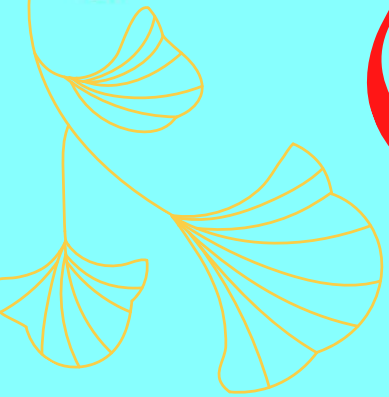




**SPOT THE DIFFERENCE**



**@FIERCE\_INVALIDS**

**COVER PHOTOS BY @SOFIATHESLOTH**



**WHY YOU SHOULDN'T BE AFRAID  
TO GET FAT**



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

zine-wide CWs for discussions of weight, weight loss and body image.

As a disabled trans person, honoring my body's need for rest, medications and lifestyle changes meant gaining a lot of weight. It meant a new relationship with my body that has been joyful and positive, and that almost everyone told me would be impossible as a fat person.

I write this from the perspective of someone who used to be thin, and who spent my teenage years thinking I was a girl. Nowhere in this will I deny that being thin comes with privilege, or that my current body negates the privileges and advantages that I had access to. I will not tell you that it isn't hard being fat, because fatphobia, ableism, racism and misogyny are all inextricably linked and viciously persecutory.

But as a teenager who was in and out of doctor's offices facing the possibility of numerous degenerative diagnosises, I was still more terrified of gaining weight than any of **these** illnesses, and I punished and policed my body the way that society taught me to. I felt convinced that my thinness was the only thing that made me worthy of love, especially in the growing vacuum left by my progressive loss of physical functions.

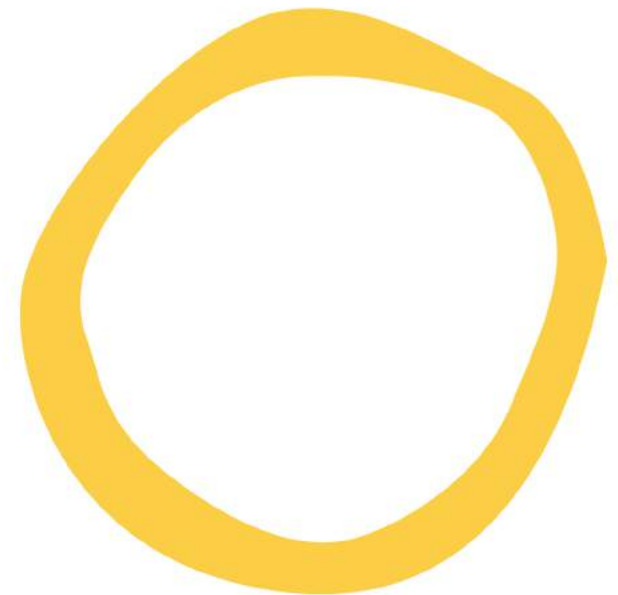
This collection is a letter to that young person. It is a love letter to the Fat Liberation movement. This is not about how everyone is beautiful, because I know from experience that hearing the phrase "all bodies are beautiful" often falls on angry, cynical ears.

The idea of beauty has been corrupted by whiteness and capitalism, made to feel both ephemeral and unachievable. It is also a gendered word that no longer quite fits with the way I move through the world.

This is not to say that I don't like how I look now. I do.

But you do not owe beauty to anyone. You have worth and value that are immutable and completely outside the concept of beauty or size.

**FIERCE INVALIDS**



## THINGS I LIKE ABOUT MY FAT BODY:

How small my baby feels in bed with me.  
How much space there is for their limbs sprawled  
across me  
I am soft I feel like a respite  
I am large I feel like a shelter  
I am big and sturdy, less threatened by strangers.

