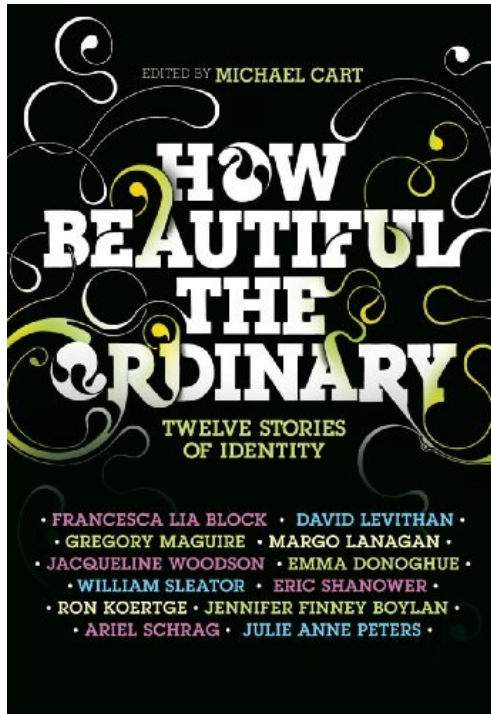


HOW BEAUTIFUL THE ORDINARY



Young Adult

Edited by Michael Cart

ISBN: 978-0-06-115498-0



Book Summary:

A collection of short stories written by twelve authors in the LGBTQ community.

Summary of Concerns:

This book contains sexual activities; sexual nudity; mild profanity; alternate gender ideologies; alternate sexualities; and violence.

4 /5

Not For Minors
BookLooks Review Rating

Page	Content
1	<p>But what if you search whole libraries of such book in vain for your own face? That- for too many years- was the plight of the gay, lesbian, and transgender young adults. For as far as literature was concerned, they were invisible. And even gay and lesbian characters did begin appearing in the late 1960s and early 1970s, they were too often presented- stereotypically- as unhappy outsiders doomed to lives lived as "the other" on the outer fringes of society. Transgender remained invisible even longer, for their faces didn't appear in fiction for young adults until 2004.</p>
2	<p>This collection contains stories by twelve of our finest authors for young adults, writing about what it might mean to be gay, lesbian, or transgender. Whether you're transgender, gay, or straight, you will find your own meaning in the stories that follow, of course, but for me one area of commonality is...their uncommonality.</p>
4	<p>Next, Jacquelin Woodson, winner of the Margaret A. Edwards Award, takes us inside the mind and heart of Trev, a young girl who knows what the rest of the world can't- that she's really a boy- and then shows us how he struggles heroically- even superheroically- to come to terms with his true self.</p>
5	<p>Then the gifted young cartoonist Ariel Schrag, whose graphic novels Awkward, Dsyfunction, Potential, and Likewise chronicled her four years at Berkley High School, offers readers a hilarious, sometimes existential, occasionally, delusional tourist's-eye view of a San Fransisco dyke march. (Get your picture taken with a topless dancer!)</p> <p>Jennifer Finney Boylan, author of the bestselling memoir She's Not There: A Life in Two Genders, writes a story about a girl who vanishes and the summer when a young teen named Jimmy "gave up on being a boy and became a girl instead."</p>
8	<p>We were once the ones who were dreaming and loving and screwing.</p>
13	<p>"Let's just do it," one boy says to another. We yell no. And when we're not heard, it hurts even more. We know that some of you are still scared. We know that some of you are still silent. Just because it's better now doesn't mean that it's good. Dreaming and loving and screwing. None of these are really identities.</p>
14	<p>At the risk of sounding old, we have to say: It's far too easy to get porn nowadays. We could drag out that first thrill- the quickly glanced magazine at the newsstand, the elaborately planned mail order- for years. Now it wears off in days. We're glad that it's less taboo. But how sad to deprive it of all mystery, to freight sex to early with explicit expectation.</p>
17	<p>We think of the boys we kissed, the boys we screwed, the boys we loved, the boys who didn't love us back, the boys who were with us at the end, the boys who were with us beyond the end.</p>
24	<p>The illustrations on the bottom of the page depict two young men kissing. The text above the images reads: BY THE TIME I REACHED SOPHOMORE YEAR IN HIGH SCHOOL, I'D PRETTY MUCH FORGOTTEN ALL THAT CHILDISH STUFF. I'D DISCOVERED SOMETHING MORE INTERESTING.</p>

