

The Vagina Monologues

by Eve Ensler

Official guidelines and script for the V-Day 2004 College Campaign

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Monologue-Specific Guidelines

SPECIAL NOTE: This year's script contains the optional monologue "Crooked Braid." You are welcome to leave only this monologue out of your production but, if you choose to keep it in, please adhere to its placement in the script.

The overall spirit of the play should be one of celebration and humor. The comedy in "The Vagina Monologues" is what gives the piece its unique ability to enlighten the audience without preaching to them. The performances need to be brave, fierce and *funny*. The actresses need to enjoy each other, enjoy the audience and shed their inhibitions - they should go for honesty, simplicity and humor.

- **These pieces are not meant to be dramatic interpretations:** The monologues are anecdotal and rely on good old-fashioned storytelling to come across well; they are *real* and very *human* so the performers should embrace that concept and keep the "Acting" to a minimum!
- The women who were interviewed for this piece did not see themselves as victims on any level. If any of the monologues are delivered from a place of shame, self-pity or remorse they will counteract the message of the performance.
- Please keep in mind that each actress is welcome to find her own interpretation of the piece. There is no "correct" or "prescribed" way of performing these pieces. It is up to the actress to decide "who" the speaker is and bring her to life with dynamism.

The following notes appear in the order in which the monologues must be performed and listed in your performance program.

Introduction

Self-explanatory.

Hair

This is a woman who may be slightly bitter, but newly empowered and enlightened! "Hair" is the first piece in the show so it is important to find humor in it and, as always, *stay away from self-pity*. "Hair" has been performed as a Southern woman, a Puerto Rican woman, a West Indian woman, etc.

The "Wear and Say" Lists

Because it is so straightforward, this is a terrific monologue for people of all different acting abilities.

***This is also an excellent piece for multiple performers.**

The Flood

"The Flood" has been performed as an older Jewish woman, a Southern woman, a Midwestern woman, etc. A big "trap" for this piece is to let the performer speak from a remorseful place so that the audience feels pity for her. Keep in mind that her flooding story is an *unexamined* experience and that she doesn't feel sorry for herself or feel traumatized by her past. She is a funny, sassy lady who feels like she's had a pretty good life and hasn't missed out on anything. "As always, we are looking for the performer to tap into the truth of her experience and this can be accomplished with an actress of any age or ethnicity.

The Vagina Workshop

The speaker has an English accent. If you are not performing the show in English, use what would be considered an "upper class" accent in your region. The accent helps communicate that she is extremely proper. The important thing here is that she is probably the *last* woman on earth that you'd expect to find in a Vagina Workshop! This is a long, complex piece and the actor needs to move through each section with attention to pacing and story arc.

Vagina Happy Fact

Celebrate this fact and rejoice in every word! You can repeat this fact throughout the evening. Feel free to invite your audience to request it at any time.

Because He Liked to Look At It

This piece is quite self-explanatory and works well with a variety of interpretations and characterizations.

I Was 12. My Mother Slapped Me.

It is crucial that the actresses performing this monologue do their best to separate the voices of the different women who are speaking otherwise the monologue can become confusing. One of the most common mistakes made by those performing this monologue is rushing through it. The actresses should take their time in order to allow the audience to digest the words of each "speaker." This monologue also contains a few lines that work well if spoken in unison. As Eve has said in introducing this monologue, it's like a "wild, collective song." This is how it should be performed.

**This is also an excellent piece for multiple performers.*

Not-So-Happy Fact

This "Fact" is heartbreaking and should be read slowly. You are encouraged to mention in your evening or in your program materials all the work that is being done to stop female genital mutilation (FGM). Information about V-Day's "Agnes Fund" can be found at our web site.

Crooked Braid

(This is the only optional monologue in the production. You are welcome to leave only this monologue out of your production but, if you choose to keep it in, please adhere to its placement in the script.)

Allow for the passion, sorrow, irony and humor.

My Angry Vagina

With this monologue, the "title" can be omitted so that the speaker just begins with "My Vagina's Angry." A fierce energy is appropriate for this very pissed-off piece. Any actress performing this monologue should feel free to "let it rip," and turn the theater into a rally! So, the note here is that it can never be too angry. This is a woman who is fed up and is ready to speak her mind. Amen!

My Vagina Was My Village

In the introduction to the "Bosnia" piece, there is a rape statistic for the United States. If you are doing a production elsewhere, you should replace this statistic with one from your country. If you are in the United States, feel free to add the rape statistics from your community to this introduction as well.

The "Bosnia" monologue benefits from a very simple delivery. The language is quite graphic, so the actress should let the words speak for themselves. A lot of dramatics can overwhelm the piece and alienate the audience. The actresses performing "Bosnia" should familiarize herself with the Balkan conflict and the atrocities of the rape camps. They should also research the Muslim community in Bosnia, as their culture compounds

the tragedy of rape by expelling these "ruined" women from their communities. The monologue is distinctly split into two voices - that of present and past - dramatizing the struggle between the two selves and making it a perfect piece for two actresses.

The Memory of Her Face

Each section of this monologue is a separate piece in and of itself but also part of the monologue as a whole so the actress should build to a momentum by the end.

The Little Coochi Snorcher That Could

As indicated, the speaker is a Southern woman of color but women of diverse ethnic backgrounds have performed this monologue wonderfully. In this monologue, we follow the story of a young girl from a healthy, curious child to a damaged and violated teenager. In her journey, we recognize the plight of many sexually abused women as they become dangerously detached from their own bodies and themselves. This is a true story of salvation and not an endorsement of underage sex. "Coochi" is not meant to be *judged* for its morality but admired for its tenderness. Again, the telling of this sad but beautiful tale should not be tinged with self-pity but with frankness and honesty.

The "Smell" List

Because it is so straightforward, this is a terrific monologue for people of all different acting abilities.

***This is also an excellent piece for multiple performers.**

Outrageous Vagina Fact

In this mind-blowing new fact that Eve recently added to the show, the performer often repeats "Texas" three times for emphasis. (Productions outside of the United States may want to omit this fact altogether, or adjust it to refer to your country if it is applicable.)

Reclaiming Cunt

"Cunt" is an incredibly powerful monologue. When Glenn Close performed this piece at V-Day 2001, she had all 18,000 people in the audience screaming "Cunt" with her by the time she reached her "climax." Of all the monologues in the show, "Cunt" provokes the most fear from actresses and audiences because the word is so vulgar and shocking in our (American) context. That being said, the actress who performs "Cunt" needs to transform the word from something vile and derogatory into something powerful, sexy and delicious. She can do this by really taking her time with the letters and the sounds of the word and finding a rhythmic energy and pacing that builds into a frenzied climax. No small task, but if the actress fully "attacks" this piece with no inhibitions or timidity, this can be achieved! Whatever her style of delivery, the actress should "get into her cunt groove" and sing out sister!

A six-year-old girl was asked...

This piece should be performed in a straightforward manner, without pretense, the way six-year-old girls are clear and lack self-consciousness.

The Woman Who Loved to Make Vaginas Happy

No, a "sex worker" is not your traditional therapist - this woman is a dominatrix!! Yes, that's right, a member of the oldest profession. She is dangerous and loves to shock. She is out to seduce the audience, dominate them and make them squirm in their seats. She loves sounds, including the sound of her own voice, so take your time with this one. This monologue is deep and sexy like jazz and bourbon. At the end of the monologue, she has a symphony of moans and then the party really gets started. The "moaning" is a grand climax to the evening and the actress should take her time,

getting the most out of each moan and sound. The moans are meant to be funny, but also sound real.

I Was There In the Room

This monologue is a poem and care must be taken to deliver it as such. The actress should be encouraged to find a simple, heart-felt delivery. There are no big theatrics needed here as the beauty and power of the writing does the work for her. The actress should take her time to paint the images and find the awe and reverence in this everyday miracle that we all take for granted. This monologue is based on Eve's observations of her granddaughter's hospital birth. In this monologue, Eve is in no way endorsing a particular birthing practice. As with all of the monologues, it is not advocating a specific point of view, it is an account of one woman's experience.

Eve Ensler's Vagina Warrior Statement

Please show the videotape of Eve's statement or have someone read the text version of it. After showing or reading the statement, please invite your Vagina Warriors onto the stage and read their bios to illustrate why they have been selected.

INTRODUCTION

*(*This introduction is arranged for three actresses but can be readjusted to suit your production needs.*

It can be performed by any number of women.)

WOMAN 1

I bet you're worried.

WOMAN 2

We were worried.

WOMAN 3

We were worried about vaginas.

WOMAN 1

We were worried what we think about vaginas, and even more worried that we don't think about them. We were worried about our own vaginas. They needed a context of other vaginas — a community, a culture of vaginas. There's so much darkness and secrecy surrounding them — like the Bermuda triangle. Nobody ever reports back from there.

