

# On Becoming Unmother

November 20, 2015

I am in the process of planning my abortion. It seems strange to say it like that but it's true. I'm currently pregnant and planning my abortion which should happen roughly one week from now. I've never been pregnant before, so I've never needed to make these kinds of arrangements. That doesn't mean I haven't thought about it. In fact, I've thought a great deal about abortion, and pregnancy, and the legal and moral implications surrounding such a situation. You see, I'm of the opinion that people should be able to manage personal decisions about their health and their future without the imposition of government regulations. The moral and philosophical opinions of some don't always work for the rest. I think it's deeply strange to police the most intimate spaces of our lives. When you breed and whom you take to bed is personal. If we are forced to distort our internal lives, we sacrifice the totality of our selves.

The imposition of a single moral criterion upon our collective bodies is noxious. This is why I will not take the time to pick apart the abortion debate in an attempt to persuade others to my personal perspective. I know that no amount of rational rhetoric or comparatives will convince someone opposed to my position. I will simply say that I respect the choice of others, no matter how they've arrived at it so long as I'm provided space to make my own. Living within a country comprised of a diversity of experiences and faiths, we must collectively agree to make compromises to protect our capacity to make personal decisions in accordance to our own beliefs. Once we begin to enact moral legislation dictating who we may sleep with, or marry, or how and when we become parents, we fundamentally change what it means to be "free." Once we dissolve and exploit the meaning of murder, of motherhood, and of the woman to benefit a moral agenda we lose sight of the substance and significance of these concepts.

I am one woman sharing the experience of millions. The fear of unplanned motherhood has plagued women since the dawn of humanity. References to abortion have been part of the written record since the dawn of the record itself. The earliest reference to induced miscarriage appears in the Ebers Papyrus, an Egyptian medical text written in about 1550 BCE. The bible itself details a recipe for the abortion of a child conceived by an unfaithful wife (Numbers 5:11–22). It wasn't until the mid-19th century that it became a crime. Despite the history and frequency of abortion within the annals of humanity there is virtually no record of the female experience. Perhaps we can attribute this to the omission of women's voices from history generally, but what about in the last century, or decade?

The collective silence reeling through space falls heavy on pregnant women. Despite the taboo, many groups have encouraged women to engage in public discussion about their abortions to illuminate and demystify the experience. This is sorely needed. Silence grants power to those who wish to stigmatize the act and shame the actor.

This is why I am writing about my pregnancy experience. I have written a daily entry from the moment I discovered I was pregnant and will continue to do so through the termination process. We so often focus on the abortion itself without considering the nuances of the entirety of the experience — the surreal moments between motherhood and unmotherhood. How does an uninsured woman in Detroit navigate the legal implications to terminate her pregnancy safely and affordably? The resources available to someone in my position are sparse and often confusing, even for someone who has spent the last year researching the topic.

I will not offer rationale for my decision because I do not seek approval. The entries are written solely from my internal, personal perspective as much a process of self-examination as it is a public record. Following the termination of my pregnancy, all entries will be archived and the website will serve as a resource to help others navigate the often complicated legal and medical system in Michigan. It is my hope that this action will fracture a vacuum of silence and provide clarity to the experience of unmotherhood.

# UNMOTHER

## 11.14.15 – Unmotherhood

The decision to become two people instead of one is monumental. Sometimes it's the right time and sometimes it's not.

This is one of the times that it's not.

The pro-creator of this little lump lives in the middle of the desert 1,700 miles away from here, and I am one million miles away in my own head. On the verge of World War Three, the deification of Kim Davis and President Trump, this is not American soup for future family.

Over the last year I've spent months researching and writing about women's reproductive rights, contemplating the burden and responsibility of motherhood, the relationship between our bodies, our religion, and our government. Now, I've unexpectedly become the theoretical woman I've thought so much about.

Pregnant, unprepared and uninsured. I am a version of myself I've never met.

