“Kein Bock” is german for “Nope, I don't want to.”, “Not in the mood”,
it's slang for “Keine Lust”, which literally means “No desire/lust”
More resources/stuff to read, watch or listen to:

In English:
- (A)sexual, not everybody's doing it, film
  - Undoing sex: against sexual optimism
    - In the magazine LIES, relatively academic
  - Podcast: Sounds fake but ok https://www.soundsfakepod.com/
  - Book: Angela Chen: Ace What Asexuality Reveals About Desire, Society, and the Meaning of Sex
  - Book: The invisible orientation
- In French:
  - Zines: Wer A agit musi digen (activer zu hoon)
  - Audiodeutsch:
    - Zines: Wer A agit musi digen (activer zu hoon)
    - Podcast der deutschsprachigen A*spec-Community:
      - https://inspektren.eu
  - Suis-je asexuel∙le, aromantique, aroace ? GUIDE DE QUESTIONNEMENT AUTOUR DE L’ASEXUALITÉ ET L’AROMANTISME
  - Asexualité, autosexualité, antisexualité... une émission de radio sur le site
    - www.radiorageuses.net
  - La fabrique artisanale des conforts affectifs
  - Brochure sur comment on construit autrement des relations, trouvable sur
    - https://infokiosques.net
  - Podcast : Les Nouilles et en L, 4 épisodes sur l’asexualité

In English:
- More resources/stuff to read, watch or listen to:
The portrayal of asexuality in the media, if it exists at all, is very narrow, which is also one of the reasons why many people can only identify at all with the term after extensive research.

To this I want to add these quotes on the topic of representation and identification from the book "Ace: What Asexuality Reveals About Desire, Society, and the Meaning of Sex" by Angela Chen.

She writes:

The notion that I might be asexual seemed laughable. I found Adrien Brody attractive and Channing Tatum less so and had a vulgar sense of humour, full of sex jokes and sly insinuations that made my more proper friends blush. I spoke of longing and listened intently to stories of sexual adventures, and never did it occur to me that my friends and I might be using the language of desire differently. […]

Ten years after I first came across the term asexuality, I returned to the topic, wanting to figure out what I had misunderstood. I had long known that sexual attraction and sexual behaviour are not the same and that one does not necessarily limit the other. I knew that, generally speaking, sexual behaviour is under our control while sexual attraction is not. […]

Reading more, I understood for the first time that it is possible to lack the experience of sexual attraction without being repulsed by sex, just like it is possible to neither physically crave nor be disgusted by a food like crackers but still enjoy eating them as part of a cherished social ritual. Being repulsed by sex is a fairly obvious indication of the lack of sexual attraction, but a lack of sexual attraction can also be hidden by social performativity or wanting (and having) sex for emotional reasons—and because the different types of desire are bound together so tightly, it can be difficult to untangle the various strands.

And with that I want to end now. On the following pages and on the internet you can find more to read and learn, but if I continue now, this is never gonna be finished. I also highly recommend the book I took this passage from. I hope you took something from this zine, at least you read until the last page… but well, that doesn’t have to mean anything, I also have this habit of fast forwarding to the last page … (;
The definition from the community: "Asexual people feel little or no sexual attraction and/or desire for sexual interaction." There are many different forms of asexuality, which is why we also speak of the A-spectrum. But there are certain common misconceptions, among others: Asexual people certainly cannot have sex, have no libido and do not masturbate. Asexual people cannot have orgasms or feel physical satisfaction and don't get turned on. The lack of links and expression of sexual interaction in other aspects of life are also possible and normal. There is a wide variety of living asexuality and there is nothing wrong with that.

All ways of living asexuality are legitimate.

In our hypersexualised society, asexuality is also political and queer. There is a lot of talk and celebration of sexual liberation in queer subculture. Being able to recognise yourself or come out as asexual is part of this sexual liberation and is also political and queer. There is a lot of talk and expression of sexual interaction in other aspects of life are also possible and normal. There is a wide variety of living asexuality and there is nothing wrong with that.

Coucou! Wow, someone opened this zine! Cool.

