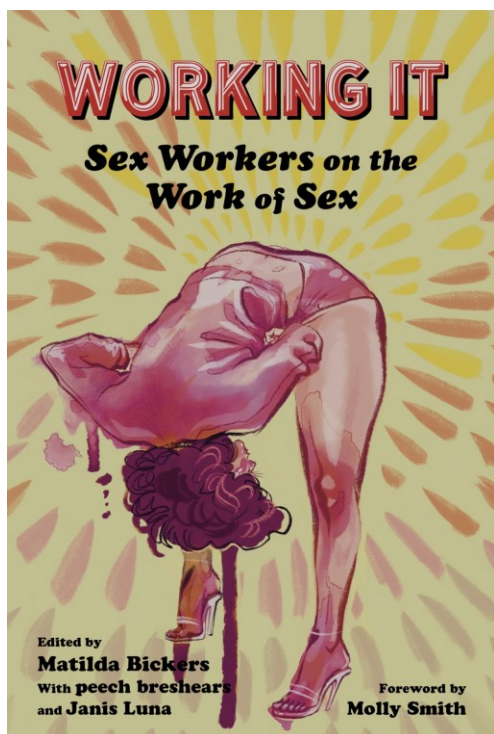


WORKING IT: SEX WORKERS ON THE WORK OF SEX



Book Summary:

Discusses the experiences and opinions of various sex workers in the United States of America and abroad.

Summary of Concerns:

This book contains obscene sexual activities; references to aberrant sexual activities including bestiality; alternate gender ideologies; alternate sexualities; excessive/frequent profanity/derogatory terms; references to drug and alcohol use; violence; and controversial social, racial, religious, and political commentary.

Adult

**Edited by Matilda Bickers with peech breshears
and Janis Luna**

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4 /5

Not For Minors
BookLooks Review Rating

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| xiii | <p>The work here is generous, generative, and deeply dug in to the realities of sex work and sex worker organizing in the context of capitalism, colonialism, and white supremacy. These essays bristle with ideas, and they show clearly that the sex workers' rights movement is an intellectual powerhouse and is producing some of the most interesting thinking around, not only on commercial sex but also on gender, feminism, trauma, racial justice, work, and labor organizing as a whole.</p> |
| 2 | <p>The current conversation around trafficking in the United States is a direct offshoot of white supremacist fears that manifested in anti-immigrant legislation in the late nineteenth century.</p> <p>...The "white slavery" panic about white women and girls being kidnapped and sent overseas to be forced into prostitution was born of European anti-Semitism, but it proved to be easily exportable to the United States, where fears about interracial sex, and specifically white women having sex with Black men, added a new dimension: not only were there fears of foreign-born prostitutes corrupting the white citizenry, but any man of color was a potential threat to innocent, native-born white womanhood.</p> |
| 3 | <p>Trading sex or sexual services for money, food, shelter, or other commodities never disappeared, sexual abuse never ended, and white supremacist fears about interracial sex never really went away, yet white slavery stopped being such a driving international moral panic for decades.</p> |
| 4 | <p>Globalization, increased ease of international travel, growing instability resulting from Western imperialism and ongoing exploitation of the global South, which has forced millions of people of color to migrate for better working conditions and wages—all of these have increased long-held white Western fears about migration and, ultimately, the ability of Western governments to maintain their control and influence in other countries.</p> <p>...From nineteenth-century reformers who vocally agitated for new laws that would protect the vulnerable from abuse to the present unholy union between conservatives and feminists that is leading and fueling the current trafficking panic, women have had a large part in shaping this conversation.</p> <p>...The guise of saving women and children from trafficking—protecting them from anything sex-related outside the context of marriage—offered a convenient shield for the Bush administration's agenda of reversing a decade of progress on sex education and sexual health domestically and abroad.</p> <p>...Unfortunately, the conservative agenda affected US foreign aid as well, barring condoms and reproductive health material and denying aid to countries that didn't conform with US policies against prostitution, which the US government equated with trafficking.</p> |
| 6 | <p>The Bush administration found antitrafficking to be a convenient vehicle for its antisex agenda, true; it also found antitrafficking to be a convenient corollary to the War on Terror.</p> |
| 8 | <p>Given these unpalatable truths—and the reality that no conservatives want to spend the money to fund shelters and services for LGBT young adults—a new source of traffickers and trafficking victims had to be found. While the lack of funding for services for queer youth is a deliberate political choice in line with the religious values of the Bush administration, preexisting deeply held beliefs about women who sell sex or sexual services, old feminist canards about "false consciousness," and political expediency all allow many more people in the political mainstream to accept unquestioningly the idea that no woman or young adult would willingly choose to trade sex under any</p> |

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| | <p>circumstances outside of coercion. If that’s your starting point, it’s not a huge stretch to then frame anyone trading sex as trafficked, and the people around them as their traffickers, in line with the anti-sex work agenda shared by particular feminists and religious conservatives.</p> |
| 9 | <p>Sex work—the sale of sex or sexualized services like lap dances and sexual performances in person, online, or over the phone—offers another option.</p> |
| 10 | <p>Many porn companies, ad boards, and strip clubs enforce white supremacist and heterosexist standards by barring dark-skinned women and trans women or limiting their access to good shifts.</p> <p>...If a sex worker gets arrested, she is more likely to face criminal charges if she’s a woman of color.</p> <p>...For many trans women, it’s one of very few employment options.</p> <p>Capitalism limits our lives in so many ways, centering whiteness and patriarchy and pushing everyone else to the margins, without access to secure shelter, food, or leisure time.</p> |
| 11 | <p>While anti-sex work feminists see trading sex as the ultimate concession to patriarchy, I see it as a refusal.</p> <p>...In that refusal is an affirmation of our right to exist, of our right to survive, and the possibility of a reality without white supremacy or capitalism.</p> |
| 13 | <p>Former Soldiers of Pole organizer Domino Rey talks about the struggles within sex worker organizing, highlighting what will become recurring themes of worker competition, scarcity, and white supremacy.</p> |
| 15 | <p>Looking back at their early adolescence in “first, last, my only,” xaxum omer describes moving from place to place with their mom and helping her with her new job as a phone sex operator. Seen from their young eyes, phone sex is just one more weird thing adult men do, and helping your mom is a necessary part of surviving together as a family in a world hostile to low-income single mothers and people of color; later, however, they find that this blurring of boundaries comes with a cost.</p> |
| 17 | <p>For Alyssa, growing up trans in an unsupportive environment, sex work to pay for transitioning was a matter of survival:</p> <p>All this is the stuff of preparation for prostitution at a young age. Sex, gender, money: these three are tangled in knots that I haven’t even tried to unravel yet. I learned about fetishism for shemales when I got the Internet, and sold my cock and ass for money so I could pay for feminization.</p> <p>...She screamed and cried about it. But I retorted that the idea of letting puberty finish the job was simply worse than death. Period.</p> |
| 22 | <p>Oppressive hierarchies are baked into the way that capitalist culture teaches us to structure our society, our schools, and, most disconcertingly, our families. Many young people are taught that respect means obedience and that it is owed to people who are older, stronger, or in positions of authority.</p> <p>...The work of untangling ourselves from oppressive systems starts here and now. The model we need to transform our society does not lie within oppressive structures like the patriarchal nuclear family. Instead, we have to look to the margins, where Black, disabled, trans, and queer people in the sex trades are building relationships and networks of kinship that subvert oppressive norms.</p> |

