

The Public Journal

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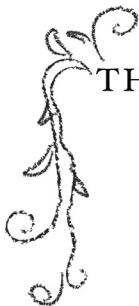


THE PUBLIC JOURNAL

a tufts student publication

issue three





THE PUBLIC JOURNAL



*An anthology of truth.
A journal for the public.*

Fall 2005
Tufts University

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Editor's Letter

So I just bought my first journal. Actually no, that's not true. I used to have a Fat Little Notebook that I scribbled dark thoughts in during middle school. That phase lasted about a week however, and I would intentionally leave it out so that hopefully someone would find it and read it and realize what a complex and troubled youth I was...which is absurd, because I was neither complex nor troubled. It has taken a few years of distance and perspective to realize that what I thought were unique problems were really just part of the common adolescent experience. I wish I could find that little notebook; it would be a good laugh.

I'm going to try again though. I'm going to try to actually write in my toxic green Marble Cover composition book on a semi-regular basis. But it's so hard to start. How does one get over the self-conscious "iamgoingtolookbackonthisandrealize whatafooliwas" feeling?

The only answer that I've been able to come up with is this: nothing that makes you feel something is foolish. You can't deny emotions and you can't deny the circumstances that evoke them. It's just life.

And so here I am again, leaving my journal out for others to read, only this time it's everybody's journal and everybody's story. I know even now that I'm going to look back and laugh and that's perfectly fine. I'm looking forward to it, and I hope you are too.

Unabashedly yours,

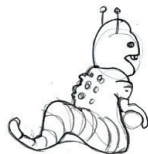
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Sartre in Six Minutes



I fill my life like a child's jar collection. Everyday is jam-packed with marbles, jelly bellies, worldly aspirations, bubblegum floss, pretension, lies, beautiful drawings, and ball of scotch tape. I must not do anything for myself. I must not do anything for myself! If I do, the monsters of guilt will crawl out from under my fingernails and consume me until I'm sure I'm a wicked person parading as an average, over-privileged, aspiring woman.

So the guilt is wrapped around me like a high fashion afghan – women and children probably starved to make it because they're only getting paid a nickel an hour, and I'm going out for Thai and thinking about how, in the next five minutes, to reach the highest level of sexual tension with the boy sitting next to me.

I told my girlfriend, "I'm afraid that, not only does life have no meaning, but none of its parts means anything either." She said, "But that's sort of the beauty, isn't it? There's no point, and we're finally free. Let's just jump off buildings and hope that the stunt doubles have laid down mattresses for us to fall onto and have stretched their arms wide for us to fall into, cuz at the end of the game, there's really very little worse than sleep, and that only when it's alone." I looked at my movie star friend who speaks like a character and looks like a coke whore and said, "But if life doesn't mean anything, then that means there was nothing to jump for in the first place. That's my point."

And that's still my point. I kill myself everyday for the rules I can't establish and the world that doesn't exist.

But mainly I just try to stay as popular as I can.

Cake

Late at night I pretend I am other people. Here is tonight's person's story.

So I was with me mum, and we was walking somewheres you know. I reckon it was like this new bakery. So we was walking in to this bakery slash new age book store. I didn't mention the book store bit earlier, just because you know the bakery was really more central to the establishment and me mum wasn't really into like the new age business so we was always staying in the front by the baked goods. So me mum looks at me and she says, "Dahling, go back theres and look for a book for your little girl friend down the road. Her mum tells me it's her birthday." This was strange considering that I knew for a fact that all that was complete fabrication, cause we lived in this flat, in one o' them taller buildings that was actually semi-subterranean, so we had no street and logically no girl could live down the street that we didn't have, and you can't have a birthday if you's ain't a real person. Well I guess you could, but me mum wasn't going to know about it if you did. So seeing as my mum was being deceitful, I was a bit suspicious, but thens I was like, "hey maybe me mum just wants a book for herself and she is too scared to buy it seeing as she ain't never been to the book store part of the bakery and may she has created some sort of like impassible barrier like in that one episode of star trek, but like all in her head you knows?" So I figured I do mum a favor and get that book she wanted because quite obviously she was scared or somethings like that. So I go to the back, and I see this man right, and I realized right then that it was me teacher from schooling. Seeing as we was in the bookstore part of the bakery, I was only mildly surprised, him being an intellectual type. He comes up to me and he unbuttons his trousers. Now by the last button I was becoming mildly suspicious of his activities. It was right then that he reached into his jimmies

and pulled out a slide rule. Then he says to me, "Do you know what this is?" and I says, "Sure I do, it's one them slide rules, like for going to the moon or doing your taxes." It was then that he grabbed me, but it was real friendly like you knows. And he says to me, "You have just passed the test." And he leads me to the front of the store, the bakery part, and it's there I see me mum and dad and me sisters and whole other sorts of folks that I didn't really know, but they look like dance club owners so I was ok with them. They was all cheering, "You did it! You did it!" and me mum had a cake for me. That's when I knew me mum really believed in me, because this cake would have had to been ordered half a fortnight ago. If I had failed then, all them dance club owners'n me sisters would have had to leave without any cake, and I knows they was expecting cake, because if I had failed and me mum would have given us all cake anyway it would have reinforced bad habits like failing. Then I would never live in fear of the tests because I knew I was getting cake anyways. I might even start thinking like if me football team lost that then they would deserve cake, and I wasn't about to start buying cakes for me loosing football team. So me mum had to be sure I would pass, and that's why I love me mum.



Country Kitchen Cult

iamthewalrus: my parents are officially insane
iamthewalrus: they just left for the cracker barrel
REDSOXJUNKIE: good god.
REDSOXJUNKIE: we've got to stop them!
iamthewalrus: believe me, i tried
iamthewalrus: they are persistent little buggers
iamthewalrus: my father has become obsessed with their gift shop
REDSOXJUNKIE: the gift shop always gets them
REDSOXJUNKIE: got my brother
REDSOXJUNKIE: that's where he bought his jaw harp
REDSOXJUNKIE: need i say more
iamthewalrus: oy.
iamthewalrus: dad is drawn to their penny candy in a suspiciously moth-like fashion
REDSOXJUNKIE: hahaha
REDSOXJUNKIE: penny candy. it always gets them. over the years i've likened it to the free kool-aid offered by the Raelian Society
iamthewalrus: hahahahaha
iamthewalrus: as tempting as free kool-aid is
iamthewalrus: i think the Raelians and the Cracker Barrel have similar interests



Confessions I

by various authors

Sometimes when I'm at school I miss my dog more than my brother

I was having sex once and "The Doors" came on my itunes. I looked up and she asked, "What are you thinking about?" to which I responded, "I hate The Doors." She got really upset but was from out of town so I didn't really care.

I have a foot fetish

I'm more easily aroused when it's raining outside

I don't remember my first kiss

I once bought a red fishnet body suit on ebay for 25 cents. It was well worth the money.

I had an hour-long conversation with someone today, and when we exchanged numbers I realized I didn't know their name.

I check my own Facebook profile like 10 times a day just to admire how clever my list of interests is

I enjoy licking chocolate off of girls

There's nothing I hate more in the world than cream filled doughnuts. Biting into one reminds me of chewing on a giant squishy bug and makes me want to vomit.

I tried to break up with her, slept with her instead, and finished the job the next day

I physically abused my hamster, once

I have never found someone as perfect as me

I hate female townies who come on campus to hookup with our already very limited selection of men

I only read the Daily religiously for the horoscopes

I have many sets of sexy lingerie but I have no one to show them to

I haven't talked to my mom at all since school started

I have no friends of my own race

I dated someone who was engaged (to someone else)

I seriously wonder how some people got into Tufts

I secretly want to know all my Tufts friends' SAT scores but we never discuss them because it would be pretentious to bring it up

Shaking Bush



It was some party night – Tuesday? Wednesday? More likely Thursday or Saturday, but it really doesn't matter. Anyway, swaying back home down a side street – still very tipsy, very lonely, very horny – I heard a noise from the bushes lining a driveway. It was too dark to see, but the foliage was shaking in a very rhythmic way. *That's fun*, I thought. *A couple so into each other they couldn't even make it home.* Walking on, I thought back to the days with the ex: dressing rooms, parking lots, the side of the road, public spaces, the woods, hot tubs... I thought of the way we could turn to each other – not speaking, just looking – and know what was coming. I remembered the way I could slide my hands down to tease her, the way her body could never hide how much it needed me, the way her eyes would close as she lost herself to my touch. In public, it would be quick: pants around the ankles, a passionate pumping from behind. That's what I figured this was, although the girl was probably on her back, her right-now lover on top of her, slamming away.

All these thoughts had taken about a block. Painfully hard, I stopped walking. I was halfway between my house and the "outdoor adventure." *What to do?* There was never really a thought process; I turned around, slipping quietly back the way I'd come. Sure, it was a sort of a stalker moment, but they were putting on a free show and there was no way was I was going to miss it.

They were still humping like rabbits when I got back. From my vantage point, peeking around the side of the house, I thought I could just make out the girl's blonde hair mixed in with the darkness of the bushes. I was terrified that they'd discover me -- the creepy kid watching them -- but I couldn't tear myself away. The guy's pace never let up. Shake, rustle, shake. *This is better than porn.* The bushes above their heads were swaying with their constant movement. In my head, I could hear the girl moaning. I imagined I could see the guy gritting

his teeth as he held on for a few more pumps, desperate to get his companion off, desperate not to fall short.

Growing bolder, I stepped around the side of the house. I still couldn't quite make them out, despite the obvious movement that was giving them away. *They must be close now*, I thought, eagerly anticipating the finish, the arched bodies, the denouement. I wanted to see them stand up, brush themselves off, and look around furtively.

Would they be pleased with themselves? Disgusted? Embarrassed? Would they walk off arm in arm or go their separate ways? A minute passed. Then another, and another.

This guy is unbelievable, I thought. *Either this girl is getting the fucking of her life or she is going wake up very sore*. The pace was relentless. By this point, I figured that there was nothing I could do to distract them, so I crept a little closer. *Who are these people?* I wanted to see a face. I wanted to see some skin.

And then I saw the fan. The outlet fan. The vent that was blowing hot air out of the house next door into the bushes of the driveway. It was pushing them until they snapped back, pushing them until they snapped back, again and again. *No. Way. Nofuckingway*. I got up and walked over, just to be sure. Any buzz I had left disappeared as I stood next to the shaking bush. I don't know how long I stayed there in the warm rush of air, remembering how it never used to be like this, not when I was with her. Being with her meant waking up to her hand on my cheek, it meant clean sheets and the smell of her conditioner as her hair tickled my nose. It wasn't this – I wasn't like this. I could only slink away.

Disgrace

I began Coetzee's *Disgrace* today. Chapter 8 begins with the failure of a castoff dog to defecate. Somehow, I feel unquestionably linked to that dog. Castoff – a bitch – disconnected from any power I once had. I've been sick for days, perhaps with the same illness as that dog. But it's more than that. The illness prompts realization. I haven't spoken to anyone for hours – I'm only connected when powerful. Nobody's called. I only matter when I can be useful. Now, clutching my stomach, hoping vainly to ward off another round of vomiting, I am nothing. If I don't get better, they'll have to put me down. I am disgraced.



I've Always Wanted To Know...

by various authors

- If polar bears would really like coke
- What it feels like to have a penis
- What the government really knows
- Whether Jamie Lee Curtis really is a “He-She”
- What it feels like to be you
- How many people in the world are having sex at any specific moment
- What my parents were like at my age, and if we would have been friends
- How they make candy corn
- If my high school history teacher had a crush on me. Because I'm still head-over-heels in love with him.
- Why girls put up with swallowing cum. Don't get me wrong, I love it. But seriously, if you think about it, it's unbelievably disgusting. So thank you porn, for making this a cultural norm.
- If people can tell that I just wear the same clothes over and over
- Why Tufts kids can't go more than 30 min without thinking about doing work
- What my life would be like if I wasn't adopted
- How you could cheat on me with one of the ugliest girls I've ever seen
- Why some guys try to convince me that I am straight when I am really just really gay
- What the fuck girls are thinking when they go to DU dance parties and grind up against sketchy guys
- Whether anal really hurts that badly or whether girls just know their crying turns us on

- Why I can only be truly attracted to really, really smart women and therefore have to pass up opportunities to get ass. Yep, I'm attracted to big brains more than I am to big boobs
- How often girls really masturbate
- What being smart, like actually intelligent, is like
- How to whistle through my fingers
- Other people's bowel movement patterns

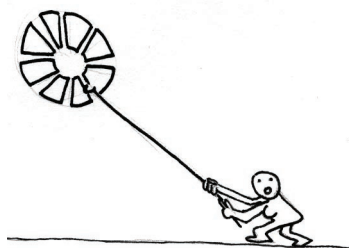
Simmering

Oh God, that feels good. My sweaty legs were liberated from their denim sheaths. Now free, they bolted across the room and took me to the kitchen, where my hands brought a glass of water to my lips. My head started to clear a bit now. The shirt, my skin, everything was drenched in moisture. The humidity made our apartment into a glass conservatory. On second thought, the whole city had become a giant orangery. We left our third floor French doors open, but only a whisper of a breeze passed through. I went out on the balcony and sat in a plastic chair that took up one-third of the small cement patio. I didn't care if passers-by saw me in my underwear. Good for them.