WOMAN 2

In the first place it's not so easy to even find your vagina. Women go weeks, months, sometimes years without looking at it. A high-powered businesswoman was interviewed and she said she was too busy; she didn't have the time. Looking at your vagina, she said, is a full day's work. You have to get down there on your back in front of a mirror that's standing on its own, full-length preferred. You've got to get in the perfect position, with the perfect light, which then is shadowed somehow by the mirror and the angle you're at. You get all twisted up. You're arching your head up, killing your back. You're exhausted by then. She said she didn't have the time for that. She was busy.

WOMAN 3

So there were vagina interviews, which became vagina monologues. Over two hundred women were interviewed. Older women, young women, married women, lesbians, single women, college professors, actors, corporate professionals, sex workers, African American women, Asian American

women, Hispanic women, Native American women, Caucasian women, Jewish women. OK. At first women were reluctant to talk. They were a little shy. But once they got going, you couldn't stop them. Women secretly love to talk about their vaginas. They get very excited, mainly because no one's ever asked them before.

WOMAN 1

Let's just start with the word "vagina." It sounds like an infection at best, maybe a medical instrument: "Hurry nurse, bring me the vagina." "Vagina." "Vagina." Doesn't matter how many times you say it, it never sounds like a word you want to say. It's a totally ridiculous, completely unsexy word. If you use it during sex, trying to be politically correct — "Darling, could you stroke my vagina?" — you kill the act right there.

WOMAN 2

We were worried about vaginas, what we call them and don't call them.

WOMAN 3

In Great Neck*, they call it Pussycat. A woman there said that her mother used to tell her "Don't wear panties underneath your pajamas, dear, you need to air out your Pussycat."

*(*You can add "Great Neck, New York" if you are unfamiliar with this town)*

WOMAN 1

In Westchester they called it a Pooki,

WOMAN 2

in New Jersey, a twat.

WOMAN 3

There's Powderbox, a Poochi, a Poopi, a Peepe, a Poopelu, a Poonani, a Pal and a Piche,

WOMAN 1

Toadie, Dee dee, Nishi, Dignity, Monkey Box,

WOMAN 2

Coochi Snorcher, Cooter, Labbe,

WOMAN 3

Gladys Seagelman,

WOMAN 1

VA, Wee wee, Horseshot, Nappy Dugout,

WOMAN 2

Mongo, Mooky, a Pajama, Fannyboo, Mushmellow,

WOMAN 3

a Ghoulie, Possible, Tamale, Tottita, Connie,

WOMAN 1

a Mimi in Miami,

WOMAN 2

a Split Knish in Philadelphia,

WOMAN 3

and a Schmende in the Bronx.

(You can add up to five of your own regionally-specific names to this list.)

WOMEN 1, 2, and 3

We're worried about vaginas.

*(*It is generally nice for the actor to add a personal introduction here such as, "Hello, welcome. I see we have a great bunch of vaginas in the house tonight!" Etc.)*

INTRO – HAIR

Some of the monologues are based on one woman's story, some of the monologues are based on several women's stories surrounding the same theme, and, a few times, a good idea became an outrageous one. This monologue is based on one woman's story, although the subject came up in every interview and was often fraught. The subject being ...

HAIR

You cannot love a vagina unless you love hair. Many people do not love hair. My first and only husband hated hair. He said it was cluttered and dirty. He made me shave my vagina. It looked puffy and exposed and like a little girl. This excited him. When he made love to me my vagina felt the way a beard must feel. It felt good to rub it and painful. Like scratching a mosquito bite. It felt like it was on fire. There were screaming red bumps. I refused to shave it again. Then my husband had an affair. When we went to marital therapy, he said he screwed around because I wouldn't please him sexually. I wouldn't shave my vagina. The therapist had a German accent and gasped (*Gasp.*) between sentences (*Gasp.*) to show her empathy. She asked me why I didn't want to please my husband. I told her I thought it was weird. I felt little when my hair was gone down there and I couldn't help talking in a baby voice and the skin got irritated and even calamine lotion wouldn't help it. She told me marriage was a compromise. I asked her if shaving my vagina would stop him from screwing around. I asked her if she had many cases like this before. She said that questions diluted the process. I needed to jump in. She was sure it was a good beginning.

This time, when we got home, *he* got to shave my vagina. It was like a therapy bonus prize. He clipped it a few times and there was a little blood in the bathtub. He didn't even notice it 'cause he

was so happy shaving me. Then, later, when my husband was pressing against me, I could feel his spiky sharpness sticking into me, my naked puffy vagina. There was no protection. There was no fluff.

I realized then that hair is there for a reason — it's the leaf around the flower, the lawn around the house. You have to love hair in order to love the vagina. You can't pick the parts you want. And besides, my husband never stopped screwing around.

*(*The "Lists" that follow are broken up for three women but you are free to divide up the answers to the questions among your actresses as you choose. You may also add your own items to the list.)*

WOMAN 1

All of the women were asked the following questions.

WOMAN 2

If your vagina got dressed what would it wear?

WOMAN 3

glasses

a beret

a leather jacket

silk stockings

mink

a pink boa

WOMAN 1

a male tuxedo

jeans

something form fitting

WOMAN 2

emeralds

an evening gown

sequins

WOMAN 1

Armani only

WOMAN 2

a tutu

see through black underwear

a taffeta ball gown

WOMAN 3

something machine washable

WOMAN 1

costume eye mask

purple velvet pajamas

angora

a red bow

WOMAN 2

ermine and pearls

a leopard hat

a silk kimono

sweatpants

a tattoo

WOMAN 3

an electrical shock device to keep unwanted strangers away

WOMAN 1

high heels

lace *and* combat boots

purple feathers twigs and shells

cotton

WOMAN 2

a pinafore

WOMAN 3

a bikini

WOMAN 2

a slicker

WOMAN 3

If your vagina could talk, what would it say, two words:

WOMAN 1

slow down*

*(*Since 'slow down' is one of the biggest laughs in the show, this can also be said by all the actresses in unison. After laugh...)*

WOMAN 1

This might be the international vagina anthem.

WOMAN 2

is that you?

WOMAN 3

feed me

I want

yum yum

oh yeah

WOMAN 1

start again

no, over there

lick me

stay home

brave choice

WOMAN 2

think again

more please

embrace me

let's play

WOMAN 3

don't stop

more more

remember me?

WOMAN 1

come inside

not yet

whoa mama

yes yes

rock me

WOMAN 2

enter at your own risk

WOMAN 1

oh god

thank god

I'm here

let's go

let's go

find me

WOMAN 2

thank you

bonjour

too hard

don't give up

WOMAN 3

where's Brian?

that's better

yes, there. there.

INTRO – THE FLOOD

A group of women between the ages of 65 and 75 was interviewed. These interviews were the most poignant. Possibly because many of these women had never had a vagina interview before. One woman who was 72 had never even seen her vagina. She washed herself in the shower and bath, but never with conscious intention. She had never had an orgasm. At 72 she went into therapy, as we do in New York*, and with the help of her therapist, she went home one afternoon by herself, lit some candles, took a bath, played some music, and she got down with herself. She said it took her over an hour, because she was arthritic, but when she finally found her clitoris, she said, she cried. This monologue is for her.

*(*Can also say "as they do in New York")*

THE FLOOD

Down there? I haven't been down there since 1953. No, it had nothing to do with Eisenhower. No, no, it's a cellar down there. It's very damp, clammy. You don't want to go down there. Trust me. You'd get sick. Suffocating. Very nauseating. The smell of the clamminess and the mildew and everything. Whew! Smells unbearable. Gets in your clothes.

No, there was no accident down there. It didn't blow up or catch on fire or anything. It wasn't so dramatic. I mean...well, never mind. No. Never mind. I can't talk to you about this. What's a smart girl like you going around talking to old ladies about their down-theres for. We didn't do this kind of a thing when I was a girl. What? Jesus, OK.

There was this boy, Andy Leftkov. He was cute — well I thought so. And tall, like me, and I really liked him. He asked me out for a date in his car...

I can't tell you this. I can't do this, talk about down there. You just know it's there. Like the cellar. There's rumbles down there sometimes. You can hear the pipes and things get caught there, little animals and things, and it gets wet, and sometimes people have to plug up the leaks. Otherwise the door stays closed. You forget about it. I mean, it's part of the house, but you don't see it or think about it. It has to be there, though, 'cause every house needs a cellar otherwise the bedroom would be in the basement.

Oh Andy, Andy Leftkov. Right. Andy was very good looking. He was a catch. That's what we called it in my day. We were in his car, a new white Chevy Belair. I remember thinking that my legs were too long for the seat. I have long legs. They were shmushed up against the dashboard. I was looking at my big kneecaps when he just kissed me in this surprisingly "Take me by control like they do in the movies" kind of way. And I got excited, so excited and well, there was a flood down there. I couldn't control it. It was like this force of passion, this river of life just flooded out of me, right through my panties, right onto the car seat of his new white Chevy Belair. It wasn't pee and it was smelly — well, frankly I didn't really smell anything at all, but he said, Andy said that it smelled like sour milk and it was staining his car seat. I was "a stinky weird girl," he said. I wanted to explain that his kiss had caught me off guard, that I wasn't normally like this. I tried to wipe the flood up with my dress. It was a new yellow primrose dress and it looked so ugly with the flood on it. Andy drove me home without saying another word and when I got out and closed his car door, I closed the whole store. Locked it, never opened for business again. I dated some after that, but the idea of flooding made me too nervous. I never even got close again.

