

A close-up photograph of a person's skin, likely a woman's face, covered in white foam bubbles. The skin is light-toned and shows some texture and pores. A clear plastic shower curtain ring is visible on the right side. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

soap

a collection of photos and words by yasmin ahram.

special thanks to C, miri & syd.

letter from the editor

a zine about showering.

soap may be the one thing we all use as a commonality in our shower practices, whilst also being the one thing we all use so incredibly differently.

each of our showering routines is so peculiar to us, to our families, to our cultures, even, and we are always so weirded by one another for it.

conversely, the peculiarity finds itself riding the line of a victorious bonding moment when realizing common threads among practices. we either roast each other, or we celebrate together.

soap highlights the discovery of our differences and similarities in showering, and embraces the unique quirks.

psa: please use soap.



"the water's hitting me, doesn't that count?"





me: what is the prime temperature for a shower?

cienna: hot. always.

me: how hot? like does your skin get really red?

cienna: um, yeah. i'd say so. It's always super steamy.

me: even in the summer?

cienna: even in the summer.



me: do you always use a loofa?

cienna: it kinda just depends.

me: on what?

cienna: um, I guess when i feel extra dirty.

me: did you always use one?

cienna: so, i used to never wash my body. i would just wash my body with my shampoo.

me: wait, excuse me? you never washed your body?

cienna: [laughs] Yeah. So my mom always did this funny thing to me and my sister, we'd be full grown and she'd be like "I'm gonna come in there and wash you!" up until two years ago, after i started college.

me: stop!!! i totally knew you two years ago, you nasty.

cienna: [laughs] yup.



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me: even in the summer?

cienna: even in the summer.

me: ooooh that sounds weird too. it doesn't hurt? you do this every day?

cienna: uhh, yeah. whenever i shower twice a day, i'll do a downscaled shower at one point. Like i'll use a different face wash and i won't exfoliate, i'll just rub soap on me. it's honestly not a big deal [laughs]

me: i actually kind of want one now. where did you get it?

cienna: they have them in the japanese markets a lot of the time.





miri

"scrubbing down is the one occasion of my showers"



me: you're flossing right now.

miri: i usually floss while the water is heating up

me: why? Do u never eat after you shower?

miri: no, not really, because i usually shower right before going to bed.



me: oi, what's that!!

miri: it's my exfoliating towel. It's like a loofa. i think loofas are disgusting because they're all balled up and the center never dries and they're gross as hell, like what's in there?

me: honestly, good question.

miri: yeah, so this is... an untied loofa.

me: oh my god, i've never seen one of these though.

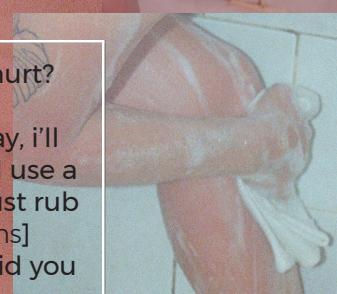


me: do you listen to music?

miri: these days i've been listening to a lot of fleetwood mac.

me: yes. good.

miri: and the sound of silence simon and garfunkel spotify radio station. I feel like all of that is very autumnal to me.

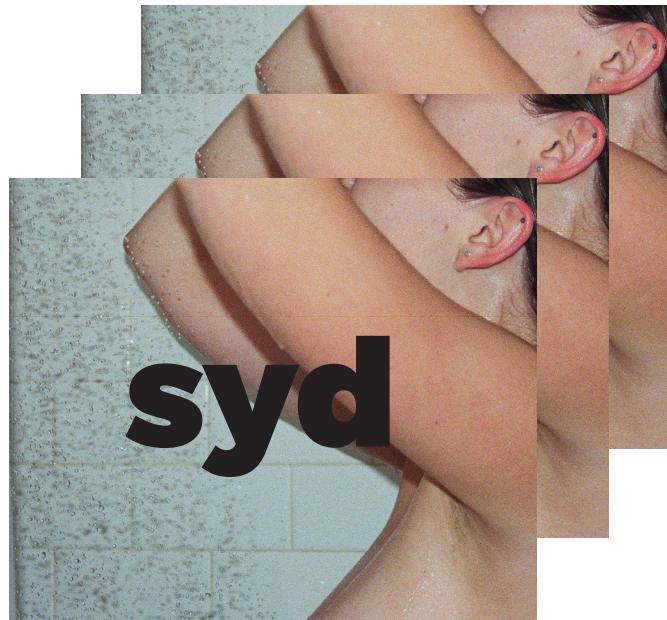


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"the water needs to be right before you reach that threshold of pain."





