

a tufts student publication

the public journal

THE PUBLIC JOURNAL

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



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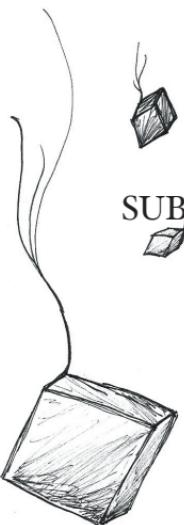


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Editor's Letter

Here's the thing.

My interests in paleontology, ballet, calligraphy, *papier mâché*, acting—as all-encompassing as they were at their respective moments in time, they were fleeting. There was no real passion the next morning; not much more than goosey skin to warm up to before kicking off the sheets.

Words, however, well, they're the ones I've always been drawn to. In more than one sense, they have come to define my life. Whether that means snuggling up to Bukowski or Gide, or penning some prose of my own—the ardor is real and hot-to-the-touch.

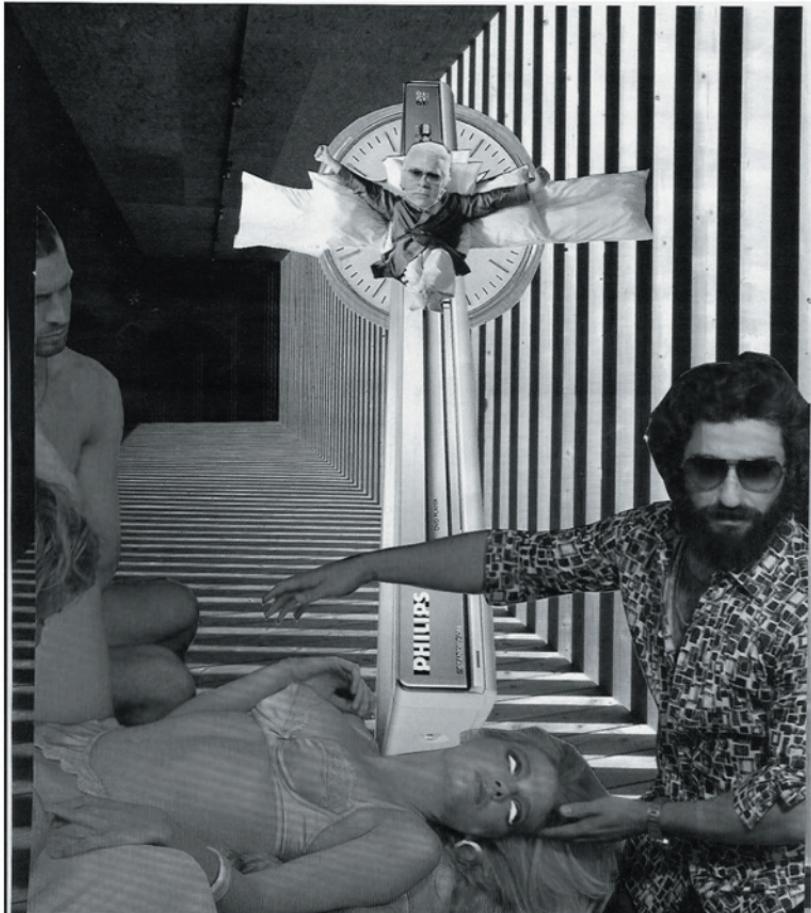
While a rare flash of inspiration will lead me to craft rather well-honed fiction, I have come to realize that my best writing is that which describes the tactile, the real, The Life. When I started this literary magazine of sorts over two years ago, I hoped that others did the same.

You did; you do.

My four years on this safe, lovely campus are quite nearly over, and I must admit—this is the *Public Journal*, after all—that in my current stage of premature nostalgia, I wanted to leave something behind that would ensure my legacy on this hill. I quite seriously considered inserting “Founded by D. Perdomo, 2004” in here somewhere for all of posterity, but then I realized that while I may have planted a seed, this forum belongs to all of us.

Fifteen, thirty, fifty years from now, I'll look back on these issues I had a hand in editing and—most importantly—writing, and I'll remember that *this is what it was like*.

Daniel



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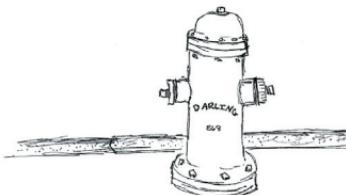


Ennui

I'm bitter and I'm spleeny and horny and bored (*so bored*), and yet I prostitute myself for popularity and I prostitute myself for posterity. I am unoriginal and shallow and I'm a drunk but it's charming and cute. And I'm going through changes, apparently, and to be honest, I've felt it, too. But it's not so much a change in as much as I'm no longer charmed enough to put up a charade.

I emerge with truisms on my wingtips and I strive and I crave not to regret and to be an idol and most importantly to get laid. In the end I'll just slowly flutter and fail, but for now, I am a tortured artist, a screaming masterpiece. I'm severely distraught. I'm different than you because I am deeply, deeply fascinating and I'm better than everybody. And I roll my own smokes and yeah, maybe I'll be gay, or I'll move to France and sit in seedy cafés.

I'm Baudelaire. I'm Rimbaud and Verlaine. I'm Mallarmé.



Soft Shards

I wake up this morning and lay in bed, talking, kissing, breathing deeply, tangling my legs in my borrowed-now-stolen sheets for hours.

Finally, he feels it is time to pull open the shade, to let the sun in. The beams shoot right through the windowpane and onto my face and upper body. I give one last luxuriating horizontal stretch, and as I do, rub my hands vigorously up and down my body, massaging, coaxing my muscles into lucidity.

Just as I am about to sit up, the ridged tips of my fingers catch themselves at my midriff. I lift my neck, barely, and strain to look at what it is.

Glistening in the nascent sunlight are several tiny shards of glass nestled in my bellybutton. I stare, unbelieving, images of a tabloid headline from my childhood flash in my mind: *Girl cries pure five-carat diamond tears.*

He has gone downstairs to the bathroom, and here I am, in utter awe of this magical little treasure nested smack in the middle of my stomach. I gingerly pick out a piece of glass, and hold it between two fingers and marvel at the impossibility of it all.

Yet here it is! Glass borne of my navel! *Vitro umbilicus!*

Who am I? What else am I capable of? I am otherworldly! I am bigger than anything I've ever known!

I am thinking all this as he walks back into the room, and sees me sitting there with a spellbound look on my face, running my finger along my sliver of glass. He gives me an amused look

as he climbs back into bed. As he does, he blocks the sunbeams from hitting my fingers for only an instant. But that instant is all it takes.

When the rays hit my fingers and navel again, I notice the delicate blue hue of the glass. With a sigh, I let my head fall back, heavy, onto the pillow.

“I fell asleep with my contacts on and one fell off during the night, found its way into my bellybutton, dried up, and fell apart,” I tell him, my voice stale.

He is all wide-eyed. “That’s definitely the most amazing story involving a bellybutton I have ever heard.”

I’ve heard better.

Ouch.

Found this today [←].

Guilt trip came running back.

I hate always feeling responsible for
relationship fuck ups.

So what if he was a little neurotic?

He was sweet.

I connected more with him than anyone before/since.

So what if he writes like a 4th grader.

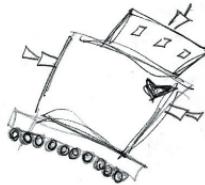
Most guys do.

Where did my new attraction to ripped
paper come from?



Things I have stolen...