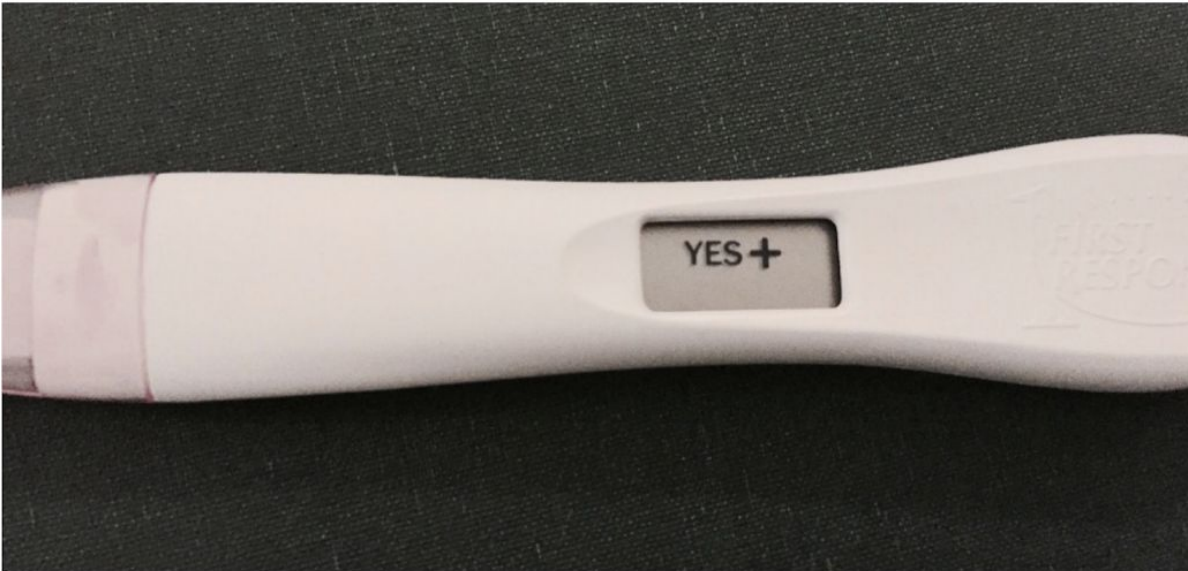
Lucky to have a choice? Fortunate? Relieved? Abortion. That ugly word that hisses like poison from the gums of the righteous. A practice employed for thousands of years yet still bears the yoke of shame. Abortion. A word still so stigmatized, it's only whispered in public.

Abortion.

This is my experience. I have roughly a week to tell it. Right now it's real. Things are happening. I'm going to talk about them. For myself, for other's on the frontier of unmotherhood, to fill a gaping silence surrounding the experience of a woman pre-termination.

Updates daily. Comments permitted. Let it out.

## 11.15.15 – The pregnancy test



A pregnancy test costs from sixteen to twenty dollars at the pharmacy. For about five minutes, the weight of the entire world rests upon the moment after you piss on a stick and the five minutes you wait for one line or two. Then you do it again. Get in the car, drive to the store, select a different brand, hand over twenty more, hope you don't get stuck with the same clerk, drive home, drink three glasses of water and pee on another stick. New brand soaks through with an affirmative "YES."

For some women, I suppose this is a moment for celebration. For others, terror. For me, shock along with some obscenities. Disbelief. Confusion.

What a curious device. This plastic piece of overpriced garbage delivering the news that there's life on other planets. You can buy them at the dollar store. I think you can also buy paternity tests at the pharmacy now. Maury in your living room. Did you know that Maury is still a thing? It is.

I learned that sometimes women sell positive pregnancy tests on craigslist as a tool to manipulate men into staying in (presumably) unstable relationships.

In many ways, the pregnancy test is an emblem of momentous transformation. A plastic stick that holds within it a cosmos tunnel of what-nows, what-ifs and oh fucks. What power. Not inherently, but representatively so. The witch wand of motherhood.

# 11.16.15 – Vomit

Motorcycle ride on a beautiful November day

Morning sickness

Pull over to the side of the road

Rip off helmet

Vomit

Car full of dudes drive by, honk and catcall.

