

Confessions

by Pennfana

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Author's note: This story contains phrasing that's been adapted from two major Christian denominations. I meant no insult by using it. A full explanation is available in my note at the end of the piece.

Bless me, Father, for I have sinned against the Cult of Thinness by things that I have done and things that I have left undone. I have not loved Size 0 with my whole heart. I have not fit my body to its pattern. I am truly sorry and I humbly repent...or do I?

My BMI is just a hair under 39, and it used to be higher. Lord have mercy.

Although the disease hasn't occurred in either side of my family since then, one of my great-grandmothers died of complications related to diabetes in her mid-80s. Lord have mercy.

I haven't seen a doctor since I was 22 because the psychological effects of that visit (self-starvation being the foremost) were so terrible that I'm still trying to sort them out; I still tend to tell myself, sometimes consciously, that I need to lose a hundred pounds, so I don't *really* need to eat anything today, even though I know that this sort of thinking is far worse for me than actually eating my breakfast would be. I'll often wake up at 7:00 AM and eat nothing until 12:00 PM and not even realize I've gone so long without eating. Lord have mercy.

My maternal grandmother died of complications from a stroke when she was 62. We're not sure if it was because of her blood pressure, which I hear was high but untreated, or a chiropractic treatment she'd received earlier on the day she had her stroke. Lord have mercy.

I wear size 24 jeans. Lord have mercy.

My maternal grandfather died after having a series of heart attacks when he was 77. Lord have mercy.

When I'm tired or sick, I *really* don't feel like taking a good long and brisk walk, so I sometimes don't get the exercise that most people feel should be mandatory for a Fatty Fat Fat Blob o'Blubber like me. Lord have mercy.

My paternal grandfather, who's in his mid-80's, had a mild heart attack two years ago. Though he survived, he's seemed a lot more frail since it happened. Lord have mercy.

I've struggled with depression for longer than I've known what it actually was and, if I'm not careful, I still have mild panic attacks at least once a month though I try not to let them get the better of me. Lord have mercy.

Almost everyone in my family is fat to some degree or another, no matter what we eat (or don't eat) or how active we actually are. This is as true for my aunt who's a Weight Watchers devotee as it is for her reclusive nature-walk-loving daughter, my uncle whose leg was badly injured at work to the point where he can't stand up for very long and my hyperactive ten-year-old cousin who can't sit still for more than a few minutes. Lord have mercy.

I eat chocolate once or twice a month. Lord have mercy.

My dad doesn't keep much food in his apartment, and he's still fat. Lord have mercy.

The last time I took my blood pressure, it was 130 over 70, and I'm not sure if that's good or bad, since the systolic pressure is ten points over the "normal" reading and the diastolic pressure is ten points below it. Lord have mercy.

My mother tends to slip in a fair amount of "diet talk" into regular conversation without even realizing it, and it drives me nuts. Frequently it makes my self-starving behaviour even worse because I feel so much more bloated and worthless than I already did, and let me tell you, that's often no small potatoes. Lord have mercy.

I use butter, not margarine, and sometimes I buy homogenized milk instead of 2% (1% and skim are too watery and tasteless for me). Cheese is one of my favourite foods; I love a good Brie as long as it doesn't taste too strongly of ammonia. Lord have mercy.

My mother's family has a tendency to develop heart disease in old age, and no matter how well I try to take care of myself, it'll probably happen to me, too. Lord have mercy.

I don't believe that tired old chestnut about weight gain and loss being purely based on calories in and calories out. That law of thermodynamics applies only to a closed system, and the human body is anything but a closed system. I believe that the amount of fat on any given person's body is the result of many causes and effects, and it can't be boiled down to something so simplistic as "eat less, exercise more". Lord have mercy.

My 80-year-old grandmother is not fat, but she's so afraid of becoming fat that she panics when she misses her daily walk for any reason. Lord have mercy.

When I was a child, I took judo lessons, horseback riding lessons, swimming lessons and ran around in the schoolyard almost nonstop during recess. I've been fat my whole life, save for when I was born, when I was actually a couple of pounds *underweight*. There may have been a time when my weight was perfect, but I was too young to be aware of it at the time. Lord have mercy.

Recently I have begun trying my best to love myself as I am, regardless of the size of my ass or the scorn of the world for it. I realize that this is in gross violation of our body-shaming culture, and that I'm not doing a very good job of it anyhow since I'm still regularly starving myself, but I'm carrying on with it regardless. Lord have mercy.

I am a human being who happens to be fat and trying her best to get along in a world where fat people are looked at as a grotesquely horrible blobby epidemic disease rather than as **PEOPLE**. Lord have mercy, ***because often it seems like nobody else ever will.***

Author's Note: Most of what I've written here is fiction, though I've slipped in a few things that are true of me because I thought it would add to the reality of what the speaker in this piece is saying. The sentiment expressed in the last two lines ("I am a human being..." etc.), however, is really and truly mine.

Now, about the use of religious language in this piece - I am an ex-Catholic who is now singing with an Anglican choir and therefore participating in Anglican worship on a weekly basis, and my use of religious language from both denominations was not meant as an insult to either. My intent was purely to put an emphasis on the attitude that many people have towards dieting, an attitude that often seems to be almost religious in nature. The result, however, is anything but spiritual. We're encouraged to hate ourselves enough to starve our bodies and put them through exercise that few people actually seem to enjoy until we get thin, at which point we *might* be permitted to love ourselves just a little bit unless we get fat again. That doesn't sound like any type of religion *I'd* want to be part of.

I firmly believe that we should love ourselves as we are and do our best to keep our bodies healthy, no matter what size said bodies might be. I don't always live this belief, but I'm doing the best I can at this time.

Reviews for this piece are welcome; however, should you choose to leave a review for me I ask that you respect what I have to say and that you *not* encourage me to hop back on the dieting wagon. Such encouragement may be helpful for some people, but for me enough of it triggers intense self-loathing and days when I feel guilty for eating even a single piece of dry toast or drinking anything with more calories in it than a glass of water. I've worked hard at improving the way I think of food and balancing my intake of the four major food groups, and I'm still trying to convince myself that it's actually OK to eat enough that I'm not hungry all the time. **Please keep this in mind if you choose to write a review.**