Welcome to the INTRO AND NOTES ON TRANSLATION! This zine is a mix of a translation of a French zine called "L’amour, le sexe, pourquoi j’ai déserté" (Love, sex, why I deserted/quit/abandoned it), a translation of a list from a pamphlet called "Suis-je asexuelle/aromantique?" (Am I asexual/aromantic?), and of parts of text that I added to put it all together in a way that makes sense and to add my own perspective. And yes, I read the text aloud to myself, as I find it easier to write what I hear, even though the text could be seen as really depressing and pessimistic in places. It made me grin and laugh out loud. I recognised myself. Why?

I’ve known the word asexual for a long time but had never found anything I really liked or found appealing. I’ve searched on the internet for a realistic description of life for asexuals, and found very few. Asexual people remain asexual throughout their whole lives. They can also change their orientation over time. Asexuality is understood as a sexual orientation or preference, not something that you feel. Asexual people cannot have sexual attraction and/or desire for sexual interaction. The definition from the community: "Asexual people feel little or no sexual attraction and/or desire for sexual interaction."
18. Having a trauma in your sex life (e.g.: assault or rape) and telling yourself that's where the lack of desire is coming from. That the lack of desire or attraction is a disease and that you could cure it with therapy. This is a complicated question, and it is difficult for a person to find the "origin" of their asexuality/aromanticism, what factors played what role. Without wanting to apply simplistic explanations like "a missing/too present mother makes you gay": it is true that our sexual orientation can be shaped by events in our lives. There is no "real" asexuality/aromanticism that was always clear, in contrary to a false one that has grown and may be reversible. If you are not sure whether your feelings are symptoms or something "deeper", it is important not to put pressure on yourself, because whatever the situation, remember that you don't owe sex to anyone. Forcing or stressing yourself is never the answer. You are not hurting anyone by questioning yourself. It also doesn't hurt anyone if you call yourself aro/ace and are traumatised, even if you are not sure and think your mental state has an impact on your sexual orientation. Also, healing from trauma (meaning: the symptoms, flashbacks, dissociation, depression, nightmares become less frequent or more bearable) does not necessarily mean that your sexual desire will come back because sexual orientation is not directly linked to it. It can also be that the desire comes back but not the desire to act it out (because of the trauma or other reasons) and that can also be asexuality/aromanticism. Sleeping with people or being in romantic relationships is not an achievement in itself. Deciding to stop sleeping with people and not being part of a couple doesn't mean you can't also be cured.

But unfortunately, there's not that much. Especially when I looked for german zines and political reflections on the topic, I found almost nothing. Maybe they're just not on the internet, that's ok, but in the queer spaces, where I've been going in and out for years, I haven't noticed much either... That's why I made this translation and this zine. Because I hope it will give others the chance to feel as relieved as I do. And because I'm really grumpy that I didn't understand until now that "no means no" also means that always saying no is ok. I know that's included, but somehow the possibility of it has never been there in my head. Sigh. All the stuff I could have spared myself. GRRr.

Sigh, Grrr.

This zine is also interesting for people who don't identify personally with the ace spectrum. It is simply about breaking the standard of "compulsory sexuality", and by that, I mean this feeling that people have to have sex, otherwise something is surely missing or something is wrong. Depending on the age group, social group, skin colour, etc., this certainly applies differently. But I think in general this idea is strongly anchored in society. (Of course, some groups of people also have to struggle with the opposite, desexualisation, i.e. the denial of a sexuality. But that's not what we're talking about right now, even though it's just as important a topic).
NOTE ON THE TRANSLATION

First of all, I recommend (to everyone who can) to read the original version as well. The partly flowery, quite repetitive way of writing just somehow makes more sense in French and it is impossible to translate all the nuance anyway.

In both translations asexuality and aromanticism are discussed simultaneously and the lines are often blurred. This is logical because the perspective is that of a person identifying with both spectrums. But it can also be confusing. Of course, a person may find only one of the two identities suitable for him or her. But it is also true that in our society romance and sex are so strongly linked that it is sometimes difficult to separate them. But it is also true that in our society romance and sex are not always linked to heteronormative conformities. Thus, it should be noted that gender identity is a complex concept that goes beyond binary notions. Studies show that non-binary people are more likely to be aro/ace. This is not altogether unique. "I am forever a stranger" by Anne Yen, thinking that you are outside the norm.