# 11.17.15 – The mother idol

The thought of being a mother is unfathomable. Not because I think that it's impossible (obviously), but because it's light years away from who I understand myself to be and who I am prepared to become. I have friends who are mothers. They are different. A friend who is a mother is not just a friend. She is a mother also. It makes a difference. I'm twenty-nine, and this year for the first time I am sometimes asked if I'm a mother, or a wife. My skin starts crawling. For my own reasons, I am agitated by conventional behavior. The spectacle of the family unit seems unnatural, yet, remains undoubtedly the reigning organizational system. We idolize the mother, the matron of life and parent-extraordinaire. As a child I used to stare at round pregnant bellies in awe, and replay stories of my own birth in my head. Socially, there is an invisible space created for the mother, the vestal woman, the reverent father, the fetishized child. It's conceptual. To become a mother, is to transcend.

## 11.18.15 – Purgatory

My own biology is disarming. I feel myself a vessel, and it's both earth shatteringly powerful and wildly intimidating. I don't trust my body. One moment I'm on the straight and narrow, and the next there's a storm in my stomach and Kubrick's clamps on my eyes. It's impossible to shake the reality. I'm unsure if this relentless reminder is rooted in the physical or my psychology.

There is an unusual place in-between. This is where I'm at. Both mother and unmother. Biologically, I am utterly aware of this new state. I am nauseous, exhausted and hyper-conscious of my breasts but forbidden to acknowledge my condition. I want to tell a co-worker who caught me sick in the bathroom that it's not a hangover, and I'm not sick, it's just pregnancy. I can't. I want to ask my mother how she dealt with certain aches and pains, but she's uncomfortable with the question. My abortion does not mean that I am an imposter. However, the fact that I plan to have an abortion does, apparently, mean that I am expected to hide my current condition. Sweep symptoms under the rug and grin. The future unmother navigates through a world where silence is demanded and shame is embedded in-between the daily fiction. One's opinion of abortion is so often tied to the very fiber of personal-morality merely mentioning it to another may result in the potential loss of a friend, a family member, a job. I am fortunate to have a network of supporting comrades, but it pains me to think of those who don't. What established outlets for expression are offered to the woman alone? Help lines? The equivalent of a mental illness support network that promises to keep all callers anonymous due to fear of humiliation. The crisis pregnancy center? A coercive anti-abortion propaganda center run by church-moms. If those were my only options, I would keep secrets too.

The purgatory of pre-termination is a social construct. The decision to end a pregnancy can be difficult and is personal but should not be embarrassing. I'm convinced that the emotional turmoil many women experience surrounding their abortion is so much less about their hormones, or some internal ethical dilemma, and much more symptomatic of perceived and real socio-cultural demands. The negotiation between the external and internal creates a hostile reality. It's a thicket, sharp and dense, unforgiving and dismissive. The conflict revolves around potential life but she is the first casualty of the culture war. There is no room her.

# 11.19.15 – Nightwife

This is the second night staring at the grey shadows on the wall. No rest for the wicked I suppose. It's a cruel joke because my body is begging for sleep and I'm now imprisoned in an endless cycle of exhaustion. Tried listening to records, tried reading dry philosophy, tried standing outside in the cold 'til I shook, tried out the opposite end of the bed, even got up to 666 sheep and still no zzz's.

They say its hormones. What a shit word, hormones – the perceived terrorist of mankind.

It's time to resort to the medicine cabinet. I guess, why not? A girl's gotta sleep, especially when she's growing something inside of her, and even more especially if that thing's not going to be growing for much longer.

Is it too insensitive to ask for a drink for two? Am I allowed to make jokes?

# 11.20.15 – I'm going deep

Have you ever flopped down on a worn leather armchair with a seat so deep and broken you sink right into the floor? The kind of chair that envelops you totally and requires a great effort to heave yourself out of? Today was a relentless cycle of getting up out of this cavernous chair and being shoved back into it, over and over and over and over and over again. First, allow me to acknowledge that sleep is necessary for survival. Without it your entire existence will teeter on the edge of hallucination. Second, I'd like to reiterate how challenging it is not to be able to ask for certain daily-life accommodations as a pregnant person, and how much having to use the excuse of being "sick" to explain your pregnancy symptoms feels like betrayal.