There is an unsung sensuality to the softness of  
my new geometry. I have gained a lot of this  
weight because I am being gentle and good to  
myself

I will not return to inflicting needless pain on this  
body. It is no longer a thing I will punish into  
submission or wear like a costume.

I am fiercer. I am angry and I fought hard for this  
anger. I am free from the fear of what will happen  
if I get fat. I no longer police my body for signs of  
humanness and fallibility. I feel free. I feel present  
and alive. I do not always like how I look but I  
finally feel like a person and not a commodity.





# A GUIDE BY @SPARKLEJAMS ON INSTAGRAM, POSTED DURING THE BLM PROTESTS IN JUNE 2020

## The Fat Protestor

- honor your body as a resource for civil disobedience
- center your needs

@SPARKLEJAMS

## The Fat Protestor

Try to go with other fat people. Comrades in normative bodies may not always consider your body and what is safe for you — so make sure you loudly advocate for yourself and your needs within whatever group you are with.

Stay cool. Take breaks. Sit or stop when you need to. Try to be hyper-mindful of getting overheated.

@SPARKLEJAMS

## The Fat Protestor

Bring:

- Change of socks. If you get caught in the rain or doused with water, or even if you sweat through your socks — walking around in wet socks will cause bad blistering.

- light first aid/bandaids

- water/snacks/meds

@SPARKLEJAMS

## The Fat Protestor

Direct action is sweaty. Prepare against crease rashes (yep — its a normal self care maintenance thing if you have skin rolls/folds. It's normal.

It's common. It's nothing to be ashamed about.) by drying with paper towels, using antiperspirant or cornstarch under your breasts/belly.

When you get home, shower and treat with a wound cleanser (shoutout bactine spray) or a tea tree oil balm or soap as needed.

@SPARKLEJAMS

## The Fat Protestor

In case of hospitalization:

Make a packet containing all medical info, advance directives, & emergency contacts. Put it in a clear sleeve with a humanizing photo of you with loved ones at the front.

Learn more about how to make a Connection Kit and humanize yourself to healthcare workers in the

Know Your Rights Guide on [nobodyisdisposable.org](http://nobodyisdisposable.org)

@SPARKLEJAMS

## The Fat Protestor

Our fat bodies are magnificent contributions at protests. Our fat bodies take more effort to move — think of all the wonderful ways we can use this to our advantage at a protest or direct action. We can block pathways and hold precious land with our fat bodies. We can shield and protect precious people with our fat bodies.

@SPARKLEJAMS

## The Fat Protestor

Police identify people by body type/clothing. Be aware (as if you could possibly forget) that you don't have the privilege of blending into the crowd.

Be aware that fatmistic police protocol and infrastructure can endanger your life during arrest. Let this inform the risk that you take.

@SPARKLEJAMS

## The Fat Protestor

If you get arrested: raise hell about being cuffed with your hands in front of your body. Mid-fat, super-fat, and infinifat people are especially at risk of positional asphyxia when cuffed with their arms behind them. Be especially vocal about any stress position where your knees are raised (sitting on a low police van bench, for instance).

@SPARKLEJAMS

## The Fat Protestor

**Remember that there is so much to do beyond the front lines.**

Provide jail support (wait to greet released protesters with water, snacks, hugs, and rides home). Provide your home as a central prep and recovery space before and after. Provide childcare. Drop off supplies. Stay near the action and offer your car as a mobile phone charging station.

@SPARKLEJAMS

Excerpt from

## **HOW I MADE PEACE WITH MY FAT BODY AND DISAPPOINTED MY PARENTS**

In the body-image workshops I run as a trauma therapist, I teach the concept of understanding our bodies as heirlooms. If we think about the purpose of an heirloom, it is a symbolic representation of resilience. We do not criticize an heirloom. We do not devalue it for its flaws and imperfections. We see heirlooms as tangible evidence of the existence of our ancestors. I want fat folks of color to see our bodies as important and necessary in the context of survival. I want us to remember to write ourselves into existence at the expense of diet culture and fatphobia

.....