By various authors

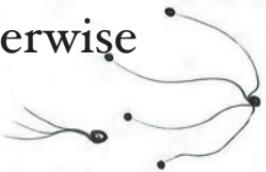


- Underwear
- A blazer from Nordstrom's
- A wife-beater I found on the stairs in Miller
- A good friend's tears
- A sweater from the laundry room
- A red, leather-bound journal from Barnes & Noble
- My brother convinced me to steal a peanut from a market when I was seven
- A teaspoon from a restaurant because it was pretty
- A lobster cookie cutter from Williams-Sonoma
- Magnets from a hardware store. I don't know why.
- Barbie clothes from my best friend's house. I was six, but that doesn't mean I wouldn't do that shit again.
- Any and all food in my dorm's kitchen while high. Then I run when asked, "Hey, isn't that my frosting?"
- I stole a little hamster from my cousin's Littlest Pet Shop collection. She deserved to have it stolen.
- When I was five, my kleptomaniac babysitter told me to steal a lemon from our local grocery store. When my mother found it in my coat pocket, I remember telling her that it grew there.
- Your ability to love. And I'm happy as hell about that because that's what you did to me.
- Viagra from my stepdad
- A plastic eye in Singapore
- A carabiner from a Spanish boating store
- A spring from the MoMA bookstore
- A medallion from a church in Normandy
- A set of chopsticks from P. F. Chang's

- Once I stole a travel-size Neutrogena Rainbath Body Wash
- A rock from my friend in preschool
- A pumice stone that came attached to a pair of jeans at TJ Maxx
- Your boyfriend
- My roommate's food
- Rice-cakes
- Office supplies
- My mother's jewelry
- Lifesavers
- Boxed wine
- More beer, sandwiches, candy bars, fruit, milk, chicken strips, shakes, and over 200 yogurts than I can count from the grocery store I worked at in high school.
- Food from a homeless shelter... just a little bit. I was pretty hungry.
- Friends' pajamas
- At work, I'll sometimes give the customer change entirely in nickels, hoping that they'll dump it in the tip jar rather than carry it around. That's not theft, is it?
- Archie comics (when I was 5)
- The "Mala educación" DVD from Hollywood Video
- My boyfriend's baby picture when I visited him at home
- Bowling shoes
- A chocolate bar from Whole Foods (because of which I am now banned from the Alewife store)
- A lip-plumping gloss from Bath & Body Works
- Chapstick in second grade. For some reason, all the cool kids had it.
- Chuck Norris Karate Glove in third grade, leather bound.
- Hand lotion from my friend's house



Conquests and Otherwise



I feel compelled to simply list things that I would like to get off my chest. These are all true facts that I am not necessarily proud of. In no particular order:

I had sex with two different girls the weekend I got back together with my girlfriend. I have a genius IQ but don't like it because now I have no excuse to suck at life. Once I was hooking up with a girl, left her to puke, and then proceeded to hook up with her again. As a high school freshman, I got a really bad report card so I told my parents it was because I was suicidal, my logic being that there was no possible way they could ground me with that excuse (*Note: Do not use this excuse, it will backfire.*) I hooked up with a not-so-hot black girl simply because I wanted to go-black and I thought that it was my only chance. I took a girl's virginity once, but was too blacked-out drunk to remember.

I wish I was anorexic (only for like two months to lose my baby fat), but I don't have the discipline. I've only said "I love you" to one girl, and it took five shots of tequila for me to have the guts to say it. I got arrested for peeing on a police officer. I once crashed my car trying to fling a live turkey into my friend's backyard (*Note: If you ever decide to do this, I strongly suggest you get out of your car first.*) As a kid my parents took out an insurance policy on me for damage caused to property (*Note: This policy was used twice: once when I knocked a glass table full of fancy shit in Sears and the other for a broken vase, for which I was blamed, for insurance purposes.*) I dated a girl I consider to be the most fucked-up individual on earth; I guess that was part of the appeal (*Note: You have only yourself to blame if a crazy girl starts acting crazy.*)

I can only really be friends with girls I don't find pretty. I

once locked a friend of mine in a chest for like three hours. I haven't cried in six years (*Note*: The closest I got was watching the Military Channel high.) I have more friends than I know what to do with so I always end up looking like a flake. In following the strategy of "win the friends and you win the girl" I ended up fucking the ugly friend, who still likes me and it makes for an awkward situation. I find Asian girls ugly as shit; they are like teenage boys with vaginas. I once was stabbed. Once I sent a person to the hospital after a fight. I used to make \$200 dollars a week in high school writing other kids' lab reports.

I hooked up with my very ugly T.A. only for the bragging rights (*Note*: Totally worth it.) I got kicked out of a Walmart once for an improvisational session of jousting (*Note*: If you ever do this, mops are way better than brooms.) I lasted two days as a Boy Scout (*Note*: I have concluded that if you are a Boy Scout past the age of fifteen, you are definitely a chronic masturbator). I wrote this entire thing in twenty minutes (*Note*: I find the *Public Journal* to be written mostly by girls that got dumped one too many times and decided to write down their frustrations in between crying, vomiting, and/or cutting themselves. This is not to say that it isn't entertaining as shit to read about how a girl watched the sun rise with a guy that "deep in her heart, she knew she would never see again." I know this has nothing to do with anything, but I just thought it needed to be said).



Not (Only) on Tuesdays

She smokes Marlboro Red 100's and drinks her coffee black. It's no secret, her uphill battle with existence. She quietly repeats, "I am a robot. Robots don't eat," and coaxes the pounds off her slim frame. Sadness accosts her in waves; it rolls across her tempestuous green eyes, not unlike fog down the San Francisco streets.

One day, when the winds were hinting at colder nights and a dark winter, she took the hourly bus to the train station and bought a ticket. The ticket cost \$7.50. She paid for it with a folded and unfolded pass from the summer and remembered how she'd gone haplessly to work then, hiding behind high-quality headphones.

"You two remind me of Hansel and Gretel."

"Excuse me? Are you talking to me?"

"Not you, to them."

The scruffy, aged man jerked his head in the direction of a tired-looking couple. The girl's short, brown hair nodded about her shoulders with the swaying train. The boy was resting his head in her lap, his feet propped up on an empty seat. She played with his ears, gently stroking them with slender fingertips.

The man got up and awkwardly walked over to them, lurching back and forth as they sped over the underground tracks.

"You two remind me of Hansel and Gretel," he repeated, lips flapping as though caught in a stiff wind. Spit crept out the corners of his mouth. The girl glanced up, looking at his knitted, blue cap and torn sneakers, before averting her gaze. The boy had opened his eyes at the man's approach and sat up.

"Weren't they brother and sister?" he asked, puzzled.

"What's that matter?" he slurred. "You never can be too sure these days, times have changed. Oh, it's different. We all dating each other; I just had to ask. Got to ask."

"She isn't my sister, she's my girlfriend," he said, pointedly.
"I don't practice incest on Tuesdays, man."

"Didn't they get eaten?" the girl asked of the stranger. "There was a witch, right? And she ate them for dinner one night."

"No, no." He started coughing, bending over at the waist and taking sharp breaths. "They killed that evil bitch. Cooked her ass in her own damn oven. Damn. Those brothers sure were grim, all right."

"Yeah, I remember that now. Hey, why did you say that? Why do we remind you of Hansel and Gretel?"

"Well, if you two were any more in love, you'd be one person," he said with a sense of finality, and went back to his seat. He got off at the next stop, never once looking back over at them.

"San Francisco. Well, what would it be without him?"

"Walnut Creek?" she suggested. He smiled and took her hand in his.



The Swipe

I simply cannot fathom doing it any other way. Indeed, this little ritual is the linchpin of the whole experience.

A swipe: a simple swipe. Front to back. Moist, cool. The quilted dampness, scented lightly of lavender and aloe vera—or shea butter, at times—renders the sensorial moment a nostalgic one.

So clean. Unsoiled.



It is unlike most any other cleansing process I know. Perhaps it is comparable to a midnight shower beneath a waterfall's torrent in some balmy place. Yet note the qualifier: *perhaps*.

There is something so inextricably twined to this special swipe; something so pleasing and comforting and necessary about it. I realize now that it is most unequaled in its ability to make me feel extraordinarily safe and *well*. Healthy.

That sliding swipe along the creviced course stays with me even when it's over. Even as the baby-wipe lands softly into the bin, with the flurry of movement that follows before I go on with the rest of my day, comes a cold, comfortable air—a fresh, gusty breath most like sucking on a peppermint—that reminds me of how essential the swipe is.



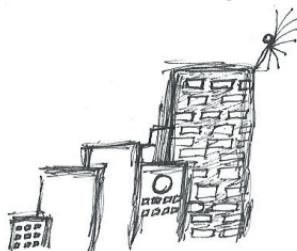
Slush

It's sunny and snowing and I feel like I'm in a snow globe. Not a very popular model though because the trees are gray sticks and there's slush in the street. But if you just look up, it's definitely a snow globe. And I'm happy to be in it, even if I know that the snow will peter out and a cloud is going to scoot across the sun and I'll be in iron-prison New England again.

Still snowing and the sky is blue now.

I almost forgot what a difference a few degrees can make. The other day it was almost up to sixty in March, and people were out soaking it up, sitting, relaxing, playing. I heard laughter from the park across the street and it took me a second to realize that this was the first time I'd heard kids' laughter since the trees dumped their leaves. New Englanders will tell you they love their seasons; they'll tell you it makes them tougher, more realistic, hardier. That's sort of like the way a guy dating a fat chick will say he likes a little padding, or someone who failed a test will say they didn't care about it anyway. Sure, whatever lets you sleep at night—I know it's just because they want to make themselves feel better. They're settling, and that's fine.