Today was the day that I began to share this project with others. It's also the day that the Facebook conglomerate took a virtual shit on me. They don't want to make this experience too easy I guess. Post after post about this project was removed from all pages without explanation, the social network effectively filtering content to the benefit of one subjective viewpoint. Is conversation about abortion truly worse than someone posting "LMFAO" alongside a video of racist police violence? Who benefits from censoring abortion? Why do I have any standards or expectations of Facebook to begin with? Am I a threat to society?

(I hope so)

I can't think about the day anymore. It feels like someone is ringing out a wet rag inside of my stomach and I have one-ton eyelids. I'm going deep tonight.



## 11.21.15 – State mandates

I have officially scheduled my abortion procedure. I'm fortunate to live in an area where there are several locations near my home. In many places in Michigan, uninsured women have to travel over an hour to the nearest clinic. If I had insurance, and a primary care physician, I would like schedule the procedure at their office, but without I must find a clinic that offers affordable treatment options. With little experience on this matter, I selected the clinic with the highest Google review stars. A simple search: "Metro Detroit Abortion Services," a brief scan of customer reviews and a phone call.

Like most medical procedures, getting an abortion is not a simple process. I think that I've always somewhat assumed that early-term abortion was nothing to bat an eyelash at. I've taken Plan B, I know many women who have terminated their pregnancy and the focus of the conversation always seems to revolve around the decision and much less about the actual medical process. Perhaps we downplay how much of an ordeal it is to get the abortion because we fear stoking the flames of the irrational? So much attention is focused on the "horrors" of late term or surgical abortion it seems that very little is said about the medical procedure, which is the most common. Regardless of your opinion on the matter, there is no doubt that getting an abortion is at least logistically a pain in the ass.

I spent about twelve minutes on the phone today setting up my appointment. I called and told the woman who answered the phone that I wanted to schedule an abortion. She then asked me if I wanted a medical or surgical procedure. I wasn't really sure what either entailed, but I asked which one was more affordable. They are the same price. But, because surgical sounds more intensive – and from what I've read it is – I opted for medical. I asked her to explain it to me. A medical abortion induces a miscarriage. It's actually the same process many women undergo if they must terminate their pregnancy due to health concerns, so I suppose the stigma really does revolve around the decision rather than the reality of actually being able to carry a baby to term. There is a series of two pills (mifepristone and misoprostol) that works by blocking the hormone progesterone, which causes the uterus to break down and stop the pregnancy. The second medicine causes the uterus to empty. The woman on the phone did not offer to explain what's involved in a surgical abortion. I also didn't ask.

She informed me that the medical abortion has an \$800 price tag not including the additional cost of antibiotics and pain medication. Turns out that I qualify for financial assistance, bringing my out of pocket expenses down to \$360. Then, she started reading this long-winded script, which began something like, “I’m required to tell you the following information by law. The only thing you have to remember from it is today’s date and time because we will ask you for it later.” The next minute was a descriptive jumble of confusing requirements imposed by the state quickly rounded up by – “got that?” – sure, I guess.

I was told that I must print, receive by fax or physically pick up state-mandated informed consent materials at least twenty-four hours in advance of my procedure. Informed consent materials are written by the Michigan Department of Community Health rather than medical professionals and are intended to “provide a woman with accurate and unbiased information,” under the assumption that the medical professional selected by the patient cannot be trusted to do so, and that the state is more qualified to inform a woman about medical procedures than her doctor. The State of Michigan website requires women to click through and read material which includes a description of the abortion procedure, illustrations of fetal development stages (as if this was necessary), pre-natal care and a brief overview of the responsibilities of parenthood (also unnecessary). Additionally, the State of Michigan website offers a list of “clinics offering free pre-natal ultrasounds.” These clinics are state funded non-medical, crisis pregnancy centers whose mission is to dissuade women from choosing abortion. In 2014, the state of Michigan allocated \$800,000 to these anti-abortion centers. If you pay taxes, you help to fund these groups.

Fortunately, I am someone who has educated herself about politicized pre-abortion “information” mandates. Many women do not know. I was told that if I were to forget to pick-up, or print off and sign the informed consent materials twenty-four hours in advance I would be sent home when I arrived for my appointment. Under the law, the clinic is unable to perform an abortion without proof that each woman has received and reviewed the state-mandated reading materials. I will need to find a place where I can print materials privately because I do not have time to drive to the clinic before my appointment and the last thing I need is for some librarian to harass me when I pay eighty cents for my copies.