When it's hard to find love for the body, I like to imagine that there must be a good reason for why I am fat. And so if I place my fatness into the context of my Indian mixed-caste lineage, then maybe my fat body would be more likely to survive another famine, genocide, or revolution. After all, there are evolutionary reasons why some of us are as large as Vikings or broad as Samoans, and valuing a single size of health does not respect or appreciate the ways we are meant to be different—and why we all deserve to exist. This understanding has been an important aspect of my fat acceptance journey. There's been relief in this process, and grief, too. Having fat—and queer—role models like Lindy West, Samantha Irby, Caleb Luna, and Ashleigh Shackelford has been integral.

...

I've learned to make what Adrienne Marie Brown calls a "pleasure practice" for myself—this includes learning to cook for my body in a way that makes her, yes her, feel loved and considered. I enjoy weaving abundant food and sexual pleasure into my weekly routine. I enjoy the work of forgiving my past selves for feeling the pressure to diet, shrink, and self-betray. Along with many other health sustaining practices, these new habits come from a long-term investment in myself.

.....

Understanding my body as an heirloom helps me to wonder why my fat body deserves to stay. If I trust my body and its genetic code, which is actually what determines my body shape, then maybe I would see my fat body as one of wisdom and survival. My ancestors survived British colonialism, partition, and migration for me to exist. And so I often think to myself what Lindy says in the first article of hers I ever read in 2011 titled, "Hello I am Fat."

*Sonalee Rashatwar (she/they) is an award-winning clinical social worker, sex therapist, and grassroots organizer. Based in Philadelphia, she is a superfat queer bisexual non-binary therapist and co-owner of Radical Therapy Center. Popularly known as The Fat Sex Therapist on Instagram, Sonalee is specialized in treating sexual trauma, internalized fatphobia, immigrant kid guilt, and South Asian family systems, while offering fat positive sexual healthcare. Read the full essay at Health.com and follow her on Instagram @thefatsextherapist*

**BY SONALEE RASHATWAR**





## WHAT IS SMARTGLAMOUR?

*SmartGlamour is an affordable, fashionable clothing line of customizable basics for folks size XXS-15X and beyond. Our clothing is made in NYC with love upon ordering – just for you. We are a women forward, body positive small business that aims to empower women, femmes, and non binary gender queer folks through stylish, custom clothing*

### FIERCE INVALIDS:

One of the things that really stands out to me about your company is that when you say you have inclusive sizing, you actually have inclusive sizing as opposed to going up to like 2XL.

**(SmartGlamour’s custom size chart goes from XXS-15X, and every piece is easily customizable.)**

I know from my own experience making clothes for the theater that you make clothes for bigger bodies differently. What was that process like of learning how to do traditional fashion construction and then moving to doing actually accessible fashion?

### MALLORIE:

It's my opinion that it's actually not harder to make clothes for plus size people. I know that that's a standard thing people like to say, like, “oh man, it's just, you know, too much work we gotta hire a whole new technical designer who's gonna spend all this money on just like it”. You don't though. You just have to know math and know how clothes work and pay attention to people and their measurements and their wants. Like it's really, really not some kind of mystical, magical solution. I make the same clothes for all sizes, for all people.

### SmartGlamour Size Chart

	XXS	XS	SM	M	LG	XL	1X	2X	3X	4X	5X
<b>Bust</b>	30-31	31-32	33-34	35-36	37-39	40-42	43-45	46-48	49-52	53-56	56-58
<b>Waist</b>	21-22	23-24	25-26	27-28	29-31	32-34	35-37	38-40	41-43	44-46	47-49
<b>Hip</b>	31-33	33-34	35-36	37-38	39-41	42-44	45-47	48-50	51-54	55-57	58-60

