

Don't Breed on Me

A Short History of Abortion

Madeline Waugh Quasebarth

Humans have always loved to fuck!

Don't Breed on Me: A Short History of Abortion is a defiant, funny, and unflinching dive into the millennia-long story of abortion—a practice as old as humanity and as contested as ever. From medieval Europe to Ming Dynasty China, from women enslaved in the American South to German nuns smuggling herbs, abortion has always been here. And so have the people who provided it.

Rooted in global history, folklore, and fierce scholarship, Quasebarth's book is as joyful as it is furious. She opens with a bang and doesn't let up, threading together ancient remedies (like crocodile dung pessaries), feminist saints, lost abortifacients, and the enduring power of reproductive autonomy. Want to meet a medieval Italian surgeon who secretly performed abortions in a city that banned women from medicine? Or a Qing Dynasty widow who casually asks her lover for "red flower medicine" after a scandalous affair? Or a granny midwife dedicated to ensuring reproductive control for herself and her community? They're here, and so are dozens of stories like them—buried, distorted, or erased by colonialism and patriarchy.

Don't Breed on Me is not just a book about abortion—it's a call to remember, reclaim, and reframe. For students, activists, and anyone with a uterus (or who knows someone with one), this book is both an accessible introduction and a vital tool in the fight for reproductive justice. Abortion is care. Abortion is power. Abortion is joy.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Madeline Quasebarth is a dedicated public health professional with extensive expertise in sexual and reproductive healthcare, reproductive rights, and maternal and fetal health care access. She holds a master's in health sciences from Johns Hopkins University and a master's in the social sciences from the University of Chicago, and a doctorate in public health at Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine.

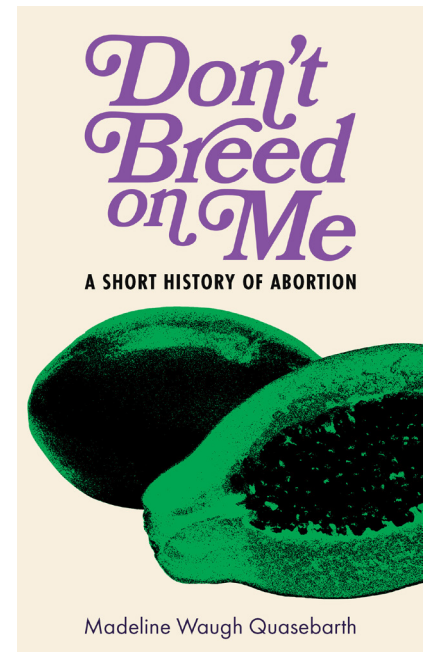
ACCOLADES

"From ancient Cambodia to contemporary New York City, *Don't Breed on Me* relates stories, legends, and rumors about abortion within historical configurations of power and social constellations of significance. Joyful and defiant in turn, Madeline Quasebarth illuminates just how abortion is not a secondary consequence of power and significance but is a central and defining principle for life, and how we want to live it. In the end, Quasebarth suggests the essential truth of abortion is not its changing meanings as a medical or moral discourse, but its necessary resilience as a crucial practice of care. *Don't Breed on Me* is a welcome reminder that abortion is here to stay, and we should embrace it."

—Mimi Thi Nyguen, author of *The Gift of Freedom: War, Debt, & Other Refugee Passages*

"In *Don't Breed on Me*, Quasebarth takes us on a journey from Chaucer's medieval tales to China during the Qing and Ming dynasties to the US during slavery (and further across the world!) to show how abortion has existed since time immemorial and always will. This short book is a well-researched introduction to abortion stories and the many lives they've touched. Even people familiar with the global histories of abortion will find something new and surprising in this wonderful little book. Quasebarth has woven a tapestry of abortion stories across space and time, and she leaves almost no corner of the world untouched."

—Karen Weingarten, author of *Abortion in the American Imagination: Before Life and Choice, 1880–1940*



SUBJECT CATEGORY
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