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A series of short (ish) autobiographies

These eight passages represent the most
memorable moments in my growing up.

I

I enjoy biking. I would bike around my small hometown with my mother on cool summer nights. My hometown is small, I like it that way. Except we had to drive 15 minutes to the closest Starbucks. I'm good at public speaking, and my first pet was an orange beta fish that I named Harry Styles. I was immensely depressed when one direction broke up. I used to have a nail Instagram account where I would do different design tutorials on my nails. I hate thunderstorms. A couple weeks ago, I made my roommate sleep in my bed with me while it was storming. The first time I got covid, it was June 2022, embarrassing. Speaking of firsts, the first time I had sex he couldn't get hard, figures. I love when people come together either in real life or tv. I am obsessed with award shows they are always so chaotic. Remember when Will Smith slapped Chris Rock? I ate that shit up. I hate Anne Hathaway, sue me. I love fishing and being outdoors, especially in northern Minnesota, but I live in the big city of Chicago. I cry over stupid things and when something is wrong, no one takes me seriously. I love old films and old tv, but I hate 'leave it to beaver', I think the mom needs her own brain. Chris Farley died too young. I used to hate my name until Selena Gomez played Alex Russo on Wizards of Waverly Place. I prefer markers to colored pencils, and colored pencils to crayons. Scorpio and Leo men have treated me like shit. I'm a Libra and I have three tattoos; I hope someone will love them as much as I do one day. My comfort shows include Friends, Modern Family, New Girl, Glee, and How I

Met Your Mother. I think it's because everyone comes together in those shows, and it portrays real life situations. It helps me cope with my own. I was homecoming queen, and my best friend was prom queen. Since then, I have had confidence to be myself because I got that validation. Another form of validation I got in high school was, I was chosen to be captain of the forensics team. Speech team, not criminal science team. I am currently in my third year of college and the end is rapidly approaching. I would never tell anyone this, but I am in love with my best friend... oops. Given that, I hope everything works out but if not, I guess I will just regret every choice up until the present. I hope to move out west so I can be in nature and with the mountains. I feel like I have so many different lives that I want to live before I die. Including a writer in the mountains, a businesswoman in the city, owning a pottery store in Italy, or a small bike shop owner in a beach-front town. I enjoy biking.

II

I am a hopeless romantic. I am that way because of how the undying hope was engrained within me. My mom was single until I was 16 and we both fantasized about what life would be like with a soulmate in it. I would think about my older self-feeling safe in a man's arms, I would think about dancing in the rain, I would think about the passions of kisses. Analyzing *The Notebook* until the lines of hope were burned into my head. Burned into my head. My head was burned with trauma. I did not feel safe in his arms, we fought in the rain, and the kisses were one sided. I am tracing the footprints of my mother's life with each trip and mistake ever made. My heart has been abused by any man I let close to me and my soul has been burned by the matches I willingly gave them. Yet, I am still a hopeless romantic.

III

My dad was an addict.

So, I turned down weed the first time I saw it.

But here I am rolling a joint.

My dad was abusive.

So, that's why I fear men.

My dad is in prison.

So, I make sure to follow the rules.

My dad left us.

So, we left him.

I am okay by the way.

Don't worry.

Or do,

I don't care.

IV

Christmas time has always my favorite. The cheer and joy of the shop workers. The warmth of the lights lining the streets. The movies. The excitement when the radio stations start playing Christmas music. The family memories. Sleeping under the tree. The parties.

Christmas time has also been a time of hope. When I was little, Santa Clause was my hero, and I just wanted to meet him. I was in awe. When I got a little bit older, I would hang on to that small chance of hope that he was truly real. When the magic did end, I held onto the hope of things such as love, and happiness. In my darkest times, Christmas time has always given me a glimmer of hope.

Christmas time has taught me how to forever be a kid. As we get older, the season changes. We aren't having classroom parties with red and green cray paper. We are paying bills and dealing with the horrible adult world. Yet, during the months of November-January, we find a way to remind ourselves how to play in the snow, stuff our faces with chocolate, and eagerly open gifts. Christmas time allows us to heal our inner child.

