

Sincerely,
Anonymous

There's that cliché saying: "the truth can set you free." But does this still apply if no one knows who you are? The truth can make a person feel vulnerable, even frightened. Yet it can also bring clarity, expression, and a sense of freedom. Through anonymity, truth can offer a greater sense of safety and the ability to be one's unapologetic self. This is exactly what "PostSecret" cultivates, creating a space where honesty is not only welcomed but protected.

Every day, strangers—people you or I may have passed on the street—send letters to this collective medium. These are not just ordinary letters, however. They arrive nameless yet carry layers of emotion, fragments of stories, and unfiltered truth, often expressed in only a sentence or two. When analyzing a collection of these letters, they reveal the very essence of what it means to be human, reminding us how varied, complicated, and relatable our hidden experiences are.

Shame, for instance, is a palpable and familiar emotion. We see this in a letter in which someone confesses, "I believe that my dead grandmother watches me with great disappointment every time I masturbate." While this produces humorous imagery, it also highlights the embarrassment we hold when it comes to our own bodies. This reflects the idea that exploring one's own body is somehow shameful and something that would bring disappointment to others, even from the imagined gaze of the dead. Many readers can connect to this, especially if their own sexual awakening was stifled or humiliated. This confession underscores one of the core truths that "PostSecret" exposes: that shame often persists not because an act is wrong, but because we have internalized the imagined judgment of others. By admitting a secret that feels isolating, the writer inadvertently reveals how common these inherited anxieties really are.

That being said, it is important to note that persisting shame can often be a feeling associated with our youth. For instance, during their babysitting days, one author reveals they would look through the homeowners' bedside drawers. After finding a packet of condoms, they

poked holes in each one to ensure themselves “another 5 years of babysitting.” This confession reveals a secret that could have ruined or drastically altered someone’s life, all for personal gain. While the author does not explicitly state how they feel, the mere act of admitting this suggests an awareness of the shame tied to such a revelation. Visually, even the colors, stains, and faded lettering seem to reflect the emotional mark left on the person who wrote it. For readers who are themselves weighed down by shame or past mistakes, this letter can serve as a reminder that they are not alone in having acted selfishly or regretfully, nor alone in wishing they could unburden themselves from the memory.

Afterall, it's fair to assume that we all wish to unburden ourselves from certain memories and experiences. Those indisputable feelings of indignity or inadequacy can especially intensify from the bad habits we form as we are consumed by these negative recollections. This very confession: “I started shooting heroin again,” exemplifies the lengths one will go to escape reality. Not only that, but this author admits a crippling and life altering secret that, at any time, could be their last. Drug use often carries an enormous burden of shame, particularly for those who struggle repeatedly to get clean. The difficulty of staying sober is further emphasized by the phrase “Do Or Die” stamped beside the message, hinting at the desperate ultimatum addiction imposes. The letter is written on a piece of cardboard with worn tape still attached, as if assembled from the scraps available within the shambles of the author’s life. It gives insight into the difficulty of addiction and the intense pressure someone feels, helping readers understand the human side of substance use.

Overall, all three of these confessions represent things most people would never admit out loud: secrets that fester, isolate, and weigh heavily. Yet by sharing them, even anonymously, readers are reminded that their own burdens and regrets are part of a larger human experience.

"PostSecret" works precisely because it allows people to recognize themselves in the vulnerability of strangers. In reading someone else's shame, many find their own experiences mirrored, proving that even our most private struggles are rarely singular.

These anonymous letters foster genuine connections that can also be deeply cathartic to both author and reader when they recount trauma. One person reflects on a childhood memory in which their friends, persuaded by a new kid, held him or her down and "took turns spitting into my [their] eyes." Two red dots in the middle of the postcard resemble eyeballs, perhaps representing how the whites of their eyes looked after the incident, or it symbolizes something greater; like the lingering anger or sadness they still carry because of this traumatic experience. For readers, this confession evokes empathy and invites reflection on our own experiences with bullying, reminding us that childhood wounds can stay with us, and that it is valid to acknowledge their impact.

It's also important to acknowledge that sometimes, one's trauma does not only affect themselves, but those around them. In another letter, written by a mother, she explains that her son "refused" to dine with her on Mother's Day unless she "gave him money for drugs." Through this brief confession, she reveals the painful, tangled relationship shaped by her son's addiction. The fact he "refused" to dine with her implies her asking to spend time with him and her persistent desire for a relationship, even as his addiction creates distance and hurt. This letter underscores how substance abuse can fracture family dynamics, bringing both awareness and empathy to the reader, as well as recognition that trauma often exists on both sides of a relationship. For the mother, sharing this truth while shielded by anonymity, may offer a moment of release, a space where she can finally articulate what perhaps she cannot say aloud to friends, family, or even to herself. The heartbreak in her confession hints at the complicated love that

persists even when addiction reshapes the people we care for. And for readers, it becomes a reminder that behind every strained relationship lies a multitude of unspoken hurts, disappointments, and hopes that continue to simmer quietly beneath the surface.

Keep in mind that despite the intensity of letters like this, readers will also encounter lighter, more humorous posts that offer a different perspective on human emotions and connections. Many submissions highlight the joy found in the absurd. And, though they are still confessions, they carry none of the shame or regret one has come to expect. Instead, they encourage readers to set aside an overly serious demeanor and embrace humor, revealing yet another dimension of human vulnerability.