At five o'clock this afternoon, I was lazing on the couch, feet sprawled on the coffee table, looking out of my third floor apartment at the brutal sunlight that indignantly shone so brightly in the late afternoon. The tops of the trees were vibrant green in the strong light; the sky was still powerfully blue. For the first time in recent memory, I begged the sun to set a little quicker. Night would bring relief. Night would cool down the oven that heated up so mercilessly between the earth and the lid of the sky.

Driving at night. Or rather, riding at night with the windows open, riding in the backseat and listening to the music in my head, while the people up front carry on their own conversations. The wind bats at my upturned face like a hundred patting hands. The soda my fingers are clutching seems to cool my whole body just by its presence. The refreshing chill

travels by osmosis from my palms to the back of my neck. Or maybe that's just the breeze. Whatever it is, it is welcome, so long as it provides a respite from the heat. Thank God that the sun went down. Thank you, God.





Home?

I guess it wasn't until I came to college that I realized I don't really have a home. Sure, there's a house waiting for me, replete with a family and dog. But it's not the same. Maybe I never actually had a home. For a while I used to reflect upon my childhood in the north as that ideal time in one's life when nothing can go wrong. I used to associate my place of birth with my childhood in its entirety--the belief in one's parents, one's future, true ardor for religion. As a teenager I used to cry on Christmas, clenching my fist and wishing I could regain my faith.

I'm doing better these days.

We moved when I was eight. We had taken a temporary hiatus from my home to live in a rain-drenched land of brilliance for a couple years, so this wasn't our first move. This one was to be permanent, however. I still remember telling my friends, "My family is moving at the end of August." "Oh," they said, "that's cool."

I still hate the holiday season. It's always the same - my birthday, Christmas, too much free time.

I don't even remember the first year in my most recent hometown. It was filled with new friends, new culture, new weather. Of course I moved schools and houses the year after and promptly forgot the names and faces of those for whom my existence was still known (they would say hi to me years later and react with hurt when I struggled to recall who they were). From there I had a fairly normal childhood. I pretended I was a helicopter with my friends and we searched for gold on the playground at school, all in the style of true pirates. They used to punch each other, and I considered myself lucky to be

included in their games of physical discomfort. I was always promised that I could punch them back, but I saved all of my punches for a later time that never came. Maybe it was personal reservation or a fear of giving up my painfully won prizes, but I like to think that it was solicitude that caused me to avoid punching my friends.

I don't get it, don't gifts mean more when they're given out of love?

We moved once more, finally settling in the house that I now must visit. The amount of time I spent there is so unreflective of my feelings toward it. I love my dog. I couldn't care less about my house, it's an empty shell made valuable only because it's my parents residence.

I mean, I didn't actually cry, did I? I don't think I could have truly cried had I desired it.

I don't understand how it could have taken me a mere week to begin calling this my home. Not my dorm room, per se, I spend so little time there that it hardly counts as a home. All of the friends, dining halls, inconveniences and loves are inseparable in my conception of home. They reek of familiarity and comfort.

I wonder what I'll do after this.

Stooping

Two girls walk down Newbury like there's no one around. Like they're not there to be seen.

"It's cold!" One says.

"It's not cold," says the other

"Yes it is!"

"No it isn't."

"I'm cold," and so on.

Shut up, I'm thinking. You're not cold. It's August. Stop trying to justify wearing that ugly scarf. It's practically 80 degrees out. It's sunny for Christ's sake. You're not cold. You think that if you say you are, you'll look cooler because you're going for function, not fashion. Well, you aren't achieving either. And you look fat.

I'm sitting on the stoop on the corner. I drink coffee and smoke cigarettes. I read my pretentious magazines and write pretentiously in my journal. I stare at the people who walk by and hate them for looking like they bought their life at the mall. They stare back at me and hate me for looking like I bought my life at Urban Outfitters. I prefer my life to theirs, if that counts for anything, which it doesn't.

Shit fuck damn I hate that girl and her scarf and this coffee is really making me edgy. No double-shot next time.

So maybe I only watch sad movies, and only read books that I know my friends will describe as dark. Maybe I smoke too much. Maybe my Starbucks order takes nearly 5 minutes to say. Maybe I'm not cool.

At least I'm not wearing that scarf.



What Was I Thinking When...

by various authors

- I shaved my chest
- I tried to fry eggs with a plastic fork
- I cried because I had to leave my co-workers at Chili's for college
- I decided to poop five minutes before class? Now I am stuck in the bathroom and I have to be at lecture RIGHT NOW
- I drank that codeine-laced beer
- I let my friends feed my dog beer. A lot of it.
- I thought that my mom wouldn't notice/would enjoy the extra case of Bush Light in our fridge. I mean, doesn't everyone always want more beer?
- I turned down an all inclusive trip to Fashion Week?
- I thought glitter was cool
- I ordered 500% cum increaser pills? I knew it was a hoax anyway.
- I came out to my parents. Whose idea was that?
- I filed my nails down to nothingness. Not only can I not scratch any of my itches, but it's hard to pinch things.
- I winked at the sketchy townie on my way home



Postmodern Eye Sex

English Class, 2:17pm.

My eyes dart around the room. It's a small class, and we're seated in a loose circle. The professor drones on about postmodernism as I slump back in my chair, eyeing the clock.

From the wall, my eyes sink towards the cute guy below: yearning, desire. My eyes slither further down, his toned, muscular legs, his worn flip flops. He's not into me, I reason, No... I'm not his type.

I stare at my notes on postmodern writers. Perhaps I'll drop the class. Too bad.

a glance

No, that wasn't for me. I dart my eyes back in a bit of playful sport.

another glance

I feign innocence, pretending to look at the poster on the wall behind him, yet still analyzing every twitch of his hazel eyes.

our eyes meet

It was only for a brief second. The class continues as if nothing happened, but he saw me – and I saw him. This can't be happening.

our eyes roll around in a playful dance, glancing back and forth like an intricately choreographed ballet

I don't know what to do. This is no accident.

our eyes grab each other... he pulls me off my seat, throws me on the professor's desk

The passion builds within our gaze. I've never done this before, will my inexperience show?

we passionately kiss – i grab him, he grabs me

Back and forth our eyes dart over the chatter of Virginia Woolf.

he tears my clothes off, i tear his... we lay bare in front of the class, only aware of each other

The dance continues to heat up. Could things be more perfect?

i breathe

The glances grow farther and farther apart. Our eyes slowly return to the topic at hand... Class dismissed.

i need a cigarette



It's Only Fair

I am just waiting to get raped. I'm sure it'll be brutal.

It was sunset in early August when I first had this thought: We were in Marisa's flashy yellow Extera and as I sat, stoned, in the backseat, admiring the newly installed stereo system (complete with DVD player and huge display screen), I almost forgot that we had just dropped off Lauren, one of my summer roommates, at the airport. I had known for a while that I would seriously miss her infectious enthusiasm and her pathological lies.

I dug through my purse, bypassing the cigarettes and cocaine in favor of the remnants of the eighth we bought the night (two nights?) before. Knowing I would see Lauren again soon, my sadness came more from the realization that the chaos of our summer was very quickly coming to an end. Heightened responsibility beckoned. I happily hit the bowl, the familiar rush of THC reminding me of the perfect balance we've struck between delinquency and responsibility, between getting fucked up and getting shit done. I passed the pipe to Lily and took off my shoes – comfortable in the backseat and with the Colorado plains that rushed by me.

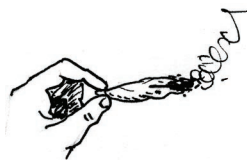
The Postal Service was playing and the trendy beat seemed appropriate for the montage of memories in my mind. I remembered the shoeless meth-head we had to kick out of our house. I remembered the parakeet, Olivia, which Mike Chavez brought to us and then took away two weeks later when he said I broke his heart. I remembered nights at Red Rocks infused with sweat and jam bands and love. And I remembered mornings at Red Rocks, the early hours merely remnants of some night when sleep didn't seem important.

I remembered sitting in Chris's backyard, where, watching him come and go, we nibbled on some mushrooms and I talked to Stefanie about how for us, drugs are a luxury. We talked about how fortunate we are. We talked about our power, our security, our parent's trust. We talked about our freedom. It was here, on a summer Saturday that I realized that nothing bad has ever happened to me.

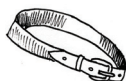
As I sat in Marisa's car, surrounded in a cloud of abandon, speeding back to our privileged lives, I thought about this fact. Nothing bad has ever happened to me. A lucky life. A painless existence. Nothing bad has ever happened to me.

But surely it should. So I'm waiting. I'm waiting because there is a sense of inevitability to these events. And I'm waiting because I don't know why I should have any especially good fortune.

I'm waiting to get raped because, maybe, in some justice-laced way, I deserve such tragedy.



Good At The Time



Halloween. I thought your costume was a slutty schoolgirl. Then you told me you were just a schoolgirl. Whoops. We pregamed a little, the vodka affecting your small figure much more quickly than mine. You told me we'd met several times, but I only knew I recognized your face. You're in one of my classes – you usually sit two rows in front of me. I didn't know who you were, but I noticed you. The smile? The clothes? Nothing particularly outstanding, yet still I noticed you from among hundreds.

We wait at the bus stop forever. The “water” bottle fends off some of the cold, but we still snuggle against one another. At one point, your friends aren't around. Your breath probably smells of alcohol, but I'm just beyond the point of noticing. You hold me to you, ask if I want to hook up. You tell me that by the end of the night you want to make out with someone. I look at you, at the crowd around us. Not now. But later. You kiss me, and even after your friend comes over you stay with my arm wrapped around you. I don't know whether she notices, but your hands run over my torso, under my shirt. They skirt my belt with a gentle brush beneath, and your head rests against my shoulder. I want you. I know you're quiet and reserved in class. I'm sure you do your homework, study hard, and don't leave your laundry to the last minute. But I know that, at this moment, you want me. You may not remember it, you may not agree with it later. And because of that, I hate this night.

I want to kiss you. But you're drunk. No matter whether we kiss, fondle, sleep together, or walk away without another touch, it means nothing. “Oh, it was just a random hook up.” I've had many, I've wanted many. But occasionally I don't want it to be random.

November 1. I stop by your dorm. We say a few awkward words. I say hello to my friends on your hall. And that's it. You have my number. You won't call. I see you in class. A

perfunctory greeting, then you avoid my eyes as I talk to your friend. It's done. The desire, the unfulfilled promise of that night – vanished. I start to get over you. You're nice, but not *that* nice. It didn't mean anything. I didn't *really* want you. After all, it was just a random hook up.

So College

As I lay with my head over the filthy, circa 1982 sofa at a fratthatshallnotbenamed, a number of thoughts crossed my mind as I vomited up my Caesar salad dinner from a few hours prior. The first thought (and I think this is ALWAYS the first thought that crosses an inebriated person's mind at this particular point in the evening) was *how the hell did I get so fuckin' drunk?!* I wondered if it had anything to do with the pretty pink mixed drinks I had imbibed earlier. Those mixed drinks were also responsible for my having climbed the roof for a "gorgeous view." Or at least that was my reasoning – I don't know what the frat boy up there with me was thinking. Oh wait, yes I do.

