

### **ABSTRACT**

A creative and hybrid retelling of a young woman's life, from childhood to early adulthood, after her early exposure to pornography. Narrated in fragments through each of the letters of the alphabet, we follow the young woman's journey to healing and love as she first struggles with pornography addiction, body dysmorphia, self-harm, and faith and against predatory relationships.

### **Keywords**

pornography addiction  
hypersexuality  
masturbation  
pedophilia  
grooming

# SEX ALPHABET

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**JULIA HAO**

AGGRESSIVE. AHEGAO. AMATEUR. ANAL. ANIME GIRLS. ASS-EATING.  
AS ABUSIVE AS IT GETS. ASIAN FETISH. ASIAN GIRL WATCHES PORN  
FOR THE FIRST TIME.

THEY CAME IN glimpses. Quick and in small amounts, building up to a whole glob. It was the orgy on my uncle's computer screen. That mass of limbs, flesh, and skin rubbing on each other. A congestion of sex. Too immersed in the immorality of it all, my uncle let me watch. Five years old with no Mommy or Daddy at home to keep watch. I stood in awe of these naked bodies and the movements they made with each other. 360p through the 2007 computer screen. Ten seconds in and a woman screams, garbled, through the cheap speakers. Up and down, she continues. Finally, it clicks in my uncle. There is a child. He kicks me out of the room. I stay at the door, listening. The woman continues screaming. It was in one of the neighborhood kids' Motorola flip phone. The flash image of a woman's vulva. That black, hairy patch of skin opening shyly to layers of red, petaled flesh. This kid, I used to play with him. Grade six seemed so old for a five- or six-year-old. He showed the picture to us all as we gathered in a circle. No one asked where he got it. The older boys raved. Hands cupping their crotches through their basketball shorts. The younger ones stared, learning. It was the looped ad of a woman getting fucked from behind. Yes, give me more. A penis increasing triple its size. *Gusto mo ba palakihin ang iyong titi*. A cute anime girl with huge breasts rubbing them together, making the big, big titties jiggle and the sweaty skin shimmer. Oh, Senpai, not like this, I look so embarrassing and naughty. It was on the computer. In the kids' gaming sites. Let's play dress up. Take off my clothes. It was in the unlabeled CDs. Burned. Seared into my mind. It was in our house. In my school. This was how I learned. It was in our playground. It was in my head. In my mind. It was in me all this time.

I have felt dirty my whole life.

*BABY-FACED. BALL GAG. BEAUTIFUL. BIG BOOBS. BITCH. BISEXUAL.  
BLOW JOB. BONDAGE. BOOBS. BOTTOM. BOY. BOYS. BREASTS WERE A  
PROBLEM FOR ME WHEN I WAS NINE.*

I was the first one in my class to have them. The boys would stare, of course. At least one of them would, especially during flag ceremonies. They'd catch a quick look at the developing nubs, softly poking through the Catholic school uniform. Hunch a little and I could still hide my breasts. A little curl made me a kid again. I hated them for what they were making me. A lady. A female. A woman. Always part of the other sex. Two letters were what made me different from the man, from the male, yet always connected. Two letters. Two breasts. What was the difference. I had to wear a bra. That cage made out of wires and polyester cotton. It's not that the other kids excluded me. It was always the way they stared like I was a circus animal. An object of pleasure. Of entertainment. Watch my tits bounce as we play *piko*. Come change for PE here in the classroom. It got better when the other girls finally got them. Grade five, finally. Then it got worse again, fast. My tits are better than yours, but hers are better than mine. Why do they part like that. Your nipples are so big. That's too dark. Why aren't they like the cute, dusty pink nipples of the other girls. The other girls are, of course, White. She's so young and her breasts are already sagging. Mine are too hard or whatever the boys whisper behind my back after they sneak a hug. Have you ever heard of a man complaining about perky breasts. I took off my bra sometimes when I went to school. Cup 34B is fine. Look at those double Ds. Julia, can you hug me for a second. Do breasts stiffen when touched, like armadillos curling for protection. I wish I could curl myself again and hide my breasts. It's stupid. It's fine. I've grown to love my breasts. My only pair. My heavy burden. My two letters.

