

that, right now, you're physically more resilient, more elastic, more spacious. Perhaps your body is being more generous with you, and with others. It is giving people more flesh to touch, while keeping you warm."

**“IN A BETTER
WORLD, SWEATPANTS
WOULD SURELY
CARRY VERY SEXY
CONNOTATIONS:
EASE OF MOVEMENT,
CONFIDENCE,
VULNERABILITY,
TOUCHABILITY.”**

I return to the teenagers' words again and again throughout the months of high Omicron-variant infection rates in Philadelphia. The more I read about the matter, the more it becomes obvious that the dominant culture of fatphobia is intertwined with the structures of settler colonialism and white supremacy that govern our world as argued in Da'Shaun Harrison's *The Belly of the Beast: The Politics of Anti-Fatness as Anti-Blackness* (2021) and Sabrina Strings's *Fearing the Black Body: The Racial Origins of Fat Phobia* (2019). Strings and Harrison's "fat liberation" theory explodes all the pathologizing, pseudo-psychological wisdom I absorbed during my middle-class white Millennial childhood. I was taught, as a teen, that a layer of fat is almost cowardly; a kind of self-numbing defense mechanism; a trauma response blocking the world out by burying the self in blubber. What if, on the contrary, the fattening of the body, especially during biopolitical crises like COVID-19, can manifest courage; willingness to stay with the trouble of life rather than shrink from it; or continued openness to touch?

Did I personally need new clothes during the pandemic? Yes and no. Toward the end of 2020, my

body no longer fit into the clothes I had been wearing in 2019, some as far back as 2005. I have nothing against great outfits, and if I hate clothes shopping in general, it's because of my negative memories of dressing rooms. But if I'm honest, I'm actually not anti-fashion, I'm pro-nudity. Does one need a new wardrobe each time (not to mention a fit body) to ensure a brilliant, delicious and satisfying sex life? Don't make me laugh. I hope you don't mind me saying now that I've never had sex this good and I've never had so many fucks. In January 2020, when my wife was traveling, I got involved, with her consent, with a man from the neighborhood. A one night stand, I thought, but we are still together to this day. I have found a wonderful friend in a highly stressful, negative body climate, with the most positive body attitude I have ever met.

The three of us—she, he and me—spent the majority of the last two years together. I've found my way into exquisite rompers, bodysuits and dungarees supplied by sustainable or "slow" makers linked to on fat-liberation Instagram. She has discovered the joy of oscillating between fake-fur-trimmed fabulousness one day, and the quieter sexiness of comfortable leggings and old beloved sweaters, the next. For his part—what can I say? The hottest man I know buys his trousers at Costco. Sometimes we joke about the outfits I wore during my first four or five dates at his house, an awkward series of tight skirts and high heels; which is a comical recollection in light of my firmly entrenched present tendency to wear barely any clothes at all while I'm at his house. The other day, I asked that he keep his hand on my belly while we had sex. This was a tiny, simple, unradical thing, no doubt, yet it constituted an interesting exercise. Allow me to recommend it to you if you, like me, have been steeped in the notion that your belly should be somehow blocked out mentally, or if you were unfortunate enough to have come across the latest diatribe in the tabloid press, dripping with disgust over the "epidemic" [sic] of obesity, about plus-size shop mannequins in sports attire and the "dangerous message they send to women" by "normalizing" normal bodies.

If I had to name my favorite trends of the past year, it would certainly be the rise of antirespectability, anti-work, affirming chubbiness, as well as memes about not wearing underwear to work at home - and refusing to hate the fatter or unathletic „lockdown“ body, and thanking the body for taking care of us.

My gut tells me that the idea that it would somehow be desirable to return to a status quo ante (sexual or otherwise) is incomprehensible to everybody except the class of people that write articles on the "toxic" effect of COVID on sex life—only to end on a forced note of hopefulness, hailing "a return to normalcy." A reversion? From this hellworld back to the previous one, plagued by overwork? No thank you! I'm with Elliot Kukla, a rabbi who is working on a book about the power of rest in a time of planetary crisis: The most valuable thing we can teach ourselves, each other, and perhaps especially children, right now, is how to be lazy. ♦