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25	<p>The illustration on the top of the page depicts the same two young men, fully clothed. One of the young men is lying on top of the other one. The text on the image reads: MY BEST FRIEND, MARK, AND I WOULD GO DOWN TO THE CREEK AFTER SCHOOL AND MAKE OUT FOR--I DON'T KNOW--HOURS MAYBE. THE TIME ALWAYS SEEMED TOO SHORT.</p> <p>The illustration on the left-middle of the page depicts the same young men described above. The one on top has his hand angled toward the other man's pubic region. The other young man is leaning back on his elbows and has a shocked, angry expression on his face. He is saying, "HEY! I TOLD YOU NOT TO DO THAT!"</p> <p>The illustration on the right-middle of the page depicts the same young man previously lying on top of the other, now sitting up looking toward another man walking away. He is saying, "OKAY, MARK...CAN'T BLAME A GUY FOR TRYING."</p> <p>The illustration on the bottom-left side of the page depicts the same two men described above. The young man walking away is saying, "BUT YOU KEEP TRYING AND IT RUINS IT!"</p> <p>The other young man sitting on the ground replies, "I'VE SEEN YOU NAKED IN GYM CLASS PLENTY OF TIMES. WHAT'S THE DIFF?"</p> <p>The illustration on the bottom-right-side of the page depicts the same two young men described above. The young man walking away says, "THAT'S TOTALLY DIFFERENT, AND YOU KNOW IT!" The other young man is saying, "YEAH, I KNOW--GRIND INTO EACH OTHER ALL WE WANT WITH OUR PANTS ON, THEN GO HOME TO JERK OFF ALONE. IT'S CRAZY!"</p> <p>The text on this image reads: THE PREVIOUS YEAR I'D TOLD MY PARENTS I WAS GAY. THEY DIDN'T EXACTLY JUMP UP AND DOWN WITH JOY, BUT THEY DIDN'T HAVE ANY MAJOR PROBLEM WITH IT.</p> <p><i>See Figure 1.</i></p>
28	<p>The illustration on the top-right side of the page depicts the same two young men described above. Mark is shouting, "I WISH I WASN'T GAY!"</p>
29	<p>THEN MONTHS STARTED TO PASS. WHENEVER I SAW MARK--ALWAYS AT A DISTANCE--HE WAS EITHER ALONE OR WITH SOME GIRL HANGING ON HIM. I TOOK SOLACE IN THE REALIZATION THAT IT WAS RARELY THE SAME GIRL TWICE.</p>
30	<p>I TRIED GOING OUT WITH OTHER GUYS--EVEN HAD SEX WITH A REALLY CUTE ONE. IT ALL JUST MADE ME MISS MARK MORE.</p>
34	<p>The illustration on the bottom-right side of the page depicts a young man lying on his bed with a telephone up to his ear. He is smiling, saying, "MARK! I SHOULD HAVE CALLED SOONER. BEEN THINKING ABOUT...WELL, YOU KNOW...THINGS..."</p>
43	<p>He can't imagine Aimee and Martin having sex.</p>
44	<p>Noah's seen them pretend to kiss, but it's brusque and perfunctory. What the shoe does to a doormat on sunny day.</p>

