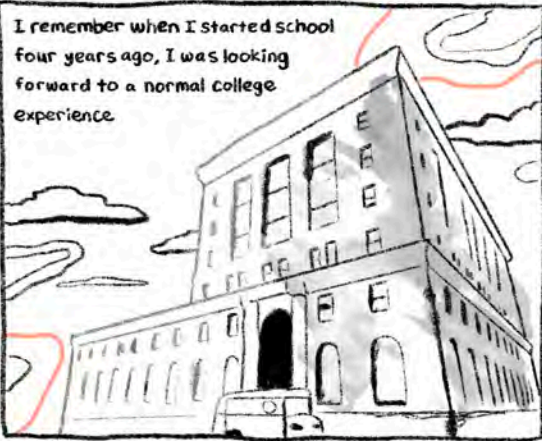


Acceptance

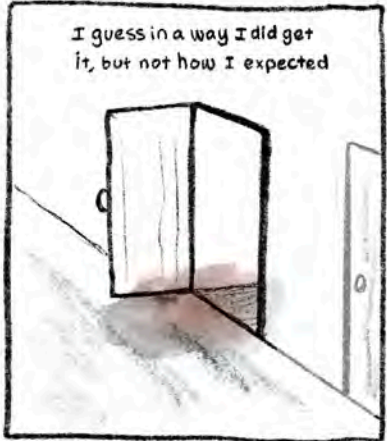


By Chlo Greve

I remember when I started school
four years ago, I was looking
forward to a normal college
experience



I guess in a way I did get
it, but not how I expected



In my sophomore year



I was raped



We met the day I moved into my dorm, he was next door



When I left my dorm that night, his roommates recognized me



I showed them around town



I started hanging out with just him and I felt romantic feelings grow



Turns out he felt the same





By May of that year, I changed my behavior



I walked faster from class to my dorm



I started locking my door



Small touches made me uneasy



I couldn't sleep



That summer he flew back to his home town, and he sounded different



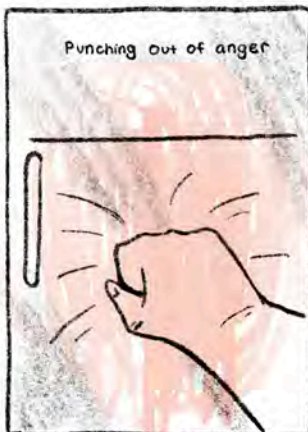
when he returned he started throwing things



Swearing more



Punching out of anger



He started to hear me saying "no"



as "yes"

I don't remember how exactly it started. All I know is when he figured out he could do it once

he did it again.

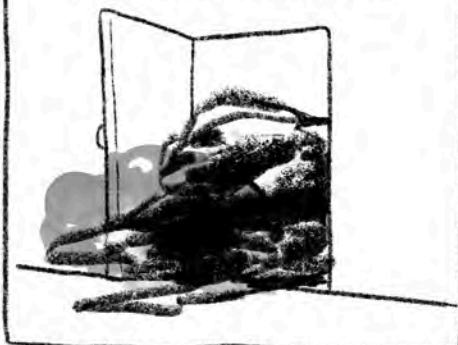


And again.

I started to wear turtlenecks
most of the time.



Whenever he entered my bedroom
I never remembered what happened



I tried not to think too much about it



One morning at the end of September
I let everything sink in



I'm being raped



I broke up with him that day



I finally told my roommate
about how I was being treated



We both started receiving a
barrage of texts from him



Soon he was sending hundreds



It got to the point where I had to report to our school what was going on



Immediately I was dismissed



I need you

I want to sleep with you



Your body is

I love you still

I'm gonna hurt myself

fuck you

I'm alone

why are you scared?

are you



The next time I went back I told them I wanted to start a Title IX case



Under Title IX schools are legally required to respond to hostile educational environments caused by sexual harassment and assault. The process of reporting a Title IX is through many interviews with both parties, each recounting their experiences and providing what evidence they had. A 3rd party then looks over the interview transcriptions and makes a decision.