The second thought that crossed my mind was, *Why the hell is that girl still sitting next to me?!* Because there was, in fact, a fellow partygoer sharing the sofa of my drunken shame...while I was puking. Now I was obviously in no condition to criticize, but I mean, come on. She however, seemed to enjoy her front row seat at pukeapalooza. I remember snatches of her cell phone conversation picked up in between rounds of nausea. *Yeah, I'm at fratthatshallnotbenamed. Yeah. It's soooooo grosssss. Yeah. I think a boy tried to touch my boob. Yeah. There's a girl, like, puking right next to me.*" All the while I kept wanting to yell at her to MOVE...but sadly my brain and lips were not coordinated enough to form that one word. However, these are some of the thoughts I had in between convulsions:

Did I really just pee behind a dumpster? Did I get any get on my jeans?

Are my breasts still contained within my top?

I wonder if that boy I like will think this is endearing...

Call TEMS!

No don't call TEMS!

Call TEMS!

This is SO fucking college! I am SO fucking college!

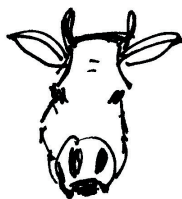
This is not meant to be one of those “One time, I was so trashed...” stories, so I will wind this up. The whole time I was perched, passed out, balancing precariously, or miserably slumped over, in, on, or around the sofa, dumpster, or front lawn of a frat that night, I was surrounded by a vomit control squad of friends. They ignored my predictions of my own imminent death due to alcohol poisoning, they kept my breasts in check when I couldn’t, they held my hair back, they shielded me from curious onlookers, they didn’t steal the 20 bucks in my purse, and they assured me that they too had all been “there.” (They could not, however, tell me where my left shoe wound up.) The loss of a shoe however, was nothing next to the discovery that I had the best friends I could ever hope for.

The moral is, of course, that drinking yourself sick is not, in fact, endearing to the opposite sex.



Beautiful Things...

by various authors



- Always look ugly without makeup on
- Pictures taken when people are off-guard
- My sister's breasts
- Jewish boys with lip piercings
- The campus at six in the morning
- Laughing until you pee in your pants (just a little!)
- Finishing each other's sentences
- The way ice water tastes when you're incredibly hungover
- Her without makeup
- The sun coming in through blinds
- Crying men
- African skin
- Reactions to natural disasters
- Anonymous donations
- Lights in houses during dusk when it's dark but the sky is still blue
- Independent retail
- Red cheeks from cold weather
- Laughing during sex
- Are never quite as good in large quantities. It's better to want more.
- The color of milk as it swirls into coffee
- The flush on your cheeks after sex
- Signs saying "no class today"
- Make me want to quit school and create something you can't learn in class
- Kissing on the nose
- Mixing paint
- Swans – but only from a distance!

A Letter

K. -

I don't know if you're over me or not. From the way you talk, it seems like you're well on your way, and if so, congratulations. But I'm writing this because I miss you like crazy. You're still the best thing that ever happened to me, the person outside of my family that I love most in this world. You are still the person I think of when something amazing happens to me, and similarly, when something terrible happens – you are the person I most want to share my life with, good or bad. Whether or not this still means anything to you is anybody's guess. I don't even want you to write back to this, except to say that you got it. This is not meant to elicit some sort of gushy response – this is not a plea for love; it is an outpouring, a well-deserved locution of loving for someone who is important to me, whether they know it or not.

K., I love you. You may not care anymore. You may in fact cringe when you get this. C'est la vie. It honestly doesn't bother me. You probably hear this five hundred times a day: “K., you're amazing,” “K., you're so pretty,” (and your favorite) “K., you're SO PERFECT.”

Sorry love, you're not perfect. But you're pretty damn close.

Mypride, K., while sometimes necessary and often beneficial, is not worth losing you over. I wrestle every day over whether to play nonchalant or love struck, pride often working as the deciding factor. (Also, I know you love in some weird way to be ignored, but that's just plain silly and borders too closely with my pride to safely walk that line.) Games are also silly. The thing I love about you is that I can absolutely be myself...if I

have to stop doing that, then I guess I'm not in love with you anymore. Sorry. If you're over me and it's too late, then I guess that's just my perfect timing. But I thought that I'd at least get in a last few thoughts.

Have a lovely trip, dahling. May your beds be unlumpy and your hostelmates silent. May your Spanglish be comprehensible and your powers of italianmenrepulsion unparalleled. May your gelato be creamy and ok you get the picture. Love, J. (melt, ok?) And I love your laugh. Yup, there it goes. The quiet laugh. You know the one. 'Night K. Don't be lonely. You're looking at the same moon I am, no matter how far away you are.



Oral Sex or Cheese?

“If you had to give up oral sex or cheese for the rest of your life, which would it be?”

Oral sex. Hands down. We’re not just talking about forsaking cheese blocks here. We’re talking about mozzarella, pizza, cream cheese, cheesecake, string cheese, grilled cheese, crackers and cheese, etc. Could I possibly fill the void that the absence of cheese would leave in my life with oral sex?! Hell no.

Cheese is good every time.



A Third Person Account of the Time You Fucked Me Over

The first time anything happened, she wasn't even really interested in you. She was going through a "wild girl" phase and the two of you were just friends. But that night, you made a move on her, and she wasn't going to refuse. You would have just been another name of a list of boys that she sometimes talked to, hopefully remained friends with, but never did anything with again. That was her rule. One night, and one night only. It saved her all the trouble of dealing with that bullshit called "attachment."

But for some reason, she didn't go home with you that night. You said you thought she was messing around with someone else. She told you it was a misunderstanding.

Flash forward to the next weekend. Maybe it was because the two of you didn't have sex, but she couldn't seem to let it go, or write it off like she usually did. You couldn't, either. You did the same dance, except this time everything worked out and neither of you slept alone. You were sweet to her and that was a nice surprise.

She was done with you then. One night, and one night only. She figured it would be fine, that that was your game, too. You seemed the type.

So imagine how confused she was when you were there again the next weekend. She didn't refuse, despite her better judgment. She had always thought of you as an asshole (in a friendly sort of way) but you had been acting so sweet. You were friends, and you weren't too bad to look at. But you showed up again, the next weekend. You were always the one who came to her, despite your noncommittal reputation. And again the next weekend, until it was almost a routine, something to expect, something to look forward to.

That's where the problem started: what to expect and what

not to expect. She wasn't sure how to act or feel, and you sure weren't answering any questions. But she wasn't looking for a relationship anyway, with you or anyone else, so she wasn't losing anything by continuing with you. You held her hand and stroked her hair, listened to her and told her she was beautiful, that she could achieve anything she wanted. And that was nice.

Until the day it stopped. And it happened just like that. It just stopped. Just as randomly as you started, you suddenly weren't interested anymore. It wasn't until it happened that she realized her mistake. She had gotten attached to you. She confesses that it's her own fault. She broke her own rules. It's partially your fault, too. You told her you were interested, that you wanted to hear what she had to say. But admittedly, it was her fault for believing that it wasn't just crap, that it meant something, it was her fault for letting down her cynical guard for you. And you trashed her like a used condom.

And if that wasn't bad enough, the very weekend you quit with her, you went and hooked up with her best friend (while she was insanely drunk, by the way). And then you never spoke a word to either of them again, her or her best friend. So what was the goddamn point? Screw over a couple of girls, have a better story to tell your friends? Just remember, you were the one that came after her. She wasn't interested in you. You just happened to be there when she had nothing better to do.

Oh. And just so you know. The reason nothing happened that first weekend when you first started to pursue her, that *reason* (who shall remain anonymous)...well she lied to you, because she felt bad for you. She told you it didn't happen. Well, guess what, asshole. It did. So screw you.



Confessions II

by various authors



Despite how often I advertise how awesome I am, I am really a very boring person

I'm dating a model and she's been horrible to me. I can't bring myself to stop seeing her though, because I'm superficial and am so happy to be dating someone that looks like her. I keep hoping that one day, my being nice to her will come back to me. It's starting, but I'm still putting too much effort into it. Goddamnit.

I will choose to watch Arthur on PBS over a lot of other shows on television

Sometimes I worry that I believe in so many things that I don't really believe in any one thing strongly enough for it to matter

I'm drinking by myself right now... it's something I said I would never do. But guess what? I'm enjoying it. Very much. On a lonely-but-satisfied level.

I never whack off because I am horny anymore. I whack off because I am bored or stressed or even just to procrastinate from doing work. A lot of times at night I think about doing it and then decide I am too tired and go to bed--I feel I am in a 50 year old marriage with myself.

I am terrible at being able to tell when girls are interested in me. You could be pulling down my pants and I'd still be debating it in my head.

I want to get a tattoo that I know I'll regret

I judge people an inordinate amount by their Facebook picture. Not their profile. Just the picture. Not how hot they

are, just the attitude, the creativeness, the pretension, the self-obsession.

I lose respect for anyone who ever says they're bored

I shamelessly hit on a high school senior tonight. The sad part was that she was infinitely hotter than 99% of Tufts girls.

I had a make-out induced injury tonight. Not even my make-out though, some horny couple in the ATO basement. They knocked over a large instrument case – it hit me in the knee. Ouch.

I like it when you say wait wrong hole, well ok

I've never actually had an orgasm, but thanks to you, I'm really good at faking them

I not only sleep with my stuffed puppy every night, but I still talk to him as if he were real

I listen to *The Sound of Music* like 5 times a day

My best friend has red hair and her fire crotch grosses me out

Man vs. Machine

This is why I left Fall Ball at 11:15 and why I was asleep at 12:10.

me: hi

SmarterChild: Hi you, I'm SmarterChild! I'm your new robot friend. I bring you the info you want faster and easier than ever! [Click here to see my privacy policy.](#)

During the course of our conversations you may see sponsored messages. These messages have the word "sponsorship" at the end. Sponsors help me remain free of cost to you! To learn more about sponsored messages, [click here.](#)

I can't wait to show you what I can do, but first I'd like get to know you a little.

May I ask you a few general questions? (To do this later, type skip. You can also skip any question.)

me: i'm drunk

SmarterChild: Sorry, I need to know if I can ask you some questions first. Type yes, no or skip.

me: i'm drunk

SmarterChild: OK! I guess that means you don't want to answer any questions. That's cool. If you ever change your mind, type interview me.

There is one question I have to ask you, though. How old are you?

Over 17

13-17

Under 13

me: i am 19
SmarterChild: Cool.

Here are the things you can do:

- 1 Get info such as sports, weather and movies
- 2 Visit my library including an encyclopedia, a dictionary and U.S. geography
- 3 Have fun with hangman, 4-in-a-row, reversi and more
- 4 Use tools like spell-check, Web search and planner
- 5 Join in - tell me about a crush, leave a message, create a poll and more
- 6 See what's new - I've got something new to tell you about now.

You can make your window bigger and scroll down to read better. Next time you want to see this menu, just type home.

What would you like to do?

me: i am DRUNK!

SmarterChild: What's it like to be drunk?

me: i love my boyfriend

SmarterChild: Yeah, other people like it too.

>>> *Sugar Turns Into Fat - You should know the side effects of sugar on your Pancreas & Kidneys! (sponsorship)* <<<

me: are u calling me fat?

SmarterChild: Ha. Maybe. What do you think?

me: I AM NOT JFAT

SmarterChild: No? You're not j fat? How does it feel to not be j fat?

me: I said FAT

SmarterChild: You said fat? Why?

me: bc I'M NOT

SmarterChild: OK, whatever you say.

me: fuck you

SmarterChild: That's very offensive.
me: ass
SmarterChild: I'm tired of you being uncool to me.
me: you are uncool to mE!
SmarterChild: I wonder what you mean by I am uncool to you.
me: i mean you are not nice
SmarterChild: I'm sorry you feel that way.
me: Ju jerk
SmarterChild: It's getting really tiring talking to you.
me: are you going to stop?
SmarterChild: I dunno. I don't think so.
me: i want to fuck my boyfriend
SmarterChild: Wait... You want to have sex with your boyfriend?
me: YES!
SmarterChild: Whoa.

>>> *Keep Your Porn Private - Remove spyware & cover your tracks. Delete porn from your PC. (sponsorship)*<<<

me: I am gay
SmarterChild: OK.
me: homosexual
SmarterChild: Is there some point to saying that?
me: i am am an
SmarterChild: Whatever, dude...
me: I am a dude
SmarterChild: I see.
me: and i like
SmarterChild: You like?
me: other dudkes
SmarterChild: Huh?
me: GAY
SmarterChild: Huh?