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	Sometimes Robbie and Noa suck on a cough drop and pass it back and forth until it's gone, and it's a thousand times more passionate.
45	He looks at the books he bought. Those books- Boy Meets Boy, When I Knew, That's Mr. Faggot to You.
47	"I found something on the net for you the other day. A fact-ette. In the Bible, in Ezekiel, it's very clear that the sin of Sodom wasn't homosexuality. It was inhospitality toward travelers from the desert."
60	There wasn't any van. I got beat up. It was a gay bashing. I'm gay.
67	Have a seat right here, Trev, my teacher said. And in the way of great first-grade teachers everywhere, she folded herself around this daughter-boy that was me.
68	I'm wrong down there. All summer long I'm wrong down there, until Dr. K with her limber dolls and button-down dress-up shirts and mirrors and words showed me that the other world, the world inside the world.
69	<p>My father's world inside his world was crumbling. He had dreamed me pink and girlie. He had dreamed of princess parties and sweet sixteens, a wedding dance before handing me off to this new and beloved son-in-law. He'd said this: She's killing me. I'm a a man and my little girl is killing me. But in my world inside my world, I knew he wasn't talking about me, because I wasn't his little girl. I was Trev. And Trev was not a girl.</p> <p>Dr. K had sat them down, slowly re-explained me.</p> <p>But you can fix that, can't you? My father had asked. Can't someone fix her?</p> <p>Trev is Trev, Dr. K had said. Let him be so.</p> <p>And my father pressed his face into his hands and cried.</p> <p>I am not a little girl.</p> <p>You're a fuckin' freak! My brother had screamed.</p>
76	I stare at my wrists. They have these white sems along them. Sometimes I hide them under sleeves and jewelry. Sometimes I want yu all to see them. I want you to worry about me, to be impressed, a little afraid. I want you to hold them to your lips and see if you can feel the marks, like braille, and if you can read the story they write.
77	<p>hi blue</p> <p>about two years ago I started cutting myself. It was the weirdest thing. I felt so powerful. I don't admit this to most people but it was almost beautiful. The way the blood beaded on my skin and feeling of being close to death but in control of how close.</p> <p>...he broke up with me and I wanted to take the cutting further.</p>
81	my art therapist encouraged me to make art instead of drinking too much. Do you feel you could keep from cutting yourself by writing more?
83	<p>this is weird to write.</p> <p>I am not like any boy you ever met because I was not born a boy.</p>
85	<p>It's funny because I always wished I could like girls. I kind of idealized lesbians in some way. But I've never even kissed a girl.</p> <p>...this may sound like a too personal question but I'm wondering if you think that a</p>

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	straight girl involved with a boy who was born a girl is really a lesbian? I don't mind being a lesbian but I'm not sure that would feel exactly accurate.
86	I know that you are not queer but I wondered if maybe there is some strain of queer blood in you? ...it might help you to look at my pics again, especially the one in the white briefs. Tranny boy g.
87	I also saw that picture you were talking about again. Wow you are hot. Does this mean I am now a lesbian? X mist r. e. ...I never felt like a girl. I always wanted to wear boys' clothes and play with toys that boys usually play with. My body felt strange, like it belonged to somebody else. When I was a teenager I tried to stop eating so that I wouldn't develop or bleed. At twenty-one I started hormone therapy and surgery. It helped but there is a lot of shame I still feel, which is probably why I drank so much, in addition to the fact that I have alcoholism in my genetics. ...why do you feel shame? There is nothing shameful about who you are. You are a beautiful person. In some cultures, you would be revered as a representative of both sexes. I imagine you are the perfect lover because you are a man who can feel a woman in true way.
89	you asked if I care if I'm a lesbian. No. Last night I got into a fight with my ex-boyfriend and I wanted to cut myself so badly but instead I wrote about my feelings. ...I thought about what you have done to your body and how it is the same but different from what I have done to my body. It is different if you can still love the little girl who you were while honoring the man you have always been and have become. You were cutting to make yourself whole and I was cutting to tear myself apart.
98	And she hung above him reaching, blowing kisses, her breasts almost falling out of her bodice, which I dare say she thought would allure him; these shall be yours when you come, when you bring our fortune.
101	So let us ply them with our meat and ale, and no one has to notice, do they, if they lead some colorless ostler boy into the forest and there get naked with him? Let's not speak of it; let them have as they will. They've been a long time at war with their eyes full of death and dark dealing and cannon smoke. He had me up and down and around about. I cannot tell you how glorious it was, or how confusing, my God. I could not tell, did he love me or hate me? For one moment he was savage at me behind with his claws on my hips and such oaths, such talk in my ears as I'd never heard uttered, saying what he was doing and what he would do, and kind of filth was it. Then the next he was winding his hot nakedness all around mine, and drinking long drafts of kisses out of my mouth and saying Who are you and Where have you come from and No don't answer. Be a mystery to me, a lovely mystery, my darling.
102	Out the loft window the stars massed and winked. All down in my gut and loins, everywhere he had touched and used, was lapped by warm blood and excited,