I used to have dreams, crazy dreams. Oh they're dopey. Why? Burt Reynolds. I don't know why. He never did much for me in life, but in my dreams...it was always Burt and I, Burt and I, Burt and I. It was always the same general dream. We'd be out. Burt and I. It was some restaurant like the kind you see in Atlantic City, all big with chandeliers and stuff and thousands of waiters with the vests. Burt would give me this orchid corsage. I'd pin it on my blazer. We'd laugh. We were always

laughing Burt and I, laughing, laughing. We'd eat shrimp cocktail. Huge shrimp, fabulous shrimp. We'd laugh more. We were very happy together.

Then he'd look into my eyes and pull me to him in the middle of the restaurant — and just as he was about to kiss me, the whole restaurant would start to shake, pigeons would fly out from under the table — I don't know what those pigeons were doing there — and the flood would come straight from down there. It would pour out of me. It would pour and pour. There would be fish inside it and little boats and the whole restaurant would fill with my flood and Burt would be standing waist deep in it, looking horribly disappointed in me that I'd done it again, horrified as he watched his friends, Dean Martin and the like, swim past us in their tuxedos and evening gowns.

I don't have those dreams anymore. Not since they took away just about everything connected with down there. Moved out the uterus, the tubes, the whole works. The doctor thought he was being funny. He told me if you don't use it, you lose it. But really I found out it was cancer. Everything around it had to go. Who needs it anyway. Highly overrated. I've done other things. I love the dog shows. I sell antiques.

You ask me what would it wear? What kind of question is that? What would it wear? It would wear a big sign: CLOSED DUE TO FLOODING.

What would it say? I told you. It's not like that. It's not like a person who speaks. It stopped being a thing that talked a long time ago. It's a place. A place you don't go. It's closed up, under the house. It's down there.

You happy? You made me talk — you got it out of me. You got an old lady to talk about her down there. You feel better now? (*She takes a moment.*) You know, actually, you're the first person I ever told about this, and I feel a little better.

THE VAGINA WORKSHOP

*(*English accent)*

My vagina is a shell, a round pink tender shell opening and closing, closing and opening. My vagina is a flower, an eccentric tulip, the center acute and deep, the scent delicate, the petals gentle but sturdy.

I did not always know this. I learned this in the vagina workshop. I learned this from a woman who runs the vagina workshop, a woman who believes in vaginas, who really sees vaginas, who helps other women see their own vaginas by seeing other women's vaginas.

In the first session the woman who runs the vagina workshop asked us to draw a picture of our own "unique, beautiful, fabulous vagina." That's what she called it. She wanted to know what our own unique beautiful fabulous vagina looked like to us. One woman who was pregnant drew a big red mouth screaming with coins spilling out. Another very skinny woman drew a big serving plate with a kind of Devonshire pattern on it. I drew a huge black dot with little squiggly lines around it. The black dot was equal to a black hole in space and the squiggly lines were meant to be people or things or just your basic atoms that got lost there. I had always thought of my vagina as an anatomical vacuum randomly sucking up particles and objects from the surrounding environment.

I did not think of my vagina in practical or biological terms. I did not, for example, see it as something attached to me.

In the workshop we were asked to look at our vaginas with hand mirrors. Then, after careful examination, we were to verbally report to the group what we saw. I must tell you that up until this point everything I knew about my vagina was based on hearsay or invention. I had never really seen the thing. It had never occurred to me to look at it. My vagina existed for me on some abstract plane. It seemed so reductive and awkward looking at it like we were in the workshop on

our shiny blue mats, with our hand mirrors. It reminded me of how the early astronomers must have felt with their primitive telescopes.

I found it quite unsettling at first, my vagina. Like the first time you see a fish cut open and you discover this other bloody complex world inside, right under the skin. It was so raw, so red, so fresh. And the thing that surprised me most was all the layers. Layers inside layers, opening into more layers.

My vagina amazed me. I couldn't speak when it came my turn in the workshop. I was speechless. I had awakened to what the woman who ran the workshop called "vaginal wonder." I just wanted to lay there on my mat, my legs spread, examining my vagina forever.

It was better than the Grand Canyon, ancient and full of grace. It had the innocence and freshness of a proper English garden. It was funny, very funny. It made me laugh. It could hide and seek, open and close.

Then, the woman who ran the workshop asked how many women in the workshop had had orgasms. Two women tentatively raised their hands.

I didn't raise my hand, but I had had orgasms. I didn't raise my hand because they were accidental orgasms. They happened *to* me. They happened in my dreams, and I would wake in splendor. They happened a lot in water, mostly in the bath. Once in Cape Cod.

They happened on horses, on bicycles, sometimes on the treadmill at the gym. I did not raise my hand because although I had had orgasms, I did not know how to make one happen. I thought it was a mystical, magical thing. I didn't want to interfere. It felt wrong getting involved — contrived, manipulative. It felt Hollywood. The surprise would be gone, and the mystery. The problem, of

course, was that the surprise had been gone for two years. I hadn't had a magical accidental orgasm in a long time, and I was frantic. That's why I was in the vagina workshop.

And then the moment had arrived that I both dreaded and longed for. The woman who ran the workshop asked us to take out our hand mirrors again and to see if we could locate our clitoris. We were there, the group of us women, on our backs, on our mats, searching for our spots, our locus, our reason, and I don't know why but I started crying. Maybe it was sheer embarrassment. Maybe it was knowing that I had to give up the fantasy, the enormous life-consuming fantasy, that someone or something was going to do this for me — the fantasy that someone was coming to lead my life, to choose direction, to give me orgasms. I could feel the panic coming. The simultaneous terror and realization that I had avoided finding my clitoris, had rationalized it as mainstream and consumerist because I was, in fact, terrified that I did not *have* a clitoris, terrified that I was one of those constitutionally incapables, one of those frigid, dead, shut down, dry, apricot-tasting, bitter — oh my God. I lay there with my mirror looking for my spot, reaching with my fingers and all I could think about was the time when I was ten and lost my gold ring with the emeralds in a lake. How I kept diving over and over to the bottom of the lake, running my hands over stones and fish and bottle caps and slimy stuff, but never my ring. The panic I felt. I knew I'd be punished.

The woman who ran the workshop saw my insane scrambling, sweating and heavy breathing. She came over. I told her "It's gone. It's gone. I've lost my clitoris. I shouldn't have worn it swimming." The woman who ran the workshop laughed. She calmly stroked my forehead. She told me my clitoris was not something I could lose. It was me, she said, the essence of me. It was both the doorbell to my house and the house itself. I didn't have to *find* it. I had to *be* it.

Be it. Be my clitoris. Be my clitoris. I lay back and closed my eyes. I put the mirror down. I watched myself floating above myself. I watched as I slowly began to approach myself and re-enter. I felt like an astronaut re-entering the surface of the earth. It was very quiet this re-entry, quiet and gentle. I bounced and landed, landed and bounced. I came into my own muscles and

blood and cells and then I slid into my vagina. It was suddenly easy and I fit. I was all warm and pulsing and ready and young and alive. And then, without looking, with my eyes still closed, I put my finger on what had suddenly become me. There was a little quivering at first, which urged me to stay. Then the quivering became a quake, an eruption, the layers dividing and subdividing. The quaking broke open into an ancient horizon of light and silence, which opened onto a plane of music and colors and innocence and longing, and I felt connection, calling connection as I lay there thrashing about on my little blue mat.

My vagina is a shell, a tulip, and a destiny. I am arriving as I am beginning to leave. My vagina, my vagina, me.

Here is a vagina happy fact. This is from "Woman: An Intimate Geography," by Natalie Angier*

*(*This author's name is pronounced AN - JAY)*

The clitoris is pure in purpose. It is the only organ in the body designed purely for pleasure. The clitoris is simply a bundle of nerves: 8,000 nerve fibers, to be precise. That's a higher concentration of nerve fibers than is found anywhere else in the male or female body, including the fingertips, lips, and tongue, and it is twice, twice, twice the number in the penis. Who needs a hand gun when you've got a semi-automatic?*

*(*The last line here is optional.)*

INTRO — BECAUSE HE LIKED TO LOOK AT IT

This monologue was based on an interview with a woman who had a good experience with a **man**.

