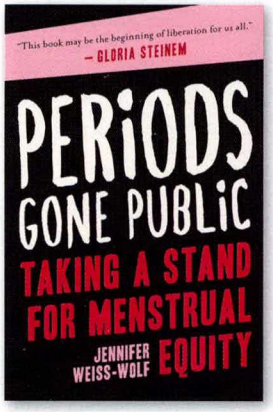
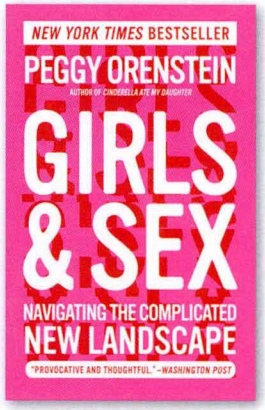
Florence Wyle (1881–1968) and Frances Loring (1887–1968), whom, the biographers suggest, their subject probably knew, Riter Hamilton moved very much in a cultural landscape inhabited by women. In fact, it was individual women, as well as the vibrant club movement of the day—notably the Women's Art Association of Canada and the IODE—who helped to pay the rent, put food on the table and provide emotional support. Kathryn Young and Sarah McKinnon's painstaking effort at retrieval have supplied a reminder that women often kept the faith with one another.

Riter Hamilton, born on Ontario's Bruce Peninsula, linked Canadians to European salons and artistic trends. Like her contemporary Emily Carr, she attracted interested audiences to her shows and taught countless students. Riter Hamilton's paintings and influence helped ensure that the new colonial nation's artistic legacy, while grounded in European traditions, would be rooted in the Canadian landscape.

Conscientious searches in archives and newspapers, as well as the personal papers and memories of family and friends, have helped to rescue a major female artist, and Canadians have reason to be grateful. Ultimately, however, the flesh-and-blood woman who sacrificed much for her art remains largely missing. Riter Hamilton, like the young men left behind in France, and like her own still-born child and her husband, who died early in their marriage, lingers like a melancholy ghost throughout this brave and loving commemoration.





PERIODS GONE PUBLIC
Taking a Stand for Menstrual Equity
JENNIFER WEISS-WOLF
Arcade

REVIEW BY KRIS ROTHSTEIN
Menstruation, a topic shrouded in stigma and shame for too long (thanks patriarchy!), has recently come out of the closet in a big way. Advocate and activist Jennifer Weiss-Wolff has written a fun, fascinating, informative book about periods that is neither academic nor medical. Other authors have written about the social and cultural history of menstruation, but *Periods Gone Public* has lots to add about menstruation as a public health and human rights issue.

In the last few years, menstruation has made it big in the media and has become a stimulus for innovation and entrepreneurship around the world. In 2015 there was Kiran Gandhi, the free-bleeding marathoner, followed by celebrities talking openly about having their period while swimming in the Olympics or while walking the red carpet. Meanwhile, low-cost machines have made it easier for communities to manufacture cheap pads, while techies created a menstruation video game and educators created menstruation-themed comics. Weiss-Wolff met many of these inspiring pioneers and has contextualized their stories as part of a growing movement to bring menstruation out of the tent.

The book covers the campaign for the elimination of taxes on feminine hygiene products and highlights groups working to provide free tampons and pads to prisoners, and to homeless and low-income women and girls. Weiss-Wolff paints the big picture, addressing menstruation and trans people, as well as the need for ecologically sound menstrual products in the developing and the developed worlds. For example, she discovers a Colombian designer who manufactures underwear with a built-in pocket that can accommodates absorbent materials (including rags, leaves or ash!) for low-income women.

Weiss-Wolff's analysis of menstruation in North America and beyond is sure to draw much-needed attention to a topic that has been kept hidden for too long.

GIRLS AND SEX
Navigating the Complicated New Landscape
PEGGY ORENSTEIN
Penguin

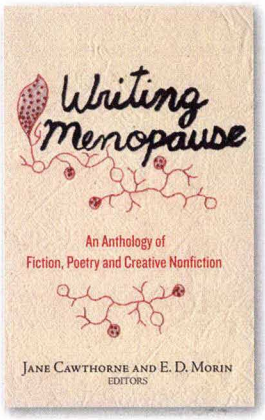
REVIEW BY GINA WONG
Peggy Orenstein, the author of *Cinderella Ate My Daughter* (2011), has written a sobering account of in-depth interviews with over 70 college or college-bound American women between the ages of 15 and 20. After listening to their litany of disembodied early sexual experiences, she concludes that, as a society, we have "performed the psychological equivalent of a clitoridectomy on our daughters."

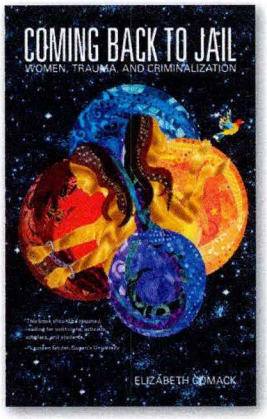
A psychologist, sex therapist and mother of two young women, Orenstein provides confirmation of an epidemic among young women, one where sex is bereft of pleasure and is instead a performance, an act to prove desirability and worth. It is one in which Internet pornography is the reigning (mis)educator for youth to learn what sex should look, sound and feel like. In this epidemic, many young women perform fellatio so routinely that they don't even consider it sex. According to Orenstein, teen girls are engaging in anal sex twice as often as teen girls in the past, due to heightened pressure from teen boys looking for bragging rights.