*CHOKE. CLIT. CLITORIS. CNC. COCK. COCKBLOCK. COCKRING.  
COWGIRL. CREAMPIE. CUM. CUNNILINGUS. CUNT. CURIOSITY  
KILLED MY INNOCENCE.*

The internet was talking all about it. The girl who ate her tampon was so “last week.” No, this was the new topic. Fuck Vanessa Hudgens’ nudes. Have you heard of *Boku no Pico*. Sounds like an anime. You have to watch it. Don’t watch it. Bleach your eyes. It’s just three episodes. I can’t look at ice cream the same again. Now I have to watch it. Look it up, it’s so easy. Search?=Boku+no+Pico. Showing results for Boku no Pico. Watch here all three subbed/dubbed episodes of Boku no Pico. I watched. I watched. I watched. Cross-legged and hands on the keyboard, ready to Esc, X, and Alt+Tab. It wasn’t as bad as I thought. Just an anime about a boy and a man. The man takes the boy out for ice cream. Vanilla ice cream. He makes the boy eat it in the car. Just the two of them. Then white sticky liquid drips on his chest. The man brings him to a motel. He makes him dress like a little girl, then he takes it all off. But he keeps the skirt. They always keep the skirt. The skirt is hot. Schoolgirl fetish. All these young girls need a big man to teach them a lesson. Pico, the boy, gets fucked in the ass. Then ice play. From behind. That hurts, Senpai. They do it on the beach. Senpai, I feel like I’m going to pee. It’s okay. Yes, this is okay. I’m going to pee, Senpai. But the pee is white and sticky. Where are you going. Are you still watching. The older man breaks Pico’s heart in the end. Pico is never the same, and he keeps wanting more and more. Is this okay.

Yes, this is okay.

*DEEPTHROAT. DEGREDATION. DICK. DILDO. DIRTYTALK. DOGGY  
STYLE. DOM. DOMINATED. DOPPELBANGER. DREAM. DREAMING  
WAS EXCITING, HORRIFYING, WET, DIRTY, AND DANGEROUS.*

I could be with anyone. Give me all the boys, the girls, the men, the women, the men with vaginas, the women with dicks. I could have them all in my dreams. One dreamy orgy with people I've created yet always known. I was kissing and fingering the girl in my class while she had the boobs of the porn star I just watched last night. I was giving this actor a blow job while he had the voice of one of my teachers. I did them all so good, like everything was real and not some ghostly, foggy imitation of reality. I could have them all here in my sleep. Just lie down and let my mind do all the work. Look, no hands. They could have me, too. They can press me down on the bed and hold my head down. I struggle in my dream, but the bed remains calm and silent. They can choke me here. Thumbs on my throat. Let me go. Punch me in the nose and finish on my face. Call that a cherry sundae. I would scream and no one would hear. The man from church is raping me. My own mother is holding me down. The worst thing is I wake up wet, not only from sweat. You like that, don't you. I don't. This is just how it is with an excited mind. An open mind. A green mind. I open my mind before my legs. Whatever my dreams give me, I take. Yes, take it. Take it all in, bitch. This is what whores like you deserve. I shut up. I close my eyes. I dream.

*EARPLAY. EATING PUSSY. EAT ME OUT. ECCHI. ECSTASY. EDGING.  
EJACULATE. ENJOY. ERECTION. EROGENOUS. EROTICA. EXPLICIT.  
EXPOSE YOUR BREASTS FOR ME, DARLING, WILL YOU?*

The text came from a white man around his thirties. I am thirteen, fucking around and finding out on an app called Whisper. Three hours ago, I made my first post. Hiii i am 15F looking for a bf/gf. All the comments were screaming. Get out of here. 15, you're a child. Go away, kid. This isn't the place for you. Go look somewhere else. WTF. Get out. Get out. Get out. You have one (1) new message. Hi, I am [REDACTED] 34M. He is white. Freckled. Medium-built. Curly-haired. He sends me another photo. A "dick pic." My first one. I laugh and I giggle at his photo. At his mushroom of flesh about the size of my thumb. He asks me for photos of my face and I send him one. You look so young. I am actually thirteen. You sound mature for your age. I smile. Oh, I am mature for my age. Can you show me your mature body parts. Yes. Expose your breasts for me, darling, will you. I take off my shirt. Camera. Snap. Send. Keep it going, love. I take off my bra. Take picture. Camera. Snap. Send. You're so beautiful. More. I show my panties. Take picture. Camera. Snap. Send. Fuck, take it off, babygirl. I take it off and I cup my sex. Furpie doesn't sell. I angle the photo like I'm fingering myself but I'm not. Take picture. Camera. Snap. Send. I'm cumming for you, babygirl. Photo loading. Photo of dick, cummed. It looks terrible.