V

Wedding vows that I will never get to say to you:

My love, I thought this day would never come. I wished on every star that crossed my path, I wished that it would be you and I in the end. It has always been us since the beginning. When you were that little boy that grew up down the street from me. We would bike back and forth to our houses, watch movies, and wrestle each other in the backyard. I wanted to tell you I had a crush on you, we were 7. My ankle broke when we got into that ATV accident, and you were so scared you almost killed me. One year later, we went to that exact spot and watched the sunset. We sat on that hill and talked about anything and everything. I wanted to tell you to kiss me, we

were 13. We got into the worst fight. You didn't like my boyfriend and was jealous. You took it out on me, and we said awful things to each other. We didn't talk for 10 months. But we sat next to each other on a field trip, and we started laughing together like it wasn't 10 months later. I wanted to tell you I missed you, we were 15. It was the summer before college, and we had both broken up with our high school significant others. We were walking on that damn country road, just you and me. Talking about our futures, we had the same dreams. I wanted to tell you that I loved you, we were 18. And here we are, however, many years later. We went from little kids on a playground, to soulmates holding hands in front of our friends and family. I promise to always love you as much as I did the first time, I saw your hazel eyes in kindergarten. I love you.

VI

Growing up in the Midwest

If you've grown up in the Midwest, you know that Target is the default place to go when bored. Snow days were the best thing to wake up to, and hot chocolate from Caribou would top it off. If you've grown up in Minnesota or Wisconsin, you know that when people "go up north" they are going to their family cabin. A day trip would consist of driving to Duluth and spending the day walking along Lake Superior and shopping at Duluth Trading Co. Field trips are to the Twin Cities to visit museums, and the sculpture garden. The first weekend of fishing and deer hunting is practically a holiday, and that's all your family talks about in the weeks leading up to it. If you've grown up in River Falls Wisconsin, you are technically from Minnesota and Wisconsin as you live 10 minutes from the border. You must travel over to Minnesota to get your

essentials for living. If you've grown up in my hometown, your graduating class was 250 people at the most. You know what the old Shopko parking lot was for, and you used to spend your summer days at the Glen Park pool. Your first date was at the Falls theater, and you were ecstatic when they put a Culvers in town. In River Falls, we were no more than a mile from our best friend's house, school, and our downtown that consisted of local coffee shops and restaurants. In River Falls, we lived the lives of a Hallmark Christmas movie and yet when we come back, it doesn't feel like it's ours. It's an empty town filled with little siblings of people we know, but not us. This was once our home, but now it belongs to someone else.

VII

Have you ever stared into the eyes of your abuser? I have. I have started into the soul of the man who claimed to have never treat me like the others than continued to be the worst of them all. I have. I have screamed into the crashing waves begging for escape. I have cried for help while being dragged by the only strand of innocence I had left. He took that. He took my youth along with the will to love ever again. He showed me fear, like my dad. He showed me that my own self is just a speck on the streets, while his Air Forces shoved me deep into the cracks of the sidewalks. He was the reason I went insane; he was the reason my life stood still while I waited for the drowning to stop.

VIII

Attachments are inevitable. Whether you are attached to people, physical items, or a time. However, attachments to the environment you grew up in hurt the most.

I woke up with the worst heart ache on the morning of moving out of my childhood home. I took one last look around the walls that had held me together at times when I wanted to collapse. I saw the grass I would lay in, and the bedroom I danced in. I wanted so badly to lock myself in that house with all my happiest memories and stay living in that time. That time of bonfires, outdoor movies, make believe. Make believe that I would never have to leave this place.

I graduated in the “pandemic class”. I don’t remember my last day of high school, but I remember my class begging to see each other one last time. Three years later, we are so genuinely happy to see each other while home for the holidays. We were the class who never got to say goodbye to the attachments of 13 years. 13 years of learning and growing together. Falling in love and falling in hatred with one another. When we first met, some of us had lost our teeth, and when we left, some of us had lost our virginities. Now we are spread across the country and even the world after being confined to one building for 13 years.

I spend my last day in my hometown with my four best friends. My heart will forever live in the time of drives, late night taco bell, sleepovers, movies, sunsets, bonfires. My heart will forever live in the time when we were all living within 5 miles of each other. A time where our biggest worry was who’s house we will hang out at that night. We held each other and sobbed when we had to let go of our grip of each other. We looked up at the stars one last time and realized nothing will ever be the same as it was in that exact moment. I stand with the conflict of the past and the future pulling at my soul.

That's the thing about relationships, they were made to give us memories. How beautifully
unfair.