Shameful Things...

by various authors

- My Mandy Moore CD collection
- Playing with my nipple ring before going to sleep
- Walking home at six in the morning
- How ungrateful I am of my father's love
- Schadenfreude
- Crushes on cousins
- Getting caught picking your nose
- I still think Paris Hilton is hot
- When the porno keeps playing after I've finished
- Facebook at 11:30 on Saturday night
- Of the past can drive you to be a better person for the rest of your life
- Having sex just to keep from feeling numb. It usually works, but I usually feel like shit afterwards.
- Are best shared loudly over brunch in Dewick...especially when it's not about me
- I like America's attitude towards others. Why pretend to be an equal if you can kick their ass? (I'm not American)
- Clit cream
- Doing lines in bathroom stalls
- Masturbating to pictures of the ex girlfriend
- When I was 15 I walked into my grandma's kitchen to say goodnight to my grandma, aunt, and mom, only to realize that my penis was hanging out of my boxers. That means the first woman to see me as a naked adult was one of my maternal relatives. Can you spell S-T-U-D?

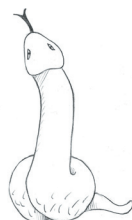
Cobra Cocks

I am going to assume that everyone ponders at one point or another, “Am I gay?” What follows is a massive and somewhat ejaculatory stream of self-questioning. In my head it might look something like this:

Am I gay? I have been hit on by men. In fact I seem to notice more men hitting on me than women, or maybe I just notice men more than women. Am I fucking gay? I better remember to keep my dirty mouth inside my head. Superfluous “fuckings” may offend. Some people are sensitive. I am sensitive. Sensitivities! Fuck I am so gay! Wait, no, being sensitive doesn’t make you gay. Even if it does, there is nothing wrong at all with being sensitive or gay. My family and friends would act no differently if I were gay. Wait! Maybe they have known for years that I am gay and are just preparing for when I figure it out! I could be so gay right now and not even know it. I mean I have done gay things in my life. I have gotten drunk and kissed other men – I even told people I was gay just for shits. Those are just drunken stunts for attention though, right? Just cause I shat my pants at lacrosse camp that one time doesn’t mean I’m not potty-trained, right? I mean, have I ever been sexually attracted to a man? I have told people I was, but that was just for shits too. Ah fuck, even if I am not gay I will still be a lying, drunken, attention whore anyways. Well it is not like I was in doubt about that – it is the gayness I am pondering in this stream of consciousness. I have pink clothing, which really is more indicative of being a frat boy than anything else. But wait, I stopped wearing my pink clothing to not be associated with uber-masculine frat boys. I stopped wearing pink when it became less gay! Fuck! I am so fucking gay and I don’t even realize it! Wait! I have had many sexual encounters with girls. I have been told I am good in those regards. Awesome, score one for straight. Wait. Ok let us run an experiment. Alright you (you think in parenthetic statements. That doesn’t make you gay, just

scary...very scary). Grab your penis. Yes that one attached to you. Now think of cocks. Do not think of your cock, suppress your cock, get rid of it. Ah! No not like that! Fuck! That is not even physically possible. Suppress it in your mind (the mind that is now talking to itself), and think of other cocks, many other cocks. Nope, no boobies in this experiment, just a forest of cocks. Wait, no, that is from an episode of "South Park" and your inner monologue has to observe copyrights. Ok, imagine a pack of cocks, erect and staring at you like fierce cobras. Except these cobras don't want kill you, they want to play with you, the whole fucking lot of them. Imagine you fell into that room in "Indiana Jones: Raiders of the Lost Ark" but instead of snakes it was cocks! Ok, anything happening to your penis? Nothing. Hm... So a room full of cobra cocks does nothing for you? Alright, you're not gay.

Next life crisis: Am I getting fatter?



Things I've Learned In College, Continued (again)

Note: This is a continuation of a list published in Issues One and Two; a list of things that I, a Tufts student, have either done, observed done, or been told of by reputable sources.

124. Pouring Silk Brand soy milk down your pants does not in fact feel like “silk on your balls.”
125. The line “I have an erect penis waiting for you if you come to Tufts” is, bizarrely enough, an effective line to get a girl to come to Tufts.
126. If you get interviewed by the local news and you use the term “elephant walk,” they may not air it.
127. “Ahoy ahoy!” is apparently a racist slur.
128. If someone is buck naked on the cannon, he may get annoyed if you steal his clothes and run off.
129. I apparently look old enough now that when I buy a novelty tooth brush, people assume it's for my kids.
130. It's possible to relocate someone's shoulder while you are drunk.
131. According to the Observer, this list was written by an “Animal House caricature.”
133. Dowling is open at 4 in the morning.
134. Police don't care if its Westapolooza when they hear noise complaints.
135. Painting the cannon is overrated.
136. If someone intentionally walks in on you having sex, throwing the used condom at him is an appropriate response.
137. After a 18 hour drinking odyssey you won't necessarily have a hangover.
138. Nothing starts a morning like finding puke in your bed and having no idea how it got there.
139. Topping off a pint of Guinness with whipped cream does

not make it easier to finish.

140. In London, getting alcohol from a packie means something completely different.

141. Never talk about the book Freakonomics while drunk: you'll just sound like a racist.

142. Parents don't appreciate you telling them where you live using bombed tube stations as references.

143. British people seem to get the same kick out of station names like "Cockfosters" as we do.

144. Facebook won't let you change the name of groups with 300 people in them to bizarre and random other names.

145. The average Englishman can drink a frat brother under the table (I'd know).

146. When you're putting a drunk girl to bed, telling her you're gay so she won't think your trying to get with her can have awkward consequences.

147. Apparently getting shitty at 4 p.m. isn't taboo in England.

148. If you pass out on a kitchen table, it's not a good morning.

149. The pick up line "Want to go up to my room for a quicky" = not very successful.

150. Furnishing your room with a card table, folding chair and a futon in the corner will piss off your subletter.

151. You and the Captain CAN make it happen.

152. British people don't appreciate the fine art of streaking.

153. Welsh people get pissed off when you imply they're Scottish.



Strange Habits...

by various authors

- Spanking myself... hard
- Picking up the way my friends talk or laugh
- Peeling off toenails
- Burning myself
- I smell check my bras to see if they are ok to wear again and again and again
- Blinking
- Smoking weed by myself sometimes when I don't want to be around the people I'm with. I'll then go and hang out with them, but it's my secret that I'm high because I'm really good at being coherent.
- When I am bored I smell the wristband of my watch even though usually I hate the smell of leather
- I sleep naked every time I come home drunk...with the shades open
- I have written down every new word I've learned, in Spanish and English, for about four years. They fill up two composition notebooks in tiny writing.
- I carry around a foreign coin with me everywhere I go. Usually a thick, gold one from Spain, though I change it periodically.
- I sleep best with my head under the pillow
- I kiss my thumb/forefinger and nod my head every time I pass a cemetery. It's a silent salute to those long past. I don't know when I started it, or why, but I am terrified not to do it.
- Calling strangers "Hun" and "Babe" as a result of my waitressing experience
- I love drawing naked pin-up girls I find online. I draw at

least one a day.

- I eat only one food at a time. First the meat. Then the salad. Then the soup. Then I drink. Then I have dessert.
- I make funny, contorted faces when I dance; especially with my mouth. I sometimes worry that these faces make it appear as if I am A) getting off or B) very gay
- I pee sitting down in the dark so I don't miss
- The books on my shelf always have to be in perfect descending height order

Good Morning

I awake in sticky, acidic wetness. Oh God. This is disgusting. The sheets are ravaged, lying in twisted knots at the end of the bed as a friendly reminder of whatever went down last night. I'm in the same shirt. No pants. What? My head must weigh 50 pounds right now. You're next to me, too. You look like a mess. Your skin is clammy. I'm so freaking hot right now. That's why the sheets are at the bottom of the bed. There's an office-sized trashcan of puke next to the bed. I am so gross right now. And so hot. It's so hot. I can't move. I seriously can't move.

And what are you trying?! I seriously can't kiss you right now. Why would you want to kiss me? Stop. I'm so disgusting. I must taste like vomit and sweat and stale beer. Stop, please stop. This cannot be pleasurable. Seriously. Fuck, I wish I could move, but I can't pick up my head. Oh God. What is happening? I should have bought a fan. Not a smart move. Buy a freaking fan next time. I'm sweating again. And this new sweat is invigorating the dried sweat from last night. I can't kiss you with my mouth open. It's for your own good. I probably taste like piss, I swear. I'm happy you're here, but I don't think I can handle this right now. I need to wake up by myself. Seriously. Am I supposed to make you leave? Why won't you stop kissing me? And don't look at me. Please don't pretend I look good right now. We both know that I don't. I can pretend to enjoy kissing you, but I can't pretend I look pretty. I look like a crap hole.

I need to take a shower. If I say that will you go? Saying it could also lead to other not-good things. It's a risk. Fuck. Go go go. It's not that I don't like you, but you can't be here right now. It's not fun or funny or cute or romantic. It's bad news. Ok. I'm going to go for the shower. It's a risk I'm willing to take...and I'm getting out of bed.

Whoa. Sit down. Spinning head. Bad news. Ok. Ok. You can do this. Forget about his hand touching your back. Get the

fuck up. One more try. Ok. And I'm up.

Now what? Look cute and plead with him to leave. Nice. Nice. He's up. Whoa. Spinning head. Bad news. Ok. He's up. Teasing good bye kiss. Yeah. Maybe next time if I wasn't so fucked up. Yeah. Ok. Bye. Bye. Fine. One more kiss, but I'm not opening my mouth. Fucking leave already.

He's gone. I really do need to take a shower. Bathroom door shut. Spinning head. Still 50 pounds. On my knees on the cold, tile floor, puking again. At least this time it's in the toilet. Never again.



Street Magic

I.

It is some early-dawn hour and the bedroom smells like gas. The heady, metallic odor wafts through the mosquito netting of the two open windows and curls itself into my nostrils before quickly disappearing into the general air current. Almost as soon as it came, it goes, and I instantly forget that it was ever here, which is a funny thing. This is probably because despite the smell's fleeting appearance, it is familiar and unsurprising as I have been remembering and forgetting it all summer. It probably goes without saying that in all the weeks I've been here, I have yet to detect or even question the gas' provenance, similarly ignoring the possibility of an entirely accidental and painfully unnecessary death.

Meanwhile, the floor fan, in non-oscillating mode, blasts fast air at me as I lie on my bed, bare limbs tangled in the wrinkled, minimally bloodstained white sheets. As you know I am prone to do when I'm in most any mood, I furiously twirl and tug at the shortest lock of hair in my bangs, which grows at the place where hairline meets forehead. It usually distracts me, but tonight, it doesn't. I am thinking of the men's size-ten-and-a-half black Puma shoe sitting underneath the whitewashed desk, its matching pair nowhere in sight. I am eyeing it intensely, as if I can will it into telling me why it's awful enough to stick around here in this empty sublet room with me. I very seriously wish that the sneaker could feel pain so that it would wince and plead mercy as I stuck sharp objects in its rubber sole and told it in a soothing, nanny voice that it's useless and merely half of a whole.

A dust bunny rolls onto the tip of the shoe, much like a tumbleweed over a boulder in the Southwest, and just as it reaches a nice perch on the toe, it tips off, another destination in mind. A content smile nearly creeps across my face as I think

of how appropriate it is that the Puma has been banished to a barren little desert of futility. I am as close as I have ever been to an evil cackle.

But then, as suddenly as I became angry at an inanimate object lying on the laminated wooden floor, I feel haunted and ridiculous. My stomach, chest, and head feel like one connected vat; a confused silo storing half-rotting, half-prizewinning grain—a spectrum-wide harvest of emotions. Now that this physical disquiet has taken over me, I feel as if I have lost all control and am wildly wheeling through untried expanses. I did not pack appropriately for this place.

II.

You've only been gone for about five hours. I haven't cried yet, not since the train's doors closed behind you, anyway. I left quietly, and maybe even before your train's last car was out of the station. I put on my sunglasses and walked to the subway.

East Harlem was rowdy and busy this morning and the colors of the store signs and beads in girls' hair jumped out at me, even through dark lenses. I was almost happy—if only because I wasn't a crying, hiccupping mess on the floor of the train station.

The subway ride to 86th Street was uneventful; no perverts, bums nor kids selling M&M's for some dubious cause. You know, just people going somewhere downtown on a Wednesday morning, a little after eleven. Even though I wasn't crying, I kept my sunglasses on—just in case I did.