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	remembering. If he came to Bracken' what would I do? Would he manage to sneak away, come up here, kiss me again, and bite me?
104	I told him quick and blunt then. I left out all the love stuff, the kisses and the hair and the bosom, the sight of the man's manhood in his tight breeches. I gave him the business straight, the plan I had heard.
124	<p>I am very surprised. Twenty years old, and already have sex with a Thai woman and a few Thai men, but nobody ever kiss me before. I walk out of the museum fast. The farang follows me.</p> <p>...The farang cannot speak Thai and I cannot speak English. But we can sign to each other. He makes sign he wants to have sex together.</p> <p>...The farang is very happy and smiles a very big smile. We ride in tuk-tuk to the farang's hotel, near the big old train station, Hua Lampong.</p> <p>...But I don't have time to look at the room, because Bernard is kissing me. And I am learning how to kiss him.</p> <p>It was never like this before, the kissing, slowly taking our clothes off, doing many things, taking our time. Before, with Thai men, it was always fast and secret, hurry up so no one will catch us. Here, with Bernard, no one can catch us. Here, with Bernard, we can do anything we want, for as long as we want. We can study every part of our bodies. I can tell he likes my body, and my dark skin.</p> <p>...And the kissing! The kissing makes everything different. This is not just a quick release, the way Thai people do it. This kissing and the taking time making it meaning. Now I know that for me the real way is with a man, not with a woman. Because already I love Bernard.</p> <p>Nobody was ever so good with me, understanding my body so well. We do many things. We stay in bed for a long time. He strokes my body, smoking a cigarette. Finally we fall asleep in each other's arms.</p>
133	At the hotel we go right up to his room. Now we are impatient. He pulls my clothes off very fast and I pull off his. And tonight it is better than the first time, almost one year ago.
135	<p>He has the same very serious frowning face he had at the airport. "Who did you have sex with in there?" he says.</p> <p>"Huh?" I say, not understanding.</p> <p>"Sex. S.E.X. Look it up in your precious dictionary. You should know the word. You're always looking for it."</p>
136	"After so many times with you last night, and you are right here waiting, you think I do that with another? Baa!" I say, meaning "crazy" in Thai.
137	Every evening as soon as I am free I come to be with Bernard. I sleep with him at the hotel and get up at three and go to the market.
141	The night in the bungalow, naked, Bernard smashes a whiskey bottle and tries to cut my neck. I tell him, "No, Bernard, don't do this!" but he will not stop, he pushes the broken bottle at my neck. I reach out fast and squeeze his balls, so very hard that he screams and drops the bottle and cuts his foot. He cries and cries while I clean and bind his foot, he says he is so sorry, so sorry, he loves me too much. And then we make love. Very passion- always special passion after Bernard tries to kill me, because we have terrible fights and then we make up.

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144	<p>The bar is on a street with many bars where girls dance on platforms in swimsuits and wear numbers. Many farangs come and drink, and if a farang likes a girl, he pay the bar and she has to go with him.</p> <p>The customers like me, because I make many jokes with them in English and we all laugh a lot. Sometimes I get up on the platform and dance, not for work like the girls, but for fun.</p> <p>...And after we know each other for a month, we finally sleep together.</p>
147	DYKE MARCH
149	<p>The illustration on the top-right side of the page depicts a crowd of individuals. There is a couple in the front of the crowd kissing. On the right-lower side of the frame an exposed breast is showing through a tear in a shirt. In the foreground, a messaging device is shown with a message reading: I want to french</p> <p>The words at the top of the illustration reads: 6:00 PM</p> <p>6:30 PM Down bottle of tequila</p> <p>7:00 PM Think Big "You know rich lesbians?!" "they'll totally buy us dinner!" "I want lobster and oysters on the half shell and..." "We wanna meet rich lesbians!" Text girlfriend in New York</p>
150	<p>"all the dykes here are old! They're all over 60! I know why! It's 'cause all the young ones turned into boys and were at the TRANS march yesterday! All of them! Boys, boys!"</p> <p>The illustration on the top-left-side of the page depicts a young man in the foreground with a confused look on his face. In the background, to his left, there is a woman with a mini skirt and fishnet stockings, lifting up her shirt exposing her breasts while a man watches.</p> <p>The illustration on the bottom-left-side of the page depicts a crowd of individuals watching a woman as she walks with her hands in the air. She is topless with her breasts exposed. A man is standing in front of her with a camera. The text on this image reads: 8:30 PM Follow around dancing topless girl who everyone wants to take pictures with</p> <p>The illustration on the bottom-right-side of the page depicts a young man with a nervous smile. There is a topless woman standing next to him with her arm around his shoulders. Her right hand is holding up a "peace" sign and her tongue is sticking out. The text at the top of this image reads: 9:00 PM Take picture with dancing topless girl <i>See Figure 2.</i></p>

