

A photograph of a person in a yellow kayak navigating a turbulent river with bright red water. The river is surrounded by dense green forest on a hillside. The text is overlaid on the image.

f me and my *flow*

My unfortunate journey with
“Big Red”

Jane Birr

For Women Only

Me and My Flow

My Unfortunate Journey with “Big Red”

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WARNING:

This book is a little out there. If you faint at the sight of blood or get squeamish hearing about it, this book is probably not for you.

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Dedication

I love a good laugh with my girlfriends. Especially the kind when you are laughing so hard you cry and no more sound comes out. I know I have had fun when my abdominal muscles hurt the next day from laughing. Isn't that a great feeling! Embarrassing as it can be, "The Flow" has provided my friends with plenty to laugh at through the years. It is my hope that you get a good laugh with your friends by reading this book and keep the fun going by sharing your own stories. Enjoy!

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to my friend Uey. We would only see each other occasionally. Strangely her greeting would be, "Are you flowing?" I would say, "Yes! And you wouldn't believe what happened to me." I would proceed to tell her another incident of me and my flow and we would start crying laughing. She always ended with, "You should write that down." Well, here it is. Thanks for the encouragement, Uey.

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Chapter One

The Developmental Years

Women are bound together by one common string. It's red. It comes and goes like a full moon. Our favorite white outfits fear it. It rhymes with "oh, no" and "please go." It's "the flow". The red river. The monthly. Grandma came for a visit. Whatever you call it, it's dreadful. Period.

Looking back to fifth grade, I was completely oblivious at what entering "womanhood" was all about; yet, some facts were presenting themselves.

- A) The gym was getting stinky. Funny thing. No one stunk in fourth grade.
- B) Hair was springing up in odd places.
- C) A boy came up and asked me with a teasing grin if I knew what a "period" was. Duh. It was a dot at the end of a sentence. He should really pay attention in English class.

There was to be a special presentation in the gym for the girls that day. I loved the gym. Did we get an extra day of dodgeball for knowing what a period was? What's with the chairs and the movie projector? Has there been another moon landing? Why can't the boys see it?

Oh, how I wished it was a moon landing. From that moment on, the words menstruation, deodorant and worst of all, “the big pad” broke into my innocent little world. They passed around the big pad. I held it. It was thick and full like a diaper. Words escaped me. What on earth would you do with this? Mom broke the uncomfortable silence with, “You’ll be needing one of those someday.” Yikes! Why? Why would I need this? What would drop down on to the big pad? I shuddered to even think. What was going on? What have they done to my gym?

The dreadful day passed and the gym turned back to a place of dodgeball. But it wasn’t the same. A dark cloud was on the horizon. Fifth grade ended. They even passed the boy who didn’t know what a period was. Figure that. Summer began and so came swimming at the pool and popsicles in the sun. Life was good. For now.

Then, it happened. The day was dark and cloudy and the sky was filled with a foreboding thunder. Why did I feel so funny? Like the rumbling thunder, my insides started to quake. Suddenly, without warning, a lightning bolt struck and with it womanhood entered with a flash. I darted to the bathroom and locked the door, trying to shut out impending doom. Sweating, to the throne I went. Oh, no. What was that brownish-red color in my underpants? Didn’t I wipe? But that would be an unsightly line in the back of my cotton florals, wouldn’t it? My mind went blank. Another bolt of lightning crashed and with it a visual of the gym, the chairs and “menstruation” invaded my mind. Oh, dread. Could it be, I wondered with mouth agape, time for the “big pad”?

Life as I had known it had passed away. A new era had begun. Me and my flow.

They say sisters can be full of wisdom. I say they can be full of something else, too. Age 12 through 22 was forever linked to the “big pad” due to one simple sentence uttered by my big sister Connie.

“Remember this,” she said with her finger pointed for emphasis. “Never use a tampon. If you sneeze it will fall out!”

Horror of horrors. Impression of all impressions. Our discussion was over. I nodded and closed my wide eyes. No need to say anything more. I will be bound to the “big pad.” Thus begins the story of me and my flow.