For example, one author admits to throwing eggs into a neighbor's pool as a child. While this could be a simple, straightforward confession, the accompanying drawing transforms it into something playful. It shows a boy clutching eggs with a mischievous grin as they arc over a fence and splash into the pool. This letter makes light of the ridiculous things we do when we're young, inviting readers to look back on their own childhood antics and laugh. Readers come to understand that secrets aren't only burdens we carry; they can also be moments of innocence, humor, and nostalgia.

Humor is not always this innocent, however, as another postcard involves someone who still has access to their ex-boyfriend's email and secretly reads or deletes his messages. This falls into the category many would call "petty revenge." While the action is certainly not ethical per se, the confession uses humor as a coping mechanism. It highlights for readers the irrational ways people sometimes behave during a breakup—don't worry, we've all been there. In hindsight, these moments take on the kind of absurdity you'd expect from a sitcom. Though the behavior itself isn't healthy, it is undeniably funny, creating a moment of shared laughter that

connects reader and writer. That shared humor, in turn, softens the emotional intensity surrounding serious situations, turning tension into something we can actually laugh about.

Ultimately, to write a secret down is to make it tangible; no longer a fleeting thought, but something physical, inked onto paper for anyone to see. Humanity is messy, unstable, and even shameful at times. Yet these letters remind us that it is also interdependent, multifaceted, and joyous. "PostSecret" becomes the place where these contradictions meet: a communal exchange for the truths people carry but rarely dare to share.

What makes these postcards so compelling is not simply the shock value of their confessions, but the vulnerability beneath them. Each secret—steeped in shame, regret, trauma, longing, or even comedy—reveals a hidden interior world that someone has navigated privately. Anonymity becomes a doorway through which individuals can exhale and finally set down what they have carried in silence. And in doing so, they reach others they will never know, connecting to people whose names and faces are unrecognizable. Perhaps it isn't even about who reads the letter, but rather that the author is heard by someone, anyone, amid the endless number of strangers their confession is bound to encounter.

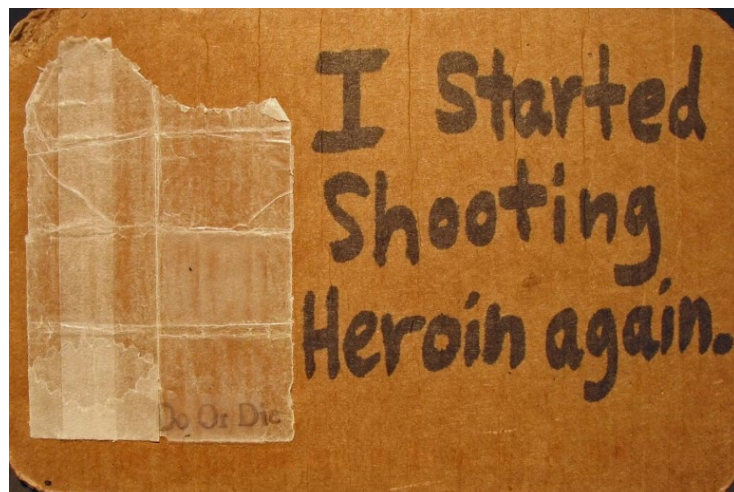
For the reader, these fragments of strangers' lives create an unexpected sense of connection. We recognize pieces of ourselves in the admissions of others, discovering that the darker, quieter corners of our experiences do not isolate us as much as we once imagined. In witnessing another's truth, we are invited to reexamine our own, and perhaps to forgive, or even laugh at, the parts of ourselves we have long kept hidden.

And so the old cliché finds new depth: perhaps the truth does set us free. Not through grand declarations or public revelations, but through the simple, courageous act of acknowledging it, even if only on a small postcard sent into the world.

I believe that my dead grandmother watches me
with great disappointment every time I masturbate.



When I was a young teenager I used to
babysit my next door neighbours
son. When he was asleep I would go
into their bedroom and go through
their bedside drawers. I found a
packet of condoms. I put a pin
through the middle of each of them,
and thus ensured myself another 5
years of babysitting.



When I was in the Fourth Grade, a new kid moved into our neighborhood.

He was a charismatic leader who quickly became popular.

Soon after, he convinced two of my friends to pin me to the ground and hold open my eyelids.

They took turns spitting into my eyes.

ON MOTHERS DAY,



MY SON REFUSED TO DINE WITH ME

UNLESS

I GAVE HIM

MONEY



FOR DRUGS





I HAVE THE PASSWORD TO
MY EX-BOYFRIEND'S EMAIL AND I GO
IN & READ AND/OR ERASE EMAILS
HE HAS NO CLUE!

We pass strangers on the street every single day as if it means nothing, rarely stopping to consider the countless secrets each person carries. This begs the question: what if we could unlock those hidden truths?

The website “PostSecret” invites exactly that. Anyone can anonymously mail a secret—whether it’s something weighing heavily on the heart or a confession long buried—to this unique mail-art project. These submissions range from humorous to heartbreaking, each one revealing a different idea of what a “secret” can be. Together they create a diverse, vulnerable space where people can finally release what they’ve held inside.

From the thousands shared on “PostSecret,” *Sincerely, Anonymous* explores seven remarkable letters, seven secrets that capture the full spectrum of human experience. Each one opens a window into a life you will never know, yet somehow understand. These stories are at once intimate, varied, and deeply human. We all have secrets; the only question is whether they’re better left buried... or uncovered.

Perhaps in reading these seven, you’ll find pieces of your own story reflected back. And who knows? Maybe you have a secret of your own to share.