With that, I set my date and the woman on the other end was ready to hang up and move on. I was not ready. I wanted to know what was involved during the appointment and I'm glad that I asked because it's quite elaborate. She told me that I can expect to be at the clinic for about four hours and will need to complete fifteen minutes worth of paperwork when I arrive. First, I will receive an ultrasound, then blood work, then urine test, I will have to watch a video, potentially receive a pelvic exam from a doctor who will also speak with me about my options. Someone is allowed to come with me to the appointment but they must remain in the waiting room. Before I leave the appointment I will take the first of the medications. I can expect cramping and bleeding most on the second day of medication and should plan to take the day off during the process. I will also need a day to recover. They also recommended having someone with me during the second day in case there are any complications.

Four women have recently discussed their medical abortion experiences with me. None of the stories were easy or simple, or painless. I must admit – I'm freaked out. I'm not sure if I should keep researching or ignore these stories altogether with the understanding that everyone's experience is unique. I would seek professional advice prior to my appointment to get the perspective of an experienced medical practitioner – but who is there to trust? A pregnancy help line? A resource with typically zero transparency regarding the organization's motivations or funding sources? Plus, I don't really need "help," I would just like some impartial explanations. The politicization on both sides of the abortion debate make this process so much more difficult to navigate, discuss and understand.

## 11.22.15 – The ejaculation situation

My sex life has become a topic of interest among the righteous and faithful. I wish this newfound fascination was inspired by something more erotic than pregnancy, but I suppose that's as erotic as it gets with this crowd.



Your a bitch if you didn't want to be. A mother then you shouldn't of open your fucking legs

Nov 20th, 6:53pm

Apparently, some believe that women must accept the burden of motherhood every time they have sex. It might surprise you to learn that many people have no intention of procreating when they sleep together. I for one do not believe that sex is a contract for pregnancy.

Many of the messages I've received illustrate the resounding assumption that I'm pregnant because I was irresponsible and had unprotected sex. This is not true, but does this really matter? Perhaps it's easier to demonize a pregnant woman seeking abortion rather than consider that she's someone like you.

What I hadn't quite realized until now is how much attention is focused on the exact manner in which a child is conceived. Total strangers have asked me to explain, or presumed details about the person I've been sleeping with, whether I take birth control, the kind of sex we had, the general level of promiscuity in my life, and the amount of times I've "thrown babies in the trash after a wild orgy." Apparently, to those who oppose abortion, the value of a potential life is directly related to how it was conceived.

Interestingly, my male counterpart shared news about our abortion on his social media accounts and has yet to receive a single criticism. Additionally, not one of his friends or family members assumed for a moment that he might keep the child when he announced my pregnancy. Nobody has asked him if he wore a condom, or if he's thought about adoption. As far as I know, nobody is praying for him tonight.

I am repulsed that the most intimate details of a woman's life are co-opted and broadcast in order to shame, humiliate, and guilt her in the name of a "innocent child's life."

# 11.25.15 – The clinic

I was the only one in the room with a still leg. The other three women sat cross-legged, fidgeting and bouncing their toes restlessly. This was the first stop during the three-hour ordeal, a video screening for all women who had selected a medical abortion that day. The film, entitled “Everyday Good Women Choose Abortion,” described what we could expect over the next forty-eight hours in detail as narrated by clinic staff. The artificial flowers and vase on the video matched the flowers in the small screening room. Each woman narrowed in on the television screen as if they had blinders on, seemingly unable to glance even for a moment at each other. I think this was the first time any of us confronted the reality of our situation, and it was uncomfortable to acknowledge alongside strangers.

The clinic was in a generic medical office building, which retained its Nixon-era charm because it hadn't been updated since. I arrived just after nine in the morning. The waiting room was already noisy, bustling with people engaged in conversation, sharing videos and playing music on smart phones. There were no men waiting and nobody seemed to notice Pat Robertson spewing out his typical nonsense as *The 700 Club* played on the widescreen. I thought this was a strange programming choice. Admittedly, I wondered for a moment if this was a trap until I resigned myself to the likelihood that the television channel was a low priority (they later changed it to *The View*).