*(*Emphasize the last word in the sentence.)*

BECAUSE HE LIKED TO LOOK AT IT

This is how I came to love my vagina. It's embarrassing because it's not politically correct. I mean I know it should have happened in a bath with salt grains from the Dead Sea, Enya playing, me loving my woman self. I know the story. Vaginas are beautiful. Our self-hatred is only the internalized repression and hatred of the patriarchal culture. It isn't real. Pussies Unite. I know all of it. Like if we'd grown up in a culture where we were taught fat thighs were beautiful, we'd all be pounding down milkshakes and Krispy Kremes, lying on our backs, spending our days thigh-expanding. But, we didn't grow up in that culture. I hated my thighs and I hated my vagina even more. I thought it was incredibly ugly. I was one of those women who had looked at it and from that moment on I wished I hadn't. It made me sick. I pitied anyone who had to go down there.

In order to survive, I began to pretend there was something else between my legs. I imagined furniture — cozy futons with light cotton comforters, little velvet settees, leopard rugs, or pretty things — silk handkerchiefs, quilted pot holders, or place settings. I got so accustomed to this that I lost all memory of having a vagina. Whenever a man was inside me, I pictured him inside a mink-lined muffler, or a Chinese bowl.

Then I met Bob. Bob was the most ordinary man I ever met. He was thin and tall and nondescript and wore khaki tan clothes. Bob did not like spicy foods or listen to Prince. He had no interest in sexy lingerie. In the summer he spent time in the shade. He did not share his inner feelings. He did not have any problems or issues and was not even an alcoholic. He wasn't very funny or articulate or mysterious. He wasn't mean or unavailable. He wasn't self-involved or

charismatic. He didn't drive fast. I didn't particularly like Bob. I would have missed him altogether if he hadn't picked up my change that I dropped on the deli floor. When he handed me back my quarters and pennies and his hand accidentally touched mine, something happened. I went to bed with him. That's when the miracle occurred.

Turned out that Bob loved vaginas. He was a connoisseur. He loved the way they felt, the way they tasted, the way they smelled, but most importantly he loved the way they looked. He had to look at them. The first time we had sex, he told me he had to see me.

"I'm right here," I said.

"No, you," he said. "I have to see you."

"Turn on the light," I said, thinking he was a weirdo and freaking out in the dark.

He turned on the light.

Then he said, "OK, I'm ready, ready to see you."

"Right here," I waved, "I'm right here."

Then he began to undress me.

"What are you doing Bob?" I said.

"I need to see you," he replied.

"No need," I said. "Just do it."

"I need to see what you look like," he said.

"But you've seen a red leather couch before," I said.

Bob continued. He would not stop. I wanted to throw up and die.

"This is awfully intimate," I said. "Can't you just do it?"

"No," he said. "It's who you are. I need to look."

I held my breath. He looked and looked. He got breathy and his face changed. He didn't look ordinary anymore. He looked like a hungry beast.

"You're so beautiful," he said. "You're elegant and deep and innocent and wild."

"You saw that there?" I said.

It was like he read my palm.

"I saw that," he said, "and more, much much more."

He stayed looking for almost an hour as if he were studying a map, observing the moon, staring into my eyes, but it was my vagina. In the light I watched him looking at me and he was so genuinely excited, so peaceful and euphoric, I began to get wet and turned on. I began to see myself the way he saw me. I began to feel beautiful and delicious — like a great painting, or a waterfall. Bob wasn't afraid. He wasn't grossed out. I began to swell, began to feel proud. Began to love my vagina. And Bob, lost himself there, and I was there with him, in my vagina, and we were gone.

INTRO I – WAS 12. MY MOTHER SLAPPED ME.

Many women were interviewed about menstruation. A choral thing began to occur, a kind of wild collective song. Women echoed each other. The voices bled into one another.

I WAS 12. MY MOTHER SLAPPED ME.

WOMAN 1

Second grade, seven years old, my brother was talking about periods. I didn't like the way he was laughing. I went to my mother. "What's a period?" I said. "It's punctuation," she said. "You put it at the end of a sentence."

WOMAN 2

My father brought me a card: "To my little girl who isn't so little anymore."

WOMAN 3

I was terrified. My mother showed me the thick sanitary napkins. I was to bring the used ones to the can under the kitchen sink.

WOMAN 4

I remember being one of the last. I was 13.

WOMAN 1

We all wanted it to come.

WOMAN 3

I was so afraid. I started putting the used pads in brown paper bags in the dark storage places under the roof.

WOMAN 2

8th grade. My mother said, "Oh, that's nice."

WOMAN 4

In junior high-brown drips before it came. Coincided with a little hair under my arms, which grew unevenly: one armpit had hair, the other didn't.

WOMAN 1

I was 16, sort of scared.

WOMAN 2

My mother gave me codeine. We had bunk beds. I went down and lay there. My mother was so uncomfortable.

WOMAN 3

One night, I came home late and snuck into bed without turning on any lights. My mother had found the used pads and put them between the sheets of my bed.

WOMAN 2

I was 12 years old, still in my underpants. Hadn't gotten dressed. Looked down on the staircase. There it was.

WOMAN 1

Looked down and I saw blood.

WOMAN 3

Seventh grade, my mother sort of noticed my underwear. Then she gave me plastic diapers.

WOMAN 2

My mom was very warm. "Let's get you a pad."

WOMAN 3

My friend, Marcia, they celebrated when she got hers. They had dinner for her.

WOMAN 1

We all wanted our period.

WOMAN 2

We all wanted it now.

WOMAN 4

13 years old. It was before Kotex. Had to watch your dress. I was Black and poor. Blood on the back of my dress in church. Didn't show, but I was guilty.

WOMAN 2

I was 10 and a half. No preparation. Brown guck on my underpants.

WOMAN 1

She showed me how to put in a tampon. Only got in half way.

WOMAN 3

I associated my period with inexplicable phenomena.

WOMAN 4

My mother told me I had to use a rag. My mother said no to tampons. You couldn't put anything in your sugar dish.

WOMAN 3

Wore wads of cotton. Told my mother. She gave me Elizabeth Taylor paper dolls.

WOMAN 2

15 years old. My mother said, "Mazel-tov." She slapped me in the face. Didn't know if it was a good thing or a bad thing.

WOMAN 1

My period, like cake mix, before it's baked. Indians sat on moss for five days. Wish I were Native American.

WOMAN 3

I was 15 and I'd been hoping to get it. I was tall and I kept growing.

WOMAN 4

When I saw white girls in the gym with tampons I thought they were bad girls.

WOMAN 2

Saw little red drops on the pink tiles. I said "Yeah."

WOMAN 4

My mom was glad for me.

WOMAN 1

Used OB and liked putting my fingers up there.

WOMAN 4

11 years old, wearing white pants. Blood started to come out.

WOMAN 3

Thought it was dreadful.

WOMAN 1

I'm not ready.

WOMAN 2

I got back pains.

WOMAN 4

I got horny.

WOMAN 3

12 years old. I was happy. My friend had a Ouija Board, asked when we were going to get our periods, looked down and I saw blood.

WOMAN 1

Looked down and there it was.

WOMAN 4

I'm a woman.

WOMAN 2

Terrified.

WOMAN 1

Never thought it would come.

WOMAN 4

Changed my whole feeling about myself. I became very silent and mature. A good Vietnamese woman--quiet worker, virtuous, never speaks.

WOMAN 2

9 and a half. I was sure I was bleeding to death, rolled up my underwear and threw them in a corner. Didn't want to worry parents.

WOMAN 1

My mother made me hot water and wine, and I fell asleep.

WOMAN 3

I was in my bedroom in my mother's apartment. I had a comic book collection. My mother said "You musn't lift your box of comic books."

WOMAN 2

My girlfriends told me you hemorrhage every month.

WOMAN 1

My mother was in and out of mental hospitals. She couldn't take me coming of age.

WOMAN 4

"Dear Miss Carling, Please excuse my daughter from basketball. She has just matured."

WOMAN 3

At camp they told me not to take a bath with my period. They wiped me down with antiseptic.

WOMAN 4

Scared people would smell it. Scared they'd say I smelled like fish.

WOMAN 2

Throwing up, couldn't eat.

WOMAN 4

I got hungry.

WOMAN 3

Sometimes it's very red.

WOMAN 1

I like the drops that drop into the toilet. Like paint.

WOMAN 3

Sometimes it's brown and it disturbs me.

WOMAN 4

I was 12. My mother slapped me and brought me a red cotton shirt. My father went out for a bottle of Sangria.

NOT-SO-HAPPY FACT

This is a not-so-happy fact found in *The New York Times*, April 1996 (and updated to reflect more recent statistics):

Female genital mutilation has been inflicted on approximately 130 million girls and young women. In countries where it is practiced, mostly in Africa, about two million youngsters a year can expect the knife — or the razor or a glass shard — to cut their clitoris or remove it altogether.

In a man it would range from amputation of most of the penis, to removal of all of the penis. Short-term results include: tetanus, hemorrhages, cuts in the urethra, bladder and vaginal walls. Long term: chronic uterine infection, increased agony and danger during child births, and early deaths.