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| 23 | We were separated from those who birthed us by state violence, whether by police brutality, incarceration, harmful immigration policies, or intervention by the family policing system. |
| 24 | Our alternative modes of surviving and caring for each other show up in many communities navigating oppression, for whom the cookie-cutter mold of the nuclear family structure wasn't built. As trans and queer people, and especially as people of color, who have experienced family rejection and homelessness, we forge networks of kinship rooted not in blood relations but in mutual respect, empathy, kindness, and care. |
| 25 | I matched with a guy on Tinder who offered me four hundred dollars for a blow job. |
| 27 | When did you decide to trade sex/ ualized services? As I was leaving the Tinder match's apartment with six hundred dollars in cash. |
| 29 | But I don't consider many sex workers to be my community, because a lot of them are tied to racist, classist, and capitalist values that I find to be violent and/ or antithetical to my survival. ...White women, especially thin, cis white women, get away with literal murder. All of the "-isms" that play out in the larger society play out in the microcosm that is the sex industry. White women are platformed, deified, and revered as the figureheads of the sex trade, full stop, and this happens regardless of hierarchal positions. I could talk about this endlessly, and I have written about it, but look at the ways non-sex-trading white women are given a voice in the community over Black and brown sex workers, especially those who are disabled and/ or migrants. |
| 31 | My clientele don't want emotional labor in the form of anything resembling normal social interaction: they want emotional labor in the form of subtle reassurance that whatever it is that they particularly want to do with somebody else's penis makes them not gay. I am so beyond bored of having to reassure men that they're not gay for being attracted to women, usually based on what they've seen in a type of porn directed at and made for straight men. |
| 33 | Vomitous public declarations and bad love songs don't please my ears at the best of times, but especially not while trying to find the dick of the world's most repulsive client. I subsequently discovered that the reason the music finally stopped was because the drag queen had lost patience with that as a soundtrack to her giving head to another random dude, stormed out to reception mid-booking half-starkers, and changed the station herself. |
| 35 | When I was eighteen years old, I went to a strip club in Indiana called Industrial Strip. That was the first time I had ever seen a stripper and the first time I learned how it all worked. I thought they were gorgeous. ...Four years after that first time in a strip club, when I graduated from college, I decided to strip until I could find a solid job in my field of study. |
| 36 | When I got better at dancing, I wanted to try out different clubs, because the owners of my first club were racist. I went to a larger, more popular club. Management there was colorist. |
| 37 | I don't appreciate the warring factions of our community or the racism, but I still enjoy being able to express myself and support myself in this way. ...Now they hate and dehumanize us by way of fetishization, appropriation, and voyeurism (Hustlers, P-Valley, pole classes, "twerk" classes, "sensual stretch" classes, "exotic" pole, etc.). |

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| | <p>...People don't seem to respect full-service sex workers at all, and then other full-service workers discriminate against each other based on whether they travel, how much they charge, what boundaries they have, etc.</p> <p>...Strippers either tie for that same spot as sugar babies or they are perceived as slightly above them, because no sex acts are being performed unless a person chooses to do extras. Then other strippers shame the ones who do extras. Above strippers are cam models, because there's no physical contact required and I guess it's perceived as "cleaner" than all the other forms of sex work.</p> |
| 38 | <p>What would you like to see from white sex workers moving forward? Individually and/ or as a community and/ or as organizers?</p> <p>I need them to use their privilege to protect sex workers of color, especially Black sex workers, because they are valued the least in our industry. Use their privilege to give sex workers of color a platform. I also need them to understand that not every conversation is for them. Allow people of color to claim and protect their contributions to this industry that are specific to their culture.</p> |
| 39 | <p>I snorted. "Try being a woman. Try being not white. Try being poor. Try having so little power that any sort of resistance to policies at work means potentially being out of a job, which isn't an option when you have rent and bills due and no savings."</p> <p>...Because of who is abused, their place in society, their power and influence (or lack thereof), their race, and other intersections ... nothing ever changes.</p> <p>...Confronting these abuses would require a reckoning with white supremacy, capitalism, our values, how we determine community, how we treat women, how we view sex and women's ownership of their own sexuality and the commodification of it, and a myriad of other topics usually off-limits to discussion in our society.</p> <p>The illustration on the top-left side of the graphic depicts a woman with her breasts exposed. She is on her hands and knees leaning toward a man holding out money to her. The illustration on the top-middle of the graphic depicts the same woman sitting bac on her heels. She is lifting her right breast toward her tongue. A hand is placing money on the edge of the stage.</p> <p>"DAMN, SHE IS SO INTO THIS. SHE MUST BE SO HORNY..."</p> <p>The illustration on the bottom-left side of the graphic depicts the same woman sitting back on her heels. She is holding up a finger on her right hand and holding an electrical device in her left hand. Her breasts are exposed.</p> <p>The illustration on the bottom-right side of the graphic depicts the same woman lying back on her left arm. She is smacking her buttocks with her right hand.</p> <p><i>See Figure 1.</i></p> |
| 43 | <p>We decided on a set of priorities: ending wage theft through house fees and illegal tipouts, ending sexual harassment and assault in the club by customers and staff alike, and ending racist, colorist hiring practices, as many clubs have unspoken caps for Black and brown strippers (often one) and often hire only the lightest-skinned, most European-looking ones.</p> |
| 47 | <p>While we know that white supremacist, capitalist, misogynistic institutions were designed to fail and punish workers like strippers, we also know that all we have is each other.</p> |
| 48 | <p>If we allow white supremacist, capitalist patriarchy to continue to divide us, we will all go down on this rapidly sinking ship.</p> <p>...Time and time again, organizers (who are often white, financially secure, and have other</p> |