**In both translations asexuality and aromanticism are discussed simultaneously and the lines are often blurred.**
14. Getting over the end of a relationship very quickly, as if you weren't really in love, or not very much.

15. Thinking that you should be sure if you are really feeling love or sexual desire. Telling yourself that you can certainly feel romantic love/sexual desire, that you just haven’t found the right person yet.

16. Thinking if you were really aro/ace you would have realized sooner. (but no, because of all the reasons here).

And finally, I would like to say that I have taken the liberty of translating the text as I understand it, and that is not necessarily how everyone understands it. Feelings are a very subjective topic and of course I have tried to convey the mood that the author conveys in the original text, but it is still filtered through my view. (as always with translation) For the list from the other brochure, this means that I also added sentences, because I thought some things were not clear enough, and also because the list is a bit out of context.
10. Having the impression that it doesn't change sex if you try it with different people, that it doesn't matter who you sleep with. You have sexual fantasies, but no actual bodies appear, or they are without faces. Being sure that people exaggerate when they say how incredibly great sex is. Being curious about sex and thinking that this is sexual pleasure. This is the same idea as in point 9: Asexual people have little or no idea what sexual desire feels like and may confuse other kinds of attraction with it. If a person really attracts you sexually, it means you like to imagine and see their body. You like to fantasise about them and actively engage in sexual acts. They are not an anonymous body in your imagination, it is that very person you desire in your mind. This is not stressful or embarrassing (or only in terms of social norms), it feels good.

11. Being attracted to the idea of being in a couple, but the difficulties seem completely unconquerable. Seeing only limitations in couples, but still wanting to be in one.

12. Starting a love relationship but not feeling the difference from being single. Not understanding the difference between friendship and a love relationship.

13. At first, sex in a partnership is not a problem, but the longer the relationship goes on, the less you want sex. You force yourself to do it, it has become a burden. You think it would be good if your partner didn't want so much sex.

I imagine that everyone stops having sex. Would the state start a public awareness campaign? "Eat five vegetables or fruits a day, and don't forget the sex!"
8. Mistaking admiration or interest that you feel for a couple for desire.

9. Not understanding when people flirt with you. Feeling uncomfortable when you get it, blushing, stuttering because you don't like people coming so close to you and thinking that's a sign of being in love. (Thinking it's the butterflies in your stomach.) Aromantic people, by definition, have little or no understanding of what romantic love feels like and can therefore simply ignore "red flags" in such situations because societies messed up representation of love makes them think it's normal. Being in love is a pleasant feeling! If it is really love, the stress may come from wondering what the other person thinks of you and if they like you, but at the same time you honestly feel like learning more about them and it is this desire to get closer that can be embarrassing or overwhelming. Being with a loved one is a beautiful thing.
I got together with friends to write for ten days. This was an occasion for me to pull out many individual scraps of previously written text and write more to make this booklet with.

There was a moment years ago when I was looking for stuff about asexuality and aromanticism, about how to do relationships differently, how to build them differently. It was necessary for me to seek out these texts, to think about them, to understand better, without knowing what I was really looking for. I started writing myself, regularly, to empty my head. And because it helped me to be clear about things I wasn't hearing anywhere else.

Since then, I've felt like publishing something on the subject, so that something exists. I don't really feel comfortable publishing texts, but I thought, at least there's no big pressure to repeat things I've often heard before. It scares me to say what I think and have others hear it. I'm afraid to be offensive or hurtful. I'm afraid of regretting it or changing my mind.

But I told myself that if someone had written this zine before me, I would have loved to read it. So I hope that's the case for others now.

During the writing session, in order to have more structure, I answered questions. They are questions I was asked, new questions I asked myself. They are questions I asked, new questions I asked myself. It was necessary to go beyond my usual topics that would otherwise not come up.

I also put in bits of text that I had written earlier when I felt like they fit and questioned other topics that would otherwise not come up. I tried not to do things that were asked. In general, I asked myself questions. They are questions I wasn't asked, new questions I asked myself. I answered them, at least there's no big pressure to repeat things I've often heard before.
1. **Only being attracted to fictional characters.** These can be characters from films or series as well as celebrities who are unattainable in reality. This attraction is a way of "practising" the need to be interested in other people/the opposite sex learned by society in a less intimidating manner. But they remain crushes that do not require action.