INTRO – CROOKED BRAID

This monologue is based on interviews by Eve Ensler with women from the Oglala Lakota Nation on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. Their stories reflect the challenges that Native women face every day living in isolation and without resources. According to the US Bureau of Justice Statistics, the average annual rate of rape and sexual assault among American Indian Women is 3.5 times higher than all other races.

CROOKED BRAID

1

He wanted to go out.

He said to me-"You stay home"

I said "I wanted to go out"

He said "You have a baby"

I said "It's our baby"

I laid the baby down.

He probably felt my tension

cause he was whimpering,

the baby.

I looked up

and he slapped me, my husband.

Not a blast that knocks your eyes blue.

That came later

it was a smack

a hard domestic smack.

He looked at me.

He was smiling.

I couldn't believe it.

He was smiling.

He slapped me again.

His dad was vicious to his mother.

I saw him smile.

What was that?

He was the nicest person.

He had long black hair,

combing his long hair

when we made love it got

loose

before.

2

He took me to the dinner,

made me go out with his boss.

I didn't want to go.

He kicked me under the table,

told me to look happy,

told me to smile.

I smiled.

He kicked me again

asked me who I was trying to

fuck,

asked me to stop coming

on to everyone.

I stopped smiling.
He kicked me again.
This went on and on.
Outside the restaurant
he grabbed my hair
and pulled me down to
the curb
it had been snowing
he buried me in snow
he pounded me in the gutter

the snow was melting
it was sloppy
and mud
my hair felt like it was bleeding
I ran to...

3

He was drinking.
I was too.
I must have blacked out.
I woke up in the hospital
after five brain surgeries.
My hair was gone
They shaved it off.
I had to relearn to talk
and move my arms.

It took me four months
to remember how to cook
breakfast.

I remember putting
the egg in the frying pan
with the bacon

I knew the egg felt right
I just didn't remember to
crack it open
just the egg in the frying pan
in its shell
my head was bald.

4

After 18 years
he beat me
in the morning
when he was so nice again.
I would braid his long hair.
I would take my time
like I cared so much
and I would do it perfectly crooked.
I would make the hairs
so they would stand up
all crazy like
Then he'd go forgetting
that the bruises on my

face were his hand prints
He'd walk all cocky in the street
all macho in the road
but his braid would be so crooked
and look so stupid and wrong
This shouldn't have made me that happy
it really just shouldn't have made me that happy.

5

Heard that he was out
with a woman
making love and she was fluffing
his hair when he was wild
on top of her
he came home
much later
and his hair was braided up all
right and tight
he passed out
from drinking
then I got up
with scissors
as he snored
and slowly walked to him
and just cut the braid off
completely off
and put it in his hand

so that when he woke
up he screamed
"what the
fuck, I am going to kill you"
and he jumped up
but I had tied his shoes
together so he couldn't run
I didn't go
back to him for three years
until I knew his hair had grown out again.

6

I didn't want to have sex with him.
He was drunk
I was just a piece of meat
to him
a big hole.
I tried to pretend
I was asleep.
He elbowed me, jerked me
pulled me up.
I remember thinking just get it over with
He was soft and kept pumping
and pumping until
I got sore
I said it didn't feel good
he said, "Who were you with?"

Was he bigger than
me? Did you like it?"
You're like a mouse with a lion
You have to move fast
to the door.
He picked me up
like I was a rag
His eyes were numb.
I could hear my son screaming
his mouth was open and
his tonsils,
I could see his tonsils.
My husband beat the shit out of me
He wrapped my long black hair around his hand
jerked my head.
I tried to get my son
"That's not your son," he said,
holding my hair in his hand.
"That's not your son anymore."

Now he calls me the middle
of night
weeping,
He didn't mean to beat his wife
He didn't mean to batter her
He's suicidal
He knows what his mother went through.

But he can't stop, my son.

They took our land.

They took our ways.

They took our men.

We want them back.

MY ANGRY VAGINA*

*(*This title is normally not read aloud)*

My vagina's angry. It is. It's pissed off. My vagina's furious and it needs to talk. It needs to talk about all this shit. It needs to talk to you. I mean what's the deal — an army of people out there thinking up ways to torture my poor-ass, gentle, loving vagina. Spending their days constructing psycho products, and nasty ideas to undermine my pussy. Vagina Motherfuckers.

All this shit they're constantly trying to shove up us, clean us up — stuff us up, make it go away. Well, my vagina's not going away. It's pissed off and it's staying right here. Like tampons — what the hell is that? A wad of dry fucking cotton stuffed up there. Why can't they find a way to subtly lubricate the tampon? As soon as my vagina sees it, it goes into shock. It says forget it. It closes up. You need to work with the vagina, introduce it to things, prepare the way. That's what foreplay's all about. You got to convince my vagina, seduce my vagina, engage my vagina's trust. You can't do that with a dry wad of fucking cotton.

Stop shoving things up me. Stop shoving and stop cleaning it up. My vagina doesn't need to be cleaned up. It smells good already. Don't try to decorate. Don't believe them when he tells you it smells like rose petals when it's supposed to smell like pussy. That's what they're doing, trying to clean it up, make it smell like bathroom spray or a garden. All those douche sprays, floral, berry, rain. I don't want my pussy to smell like rain. All cleaned up like washing a fish *after* you cooked it. I want to taste the fish. That's why I ordered it.

Then there's those exams. Who thought them up? There's got to be a better way to do those exams. Why the scary paper dress that scratches your tits and crunches when you lie down so you feel like a wad of paper someone threw away. Why the rubber gloves? Why the flashlight all up there like Nancy Drew working against gravity, why the Nazi steel stirrups, the mean cold duck lips they shove inside you? What's that? My vagina's angry about those visits. It gets defended weeks

in advance. It won't go out of the house. Then you get there. Don't you hate that? "Scoot down. Relax your vagina." Why? So you can shove mean cold duck lips inside it. I don't think so.

Why can't they find some nice delicious purple velvet and wrap it around me, lay me down on some feathery cotton spread, put on some nice friendly pink or blue gloves, and rest my feet in some fur covered stirrups? Warm *up* the duck lips. Work with my vagina.

But no, more tortures — dry wad of fucking cotton, cold duck lips, and thong underwear. That's the worst. Thong underwear. Who thought that up? Moves around all the time, gets stuck in the back of your crusty butt.

Vagina's supposed to be loose and wide, not held together. That's why girdles are so bad. We need to move and spread and talk and talk. Vaginas need comfort. Make something like that. Something to give them pleasure. No, of course they won't do that. Hate to see a woman having pleasure, particularly sexual pleasure. I mean make a nice pair of soft cotton underwear with a French tickler built in. Women would be coming all day long, coming in the supermarket, coming on the subway, coming happy vaginas. They wouldn't be able to stand it. Seeing all those energized, not taking shit, hot happy vaginas.

If my vagina could talk it would talk about itself like me, it would talk about other vaginas, it would do vagina impressions.

It would wear Harry Winston diamonds, no clothing, just there all draped in diamonds.

My vagina helped release a giant baby. It thought it would be doing more of that. It's not. Now, it wants to travel, doesn't want a lot of company. It wants to read and know things and get out more. It wants sex. It loves sex. It wants to go deeper. It's hungry for depth. It wants kindness. It wants change. It wants silence and freedom and gentle kisses and warm liquids and

deep touch. It wants chocolate. It wants to scream. It wants to stop being angry. It wants to come. It wants to want. It wants. My vagina, my vagina. Well...It wants everything.

INTRO – MY VAGINA WAS MY VILLAGE

Bosnian women refugees were interviewed during the war in Yugoslavia, in refugee camps and centers.

Twenty to seventy-thousand women were raped in the middle of Europe as a systematic tactic of war. It was shocking to see how little people did to stop it. But, then again, in the United States, each year, about five hundred thousand women are raped, which is another kind of war.*

This monologue is based on one woman's story. We do it tonight for that woman and the extraordinary women of Bosnia and Kosova.

*(*If you are outside of the United States, you can replace the US statistic with your own regional rape statistic. For US cities, you can add your local statistic as well.)*

MY VAGINA WAS MY VILLAGE

My vagina was green, water soft pink fields, cow mooing sun resting sweet boyfriend touching lightly with soft piece of blonde straw.

There is something between my legs. I do not know what it is. I do not know where it is. I do not touch. Not now. Not anymore. Not since.

My vagina was chatty, can't wait, so much, so much saying words talking, can't quit trying, can't quit saying, oh yes, oh yes.

Not since I dream there's a dead animal sewn in down there with thick black fishing line. And the bad dead animal smell cannot be removed. And its throat is slit and it bleeds through all my summer dresses.

My vagina singing all girl songs, all goat bell ringing songs, all wild autumn field songs, vagina songs, vagina home songs.

Not since the soldiers put a long thick rifle inside me. So cold, the steel rod canceling my heart. Don't know whether they're going to fire it or shove it though my spinning brain. Six of them, monstrous doctors with black masks shoving bottles up me too. There were sticks and the end of a broom.