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151	<p>The illustration on the top-right-side of the page depicts a nervous-looking young man with his hands on his thighs, walking. There are two men drinking from wine glasses pointing toward a group of people in the foreground. One of the individuals in the foreground, is a topless woman with her breasts exposed. The text on the top of the image reads: 10:00 PM Use rich fag's bathroom</p> <p>10:30 PM Get high</p> <p>The illustration on the bottom-right-side of the page depicts a group of people. Two young men look toward the background where a nude man is standing next to a fully clothed woman. The man's cartoonish penis is depicted. The text at the top of this image reads: 11:00 PM Stare at the world's smallest penis <i>See Figure 3.</i></p>
154	<p>That was the summer I gave up on being a boy, and became a girl instead. ...I didn't know the word transgendered back then, and even after I learned the word it would be years and years before I could say it out loud. But the summer between eighth and ninth grades I knew that somehow I had left the world of boys for good, and began slowly, blindly, feeling my way toward the world of women.</p>
169	<p>I pulled on a pair of blue jeans and a white T-shirt and stuck my hair behind my ears, looked in the mirror. I was a boy again. My eyes filled with tears. But I didn't want this, I whispered to my reflection. I want to stay Jenny.</p>
178	<p>I always thought I might be lesbian, but once I met Jesi I was one hundred percent certain. ...I raise her hand to my lips and kiss it.</p>
180	<p>Maybe if I start. Get her going. I could kiss her eyes, her lips, her neck. Her lips are so soft and sweet. ...When you kiss me like that...I lift her hair and kiss the back of her neck. ...I kiss behind her ear, under her jaw. She shivers. ...I lean over and hold down her knee. My lips press to hers, gentle at first, then urgent. She responds. This is going to happen. It is. I love to kiss her. She's so beautiful. She relaxes in my arms. I comb my fingers through her soft hair, and her arms glide around me. ...I slide my hands down her arms and she trembles under my touch. I know we both want this so bad. We've been waiting, being good, being patient. Waiting to be sure. ...I slip my hand under her shirt and she inhales a sharp breath. Oh God, Jesi. In the cave with our arms touching, our natural warmth seeping through our windbreakers. Jesi looped her leg over mine and I crooked my arm in hers. She whispered in the dark, "I've never felt this close to anyone- ever." I breathed, "Me neither." My hand crawls over her bra in front and I press my palm to her heart. It's beating</p>

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	<p>fast. I love her touch. I love the feel of her skin on mine. Her lungs fill and her breasts expand. A shallow breath escapes. Yes, Niolle. Give in to the feeling. I breathe her in, and fly.</p>
189	<p>My tongue touches hers and I want to jam it in her mouth. Push her down and Slow. Slow down. ...The deep kissing we've been doing, the touching and stroking, it's all been a prelude. She lifts my T-shirt in back. I feel both of her hands on my bare skin and it sizzles. We've done this before. We've felt every part of each other. ...As I pull up her shirt, we stand together by the bed. My fingers fumble her buttons and she tries to help, but I nudge her away. I want to do it. It takes me forever. Six buttons. Stupid, I think. Why didn't I wear a T-shirt like she did? Hurry. Last button. I ease the shirt down off her shoulders, where one of the buttons gets stuck on her bra clasp. "Shit." ...I have to slide the shirt back up over my shoulders to free the button. My shirt falls to the floor on top of Jesi's T-shirt and we're standing face-to-face in our bras. I unfasten Nicolle's bra in front as she's undoing mine. Hers pops open and releases her breasts. I gentle Jesi's bra down her arms and off. Her breasts are smaller than mine, perfec. I want to... My fingers graze Nicolle's arms and it raises goose bumps on her skin. I can't take my eyes off her breasts. They're, like, three times the size of mine. I bend down and kiss one, then the other. Stop. Don't stop. My nipples are already hard from exposure to air, the sudden spike in temperature, or excitement, or anticipation. I pinch her nipple lightly between my thumb and index finger. I squeal a little, an involuntary yip. I do the other one. God. I want to grab her wrists and pull her hands away, but the pleasure is excruciating. Her fingertips circle my nipples. She lowers her head again. I kiss her left nipple. Then the right. Oh my God. Torture. Pleasure/pain. I clutch her waist and pull her to me. "I love you," I expel in her hair. "I love you too." ...Her spine is straight and stiff. I run my hands up along either side and she arches her back. I copy her moves. She has taut, smooth skin. I can feel her ribs. We run our hands along each other's sides and arms and waists and hips. My hands spread across her bottom and she contracts her muscles. Nicolle's getting into it. Unzip my jeans, I think. Touch me there. My hands find her breasts and I press them up from below. She's moist, sweaty. She's holding up my breasts. She's looking at them, licking her lips. Do it, Nicolle. Do it.</p>