I miss bare feet. I miss my tan and the lazy sound of a distant lawnmower. Lying in a hammock watching the planes. Chlorine. The snow globe moments are good though, it makes it almost worth it. Almost. Actually, you can have it, New England. I'll be at the beach.



Confessions I

By various authors

I peed in my boyfriend's bed and tried to cover it up with water.

All my close friends are sluts.

Sometimes, when I get drunk, I look at porn and I'm not sure if I'm looking at the guy parts or girl parts... but then I just look in my mirror, part my cheeks, massage my anal walls, and say, "You're not gay, you're just liberated."

I slept with one of my sister's friends who she warned me to stay away from and never told her about it. It was not worth it and it felt horrible.

I don't mind being called a bitch.

I want the indie kid in my Spanish class to think I'm cool.

One time I went out to dinner with my know-it-all friend who looks really young. The waiter gave her the kids' menu and me the wine list. *Take that.*

My worst fear is getting stuck in a boring marriage to an investment banker who doesn't like to travel nor have kinky sex.

I hate the words "pachyderm", "moist", "ointment," and "Jacuzzi."

It's not perfect, but I love my body.

I'm aware I'm not that interesting.

When I think about the fact that I will never be able to date John Bender from “The Breakfast Club”, I become ridiculously depressed.

I know I’m supposed to love all my family members, but that one uncle is a grade-A creep and I hate him.

I’m not actually French.

I don’t ignore you because I hate you. I ignore you because I really liked you and you didn’t like me back and it hurt.

Russian guys turn me on, and I don’t know why.

I try to look like a hipster, but end up somewhere between douche-bag and homeless man.

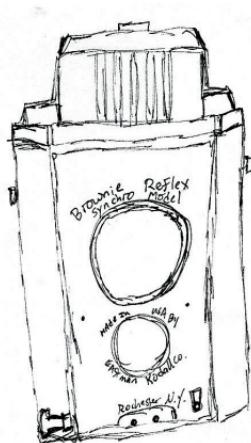
I’ve never faked an orgasm, because if it doesn’t happen I want him to know, feel incompetent, and go down on me.

I don’t belong here.

I always look in the toilet bowl before I flush.

I’m really rich.

I don’t actually like smoking.

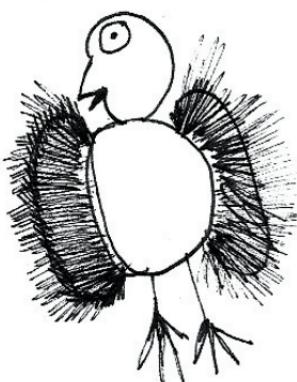


Stick Out Your Tongue

Something about a dusting of snow is magical. Oh, the grown-up part of me knows that it's just frozen water and that the ice/slush that comes afterwards is a bitch, but the part of me that is still (and shall always remain) a child knows differently.

Every flake is a tiny miracle to be caught and held on the tip of the tongue, to be savored. My insides well up and melt in response to the freeze, even to the puff of wind that smells of it. That singular feeling, bursting over and over again into either laughter or tears. I implode joyfully and readily, looking up to remember instead of forget and shoving my face inside my coat.

At times such as these, when the whiteness seduces me back into innocence, I don't want to keep the world out. Indeed, I'd love to welcome it in for tea, press it to me, let it settle in through my pores, until there's no difference between inside and outside, self and non-self. I can lay my pink heart out on the line and hope.



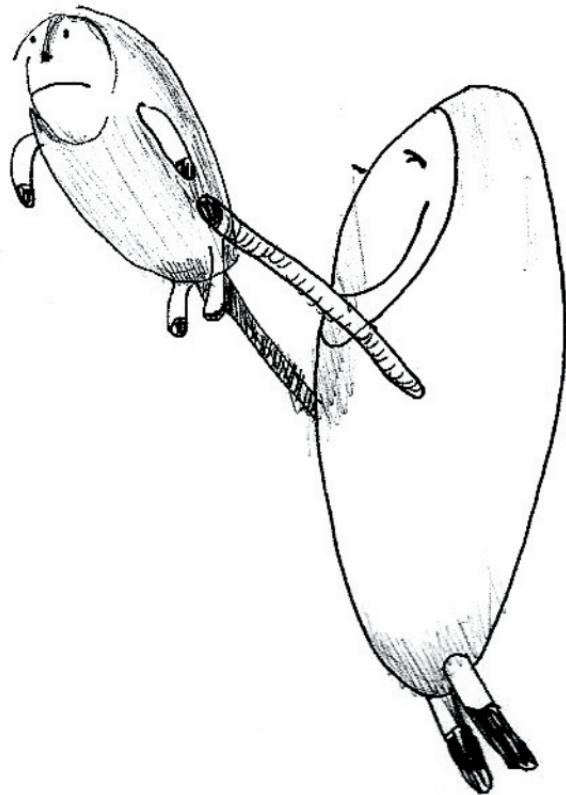
Active Citizenship



Whenever I'm not doing schoolwork or being an upstanding citizen, you can find me, a Tufts student, engaging in any number of the following things:

Taking off all my clothes and hiding in the dark bathroom for an unsuspecting victim, working out, curing AIDS, wiping out cancer, picking fucking scabies off homeless children in Ethiopia and teaching them to play the flute and shit, tutoring retarded kids in the Bronx, giving lucky pennies to old homeless guys, telling ugly people I love them, giving homeless guys ten minutes with my vagina, giving homeless gay guys ten minutes with my ass, babysitting for free and adopting crack babies, freeing hoes from pimps like Moses did with the slaves, tailoring all my old clothes to fit people with no legs, donating my legs to the legless, pretending I'm a corpse so that necrophiliacs get some joy out of their days, killing children just so I can bring them back to life, killing Jews, did I say working out?, wiping my ass with both the *Observer* and the *Primary Source* so that everyone gets some love, giving the guys that stand outside of Subway dressed as sandwiches free hand-jobs for all their hard work, stealing beer for alcoholics, serving prison terms for rapists, finding children for pedophiles, stealing schizophrenics' extra identities so they don't have to suffer anymore, putting things on strings so kleptomaniacs can steal them again and again and only get in trouble once, pretending I'm retarded and having other Tufts kids tutor me so they can feel like they're doing something with their lives, fucking up the scales that belong to people with eating disorders so they think they're skinnier, clogging the toilets in Wren Hall so they can keep having something to complain about, calling into people's WMFO radio shows anonymously so they actually think someone is listening, giving Facebook presents to *everyone* so the stupid

lady fighting breast cancer gets money and everyone has a cute little bear on their wall.





Décollage et atterrissage
Take-off and landing
Start und landung
Despegue y aterrizaje
離着陸 起飞与降落
الإقلاع والهبوط



Atterrissage forcé
Emergency landing
Notlandung
Aterrizaje forzoso
緊急着陸 紧急降落
الهبوط الاضطراري

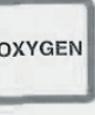


Amerissage
Landing on water
Wasserung
Amaraje
緊急着水 水面降落
الهبوط على الماء



EXIT

Ssortie de secours
Emergency exit
Notausgang
Salida de urgencia
非常口 应急出口
باب الخروج عند الطوارئ



OXYGEN

Oxygène
Oxygen
Sauerstoff
Oxigeno
酸素吸入マスク 氧气供应
الإلكتروجين

*thank god planes float like
ducks in water!!!*



OXYGEN

PARISIAN HOLIDAY

FOR LITTLE MORE THAN THE COST
OF AN ORDINARY VACATION



Last day—"Au Revoir, Paris".
The vacation of a lifetime at
a price that says, "Go now!"

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your com
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Street _____

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mental jets—enjoy



Make every minute count. For
example, leave New York 7
P.M. in hours—you're over Paris!



Stroll along beautiful
yards—the tourist rush
See France at its

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Comfort



Last night, I wore my brother's oversized, long-sleeved T-shirt out. It wasn't even especially warm. The cold outside iced my body, iced the shirt. I don't even know why I wore it. We're not even that close, in the normal sense of the word. But sometimes, when it's too cold, I need something. Not heat. That would feel too easy. Maybe something that gives the illusion of warmth, makes me feel a little removed. I get that feeling, where you need someone—anyone—to be around and see you hugging your knees to your chest at twelve o'clock at night in your brother's abandoned bedroom.