	6X	7X	8X	9X	10X	11X	12X	13X	14X	15X
<b>Bust</b>	59-61	62-64	65-67	68-70	71-73	74-76	77-79	80-82	83-85	86-88
<b>Waist</b>	50-52	53-55	56-58	59-61	62-64	65-67	68-70	71-73	74-76	77-79
<b>Hip</b>	61-63	64-66	67-69	70-72	73-75	76-78	79-81	82-84	85-87	88-90

**If you are between sizes, please continue to use our bust to waist, waist to hip, or custom garment size add ons. If you have any fit questions don't hesitate to get in touch via contact page, email, or social media! We are also currently looking for NYC based folks size 7X-15X to measure as fit models, please email smartglamour@gmail.com for more info!**

## FIERCE INVALIDS:

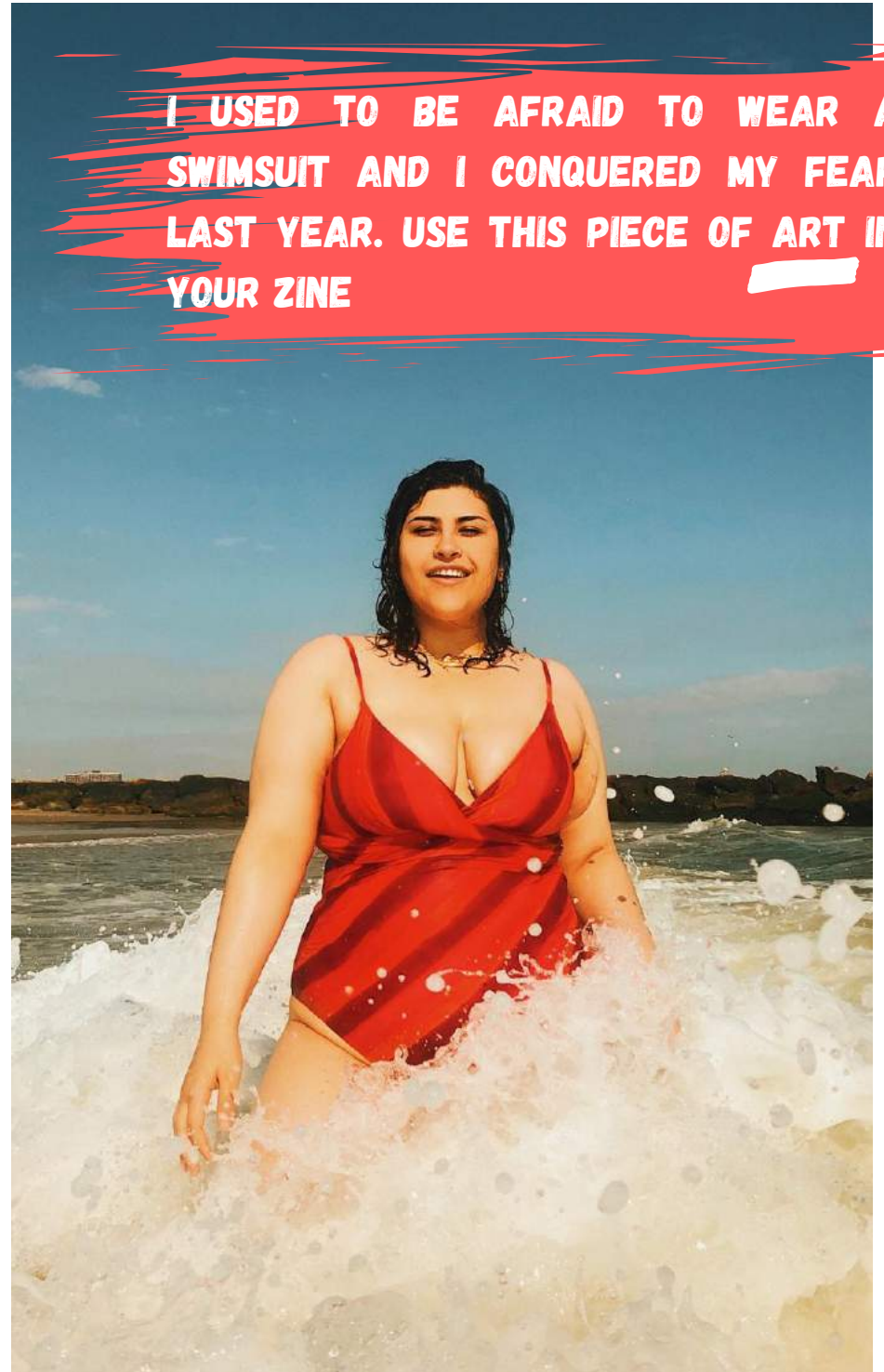
I also really appreciate that your pricing is still accessible, even for the really kind of wild amount of labor that I imagine must go into making everything. Obviously more expensive than fast fashion, but it's also not made in a sweatshop.

