

The Vagina Poems

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Abstract

My project is a portfolio of 8 poems which employs female individuals as subjects to narrate common struggles of women. The collection is inspired by Eve Ensler's play, *The Vagina Monologues*, where the Vagina symbolizes sexuality and empowerment. We are not allowed to discuss the Vagina in public because it is highly private and socially inappropriate. Embarrassment with the Vagina is international, where every culture gives her nicknames, such as pussy or *muimui* in Cantonese. My poems confront the "private" issues of sexuality and give victims of gender oppression a voice, with the goal of sparking a greater social discourse on sex and gender. *The Vagina Poems* is in three sections. Subjects of "My Coochi Snorcher is my Pandora Box" and "You Cannot Love a Vagina without Loving" are borrowed from the *Monologues*, addressing issues of domestic sexual abuse and public hair removal respectively. I then ventured to discover real-life subjects through social media for the second section, writing on the stereotypical Instagram girl for "tl;dr, rant", Hong Kong transgender, Beatrice Wong, for the two-part poem "From Beavis to Beatrice & From Beatrice to Beatrice", and consent in sex for "Said She". The last section deals with the Vagina herself, attempting to inspire new imaginations about the Vagina in "Women on the Internet don't know where the Vagina is", and deconstruct sexual taboos in "The Vagina Poem". The poem in the Preface, "A Disclaimer for Vagina: I cry with you but I do not feel", is chronologically the last poem to be written. It illustrates difficulties I encountered in the creative process of representing personal experiences of poetic subjects foreign to me in reality, namely narrative distance and the impersonality of language. It reminds readers to take my poetry as an artistic representation, and not an accurate reflection of what the subject feels.

Reflection

This is my first collection of poems. I was initially hesitant to settle on this topic because I have never properly written poems before. I want to take this opportunity to thank Professor Eddie Tay for encouraging me to take on creative writing, and for the freedom and flexibility he has given in my creative process. I struggled with understanding my transgender subject the most. Her exclusive experience as a sexual minority creates an interesting but marginalized feminist narrative. However, I, as a heterosexual woman, can never fully comprehend her internal struggles. Writing *The Vagina Poems* has reshaped my understanding of how to represent feminist subjects, specifically gender minorities, in literature as well as social campaigns. The learning experience has been especially meaningful because I find my topic relatable, not only to my life experience as a woman, but also to my future plans of contributing to feminist causes and participating in feminist movements.