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| | <p>jobs and backup plans) have shown they're willing to do just that if they can center themselves as #girlbosses who can conquer all through their powers of stripper persuasion. It's time to squash this narrative once and for all, center the historically silenced voices, and put ego aside to improve conditions for everyone.</p> |
| 51 | <p>Do you remember the first time you learned that selling sex or performing sexy was a way to make money? Yes, sixteen, and thank you, Tumblr! I also remember the first time I talked to my mom about sex work. Same age, kitchen setting: I said, "Mom, will you still be proud of me if I start stripping?" My mom, not believing me, says yes. Okay, so boom, she finds out when an ex rats me out to my family, and I'll never forget the night she called before I went into a new club and told me to make a million dollars.</p> |
| 52 | <p>I think between my specific generation of hoes and you, Matilda, it would actually be so fun to talk about. I grew up during the Internet, 1 so most of my whoring is Internet whoring. The club sucks when you're Black in the South.</p> |
| 53 | <p>I'm gonna take it back to ancestry. Sex work is also in my lineage, and so I know if I want to, I can make sex drip off my aura and intoxicate the entire room. Consequently, I struggle with the line of performing and genuinely experiencing pleasure. I'm so good at faking a good time, I sometimes worry I don't know what a good time is. ...Defunding the police and refunding the community so that sex workers, who are just people, can live their lives. ...If I am being completely honest about the whorearchy in the South, it's the white women who fuck for free and post for three dollars who seem the loudest on the Internet, and in real life. So loud, who can figure out where the rest of us go? If you're a white swer reading this, I wish to you a merry "be quiet sometimes." Abolish the whorearchy unless we putting BIPOC trans people first. ...In regular jobs, I fucked and flirted with multiple people in "management."</p> |
| 54 | <p>What do you think are barriers to achieving those goals? The barriers that prohibit women and trans people from achieving the exact same goals, with the added sticky note of "unlovable whore" on top. ...What would you like to see from white sex workers moving forward? Individually and/ or as a community and/ or as organizers? Oh my God, I want them to use their platforms to amplify, listen, and otherwise be quiet! I have such a knee-jerk reaction to white sex workers using sex work as an oppression token, and I am willing to admit that's up to me to iron out in therapy, but it's truly toxic to the industry.</p> |
| 55 | <p>The illustration on this page depicts a woman lying on a couch. She her garter belt is exposed. A painting showing a woman in a bra, stockings, and heels lying on her back with her right leg raised.</p> |
| 59 | <p>In undergrad, this looked like reception work in two different eye doctors' offices, one on the Upper East Side, where our patients were mostly well-off, privileged white folks, some of whom were incredibly rude to the admin staff. ...Like Emily, I also experienced violence, misogyny, and risk at the club: being groped by clients, being verbally harassed and manipulated by the club owner and security staff, wondering what the heck would happen if my club were ever raided by police.</p> |

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| 66 | <p>Exploitation of labor is clear when workers are paid so little they are eligible for federal benefits, as with many fast-food companies in the United States, leading to the Fight for 15 Campaign to raise fast food workers' wages to fifteen dollars per hour.</p> <p>...Race and gender also figure; unskilled and poorly paid work is frequently performed by people of color who earn less in the sex trades than their white counterparts.</p> |
| 74 | <p>I started with full-service work and was scouted from my ad to perform in pornography. I found it helpful to take on as much porn work as was possible, until the culture changed and less work was available. I am satisfied with providing full-service because it actually feels like an equitable exchange to me, most times.</p> |
| 76 | <p>Removing the immigration legislation that makes im/ migrant workers liable to deportation for doing sex work, in Canada, and prioritizing the most marginalized sex workers, including Black, Indigenous, Asian, and otherwise racialized sex workers, im/ migrant or undocumented sex workers, trans and nonbinary and two-spirit sex workers, disabled sex workers, fat sex workers, and sex workers who use drugs.</p> <p>What do you think are barriers to achieving those goals?</p> <p>The bureaucratic system and the "democracy" are huge barriers to reforming laws, as criminalization is a direct barrier for sex workers accessing health, legal, and social resources.</p> <p>...What would you like to see from white sex workers moving forward? Individually and/ or as a community and/ or as organizers?</p> <p>I'd like to see more white sex workers and organizers use their whiteness as a tool.</p> |
| 79 | <p>I spent my teen years selling sex on the Internet. I grew up on the Craigslist erotic services section, finding men who would pay me for something I didn't take seriously, because I'd been robbed of the chance to do so. I'd been raped at twelve by my next-door neighbor after months of molestation and was subsequently passed around the neighborhood to two other perverts. One was an Albanian fella who definitely sold women, and he could have ended up trafficking me as well.</p> <p>...When I was sixteen, I met a man on Yahoo! Personals who seemed nice enough. After a four-hour session, he didn't want to pay.</p> <p>...Because of the demographics I fit into—Black, girl, and too young to be working in the first place—I was wary of telling anyone what I was doing. And even when I felt like I was in danger, I couldn't call the police without worrying about my Black body being meat for the carceral system to chew up and spit out.</p> <p>...There is no class mobility for a poor Black woman with a prostitution charge on her record.</p> |
| 80 | <p>So many Black and brown girls are just trying to make it to tomorrow with as little pain as possible. Because of how our bodies are forced to navigate late capitalism, we find ourselves gambling with the very lives we are fighting to keep. Yes, my boyfriend sells me, but he feeds me. Yes, he beats me, but I'm not homeless.</p> |
| 81 | <p>The pseudo-positivist leanings of the judicial system are ill-suited to address the lived experiences of Black and brown folks, period.</p> <p>...The school-to-prison pipeline was built for girls just like me, and even outside of school, Black girls' bodies are rendered adult and profane before we get to decide for ourselves.</p> <p>...Abolish the carceral system. Period. Our bodies deserve more than this.</p> |

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| 83 | <p>Do you remember the first time you learned that selling sex or performing sexy was a way to make money? I was probably three or four years old.</p> |
| 84 | <p>I remember overhearing the opinions of my maternal grandmother, who was a lesbian activist and nurse who worked in Oakland, Berkeley, and San Francisco. I remember her talking about treating women in the ER who were mainly Black, trans, and/ or migrant sex workers and about how hateful the other medical professionals were toward them. I would say that I considered sex work of some form to be a viable potential option for me, either as a fast-cash side gig or in some kind of elevated, elegant, professional way, like being a dominatrix, I imagined, before I knew much about or was a sex worker.</p> |
| 85 | <p>For six months, I drank DayQuil from the bottle and cleaned human shit off toys, plotting my next move, which led to the realization that I could transfer most of my current job skills to a more lucrative industry. I desperately wanted to avoid the cannabis trade, because my family would have been disappointed they'd had to become criminals only for me to repeat the cycle.</p> <p>...I asked her if she thought I could do it, and she told me all I needed to know was how to be naked by the end of two songs and count cash in the dark.</p> <p>...“Take a shot and try to smile on stage without throwing up, and move like the air is honey. If the customers laugh at you, act as though you meant for them to.” She slapped my ass up the dinky stairwell to the stage, where I floundered around to “Peaches,” by the Stranglers.</p> |
| 86 | <p>Yolanda club-hopped constantly, but Bambi was teaching me about how to get in good with the management, who were the Korean and Russian mafia, and the more I learned, the more they trusted me, because I could drive with blow in my car, worked whenever they asked me to, and was good at talking to the undercover cops who would come in constantly because the fact that my club was essentially a brothel was an open secret.</p> |
| 87 | <p>When I started, the Instagram/ Twitter fame-stripper-success model wasn't as much of a thing at all, so some of the biggest changes I have witnessed within the community have been related to the gradual process of in-person sex work becoming symbiotic with online sex work.</p> |
| 88 | <p>What do you do to relax after a bad shift or client? Take a Xanax, drink Hennessy or Camarena tequila, talk to a friend or completely recluse, stretching ...</p> <p>...Pros/ usable skills: I learned what intersectional feminism and what capitalism were from doing sex work. I learned true appreciation and respect for the absolutely endless debt we all owe Black women for every single thing they do. I've gained a much more intimate and nuanced understanding of the violence that marginalized groups of people face in general, I think.</p> |
| 90 | <p>My experience has been that managers are at their core racist, misogynistic, and homophobic control addicts.</p> <p>What kind of organizing goals are prioritized by the sex workers around you? Immediate mutual aid to Black and trans sex workers. Also, undocumented sex workers and sex workers experiencing homelessness or working outside are prioritized by some, while others are looking to further their own personal interests and have an outstanding need for attention, money, and external validation specifically disguised as flashy activism.</p> |