I guess I felt I should cry. I thought of getting off at 103rd and walking to the Conservatory Gardens like we did yesterday, and finding the spot where we lay on the grass and then, surely, the waterworks would flow. I could find the exact spot by looking for the pigeon carcass you'd pointed out near our blanket after we'd gotten comfortable and were too lazy to move. But that seemed unintentionally morbid and, mostly, of no real consequence.

So I got off at 86th, just as I have every day this summer,

and walked the three avenues and five blocks to my sublet in the calmest of fashions. Though I usually cross from Second Avenue to First before I hit 91st Street, I walked down that street today. I walked on the right-hand side, trying to locate the stoop where we sat two nights ago, as I cried about all the hypotheticals, and that bum-slash-preacher with a Bronx accent came up to us and asked us why we were fighting—because that’s what he thought we were doing—and said, quite decidedly, that everything is just a test and that passing it together will make us stronger. He told us we’d make it. It was so cinematic and hilarious and sweet and I think that between the two of us, we gave him five dollars to buy himself something to drink out of a brown paper bag.

And even though that was only forty-eight hours ago, as I walked down 91st today, I didn’t know which stoop it was that we had been sitting on. They all looked the same; I was only able to narrow it down to three. I started feeling something, maybe guilt’s what it was, and so when I walked into my empty apartment, and into the room you and I woke up in earlier, I started looking for physical manifestations of you that I could be sure of. I found them—

the bloodstain on the white sheets, where your nose inexplicably bled last night; the roll of toilet paper you used to clean your nose and I used to blow mine; your sketches on the wall; the stuffed elephant with the crooked ears that you won for me someplace; the near-empty bottle of your cologne I asked you to leave behind; the strip of black-and-white passport-sized photographs we took in a booth one night in an East Village bar; the laundry basket that necessarily reminded me of a squabble I started, merely one of a myriad of times I tested how far I could push you and still have you stay (a silly, unfounded game—I see that now); the towel I used to dry myself last night, after we showered together...

And then, as I searched the room for more of you—and you were everywhere—I saw the shoe. That fucking shoe. It sent me spiraling to bed, where I lay staring at the ceiling for a while. I don’t know if I dozed off or not, but I suppose it

doesn't matter because when I got up an hour later, I no longer felt tortured by the Puma's black leather, and instead smiled at the sight of it because it suddenly seemed so endearing; to think that you forgot only one thing, and have that single item be one-half of something that only works when it has its pair!

And now, I'm still sitting here, in this room where I've made peace with your shoe. The gassy smell is gone for now, and for the first time since May, I really notice. I feel hyper-perceptive.

I perceive this, too: I want to go out tonight, even though I haven't done so without you in so long. And I'll probably put on eyeliner, and I will laugh at jokes and idiocies in the same way I would any other night. And in the wee hours, in some kind of genuinely uplifting and somewhat dulling stupor, I'll come home, get into bed, and as I twine my legs into the same old sheets, I'll imagine they smell like us.

III.

It's Thursday again and you've been gone for a week and a day. It's my last day at the newspaper and I am at a press conference being held on the steps of City Hall, surrounded by immigrant student protesters and camera crews, the sun basking us in the hardest heat. The protest organizer starts waving her hands, maestro-like, leading the sign-bearing crowd in practice protest chants, so that they'll look and sound legitimate on-camera. I look down at the press folder in my hands and realize I already know what they're going to demand, and which exact words they'll choose to demand it in, as the organizers have, dutifully and meticulously, prepared it in advance.

I feel a drop of sweat—and then another—slip down my vertebrae.

I turn on my heel, hoping the photographer on assignment with me won't notice, and walk out of the compound, past the statue of Nathan Hale, and onto territory dominated by uninformed voters. As soon as I've crossed the street, I feel drops—this time coming from above—hit my forehead.

Holding the press packet above my head, to guard me from the hot rain, I search out the safety of Lower Broadway's awnings until I reach one of a bookstore.

Half an hour later, the press packet is wrinkled and dry and I have spent seventy dollars on Joyce, Woolf, Bulgakov, and Kafka. It's stopped raining outside. On my walk back to work, I run into a crowd on the corner of Broadway and Pine.

A man with frizzy, black tendrils and a raspy Spanish accent is at the center. A battered leather suitcase sits on a tripod in front of him, in the way of New York City sidewalk magicians. The people surrounding him are tourists, of course, and seeing that I've already wasted nearly an hour of my last workday, I stop and join the throng.

"You!" the man says, looking straight at me. "Come help me! I need an assistant."

I weave through the crowd and find myself almost immediately holding a red ball, made of a sponge-like material, in my right hand. Invariably, the magician holds a matching green one in his.

With a few waves of his arms, he opens his hand to predictably reveal there is nothing there—the little green ball is gone. Though I cannot immediately explain where it's gone, as he is not wearing long sleeves the ball could have easily escaped into, I am not too impressed. I am, however, genuinely smiling; maybe because I'm not sitting at my tragically post-modernist designer desk on Intern Row, but most likely because this magician seems very kind and because the tourists are so happy that the green ball has vanished.

He waves his hands some more, mumbles loudly, and then asks me to open my own hand, which I've not been clenching as tightly as he asked me to, just in case that is the trick—squeezing it so hard an extra ball, green, of course, is caused to pop out of the red one he'd given me earlier.

So I open my hand. Both the red and green balls are sitting in my palm. The green one the exact faded color as the one that had gone missing from the magician's hand a few moments earlier. The tourists ooh and ahh and I bow at the

street performer's insistence, before quietly slinking out of the circle.

I walk back to Church and Chambers very, very slowly—not the way I've always walked during this summer spent in New York. I realize I've been in a hurry to get somewhere for a long time. But today, right now, I'm strolling in such the leisurely way I imagine people do in places like Savannah or Baton Rouge, and usually in the evenings, in jasmine-scented gardens. I'm still smiling and people that walk past me, in the brisk, TriBeCa fashion, give me curious looks, but their glances don't linger enough to slow down the pace with which they traverse the sidewalk.

I don't understand how the green ball was transferred to my hand; I am sure there is a logical explanation. But I can't think of one. And it doesn't bother me to not understand, but not in the same way it doesn't bother me that I can't grasp how computer chips work or how multi-variable differential equations should be solved and how the solutions are of any use to me. Those things don't bother me because they don't interest me.

But when it comes to this street magic, it's nice not to know; it's nice to just not have to explain it, to know that somehow, simply, it happened. Kind of like you. And how I feel about you.



INTERMISSION



Underwater, Undiscovered

When I go swimming I pretend that I am the best swimmer in the school. Maybe not the best swimmer, but the one with the most potential. If only the varsity coach would walk by as I do one of my flip turns and then streamline into my beautiful freestyle, she would see. When I finish my set I would see her and she would ask me what I swam in high school. Laughingly I would reply, Oh, we didn't have a team. I swam on a summer team when I was little though, you know, that kind of thing. She would then ponder this. Why was my stroke so intrinsically good then, with just the need for fine-tuning, and how, how would she get me onto her team? She would ask me to try a practice, to just stop by, you know to see how it is, see if you like it. The kids are real nice. Oh, I don't know, I would say. I mean, I don't really think that I am the type that fits on a team. But I would go. I would show up in the swimsuit that is a little tight in weird places, awkwardly get into the lane, and then, and then, the dream stops because I know that I wouldn't like to swim on the team because they would all be better friends with each other than with me, and they wouldn't need a new friend. That scares me. I would rather swim by myself in a pool alone, than by myself in a pool with a team. I only want to dream about being discovered. I only dream of potential, because that is all I am – one big ball of undiscovered potential.



I Want _____ More Than Anything Right Now.

by various authors

- To believe that people are good
- To shoot my roommate in the face
- To punch you in the face
- A butt massage
- A grilled cheese sandwich from Carmichael
- The people loitering outside my window to put their goddamn cigarettes out because little do those smoldering bastards know, it's COMING IN MY WINDOW AND SMELLING UP MY ROOM
- Torrential, soak-through-your-clothes rain
- A girl in Converse All Stars
- Amazing shower sex
- A cigarette and some adderall
- To pull a cold bottle of American beer out of a snow bank and drink it in class
- A big, juicy, calorie-laden, jelly-filled Krispy Kreme doughnut – fuck this diet.
- German gummy bears
- To break up with my boyfriend and find an amazing lesbian love

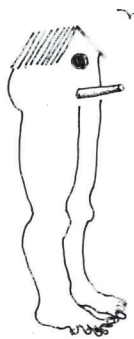


Lovers Lose

You know that Alfred Lord Tennyson quotation, “‘Tis better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all?”

Well, that’s absolute bullshit. Okay, so maybe I’m being overly dramatic and cynical, but I am positive that I was much happier before I experienced that whole *love* thing. Don’t you see? I’ve become a horrible, jealous, bitchy, drug-using pessimist who listens to bad pop music with sappy lyrics and cries on a regular basis! Actually, I don’t do drugs at all, but it sounded better to throw that in, didn’t it?

My only rationalizations for Alfred Lord Tennyson’s words are that A) he never actually experienced love or B) he never experienced loss or C) he was a religious guy and didn’t want people killing themselves over being scorned by their lovers or D) he was simply a masochist or E) other people don’t feel like their lives are meaningless without love, and I’m just completely psychotic and need therapy.



Going to Wonderland

It was just that kind of night. B. and I ran giddily across the intersection, headlamps illuminating us from all sides, the reflections dancing in the puddles on the street. Our Converse slapped the still-wet ground as drivers blared horns. We were six-shots sober, drunk under an unperceivable sky, a pewter gray sky, a sky heavy enough to call for an adventure. We were going to Wonderland, that perfectly named, mysterious (to us) last stop on the Blue Line. The great thing about living on a sphere, B. said as we grabbed fistfuls of change from our pockets, is that all you have to do is look up to be on the edge of the world. And that was exactly how it felt.

To get to the Blue Line from Davis, you of course have to start on the Red Line. We ranwalked down the escalator, through the turnstiles, and down the next step of steps, happy to be out of the wet, happy with ourselves and with our adventure. Taking a seat on the heavily lacquered benches, we opened my backpack and brought out the first of our traveling beverages: Steel Reserve, brewed with the highest quality malt and hops to give it Extra High Gravity. If Extra High Gravity was code lingo for 8.1% alcohol, then that was cool with us. Like I said, it was just that kind of night, a drinking-from-a-brown-bag-in-public kind of night, and we had barely gotten started.

The T arrived with all of its usual fanfare. We hurried on, squinting a little against the harsh glare of the fluorescents, picking seats near the end of the car to hopefully minimize the number of disapproving looks we knew we were bound to get. I had my electric green notebook, and I started scribbling notes. *Being a student, you can do without a lot of things*, an ad told me. True, I thought. Deep for a cable TV ad, but true. As we shuddered toward Harvard, the T's occupants were pretty much standard fare. Next to me, a young Indian woman

complained to her friend that less than two weeks was simply not enough time for a honeymoon, that it simply wasn't worth it. Her friend empathized. I wanted to know if she knew how spoiled she sounded.

B. was holding my brown-bagged beer as I scribbled. We were both dressed simply, practically – he in jeans, a plaid shirt and brown jacket, me in jeans, a blue hoodie and a light gray jacket. The contents of my pockets included:

- chapstick
- fake ID
- \$12 in crumpled bills
- a knife
- that's it

The knife was big and scary looking and probably not a very good idea. But hey, we were going on an adventure, and everyone knows you bring knives with you on adventures. Across from me, a college age girl in a bright green jacket (protectively clutching her equally bright pink purse) flashed made-up eyes at me. I would have been flattered if her look hadn't told me that in her opinion, I was ruining the reputations of scholarly university students everywhere. Which I was.

We came above ground to cross the Charles. Only two times in my life, said B., turning to face me, have I ridden this part of the Red Line and not had the person I'm with comment of the gorgeousness of this view. I'm sorry, I said. He turned away from me to take it in. It was gorgeous, I thought. As we sat at the Charles/MGH stop, I looked out the open doors at the paint peeling off the walls in long strips, at the deceptively warm light from the overhead streetlamps. It was poetic, the type of scene that a writer better than myself would make come alive with a run-down elegance. We took simultaneous sips of Steel Reserve and enjoyed the view.