## MALLORIE:

That's like super important to me and always was from the start, that when you say something is accessible, in my opinion you need to be thinking about not just size, but also price, and um, there is a line to walk on there. Like how do I keep, how do I make this an ethical product that I'm paying myself fairly to make, but I'm also not charging so much money that no one can afford it. I feel very strongly that like, words matter and if you're going to say things like [inclusive and accessible], then you need to mean that. And that doesn't stop only with size. And it also means all types of representations of people and all genders and all abilities and all the different ways that there are to looks. You can't just put on a picture that makes it look like maybe you're a safe place, but then you're not one.



I USED TO BE AFRAID TO WEAR A SWIMSUIT AND I CONQUERED MY FEAR LAST YEAR. USE THIS PIECE OF ART IN YOUR ZINE





# WILD LITTLE ANIMALS

By Fancy Feast

My cat is a marvel. She is soft and flexible enough that she can be her own pillow, stretching to find her stomach to rest her head on. I have been watching her with no small amount of envy, a creature with little cognition, desire without memory, and a squishy abundance for her 15 daily hours of beauty sleep. I have had more time to observe her, because I have been at home for three months in lockdown. It doesn't surprise me to learn that many people are afraid of their bodies getting fatter from a drastic lifestyle change now that we're all inside. There is a particular viciousness to this fear, an intensity that feels supernatural. It makes sense. All we are doing is thinking about death, disease, a fear that our bodies will fail us. I got an ear infection a month ago, while sheltering in place, and it felt like the floor of my apartment was caving in. Would I go to a doctor? Would I feel safe to walk into a pharmacy? Would I risk exposure to worse, or wait to see if my infection spreads? Our bodies are adept at betrayal. I meant to stay well but I got sick anyway. I can deadlift 250lbs, no problem, but when I turn my arm the wrong way to get oats off a shelf I turn into a cluster of hard, sore angles. We will all get old, if we are lucky, and we will die, regardless of our luck. I and you and everyone we love and everyone we hate.

For so many, this feels less scary to contemplate than the idea of living life as a fat person. I've inhabited the body that you've been afraid of, and my reporting is limited to my point of view, from the inside out. It's pretty goddamn nice.