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| 91 | <p>What would you like to see from white sex workers moving forward? Individually and/ or as a community and/ or as organizers?</p> <p>I would like to see a lot of public accountability. I would like to see certain platforms given away completely to the Black sex workers and organizers who deserve to be heard. White sex workers should be engaged in constant, continual reprioritization and clarification of their community involvement and personal goals, which in my opinion as a white sex worker should be: working to ensure the safety and elevation of our most vulnerable community members.</p> <p>...I definitely would like to not be smoking weed every day by the time five years from now rolls around.</p> |
| 95 | <p>I witnessed Black and brown soldiers struggle to reconcile with killing innocent civilians that looked like them, cringing at participating in the same systemic racism that harmed them. It was a nexus of racism, classism, feminism, capitalism, and imperialism.</p> |
| 96 | <p>We were eager to listen, stiletto legs crossed in between stage sets, sometimes sipping on drinks (mine always water), warming laps or dancing on them.</p> <p>...We experienced a raid one day: the pigs came in and demanded to see that we were wearing “T-backs,” which are regulation double-lined thongs. This check consists of a humiliating search where we pull our thongs out and pigs shine a light to check that we are abiding by this arbitrary rule.</p> |
| 97 | <p>I ran groups when they needed additional help. Many of the soldiers refused to speak; several told stories of attempted suicide and indicated they were not receiving the help they needed on base.</p> |
| 98 | <p>Our military is a tool of colonialism and imperialism; it has no parallel to sex work. If anything, many of the most vulnerable who engage in sex work often find themselves on the violent, invading end of colonization. Assault and murder of local sex-working and non-sex-working women at the hands of military members come in tandem with imperialism. Military members are glorified through a colonial lens, a saviorism that is palpable for those who engage in white supremacist, imperialist, patriarchal beliefs—many of those who also link sex work to sex trafficking.</p> |
| 103 | <p>I’d complained to enough friends enough times that one finally said, “Why don’t you just do phone sex? You’ve got a great voice, you don’t have to sleep with anyone, you get paid weekly, you make a ton of money, and you work whenever you want!”</p> |
| 105 | <p>After almost a decade of not trading sex, I’ve realized that trading sex is just like any other job: you’re beholden to someone, somewhere, somehow. The freedom is there, though. It’s in the consideration of the fullness of it. It’s in adjusting our views to see the situation from every side, not just the one where we think about how much money we’re going to make, how many times we won’t have to clock in anymore, or how to deal with workplace bullying, racism, sexism, sexual harassment, or wage inequality.</p> <p>...As a twenty-two-year-old woman, I could choose to secretly be a phone sex operator at night.</p> |
| 106 | <p>I couldn’t trust people anymore; talk to thirty people a day, find out twenty-nine of them are masturbating to pedophilic rape fantasies, and see how quickly the ability to trust people flies out of the window. I</p> <p>...They struggled for money, were isolated and always alone, and often comforted</p> |

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| | <p>themselves with drugs, alcohol, or indiscriminate sex. Soon it became that I couldn't leave the house. Instead of trying to meet people, I sold pictures, videos, and webcam shows.</p> |
| 114 | <p>we giggle as he describes himself. so new, i'm eleven, she's thirty-five, mother and child, but there, in our bed whose width is almost that of our entire small studio, we are the same, two fresh giggling whores. it's easy to laugh now. it doesn't hurt yet.</p> <p>...when he is in need he fucks one of the goats or chickens. chicken feels better, but is harder to catch and makes distracting noise. goats are slower, more to hold, an easier, softer lay, their moaning something more akin to how a woman's love might sound. it is all funny until he says he's never made love to another human, never touched a woman other than his kin. in sadness john becomes familiar.</p> <p>...an alphabetized list of things phone whores need, mostly slang for sexual acts and fetishes. i flip through, scanning, curious, eager.</p> <p>she wakes me, whispering, "what is cbt?"</p> <p>i pop alive, upright, thumb the bible, alphabetical.</p> <p>"cock and ball torture. he wants you to hurt his nuts, probably with high heels."</p> <p>she thanks me, whore to whore, and tells me to go back to sleep, mother to child. the boundaries between whore and mother are as flexible as a street walker's hips.</p> <p>...she needs me, another whore, to moan on the phone while she takes a pee. she becomes my first pimp, gently.</p> <p>...here is my mother on the couch, our couch, with a man on top of her—no yes—his hands are around her neck, this is not right. her hands are holding his wrists. i see strain, see through her skin, veins, tendons, into the body that made me, earth that grew me, the mountain of her, my first love, most beautiful. this man is choking my god. her eyes squeeze tight, as if shutting them hard enough will pull her beyond whatever this is. what is this. i see tears, but the tears and i do not know what is going on.</p> <p>"what are you two doing?"</p> <p>he lets go, gets off of her. she gasps, puts her own hands where his just were.</p> <p>"go back to bed."</p> <p>one voice, unison.</p> <p>i go back to bed.</p> <p>...one day i have a child and understand why strong mothers let weak men strangle them: to keep from waking the baby, letting the children see the truth, that some men say "i love you" with hands clenched too tight around the neck, and some women love only, exactly, those men.</p> |
| 116 | <p>i chomp at the bit to ask why i've been denied, to see if he's just another coward scared to meet the child of the woman he's fucking.</p> |
| 117 | <p>K never fucks or even meets her men in person, she uses whore magic over the phone and they send money.</p> <p>...K was another single black sex working mother.</p> |
| 118 | <p>funny how getting paid to not fuck is more shameful than fucking for free.</p> |
| 119 | <p>his favorite pastimes are watching porn while chatting on the phone with his mother, stretched out on the couch, and sitting outside the room where i stay, listening while i work the lines.</p> <p>...every so often she gets the degenerate drunk and lets him stay over in his own bedroom to feel her tits while she jacks him off. i hear him on the phone with his mother, bragging</p> |