Block.

*FAGGOT. FANTASIES. FELCHING. FELLATIO. FEMALE. FEMININE.  
FETISH. FINGERBANG. FINGERING. FINISHING. FISTING. FLACCID.  
FOREPLAY. FRENCH KISS. FUCK. FUCK. FUCK.*

Ctrl+H. Select All. Delete. Clear browser history? Data cannot be recovered after, Continue, Cancel. Continue. Browser history is empty. Right-click. New Incognito Tab. Alt+Tab. X. Search in incognito mode. I type my lusts. Enter. Showing results for ████████████████████.

*GAG. GANG BANG. GAY. GAY GIRL. GENTLE. GENTLY. GENTLER.  
GIRLS. GLANS. GLORY HOLE. GOOD. GOOD GIRL. GRIND. GROPE.  
GROWER. GROW UP.*

Here, wear this. My best friend hands me her lacy white bra and panty set. It's recess in grade eight. No one is in the classroom except for us. Will this fit me, I ask. Your boobs are big enough, don't worry, just get rid of your So-en shit and wear this. But SO-EN is comfortable. Well, pretty has a price, and if you want to get in his pants, you have to wear this. Okay. I nod and take the lingerie. I wear it at home and stare at myself in the mirror. I feel so out of it. I am baby-faced with boobs. The lace is beautiful with its intricate eyelets, but damn, it was itchy as hell. The panty is awkward on me. I am fourteen with not enough hips to carry the frame the panty wants. Not enough ass, either. But I make it work. We always have to make it work. Angle it here. Put on the flash. Jut out your hips and your ass. Make sure all your breasts' flesh is cupped in the bra. Lights. Camera. Action. Fuck like you're being watched. And that's a wrap. I hit him up and I send it to him. He sees the message, but he doesn't reply for a couple of minutes. Then he replies. He says,  
Nice.



HAIR. HANDJOB. HARD. HARDER. HARDER. HARDER,  
MOTHERFUCKER. HAVE. HEAD. HEART. HEDONIST. HENTAI WAS  
MORE TOLERABLE THAN ACTUAL PORN.

Porn was real, that's what I thought. This woman taking two dicks all at once has a childhood, a first crush, a favorite TV show, a comfort food. She holds on for dear life to the guy thrusting his dick into her lipsticked mouth while the other guy does her fast and hard from behind. Who was she outside this porn site. This guy sticking his cock out of a hole has more to his life than this twenty-minute glory hole video. Does he have siblings. Is he close to them. He wiggles his hips, and his dick swings like a pendulum. Who was the first person who broke his heart. Did he ever like going to school. The questions bothered me more than what I was watching. The bald guy fisting this fake-tanned woman and then trying to fit his whole head in her vagina, what was his favorite flavor of ice cream. This woman getting her labia clamped and stretched to an open, what was the best day of her life. I couldn't bear seeing actual genitals. That was another thing that bothered me. The fleshiness and reality of it all made me uncomfortable because they belonged to someone who was more than what the cameraman was zooming in on. They had a life I didn't know. I was an intruder then. And I couldn't shake off the questions. I couldn't get off. So I tried *hentai*. Japanese animated porn. It worked. It worked really well. Anime people weren't real. Sure, they had voice actors, but I didn't have to think of them because I couldn't see their real faces. Just their voices. Their moans. Their whimpers. Oh, Senpai, your dick is so big inside me. Onee-san, your breasts are so big, I want to stuff my face in them. Their genitals were pixelated. White bar. Black bar. You couldn't see anything, really. I liked it that way. Hentai focused on the faces. That's what they called *ahegao*. Big eyes half-closed and crossed. Blushing in pleasure. Tongue out with a glimmering film of saliva covering it. A drawn cloud of a breathy moan right beside their mouths. The anime girls loved it. Whatever it was that fucked them, they were loving it. Rapists. Uncles. Old men. Professors. Classmates. Fathers. Octopuses. Aliens. Goblins. Ogres. The Japanese were fucked-up people. Oh yes, they were. Finish on my humongous breasts that are almost as big as my whole body. There's so much cum on me, I'm literally drowning in it. Put another tentacle on my nipples. Sensei, that hurts. Oh, please don't rape me, I'm a virgin. Brother, don't get me pregnant. Don't chop off my head and use my mouth. Oh, not the katana in my hole. *Yameru kudasai*. Stop, please. Make it stop. Make it go away. Don't do that, please. Stop. Stop. Stop. Stop. Stop. Don't let me hear them anymore.