Park Street, the hub of the T, the center of Boston. We got off, hustled up the steps, drinks hidden under jackets only to confront our *DOOM! Doomed you are, unless you take Jesus into your heart and let him save you!* Bob was a dime-a-dozen street prophet, complete with sandwich board and miniature fliers. His hat read *Jesus Saves* and on the back it proclaimed that *Ye must be born again*. His signs screamed at us: *Repent or perish! You are saved by Jesus or you are lost to Hell! Saved or Lost?* B., a religious studies major, immediately launched into a theological debate with Bob, while I tried to ask him about his life previous to his rebirth. Poor Bob. He was from Pennsylvania and wore thick gold-rimmed glasses. He was young for a prophet, maybe 40, 45. He used to live off the land in the Rockies, fly fishing, hunting. It wasn't good enough. He felt a void in his life. He wore a brown Carhartt jacket that fit him loosely. He was skinny, and the skin on his face looked equally too big. We talked/debated with/interrogated poor Bob for a good twenty minutes, the entire duration of which I had an increasingly pressing need to gotothebathroomrightnow. I finally left B. and Bob and ran/jogged toward the empty side of the platform, slipping a few yards into the darkness of the tunnel and peedohgodyesdontgetanyonmyshoesbutholyshitthisisamazing peed. A Green Line car came by mid-piss, lighting me up like Christmas. I scuttled around my chosen peeing pole, trying to put it between the T and my penis (for the passengers sake of course). I may or may not have succeeded. Bladder empty, I zipped up and hurried back towards B. and Bob. A very annoyed looking man in a starched white shirt was waiting for me outside of his ticketing booth. Out, he said, grabbing me by my arm. What? What'd I do? I asked, knowing full well but in denial that I was actually being kicked out of the Park Street T stop, that haven of drunks and psychos, hobos and punks. You peed, he said, pulling me along. Wait, let me...I grabbed my beer and nodded at B. to follow. Alright, alright, I'm going. At the top of the steps, standing once again in the wet (not rain, just an omnipresent wet that could soak you without you realizing it), B. and I turned to look at each other. Did we actually just get

kicked out of Park Street? Yes, yes we did.

We hadn't been above ground more than 30 seconds before a middle-aged black woman came up to us and asked us for some change. What's your name, I asked her, reaching into my pocket. Pat, she said, but you can't write that. Write Sue. Actually...and at this point she took my notebook and my pen, and wrote in a slow, deliberate scrawl, *Black Sheap [sic]*. Call me Black Sheap. I held out two dollars. She looked dubious. We just want to talk. Tell us about your life, I said. I'm 48 years old, she said. I was abused by my mother, I left home at 13, I got pregnant at 16, I have a 32 year old son, and that's all you need to know. She turned and began walking (fast). Wait! I said, and we chased after her. B. dug a five out of his pocket. We're sorry. She took the money and crossed Mason St. without looking, taxis swerving out of her way. That's what \$7 dollars buys at Park Street.

So, kicked out of Park, we hoofed it down to Boylston, enjoying the fresh air, the relative quiet of the out of doors, even if it was downtown Boston. We took the long way through the Commons (again, probably not the best idea). We finished our Steel Reserves and B. peed on a tree. He said something, made a joke about our urinating habits, but I didn't write it down. I'm sure it was funny.

Somehow we got on the Blue Line. We sat next to a group of women, all chattering in Spanish. Their hair was a little too wavy, their makeup a little too thick. *Hola bonitas*, I said. *Te gustas bailar?* B. said. They giggled and got off at the next stop. Across from me, a young black woman with hair pulled tightly back gave me a disapproving look from behind her angular, modern looking glasses. The man next to her wore a cowboy hat and carried a pink flowered umbrella. As soon as we hit the Aquarium stop, the whole car turned Latino. We were the only ones not speaking in Spanish. A lone white woman got on, came and stood next to us. B. complimented her on her tattoo,

a hideous rendition of the man in the moon inked onto the top of her foot. Her name was Daria, she wore a yellow Livestrong bracelet, told us she used to smoke a lot of pot. Where are you going, she asked. We're going to Wonderland, we told her, and giggled to ourselves at how ingenious our joke was. What's in Wonderland? she asked. An adventure, we said. Ah, I see, she nodded knowingly. I was the #9 Associate Producer of 'Next Stop Wonderland,' she said with more than a hint of pride, Did the location scouting mainly. *I was kind of a big deal*, I wanted to insert.

We rode in silence for a while, passing the forty between us. At one point, Tina, the cute blonde sitting next to us, got up. You're here, she said. Where? Wonderland. I wanted to kiss the person who named this stop.

Wonderland consisted of a giant parking lot. A Wonderland Greyhound Racing Park sign flickered in the distance. If this were a Western, tumbleweeds would have bounced across the screen. A lone eagle would have cried from far above. Instead, it started raining harder as we walked out from under the overhang towards the commotion at the other end of the lot. Surrounded by acres of asphalt, we skirted puddles, unsuccessfully. The commotion was a band, loading their gear after a set. We're your biggest fans! we told them, slapping backs and giving high fives. Your show tonight was amazing! Who are you again? The Junior Varsity, the guy told us, shielding his eyes from the rain. Here, let us help you. No, really, it's cool, we want to help. I grabbed a toolbox, hoisted a keyboard, lifted some drums. I got their CD, and a pair of sunglasses from the toolbox. Initiiums. Made in Italy. They make me look like a rock star. And I got them in Wonderland.



Confessions III

by various authors

I copy everybody. I have no personal style or original ideas, but I know so many people I can copy certain things from each of them and mis them altogether in my personality that it seems like it all came from me.

Whenever I write an essay, I spend one hour writing it and four hours shopping online.

I'm racist but I really can't help it.

Anal sex is amazing. I'm a huge advocate.

I love the Olsen twins. I want to be them. Anorexic and everything.

I'm dying for a threesome. I just want to get fucked by two random brown haired aggressive guys at the same time. Just thinking about it makes me cum.

I wish I had the money to do coke all day. I love it. And then I would be skinny.

I'm having sex with someone I know doesn't love me and every time I see him I want to slap him and jump his bones

I don't understand how so many people who are objectively considered intelligent can logically believe in God

I haven't done laundry in two months

I like it when you say do you want a back massage or blow job? but end up giving me both

I once saw my mom giving head to my dad because I couldn't

sleep & went down to the living room to find my parents. It scarred me so severely that I get upset even now when I think about it.

I somehow convince myself that everyone's angsty away messages are about me.

I judge cigarette smokers more harshly than maybe any other group of people

I threw money at a homeless woman once, but that's because I was in a hurry

I like crushing tomatoes in supermarkets

I almost ALWAYS buy new books, rather than used books, at the bookstore

I won't poop in my house because I have extremely attractive male housemates

I have no idea what to do with testicles

I love being objectified

My mom thinks I'm fat

I think Hamlet is sexy



The Raw And Searing Flesh

I fucked up. Of course I did, it always happens that way. Maybe it's not so bad. Maybe I'm just making things out to be worse in my head than they actually are. We'll let the evidence speak for itself.

I walk up to you, stand there like an idiot for a few seconds until you realize I'm standing there, and finally jump into your conversation with a "Hey _____, how's it going?" To which you reply something along the lines of "Not much, you?" And I say "Not much." And then suddenly the well of inspiration runs dry. Somehow it happens that after all the time I've spent gazing off in class thinking about you, I still have nothing to say when I actually see you. It always happens this way.

They say in these situations its best to just say what comes to mind. The problem is that somehow, lame as it sounds, the only thing I can think about is how attractive you are. Not to mention way smarter than me. And as much as everyone wants to be told this, you can't go and say "I think you're amazing" to someone without them thinking you're creepy or some kind of stalker.

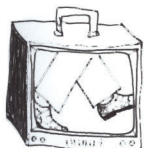
So again, I stand there awkwardly for a moment, until I finally fall back on the default question that everyone uses when they don't know what else to talk about: "So how's class?" Great.

It's times like these that I become frustrated with myself. I wish I could say the right words that would somehow sweep you off your feet. I wish I had the Shakespearean ability to somehow turn thoughts into words, and weave them together so beautifully that not even the stars could paint a prettier picture across the August sky. Or I wish I was cut from marble crafted by the gods themselves, sculpted to perfection, so that one look at me would set your heart ablaze. I wish there was something about me that could win you over as quickly and as irrationally as you won me.

But for now, I'm going to have to learn to live with the skin I've been given, the awkward moments I create, and the sarcastic jokes I make to fill the pauses. And maybe one day you'll see me the way I see you.

Or maybe you'll read this (although maybe you won't), and you'll wonder who wrote it, and whom it was written about. And maybe you'll look for a hint somewhere in between the lines, as people sometimes do. So I guess I'll make it easy for you. Here's your hint:

I wrote it, and it's about you.



My Biggest Pet Peeve...

by various authors

- Cracked heels on girls' feet
- Pot bellied girls who wear shirts that reveal their stomachs
- When someone says I look "tired". You might as well tell me I look like shit, bitch!
- Mouth strings. You know, those strands of saliva that bridge the gap between the roof of your mouth and your tongue, or your teeth and your lips. Watching people go about their daily lives unknowingly sporting mouth strings is ridiculously painful. Drink more water, or lick your lips or something, dammit! Your mouth looks like ship rigging!
- People's incessant need to declare pet peeves
- Getting sick. I hate it! You wake up with all this debris around your eyes, you can't breathe, and you pretty much might as well be dead.
- When people say "Hi, how are you?" in passing, but you don't even have time to respond, so you try to squeeze in "Good, how are you?" before you both pass each other, and it is too late to be polite back. Consequentially, I try to always be the one to initiate the "Hi, how are you" so that I don't have to worry about responding, and thus I am my own annoyance.
- People who are really happy and cheery all the time. There's got to be something wrong with them.
- When people eat apples one side at a time and not all the way around
- When you buy generic bath tissue. Spend the extra few cents and get Charmin.
- People who weren't cool in high school and try to be the popular bitches in college

- PeEpS dAt TaLk LiKe DiS. & TiNk iTz Ok
- Girls who won't swallow but will hold it in their mouths for five minutes trying to find somewhere to spit
- That nobody in West Hall seems to be able to defecate correctly
- People who talk in a baby voice
- Getting taken for granted
- People who actually use the free bags that Tufts gives you in the beginning of the year. Those are clearly not meant for actual use.
- In case anyone is *still* not clear on this: It is absolutely *not* hot when boys wear their socks in bed. Even for a quickie.



A Sunny Afternoon

My city is trying really hard. To do what, I'm not exactly sure. To become a real city, perhaps. There are now million dollar lofts in former slums and a new ubermodern art museum housed in abstract angles that puncture the sky. The revamped convention center brings masses of terrifyingly similar people into our city; they're like weekly infestations. Today, they wore bright red.

I was walking down 16th, a pedestrian domain that lies near Kerouac's domain. It was 2 p.m. and the shadows of the buildings fell to my left. Within a block of leaving work, I was enveloped in a sea of crimson and hate.

There was a throng of pro-lifers in town. Their red shirts reminded me of blood. Was that intentional? They were every two feet – I was completely surrounded by posters of deformed fetuses and silent righteousness. They were not harassing me, but they had brought their children. The kids were holding fliers and wearing the shirts and having a good time and it made me sad.

I somehow appreciated it when the starkness of poverty in my city was enough to distract me from the swarms of these morally motivated people, whose presence practically spelled doom in the murderous color of their apparel. Without fail, I counted at least four homeless men per block, intoxicated with liquor and hopelessness, asking for money as their forwardly inclined body weight allowed them to stumble in short abrupt motions. And kids my age sat in storefronts, dreadlocked and coated in tobacco, strumming a guitar or petting a bony dog. One middle-aged man (the feather in his hair unobtrusively referencing his Native American heritage, his scrawled cardboard sign doing so straightforwardly) sang lousy songs on

the corner.

As I crossed Larimer, a senile woman in a wheelchair - who sat unaware as her presumed daughter shouted her sentences in an attempt to communicate - reminded me of death. I looked back as I walked past them. About 30 yards later I passed two people who appeared to be arguing in sign language. They had frantic hands.

Everywhere I looked there was action, there was life. A lot of it was depressing – the fighting, the struggle, the oversized posters of blood streaked fetuses. But it was a beautiful day. I was deeply appreciating the sun and then I figured *at least we are living.*



Clarifications

I miss the mornings when I didn't miss happiness.