My vagina swimming river water, clean spilling water over sun-baked stones over stone clit, clit stones over and over.

Not since I heard the skin tear and made lemon screeching sounds, not since a piece of my vagina came off in my hand, a part of the lip, now one side of the lip is completely gone.

My vagina. A live wet water village. My vagina my hometown.

Not since they took turns for seven days smelling like feces and smoked meat, they left their dirty sperm inside me. I became a river of poison and pus and all the crops died, and the fish.

My vagina a live wet water village.

They invaded it. Butchered it and burned it down.

I do not touch now.

Do not visit.

I live someplace else now.

I don't know where that is.

THE MEMORY OF HER FACE

Islamabad

They all knew something terrible
Was going to happen
Each time he came home
The things he used
First time
He grabbed the closest thing
He grabbed a pot
He smashed her head
He smashed her right eye hard
The next time
He thought about it a little
And paused
Took off his belt
She had gashes inside her thighs
The third time he needed to be more
Involved in hurting her
So he beat her with his fists
He broke her nose
They heard her screams
They heard her beg
They didn't, wouldn't intervene
She was his
Unwritten law
Don't ask what she had done

It was just her face that pissed him off
Just her needy face waiting for more
The last time he
Had enough of her
He planned it out
He got the acid in advance
He poured it in a jar
She said she needed money for food for them
She looked like that.
Like that. Like that. Like that.
Her face is gone
Totally melted off
Just eyes that all you see
That's all
Just eyes encased in gooey flesh
I tell you this because
She's there inside this mess
Inside this monstrous mask
Inside the death of her esteem
Inside his wish to make her none
She's there, I swear
I heard her wheeze
I heard her sigh
I heard her babble something
With what was once her mouth
I heard her. I swear
She lives in there.

Baghdad

When she woke up
Her face was on fire
Bombs had fallen from the sky
And her face was in flames
She couldn't scream
The burning encircled her throat
Like a falling tower
Just as the flames were entering her eyes
She pressed her torn blanket
And it put out the flames
but stuck to the melted skin
when she pulled it off
she lost most of her cheeks,
most of her forehead and chin.
This was not a dream
There was nowhere to go
There was nothing to say
As they wandered the streets
Of Baghdad
Looking for a hospital
Or a doctor who knew
What to do when a face burns off
Her father
Unable to look at his only daughter
Oozing through
The bandages he made of white rags

Hated her looking like that
Hated whoever she had become
No longer a relative
No longer someone he knew
No longer a woman he could marry off
But still something he was responsible for
He hated the planes that dropped
Fire from the sky
Who promised
Freedom and instead destroyed
He hated those planes
But right now he hated his bandaged melted
needy daughter more.

Juarez

We look at the photographs in Esther's book.
Each woman is dark, particular, young.
Each woman has brown eyes. Each woman is gone.
There is one girl missing for 10 months.
She was 17 when they took her away
She worked in the Maquilladora (**pronounced MAH-KEY-AH-DOOR-AH*)
She stamped thousands of coupons of products
She would never afford
Four dollars a day
They paid her and bused her to the desert
to sleep in freezing shit
It must have been on the way to the bus

They took her
It must have been dark outside
It must have lasted until morning
What ever they did to her
It went on and on
You can tell from the others
who showed up without hands or nipples
It must have gone on and on.

When she finally reappeared
She was bone
Bone bone
No cute mole above her right eye,
No naughty smile, no wavy black hair.

Bone she came back as bone.

She and the others in Esther's book

All beautiful

All beginning

All coupons

All faces

All gone

300 faces gone

300 noses

300 chins

300 dark penetrating eyes

300 smiles

300 Mulatto colored cheeks

300 hungry mouths about
to speak
about to tell
about to scream
gone now bone.

I saw all of this with these eyes
I swallowed the ashes of their sorrow with this mouth
I choked on the ugliness of their melted beings
with this throat.
I smelled their burning screaming flesh
I tried to turn away
When she lifted her chador
In the restaurant
When she took off the bandages
To prove to the soldiers how bad it was
When they raised the plastic cloth that concealed
the bone out line of her head in the morgue
I tried to turn away.

It is estimated that nearly 5,000 women have been burned by their families in Pakistan since 1994, with only 4% of the victims surviving. Some reports indicate that as many as 300 Pakistani women are burned to death each year. Prosecution and conviction for this crime is almost non-existent. Many women were burned or killed in the recent Iraqi war. The United States government calls it "collateral damage." In Juarez, Mexico in the past decade, over 300 women and girls have been killed or have disappeared. Many of the victims were raped, mutilated and tortured. One of the victims was a six-year-old girl. This year, V-Day is spotlighting the terrible situation in Juarez

so that women will be safe and perpetrators will be brought to justice. We urge you to join us in this campaign.

INTRO – THE LITTLE COOCHI SNORCHER THAT COULD

In hundreds of interviews with homeless women in the last thirteen years, only one woman was not sexually abused as a little girl or raped as a young woman. For most of these women, "home" is a very scary place, a place they have fled. The shelters are ironically the first places many of them ever find safety, protection, or comfort.

This is a woman's story as she told it. What isn't in the story is the fact that this woman met another woman in a shelter, and they fell in love, and through their love, they both got out of the shelter system.

THE LITTLE COOCHI SNORCHER THAT COULD

*(*Southern, woman of color)*

Memory: December 1965, five years old.

My mama tells me in a scary, loud, life-threatening voice to stop scratching my Coochi Snorcher. I become terrified that I've scratched it off down there. I do not touch myself again, even in the bath. I am afraid of the water getting in and filling me up so I explode. I put Band-Aids over my Coochi to cover the hole, but they fall off in the water. I imagine a stopper, a bathtub plug up there to prevent things from entering me. I sleep with three pairs of happy heart-patterned cotton underpants underneath my snap-up pajamas. I still want to touch myself sometimes, but I don't.

Memory: seven years old.

Edgar Montane, who is ten, gets angry at me and punches me with all his might between my legs. It feels like he breaks my entire self. I limp home. I can't pee. My mama asks me what's wrong with my Coochi Snorcher, and when I tell her what Edgar did to me she yells at me and says never to let anyone touch me down there again. I try to explain that he didn't touch it, Mama, he punched it.

Memory: nine years old.

I play on the bed, bouncing and falling, and impale my Coochi Snorcher on the bedpost. I make high-pitched screamy noises that come straight from my Coochi Snorcher's mouth. I get taken to the hospital and they sew it up down there from where it's been torn apart.

Memory: ten years old.

I'm at my father's house and he's having a party upstairs. Everyone's drinking. I'm playing alone in the basement and I'm trying on my new cotton white bra and panties that my father's girlfriend gave me. Suddenly my father's best friend, this big man Alfred, comes up from behind and pulls my new underpants down and sticks his big hard penis into my Coochi Snorcher. I scream. I kick. I try to fight him off, but he already gets it in. My father's there then and he has a gun and there's a loud horrible noise and then there's blood all over Alfred and me, lots of blood. I'm sure my Coochi Snorcher is finally falling out. Alfred is paralyzed for life and my mama doesn't let me see my father for seven years.

Memory: thirteen years old.

My Coochi Snorcher is a very bad place, a place of pain, nastiness, punching, invasion and blood. It's a site for mishaps. It's a bad-luck zone. I imagine a freeway between my legs and I am traveling, going far away from here.

Memory: sixteen years old.

There's this gorgeous 24-year-old woman in our neighborhood and I stare at her all the time. One day she invites me into her car. She asks me if I like to kiss boys, and I tell her I do not like that. Then she says she wants to show me something, and she leans over and kisses me so softly on the lips with her lips and then puts her tongue in my mouth. Wow. She asks me if I want to come over to her house, and then she kisses me again and tells me to relax, to feel it, to let our tongues feel it. She asks my mama if I can spend the night and my mother's delighted that such a beautiful, successful woman has taken an interest in me. I'm scared and I can't wait. Her apartment's

fantastic. She's got it hooked up. It's the seventies, the beads, the fluffy pillows, the mood lights. I decide right there that I want to be a secretary like her when I grow up. She makes a vodka for herself and then she asks what I want to drink. I say the same as she's drinking and she says she doesn't think my mama would like me drinking vodka. I say she probably wouldn't like me kissing girls either, and the pretty lady makes me a drink. Then she changes into this chocolate satin teddy. She's so beautiful. I always thought bulldaggers were ugly. I say "You look great," and she says "So do you." I say "But I only have this white cotton bra and underpants." Then she dresses me, slowly, in another satin teddy. It's lavender like the first soft days of spring. The alcohol has gone to my head and I'm loose and ready. There's a picture over her bed of a naked Black woman with a huge Afro. She gently and slowly lays me out on the bed and just our bodies rubbing makes me come. Then she does everything to me and my Coochi Snorcher that I always thought was nasty before, and wow. I'm so hot, so wild. She says, "Your vagina, untouched by man, smells so nice, so fresh, wish I could keep it that way forever." I get crazy wild and then the phone rings and of course it's my mama. I'm sure she knows; she catches me at everything. I'm breathing so heavy and I try to act normal when I get on the phone and she asks me, "What's wrong with you, have you been running?" I say "No, Mama, exercising." Then she tells the beautiful secretary to make sure I'm not around boys and the lady tells her, "Trust me, there's no boys around here." Afterwards the gorgeous lady teaches me everything about my Coochi Snorcher. She makes me play with myself in front of her and she teaches me all the different ways to give myself pleasure. She's very thorough. She tells me to always know how to give myself pleasure so I'll never need to rely on a man. In the morning I am worried that I've become a butch because I'm so in love with her. She laughs, but I never see her again. I realize later she was my surprising, unexpected and politically incorrect salvation. She transformed my sorry-ass Coochi Snorcher and raised it into a kind of heaven.

