

Rachel Gundersen

Mrs Cannon

Socratic XII

5-14-2021

To my dearest problems,

Hurling toward an aspen tree at 55 mph on skis was not my intended way of spending a Saturday morning. I picked a fight and lost to a glorified stick in the ground, 4 inches in diameter. This useless twig gave me the chance to spend weeks in an all-inclusive resort known as the Intensive Care Unit, surgery after surgery, months in physical therapy, and a sweet disability parking pass.

Sometimes I find myself traipsing through an ocean of personal tragedy. As I sulked in my hospital bed, unable to move, I had every excuse to be bitter, angry, and all around unpleasant. I grew hateful towards anybody who could walk and jealous of people who could eat something other than cold chicken broth and room temperature jello.

I write love letters to my problems. Why love letters? Because brooding over broken bones won't magically fix them and complaining about my sorry excuse of a meal never changed my dietary restrictions. They go a little something like this:

To the Deer Valley aspen tree 50 yards north of the Mountaineer bridge,

I don't like you. I never have and I never will. Don't worry though, I won't come and chop you down. You still have a long life to live. Thanks for the memories and the hospital bills.

With love,

Rachel

I've learned my letters don't have to be long, just sincere. That's easier said than done when a certain class shattered my perfect 4.0 GPA but it's really all about perspective.

Dear Mr. Watabe,

I'm really good at math but I suck at calculus. Thank you for your patience and the curve.

Yours truly,

Rachel

I get in my own way. A lot. More often than I am comfortable with admitting, school was pushed to the bottom of my laundry list of to-do's. Practicing, work, my rigorous napping schedule and poor planning would leave me scrambling at the last minute, desperately needing more hours in the day.

To past Rachel,

Every Socratic discussion you showed up unprepared for never ended well. Stop telling yourself you will wake up early in the morning and finish your reading. You won't.

Love present, older, wiser, self reflecting,

Rachel

Write letters to everything that has gone wrong, everything that could have gone better, and anything that's out of your control. Life isn't about the things that happen to you, it's about your response to your situation.

To my dearest freshman research paper,

I have never forgiven you for not autosaving but I still got you in on time.

Dear computer #21,

Every time you crash it gives me a chance to appreciate when you're working properly.

To the Maeser practice room,

Talia Timpson and I don't need therapy, we just need to sit and cry on your floor every once in a while.

Dear Maeser soccer field,

I never scored a goal but my jersey means more than my stats.

Dear Stuco closet,

No matter how many times I organize you, you just seem to get messier. Thanks for being the designated Room of Requirement.

To my Senior year,

Everything that was going right went left and everything that was going up went sideways. Now that it's over, I wouldn't have traded it for the world.

There will come a time in life when more things are going wrong than are going right.

Fight the urge to write hate mail. Find joy within the chaos and laughter within the tears. I choose to fondly reminisce on my not so awesome Socratic discussions and the time I puked at Sophomore prom. I look back and laugh about the time I sat down for an orchestra concert with no music on my stand because my stand partner and I were really bad at remembering that sort of thing. Regardless of where you are, how you got there, and where you're going there will be things to hate, things to be angry about, and there will always be a reason to scream "WHY ME?" Don't. It will only get you somewhere close to rock bottom. Instead, try writing your problems a letter, better yet a love letter. Find their amiable qualities and charming quirks because one day you will realize how important they were. Eventually you'll see that your biggest problems are the source behind your best qualities. Your strength, your will, and your resilience are all reasons to write your trees (figurative and literal) a love letter.

To my dearest problems, I just wanted to say thank you.