Orenstein reveals that it is commonplace for girls to hook up (for activities ranging from kissing to intercourse) almost as if it were a social sport. Hookups give young women social standing, popularity, confidence and recognition, but within narrow limits, before slut-shaming takes over. Orenstein highlights the thorny politics of desirability that include the stigma of being a virgin and the pressure to look "hot." One young woman claims that "every college girl's dream is to find the balance between being just slutty enough, where you're not a prude but you're not a whore."

The author urges parents to stop fear-based discussions with young women about pregnancy and STIs, and to stop peddling the ambition of waiting for sexual intimacy. Instead, Orenstein advises us to mirror the Dutch, who have

the lowest teen pregnancy rate and whose girls tend to engage in sexual activity later, ultimately resulting in girls who feel better about themselves and about their bodies. Orenstein instructs us to discuss sex openly with our daughters and to talk positively about oral sex, masturbation and the pleasure of orgasms. Parents are encouraged to emphasize the importance of experiencing and expressing sexuality from within, rather than impersonating porn-quality sex, and for young women to hold high expectations and standards for reciprocity and their own pleasure. This book is outstanding and is recommended for everyone and anyone interested in the development of young women. It is an injustice to shelter and lecture girls, says Orenstein, whose book advises us to help young women claim their value and worth in a culture where sexual desirability has become the yardstick of social acceptability and approval.





WRITING MENOPAUSE

An Anthology of Fiction, Poetry and Creative Non-Fiction

EDITED BY JANE CAWTHORNE AND E.D. MORIN

Inanna Publications

REVIEW BY CHRISTINE PEETS

"Menopause. Say the word in public. See what happens."

So begins *Writing Menopause*. This anthology isn't about menopause from a clinical perspective—although there are many references to night sweats, mood swings and heavy bleeding. As editors Jane Cawthorne and E.D. Morin point out, there is no shortage of books about menopause, yet there has been a shortage of inspiring stories. This book attempts to fill that void, and, in doing so, it leaves the reader emotionally spent yet emotionally charged. From the opening montage of "The Chrissie Hynde Stories" (yes, *that* Chrissie Hynde) to the closing short piece "Last Blood," there is laughter and tears. Some pieces will haunt you as they lay bare the raw emotion that often surrounds this phase of life.

If there is a common thread throughout the book, it is that these women who experienced "the change" have given themselves permission to be more creative, more powerful and more passionate.

"The menopause experience is not simply something to survive ... those in menopause climb mountains, take on lovers, create art, daydream, undertake scientific explorations and transform themselves with an urgency that springs from the bittersweet realization that their time is short," Cawthorne and Morin write.

The titles of the three sections in the book, Un/Done, In/Fertile and Un/Known, the editors say, are meant to show the multiplicity of experiences within menopause. As these essays and poems show, there is indeed a lot of life left to live after menopause.

The contributors encourage readers to be open to all of the joys and challenges it may bring. While you may not relate to all or any of the writers' experiences, the book will make you think differently about menopause. It may even get you talking about it in public and waiting to see what will happen next.

COMING BACK TO JAIL

Women, Trauma and Criminalization

ELIZABETH COMACK

Fernwood Publications

REVIEW BY JOYCE GREEN

Elizabeth Comack, a scholar whose work concerns the Canadian justice system and Indigenous peoples, has produced an insightful book about the criminalization of Indigenous women. The women's personal stories—Comack interviewed 42 incarcerated women—inform Comack's feminist anti-colonial analysis and her critique of the justice system.

This system is racist rather than neutral; it is an institutional apparatus of the colonial state that is thoroughly infused with biases toward Indigenous, racialized and impoverished people and with patriarchal biases towards women; it individualizes the experiences of its captives, so as to avoid both understanding the systemic features of Canadian institutions, and Canada's complicity in producing them; and it is poorly constructed and funded to execute its putative and contradictory missions of both punishing and rehabilitating prisoners.

Importantly, Comack makes the case that imprisoned Indigenous women and the state's delivery of carceral services have been negatively impacted by capitalist globalization, economic restructuring and welfare state retrenchment. Thus, official accounts of Indigenous women's cases often miss the back story—one that can include homelessness, the loss of one's children, addiction, victimization by abuses in childhood and adulthood, isolation from community, lifetimes of normalized intergenerational dysfunction constructed by colonialism, and impoverishment.

As Comack argues, these factors, combined with the toxic racism in both civil society and in the justice system, produce conditions that increase the odds that Indigenous women will fail at rehabilitation and at successful social reintegration. Therefore, once they are enmeshed in the criminal justice system, Indigenous women are likely to continue "coming back to jail."

Faced with these limiting conditions, women such as those in Comack's study can be seen as negotiating dystopic conditions in order to survive. Hopefully, research like Comack's will amplify the voices demanding better lives for Indigenous women who are criminalized. As Comack notes, women should not be forced into contexts that punish but do not rehabilitate, and that replicate the deep structural processes of colonial and patriarchal power in Indigenous lives. ❁