2. **Liking the idea of being in a couple, getting into relationships, liking that "aesthetic" but getting stressed out when it becomes too real and not wanting it anymore; feeling uncomfortable.** It could also be that you have the impression of being sexually attracted to someone or being in love, but when you get to know that person better, or it seems like the feeling could be reciprocated, it disappears. Having an "intangible", "indefinable" sexual orientation.

3. **Constantly assessing people's attractiveness and feeling you have to "decide" to crush on command.** Developing feelings for others when you think it is necessary to have them. Suddenly being into someone or in love with someone when that person has made it clear that a relationship would be possible, even though you didn't feel that before. This can seem like you have low standards, like you take what you can get.

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**Why do I use the word ace/axex/asexual (or not)?**

Sometimes I call myself asex, sometimes not. Then I use other words: I don't have sex/share sex. Among asex people I find it easier to call myself asex. In other situations, it depends... With many people I'm afraid that they don't even know the word, don't know what it means. Also, in most of the mainstream stuff I've found online, the word asexual is defined as "someone who has no sexual desire, no libido". Something that humans don't decide, that is fixed since birth. I don't see my development that way because what bothers me so much about sex, and what is the reason I chose not to have it, is not sex itself. Which means, for example, that I do masturbate and I like that, as opposed to the social construction of sex and the place it has in our society. By that I mean for example the connections between sexual relationships and love relationships that are superior to others, and also the connection between sexuality and feeling sexy or attractive. The connection between sexuality and being special/unique/extraordinary. I don't want any of that. I want to get rid of it because I want being asexual to be something political, not an identity that is incorporated into this world without changing it.

Sometimes I find it difficult to call myself asex because there is so little written or said about it that I feel like people immediately label me without asking themselves, for example, if I'm more of such- and-such an asex person, or of which "current", because all these distinctions don't really exist for most people. Sometimes the word asex helps me feel legitimate in a space because I am neither lesbian nor a woman. Even though since I've started identifying as trans at least that's easier, but still. In reality, it would take an A in the invitation more often. (Note: LGBTQIA+ is used less often in French than tpg- trans,pédé,gouine → trans, gay, lesbian) For me, being mentioned with an A shows a minimum of inclusion and reflection and that is rare.
This is a list of signs that the desire/lust you feel comes from being raised to be heterosexual.

The point is not that with this list everyone can identify as ace/aro, but to help people who are aro/ace but haven’t had any contact with it until now. As an ace person who doesn’t know asexuality exists, I’ve tried to help people who are ace/aro hear and account with this list. I hope everyone can identify as ace/aro, this list is a list of signs that the desire/lust you feel comes from being raised to be heterosexual.

CHECKLIST AROACE

Why do I almost never use the word aromantic?

Even though I was already living it, that was nothing about whether romantic relationships or not. Before this year I was still down for their love relationships, but not for how they exist. But I don’t find themselves in that, but are still down for their love relationships, bougeois of how they exist in French, etc. Many people still get them strongly a little theatrically, like singing relationships, drawing them strongly, a little theatrically, like singing relationships, drawing them strongly, a little theatrically. It’s not about to this culture around love relationships, or to explain it by other half-sentences to explain my approach to love relationships. It’s not about that the word work, already because nobody knows it, so why don’t I use the word? Well, it’s difficult to distinguish what we have been taught to be heterosexual.

you often feel compelled to perform allosexuality? And all the points in the list, it doesn’t necessarily mean that this is the right thing we need/want. If you recognise yourself in some of the points in the list, it’s not about the culture around love relationships, or to explain it by other half-sentences to explain my approach to love relationships. It’s not about that the word work, already because nobody knows it, so why don’t I use the word? Well, it’s difficult to distinguish what we have been taught to be heterosexual.

This is a list of signs that the desire/lust you feel comes from being raised to be heterosexual.
I imagine my life as a journey. On this journey I make choices, I choose where to go. Sometimes there is a storm that takes me somewhere I wouldn't have gone on my own. And all around me are my friends, the people who are close to me, with whom I more or less often travel parts of the way.