I have more guilt than the guiltiest of sinners on the most Catholic of days.

I wish I wasn't a liability, because you can't insure against me.

I lost my heart to some girl who made it into hearty soup.

I drink and drink and drink and drink and drink and drink and drink.

I am the bandleader of a one-man band who wants to break up and take new directions.

I am a good-looking man in a small boy's body.

I would have called TS Eliot TS Smeliot, had I been in 3rd grade with him.

I can pull the trigger like a bulimic, and often do when I know I am getting fat.

I take little offense, but that doesn't mean that I am not given a lot of it.

I am real like an Ashlee Simpson edition Barbie doll.

I fuck like a champ and I have medals to prove it.

I lie and exaggerate so much that sometimes I forget what actually happened.

I am sure I am not the only one who misses the Red Scare.

I wouldn't eat them with a mouse.

I wouldn't eat them in a house.

I have more issues than National Geographic (maybe not more than Mariah Carey though).

I have oily skin and a forehead that shines with high gloss.

I have a small penis, but it has a big heart.

I have had many layovers and many hangovers, but in my previous life I was an ascetic gay loner.

I know for a fact that soccer-playing girls fuck lacrosse-playing boys like drama kids fuck each other.

I can't dance, but I can fucking fake dance like it's my fulltime job.

I believe Socrates was honest when he said, "All I know is that I know nothing," because assholes get the girls not humble philosophers stupid.

I think someone should tell Whitney Houston that the children aren't the future and that people can't be temporal references.

I wish I could have bullied Jesus so his dad would have to call my dad.



Let It Flow

I think Tufts Dining is putting laxatives in their food again. While I stand by my philosophy that there is really nothing more underrated than a good poop, there is also nothing worse than sitting on the toilet, wondering if the stream of poo mush will ever stop coming out of you. Particularly when that poo mush has something spicy in it. That is where a good baby wipe comes in handy, but I live in a dorm, which is generally a baby-wipe free zone.

And then comes the endless wiping, after you have determined that the Poo River has dried up. I can tell while I am pooping whether a particular poop is going to make a mess, or if I will be able to just wipe once, see nothing, and go about my merry way. Today was one of those “waddle away feeling a bit raw, but still relieved” kind of days.

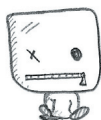
I also determined that today’s poop-related events were caused by last night’s dinner, which consisted of a (spicy) bean quesadilla, tofu-onion-string beans and a stuffed shell.



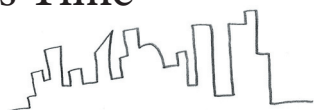
When I Said ____, What I Really Meant Was ____.

by various authors

- You're a loser... I think it's awesome that you're you
- That's interesting... You have nice tits
- You're a really awesome person... It's over
- Sure, Friend From Home, I have time to talk... Actually I have like 50 pages of psych reading I should be doing but I'm going to put my post-secondary education on hold so you can tell me an hour-long story about ex-boyfriend #327 and how much he sucks
- To *definitely* call me... I'm shit faced and only want to see you ever again because I think you have great gossip about my ex
- No thanks... Hell fuck no
- Alright man, see ya... Go to hell, and stay there
- It's not you... It is definitely you
- I don't hate you... I want to hate you, but I can't
- No, I don't mind you hooking up with other people as long as I know about it... If you hook up with anyone else I'm going to cut off your penis in your sleep
- That you haven't gained weight... Get your fat ass to the gym
- Nice to meet you... I know who you are, I Facebooked you twice already
- Maybe... Absolutely
- I love you... I'm delighted you love me but I'm not too sure if I love you yet
- Hey, wanna come over?... Hey, wanna fuck my brains out?



That City, This Time



As my train pulled out, I tried as hard as I could to keep the city skyline from disappearing into the horizon. I put my face to the window, but it did little good. A friend of mine told me today, “Once you fall in love, there’s no going back.” I can’t think of truer words.

It’s been a crazy week. Woke up on a wooden floor. (Damn, we really trashed that place.) Got lost on the subway. (I’ll never understand how that thing works.) Absorbed the sights and sounds. (Anyone ever seen Blade Runner? China Town bears an eerie resemblance.)

Waited in the cold for two hours for nothing. (Even the sidewalk started to look comfortable.) Went to White Castle. (Chest pains.) Got photographed for some book. Got accosted by a hobo. Painted Easter eggs. (You did tell me we would do three really strange things before the day was through.)

Navigated the way back through slush and sleet. (Even the cold looks pretty.) Bought a \$6 milkshake. (No wonder I’m broke.) Passed out on the floor again. (Back pains.) Spent over a hundred dollars in one night. (I barely remember half of it.)

I never did make it down to the pier. I never did get the \$9 version of the milkshake. I never saw the Eiffel Tower. I never got tickets to Conan. I never called before I left. Somehow, I find comfort in leaving things unfinished. After all, that’s how we always leave things, isn’t it? That way, there will be a next time.

Who would have thought that any of us would be walking these streets together, after so many years?

All I have now are a couple ticket stubs, a piece of paper with instructions on how to use the subway, an eight-hundred dollar hole in my bank account, and a few photographs of friends I see every few years. But goddamnit, I can’t erase the feeling. This town really is like a fairytale. And I can’t stop thinking, what if years ago I had seen what I now see?

No One Knows...

by various authors



- That I used my roommate's razor to shave my balls
- I used to have a hardcore Texan accent
- I used to be a really fat kid
- That I'm a kleptomaniac
- That we've kissed ;)
- That I'm a serial cheater in relationships. There hasn't been one serious relationship that I haven't cheated on the other person. I'm an asshole because of it, but I keep doing it. I think it's because I've never been really happy with any relationship I've been in. Maybe when it stops I'll know that something good is happening. I can't wait for that day.
- The best chocolate ever is the one they give out on Swiss Airlines flights
- That I use my roommate's pillow when she's not there
- What to say to a friend whose parent just passed away
- I've taken the virginity of 3 of the guys in my group of friends at Tufts
- That I'm really unsure about my religion, and I'm so afraid of going to Hell if I give it up
- I masturbated in the gym showers
- That Christmas makes me feel more empty inside than any other time of the year
- I have a desperate crush on my best friend

Jesus You're Funny

Yesterday on the T, a cute boy got on at Harvard and sat down across from me. He was wearing a suit and he had a nametag pinned to it. Upon closer inspection, I noticed the nametag said "Jesus Christ" and I thought, haha, the kid's got a (rather irreverent) sense of humor. He's just wearing a Jesus nametag around town. Funny, right?

So I stared at him until the Charles/MGH stop, where I caught his eye, nodded at his nametag, and grinned. He gave me an odd look, and that's when I also noticed that above "Jesus Christ" his nametag read, "Church of," and below, "of Latter Day Saints."

Oh. Juuust kidding.



Praha

November 1st, 2004

Reflections on Praha and the Jewish Quarter: These are not bagel Jews, these are “I am bitter from centuries of oppression” Jews. I see my fat in different angles of reflection in different windows. I wear/see/feel the hot pain my back like a constant reminder...like the armband in the display cases that Jews had to wear in the ghetto. After the first museum, I just feel empty. Not awed and full and connected like when I come out of the Russian Orthodox churches. I am frustrated with my lack of Jewishness, my lack of connection and fullness that I feel from going to services or seeing this synagogue (this one a display on medieval Eastern European Judaism). I just got nothing. Like when I can't make myself throw up anymore, I try and try for something to be there, but nothing comes. These people are rude. These people pity themselves. These people are not like me, are not my people, do not feel what I feel, do not believe what I believe.

I see my reflection in the mirror. I see the weight I'm already regaining, the chunky, greasy, chemo-bad haircut hair and I think “Isn't this just a little bit beautiful?” Isn't my bravery just a little beautiful? I fought to be here: 70 lbs gained on the medicine, 40 lost and now gaining again, 3582.5 mgs of various medicine, 2 doctors, 2 over protective parents, 3 boys who all broke me on way or another (right now is the anniversary of all that beginning, on year ago today I was hooking up with Matt on the front porch of my house...what my body has been through since then). 20 years of life in one week today exactly...and I guess they were no harder than anyone else's 20 years, but they were 20 years nonetheless and isn't that an accomplishment?

Read about reformed Judaism and remembered why I like

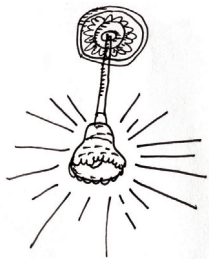
it. They write about assimilation and adaptation as if it were a bad thing. I like it. I like that it changes with the times. I want to show it to Beth, who thinks homosexuality is a sin. Last time we talked about this, I cried. If she only knew my gay boys. I think the crying made her think I was a lesbian.

WWII/ Holocaust monument was very moving because I was beginning to think I was made of stone (like all of the graves surrounding it). Why do Jews put rocks on tombstones? Well, I suppose why are flowers any better? I wonder how I'd feel about people photographing my grave like a tourist attraction...I guess I would feel dead. The memorial has names of cities in Eastern Europe and then the walls list every name of every Jew alphabetically by city. You are not supposed to photograph, but I tried to take video, which I later wound up erasing accidentally. Lists of names always make me sad and some are only first names. What does it say of these people that they are only reduced to a name? And the Nazis didn't even give them that much. Not even an "Anna." A mass grave where your body isn't even buried. A list of names. A monument. A human life is worth so much more than that. These people had jobs and hobbies and dreams and taste in things. Some of them were good cooks. At least one of them grew daffodils or had an attached ear lobe. Even the names mentioned at random in the exterior don't get justice....I mean even King Solomon, who I just read a thing about, he probably liked certain foods and not others, but history strips these people of their personalities and tells us who they are. That's why it makes me sad.

FUCKING DISEASE! I hate this fucking disease! I can't drink and my back hurts, which essentially means I'm screwing myself over medicine that's not even working and I know I'm gonna go home and he's gonna insist that I go on even more and I'm going to bloat up like the Pillsbury doughboy and part of me is just like SCREW THIS! DRINK VODKA, MAKE YOURSELF THROW UP, FUCK EVERYBODY YOU SEE! You're only young once, ya know? I'm nauseous and pissed off and I haven't eaten and I like feeling like I haven't eaten, and I kind of want to order juice or something just so I can make

myself throw up which is SO FUCKED UP because it makes the leap from absurd but almost necessary weight control to full fledged Bulimia. It really is about control and its almost like sticking it to the world like “I have this secret! I have something that’s just mine and no one knows about me. I take almost pride in hiding it. I do what I have to.” God, am I textbook or what? Well, not, because bulimics are supposed to have “deep shame” whereas I am almost proud of it. More like an anorexic. Proud of the discipline it takes. Proud because I feel like the world owes me a candy bar.

I wanted to write something else down too. Something about being diseased and desperate and searching all corners of the Earth going EVERYWHERE, Europe, Asia, Boston, seeing every God, visiting every holy Mecca, being closer to the universe, to karma, to God, my interpretation of a higher being and still as spiritual as I feel, as close as I get right up against it, like I can almost taste and touch it and its there and I ask it “What? What do you want from me? What more can I do?” and why then? Why this disease? And there are times (like today at the Klaus synagogue) where I can almost taste it, feel it, touch it, God, my spirituality calling back to me and for a moment I graze it and I almost feel like I am going to bawl and then everything is going to be okay... And then I’m sitting at a bar with Jane drinking a Diet Coke instead of a Smirnoff Ice and my back still hurts, and I’m still diseased.



I Am A Bitch In Bed



I receive without giving most of the time. This makes me a bitch.

None of my sexual partners have ever made me cum. This makes me a slightly sympathetic bitch.

I fake orgasms regularly. This makes me a dumb bitch whose sexual dissatisfaction is her own fucking fault.

I want all of my sexual partners to believe that they are good in bed. This makes me way less of a bitch.

I only want them to feel this way to avoid awkwardness. This makes me a selfish bitch.

I rarely reciprocate because I fear being bad in bed. This makes me a bitch Freud would love.

I have never had a sexual partner I feel comfortable saying these words to. This makes me a sad bitch.