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	<p>Her nipples are small and pink and puckered. With my hand, I guide one into my mouth.</p> <p>My head falls back and I open my mouth to gasp.</p> <p>Her fingers grip my arms as I nibble her.</p> <p>I try not to cry out.</p> <p>I pull back. "Did I hurt you?"</p> <p>"A little," I admit.</p> <p>I die. "I'm sorry."</p> <p>"No" I say. "They're just...tender. Kind of sensitive."</p> <p>"I won't touch them."</p> <p>"Yes, you will." I clamps her hands back on to my breasts.</p> <p>...I widen my eyes at Nicolle before sliding her nipples between my fingers again and squeezing.</p> <p>I jump through the ceiling. Please. In your mouth. We fondle and kiss each other. The voice inside says, "Move on, move down." My right hand spreads across her stomach and over her jeans zipper and between her legs.</p> <p>Oh yeah. A moan sits in my throat. I move my legs apart as my hand reaches between her legs.</p> <p>Oh yeah. A moan sits in my throat. I move my legs apart as my hand reaches between her legs.</p> <p>I suck in a breath. I don't know how long we do this, kiss and rub each other. Groan with pleasure. We've done this before.</p> <p>I'm so hot for her. I unzip my pants. Let's get to it.</p> <p>Forget trying to take off each other's jeans. We shimmy out separately and drop them in place.</p> <p>At last we're in bed together naked. Well, not totally.</p> <p>Nicolle kept her underwear on, so I did too.</p> <p>Under the sheet, we kiss and hold our bodies against each other and intertwine our legs.</p> <p>...My hand slides between her legs and she jolts. I pull back. "What? Don't stop."</p> <p>"You're sure?"</p> <p>"Yes." No stopping now.</p> <p>I ease off her thong and she takes off mine. Our feet get tangled.</p> <p>She kicks our underwear off the end of the bed and throws herself against me. Her hair drapes around my face like a veil. She plants kisses on my nipples and stomach, one thigh, then the other. She arcs into the air and she's over me. Her hair hides her face, so I rake my fingers through it- long, thick, black hair - and bunch it behind her. I want to see her, watch her face.</p> <p>My hand slides between us, between our legs, and finds her spot. She makes a high, squeaky sound. Her hand is there too, on me. I take her wrist and steer her away. "I want to do you first."</p> <p>I pause. "Don't you want to come together?"</p> <p>Yes. No. I want to tell her I've been reading up; that it's hard to have orgasms together, but I don't want to break the mood. Instead, I simply say what I feel: "I want it to be good for you."</p> <p>It already is. What do I do next? Just lie here? I don't know how to do this.</p> <p>...I cup Jesi's chin and draw her to me; I kiss her. Her lips are full and sweet. "Let</p>

