

STILLP • INT
A MAGAZINE IN THE EYE OF THE STORM

WE DON'T MAKE LOVE HERE ANYMORE

GABRIELA WIENER

In bed we're always doomed to repeat ourselves. The cycles of marital love are often implacable before they drop dead. From a horizontal exercise to yet another sleepless night, and vice versa, a shared life is constructed. From tiny gestures made with the feet, or the closing of a mouth, to removing a book from hands gone limp. From that which exists between sex and rest, or from that which resonates between tears and love, to that which remains between a last word and silence.

One day we decided that our bed for three would not be used for sex anymore. The bed which was, for years, the surface on which we recreated our fantasies of breaking with "husband and wife" is now a bed for sleeping, a retired bed, at most, a giant bed to throw ourselves in and roll and tumble with our kids. We sleep together, the three of us, but only sleep, for everything else, there's the extra room.

I think my libido still can't get over the fact that we're no longer a throuple, and that instead we're two sexual couplings: that between me and him, and that between her and me. There's a coupling missing here: she and he had a baby, and stopped touching each other. I don't know if this long postpartum will finally end one day and they'll seduce one another again, or if I'll have to assume that we've become something else entirely. There are days when I feel like I've been ripped off, but if I think about it seriously, how long could a matrimonial orgy really last? The first thing I explain to whomever asks me about our poly relationship is that I don't have more sex than most people. Even though we've got double—and more diverse—possibilities of having marital, consensual and non-adulterous sex compared to a monogamous couple, there are nights, like this one, in which I'm the only one who can't sleep.

If someone saw me touch myself lying between two naked bodies, a man and a woman fully within my reach, one at each side of my desire, perhaps they would think this is just one of my perversions, but far from it being so, I don't touch pretending to brush against them, I don't even try to get myself excited at the sight of their nude and indifferent silhouettes, floating in semi-darkness like islands that cast their own light onto the ocean. I'm actually

touching myself while watching Magdalene St. Michaels deflowering a teen sister in a Mother Superior outfit, as well as a Japanese man slithering up in a woman's bed while her husband is fast asleep with his leg dangling to one side. The intertextuality between my bed and porn will always surprise me. I'm watching all this on my phone screen, sound off, trying to forget that those made of flesh are right there, at the same time careful that my growing excitement doesn't stir them awake, all the while unmotivated to look for a more intimate spot for myself. I say intimate but can't think of any place more intimate than this bed, right here, though there must be one. For some, sex is something very concrete: that which crowns a day of perfect understanding, or that which one does alone when the urge comes around, or something one does with the remainders of the bodies that children have left behind or, as some prefer it, after a bath or a swim. For others, sex is welcomed even when it doesn't include rituals, or personal hygiene, or particular effort, more of a supplement, like a banal pastime activity, a trigger for dramas, consolation, or as a premenstrual remedy. Sometimes I feel alone in this second group.



Territories ~ Leviticus Hinds

I belong to that generation of women who overestimated sex. We that once were purists of orgasm take more time to mature in the realm of the relational—another awful word I have learned reading the theoreticians of free love—but strange though it might sound, touching myself watching porn while my lovers sleep is an introspective, therapeutic labor. To wake them up, manipulate them, force them, would have been worse. Especially when the menstrual pangs gather, taking you by surprise, or when I'm reminded of those stormy and endless nights when one of us was left devastated and in tears by convulsive excursions from sex to love, then from love to sex, imploring for an understanding that won't ever come.

It hurts me to not be sexually reciprocated. Unsatisfied desire is gruelling, it causes me such pain. I need too much sex, in order to forget how little I love myself. But it's a vicious cycle, the excess of impulse, of demand and its loquacity, this vacuous need stemming from low self-esteem that seeks fulfillment through sex, that does not eroticize anybody, just frightens them away. I have probed into my trauma despite myself and, I suppose, it comes from a time when I decided that sex would be my trump card, that which would replace love for myself or for others, but above all would fill the emptiness; that's why for years I was incapable of dealing with rejection of my naked and desiring body. Just to look at the back of my beloved used to drive me crazy. Until one day I understood that appetites don't synchronize the way the clocks do. With time I learned how to avoid dramas after 10 P.M. When living together, sexuality requires daily education, a contrite spirit, freedom up to the point where the other's dream, or their lack of appetite, sets in, demands masturbation, or more lovers.

Not so long ago we were on vacation and I was allotted the room with a matrimonial bed. They took turns sleeping with me, an awkward thing since it imposes a hierarchy in which I do not believe, though I enjoyed seeing myself, at least for the span of those days, as a polygamist from Salt Lake City, Utah. Since we were on vacation, I resolved to have sex each day with a different one, as a way of circumventing the nostalgia of group sex by tapping into what I already have. I did not bridge the gap, of course, between the nostalgia and what was now available to me. I had almost the same amount of sex as on any other day, not enough, that is, but I tried to keep my resolve, and continued experimenting with this alternation.

