

# SOME FACTS REMEMBERED FROM FIVE YEARS AGO

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You remember: blood is a fluid that's 55% plasma—proteins, salts, stuff dissolved in water. Explains the lipsmacking taste loved by vampires. The other 45% are erythrocytes, leukocytes, and platelets floating around in that fluid. What gives blood its iconic red is hemoglobin, which being iron-rich accounts for that surprising metallic tang from the ragged cut on your lower lip, in the fleshy part where he bit you.

The whole thing took less time (6 minutes?) than you thought (an hour at least). It hurt much more than expected. You knew about the pain—never mind the violins/ trumpets/orchestras in romance novels—you're not that dumb. When something fairly large and rigid and bent slightly to the right forces itself into a space too tight for even the smallest tampon (1 cm, just wider than a pencil) something's gotta give.

That something is called a hymen: a mucous membrane, like the inside of your cheek, surrounding the vaginal opening. In many cultures, it is physical evidence of chastity. The body's flimsy way of keeping the enemy at the gate. Your gynecologist detailed the variousness of hymens: crescentic (thick at bottom and nothing on top), annular (ring-around-the-opening), and redundant (protrudes like a third set of labia). In rare cases, it is imperforate—a perfect seal requiring surgery to allow the menses to flow out. You never needed a gynecologist before.

Whatever form your hymen had is now immaterial.

What is apparent: it got torn when he held you down, your bony wrists above your head in his right hand. You choked because his left palm pressing down on your mouth smelled like the Marlboro Reds he chainsmoked at two packs a day. You tried to kick, push him off. You couldn't: he was significantly heavier at 168 lbs to your 94. Your legs were pinned down and wide open. Even if you could scream, there was no one to hear you that night in his apartment along Padre Faura. There was nothing you could do.

Enough of that. Remember instead: viscosity is a fluid's measure of resistance to being deformed by shear/extensional stress. Resistance to flow. The thickness or thinness of a fluid. It's not always easy to measure because some fluids are Newtonian (viscosity dependent on temperature but not on shear rate or time) and some are not. Viscosity is measured in centipoise (cPs), with water as the standard at 1 cPs. Pork lard can have a million cPs (almost solid) while honey has 3,000 (quite oozy). Blood is, yes, thicker than water but not by much at only 10 cPs.

And so you wonder now at the rate the blood flowed that night from the inside of your thigh, down your leg, onto the shower's yellow tiled floor. For a few seconds, you watched as blood mixed with water: how the bright red spreads in slow wispy circles into the clear, into the wet. How it flows away from you. How it disappears.

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