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| | <p>about fucking mine, hollering over the moaning porn—he has no idea that my mom is paying rent in handjobs and blind eyes to his habit of lingering in the hallway. ...he doesn't know that my mother is a whore so masterful she makes you think her hand is a pussy and her manipulations are your advantage. ...my mother doesn't force me to work the lines or hold me down when my baby's father rapes me, only that she raised me to never say no. ...you're so nervous. you sit on a black futon with none-too-mysterious white stains at an "office" in burbank, the none-too-lowkey porn capital of southern california. she is nineteen, like you, but not like you. she's just gotten her clit pierced and unzips her low cut jeans to show you, no underwear, no boundaries, no shame. her pubic mound is shaved, raw, puffy with youth, and covered in hair bumps. she has braces, rainbow colored brackets. ..."cool, that's cool, you'll be good at this. wanna see my hole?" you've just seen someone else's pussy for the first time in real life and now you're being offered another? where are you? who are you? you are at a phone sex call center sitting on a futon stained with human fluids, about to be shown another hole. you are a whore. the interviewer lifts her shirt. "i have to wear a fucking maxi pad over it 'cause this shit leaks." the hole, about the size of a bullet wound, is dry and red around the edges. at least it's not another barely legal razor burned mons pubis. when she presses her fingers into either side of the hole, green pus oozes out.</p> |
| 121 | <p>i'm still a virgin you were never a virgin you were born from a whore i was born a whore ...peter calls every tuesday at four, right when my shift starts. i tell him to put clothespins on his nipples and balls, shave his pubes and ass, fill his raw asshole with ice cubes, rub icy hot where he shaved, and spank himself with a ping pong paddle. he begs for permission to touch his dick, i only give it when he sounds like he's about to die, i only give it to save his life. when he cums birds fly, waves crash, legs of light break through dark clouds. he's always so grateful, heaving, "thank you, mistress. you're the best." you're welcome</p> |
| 122 | <p>my johns are usually like peter, fetish callers who want domination, or the bored and lonely who want to complain about their girlfriends, wives, or jobs and have a sweet woman's voice to help them cum at the end so they didn't feel like bitches for emoting. i have one caller, steven, who likes me to invite my big black boyfriend over. steven likes me to "force" him to suck gigantic black cocks. at the end of every call, right after he cums, he yells, "i'm not a fucking faggot!" richard is having a man-baby tantrum. i try being sweet. "baby, why are you so upset? i just wanna spend some time with you—" "No you don't! You're just faking it! That's all you whores do." ..."do you want me to take him? you can start and we'll go to party mode so you can clock out, there's another girl he likes."</p> |

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| 123 | <p>pussy and tits, hands and mouth, asshole begging for a thumb to hold till there is cum moaning on the wall and you are nothing, nothing, and he is gone and he is nothing too, you are one. stare at it, you don't want to clean it.</p> <p>...“i'll drag you to the abortion clinic myself.”</p> <p>he calls you more in the weeks it takes to wear you down than he did in seven years spent fucking you on the side.</p> <p>...your child's father keeps raping you, you have no idea because you do not know who you belong to. he never feels good to your body or kisses you or stops when you ask. you say it hurts, he says you are too tight. he feels like nothing or pain, still you want him, you want it.</p> <p>...you've been fingered, licked, sucked, and fucked, you've been raped. no one has ever made you cum. the nineteen year old white boy whose dick you sucked when you were two made sure you were never a virgin. you gave birth before you ever made love. you sold sex before you ever had it.</p> |
| 124 | <p>in the mirror, the body they used to cum in.</p> <p>...the first time i get paid for a nude photo i feel my heart throbbing in my pussy—same heart, same pussy beating as i bark back louder than richard growls, he bares his teeth but mine are sharper, i shake dust up from the earth, digging my claws in, thick pendulums of foamy saliva dangle and stretch from my jowls but never fall</p> <p>come at me bruh</p> <p>my heart beats in my panties as i hear his ears pull back. he pisses down his legs, terrified i'll leave, and in that warm homey piss puddle he belongs to me, lover, child, mother, victim, predator, phone that finally rings and all of a sudden won't stop.</p> <p>...i belong to my mother when she makes me a whore, my rapist smashing into my cervix, cum on my wall, still fetus i press out, squatting on the toilet seat, screaming, tiny chicken bones and blood soup.</p> |
| 125 | <p>You call your mom you call your mom you call your mom like you call for milk like you call your ex for dick like your ex who only ever calls back to drag you to abort his child</p> |
| 127 | <p>i've never been kissed, never made love. my rapist's son has the most beautiful face i've ever seen, eyes of the grandmother he doesn't remember.</p> <p>...i don't fuck, i can't be touched. i get my rocks off selling nude photos and videos, bend my body, pull my flesh open, show the pink, whispers and lies set free.</p> |
| 131 | <p>Within sex work, humility, curiosity, and a beginner's mind correspond to respecting sex workers more marginalized than myself: Black, queer, and trans workers; poor and outdoor so-called “survival” workers; workers with disabilities; and sex worker elders, people who have been living activism longer than i've been alive.</p> <p>...Put simply, most strip club customers are seeking out entertainment, usually in the form of titties in their faces and a smooth, round ass grinding over their dicks.</p> |
| 132 | <p>I also wonder, in these comparisons, exactly which sex workers are perceived to be providing therapeutic services to their clients, or which sex workers feel the need to identify themselves that way. (If I had to, I would probably guess that it's white or white-passing sex workers who get coded that way, and we always have to remember that respectability politics operate along white supremacist lines more than anything else.)</p> |
| 134 | <p>The illustration on this page depicts two nude women. One of the women is lying on her back with her breasts and nipples exposed. She has a gag in her mouth. The other woman is lying on her stomach with her head between the other woman's thighs.</p> |

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| 138 | <p>We did not know that being in this festival would spark us to continue making porn and doing other types of sex work!</p> <p>...Creating more visibility for Black queer and trans people has been our goal ever since. <i>See Figure 2.</i></p> |
| 139 | <p>Sex workers' lives would be better if there were more accessible housing and holistic health care, if sex work were decriminalized, if there were more empowering depictions of sex work/ers in the media, if rapists and abusers were actually held accountable, and if there were a true end to rape culture.</p> <p>...I see power dynamics play out in the adult film industry through people continuing to prioritize white and heteronormative views. Indie companies and Black queer trans performers are sidelined and disrespected, constantly receiving less for their labor or placed in disempowered or exoticized positions. It supports rape culture and is typically catering toward a "male fantasy." As more visibility has been possible through the Internet, there is a growing niche for "ethical porn" that supports Black queer trans sex work and more "realistic" portrayals of sexuality.</p> <p>...Important goals for us to work toward are the empowerment and inclusion of Black trans and queer people in everything we do. Showing love toward Black trans and queer people by getting us jobs, resources, features, and paying us well for our labor.</p> |
| 140 | <p>I would like to see more white sex workers featuring and promoting Black sex workers on their platforms! And showing more love to Black people in general. Speaking on the inequality within the industry and actually advocating for Black and nonwhite sex workers to be paid more.</p> <p>...Ideally homelessness would no longer be, weed and sex work would be legal and fully decriminalized, we would have universal health care, and Black trans people would be able to live safe and prosper in all the ways.</p> |
| 141 | <p>The image on this page depicts three nude women swimming in a pool with their buttocks exposed.</p> |
| 143 | <p>During one of our sessions, he was hovering over my bare body, preparing to enter me. I stopped him for a request.</p> <p>"Can you turn the lights off?" I asked. I was self-conscious, but more than that, I didn't want to see his white, wrinkled body in such detail.</p> <p>"What, why?" he shot back. My response wasn't good enough, I suppose, and we had sex with the lights on. I pretended to cum as he came, and then slowly gathered my things from one corner of his house to the other.</p> <p>...Swooping down the winding streets, my vagina throbbing between my legs in pain and my head in a blank daze, I started to wonder what the fuck I was doing.</p> <p>Of course, I felt like the relationship was beneficial for me financially. I was able to buy textbooks I needed, buy drugs to numb the pain from being alive, and engage in fun, mindless activities like taking Uber wherever the fuck I wanted without having to be concerned about the cost.</p> <p>...During our last meeting, in which he forced himself in my mouth, I gagged and thought of death.</p> <p>...But I still remember the blinding sunset we could see from his achingly tall windows, the lush of green that I would look out at while in the shower sucking his cock, and the exquisite taste of the wine I'll never be able to afford that he poured for me.</p> |