And then there are my constant companions on this journey. I didn't choose them, we found each other somewhere, but I know that they will always be there, no matter what happens. Even if I would often like to get rid of them. We don't always get on so well, and at first, I found it hard to get used to the idea that they would always be there. More than my friends and the people close to me. One of these companions is the difficulty of not having love relationships. When I took the path of not having love relationships anymore, I met her by the wayside, and she joined me. I was very angry with her for that. Because of her, people thought I was weird. Because of her, it was hard for me to find balance in my relationships, my closest friends left me when they fell in love. So I ignored her at first. I convinced myself that if I just pretended not to hear or see her, she would go away on her own. She would understand that I didn't want her. But she stayed. So I cried, talked to people all around me, pointed out my companion whom I didn't want, whom I hadn't chosen. But nobody did anything, nobody could do anything, so she stayed, for the moment and forever. And the more I looked at her, the more I cried, the less I saw the rest, and she upset me more and more.

I didn't manage to get rid of her, and finally I understood that she would stay forever. With time I learn to come to terms with her, to understand how she works, to make the best of it for myself. Sometimes I am so angry and sometimes so sad. Sometimes I ignore her, almost forget about her, but then she always comes and jumps out at me when I'm not expecting her. These little travelling companions, I have others of them, I won't lose them either, so I organise myself to deal with them all in the best possible way and continue to follow my path.

Why aren't you having sex?

Because the pressure is too big. Because I'm too stubborn to accept doing something when I feel I have no choice. In any case, when I don't really have to do it, especially if it makes me feel good not to do it. I have a mental block there.

Because I'm tired of hearing, directly or indirectly, that we all need sex, that it's good, liberating, an essential part of all of us. I'm tired of thinking it's natural and there's nothing we can do about it. Enough of thinking we all must have it to be happy, to be complete, to be fulfilled.

I don't believe in happiness, but I know that feeling good comes from being a minimum aware of what we are doing and doing at least a minimum of things that make us feel good. So, I don't see how doing a thing that we force ourselves to do because it's supposedly good for us is going to help.

Because it makes me so angry just to think that having sex would be like going to work, submitting, admitting defeat. Because I don't feel like it. I don't think about it, I don't imagine it, I don't want to. I do other things, I'm busy elsewhere. Because it would be an effort to take the time, to be available, to just think about what I want and how I want it. And to be honest, I'm not up for that. Because even if I wanted to, it would be work to find a framework in which I feel good, feel secure enough. So that in itself is not very attractive.

Because I don't like being desired, I don't know what people want from me. And I don't want to desire anyone, project thoughts onto someone, expectations, that makes me feel uncomfortable.
Because it would have been so nice to have more choice and determination. To be able to stand up for myself earlier. To struggle less with it, shorter.

Because if I want to be understood, if I want you to know where I'm coming from, I always have to explain my deepest convictions, my self-evident truths, over and over again. Because this tires me so much that I rarely do it. Because I'm always afraid of being an alien or of upsetting people when they need someone to talk about it. Because it still doesn't feel legitimate to think what I think.

Because at the moment I still have the feeling of being super radical and like a caricature, of having nothing to do with reality, of demanding too much. Because I think we should have a choice.

Because of the ideology of rape and abuse that is so often justified with this drive.

Because I still believe in loving physical contact with people, so necessary, that having loving physical contact with people can be something to destroy this idea, at least to bend it. To not feel so shitty, to decide in peace, more at ease with oneself, to better resist the ideology of rape and abuse that is so often justified with this drive.
Why do you want to be more visible as an asexual and aromantic person?

Because I’m fed up with people taking it for granted that everyone has sex or wants to have sex. Because I’m tired of people taking it for granted that everyone has or wants to have love relationships. I’m sick of the comments that it’s obvious that it sucks not to have it. I’m tired of people feeling sorry for me, people being worried or sad for me. We should stop classifying each other to be more sure of who we are. Stop saying that maybe we’re not straight, but at least we fuck. That we are more sexually free. As if freeing ourselves from restrictions has to happen through sex. Discovering your approach to sex can mean choosing not to have it.

I want my family to stop waiting for me to introduce them to someone.

I want to be visible because I know that visibility means that all this exists less. Not necessarily at the beginning, but the more we become, the more it becomes self-evident that there is no self-evidence in this topic. Because I want others to be visible, I want to hear their voices, to learn, to understand better. Being sure on your own is not enough.

Because I dream of complicity in these places. One day we will make jokes about the others, how weird they are.

