ah.” And just like that— a clear, briny dew filled my mouth. It was not, as some say, the nectar of gods; more, the gleam at the end of the forest.

- ✦ Although I had spent the first twenty or so years of my life unaware that women could ejaculate—or, at least, produce the strong, visible streams so associated with male orgasm—I did not need anyone to explain what had happened with Alana. I did not need to read a book: I was there.
- ✦ One of the first thorough studies on the female prostate was published in 1948 by gynecologist John W. Huffman who discovered that the tissue surrounding the urethra contained prostatic-like glands (found in male urethra) near the urethral opening; one model had up to thirty-one glands.
- ✦ Named after Dr. Ernst Grafenberg, a German gynecologist, the G-spot was originally thought to be solely responsible for female ejaculation. This view was advanced in the 1982 book *The G-Spot*, which introduced the highly sensitive area to the mainstream; however, as later discovered, ejaculation can accompany any kind of orgasm. Grafenberge wrote, “large quantities of a clear, transparent fluid are expelled not from the vulva, but out of the urethra in gushes.”
- ✦ In her book *Eve’s Secrets: A New Theory of Female Sexuality* (1987), Josephine Sevely documented the extensive history of female ejaculation, arguing that the phenomenon was well-known to societies across the world from antiquity to the 19th century.
- ✦ Vladimir Nabokov knew: in his novel *Ada or Ardor*, set in the late 19th century, two teen girls (also sisters) play a game called “pressing the spring” by “interweaving like serpents” and “kissing her *krestik*.”
- ✦ The *corpus spongiosum*, G-spot, and urethral sponge all refer to the same swath of tissue, which are included in the Federation of Feminist Women’s Health Clinic’s definition of the “complete clitoris.”

- ♦ Alice Kahn Ladas, Beverly Whipple and John Perry (1980's) found that many women produce a clear, alkaline fluid that is not urine which may vary in amount from a few drops to two ounces, sometimes up to eight ounces. They also found that prostatic acid phosphatase (PAP), an enzyme found in male prostatic secretions, and glucose were “substantially higher in the ejaculatory fluid [of women] than in urine samples.”
- ♦ In 1997 Spanish researchers Francisco Cabello Santamaria and Rico Nesters analyzed the urine of twenty-four women before and after orgasm for the presence of prostate-specific antigen (PSA). Unlike the preorgasmic urine samples, seventy-five percent of the postorgasmic samples showed a concentration of PSA. In the fluid emitted at the height of orgasm, one hundred percent of the samples contained PSA. All women are capable of ejaculation, but the amount may be too little to notice. Even if they look very close.
- ♦ Performer Carol Queen wrote in *Exhibitionism for the Shy* that her ejaculate tasted like buttered popcorn, sometimes the forest floor, while Fanny Fatale reported that hers had no smell.
- ♦ A lover once wrote in a poem that I tasted like scorched marmalade, but he was a romantic.

CLITS IN THE WILD

- ♦ The closest I come to romance, to anything resembling coquetry, is to walk down the street in the summer heat, sans panties, letting the heavenly stench of my pussy fan out into the atmosphere. It's how I prefer to wander: cunt pressed to the skin of the city.
- ♦ Other animals do it differently. The “winking effect” refers to a mating ritual performed by female heifers and mares in heat. When a male stern or stallion comes close, the female's clitoris retracts under the hood then swells out again. As he takes another step closer, the clitoris retracts yet again, then the labia relaxes, and the clitoris slips out. The ultimate come-hither.
- ♦ Certain mammals such as the cat and rabbit require mechanical stimulation of the clitoris, vulva, and vagina in order to ovulate. In the practice of artificial insemination of cattle, it is well-known that stimulating the clitoris will induce immediate response.
- ♦ In his novel *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, D.H. Lawrence describes the clitoris as a bird's beak waiting to attack: “By God, you think a woman's soft down there, like a fig. But I tell you [they] have beaks between their legs, and they tear at you with it till you're sick.”

- ♦ Stump-tailed Macaque moms often comfort their infants, male or female, by rhythmically stroking the infant's genitalia.
- ♦ Look around: female dogs that are not in heat will rub their clitorises on any suitable object until some seemingly pleasurable resolution is reached.
- ♦ It does not depend on season. Days when even the scent of the rain-slicked sidewalk makes my pussy dewy. Stuck in traffic on the freeway, I can't be bothered to wait. Sun wet on my thighs: I slide my hand up my skirt, press my legs together, and rub and rub my little roundlet till it succumbs. Because I can.
- ♦ Masturbation is also frequent in female dolphins of any age, and clitoral stimulation is sought during play with other dolphins of both sexes.
- ♦ If the clitoris, as is often articulated in modern thought, serves no reproductive functions, perhaps it might be more useful to think of the ways in which its assumed function—pleasure—might be adaptive. How the capacity to experience and self-generate limitless physical pleasure might in itself prove to be an evolutionary benefit.