*(*The "List" that follows is broken up for three women but you are free to divide up the answers to the questions among your actresses as you choose. You may also add your own items to the list.)*

WOMAN 1

What does your vagina smell like?

WOMAN 2

earth

wet garbage

God

water

a brand new morning

WOMAN 3

depth

sweet ginger

sweat

WOMAN 1

Depends

WOMAN 2

musk

me

WOMAN 3

no smell, I've been told

WOMAN 1

pineapple

chalice essence

Paloma Picasso

WOMAN 2

earthy meat and musk

cinnamon and cloves

roses

spicy musky jasmine forest, deep, deep forest

WOMAN 3

damp moss

yummy candy

the South Pacific

WOMAN 1

Somewhere between fish and lilacs

WOMAN 2

peaches

the woods

ripe fruit

strawberry kiwi tea

WOMAN 3

heaven

vinegar and water

light sweet liqueur

cheese

WOMAN 1

ocean

sexy

a sponge

WOMAN 2

the beginning.

OUTRAGEOUS VAGINA FACT

Here is an outrageous Vagina Fact from the book "The Technology of Orgasm," by Rachel Maines:

It is illegal to sell vibrators in the following states: Texas, Ohio, Georgia and Arkansas. If you are caught with intent to sell, you could be fined up to \$10,000 and face up to one year of jail time or hard labor. It is totally legal to sell guns in all of these states. We have yet to hear of a mass murder committed with a vibrator.

*(*Wait for audience reaction here – laughter, applause – and then proceed with...)*

More than a dozen US states have laws that prohibit the sale of sexual devices. Alabama used to be one of them. But the state ban on sexual devices such as vibrators was declared unconstitutional and overturned twice – once in 1999 and once in 2002 – by a federal district judge. Despite the court's rulings, in April 2003, the Alabama Legislature voted against a bill that would have removed the ban on sexual devices from the state's obscenity law. Ironically, this vote made the entire obscenity law illegal and unenforceable. The original case is now being considered by a federal appeals court.

INTRO — RECLAIMING CUNT

We've been threatening to create a map of all the vagina-friendly cities. Welcome (**add your school/city name here*). There have been many surprises. Islamabad, Pakistan joined in recently. Nairobi, Kenya was huge. And Birmingham, Alabama. There are many vagina holiday zones. New York City, Paris, Sarajevo, Manila, Santa Fe, Rome and Sydney. San Francisco has a status of its own; it's a vagina world fair zone. Pittsburgh is most definitely a vagina holiday zone. They are wild for vaginas in Pittsburgh. A woman from Pittsburgh was obsessed about a particular word, a pejorative word used to describe the vagina. Her mission was to reconceive the word.

RECLAIMING CUNT

I call it cunt. I've reclaimed it, "cunt." I really like it. "Cunt." Listen to it. "Cunt." C C. Ca Ca. Cavern, cackle, clit, cute, come-closed c-closed inside, inside ca-then u-then cu-then curvy, inviting sharkskin u-uniform, under, up, urge, ugh, ugh, u — then n then cun — snug letters fitting perfectly together — n — nest, now, nexus, nice, nice, always depth, always round in upper case, cun, cun-n a jagged wicked electrical pulse-n (*high pitched noise*) then soft n-warm n — cun, cun, then t — then sharp certain tangy t — texture, take, tent, tight, tantalizing, tensing, taste, tendrils, time, tactile, tell me, tell me "Cunt cunt," say it, tell me "Cunt." "Cunt."

A six-year-old girl was asked:

If your vagina got dressed what would it wear?

Red high tops and a Mets cap worn backwards.

If it could speak what would it say?

It would say words that begin with V and T — turtle and violin are examples.

What does your vagina remind you of?

A pretty dark peach. Or a diamond I found from a treasure and it's mine.

What's special about your vagina?

Somewhere deep inside it has a really really smart brain.

What does it smell like?

Snowflakes.

INTRO — THE WOMAN WHO LOVED TO MAKE VAGINAS HAPPY

Sex workers have rich, compelling, complex relationships with their vaginas. This particular woman blows my mind. She was a sex worker but she only did sex work with women.

THE WOMAN WHO LOVED TO MAKE VAGINAS HAPPY

I love vaginas. I love women. I do not see them as separate things. Women pay me to dominate them, to excite them, to make them come. I did not start out like this. No, to the contrary: I started out as a lawyer, but in my late thirties, I became obsessed with making women happy. It began as a mission of sorts, but then I got involved in it. I got very good at it, kind of brilliant. It was my art. I started getting paid for it. It was as if I had found my calling.

I wore outrageous outfits when I dominated women — lace and silk and leather — and I used props: whips, handcuffs, rope, dildos. There was nothing like this in tax law. There were no props, no excitement, and I hated those blue corporate suits; although I wear them now from time to time in my new line of work and they serve quite nicely. There were no props in corporate law. No wetness. No dark mysterious foreplay. No erect nipples. No delicious mouths, but mainly there was no moaning. Not the kind I'm talking about anyway. This was the key, I see now; moaning was the thing that ultimately seduced me and got me addicted to making women happy. When I was a little girl and I would see women in the movies making love, making strange orgasmic moaning noises, I used to laugh. I got strangely hysterical. I couldn't believe that big outrageous, ungoverned sounds like that came out of women.

I longed to moan. I practiced in front of my mirror, on a tape recorder, moaning in various keys, various tones. But always when I played it back, it sounded fake. It was fake. It wasn't rooted in anything sexual really, only in my desire to be sexual.

But then when I was ten I had to pee really badly once. On a car trip. It went on for almost an hour and when I finally got to pee in this dirty little gas station, it was so exciting, I moaned. I moaned as I peed. I couldn't believe it, me moaning in a Texaco station in the middle of Louisiana. I realized right then that moans are connected with not getting what you want right away, with putting things off. I realized moans were best when they caught you by surprise, they came out of this hidden mysterious part of you that was speaking its own language. I realized that moans were, in fact, that language.

I became a moaner. It made most men anxious. Frankly, it terrified them. I was loud and they couldn't concentrate on what they were doing. They'd lose focus. Then they'd lose everything. We couldn't make love in people's homes. The walls were too thin. I got a reputation in my building and people stared at me with contempt in the elevator. Men thought I was too intense, some called me insane.

I began to feel bad about moaning. I got quiet and polite. I made noise into a pillow. I learned to choke my moan, hold it back like a sneeze. I began to get headaches and stress-related disorders. I was becoming hopeless when I discovered women. I discovered that most women loved my moaning, but more importantly I discovered how deeply excited I got when other women moaned, when I was responsible for other women moaning.

I made love to quiet women and I found this place inside them and they shocked themselves in their moaning. I made love to moaners and they found a deeper, more penetrating moan.

It was a kind of surgery, a kind of delicate science, finding the tempo, the exact location or home of the moan. That's what I called it.

Sometimes I found it over a woman's jeans. Sometimes I snuck up on it, off the record, quietly disarming the surrounding alarms and moving in. Sometimes I used force, but not violent,

oppressing force, more like dominating, "I'm going to take you someplace, don't worry, lay back and enjoy the ride" kind of force. Sometimes it was simply mundane. I found the moan before things even started, while we were eating salad or chicken just casual just right there, with my fingers. "Here it is like that," real simple, in the kitchen, all mixed in with the balsamic vinegar. Sometimes I used props — I loved props — sometimes I made the woman find her own moan in front of me. I waited, stuck it out until she opened herself. I wasn't fooled by the minor, more obvious moans. No, I pushed her further all the way into her power moan.