I was required to provide my signed informed-consent confirmation page at check-in, which was time-stamped twenty-four hours prior to the appointment. Per [Michigan law](#), had I not brought this with me or failed to print it out at least twenty-four hours in advance, the clinic would not have been able to see me.

I then completed over ten pages of paperwork. Much of this was [mandated by the state](#) as well. I spent an additional twenty minutes reviewing all of my responses with a staff member. I would be required to return to the clinic had I missed anything.

Following the video, the paperwork, and the paperwork review I was called back by a woman in scrubs. The office looked like any other medical clinic with private exam rooms plus an additional quiet space exclusively for patients in-between tests. The ultrasound was first. Apparently, a vaginal ultrasound is required to determine how far along a woman is in her pregnancy. I was on my back with a wand in my vagina when the clinician informed me about yet another state mandate, “per Michigan law I must give you the option to see your ultrasound.” I declined.

Next, blood and urine samples. I snuck down the hall to the bathroom past a dark, discreet surgical recovery room. Several young unconscious women were tucked into recliners, waiting to return to the world. I locked eyes with an older woman with a furrowed brow who sat in the shadows keeping a watchful eye on one of the patients, perhaps her daughter or family member. This was an eerie space, but I suppose all surgery recovery rooms are somewhat eerie. This one, in particular, made me glad for selecting a medical abortion.

All my tests were completed, so I waited with the other women who were called back for their private exams with the doctor one by one. There were eight of us waiting, all appeared to be in their mid to late twenties. Each woman rushed out of the exam room with their head down, clutching a brown paper bag of medication. I was called in last. After a pelvic exam, the doctor asked me if I had any concerns or questions. I asked her how much pain I could expect. She told me that ninety-five percent of patients are happy with their abortion experience, but most all can expect some level of pain, which is why I was prescribed painkillers. The remaining five percent find the process particularly difficult.

She placed a pill in my hand. She explained that once I swallow the first of the two pills, my pregnancy would no longer be normal. The embryo would not develop and would likely be deformed if I attempted to continue the pregnancy. This point was underscored as I swallowed the pill.

# 11.26.15 – The abortion

I had a Thanksgiving abortion. This was good because I don't care much for the holiday and was provided ample time off from life to recover. I spent the morning preparing for the experience. A mound of warm blankets, heat pads, ginger ale, tea, one can of emergency Vernors, a bag of ice for snacking, a playlist of b-rated movies, one soft cat, a thermometer and a bottle of Percocet (an abortion gift), Ibuprofen 800 (prescribed), an antibiotic, an anti-nausea medication, and four pills of Misoprostol. The video I watched at the clinic informed me that cramping could begin as soon as thirty minutes after taking the medication but up to twenty-four hours to pass the pregnancy tissue. I would be having a miscarriage at home. I could expect contractions, nausea and bleeding. At three o'clock I washed down a half Percocet and one anti-nausea with a tall glass of water. At three thirty I placed two pills against the left side of my cheek, and two pills against the right cheek, took one deep breath, and pressed play on John Carpenter's *They Live*. The pills dissolved slowly into a paste of wet sawdust in my mouth. I lay there with swollen cheeks for forty minutes until I could wash away the remaining pill-goo from my gums.

They tell you every woman's experience is different. What a shit way of skirting around it. When a doctor prescribes you pain medication, you should find out why and then ask for more.

I started bleeding at four thirty, then a little pain. It didn't resemble typical ovulation pain. It was more substantial. Deeper. Lower. Buried. It's a peculiar thing to consciously feel one of your internal organs. At first, it was like a large fist slowly pressing out against my uterus, moving across one hip to the next and back. Then, a boulder rolling between my ovaries. I applied more heat and felt heavy. I fell asleep for a little.

Sometime between an alien police raid and Roddy Piper's final blow my body transitioned into animal. Something took hold of my abdomen and began to ring it out. I woke up covered in sweat and blurry-eyed. I vomited. Then I was taken over by electric, resonant throbbing. I didn't feel prepared. I expected waves of pain, but this was relentless. It could be a full ten minutes of this miserable state before a moment of stillness. There was more throbbing than there was not throbbing for several hours. I bled more.