It's always cold. But sometimes the cold is brilliant. And you wish you could stay there, picturing yourself as some tragic, misunderstood heroine, maybe some coked-up version of Snow White, minus the coke. Almost like your real life is being taped by a hidden camera for one of those teen soap operas. You're the tormented star, and the beauty of your plight is that even when things work out, it's still just so damned tragic. And when those chords of the show's theme song come on, deep music that'll make you feel something, it just gets you. Completely. Makes everything worth it for those three seconds where that music hits you and it's okay to not know why you can't make yourself happy, or worse, *why you don't want to*.

I got to thinking that I destroy everything I love. Take Mushy. My beautiful pink Gund polar bear. In actuality, she hasn't even been pink in twelve years, and I hardly think anyone who would lay eyes on her today would say she's beautiful. I used to sleep with her every night. I like to think that her dirty brown coat shows she's loved. The best example of this is Blanky. It looks as if it has swirled through sixty-three tornadoes.

Patriarch



When I was growing up, one of my stepmother's greatest fears was leaving the house alone with my father while she went on a business trip. It was not that my father was negligent, he just had the tendency to sleep through everything. It's sort of a family tradition. If I am not mistaken, he and my cousin were robbed in their sleep. The thieves took everything except the bed they were sleeping on. One time, he slept through a Wilco concert. It was actually kind of impressive.

As I helped my stepmom with her luggage, she told me to watch over everything while she was gone and to call her with an update every evening. I told her there was nothing to worry about, that my father was perfectly capable of running the house while she was gone. After giving me a worried look, I saw her off and re-entered the house. Sitting at the kitchen table in his plaid pajama bottoms, my father was eating a bowl of Cheerios and drinking a glass of Pinot Grigio. I looked at the clock: 11:26 a.m.

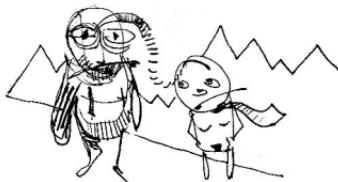
Despite my father's apparent disregard for the noon drinking rule, the first few days of my stepmother's absence passed uneventfully. Indeed, my father exhibited incredible responsibility. He would wake up early, dress my sister up for school, and take her to the bus. On the fourth night, however, my father's loud cursing woke me. I found him standing at the front door in his underwear, wrestling with a German shepherd.

"Who let the dog out of the house?" he asked, voice raised.

Perplexed, I did not know how to respond. “We don’t have a dog, Dad.”

My father stood motionless in the entryway of our house, his brow furrowed. Without further discourse, he pushed the “dirty mutt” out the front door. We stood there, both silent, for a minute or so. Then he walked past me back to bed.

To this day, I remind my father of this event, but he does not remember it. Or he is feigning amnesia. In any case, it conveys his inattention to day-to-day life. (Why didn’t he notice the absence of a dog in our household?) I’ll never know why his thought process faltered—perhaps it is a sign of impending senility. Though discouraging, it makes living with my father that much more exciting.



The best smell in the world is...

By various authors

- My boyfriend's sweaty shirts
- Garlic being sautéed in olive oil
- Sunscreen
- Freshly laundered clothes. On people, too.
- The smell of burning wood outside
- My boyfriend's neck
- Dryer vents
- Skin after a day in the sun
- Burned bacon
- Marshmallows
- Boys' hair
- A field of lavender in the early morning. And bodies having sex, of course.
- D&G Masculine
- My girlfriend's vagina
- The right side of my neck, right below the pointy part of my jaw
- Vanilla chai tea
- Curry
- Jasmine blossoms on a hot summer day
- Pancakes and bacon on Sunday mornings (not in Dewick)
- Cookies
- The ocean, especially when you've already driven back home, but your car still smells salty
- Fresh-cut grass
- My farts
- Gasoline stations
- Almonds
- Weed



Cheese-Grating a Cat

I wish I were a singer. This isn't some viable path I could have taken but didn't. I've never had any training. I always fancied myself a good singer. I still do. Yes, my range is mediocre, and my stage presence is hampered somewhat by my crippling uncertainty as to whether or not I'm singing off-key, but I feel I could be a great singer.

I last sang onstage at the high school talent show. I'm not sure if that even counts. The parents cheered, but then again, they also cheered for the girl whose rendition of "Do You Believe in Magic (High School Musical Version)" consisted of her sinking to her knees, sobbing. Still, I'm sure I'd be a great lead singer. I have the megalomaniacal certainty that I am the greatest genius that ever lived. That must count for something, right?

When my roommate is out taking classes in Bridge Engineering or whatever, I'll be overcome by the urge to sing. I'll lock the door, stand in front of the one-by-two-foot mirror, grip my make-believe microphone, and sing whatever comes up on iTunes.

I can't sing too loud, though, my neighbor might hear me—the guy's a musical fucking genius. His self-deprecation doesn't fool me. He knows how to read music and can even play piano stuff on his guitar. If he hears me, I'm done for. He'll detect every single inflection gone wrong. It'll be as discordant to him as taking a cheese grater to a cat. He'll hear, and he won't tell anyone, ashamed for my sake. He'll let it be our little secret, and I'll keep thinking I haven't been discovered. This is what scares me the most. It's probably happened already.



Confessions II

By various authors



I'm pretty sure you're never going to get over me. I don't know if I should be flattered or pissed.

I just want to be used and abused. Slam me against the wall, seal the deal.

I want to be an artsy French chick. Too bad I'm pseudo-artsy and totally not French.

I'm the most anorexic person in my head. I combat this by eating like a beast.

I have an unhealthy fascination with Henry VIII.

I'm obsessed with middle names. Even if we've never met, I probably know yours. I'm just creepy like that.

I'm deathly afraid of mascara.

I pick my nose all the time. I really like to. I don't like tissues. Period.

When we went out that night, I peed my pants in front of Theta Chi. And then later that night, we made out. Well, looking back now, I don't feel bad. Karma's a bitch.

You think I'm a great mediator? A great shoulder to cry on? I am always judging you. Always.

I make up past relationships all the time so I don't seem like the loser that has never been in a real relationship before.

I love gossip too much for my own good. Except when people are talking about me. I'm such a hypocrite. I get it from my

dad. I never wanted to be like him but I see more of him in me everyday. That is such a scary thought.

I'm the only one in my family to not have had therapy. And I'm a little jealous.

I am so afraid of making plans for "us" in the future. "Us" is just a scary word. And it's not that I don't want to do things with you in the future, that I don't like you that much... It's really because I'm afraid you will get sick of me before then and I couldn't stand the heartbreak and the broken plans.

At the beginning of my semester abroad, after a night of shots that were more like death in a glass, my host brother found me passed out on the couch with a half-eaten piece of bread hanging out of my mouth... so much for first impressions.

I hate New Year's Eve. I feel more alone in the first few hours of the New Year than I do boyfriend-less on Valentine's Day.

He caused a car accident that killed someone. I supported him through the trial, but every time he got closer to escaping without punishment, I felt worse for the family of the man who died. The way he makes me feel shouldn't be enough to justify what he did.

Jewish people aggravate me.

I've only ever loved straight men.



I'm ashamed to be seen in public with my Asian friends.

I didn't tell my English teacher I was gay because I wanted to tell people I hooked up with her.

The only time I understand what he means is when I am sucking his dick.

Navy Blue Jeeps

I've never really known anything about cars, but lately I've been admiring a navy blue Jeep. I would never *buy* a navy blue Jeep. In fact, I don't even *like* navy blue Jeeps, but whenever I've seen one lately, I stop and study it.

I'll notice its unassuming height, the somewhat awkward shade of blue that reveals itself as an unexpectedly handsome shade when the light strikes it in just such a way. I'll stare at how unique the car is, how strongly it stands up against the overly flashy SUVs it competes with. How even though the Jeep isn't as up-to-date as said flashy SUVs, the rugged car functions well and rides aggressively yet smoothly, driving along almost athletically.

Sometimes I'll get so into admiring a navy blue Jeep that if one's stopped in front of me at a red light, without thinking about it, even if I'm supposed to go another way, I'll follow it. At first, I'm not exactly sure where it's going, but then I start to see the familiar turns, the familiar road, the familiar driveway. And before I speed off, undetected, I try to say I'm sorry so that he can hear it.





Flying

I don't know at what height, exactly, airplanes fly at. I want to say several miles up. We must be somewhere over the Midwest now, because we're about halfway there. The sun has just set and we're flying away from the brilliant colors along the horizon. If I look back over my shoulder, I can see this unbelievable strip of color. A glowing, unabashed red hugs the dark, hazy mass of earth, turns into tangerine orange, then a rich yellow, a hint of green that feeds into light blue, and finally the immense emerald sky that reaches off and off.