Because I want us to be more. And for that to happen, it must be possible for everyone to ask themselves these questions to be able to reposition themselves.

Quitting sex

I remember quitting love relationships and wondering about what to do with my sexuality. The question of whether I should also stop having sex did not arise. It seemed logical to me that to get by without love relationships and to find a balance, I would have to share my sexuality. Like I would die of thirst without it. So, I had a time in my life when I had sex when it suited me, without asking myself if I felt like it or how I actually wanted it, too relieved to find partners who were willing to spend a night with me without asking me the next day if I wanted to stay, or who wanted to build a love relationship afterwards.

Later, I met other people who stood up for not sharing their sexuality and did so of their own free will. It was a huge relief to know that that was possible. At first, I was afraid to recognise myself in it, to give something up. It’s not easy to define yourself by the absence of something that is seen as so important. But in the end, it has been really good for me to find a space where there are no sexual prompts without that absence being seen as something bad. These spaces are valuable.

Quitting sex, quitting love relationships too. Not an easy thing to do. Not easy, even before you make the changes in real life, to even imagine that it can work. That it is possible. Especially when there are almost no examples, and we all have our heads full of talk about what we should do. Not easy to think of all that you lose when you don’t yet know what there is to gain. To tell yourself that you can do it, that it is also possible for you, not only for the others. It’s not easy to say goodbye to things that reassure us, even when they annoy us. We often think we are safer in a known evil. We often think we can lose more by doing what we want than by doing what we should. But
I remember the resignation, the giving up. Not one memory, but tons, thousands. Whenever I remain silent. When I tell myself it’s of no use to open my mouth, it’s not that important anyway.

When I don’t feel like coming across as the funny guy on duty, the wallflower, the weirdo of the evening. When I don’t want to hear the same questions every time I explain myself. The “Ah, I couldn’t do that!”

When I wait until it’s over. When you feel like you’re exasperating or too much on your mouth. When you feel like you’re telling yourself you’re not ready.

When you feel stupefied, but you don’t know why. When you feel like you’re stuck with a story, with a thought, that doesn’t get us to the same destination.

And the more we go where we want to go, the closer we get to the things that interest us, please us, do us good. Often, it’s not easy to tell ourselves that now is the right moment. We always think we have so much to prove: to be ready, to be sure. We think it was always clear, didn’t happen, that we have to brace ourselves against the rules, the questions.

What is it good for, making decisions, taking our lives in different directions? It’s good for letting go of things that calm us down, even if they annoy us, to get into the habit of something new. Meeting people, exploring topics, seeing other places, discovering other ways of doing things. It’s good for knowing that we have the right to do that.

Sometimes it means imagining the very things that no one has ever told us. Sometimes it’s because of a phrase we heard one day, to get into the habit of something new. What is it good for, making decisions, taking our lives in different directions, it’s good for letting go of things that calm us down, even if they annoy us.

As long as you’re doing what you’re thinking.

Sometimes it means knowing the outside perspective, learning to deal with shame, knowing how to deal with shame. Learning not to care about it. Learning to be proud. And in time, to thank oneself for the choices one has made, for what one has spared oneself.

Or the choices one has made, for what one has spared oneself.

To think of yourself as accepting yourself and taking care of yourself.
So I write. I write alone when it gets too much for me, regularly. And sometimes I let people read excerpts if they are interested and ask questions. With a lump in my throat and the feeling of showing myself defenceless, vulnerable, without knowing whether it will do me any good. I give away snippets of text by email, writings, that the other person might read alone in their corner. And strangely enough, it doesn't help to discuss it more easily.

Being in a writing workshop with others helps me to work on my stuff while others are working on other issues. It helps me to understand how much it helps and is good for me. How much it helps to read pieces of text directly, to ask myself questions, to have people who ask me questions and come back to my text. I realise how much what is in my head is trapped, doesn't come out. And that when it does come out, it has an impact, I am understood. That it gets through and resonates.