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| | ...The fear when it felt like his cock would drop into my throat, when it felt like my uterus would shatter from his force, his front door that looked on, beckoning me to leave, quick. |
| 146 | <p>He thinks: For those evenings you're apart from him that you spend at home, lounging around in lingerie, writhing on the bed, masturbating with the dildo that reminds you of him, thinking of his big, strong grown-man cock and the way it makes you come over and over again by banging in and out of you very, very fast, calling his name.</p> <p>...In between flicking the bean, teehee, you can use this manicure set on your feminine hands, making those nails pink and clean and perfect for gently raking through the buzz-clipped hair on his neck wrinkles while you whisper how wet you are.</p> |
| 147 | The trauma will make you more compassionate, and you still have these gloves: when he insists you take his wrinkly hand in public to show all passersby that he's fucking you, you won't have to touch his skin. |
| 149 | <p>And yet, I am constantly being told how to fuck, when to fuck, who I can fuck, and whether or not my consent was valid. By self-proclaimed fellow leftists.</p> <p>...What began as a way to empower women, shift narratives around consent, and challenge conservative ideas around sexuality has become a weapon used to belittle, shame, and outright deny lived experiences of certain women, mainly sex workers and those who fall outside of white, cis, heterosexual norms.</p> |
| 150 | <p>Some outdated laws still suggest that rape isn't really rape if the victim is passed out and unable to say no. For example, there was the NYC district attorney who warned that severely intoxicated women aren't technically covered under the state's rape laws, 1 as well as the terrifying real-life case in which an Oklahoma court ruled that forced oral sex isn't rape if the victim had passed out from drinking.</p> <p>...Enthusiastic consent works on the premise that both partners should be engaging in any sort of sexual activity with gusto—with enthusiasm. So when you are kissing your partner, they are kissing you back (sticking their tongue down your throat!). When you are pulling your top off, they are ripping theirs off ... if they aren't engaging, then assume they are not ready.</p> |
| 151 | Is it any wonder, then, that the same white, middle-class, predominantly cis and heterosexual women who gave us enthusiastic consent as the exclusive model of consent are also the same ones who use government crackdowns, police brutality, loss of civil liberties, and social stigma to save sex workers from themselves? |
| 153 | <p>And yet I am not allowed to discuss this distinction, because the only qualifier to fucking is, "But were you into it?"</p> <p>...Not everyone fucks enthusiastically.</p> <p>...I don't always fuck enthusiastically.</p> |
| 155 | <p>All I cared about was transitioning.</p> <p>...Those were options only if I could manage to trick myself out of being trans. But when I became suicidal enough, I knew it was Delestrogen or jumping off the George Washington Bridge.</p> <p>...The story I kept telling myself was that because my mom had been strung out on heroin, I'd had to raise myself.</p> |
| 156 | That she was on dope and he was on crack. |
| 157 | I learned about fetishism for shemales when I got the Internet, and I sold my cock and ass for money so I could pay for feminization. |

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| | <p>...My mother implored me to wait to transition. Until after college and a career maybe. She told me horror stories of trans women she knew from the streets who were found murdered and mutilated.</p> <p>...But I retorted that the idea of letting puberty finish the job was simply worse than death. Period.</p> <p>...I met older femqueens in the Village, cutting school. This is so typical for queer youth that it exhausts me to have to tell this part of my story.</p> <p>...Often, their classmates at school bully them, and they go to gay neighborhoods in nearby cities to try to find love. Sometimes they do find love. But they usually find danger too: predatory adults who have a taste for young sad gurlz.</p> <p>...I didn't get to have puppy love or high school dating. I was treated as a hated fag who now had the audacity to start calling himself a girl.</p> |
| 158 | <p>The older femqueens I got close to gave it to me straight. Yes, these tranny-chasing pedos are dangerous, but they pay.</p> <p>...I lost my virginity on East 94th Street in some guy's bathroom. I don't know who else was in the apartment, but that's why we were in there. He didn't explain much. It didn't seem like a big deal to him. So I went with it. It was over in a few minutes and I got two hundred dollars. I did two other tricks that night. Six hundred dollars.</p> <p>I bought hormones and some stuff from the beauty supply store. The rest of the money I gave to a laser hair-removal technician in Alphabet City. My five-o'clock shadow had to go. I was disgusted with myself to the core, but smooth skin would assuage that. Right?</p> <p>...How many of us started hoeing on Craigslist? The erotic services section helped me pay for my education.</p> |
| 163 | <p>My drug of choice was opiates and heroin. I didn't want to be an alcoholic, because my mother was one, so I justified my use by, "At least I'm not a drunk like my mom."</p> |
| 164 | <p>So there's the idea, "We choose this lifestyle and therefore are deserving of the consequences that happen when we're on the streets and doing this type of work," and the way white men and society views the Indigenous woman, with that discrimination and racist.</p> |
| 165 | <p>A lot of these girls still worked for white pimps—they had better drugs or whatever—but there were Indigenous men on the street, they were often homeless or often transient, passing from city to city to city, and they would have multiple girlfriends.</p> <p>...I don't think I ever met, even as a social worker, an Indigenous sex worker who was so fucking pro about it the way I look at a white activist or sex worker, who is very "We have a right to choose" and, you know, reclaiming the word whore and all this stuff with fierce fuckin' ownership and whatnot.</p> |
| 168 | <p>Not just white sex workers. You're not the god of every sex worker on the fucking street.</p> <p>...Yeah, you have a strong voice, people listen to you: you're fucking white. They're gonna listen to you.</p> |
| 170 | <p>Not just the white sex worker, not just the "proud to be a fucking sex worker" reclaiming her body. Let's get that one who doesn't like the tight-fitting clothes, who's out there and you don't know whether she's a boy or not, but she's out there and she's amazing at sucking dick.</p> |
| 171 | <p>I agree that white sex worker activism spaces are extremely classist when it comes to the entry requirements of academic knowledge or scholastic experience.</p> |