Below is the lit-up patchwork of some city. The major thoroughfares are snaking streaks of orange light. These cut through the more regular grid of small streets that must be lined with houses and cafés, restaurants and shops. Already we're leaving that city behind and gliding over utter darkness, broken by the occasional minuscule pinpoint of light—maybe a farmhouse.

Traveling at 500 miles an hour has a way of skewing your perception of reality, of time and distance and personal ability.

Those little towns below—I can't imagine anyone actually living there. They're more places one passes through on a trip to somewhere else, anywhere else. These spotty islands of light representing all those buildings and concrete sidewalks and lampposts and movie theaters. All that—peoples' homes and first-kiss locales, reduced to faint light peering out of the darkness.

Clock Ticks

My friend died to classical music. She died a year ago. Her tan turned into cancer and ate away at her skin. It hurt. The sun did it. The sun gave her a tan and it cost her the rest of her life. She died on a Sunday. A fucking Sunday. Fuck Sundays. Fuck the incurable cancer that ate at her and the ghost of it that eats at me.

I think the worst of it is that I meant to call her. That's a lie. What's worst is I was getting head when she died. I was. I've never written that. I've never thought that out loud before. She was listening to classical music. Her legs swelled up. (And I was getting head.) She was in pain, in the dark, with her mom crying clock-ticks. (I was getting head.) The transfusion didn't work. The fucking transfusion they said would fucking make everything so much better. It didn't. Then the doctors went home to their families and slept. And then her legs swelled up and she died. (I came.) It was: "Amputate her beautiful legs or she dies." It had been: "Amputate her life from her—or she dies." And so she was in pain, and her 17-year-old pain died with her.

I was in the city with the traffic jams while the blood jammed her arteries. The dirty city in a foreign apartment with a friendly girl. I repeat that: *a friendly girl*. This girl was mine at the time. I liked her, this girl; she'd been one of those girls who got away, so it was nice to have her. It was nice to wake up warm. Lots of things were nice before I found out.

It was not nice to get a phone call in the dark morning alone while the girl was in the shower. It was not fucking lovely to see Eliza's mom's number and hear a calm, dead voice coming through the phone. It was not goddamned pretty when the sky fell and the walls around me became ghosts. It did not

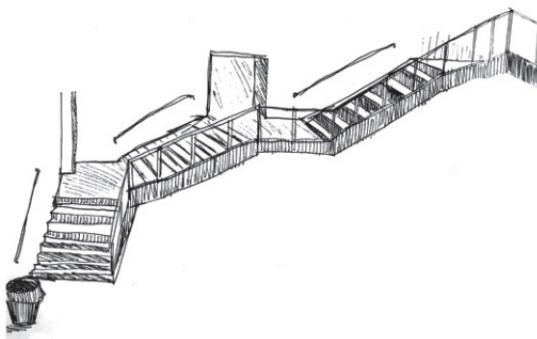
make me fucking happy to have the world shatter into sharp fragments of shade.

It was not fucking sunny to know that Eliza had died.

The funeral was worse. The funeral drowned me. The funeral shipwrecked the family. A black-ink ocean swallowed the sun. It gave me a black tan and painted my eyes tired. J. and I floated together, through it. Thank God for J. I don't believe in God. I hate that fucking word. Get over it. But J. was me and we were Eliza's and we held hands.

They fucking spoke about God in the church at the funeral. What fucking assholes. She died, and these fucking assholes feel justified in telling us about some fucking asshole who's all fucking good and blahblahblahblahblah. Fuck them. Every time they said *God*, I wished they said *Eliza*. Fuck them for not saying *Eliza*. Fuck the reverend for actually calling the corpse *Lisa*. She'd have hated that.

A year later and I still wake up with shivers and sharp fragments of shade. My eyes are still painted tired but I've cried since then. There's a black clock somewhere in my wall keeping the time of her death. It is full of her mother's clock-tick tears. I miss my friend.



Down the Drain

I don't know what I believe in. If I'm an atheist or just agnostic or something else entirely that starts with an 'A' and sounds equally as intellectually exclusive. I do, however, know this: I am a devout believer in scalding, hot showers.

Every other form of cleansing pales in comparison to the rush of hot dormitory water pouring over my body. Bathing is for prissy girls who love pink bath crap, sponge baths are for lazy people who can't be bothered to cleanse themselves properly to begin with, and cold showers are for pre-pubescent boys. There is nothing that screams *clean!* like soap scoured and red, steaming skin. In the aftermath of a good shower, I feel like a snake, standing in my new and improved skin while the remains of my old self swirl around the drain like a mini tornado. Those are my favorite showers, the kind which leave me scrubbed and rejuvenated; like a completely different person from the night before.

My shower the morning after is particularly brilliant. Scent by scent, I shed the events of the past night. The first to flood the cramped shower stall is always your cologne, that generic smelling abomination you religiously spritz on yourself before "going out." Then as I'm sudsing up my hair, the scent of your pillow and bed make a fleeting appearance before they are overpowered by my shampoo. I make a face as it reminds me of actually being in your bed. Almost done. My skin is rubbed raw by my vigorous efforts with my loofah. I really am shedding an entire layer of epithelials. The last scent is of you. Your hands, your face, your body. I scrub harder until I smell nothing but mango and pomegranate and every skin cell that holds the memory of you is scraped away. Layer by layer, I've washed you away. I look in the mirror and I am once again myself, cleansed. This is the last time, I tell myself. For the third time. But three

is a good number, good and bad things come in threes, maybe this is the end.

They say that one can be cleansed by either fire or water. I like to think that I use both. I don't know what I believe in. I do, however, know that my scalding hot showers are the closest I'll ever come to absolution.



“I love everything that flows.” – John Milton

My favorite flowing thing is...

By various authors

- Espresso
- Syrup
- Fudge sauce: on food, on people, on a spoon
- Honey
- Coming down the ice luge
- Awkward verbal diarrhea
- Life
- Compulsive lies (that's not true)
- Menses. JUST KIDDING.
- Champagne
- Good conversation, preferably acc
- A cat's spine
- Ribbon
- My hair underwater
- Dog drool
- Melting water running down a hill under a sheet of ice
that hasn't melted yet
- A clear, cold river running through the mountains of the
Pacific Northwest
- A wiggly, happy puppy
- Freshly-squeezed orange juice
- Love: pure, fast, enveloping
- The Willamette River
- Traffic on a Sao Paulo highway or avenue
- A slushy
- Nothing specific, although the more viscous the better
- Coffee down my throat right now, *glug glug*
- A dirty martini



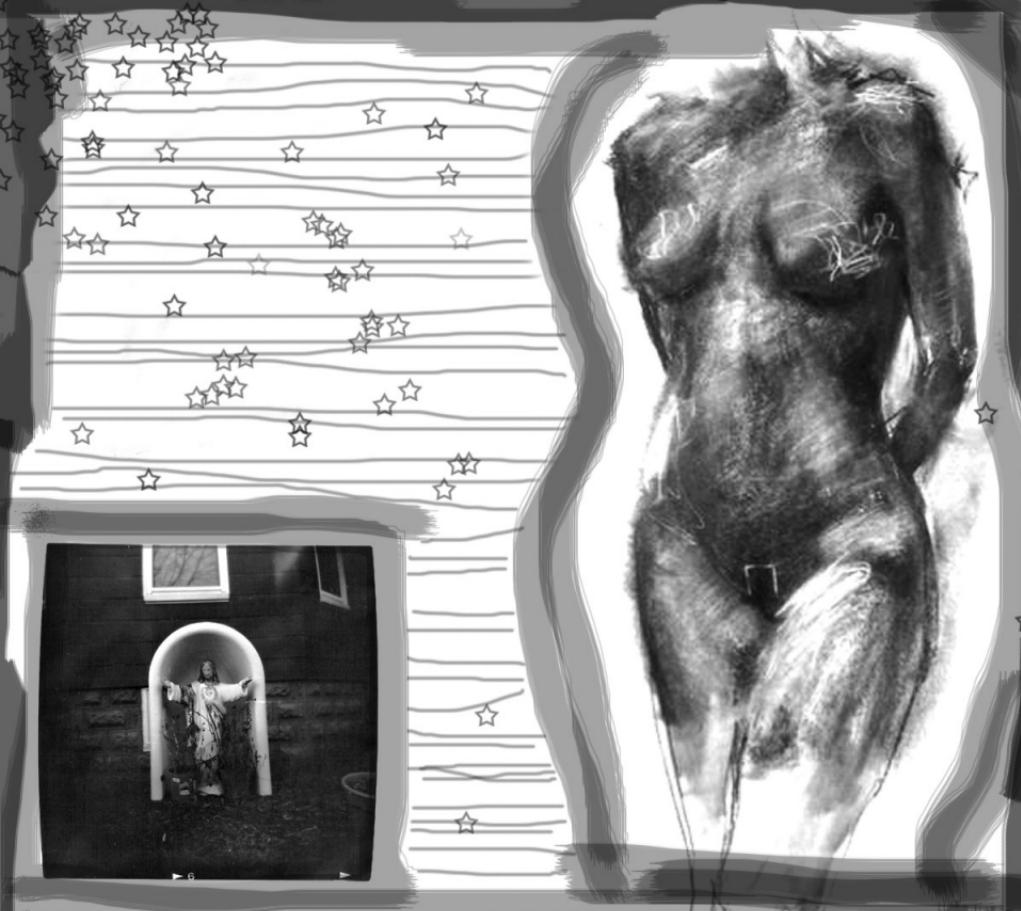




541.908.4507

For a good time call ↗









Stare deep into the world before you as if
it were the void: innumerable holy
ghosts and skeletons.
Savior gods hide there, smiling.