I remember coming into my room where I’d had a discussion with a friend with whom it is difficult. I just went to the bathroom for a moment, and I come back. And all of a sudden, I smell his smell, which I haven’t smelled for so long because we haven’t seen each other lately. There was too much fighting between us. I remember that smell jumping at me. I remember the stress I feel, the panic. Panic, for days, for weeks, for months, that the relationship will finally end, then, when it doesn’t end, the feeling of being a bad person. I remember saying to myself "I want this to stop." And not being able to imagine for years that it was possible. Just because it's seen as a bad thing to end a friendship, you can always fix things, you just have to work for it. I remember the fear of the end and also of the opposite, that it won’t stop being the way it is now. This fear makes me not express my anger, keep my doubts to myself, as well as my questions and the moments when I don’t agree. I remember the fear of being alone and the relief at the moments when I am sometimes.

I remember questions running through my head that I immediately suppressed because they were unacceptable. Always this question about stopping.

And then when it stopped, I remember relief, for days, for weeks, for months, for years, often when I think back. And the anger at what we tell ourselves to do because we think it’s good and right.
I write these stories because I feel a void. There are only few stories where it is a marginal element that is part of the characters’ relationship to the outside world. But there are also stories that talk about this decision, not every story is as well-written as mine. We are stuck in our fears and we don’t quite know how to deal with it. We sometimes tell each other this and it’s not going into too much. We are scared and we don’t know enough about how to talk about this with others. I don’t talk about these topics. Or really rarely. We talk about it briefly among people for whom it is also reality, in their own way. Without ever going into too much detail.

Talking about it

I write these stories because I feel a void. There are only few stories where it is a marginal element that is part of the characters’ relationship to the outside world. But there are also stories that talk about this decision, not every story is as well-written as mine. We are stuck in our fears and we don’t quite know how to deal with it. We sometimes tell each other this and it’s not going into too much. We are scared and we don’t know enough about how to talk about this with others. I don’t talk about these topics. Or really rarely. We talk about it briefly...
Physical relations, touching

I remember not being able to fall asleep. Feeling a friend next to me while lying in bed keeps me from sleeping. At the same time, I tell myself that I am lucky to share this intimacy with someone. All around, my friends often say that our society does not want intimacy to be shared outside of a love relationship, and that it is therefore important to construct other forms of intimacy. It’s not that I disagree, I know full well that it’s necessary to develop different ways, having never been in a couple myself. But now it is night, and next to this person I feel that I should be satisfied and reassured by the moment, even a little honoured to be so close to this person. But I can’t fall asleep because I prefer to sleep alone. That’s how I feel comfortable and good.

How do you see physical relationships with others? How do you deal with touch?

I have no problem hugging people sometimes. A friend I haven’t seen for a long time, who gives me a hug, or if we do it at a moment when we’ve told each other something emotional, or are just happy to see each other, that’s a clear way for me to convey affection. I understand it, this kind of affection. I know that the gesture is meant for me, and I know what it means.

On the contrary, for example this mode of “hanging around on the couch and groping each other”, I don’t understand that well and it makes me feel uncomfortable. I used to do that, and I think I got into it more because I thought it meant we shared a close, special relationship.

But it wasn’t because I liked being touched, but rather because I liked being chosen. It was like a super precious place where I wanted to be.
Without making it about myself, I love them too, like they love me. I respect them for who they are.

A thing that is good in itself, that I just wasn’t able to appreciate so much. Those were also moments when I felt like there was no room to ask yourself these questions about what you wanted. When you’re doing so well, you shouldn’t really ask yourself if you might not want something completely different. And that’s quite a cheat.

And how many of your relationships or playing them for not doing anything to get the inside of the group. Of course, all the people I know doesn’t call. All the books I wanted to read. The weekends I used to spend with my friends. The evenings when you didn’t want to leave the others. The days of running around each other, always staying close, never getting off the sofa, so as not to miss anything, even if nothing was happening. Being there.

This way of hanging out together and touching each other anymore. Of all the little things we forget to do. Of all the things we do to feel important to others, to feel less alone. The days of running around each other, always staying close, never getting off the sofa, so as not to miss anything, even if nothing was happening. Being there. The evenings when you didn’t want to leave the others. The days of running around each other, always staying close, never getting off the sofa, so as not to miss anything, even if nothing was happening. Being there.