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| 172 | <p>Another thing that resonated personally: as someone from a marginalized and specifically “undereducated” cultural group having insight into how white academics think about those “lower” than themselves, I have noticed that they so genuinely believe their own solutions to other people’s problems, to the point that it can be almost impossible to give them a good argument for why they are wrong other than forcing them to either go live or closely witness the perspective of the people actually facing the problems that white academics are discussing. As a white-passing sex worker with some academic experience who is also from a marginalized cultural group, I have been invited into white academic sex work organizing spaces and have firsthand knowledge of how they already have what Crystal described as “a box already set up,” and probably with instructions as well.</p> |
| 174 | <p>Never work while your trick is high. ...Use a condom for everything even head.</p> |
| 175 | <p>“Well,” I reminded her, “apparently all it takes is an adult man on the Internet to say he loves you, and you’ll head off to a hotel to show him your tits for free, like you did last month. So you’re already getting scammed like that.”</p> |
| 181 | <p>There’s some serious whorephobia, classism, and racism still rampant in our community; there’s a group of sex workers who still believe that young, rich, white sugar babies are higher up in that hierarchy, but all the dope bitches know that veterans and woke babes taking money straight out of these old, rich white men’s pockets and spending it better are the GOATs.</p> |
| 182 | <p>I can only offer advice to white sex workers that I need to keep in mind myself: Educate yourself on the white supremacy this country was founded on. Check the silent racism we were all raised in. You can’t just claim that you’re not racist, and appropriating BIPOC culture doesn’t count as antiracist work. Read works by Black civil rights leaders, listen to the needs of BIPOC women, and pass the mic to BIPOC women.</p> <p>...When I first got back into vanilla work, I thought that having my nipples show through my shirt wasn’t a big deal. Oh, it’s a big deal to squares. My current female boss actually called me out on bending over to wash my hands in the women’s restroom because my ass was sticking out too much!</p> <p>...But the more I play by these conservatives’ rules while keeping my mouthpiece in, the more money I rake in—to put into things that matter. Like a future in which women don’t have to play small and conservative to make the money they need to survive.</p> |
| 185 | <p>Two of the more enterprising dancers had lured the women to the rack, where the women shrieked and required many motorboats in exchange for their meager dollars, then clambered onstage themselves to messily hop around with their pants around their knees and swing their heads, hair too short to whip.</p> |
| 186 | <p>Inspired by this idiocy, the other two set astronomical values on the sight of their bare breasts, their asses grinding against denim—values they clearly didn’t actually assign to themselves, as they’d just been flashing the club for free.</p> <p>...Even women who were just getting fingerbanged by a stranger onstage for free—my club encouraged us to involve female customers in our shows—would declare themselves too good to grind on a dick through denim for any amount of money, though some claimed that they would become strippers and make ten thousand dollars a night just onstage. But lap dances? Grinding on a stranger’s dick?</p> |

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| 187 | <p>We sit on the edge of the bed, and I watch him get dressed. He’s wearing ratty, yellow-stained Y-fronts that sag in back. The bulk of his belly, all hard fat that doesn’t hide the hernia that pops out when he strains—which he does a lot during sex—leaves little to be seen of his thighs. Just enough room for his hands to rest.</p> <p>...“A lot of these girls, they love sex. They just love sex so much. They do it for the sex, because it feels so good.”</p> <p>My foul mood doesn’t lift, exactly, but the fantasticalness of this eighty-year-old—swollen stomach, popping intestinal hernia, black gums, a black, furred tongue (both of which he insisted on inflicting on me through forty-five minutes of cunnilingus, during which I imagined my vagina turtling into my body, pulling desperately away from the bacterial vaginosis his tongue was inevitably spreading, as no one with a tongue that color should be touching it to other people!)—this eighty-year-old man talking earnestly about the pleasures of sex with him as a reason for having sex with him, it makes my chest light. I struggle to hold back a hysterical giggle.</p> <p>“That too,” I agree. “I love sex. It’s so wonderful. It’s so”—I can’t stop myself—“sexual.” He nods like this is deep wisdom and not an inane platitude to appease a paying customer, and I’m not surprised, because when he asked me how many orgasms I had and I said, “Oh, at least eight,” he smiled and said, “Good,” with no sense of irony.</p> |
| 188 | Your precious, unemployed feet are too good to be jacked off to? |
| 189 | Add money, however, and the very people flashing their tits and picking up OkCupid dates are suddenly put off by the idea of being intimate with a stranger. |
| 191 | <p>I love orgasms as much as anyone, but providing them should not pay so exponentially more than keeping people’s bodies healthy.</p> <p>...Brushing someone else’s teeth is a whole other level of weirdly intimate, on par with—but not as unpleasant as!—the dreaded Deep French Kiss. And you don’t want to make it like a DFK for them: some foreign object shoved in their mouth and poked around.</p> <p>...I thought, “I’d rather be face-deep in the long and unkempt pubes of one of my more grotesque regulars, with the knowledge that I’ll be free of him in an hour, with a quarter of my rent in hand, than stand here folding the underwear of a man who is very clear that he fantasizes about me being face-deep in his pubes as I cringe out of his reach for eight to twelve hours straight, all for minimum wage.”</p> <p>...This is something that I think only other working-class people or sex workers or working-class sex workers can possibly get: sex with straight cis men is often work, and being sexy is usually a performance, whether or not either are done for money.</p> |
| 192 | Even if you’re not from a Christian-patriarchy family, we all know people like Jane Villaneuva’s abuela, telling us virginity (a social construct to begin with) is precious and unless we save it for the right man and moment, we’re trash. |
| 194 | <p>I’m pretty sure the first time I learned about selling and performing sex was via watching Jesus Christ Superstar, which was one of my very favorite movies growing up. I was absolutely captivated by Mary Magdalene, and remain so, and I was equally captivated by the relationship between Mary and Jesus. I was raised pretty strictly Catholic (baptized, CCD, communion, confirmation, the whole thing) and am Latine on one side of my family and pretty traditionally New York Italian on the other, so I’m kind of amazed that Jesus Christ Superstar was part of my cultural lexicon at all.</p> <p>...Anyway, Mary really stuck with me, even though apparently scholarly articles claim that Mary the prostitute is a fictionalized amalgamation. I refuse to believe it, and I’m happy</p> |

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| | sticking with my head canon: Mary was a sex worker and his most trusted disciple, and Jesus was a queer brown anticapitalist abolitionist who loved, respected, and revered whores. |
| 195 | There are more people talking about, and probably running, OnlyFans accounts; simultaneously, there are also more people using OnlyFans as a punch line or the butt of boring, unoriginal jokes. |
| 196 | Sex work has given me insight into so much about human nature. It has helped me understand, in an extremely embodied and experiential way, power dynamics, privilege, and oppression—both as it plays out in the club with clients and with other sex workers along the intersections of our identities. ...In five years, I'll be running my own private sex-worker-affirming therapy practice and supervising other sex workers turned therapists. |
| 197 | Every shitty thing that happens to dancers classified as independent contractors (not having the right to sue for discrimination or harassment, leaving the club having paid more to work than they earned, having a DJ expect 10 percent) or employees (extensive, sometimes racist dress codes, strict schedules, clubs keeping a large percentage of private dance sales) is also being done to dancers under the opposite classification. |
| 198 | The illustration on this page depicts two women on a couch. One of the women is sitting up while the other woman is lying with her head on the other woman's abdomen with her bra unhooked. |
| 207 | I did not know as a child that the lines between make-believe and reality did not quite exist, because I, like anyone living in an Anglo-dominated society, had been told repeatedly that the two worlds did not intersect. |
| 208 | Does anyone really need another grisly fantasy narrative with orcs or fairies trotted out as an escapist musing on racism? Does it actually help us to listen to some white man's detailed retelling of real-world colonial oppression where only his avatar makes it out alive? |
| 209 | There is no point in bringing up dystopian writings now, in the full midst of climate crisis! |
| 210 | I feel that there's something lost when story loses its mythic and educational use and is seen solely as a form of entertainment and play, and it cannot be forgotten that the downgrading of fiction from meaningful mythos to commodified entertainment is the extended work of colonial culture. The idea that fantasy and reality do not intersect is not only racist and sexist in its applications and historical appearances, it is also a skillful tool of disempowerment. |
| 212 | As you know, in the time between writing this piece and its publishing, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has thrown societal collapse into overdrive and put a burning spotlight on the oppression and mindless cruelty built into the colonio-capitalist way of governance. As many other BIPOC voices are echoing, one of the most crucial roadblocks to social change is the crisis of imagination that we currently face. |

| Profanity/Derogatory Term | Count |
|---------------------------|-------|
| Ass | 19 |
| Bitch | 6 |
| Cock | 7 |
| Dick | 11 |
| Fag/Faggot | 3 |
| Fuck | 80 |
| Piss | 4 |
| Pussy | 5 |
| Queer | 21 |
| Shit | 32 |
| Tit | 12 |