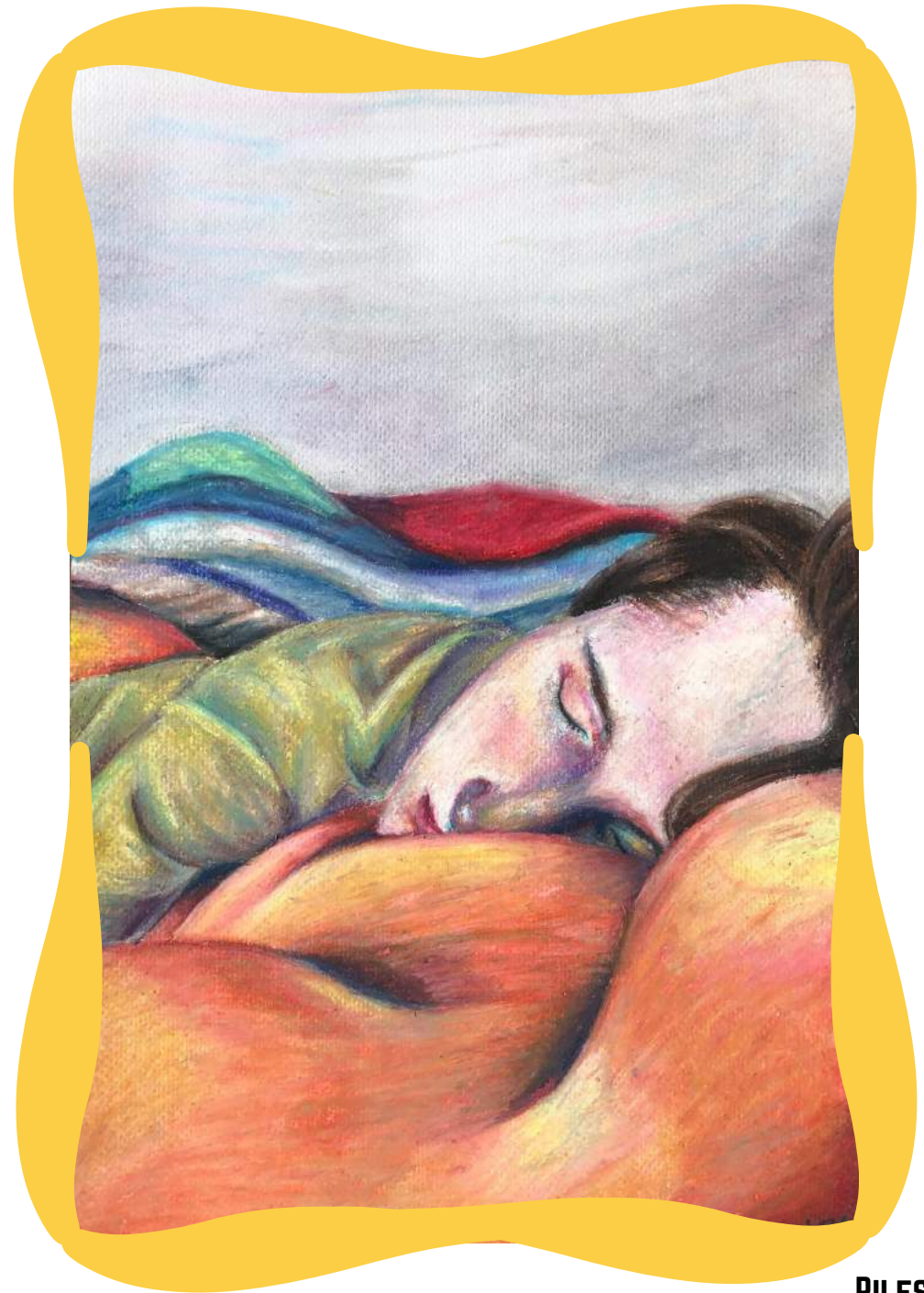


My body arranges itself into landscapes that slope like mountains or fog. I don't experience my "heaviness" unless I'm hung over; otherwise, my gravity feels right for me. My skin is soft and so is my hair and so is my stomach. I feel an ocean of neutrality with my body, a clear and unremarkable expanse of water that I paddle in. My body is, just as much as my cat's is. Our bodies are things we are and we have. It's what I hug with, dance with, mourn within. I pick out the vestiges of my outmoded self-hatred like nits in hair. Clear for now. Worth checking. I'm not sure what your nightmare is about. Is it about the indignity of experiencing fatphobia? It's startling to encounter, sure, and always a little surprising, because I've built scaffolding for my life that does not support that kind of hatred. I've been fat shamed and I'm still here.