I don’t want to desire others any more than I want to be desired. It has always made me uncomfortable, ashamed of the weight I put on them, the weight of expectations and attention. Ashamed of the stress I can’t hide. I never wanted to. If someone interests me, I don’t want to zoom in on the details. To focus on a piece of a stage, a podium. I don’t want to play that game. I don’t want to do that. I just want to be there. I just want to be desired. It feels too much like playing them for not doing anything. Of all the little things we forget to do. Of all the things we do to feel important to others, to feel less alone. The days of running around each other, always staying close, never getting off the sofa, so as not to miss anything, even if nothing was happening. Being there. The evenings when you didn’t want to leave the others. The days of running around each other, always staying close, never getting off the sofa, so as not to miss anything, even if nothing was happening. Being there. The evenings when you didn’t want to leave the others. The days of running around each other, always staying close, never getting off the sofa, so as not to miss anything, even if nothing was happening. Being there. The evenings when you didn’t want to leave the others. The days of running around each other, always staying close, never getting off the sofa, so as not to miss anything, even if nothing was happening. Being there. The evenings when you didn’t want to leave the others. The days of running around each other, always staying close, never getting off the sofa, so as not to miss anything, even if nothing was happening. Being there.
Desire makes me either feel scared away or like I should adapt. Adapt to the expectations of the people watching me. To be good, to be a good student. And I know myself well enough to know that I can't keep up this game for long before I explode. Sometimes desire puts you on a pedestal. You stand on top. You have to know better, know more, be better than the others. You are asked to explain the truth you know so well. So you silence your doubts and explain things you don't understand, hide parts of yourself at the risk of disappointing. You start to be ashamed of everything that doesn't work about this image of yourself, to be angry with yourself for it, to no longer understand yourself.

What's so annoying about desire is that it's supposed to feel good. You're supposed to be satisfied when you're desired. So how can you make them understand that all you want is for the person to leave you alone? What's bad is that we've been told so many twisted stories about desire and being desired that if you reject a person, they'll think it's because they're not good enough, not beautiful enough, not interesting enough for you to be interested in them. They won't think that they're playing a stupid game that you won't play anymore. Desire is a game for power, for a place in the hierarchy. Who do I please in order to place myself, to move up the social ladder? Who pleases me and can move me further up the ladder? It is a game of testing and trying, if I please this person and that person, I can feel that I am worth something. If I don't please them, I feel bad. We often lose in this game.

We look for confirmation in others, for them to look at us as if we were who we would like to be. In doing so, we forget that we ourselves are the first person who can do that, that we have to do that for ourselves first. When you desire me, I feel like saying, "Hey, you're playing a game here where you're going to lose too, not just relationship with this person that you don't have. This war for space, where the field being fought over is our bodies, our lives, our time. It reminds me of how dispossessed I have felt at times, caught in the uncertainty of who I belong to now. Staying close to someone, even when I would actually like to go look at something else somewhere else. Not sympathising with others. Trying to not move away too much and guarding my space, with myself and with others.
Desire

Desire is something that makes me really uncomfortable. The desire of others. I know that sensation of feeling good, of feeling valued by being desired. Like someone is giving you a point. And at the same time, for me, this feeling of being desired triggers a mixture of fear, intimidation and dependence. Fear that the person's impression of me is wrong, or that being desired will stop again. Intimidation of the image the person has of me, without knowing how they see me at all. Dependence, because it has to go on and on if it's worth it.

The fact of being desired by someone has always left me feeling dumped. Not understanding what the person is projecting onto me. Even though it's supposed to make you feel good, you never know what exactly the person likes about you, what you have to do to keep it going. In the desiring gaze, for me, lies the statement, "I know parts of you that you don't know yourself," and I don't understand that. I don't know who to believe anymore, who to exist for. So I start to exist for someone else instead of just staying on the ground and living my life. We never know what exactly the other wants from us.

Over the last few years, I have learned to give up being a favourite person. With the time, I'm beginning to understand that what I don't like in relationships is the stress, the panic, the insecurity. And what causes the most stress and anxiety in me is that I don't know if I am the most important person to someone. Whether there is someone else who is more important. The relationships where I don't feel stressed are the ones where I already know that I am the most important. The sense of my existence, my value in itself. When I think about my existence, I feel important. Not important in the sense of taking care of me, organizing with me, but in the sense of being recognized as myself, being appreciated as who I am. It's more about being able to keep being who I am, being accepted for who I am.

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