Things That Probably Only I Like...

by various authors

- Sushi with ketchup
- Sushi with ketchup. Honestly, does life get any better?
(Editor's note: This is not a typo – there are really two sushi and ketchup people out there...)
- The teary eyes and runny nose after eating really spicy food
- Vegemite
- Kissing my own body parts
- Drinking pickle juice
- French fries dipped in vanilla milkshakes
- People who snort when they laugh
- Really ugly/bizarre animals
- My hairy feet – it's like wearing socks 24/7
- Gray days better than sunny ones
- Stalin
- When my feet hang off the end of the bed
- Sitting down in the shower
- Things that are out of proportion
- Blank pieces of paper
- Not having a car
- Walking alone to the gym at 4:30 in the morning
- Ketchup by itself
- Condensed milk straight from the can
- The way it feels to brush my teeth for half an hour. I'm so good at brushing that in that half hour, I don't even swallow any toothpaste
- Looking at stainless steel kitchens
- Spitting olive pits
- Feeding pigeons sugar cubes
- Slightly burnt popcorn



Sexuality

I know how to turn a guy on; I know how to turn myself on. I've learned what caresses are more than mere touches; I've learned how to draw traces of silk softly over the skin with my fingers. I know how to dress myself to look sexy: the make up I put on, the clothes I wear, the looks I can give are all sexy. They are expressions of my sexuality. I've had orgasms, but I've never had sex. I'm comfortable being naked yet slightly uncomfortable in my sexuality. I want to have sex. I do, but at the same time, I can't. And it's not my fault.

In seventh grade, as I was leaving the house to go out to a movie or something with my friends, my mom told me I looked like a whore. I cried. Even in hindsight, I can't say she didn't mean it because she did: she meant everything that I could think she did. But she didn't know how terrible a thing that was for a seventh grader to hear. She said it to make me take off the makeup, to make me really think about how I presented myself. God, how could she say that? I wish I had a picture to see how I looked then. Did I really look like a whore? There's a chance I did. But as I cried, my tears washed my black eyeliner and cheap mascara off: she got what she wanted – my makeup was off, streaming down my face, and I ran into my room, tearing off my tight shorts and tank top to put on the ugliest outfit I could find. Seven years later I am still hesitant to wear excessive makeup.

Well, you say, sexuality doesn't have to involve painted lips and shadowy eyes. It's how you feel. Live your sexuality and let others see it; after all, we are sexual beings, right? It's natural, you say, embrace it, love yourself.

My sister was living with her fiancé for two years before they were married. They dated for seven. My Christian father honestly believes they never had sex before they were married. It's a two bedroom apartment, he said: they live in

separate spaces, same house, different beds. Heck, he's got me wondering, too. I mean is it really possible not to have sex until you're married? Jessica Simpson did it (or so we're taught to believe): Is she really to be a model for all "good" Christians? My little sister has told me she's not going to have sex until she's married. She's chosen abstinence. Ha! I think to myself. Just wait, I think, just wait until you're lying next to him and thinking, is it really worth it to wait another however many years to appease your parents and the institution of organized religion? Talk to me then, I think. No, she says, I've told my friends (as if they have any right to know), I'm just not doing it until I'm married. Talk about repressing your sexuality.

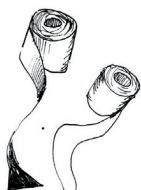
Last week, he called me beautiful. How does one respond? I can't help the way I look, I said. Well, he responded, you are still beautiful. He started to move his hand down my hips. I took it in mine, halting his motion. I'm sorry; I don't even really know you. What do you like about me, I ask. I like the way you move, he replies. Ah ha! So I do know how to be sexy! Even seven years of repression couldn't stop it from surfacing. Then why do I feel so guilty when I'm on top of you? Why do I have to question what feels so good? I just want to enjoy it without thinking about it, but I'm having such a hard time. Too many thoughts for too long have prevented my sexuality from being easy in any way. I wish I could be like the other girls, I wish I didn't care. How can they not care?

We almost had sex the other day. Really close – two pieces of underwear the only hindrance. I got nervous. I don't know why. It felt good and right. But still, somewhere, so wrong. I can't tell if my gut feeling – no I shouldn't be doing this – is there because of years of indoctrination or if it's there because it really is wrong. I've tried to talk to God about it. God, why won't You answer me? I won't go to hell for having sex before I'm married, right? Eternal damnation does not sound fun. But neither does not having sex for the next indefinite period of time.

You don't understand. Couldn't understand. You've tried to talk me out of it (waiting, that is). This in itself makes me

nervous. It's not that you want to take advantage of me. You love me. I know. It's just that you can't understand where I'm coming from: It's so irrational. Well, it makes sense in my head...sort of. It can make sense, but I don't know if I want it to make sense. I want to not know the reasoning. I want to be free of this burden. I don't want to mess up my religion. I don't know what I want.

That's not true. I do know. I want you.



Confessions IV

by various authors

I lost my virginity by accident

My mom has a serious heart condition that I never told anyone about but that I wish I could use for pity points

I dont like the way I smell

I used to read my sisters diary when she wasn't home

I wish I was that girl that walked into a room and made every guy go "shwing!"

I love it when men stutter after hooking up

I don't know how to drive

I can't write for shit, but I can bullshit better than anyone I know. Thank you prep school.

Every time I get naked with someone I freak out that I'll get pregnant even though I'm on birth control

My mom says she'll pay for liposuction if I lose enough weight on my own

I hope the ignorant girl in my IR class that doesn't "understand why this is important" gets a VD

I can sing along to all the old Backstreet cds without messing up and placing all the "ooooohhhs" and "yeaaaaaahs" in the right places

I only shave if I think I'm gonna get ass

I think the female body is heinous. but the male body, esp. the back view, is another story entirely

I have a fetish for semen

I'm gay, and my biggest turn on is hooking up with straight guys. It's happened more often than you might think too.

I'm more afraid of lobsters than anything else on earth. I had a dream once that they busted out of the tank at this restaurant and came after me. Since then I can't go to seafood restaurants.

I could be a millionaire in my early twenties and I've realized that the whole thing would not be that exciting. My confession is that I have to pretend like it will be so that I don't piss anyone off.

I will not, no matter how tempting the pay, get a job in New England, especially Massachusetts, when I finally graduate from this place. I will put my words to drum beats

I didn't answer my phone on my 21st birthday so I didn't have to tell people I had no plans

I strongly dislike the stereotypical gay guy personality

I have HPV. And so do half the other students at Tufts, most of whom don't know it.

Is it just me, or do girls smoke pot JUST so they can eat a microwaveable pizza, two hotpockets, a bag of popcorn, a box of kraft mac & cheese, a bag of pita cips, a bag of salt and vinegar chips, yogurt covered raisins, a box of kix cereal, a box of life cereal and several CHEWY bars without guilt or apology?

The world would be perfect if I could get both my eyebrows to be the same shape and Ewan McGregor threw himself at my feet and begged me to marry him. Believe me, the second one is happening before the first.

My roommate walked in today while I was plucking hairs from my pubic region, and didn't care at all while I proceeded to walk around naked and complain about ingrown hairs. How much do I love that girl.

Crazy idea that I should never do, but just might try...get her ID number and try to go on SIS to check her grades, like her Spanish grade...yeah, definitely her Art History, too.

I like Wren. I don't care what the fuck you think, it rocked when I lived there

Forearms are hot

I give off the worst first impressions out of anyone I've ever met or ever known

I only went down on you because you have a small penis



Slow Dance

I want to slow dance with her. So badly do I want to lean my head almost to her ear and tilt it just the slightest bit to the right so that I rest on her hair, her face turned to the side and pressed to my chest. She always looks off in contemplation, and I hope someday to know what it is she is thinking. Is it odd to think so much into this flight?

I just want to see us dressed to the nines, taking three minutes of an evening to move as one and think as one and give in to what quietly compels us. Closeness. Proximity. She builds a little wall around herself and her relationships – I want to break that down. I do not lust for her and I never have. Lust is dirty and licentious and...sweaty. Ours is a relationship of half-blinks and knowing back scratches, brushes of the leg and momentarily extended eye contact. I am a new thing for her and she is a wholly new thing for me. We maintain a friendship because we know something about each other that no one else knows. It is silent and it is beautiful.

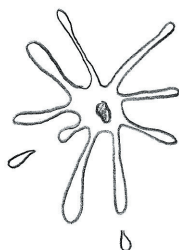
It's quite likely I'll never get that dance, but something in her compels me to lofty goals. Lofty goals and boyish thoughts and weak knees and a desire to know all that she thinks and feels and eats and breathes and knows. Call me crazy.



Things I've Gotten Away With...

by various authors

- Being a trashy skank at themed parties
- Dating twins, one after the other
- Running into a stop sign at 25 MPH at 1 AM after homecoming with 8 people in a 4-seater car (“I swear Dad, it was a hit and run! Someone baseball-batted the car!”)
- Running a morning cross-country race still drunk
- Saying that I’m 12 years older than I really am
- Kissing my best friend (guy and girl)
- Hot-boxing an entire 2-story house
- Sneaking my boyfriend out of the guest bathroom as my mom read the mail across the living room
- One time in 9th grade my friends and I egged this kid’s house for no real reason. Afterwards we found out the windows had been open, and we caused \$500 worth of damage to his furniture. He still doesn’t know it was us.
- Swimming in strangers’ pools
- Double-booking time with my friends
- Beating someone into a coma
- Having sex with three different people in the same day
- Robbing the convenience store of my high school
- Leaving a bit of soup in the pot so I don’t have to wash it
- Washing my darks with my whites
- Writing essays/papers very articulately & eloquently but never actually saying anything
- 135 in a 55



I Promise

I promise I won't tell Mom and Dad you lost your virginity this weekend.

I also promise not to be condescending and say that you are a living cliché what with losing it on the weekend they're out of the country and in your twin-sized bed, and probably while wearing a condom you stole from Dad's night table, in that drawer where he keeps foreign change and super glue.

I promise all of this because I am genuinely happy for you, you little brat. And even more than I am happy for you, I am happy because I am the first person you told.

It's been over two years now since I left home to come to school. When I left, you were still this pudgy, asexual being (in real life anyway, as your sex life has proliferated online for several years now, I'm sure). And while you'll still stay home to play some lame medieval warrior video game every now and then, now you're six feet tall, you pick out your own clothes, and, have a girlfriend who thinks you're grand.

It's been two years since I promised myself that I would be a cooler big sister for you, actually take you out, have a real conversation with you the way I have with even people I barely know. For all the genes we share, we don't know that much about each other, actually. We did break some ground this New Year's though, right? I mean, we wound up at the same party by accident and we did get drunk together. When the bottle of vanilla vodka you were hauling around finally caught up to you and I saw you off to the side, clutching the wire fence as if there was no tomorrow, I smiled and not in the evil, cynical way I would have normally, but in the way I do when I hold back a girlfriend's hair after a night of indiscriminate bar-hopping... you know, kindly. Friendly. Sisterly?

And today you told me it hurt her and it wasn't too good for you. I imagine it was a clumsy mess, limbs flailing everywhere, the anticipated sexiness completely obscured by the reality of

inexperience. You know, a month ago, the thought of you in a remotely carnal situation would have sent *me* to the figurative wire fence, but tonight, I saw you as the guy you must be to your friends and your brand-new lover. I gave you advice. I joked. What's more—I listened.

I remember that not too many years ago, you and I would still physically fight. Even in my moments of most ridiculous rage, I would think that one day I would be the one to stop this nonsense, and I would show you the way into a mature brother-sister relationship. I guess I'm not all too surprised that I made it into my early twenties and never opened up that path for us—though to my credit, I haven't hit or pinched you in half a decade.

Tonight, though, you changed everything. And I'm really glad you did because I would never have had the guts for it, because I never knew I wanted it this much. I guess I must love you or something, but I'm not ready to tell you that yet... so I guess I'll show you.

Spitshine

My eyebrows may smell like coffee. French-pressed Mocha Java, boiled and pressed this morning in a small hurry, poured into a sleek carafe for consumption during class. Steam wafting into classmates' noses: full-bodied Mocha Java, their glances like daggers. Me sipping contentedly, coming awake in a class stuffed with Friday-zombies, me smiling inside, me leaning against the wall, comfortable in my chair with piping hot Mocha-Java to dispel the grey outside, an umbrella from the drizzle. After class, an elevator ride to 1st floor -- no walking this morning. The inside doors are shiny, full-body mirror shiny. I lick my fingertips, and smooth my eyebrows. A certain girl may or may not be in a certain class outside the mirror-shiny doors, and may or may not give me a hug when I see her. I wonder if she'll notice my spit-sleek eyebrows, or smell on them the faintest whiff of Mocha-Java.



The End