Do you feel as though you'll be undesirable if you gain weight? It's not true of course, but I am also weary of assuring others that people will want to fuck them ten pounds from now. Your liberation does not lie in someone else's gaze, and neither does mine. Your body is yours. You can deny it and starve it and treat it like shit or you can negotiate the terms of a truce, one which allows for the kinds of changes that bodies experience as a physiological inevitability. I promise, once you and your body sign on the dotted line together, you will find other things more vivid and interesting and worthy of your time and your energy. I am, as of now, writing from the precipice of a new civil rights movement. My body is one that marches, that hands out water bottles to protesters, that steps between Black protesters and police. My body cooks for my household and does shitty little workouts and carries heavy bags of groceries and yearns for a pool or a river to dive into. My body is reconstituted from ancestors, a small ecstatic diaspora. My body is the same one my grandmother kissed. Who could hate such a miraculous thing? We do not need to add more things to fear. You deserve to feel at home in yourself, and so do I. You and I and everyone we know, we are wild little animals. Right now, I am alive and so are you. What a bracing, special thing that is.

*Fancy Feast is a Brooklyn-based burlesque performer, writer, and sex educator. She holds the title of Miss Coney Island 2016, and is the recipient of the Revolutionary Award at the 2017 New York Burlesque Festival. She has performed at venues including The Whitney, the Brooklyn Museum, St. Ann's Warehouse, the Metropolitan Opera, and Meow Wolf in Santa Fe. Her writing has been published on BuzzFeed News, Jewish Currents, and she has been profiled on NPR, Refinery29, and The Huffington Post. @fancyfeastburlesque*



**PILES**  
**LARA PESCE ARES**  
**@THEPESCE**

# SUGAR RUSH

## FIERCE INVALIDS

I once sat in a doctor's office and explained my intense and passionate relationship with sugar. In *Pleasure Activism: The Politics of Feeling Good* by adrienne maree brown, she says that

**"PLEASURE ACTIVISM IS THE WORK WE DO TO RECLAIM OUR WHOLE, HAPPY, AND SATISFIABLE SELVES FROM THE IMPACTS, DELUSIONS, AND LIMITATIONS OF OPPRESSION AND/OR SUPREMACY."**

(This is a brilliant line from a brilliant book, and really there's not much I can add, but.)

I have fibromyalgia, a bucket diagnosis for a constellation of symptoms for which there is a stunning void of research given that it affects millions of people. I have lived with chronic pain since I was 13 years old; my skin burns and even the softest clothes are often intolerable, a change in the barometric pressure can leave me in too much pain to move. I am not ashamed of my disability but I know that it makes me "no fun" in the traditional sense.

Sugar is one of the few ways accessible to me that allows me a positive and pleasurable relationship with my body. It is also somewhat of a coping mechanism. A brief burst of pleasure from an overpriced vanilla latte or chocolate croissant can sometimes be enough to distract from my knees screaming as I stand on the F train during my commute.

(Pre covid when I still took the subway). Sweets make living in this body bearable. Joyful. There is a revolution to fight for. Who cares if I get fat?

People love to tell me how much sugar is hurting me. They seem to relish it, gleefully explaining how sugar worsens inflammation or is a carcinogen. A friend I no longer speak with once told me as I bit into a donut that sugar is just as bad for the body as smoking crack.

I feel like the comparison is reductive at best and a scare tactic that maligns drug users at worst.

It's definitely possible, perhaps even likely, that sugar worsens fibro symptoms. But the list of things that MAY worsen fibro includes but is by no means limited to sugar, carbs, processed foods, "unhealthy" fats, gluten, red meat, dairy, tomatoes, potatoes, caffeine, and there is a lack of hard science to prove it. **For the record, my knees hurt less now that I am fat than when I was skinny.**

Fuck food morality and specialty diets- carbs are cheap and easy. Eating that carefully is a full time job. I've tried it. I've tried my best to help my partner, who does not have the luxury of eating whatever they want the way I do, with their many allergies and food triggers.