I couldn't lie down, I couldn't stand up, and I couldn't sit. I walked around hunched over, crawled on the floor, sat cross-legged, laid on my side, on my stomach, with my feet up and my head down, then my head up and my feet down but nothing was comfortable. I was trapped inside of myself.

It was six thirty. I vomited again and fell asleep. It was more exhaustion than sleep. I didn't rest. I just gave up for a little. It woke me up again at seven thirty. This time, worse. I must admit, when I'm in pain sometimes I cry. I didn't cry once. I was somewhere else altogether.

Everything became a sort of alternative reality where I was floating above myself. I transcended pain and became primal, and bloody. A relentless electric shock. I vomited again. Then felt something drop out of me.

I didn't look.

I collapsed again at eight forty-five and awoke at nine thirty. The third act was unforgiving. I'm not sure I have real memories from these final hours. Everything was white noise. I bled and I bled until I expelled one last something. I didn't look and I didn't care.

At ten fifteen it was over. Time was thick. I was suspended in that moment immediately after an old television has been turned off, when you can hear the static and a faint ring although nothing's there anymore. I drank some ginger ale. Ate some mash potatoes and fell asleep. Strange dreams.



# 11.27.15 – I brunched

Today I awoke with pancakes on my mind. Still bleeding, still aching, I brunched. Even innocent pancakes were too much after my internal marathon so I returned to bed and didn't leave. I am exhausted and sore. My uterus or something inside spasms unpredictably from time to time.

Do you know that there are people who believe women use abortion flippantly as a retroactive form of birth control? You know, the whores of America who make a pit stop at the clinic for a quick abortion between shopping and manicures? What an impractical, absurd idea. Nobody does that. Nobody. Setting aside all of the potential psychological and emotional distress that accompanies an unwanted pregnancy, it's physically incredibly difficult. Not only must a woman endure the side-effects of pregnancy for at least a month or more, the abortion process is expensive, painful, exhausting, and lasts for weeks following the actual procedure. I will be bleeding for the next month. A lot. I can expect continued cramping and hormone fluctuations over the next several weeks as my body copes with these monumental changes within me. The alternatives? Become a mother? Demand that women unwillingly commit to a lifetime of hardship if they are incapable of supporting a child on their own, knowing that financial assistance for low-income families is on the chopping block each year? Adoption? Forcing women to serve as a vessel for nine months without the financial resources to support themselves in the final months of pregnancy and during recovery? A body forever changed? None of these options are easy. Compared to the alternatives, abortion is the most sensible solution for most.

I know that everyone's experience is different. Choosing abortion was not a difficult choice for me. I've never felt sad, or depressed, or unsure. I haven't shed a single tear. My perspective does not detract from the physical and emotional hardship of the abortion itself.

An unwanted pregnancy places a woman between a rock and a hard place. There is no good solution. The clinic called this morning to check in on me. I thought that was nice.

## 11.28.15 – Big Lots

Some of my pregnancy tissue was aborted in a Big Lots bathroom today.

## 11.29.15 – Managing

I couldn't sleep last night. Low, deep pains on my left side kept me awake. I'm still taking painkillers. I woke up frustrated that this is still happening. My tits still ache. My body aches. I have no energy. I'm sick of this.

Is it manageable? Of course, but I don't want to "manage" my life. I want to live it.

# 11.30.15 – You are a good woman

It was time to return to work today after the holiday weekend. I feel like such a liar. Telling everyone my Thanksgiving was nice and quiet, I spent it at home. Apple pie was great, very relaxing, and so on – bleeding throughout every conversation. I wish I felt as refreshed as everyone looks. I can't exercise, can't drink, can't have sex, can't sleep, and I've also developed a cold. I'm obviously very grumpy. I still have ten more days before my check-up exam, which is when I must have another ultrasound to ensure that the abortion was successful. Medical abortions are ninety-five percent effective. The remaining five percent must be completed surgically.