Late-Night

Tonight I am gluing and listening to classic rock on the radio and sipping brandy and thinking about life and dreading getting up at 7 a.m. tomorrow and regretting all those times I've pussied out of situations and admitting I'll probably never cultivate the self-confidence to overcome that and wondering what the next six months hold in store for me and hoping this is the beginning of something new in my life and dreading tomorrow while *constantly waiting breathlessly for it to happen.*



Up, Up, Up

I want to take a long ride in a hot air balloon.

I will have a daughter named Adeline. Her brother will be Dorian Gray and we will live in a big apartment with tall windows and colorful paintings on the walls. There will be clean cement stretching out and, beyond the skyline, we will occasionally catch a glimpse of the open ocean.

I'll be a writer and take my kids on trips in the rolling countryside; we'll go to wine-tasting parties and I'll get tipsy, so that we'll have to walk around for an hour before I can drive home. It'll be the simple things, really.

Adeline, my Addy, will have dark hair and glowing eyes. She will never fall in love; I don't want her to find out how much it hurts.

No one talks about how much love hurts, they just talk about the first kisses and certain bouquets and romantic nights on the rooftop. It's not all lazy morning talks and dimly lit restaurants. It's drunken phone calls from an old-fashioned booth two cities apart, it's the pain of knowing that he's with another girl, her lips red like your flowing blood. It's his fingers that don't reach out for your trembling fist, it's his eyes that, downcast, let you walk away from him. It's not black-and-white photography and it's certainly not taking the train, just because you feel like it.

It's tears. It's the time we went out for my birthday and he sat up front. It's that he gave me chocolate for Christmas because he didn't think about what to buy. It's that I can't think about him without getting sad and lonesome. It's that I'm an idealist, hopelessly lost and romanticizing every gesture and

spoken word. It's that "I love you" doesn't seem to alleviate the pain. It's that I'm writing this instead of holding him. It's that he's not good to me. It's that he's not good for me. It's that I'm not good for him. It's that I'm not good to him. It's that I'm living vicariously through song lyrics. It's that he wrote a song for me and no one must know.

I suppose I am the girl who folds her eyes like wallets, I suppose I am the buzzing in his ear. I never could keep my big mouth shut.

I want to take a long ride in a hot air balloon.



Confessions III

By various authors



My friends think I am a whole lot more mysterious than I really am.

I judge people by their music taste. To the extent that I met someone who was attractive, exciting and interesting and whom I wanted to have sex with *then and there* but immediately lost interest when he told me that his favorite band was Death Cab for Cutie.

I think poor people are more interesting than the upper-middle class.

I can only orgasm when I am having sex with people I don't like.

My goal in life is to become the next Sylvia Plath, minus the whole head in the oven thing

I don't know what to talk to him about. In essence, we are the same person except that I smoke a whole lot less weed. We have everything in common and nothing to talk about.

My biggest fear is that I won't get married. That's a ridiculous thought for someone with a great family, great education, great friends and a promising future ahead of her. I just know that if I end up single for life I'll feel unfulfilled.

I haven't been taking my meds for the past month. Whoops.

I haven't told my ex my biggest secret. And he deserves to know.

I lie awake at night worrying about life post-graduation. The fact that I can't picture my world past May 20 scares the hell

out of me.

Sometimes I contemplate physical violence to get you to talk to me again.

If I smile at a stranger walking to class and they don't smile back, my day gets a little bleaker. The reverse is also true.

I don't know if alcohol turned me into a slut or if I was just a slut waiting for alcohol to lower my inhibitions.

I have lots of different friend groups because I'm afraid that if I have just one, they'll get bored with me. My way, I get to seem constantly busy and hear that people "never see enough of me." I also get to have a good time with everyone without ever getting too close.

It hurts me to remember that my best friend hid being gay from me. When he finally told me, I was disappointed that he waited so long to trust me enough.

I hate the way I look in photographs. I don't think they capture what's really there.

I don't think I'll ever be able to write anything meaningful without some sort of unspeakable tragedy happening to me.



Clash of the Titans

Today I was asked if I was a lesbian.

Actually, I believe the exact phrasing was: “Wait, you’re a dyke, right?” I was holding hands with my boyfriend at the time, so either this girl is an idiot, my boyfriend looks like a girl, or my aura is so homosexual that it overshadows my overt heterosexual actions. Yes, my lesbian aura, the one arising from my short hair and love for Fiona Apple.

This girl, this decider of my sexuality, was fat. This may not seem relevant, but I wouldn’t bring it up if it wasn’t.

I would MUCH rather be a lesbian than a chunky straight chick who won’t get laid anyway. She was judging *me*? I’m pretty sure she was packing a box of Twinkies in her purse. I should have replied, “Wait, you’re a chub-chub, right?” Then she would have projectile vomited whipped cream into my face and hip-checked me all the way to P-town, where I apparently belong.

(As a side note, I have no shame in my discrimination of fatties.)

Anyway, I said yes. I told this house/girl that I was, in fact, a “dyke,” just to see if there would be a follow up, something like, “So how many dildos can you fit in at once?” However, she simply said, “Coooooooool!” This did not please me, this boring, polite answer. I stopped the charade.

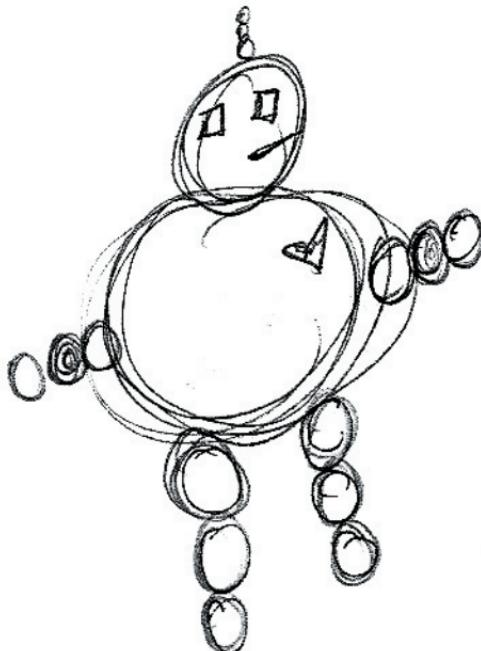
“No, I’m actually straight, yeah, this guy is my boyfriend.”

“Ooooooooooh, ha ha! Well... you had me there!”

Why was this whale so convinced that I was a homosexual? Maybe it was wishful thinking on her part; no boy would tap that fat ass, so she turned to the next best thing: a slightly masculine girl. As if I would ever willingly lose myself within the folds and flaps that is her body! Or maybe it was just curiosity—she always wanted a lesbian friend. I hear they make great carpenters.

Whatever her reasoning, she judged me based on whatever false clues her chubby fingers could grasp, and dubbed me *dyke*. But I judged her for being blubbery, assuming that I would not like her or her fat personality (you know, sickeningly nice to compensate for the potential embarrassment the blubber may cause a friend). So, we judged each other. But she was wrong, and I was right. I guess I win, then.

There's a moral in there somewhere.



Behind closed doors, I...