Ultimately, in the court of useless arguments, I will defend your right to use drugs as much as my right to eat sugar. Everyone deserves good medical care, including, maybe especially, fat queers and addicts. Life under capitalism is punishing. We deserve vice and coping mechanisms and pleasure.



# GAINING WEIGHT ISN'T THE END OF THE WORLD

AP YOUNG, @APYBLOG

“Gaining weight isn’t the end of the world.” If someone had told me that when I was a child that was obsessing over the unsolicited comments on my body; it would’ve saved me a lot of heartache.

Sometimes I’m hesitant to share my thoughts on weight loss or gain because the plus community spaces have a tendency to be divided.

While there are many who are very vocal about being against any form of intentional weight loss; there are equally as many who are for weight loss. I suppose my view on the matter is in between. I believe in people practicing autonomy with their bodies and the choices they make. I also believe that how weight affects a persons’ mind and body is different for every individual.

No matter my feelings on the matter of either subject; I certainly don’t believe that gaining weight is the worst thing that can happen. I say this as someone who is literally in the process of a weight loss surgery journey (that’s another story). I say this as someone who is an emotional eater. I say this as someone who gained weight during a pandemic. I say this as someone who is required to lose weight before weight loss surgery.

**“WE ATTACH A LOT OF POWER TO THE SCALE MOSTLY BECAUSE OF MEDIA, ENTERTAINMENT AND THE SYSTEMS THAT EXIST IN OUR SOCIETAL CONSTRUCT.”**

And let’s be honest, while some may really be concerned with their health; that many more are concerned with adhering to a made up standard of beauty. I openly admit to having once strived to meet that standard even if it meant to the detriment of my health.

At moments of my life when I was at my smallest, I was showered in compliments by family, friends and associates. I was smaller yes, but I was either starving myself, dieting until I became resentful of restriction resulting in bingeing, smoking cigarettes excessively, and unbeknownst to me dealing with an unhealthy thyroid. No one cared about the “how” because I looked a certain way. The message was loud and clear; how I lost the weight or maintained a smaller figure didn’t matter as long as I could achieve it.

I wasted so much time worrying about my weight that I forgot to just live for a long time. I didn’t know how to enjoy moments because I was saddled with the pressure of trying to keep the weight off. Now, as someone who is seeking a hip replacement, I am in the position of having to lose weight whether I want to or not. I am not resentful of doing what I need to for my health; but I have to struggle with being kinder to myself when I do gain and not view it as a failure.





*AP Young is a wife, mom and writer. AP began blogging on Myspace in 2006. In time, as her life changed and she grew; so did the blogging space she had carved out for herself on the internet. Her current blog is a reflection of her experiences and thoughts that she shares to educate, empower and encourage the reader. One of AP's main goals is to create dialogue around mental, emotional and physical health while encouraging people to explore what that means in their own lives.*

## **FURTHER READING**

### **You Have the Right to Remain Fat**

by Virgie Tovar

*\*\*This is a good intro text because it's short, but it tends to miss queer, class, and critical race analysis because of its focus on small fatness, so grain of salt!*

### **Pleasure Activism: The Politics of Feeling Good**

by Adrienne Maree Brown

### **The Body Is Not an Apology:**

### **The Power of Radical Self-Love**

by Sonya Renee Taylor

### **Fearing the Black Body:**

### **The Racial Origins of Fat Phobia**

by Sabrina Strings

### **Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice**

by Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha

And check out the writings of  
**@DaShaunLH** on twitter

Weight fluctuates, that is a reality. Weight changes for so many reasons; happiness, sadness, marriage, breakups, pregnancies, stress, hormones so on and so forth. It's not a condemnation of your value or worth. It is not a reason to punish yourself nor is it a reason to feel like a failure. I assure you that there are absolutely worse things in the world that can and will happen.

**There's enough things in this life and in this world that weigh us down; our weight doesn't have to be one of them.**

