

Where The Sun Don't Shine

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Opening reception
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Organized by 247365

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There are some things I remember with my body. Like the moment I knew it was not ok for my kindergarten girlfriend to look inside my asshole with a flashlight.

I was caught with a flashlight on another occasion. This time was at summer camp. I had snuck into the outhouse at night and was found illuminating the deep dark hole that I knew nobody was supposed to see: the abject comingling of the hidden stuff from so many discrete bodies.

Shame darted through my stomach, my heart, my flushed face. A sensation so abstract yet so vivid, I can instantly conjure the feeling twenty years later.

But don't we all want to see deeper? To see inside, to see more of someone else than you can ever see of yourself? To strain your eyes with a gaze so penetrating you might actually approach the "unknowable other"?

I once felt as if I would expire on the spot if a boy were to see me naked with the all the lights on. Like Lot's wife, my body would cease to exist: an instantaneous and complete change of state. This was not so long ago.

I managed to lose my virginity without being seen; to be seen was my greatest fear. To turn into a pillar of salt would have been a relief.

Sex without images.

An abstract sensory experience that barely leaves a trace.

I struggle to recall the disjointedness of the touch, the smell and the sight of a lover's body in the dark.

I wonder: what does a ninety-year-old woman remember of her life's most intimate encounters?

The pornographic is that of full exposure - wide open, fully lit, high definition. The camera pushes closer, deeper, moves towards the inside. It gathers and holds that which our eyes and our bodies cannot.

I close my eyes and try to pause, rewind, and recall my own memories full screen, to watch them again and again and again, but it never holds a shape.

And so, I keep looking.

— Julia Sherman