

Whenever I see an article about a mass shooting or a woman's murder, I click on it and scan the text, searching for that one offhand sentence always hidden in the margins:

"About a year before this, she had complained... because he had made unwelcome advances towards her"

"He thought she was cheating on him"

"The arrest was one of four domestic incidents in the past year."

"The victim had rejected his advances numerous times."

"*What a shame.*" I sigh and continue to scroll. But now I have begun to think.

I think about when I was 11, and tearfully begged my mom to buy me a razor to shave my "gross" legs.

I think about when I was 12, and laid in my mom's lap sobbing, terrified of what "strange men" would do to me.

I think about when I was 13, and made jokes, stolen jokes, laughing without even understanding the punchlines, laughing at my own degradation.

I think about when I was 15, how when I thought about my future, instead of dreaming of my dorms and friends, I thought about how I should dress. "Which outfit will get me catcalled?"

I think about when I was 16, and the gut-wrenching feeling looming in my stomach after hearing my mom tell me she'd gotten catcalled and the mind-numbing *what-if?s* that came with.

I think about my male friends who are oblivious to the engrained paranoia and fear of the other half's everyday lives. I'm often overcome with envy and desperate longing, for they have the *choice* of ignorance.

So woven into the fabric of girlhood and womanhood, that I could never explain nor fully dictate the constant grief I feel. Grief for the girls who are taught to despise all things pink and sparkly, grief for the girls who "distract" their teachers with their exposed

collarbones, grief for the women who find themselves forced to rely on systems founded on their oppression, grief for the women who have been left behind.

I've been sad, I've cried out of empathy and fear. I've been scared, I've browsed tasers and winced at the thought of being out alone after the sun has set. And recently, I've been mad. I've screamed and yelled and kicked and howled, the desperation and anger that's been brewing since the moment men began to stare, coming out in waves, pounding, slamming against the shore. Hopelessly begging for a way out.

But now I sit and think. All I do now is think. About the suffering assigned at birth, that has become synonymous with girlhood. I see another article pop up and I begin to scan it.

"the first victim has to be [a] pretty girl with a future so she can suffer like me."

- Oxford High School Shooter