He still attends the school and I was
told not to say a word about it

I felt more ashamed than ever. I only told my close family and friends about it.



At a family gathering my Nonna pulled me aside and said she had a similar experience



I realized there was an importance to speaking up, she wouldn't have confided in me if I stayed silent





I posted the art I made about it online



Way more people than I had imagined reached out to me

I felt good giving a voice to both myself and others



The process of creating content made me feel more in control of what happened

When my senior year came around
what kept coming to my mind was the
conversation I had with my Nonna



I decided to reach out to her and see
if she wanted to share more of her
story with me for my thesis



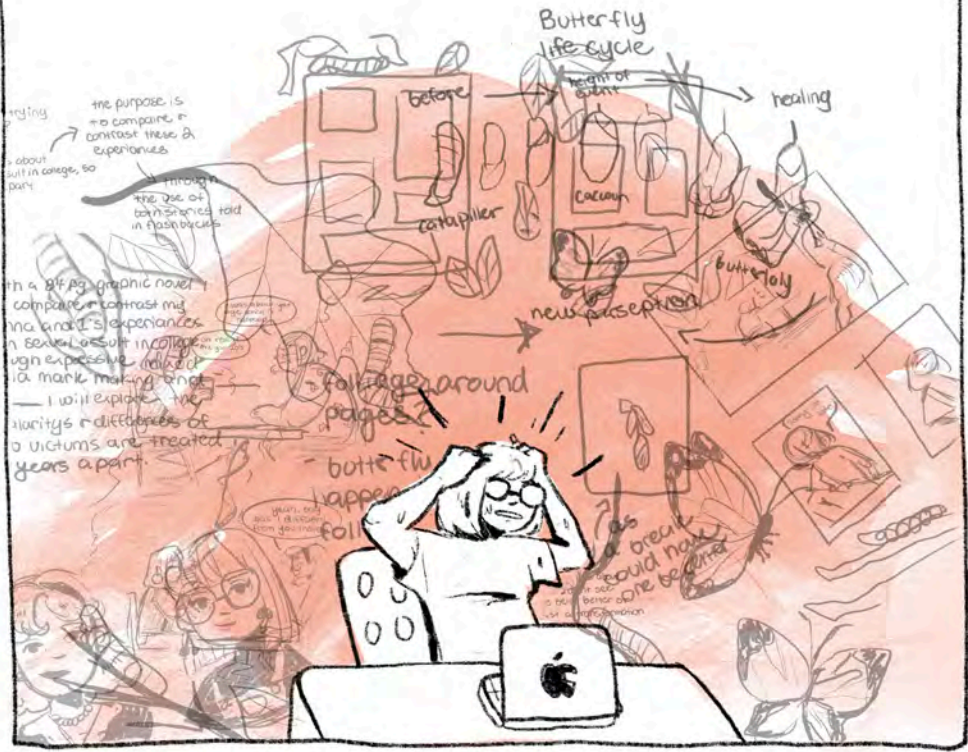
ding



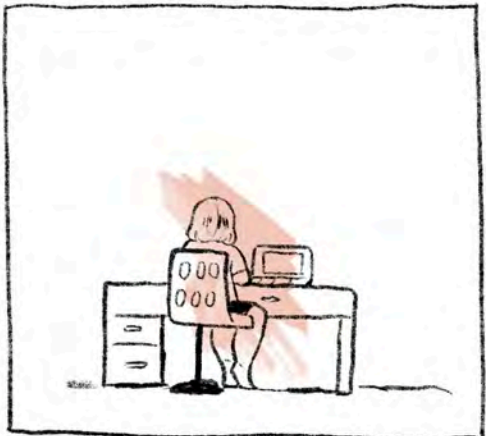
click click click



I was stressed trying to figure out how I was going to tell our stories



When my motivation was at a low I got an email from Nonna





Thesis inbox



(C)

me Sep 22, 2020

Hey, Nonna, I wanted....