The clinic gave me a pamphlet entitled, "You are a Good Woman." The "good woman" narrative was repeated endlessly while at the clinic. It was plastered on posters, on videos and at the bottom of many forms. The handout provides a brief history of abortion as well as a section entitled, "There are people who want to make you feel bad." Here is an excerpt:

*Even though you know you are doing the best you can, there are people who are working hard to make you feel guilty and ashamed...For nearly forty years since abortion became legal, these people have spent millions of dollars and used politics, religion, intimidations, terrorism, threats, arson, violence, and even murder to try to make it so you don't have a choice.*

*This may already be a hard time for you. It's not fair, but making you feel even worse is part of their plan. They believe that if you feel guilty and ashamed it will be hard for you to stand up for yourself.*

The pamphlet continues to provide advice for women who are judged by people they care about, and some confidence boosting tips for honoring personal decisions. The back of the handout provides a list of resources, including several religious organizations for reproductive choice.

I am saddened that this information is needed.

According to [a study](#) conducted by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, four percent of all priests in the Catholic priesthood between 1950 and 2002 have been accused of abusing a child.

The strings of morality dangle from the fist of power.

**Heather**

*November 20, 2015*

*Reply*

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I can't express the right words to tell you how important I think it is that you are telling this story, your story, for all to read. I was 15 when I had to tell my uber conservative parents that I was pregnant and had already made the decision and saved up the money to have an abortion. To my surprise, they didn't disown me, but they also made sure to remind me of it from time to time for the remaining three years I spent living under their roof. I made an incredibly grown-up decision for myself at a young age and I have never regretted it for a single second. Sometimes the timing for a pregnancy is right and welcome and sometimes it isn't. As a 15-year-old-child, it was definitely not right for me. And even now, if this happened to me at 33, I can solidly say the timing still would not be right for me. And I don't think it ever will be in this lifetime. So, I just want to say thank you for putting yourself out there. I wish I could have read these words at 15 and maybe I would have felt a little less terrified. I am happy they will be out here in Internet land, in perpetuity, for women of all ages, races, income levels, beliefs, etc to read whenever they need to read them. Be well. xx

**Margaret Bartels**

*December 8, 2015*

*Reply*

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This is amazing, truly a brave & powerful thing your doing. I have a close friend who had an abortion & I stand by her everyday. She has really struggled since then & Im gonna show her this & hopefully she wont feel so alone because society makes this such a terrible thing & it should never be, Thank you for you open & honest experence.

**D. H.**

*December 23, 2015*

*Reply*

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I left that comment and noticed that it is currently “awaiting moderation.” You need moderators? To shield your sensitivities from potentially “offensive” opinions?

Here’s an opinion for you and your moderators. Eat a fucking cock or take one in the ass. At least if you put it in your mouth or asshole, you won’t have to worry about going through that “awful” abortion process.

**Jex**

*March 23, 2016*

*Reply*

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Comments are moderated due to spam, and some individuals submitting personal information such as phone numbers. I appreciate your input and for shedding light on the kinds of violent rhetoric surrounding sexual relationships between men and women.

**Amy Jean**

*December 13, 2015*

*Reply*

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I am really happy I found this page. Thank you so much for sharing your story. I had a abortion last month. I am grateful I did not have to go through all the paperwork and everything since I was in Maryland. I was really pleased it with my situation, it seemed almost too easy. I had a surgical one, which I feel really good about after reading about what happened to you!

**wolf**

*December 10, 2015*

*Reply*

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thank you for this. i'm 21, living in ireland (where abortion is illegal) and 35 days pregnant. a website called women on web will send me misoprostol pills, though i'll have to travel 200 km to get them from a post office in belfast. i'm absolutely petrified but now i know at least what to expect. thank you x

**A frog**

*December 13, 2015*

*Reply*

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Wolf,

I'm so sad to read what is happening to you.

60years ago my country did not allow abortion and women here had to travel to England or other country to get an abortion. In fact, they had to do that secretly, because it was illegal. But on the other hand, there were some women organizations who organized "touristic one day trip to England" :D.

Anyway I'm ashamed such situation may still exists in a country member of EU.

**Rose**

*December 13, 2015*

*Reply*

Just so you know, there will be someone thinking of you when you go through it x

**Karol**

*December 17, 2015*

*Reply*

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I'm glad you found a way around the ilegal system. Your post is very recent, i too will be thinking of you. Good luck