*ICE. ICE PLAY. IN AND OUT. IN. IN. IN AND OUT. INNER THIGHS.  
INNER LIPS. INNOCENCE. I COULDN'T STOP HAVING SEX WITH  
EVERYONE IN MY MIND.*

That was the worst of it all. I was having sex with my crush. I was fucking the senior girl from choir club. I was bent over on my history teacher's desk. I was straddling our neighbor. I was getting fingered by the masseuse. The images of these thoughts came in like a flash. A pop-up ad in my own brain. I close one, and another one opens. I'm sucking the priest's dick under his robes. Close. I do 69 with myself. Close. I'm pegging the school janitor. Close. I'm putting my legs over the waiter's shoulders. Close. Close. I am so close. My driver rapes me. My own father tries to assault me. Then it's my uncle again. That fucking orgy. That mass of limbs, flesh, and skin rubbing on each other. Rubbing on me. My mind is so congested with sex. I cannot breathe. I cannot think without the image of someone fucking me flashing before my eyes. The sex scenes gush out of my brain. Mental creampie. My own mind rapes me with these thoughts. Expired desires. Lusts gone bad. Some days, I would cry. The intrusion would tear me up. Look at this. Look at you. Pathetic bitch who wants to sleep with everyone, even if it means getting raped. I don't mean it. I have felt dirty all my life, and I thought love meant making myself presentable for sex. Lips open. Legs spread. Nipples hardened. Wet down to my inner thighs. Tug at my hair. Come look at me. Cum in me. Take me. Free sex. Free woman. Free whore. Free cum hole. I don't want to be touched anymore. But I do want to be loved. I do want tenderness. I do want to make love. I do want to be held gently.

Maybe sex could be all that. But I've seen enough to make me afraid.

*JACK OFF. JERK OFF. JIZZ. JOIN. JUICY. JULIA. JULIA.  
JULIA, WHAT THE FUCK IS WRONG WITH YOU?*

*KISS. KISS ME. KISS ME HARD. KISS ME WET. KNOCK ME OUT.  
KNOCK ME UP. KNOW ME. KNUCKLES. KNUCKLES-DEEP. KNEE  
BETWEEN MY LEGS. KNEEL AND REPENT, THAT'S HOW YOU GET  
BETTER.*

But no one wants to talk about it. They shut you up with three Our Fathers, ten Hail Mary's, and two Glory Be's. Or they just nod. I see, I see. Thank you for sharing, Julia. We'll be praying for you. No church ever wants to talk about it. Sometimes they do, but when it's you, they don't—because you're a woman. Because God forbid women get horny outside of marriage. So they teach you: Christ is the head of the Church, and your husband is the head of you. And you, the woman, the only head you have is the one you imagine that is between your thighs. Close your eyes and bow down. Your hands grab the hair so you could push their wet, wide, open mouth on your sex—your own fleshly image of Mama Mary. Amen and amen. But no one wants to talk about that. Women's bodies. Women wanting bodies. Even Eve felt ashamed of her own nakedness. No Church just ever wants to acknowledge that women can also struggle with lust, that they can be addicted to pornography, and that they could be worshipping on a beautiful Sunday but their minds are fucking the youth pastors in the pulpit and fingerbanging the pastors' wives down the front row. So what they do is just give you rosaries. A novena. A chaplet. Or they put their hands on your shoulders and say a quick prayer for you. Surrender it to Jesus, anak. Then they go talk to the men, ask them how they are, how they're doing, if they could help, and they tell the men, God forgives you, you can do this, you have the power and Jesus' strength to overcome your weaknesses, and we'll be there with you fighting this battle. And you stand there, shamefully desperate, looking for a woman you can talk to about these things, a woman who could tell you that you're not too dirty for such a holy place, a woman who could say that even Eve, later on, got clothed with grace. You look for this woman in church for years, then finally she sees you, and she says,

Your skirt is too short.