On the first night of vacation I sleep with her. I always tell her she resembles a Spanish actress, from which movie I'll never know. I tell her that I don't deserve her, that I am ugly, fat, old, and that she's a model. She says to me stupid, you're the one who's beautiful. My eyes moisten. But today we won't play that game of "we're heavenly creatures", lesbian assassin girls who touch each other behind their mother's back, who kill their mother, this time we'll just be ourselves. I want to gently drive a fountain pen across the skin of her stomach connecting her moles, like in that game in the puzzles section of the newspaper. I know her constellation by heart. I'm the only one who can discern it in the sky. I tell her not to do anything, I'll take care of everything. I keep my eyes open all the time. I work hard for her. She's so white and clean that in my stupid auto-racism I always feel like I'll sully her. She's better than seeing my dead father again. Better than a guanabana juice. Better than dancing on MDMA. I speak to her backside, because we speak the same language—her

billowing, marshmallowy, and feathered buttocks, and me. I've gone too far! Roci tells me, "hold on there, that's too much", her shyness moves me. I hope that, some day, I can find better similes to describe the parts of her body. Upon taking my fingers from her, I see how they're soaked in magic powder from Tinkerbell. Her pussy eats away at mine like an animated, carnivorous plant. We're all chasing the surrender, nothing else, only that which makes us pliable, the rest doesn't exist. If her languid body superimposed itself on top of mine, her half-gaping mouth with its imperfect teeth sticking out, if she did this, and her wavy hair, worthy of a pre-raphaelite muse, set the subtle compass of our romping afire, all this would end in two seconds for me, and that's exactly what happens.

The second night I sleep with him. First he laughs, and when he does I know we're going to fuck. I haven't seen a sexier man than Jaime laughing. He's not only a movie actor, he's all handsome actors in one. He stretches a bit in bed, like a puppy that still wonders at seeing its tail grow. He turns voluptuous for his own sake. It's in this exact moment that I'd take him out to a Chinese restaurant, and go to see *Star Wars* in the theater, instantly grant him all he'd ask for. I stroke his old briefs with palm trees on them, I tell him he's got beautiful ears, beautiful hands, beautiful legs. I dangle my breasts over his eyes, I blind him with my carnality, I know. For half an hour I'm stuck smelling his nostrils which give off something from the depths of his being, a proof of identity almost: that's how I know him; also his armpit which has smelled, for two decades now, like ramskin, I sniff all I can till my lungs are full of that which most closely links us to beasts. I play with his eggs as if they were Chinese balls, yin and yang. I suck on the yang to bring out his feminine side, I kiss the head of his erect penis, lifting myself up to his titties, neck, and mouth, only to descend again like a little ant, feeling like someone playing a contrabass, or a similar instrument so vast and complex that one must run up and down quick, at various rhythms, just to get sound from it. I'm not so agile, normally, but I try. Since I am with a man, I obsess a bit over penetration, but not too much. His stinging beard is what catches my attention more. It surprises me that he's larger than me, yet more fragile. To feel something so different from last night is what completes my nature. He hugs me, boiling hot, or I should say, he covers me up like a blanket in love, while I find myself in his body facing a puzzle: an immortal, lean, beautiful, and youthful Gabriela who begins loving herself at the same time as he loves her. At this moment I feel I'm conquering him easily, he's swelling up, I see his pleasure reach a cruising speed, how he's starting to burn and it's my fault, how our eyes become exasperated in their movements, speaking their thousand languages, only to ambush one another in the vastness that is our shared history.

Now I'm in bed, eventually finishing my matrimonial routine of masturbating with Magdalene and the Japanese man, lying between two other bodies that give me the loveliness of their backs, without making me suffer. One is ample, strong, smooth. The other graceful, slight, ravine-like. What does it matter if I am Magdalene and the Japanese man, if I know that they will at some point turn towards me, and I will be able to see them again.

I finally choke on a moan trying to leave my body and cast an eye to both sides, everything is as tranquil as it was, their backs swell in and out as they dream on, their breathing in tandem keeps on making that nocturnal music. I, too, carry on being the same. I didn't lose myself in this sleepless night even if I had neither one, nor both of them, awake with me.

Sometimes I think I have a superpower, not that of loving and desiring more than one person at a time—everybody is capable of feeling this, I believe—but that of having, with much effort, reconciled these two dimensions of love in their distinct intensity and beauty, without having to escape nor leave either of them behind, taking charge of it all, without having the force of each compete inside of me, of having integrated them in the same playful act that life so often is. How right the poet Fabián Casas is when he says that sleeping lovers are like docked boats tied to one another during the night, bumping each other involuntarily swayed by the wind. Except that, rather than two small boats, we're three coming back after each crossing. Tonight they're already on land, while I'm still cruising. We'll be coming together very soon.

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The image shown here is a portion of the full accompanying artwork originally featured on stillpointmag.org.