By various authors

- Enjoy plucking my nose hairs
- Sometimes look in the mirror and see how I appear as I say random phrases
- Smell my underwear after taking it off
- Have conversations with myself
- Stare at dark, imagined things
- Wank it
- Take photo shoots of myself in every angle possible, then choose the best picture to put on Facebook
- Put Elmer's glue on my hands, let it dry and slowly peel it off
- Troll the Craig's List "Casual Encounters" pages for the sadistic pleasure of reminding myself how many losers there are out there.
- Think about the meaning of life, why I'm here, and what knowledge and experience really mean... and then I get stressed out and compulsively masturbate for the next several hours.
- Write love letters
- Walk around naked. A lot.
- Clip my nails
- Tweeze my pubic hair
- Get out of the shower and spend hours just doing my work or hanging around naked
- Sing at the top of my lungs
- Do all the same things I do when the door is open except maybe louder
- Pick my armpit hair
- Inspect my scrotum intensely





[rock lobster, rock.]

Inner Mirror

Here are all the things I've never told you about the eating disorder I have that I'm pissed isn't worse than it is:

Every single thought from the minute I wake up to the minute I lie down has to do with how fucking gross I feel. I hate my body. Yeah, it comes out as a riddled cliché when that goddamned eighty-pound blond slut in the corner says it to get sympathy from the boys who will go home and fuck her, but when you look like me, get ridiculed for who you are, you can say it without a single tired cliché attached to it. So, fuck you, I can say it.

I hate being short and fat, and having no self-control. What I hate most about not having self-control is not the food that I put into my body, but the fact that I don't have the fucking discipline to be completely out-of-my-mind anorexic, or to stick my finger down my throat after even looking at food. Because I swear to god, that's what I want to do.

I want to have bones poking out of my orifices and be on my motherfucking deathbed before being who I am. And yeah, I tell this to my therapists, to the eating disorder counselors I have at that place that makes me feel like a fucking nutcase (and with good reason, I guess), but they don't know what the hell happens in my head.

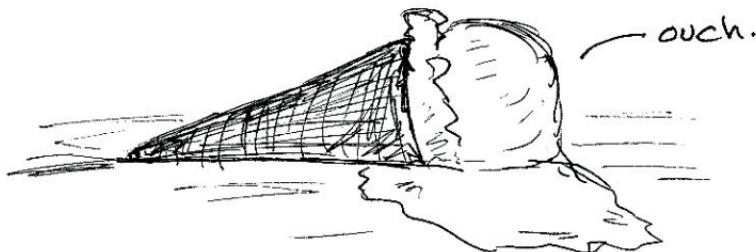
They don't know, for example, the fact that I don't sleep because I am so disgusted with myself that my mind won't turn off and let me rest. The fact that I get so angry at myself after eating and the fact that I go in the bathroom and instead of throwing up like a normal human with my fucking problems would, I cry. The fact that I sit in class and don't absorb a fucking thing because I'm too busy worrying how people are

judging me. And fuck you, because you know you've judged me and you know you've thought about the fact that I'm gross if I've passed you on this campus.

Everyone I see, the only thing I can think about it is how I want to swap bodies with you people. I don't care how shitty your life is or how ugly you are. That's how important this is to me. There are five or ten girls on this campus who I hate with everything I have in me. I've never met most of you, but I hate you because you're everything I want to be.

I hate the models in the magazines, not because they're more beautiful than I am, but because they have the mindset to do the coke, skip the meals, and spend hours hugging porcelain and ingesting stuff that will probably fucking kill them at some point.

Do you understand? Yeah, people think like this. Yeah, people live like this. And yeah, I can hear you whispering under your breath that you're so glad you're not me.



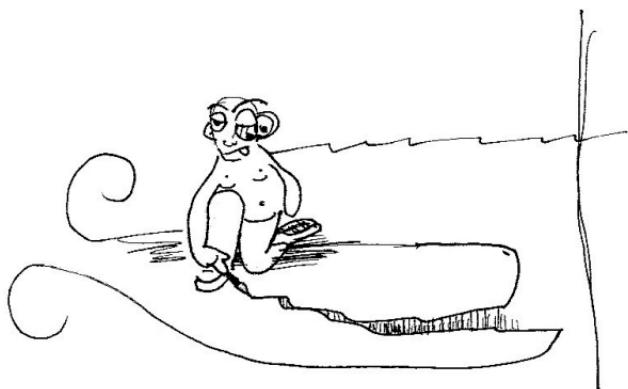
To the Women of Tufts

Ladies,

Stop worrying about what your bodies look like. When it comes right down to it, the only thing that matters to me is how your body feels under my hands. Give me some of those big velvety-soft thighs! Give me a nice round silky belly with a little bit of cushioning!

Don't get me wrong. You Audrey Hepburn types have got something going for you, too. But a lady with some flesh on her body... that is *something else*.

So next time you are obsessing about yourself, naked in front of the mirror, turn off the lights, and just check yourself out from my perspective. You might be surprised at how good you feel.



This Was South Africa

Packed dirt, sweat, waxed dresses, fast-moving clouds, long roads, high grasses, waving hands, bare feet, pink stucco, cold sea, strong winds, cinnamon, ostrich meat, impala crossing, slick wetted tires, baboon's penis, interrupted naps, chicken-frying on the sidewalk, wine-tasting beneath an awning of leaves, khaki multi-pocketed vest, torrential rain, mosquito netting, tip-toeing in fear of the Black Mamba, lionesses yawning, dusty townships, green and yellow landscapes, drunk-in-the-sun, male v. female giraffes' horns, white face paint, lucky orange beans, Winston the tracker, blue smoke, reading Coetzee, drumming, oily slinking seal, safari ponchos, the southwestern-most point, rainbow nation, early-to-bed, many showers, fireworks and doves, wooden masks, Ashley the African wildcat, more buffalo, evolution, plane's wing-tip, ants scurrying before the downpour, bald-headed vultures, always hot, Mpumalanga Province, salt shakers, jackass penguins, shell-encrusted woven fabric, no reception, that lovely accent, leather cowboy hat, grapes, blind baby rhinoceros, conservation and rehabilitation, elephant stampede, all five of us.



How May I Direct Your Call?

This summer, I worked at a telephone answering service. When various companies were closed or had no one in the office, their calls were forwarded to our company, and I would answer. It really was a silly job, because the most we could do for the caller was forward them to the business, which was closed to begin with.

Anyway, while I was at work one night, I spoke to a woman on the visiting nurses line and she said, "My husband is very, very weak, and we think he may not make it tonight."

I asked her when the nurse was supposed to show up or if she had an appointment, but she very calmly responded, "There is no appointment, I just would like to talk to the nurse about my husband."

I said a nurse would call, she thanked me, and I hung up and moved on to the next call.

Later in the night, when fewer calls were coming in, I thought back to this call. Only then did I realize that she was talking about death, that her husband was dying. The thought hadn't crossed my mind while we were on the phone because she had been so calm and collected.

If your spouse is dying, even if you're old and he has become a burden to you, some sadness and craziness and bouncing off the wall is in order, isn't it? I couldn't imagine being so calm in the face of such adversity. It was almost galling.

The next thought to my mind: is her demeanor better or worse than the expected? Maybe she has the uncanny ability to retain her composure under extreme duress, even through

something as permanent as dying. Maybe she is cold and unfeeling, and life is meaningless even to her.

This began to bug me. I wished I had written the woman's name down so I could contact her myself and ask her how she really felt.



“It”

I don't remember much about it. I was always really cold. I'd shiver even with blankets and warm sweatshirts piled on, even when it was seventy degrees in the house. Why my house was seventy degrees, I don't know. But it wasn't normal.

I think I cried a lot of the time. Not in front of anyone. You just don't do that when you're, well, you know. Actually, for the most part, in certain stages, there was no crying. Just sort of... nothing. I was devoid of feeling. But other times the whole thing hit me hard. I mean, I was really sad, obviously. But the crying was mostly pity. Pity for myself. The worst part about it, though, was that as terrible as it was, I didn't want to get any better. I couldn't try—it was just too hard to think about. It was easier, I guess, to suffer. Because I had gotten used to it.

* * *

In the end, you don't understand why it happened to you, but you can't imagine it happening to anyone else. It makes you the person you are. It makes you different. You stand apart. You don't want people to know. But you can't help pretending that they do. And they love you anyway. You can be that crazy girl that every rock band professes to be madly in love with, that glam-grunge junkie minus the junk who wears huge zip-up sweatshirts and jeans with holes in them and natural makeup and wild wavy hair; the one who has gorgeous clothes but refuses to wear them, that tragically beautiful head-case who really isn't a head-case, but doesn't know how else she should be, because that's what has happened to her, and that's the costume she thinks she wants to wear.

Confessions IV

By various authors

Seeing something beautiful makes me want to create something beautiful of my own.

It's alternately depressing and exhilarating that I might never be more alive than I am right now.

I fantasize about girls when I masturbate more than I fantasize about guys.