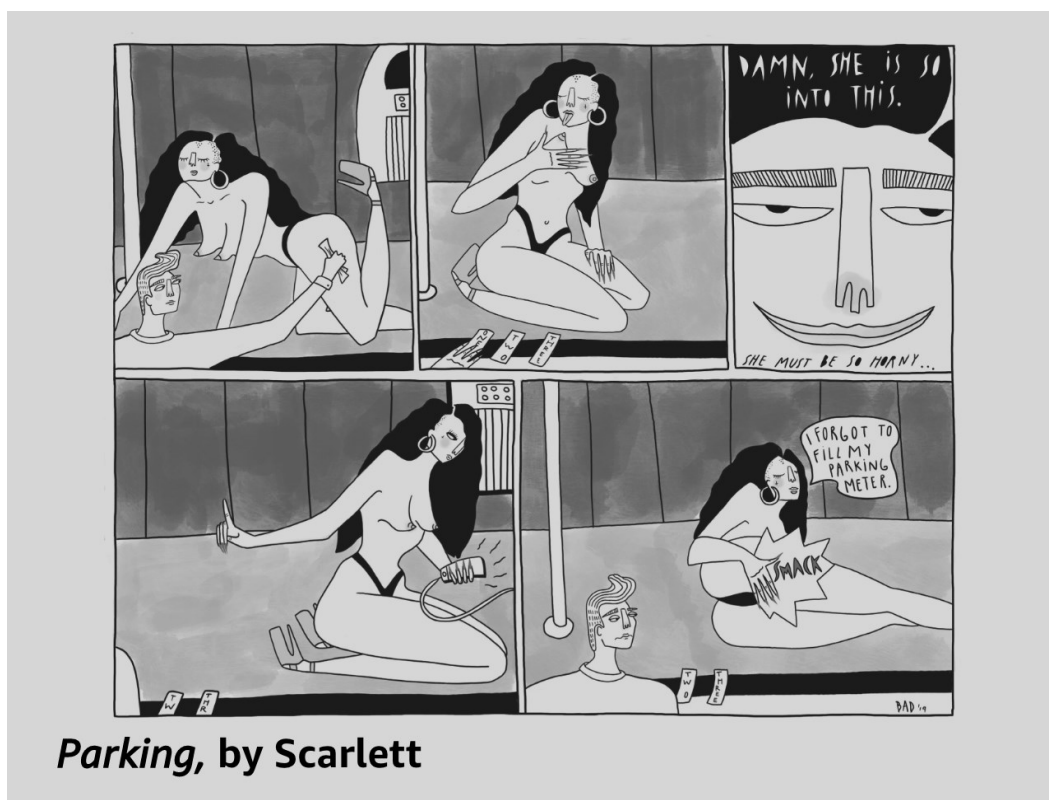


Figure 1

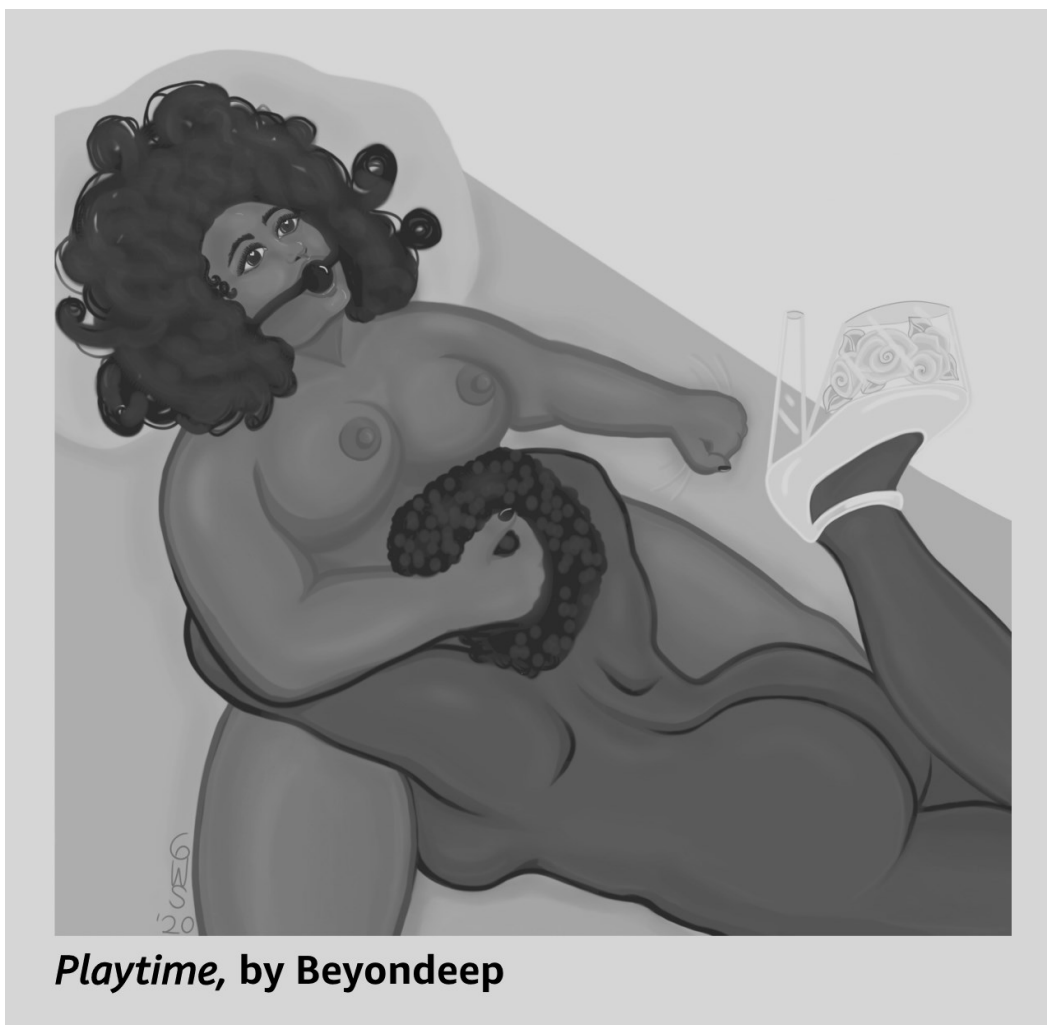


Figure 2