

Toyon: Multilingual Literary Magazine

Volume 69
Issue 1 *Volume 69: The Sex Issue / El Edicion
del Sexo*

Article 6

2023

Broken

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Recommended Citation

Crinklaw, Madison N. (2023) "Broken," *Toyon: Multilingual Literary Magazine*: Vol. 69: Iss. 1, Article 6.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.humboldt.edu/toyon/vol69/iss1/6>

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BROKEN

Content warning: this work contains reference to traumatic sexual experiences

Madison N. Crinklaw

“I have to ask, has she ever been molested?”, the doctor inquires as she attempts to perform a pap smear on 12-year-old me. I am sitting on the examination table, tears filling my eyes, as I try to explain to her that I am just in pain. The doctor gives my mom a dirty look and exits the room, leaving me confused and shaking as I try and put my underwear back on. That was the start of many uncomfortable trips to the doctor, filled with endless tears and wincing.

I knew something was wrong with my body, starting when I got my period at the age of twelve. Every month I would be on the floor screaming in pain as blood leaked through a nighttime maxi pad. I so desperately wanted to use tampons, but it felt like there was a wall blocking every little maneuver into my vagina. Eventually, my mom took me to the doctor where I was prescribed birth control. My period finally felt under control, but my emotions, however, did not. “Robot”, my friends would call me. I felt apathy towards life and all the relationships that encompassed it. Disgusted by kissing and hugging, I refused to even give affection to my mom. “Prozac is the answer”, my mom thought as she pondered on how to cure her numb sixteen year old daughter.

My first sexual relationship was with a senior boy who would sneak in through my window at night. Naively, I thought he was my first love, as he refused to be seen with me at school and only called past two a.m. I laid there bored and stone-cold as he tried to get himself off, ignoring my own needs for pleasure. He dumped me a few months later to find someone that wouldn't refuse his begs and pleads for sex. The scandalous pictures he had of me, still waiting in his stupid little flash drive, to be released if he ever felt wronged by me.

Flash forward to my senior year boyfriend, a sweet boy riddled with problems, including depression and a major codependency towards me. He was the first boy to actually care about my pleasure and give me my first orgasm. But, like all the others, he wanted more from me than I could give. It didn't matter how many times I said I didn't want to have sex, the words “please babe”, were still constantly spewing out of his mouth. During the last fight before our breakup, the words, “Am I disgusting to you or something?”, came out and I knew it was over. I dumped him the next day in hopes that he would find someone who could give him what he wanted, “penetrative sex”, the ever-elusive activity that I viewed as my arch nemesis.

Over the course of the next 5 years, I continued to be dumped over and over again due to my sexual issues. The moments before the first kiss were my favorite, because there was no pressure, no expectations placed on me yet to provide sexually. I had given up on all things

sex during quarantine, except for the occasional sexy fan-fic consumption. It was a stress-free time for me, but also incredibly lonely. I just wanted someone to love me beyond my sexual limitations. Eventually, I decided to date someone new when I arrived at college. He was a little boring, but I felt comfortable and safe around him. I was tired of being a 23-year-old virgin, so I decided it was time. Twilight was playing in the background as we attempted to have sex. It was like shards of glass were being pushed through my vaginal walls and I abruptly yelled, “STOP!” We tried a couple more positions, but nothing worked. I felt defeated and more importantly broken. I did everything in my power to avoid having penetrative sex again, but I could feel his growing disinterest in me, as he ignored my “I miss you” texts. Thanksgiving break rolled around, and he dumped me, using the excuse that our interests were “too different”. I knew it was bullshit. The fake reasons they give always are. They fear me knowing that sex is more important to them than I am.

I was puzzled and hurt, searching for any answers that I could find, until I nearly passed out in a bathroom while on my period. I thought back to all the moments where I cried out in pain from cramps and the never-ending burning sensation that plagued me. Imagine feeling like you have a UTI or yeast infection everyday of your life with no cure. That has been my existence since I was a preteen. I talked to my mom and learned that essentially all the women in our family have endometriosis. The more I looked into it, the more it explained my chronic pain and failed relationships. I also discovered during this time that I have vulvodynia, making it incredibly painful for me to experience any penetration at all. For years doctors thought I was asexual or being dramatic, ignoring the fact that I had valid health concerns. All of those years where I felt like a freak and unlovable because doctors didn't believe me. To all of the doctors who didn't believe me, screw you, and to all of the men who made me feel like my body was a burden, an extra big fuck you. I am not broken, and neither are the thousands of people who have the same issue. Sex isn't possible for everyone, and that is okay, because we are more than what our bodies can provide, and I wish teenage me would have known that before believing I could never be loved like everyone else.