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	<p>me do you first," I say.</p> <p>"No." I whip my hair around. "I've been dreaming of this moment and this is how I want to do it." With you. For you.</p> <p>I'd been visualizing it too. More like obsessing. She kisses my shoulder, my neck, my breasts.</p> <p>..."I'm ready"</p> <p>I'm ready too.</p> <p>She resumes the kissing and I close my eyes.</p> <p>Her tongue is on my stomach, in my belly button swirling around. She's at my fringe. When she spreads my legs I'm so aroused all she has to do is kiss me there, flick her tongue across me a couple of times and I explode.</p> <p>God, she's coming.</p> <p>Waves and waves of ecstasy and joy and shock pulse through my body and swell all my vessels and veins and I grab Jesi's arms to pull her up.</p> <p>I dig my head into her shoulder and press fingers into her to keep her orgasm coming. I feel the throbbing. I feel it.</p> <p>It's slowing, waning. Too soon.</p> <p>Short, concentrated bursts. She goes, "God." I'll never feel this close to another human being.</p> <p>I shut my eyes and open them; release the final spasm. "Jesi," I say to her. "Wait'll you feel that."</p> <p>"How long do I have to wait?"</p> <p>I roll over on top of her and kiss her hard. I want to extend the experience, but I can't. The tip of my tongue plays with her nipples and she whimpers. I kiss down her belly. I tease the hair between her legs until she raises her hips and opens her legs.</p> <p>It's starting.</p> <p>The first feel on my tongue is ... gooey. The smell is strong. Not gross, the way I feared. It smells natural. I want to stay and taste her more, but ...</p> <p>"Hurry."</p> <p>I drive my face hard into her. I take her in my mouth.</p> <p>I'm on the verge, and then I can't. My eyes squeeze tight. Everything squeezes. Come on.</p> <p>I suck her into me and hold on. Hold.</p> <p>Breathe, I think. Don't think. Feel.</p> <p>She's tensing up or something. I let her go and she falls away. I spread her lips down there and lick her up and down. Around, inside.</p> <p>Yes. Like that.</p> <p>My tongue, my lips, my mouth on her.</p> <p>Don't stop.</p> <p>Rhythm. Steady rhythm.</p> <p>Keep going. Keep going.</p> <p>How long should I - She arches.</p> <p>"God, oh God."</p> <p>She screams. Her hands claw at my ears and I scramble up on top of her, lengthwise, my hipbone wedging between her legs. For pressure to keep it going. She rocks and grinds me with her hipbone and I come again. I can't stop.</p>

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	<p>"Jesi." "Baby." I hold on to her as if my life depends on it. Because it does. For a long time we lie together, holding each other, no speaking.</p>
206	<p>"Jesi," I say quietly. I tell her what I'm thinking. "Want to do it again?" I smile in the dark. Oh yeah. And then she says what I'm thinking: "Me first." "Me first." We both start giggling.</p>
214	<p>I had no aspirations to same-sex marriage; they didn't even use that phrase back then.</p>
245	<p>The other guy tracks Faroukh's eyes for just long enough that Faroukh guesses he is trying to memorize his face for identifying in a sheaf of enemies of the state. Were this same gaze happening before September 11, it couldn't have meant anything but sexual curiosity.</p>
255	<p>Faroukh guides the rental with a deceptively light hand, rolling his palm across the beveled rim like a young operative in an advertisement for Scotch, oiling along in a closed universe of sexy drives and sexy women.</p>
257	<p>She quotes a line back at me, something like "November can remember April tremblings." She says, "And this means, what? Are we talking earthquakes or masturbation?"</p>
259	<p>I sleep at night in my underpants, knowing Aunti Nurjahan will respect my privacy. I have to change them every morning; they're slightly crusty in front, or still moist. I am, after all, eighteen.</p>
261	<p>I start to hum to myself to shoo away the returning waves of shame, but I can't stop myself remembering the fumbling with clothes, the realization that I needed to face an acceleration of breathing to match her excitement. The approach, the breach, the disaster of it all. ..."Using me," she claimed. Using her? For what? "You know for what, you...you..." But even drunk she's too intact to finish the sentence.</p>
264	<p>Then he sits down and pulls his oversized shirt down to his upper thighs, and hauls out a book. I plunge underwater to be alone for an instant, alone with the picture in my mind of one curve of flesh sheathed in emerald blue.</p>
307	<p>Our eyes lock before our mouths do; and now he is falling backward off the bench onto the floor, and pulling me after him. There are two or three moments of wrestling- then he pulls away. ...His thighs are clenching my hips, his bond forelocks sweeping my lashes, his hands working under my T-shirt, walking up my chest as if he wishes I were a woman, and he bucks against me, instrumentally. The twin mazurkas couching us from either side have become frenzied cacophony. It is my first real kiss.</p>
310	<p>We are facing each other, sitting on the floor in the locked rehearsal room. I am in briefs, my legs locked about his waist; he is cool and clothed. I touch his knees, running my hands in his loose shorts, meaning comfort, but he misreads me as merely horny, and flinches. I freeze.</p>
314	<p>We roam the place in the dark, holding hands, finding new corners in which to kiss.</p>

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323	But I must say something. "You kiss me, you console me, all that, all that"- may hands flailing in the dark mean the sex the sex the sex-" and it's a diversion? What's the main event then, after this? Are you becoming a bishop or a senator or something where it matters?"

Profanity/Derogatory Term	Count
Ass	1
Dyke	2
Fag/Faggot	2
Fuck	3
Piss	1
Shit	5



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3