*LABIA. LAP DANCE. LEGS. LICK. LICK MY CLIT. LICK YOUR CUM. LICK  
IT ALL UP. LIPS. LOLICON. LOLITA. LONELY GIRL. LOWER. LONELIEST  
HEART. LOVE. LOWER. LOVE ME. LOVE ME, PLEASE.*

The body wants.  
The body screams.  
The body cuts.  
The body needs.  
The body curls.  
The body arches.  
The body hugs herself.  
The body cries.  
The body sleeps.  
The body wakes.  
The body is shit.  
The body is one.  
The body is alone.  
The body desires.  
The body crushes.  
The body hungers.  
The body is shamed.  
The body forgets.  
The body remembers.  
The body begs.  
The owner surrenders.

MAKE. MAKE LOVE. MAKE YOU CUM. MASOCHISM. MASTURBATION.  
MILFs. MILKY. MOAN. MOLEST. MOUTH. MOUTH-FUCKING.  
MUTILATION. MY SCIENCE TEACHER COULDN'T WAIT FOR ME TO  
TURN EIGHTEEN,

and while I wasn't, he gave me gifts: candies, books, bookmarks, handwritten letters, and a box of love quotes from Papemelroti, among other things. He would meet me after dismissal. He would tell me my friends were shit, but that he was there for me, anyway. Then he would ignore me for weeks and make me cry. Then one night, he would message and call me in the app he told me to download and say sorry. I would always wait for the apology, as I would always take the call, as I would always reply. At our Christmas party, he took me to the science laboratory, and he touched me—safely, carefully, and legally—pulling me into an embrace. That wasn't the first time he did that. The first time would be on Club Day, when he had me visit him in a dark and empty classroom. He would always tell me, he would like to leave the school because he doesn't like being my teacher. And when I would ask why, he would always say, you know why. His answer concealed, because he must've known I wasn't really old and smart enough to really know why. I thought this was all okay.

On Christmas day, he messaged me he loved me.

I never got to reply because my parents had seen the notification before I did, and they had taken my phone and screamed at me and blamed me for being so stupid and for being such a whore. And that was the end of everything.

But this was years ago, when I had just turned fourteen.

Now we're older. I'm already in college, and he's still teaching high school students.

*NAUGHTY. NAME. NAKED. NO. NAVEL. NECK. NEED YOU. NO.  
NEED ME. NO. NEED THIS BAD. NIPPLES. NO. NUDES WOULD  
MAKE ME FEEL ASHAMED.*

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nipple plastic surgery

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nipple reduction surgery philippines price

female reproductive system diagram

why are my labia minora out

labiaplasty definition

labiaplasty recovery

labiaplasty philippines price

*ON THE BED. ON THE TABLE. ON THE DESK. ON THE WINDOW. ON  
THE FLOOR. ON THE CHAIR. ON THE SINK. ON THE TOILET, I TRIED  
TO CUT MY LABIA OFF.*

One day, I looked down at my vagina and concluded it looked wrong. My vagina had been my flower bud, my beautiful rosebud. I thought it would forever stay that way: closed and shy, growing a lush patch of grass that I needed to mow every now and then. And then my vagina “bloomed,” but really, it wilted. My vagina stuck out its tongue, lazily and sickly, and for weeks I would grab the skin around my labia and try to tuck them back in. Get in! Go back inside! But they would keep spilling out, darkening also over time. In the end, I just wish I hadn’t looked.

Watching porn those days turned me into an angry, jealous, and confused eleven-year-old. I wonder if I had done anything wrong to my vagina that it would darken and turn that way: all out in the open, like expired beef slices too disgusting to touch. I envied porn stars for their rosebuds—for their labia that were neatly folded inside their smooth and milky skin. I could see how much the men loved touching them because of the way their fingers enjoyed sliding in and out of their vaginas. Smooth. Silky. Plump. Soft. Welcoming. Their vaginas were palaces.

My vagina was screaming. Naughty bitch. So I held my shame through my scissors, the one I bought from National Bookstore’s Back-to-School sale, and I put the blades on my labia, ready to cut. DIY labiaplasty.

For a moment, I put down the scissors to check my labia’s sensitivity. I pinched it. Massaged it. I almost couldn’t feel anything, and with that, I guessed there wouldn’t be much pain when I cut my labia off. It would just take one snip here, and another there—then I would just let the flesh drop into the toilet. Flush.

Slowly, I closed the gap between my thumb and my forefinger, between the two blades and my labia. In the toilet water’s reflection, I could see my vagina. Shy but open. A virgin operatic mouth. Red and alive. It looked like a raw wound, gaping.