There's the clit moan (*a soft in-the-mouth sound*), the vaginal moan (*a deep in-the-throat sound*), the combo, clit-vaginal moan. There's the almost *moan* (*a circling sound*), the right on it moan (*a deeper definite sound*), the elegant moan (*a sophisticated laughing sound*), the Grace Slick moan (*a rock singing sound*), the WASP moan (*no sound*), the Jewish moan ("No. No."), the African-American moan ("Oh shit!"), the Irish Catholic moan ("Forgive me."), the mountaintop moan (*yodeling sound*), the baby moan (*googie googie googie goo sound*), the doggy moan (*a panting sound*), the uninhibited militant bisexual moan (*a deep, aggressive, pounding sound*), the machine-gun moan, the tortured Zen moan (*a twisted hungry sound*), the Diva moan (*a high operatic note*), the college moan ("I should be studying. I should be studying."), and finally, the surprise triple orgasm moan (*intense, multifaceted, climactic moan*).

INTRO — I WAS THERE IN THE ROOM

This piece was performed for some time without any mention of birth. This was a bizarre omission. But, then again, a male journalist recently asked "What's the connection?"

Our author, Eve Ensler, was present for the birth of her granddaughter. She was in awe of vaginas before that moment, she's in deep worship now.

I WAS THERE IN THE ROOM

I was there when her vagina opened.

We were all there, her mother, her husband and I,
and the nurse from the Ukraine with her whole hand
up there in her vagina feeling and turning with her rubber
glove as she talked casually to us — like she was turning on a loaded faucet.

I was there in the room when the contractions
made her crawl on all fours,
made unfamiliar moans leak out of her pores
and still there after hours when she just screamed suddenly
wild, her arms striking at the electric air.

I was there when her vagina changed
from a shy sexual hole
to an archeological tunnel, a sacred vessel,
a Venetian canal, a deep well with a tiny stuck child inside,
waiting to be rescued.

I saw the colors of her vagina. They changed.
Saw the bruised broken blue
the blistering tomato red
the gray pink — the dark;
saw the blood like perspiration along the edges
saw the yellow, white liquid, the shit, the clots
pushing out all the holes, pushing harder and harder,
saw through the hole, the baby's head
scratches of black hair, saw it just there behind
the bone — a hard round memory,
as the nurse from the Ukraine kept turning and turning
her slippery hand.

I was there when each of us, her mother and I,
held a leg and spread her wide pushing with all our strength against her pushing
and her husband sternly counting, "One, two, three,"
telling her to "focus, harder."
We looked into her then.
We couldn't get our eyes out of that place.

We forget the vagina — All of Us
what else would explain
our lack of awe, our lack of reverence.

I was there when the doctor
reached in with Alice in Wonderland spoons
and there as her vagina became a wide operatic mouth
singing with all its strength;

first the little head, then the gray flopping arm, then the fast swimming body, swimming quickly into our weeping arms.

I was there later when I just turned and faced her vagina.

I stood and let myself see her all spread, completely exposed
mutilated, swollen and torn,
bleeding all over the doctor's hands
who was calmly sewing her there.

I stood and her vagina suddenly
became a wide red pulsing heart.

The heart is capable of sacrifice.

So is the vagina.

The heart is able to forgive and repair.

It can change its shape to let us in.

It can expand to let us out.

So can the vagina.

It can ache for us and stretch for us, die for us
and bleed and bleed us into this difficult, wondrous world.

I was there in the room.

I remember.

EVE ENSLER'S VAGINA WARRIOR STATEMENT

This piece was written by Eve Ensler, to celebrate Vagina Warriors around the world.

*(*The previous line should be said or read aloud. Then please show the videotape of Eve's statement or have someone read the following text version of it.)*

I have sat with women in crowded factories in Juarez, in crumbling shelters in the back streets of Cairo, in makeshift centers for teenage girls and women in Jerusalem, Johannesburg, Pine Ridge and Watts, in mansions in Hollywood, in burnt-out backyards in Kosova and Kabul, in a moving van after midnight with sex trafficked girls in Paris. Sometimes these meetings went on for hours; in the case of the 17-year-old Bulgarian sex slave, we had 35 minutes before her pimp came looking for her. I have heard the staggering stories of violence - war rapes, gang rapes, date rapes, licensed rapes, family rapes. I have seen first-hand the scars of brutality - black eyes, cigarette-hole burns in arms and legs, a melted face, bruises, slices and broken bones. I have witnessed women living without what is fundamental - sky, sun, a roof, food, parents, a clitoris, freedom. I have been there when skulls washed up on riverbanks and naked mutilated female bodies were discovered in ditches. I have seen the worst. The worst lives in my body. But in each and every case I was escorted, transformed, and transported by a guide, a visionary, an activist, an outrageous fighter and dreamer. I have come to know these women (and sometimes men) as Vagina Warriors.

It was Zoya who first took me to the muddy Afghan camps in Pakistan; Rada who translated the stories of women refugees as we traveled through war-torn Bosnia; Megan who led pro-vagina cheers on a freezing cold campus in Michigan; Igo who made jokes about land mines as we sped in her jeep through the post-war roads outside Pristina, Kosova; Esther who took me to the graves marked with pink crosses in Juarez, Mexico; Agnes who walked me up the path with dancing and singing Masai girls dressed in red, celebrating the opening of the first V-Day Safe House for girls fleeing female genital mutilation (FGM).

At first I thought this was just a rare group of individuals, specific women who had been violated or witnessed so much suffering they had no choice but to act. But after five years of traveling, forty countries later a pattern has emerged, an evolving species. Vagina Warriors are everywhere. In a time of escalating and explosive violence on the planet, these Warriors are fostering a new paradigm.

Although Vagina Warriors are highly original, they possess some general defining characteristics:

They are fierce, obsessed, can't be stopped, driven.

They are no longer beholden to social customs or inhibited by taboos. They are not afraid to be alone, not afraid to be ridiculed or attacked. They are often willing to face anything for the safety and freedom of others.

They love to dance.

They are directed by vision, not ruled by ideology.

They are citizens of the world. They cherish humanity over nationhood.

They have a wicked sense of humor. A Palestinian activist told jokes to an Israeli soldier who pointed a machine gun at her as she tried to pass the checkpoints. She literally disarmed him with her humor.

Vagina Warriors know that compassion is the deepest form of memory.

They know that punishment does not make abusive people behave better. They know that it is more important to provide a space where the best can emerge rather than "teaching people a lesson." I met an extraordinary activist in San Francisco, a former prostitute who had been abused as a child. Working with the correctional system, she devised a therapeutic workshop where convicted pimps and johns could confront their loneliness, insecurity and sorrow.

Vagina Warriors are done being victims. They know no one is coming to rescue them. They would not want to be rescued.

They have experienced their rage, depression, desire for revenge and they have transformed them through grieving and service. They have confronted the depth of their darkness. They live in their bodies.

They are community makers. They bring everyone in.

Vagina Warriors have a keen ability to live with ambiguity. They can hold two existing, opposite thoughts at the same time. I first recognized this quality during the Bosnian war. I was interviewing a Muslim woman activist in a refugee camp whose husband had been decapitated by a Serb. I asked her if she hated Serbs. She looked at me as if I were crazy. "No, no, I do not hate Serbs," she said, "If I were to hate Serbs, then the Serbs would have won."

Vagina Warriors know that the process of healing from violence is long and happens in stages. They give what they need the most, and by giving this they heal and activate the wounded part inside.

Many Vagina Warriors work primarily on a grassroots level. Because what is done to women is often done in isolation and remains unreported, Vagina Warriors work to make the invisible seen. Mary in Chicago fights for the rights of Women of Color so that they are not disregarded or abused; Nighat risked stoning and public shaming in Pakistan by producing "The Vagina Monologues" in Islamabad so that the stories and passions of women would not go unheard; Esther insists that the hundreds of disappeared girls in Juarez are honored and not forgotten.

For native people, a warrior is one whose basic responsibility is to protect and preserve life. The struggle to end violence on this planet is a battle. Emotional, intellectual, spiritual, physical. It requires every bit of our strength, our courage, our fierceness. It means speaking out when everyone says to be quiet. It means going the distance to hold perpetrators accountable for their actions. It means honoring the truth even if it means losing family, country, and friends. It means developing the spiritual muscle to enter and survive the grief that violence brings and, in that dangerous space of stunned unknowing, inviting the deeper wisdom.

Like Vaginas, Warriors are central to human existence, but they still remain largely unvalued and unseen. This year V-Day celebrates Vagina Warriors around the world, and by doing so we acknowledge these women and men and their work. In every community there are humble activists working every day, beat by beat to undo suffering. They sit by hospital beds, pass new laws, chant taboo words, write boring proposals, beg for money, demonstrate and hold vigils in the streets. They are our mothers, our daughters, our sisters, our aunts, our grandmothers, and our best friends. Every woman has a warrior inside waiting to be born. In order to guarantee a world without violence, in a time of danger and escalating madness, we urge them to come out.

CELEBRATE VAGINA WARRIORS. LET THEM BE HONORED AND SEEN. LET MORE BE BORN.

We are proud to present to you the V-Day 2004 *(add your school/city name here)* Vagina Warriors.

*(*Invite your Vagina Warriors onto the stage and read their bios to illustrate why they have been selected.)*