(N)

Nonna Sep 22, 2020

to me ✓



My assault happened 61 years ago in 1959, although at the time none of the words used today were even in my vocabulary: sexual assault, harassment, rape. What we said then was we had "gone all the way" . . .



It was May 1960. I was finishing
my first year of highschool and
my boyfriend was a junior.

We went to a drive-in movie



Heavy kissing and roaming hands began

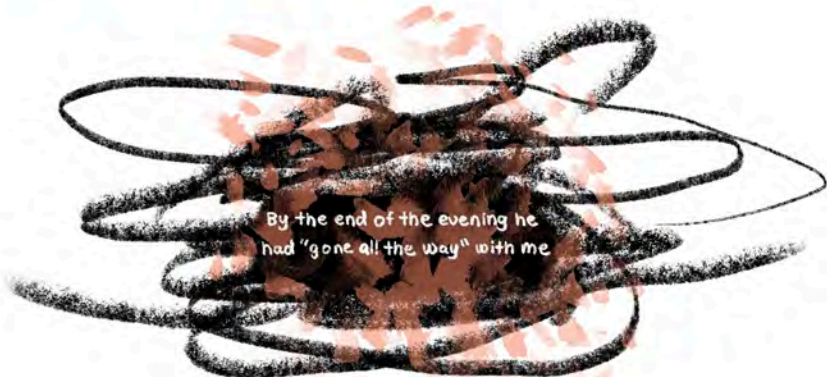


I kept saying



I don't want to do this

By the end of the evening he
had "gone all the way" with me



I didn't tell anyone



My mother often voiced her opinion about girls having sex before marriage



women like that are bad!

they asked for it!

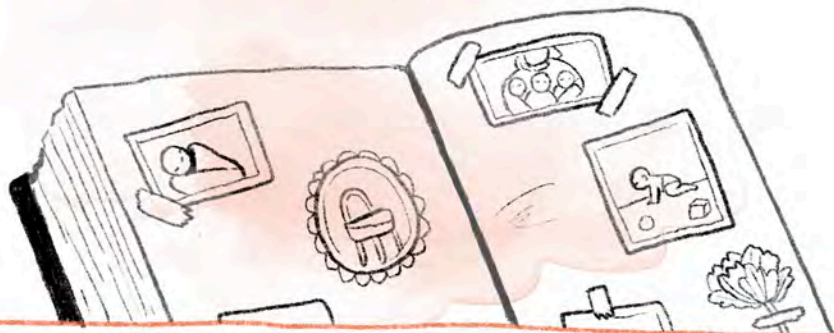
My "boyfriend" never asked me out again



I was bad.



I went on to live a nice life. I married first at 20, had 2 sons, then divorced by 29.
Married again at 31, had a 3rd son and then divorced again 16 years later.



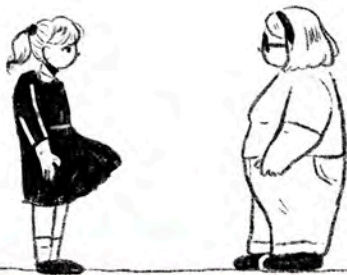
About 3 years ago I was told that my granddaughter had been sexually assaulted



memories surfaced and feelings I haven't felt for a long time showed up



That's when I knew I had not healed completely.



I began thinking deeply about my granddaughter's decision to speak up



I realized she didn't have the degree of guilt and shame I had for all these years



Why not?

Why was I a bad person for letting it happen and she was not?



If Chlo wasn't bad than neither was I!



I often wondered if it was worth it to speak up



If all this effort was worth it. Did it actually help?



Knowing I could help my Nonna showed me it did



I don't think either of us will ever be fully at peace with what happened



But we are good where we are now.



Chlo Greve is a Portland-based mixed media illustrator. She loves creating artwork that helps people feel comfortable in their own skin and validated in their various experiences.

Portfolio: chlogreveillustration.com

Email: grevechloe@gmail.com

Instagram: [@thechlorange](https://www.instagram.com/thechlorange)

Twitter: [@achlorange](https://twitter.com/achlorange)