A little blood drops into the water, disrupting the reflection. I put the scissors down.



*PANTIES. PASSION. PATHETIC. PEEK. PERVERT. PENIS.  
PENETRATION. PERIOD. PERIOD SEX. PIV. PICK. PICK ME. PLEASE.  
PLEASURE WAS HER ONLY PURPOSE.*

I call her my pearl. My star. The center of my earth. She's my core. My nucleus. She's a comet on fire. With more than 10,000 nerve fibers, I call her my atomic bomb. My light bulb. My TNT. She's my weapon and my pleasure button. I'm the princess, and she's my pea. My bed of desire. My seat of delight. They call her a myth. They say she's virtually invisible. The truth is, she's just my hidden treasure. My wishbone. My precious ruby. She's Venus' kiss. My honey drop. My key. She's the stigma of my flower. My lovely controversy.

I call her my clitoris. She's the center of my gravity.

*QUEER. QUEER GIRL. QUICK. QUICKIE. QUIT. QUIT IT. QUITTING  
WAS DIFFICULT BECAUSE I WAS SO LONELY AN ORGASM WAS MY  
ONLY FRIEND.*

Some individuals may avoid difficult emotions, such as sadness or shame, and seek temporary relief by engaging in sexual behavior. Sexual cravings, therefore, can mask other issues such as depression, anxiety, and stress. . . . They may feel distress in areas of life including work, school, and relationships.

— Psychology Today, December 16, 2021

*RAW. RAPE. R-RATED. RAM. RAM IT IN ME. REAR. RIDE. RIDE YOU.  
RIDE ME. RIMMING. ROMANCE. ROUGH. RUB. RUB IT. RUBBED IT  
UNTIL MY HYMEN BLED.*

The first time I fingered myself, I felt like I was on fire. It was siesta hours during the summer. My family had been napping upstairs while I stayed in the living room, unable to sleep because of the heat. Frustrated, I covered myself with the couch pillows and started rubbing myself through my panties. Knockout by orgasm. Down, there was a spark, the strike of a match, and then the familiar and quiet rush started between my legs. It was a slow and smooth quiver, and then a light earthquake that invited me to stay, to keep going. I was waiting—working for that mighty eruption to come, for my own exploding Vesuvius to weigh down my whole body and put me to sleep. Instead, a new feeling broke inside of me. The earthquake intensified. Magnitude after magnitude, I felt my ground open. My own continental drift. I put my fingers under my panties and I let them slide, a little dry. Everything was warm and thick, and the warmth grew steadily fast. I could feel myself smoking, emanating heat, glowing like a sun. I was ready to erupt. Faster, the warmth expanded and rose. Then I exploded into a thousand, hot, flying lava—silently but intensely. The friction from my fingers burned me, but I loved that it felt like I was completely on fire.

I was gold, refined. I was the earth, rearranged. I broke into myself until I bled.

And then the shame came.

*SADISTIC. SICK. SICK GIRL. SICK SLUT. SEE ME. SCREW YOU.  
SCREW ME. SEE YOU. SEMEN. SPANK. SPOON ME. STROKE ME.  
STARE. SUBMISSIVE. SHAME. SHAMEFUL. SAVE ME, PLEASE,  
SOMEONE SAVE ME.*

TAKE. TAKE ME. TEASE. TEETH. TENDER. TIE ME UP. TURN THE  
OTHER WAY. TRY. TRY ME. TRY AGAIN, IT'S NOT TOO LATE.

I am a little shy to admit the facts—that it started with a boy, that it was in church, that I was in love with this boy, that I tried to go to church again, that I tried to quit watching porn again because the boy I was in love with stood in front of our church and opened up about his own struggles with lust. He stood there in the wide stage of the megachurch, and they called him a “testimony of God’s healing grace.” I listened. I prayed.

As much as I wanted for another woman in church to speak about struggling with lust and pornography, she never came, not at least when I needed her. Instead, it was him, and I guess it was enough that I knew I wasn’t alone in my struggle.

Call it reclamation  
recovery  
repossession  
recuperation  
repentance  
healing  
opening.

When I found out our wounds almost looked alike, I felt like I could slip in them and nestle myself in and find comfort that it wasn’t only me who had been bearing some weight of guilt their whole life.

But I learned that  
I just believe

Because of him, I learned there is a certain reward

joy

comfort

alchemy in sharing wounds.

