

## The Vagina Monologues

By Claiborne Beurle

Eve Ensler begins her book/play by writing *The Vagina Monologues* “and so many other acts of radical feminist resistance [begin] by speaking out. By saying what we see. By refusing to be silenced.... When you break the silence, you realize how many other people were waiting for permission to do the same thing.” At the beginning of the book, she encourages the readers to take action. To speak out and advocate for their beliefs. While *The Vagina Monologues* is usually a performed piece, the book gives Ensler a unique chance to provide a bit more context on *The Vagina Monologues*, her journey as an activist, and the experiences so many women face.

Ensler highlights gender-based violence, taboos, sex, and the need for activism throughout the collection of stories. Amidst all that women endure, there is not enough action. She writes, “I am over violence against women not being an international priority when one out of three women will be raped or beaten in her lifetime -- the destruction and muting and undermining of women is the destruction of life itself.” Ensler uses the word “muting,” which is especially relevant today as more than two-thirds of Americans agree with *Roe v. Wade*, yet the supreme court overruled it. Despite activists demanding reproductive care and protection, the government still stripes women’s freedoms.

Furthermore, Ensler highlights the impact of the environment on women. Stating, “The destabilization of the planet’s climate creates insecurity that often leaves women vulnerable to rape and violence after storms and increasingly erratic climate catastrophes.” Usually, the intersectionality of women’s rights is overlooked. The environment impacts women, race impacts women, and socioeconomic status impacts women. As co-head of the environmental club, I am especially interested in climate justice and how climate change affects women. Ensler ties together all the loose ends and sections of women’s rights to create change and inspire her audience.

Finally, my favorite line from the book states that change” relies on troublemakers, anarchists, poets / shamans, seers, sexual explorers / Mystic travelers, tightrope walkers, and those / who go too far and feel/ Too much.” We can make a difference by breaking boundaries, shattering taboos, feelings, seeing, and speaking out. But only those willing to speak out are the ones who can create tangible change.