me: did you always use body wash? because a

syd: i'm weak. well actually, no i didn't.

me: oh my god, you too?!

syd: even now like i don't really shower every day. and if i run out of body wash, i get a new one. but if i run out of shampoo or conditioner, those i need.

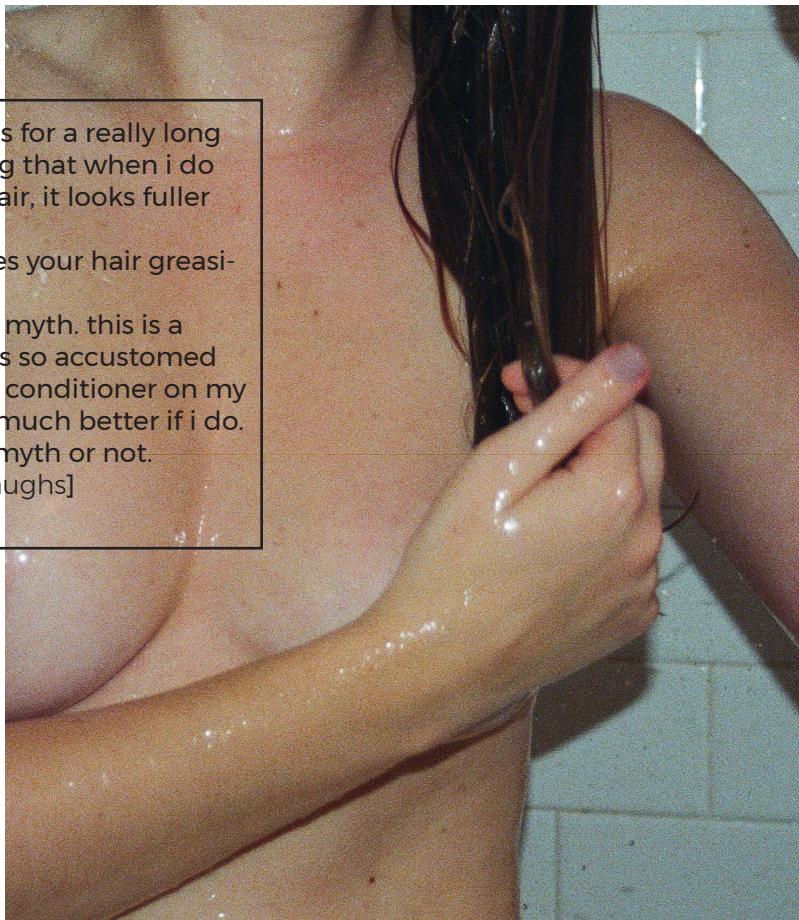
syd: so i used to take baths for a really long time, but i started realizing that when i do condition the top of my hair, it looks fuller and nicer.

me: you shouldn't! it makes your hair greasier faster!

syd: ok but i think that's a myth. this is a recent thing because i was so accustomed to making sure not to put conditioner on my roots, but my hair falls so much better if i do. so i don't know if that's a myth or not.

me: it's not, it's a thing!! [laughs]

syd: mmhh, k.



me: why do you keep patting down your hair like that?
syd: what! i don't know, this is how i've always done it.
me: you're not scrubbing!
syd: i guess not? [laughs] never thought about it. my mom always washed my hair from top to bottom. i realize it's kind of a comforting motion.

apparently it's a thing not to.

day, because i don't sweat or feel
could go a while without buying
tioner then i'm at cvs right away.



me: what's your favorite shower memory?
syd: one of the most beautiful shower memories i have is with this boy i was seeing. we both knew it was the last time we were going to see each other for a while but we weren't talking. he was just so sad and i just remember us both sitting in the shower, in silence, for a long time. it was just this unspoken thing.



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