UNAFRAID. UNACCEPTABLE. UNAVAILABLE. UNANSWERED.  
UNBELIEVABLE. UNCOVER. UNDO. UNLOVABLE. UNSPOKEN.  
UNREQUITED. UNHAPPY. UNOPENED. UNDERSTAND. UNTIL WE  
SAW EACH OTHER AGAIN.

This is not a love story, but love is in it. That is, love is just outside it,  
looking for a way to break in.

— Jeanette Winterson, *Lighthousekeeping*

VAGINA. VANILLA. VIBRATOR. VIRGIN. VILLAGE. VULVA.  
VULNERABLE. VALUABLE. VERY. VERY GOOD. VERY BEAUTIFUL.  
VIBER ME A NUDE AND I'LL DRAW YOU.

She called them *#SecretNudes*, and it was her way of protesting against digital violence. The key in her art was consent. In a time when the internet had already evolved disturbingly into a dangerous place where women were too often reduced into sexual objects or pitted against each other, opening her Instagram account was like entering a sacred, reclaimed space for women and their bodies. And right there, amid the digital curation of the nudes she had drawn, I could hear a choral calling from those women: “my body is a temple, and so is yours.” At that time, they seemed like foreign words to me:

Beautiful. Worthy. Holy. Valuable. Soft. Lovely. Admirable. Divine.

In the end, the drawings persuaded me to have my very own nude drawn as well. I messaged her shortly after.

When she gave back my nude after some weeks, I found myself on the verge of tears. The outline of my body flowed like music and desire and innocence. Her strokes and coloring made my portrait glow gently, embracing my body with a kind of lightness that felt kind on my eyes and in my heart. My scars from self-harming, which she had also included in my portrait, delicately and softly smiled at me, along with my nipples, which I had always been insecure of, that stood out like rose petals and orange slices. Looking at my naked self among the other women, I heard a vibrant singing of what my body truly was—of *who* my body truly was:

She is a breath of God. An echo of all the women that came before her. She was a chord, struck, that has become a calm humming I am learning to listen to. She is finding her voice again. She is a song, ever-changing, yet still sonorous in any key she plays herself in. Right there, I got lost in my song. I let myself be carried by my melody. And when I harmonized myself with the other women, at last, I could feel us arriving together, sinking slowly back again into our own bodies, getting lost, burrowing in, and fitting inside ourselves again, finally. There, in the prism of our drawn naked bodies, I could hear my village of women, my family of women, myself, me.

*We are steadily crescendoing from our wounded overtures and into this grand orchestral piece of connected womanhood.*

*WHO. WHORE. WIFE. WRITER. WOMAN. WHERE. WOMB.  
WONDERFUL. WARMTH. WHY. WIN. WORTHY. WORSHIP. WAIT.  
WHAT I KNOW ABOUT LOVE NOW IS THAT:*

It is abundant, abounding, and accepting.  
It is beautiful because it blesses.  
It carries me, whether I am strong or weak.  
It is a dialogue I will have with him for life.  
It exhausts, but it also excites, expands, and extends.  
It is forgiving at all times.  
It is God, whether I like it or not.  
It happens to everyone, fortunately.  
It is intimate, because it is so inherent in all of us.  
It justifies our being.  
It is kind, even in the most painful times.  
It lowers itself down in humility.  
It mends when it is allowed to.  
It nourishes the heart.  
It opens, and opens, and opens—over and over and over.  
It is painfully patient.  
It is quiet in the best of ways.  
It is rest.  
It surrenders to the terrifying intimacy of being known.  
It is tenderness shared.  
It understands even when it doesn't.  
It values me, my body, my past, my mistakes, my victories—all of me.  
It wins, and wins, and wins each other, every time.  
It is the *x* that marks where I belong and where I should go.  
It yearns and it yields.  
It is the zenith of how I could offer my heart.



*XXX VIDEOS HERE. X MARKS THE SPOT. X MARKS THE PAST. X IS THE  
CLOSE. X MEANS*

I am stronger than a relapse.

YEARNING. YES. YESTERDAY. YES. YOU. YES. YOURS.

Yes.

Yes, please.

Yes, you can.

Yes, I do.

Yes, I like that.

Yes, I want to.

Yes, I love you.

Yes,

and yes,

and yes.

*ZEAL. ZENITH. ZERO. Z IS FOR THE END.*

Thank you for listening to my story.