I still think you're too good for me and I'm still waiting in fear for the day you're going to wake up and realize it's true.

I hate your new girlfriend. Everyone thinks she's ugly and I know she is a whore. And your suitemates can hear you having sex. They've told me to ask you to stop.

I'm usually happy when I see that I'm even a little bit better than someone else.

I'd hook up with her if she lost twenty pounds.



Whenever I boast about myself I'm really just lying to hide my insecurities.

After trying so hard to get into Tufts as my first choice, I look at a lot of the kids here and think, "How the fuck did you get in?"

My favorite procrastination technique is to sit back and think, quite detailedly, of how and with whom I am going to cheat on you.

For five years, my mom has thought I should marry you, and, well, lately, so do I.

If I don't become wildly successful, I might do something drastic.

My roommate is really gassy and I've told everyone about it.

Sometimes I really wish that I could stop caring about other people in this world and only do things that benefit me. I think it would be a lot easier to be selfish.

I really want to know what it feels like to be obese.



DATE:

ASSIGNMENT:

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The Bathtub

This wintry weather always makes me want to take a bath. The snow especially makes me want to run home, shed my coat that makes me look twice my size, and soak in a sea of boiling water. No one takes baths anymore. Have you noticed? (With the exception, of course, of rich people in their ivory tubs and infants in those blue plastic buckets.)

I somehow felt nervous filling up my two-in-one shower-slash-tub. I'd never drawn a bath before and I was worried that I was wasting water or that it would be too hot or too cold. Still, I was eager to sink beneath the water and forget all my troubles.

Minutes later, I did just that. Of course, my shower-slash-tub is very small—I had to bend my knees to fit and there was absolutely no chance of submerging my neck or face. My bathroom was filled with steam and it felt natural to just close my eyes and focus on my breathing.

I'd never noticed the texture of my skin before! The water I splashed on my legs ran right off in small rivulets. And, when I inhaled and exhaled, my stomach would submerge above and sink below the surface of the water like a curious monster, my bellybutton acting as its mouth or eye.

Unfortunately, the water was all the while slowly draining out of the tub. The water-level and the water temperature were noticeably depleted after only a few minutes and I suddenly imagined an authority figure telling me that if I didn't get out of the tub right now I would catch pneumonia.

So what is the point of taking a bath? Did I accomplish anything? In a purpose-driven society founded on an intense

work ethic, is there any merit to bathing when taking a shower is just as viable?

Ha-ha. I don't know. I have, however, decided that I will call my landlady to fix the leak.



I wanted to be _____ when I grew up.

By various authors

- A fashion designer
- A hair dresser
- An ice skater... until my best friend stole my idea. So I decided I really wanted to be a teacher, that is, until I realized what children are like.
- A veterinarian
- A “fixer-upper”
- A dog
- An actress, dancer, singer or teacher. Or an artist. Or a zookeeper. Or anything that has to do with animals.
- A dolphin trainer/secret agent (at the same time)
- A Christmas tree with lights. I had high hopes.
- A funeral director. I was not normal.
- Straight, happy, and an architect (though not in that order)
- A cartographer
- An architect
- A chef
- The first woman president
- An artist
- A musical theatre star or an historian
- I wanted to be God. Or a really powerful sorcerer.
- A paleontologist
- An Animorph
- An astronomer
- The little man who sits inside a computer and has all the answers.
- AJ's (from the Backstreet Boys) wife



Fuschia War

I also had a strange dream.

I was waltzing through the streets of New York and spied an irresistible towel shop. It was all the pastels, I think, that really drew me in. At any rate, I entered the shop and purchased eighty-four towels, all fuschia. I brought them home in an ark, and glued them to every square inch of wall, floor, desk, curtains... you name it, it was fucking fuschia. The whole room looked like the inside of an animé chick's vagina.

In addition to the eighty-four towels, I also had purchased a fuschia bathrobe. The purpose for affording myself this luxury was not so much an affinity for terrycloth, but for the camouflage it offered me in my newfound pink surroundings.

I sat down in a chair, and languidly laid my pale hand upon a metallic chord, which emerged from the shaft of a huge, fuschia-dyed, stainless steel cannon. It was aimed directly at the door to my room. I sat patiently.

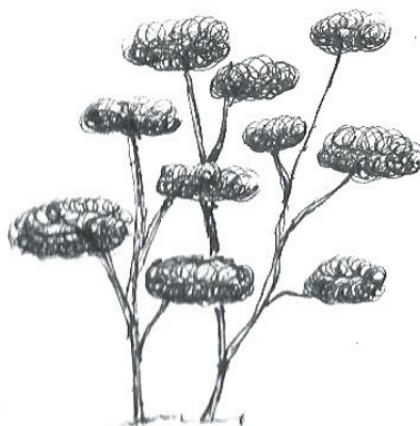
This is what it has come to, the depths of my sorrowful addiction: inside the barrel of that bellicose phallus was a crack rock the size of a softball. I deftly put on NPR, at medium volume. There was a special on emerging hedge funds in Vietnam, and I knew my trap could not fail.

Upon arrival in my doorway, any visitor would have surely been baffled by the pink, overwhelmed by the indiscernible decor of my chambers. This is most certainly the way Mr. S felt, as he pushed open my door, following the mellifluous tones, so pregnant with financial insider know-how.

A simple jerk of my hand, triggered by a savage chemical exchange in my brain, under a black, pinched nerve of inhuman emotion and insatiability, and that potent payload burst from my pink weapon and blew his head clear off.

Perfectly remorseless, I sprung from my chair and dove on top of his limp body. The rock had somewhat splintered and now burning holes lay gaping upon his dastardly flesh. I put my nostrils upon these hot, smoldering wounds of euphoria and inhaled most deeply, at first timidly, but before long with great, frenzied huffs.

This is how I get my fix, sweet tits.



Does Sweden Have Playgrounds?

“You fucking Americans! You have no respect!” a dark-haired, short, shirtless Swede yelled at me as I finished setting off the last of our firecrackers on the roof of the hostel.

I felt a little guilty. Perhaps I’d woken him up. Perhaps I’d woken some other people up. But the guilt soon passed. What American part of me made me do this? I wanted to see something *explode*. I wanted to make loud noise on a holiday night. Is that American? Fuck no, that’s human. I wanted to tune out for a bit and feel the power of a powder-keg.

The Swede lives next door to me. I want to play my music loud. I want to rattle his door just a little every time I walk by and then skip around the corner so he has to get up and—*ha!*—find no one there. I want to knock on his door and inform him every time there is a loud noise during the night. I want him to consider screaming at an Indian observing a morning prayer. “You fucking Hindus! Always chanting at 5:30 a.m.!” He somehow feels it is okay to scream an epithet at me that has little to do with the firecrackers.

*The rockets red glare
The bombs bursting in air
Gave proof through the night
That our flag was still there.*

Here’s an American inspiration for explosions of all kinds. Patriotic explosions! The kind that fill you with that warm feeling.

I always get spooked at confrontations like these. I can’t think at all. I feel the guilt the screaming Swede wants me

to feel. I understand his anger, and I ask myself “How could you be so inconsiderate?” But then I fall hard upon the rotten feeling of being insulted, and the helplessness with which I react. Would it have been American for me to say, “Fuck you! Your country sucks. Don’t hate on us just because we’re the best nation in the world. Why don’t you go fuck your blond cousin and yodel through the fjords!”

I think fjords are in Norway. And he’s not blond. But I don’t know anything about Sweden. There it is! There’s my American ignorance. I knew I had some patriotic blood in my body. But I didn’t say anything. That’s like the tongue-tied American middle schooler who never fights back at the bully. But isn’t that a universal adolescent role? Does Sweden have playground bullies? Does Sweden have playgrounds?



*the longer i sit across from
this fire extinguisher, the greater
my urge grows to use it on
anything.*

Kernels

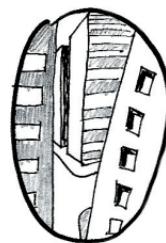
Every time I don't think you'll call, I go to bed angry and wake up forty-five minutes later to a vibrating phone beneath my pillow. And then you come over, and we stare for a while at each other, and I wait for you to say something to me, but it takes you another forty-five minutes to get out a sentence and I can feel my bitter resolve fading with every frustrated sigh you make. I love the way you hold my hand; you reach out and trace circles on my skin and your calluses are rough but I love them and you trace more circles until you can think of what to say. And I think I understand what you are telling me, but then later when I'm sitting at my desk I try to remember and I can't because I think I was just rationalizing at the time, because the tiny kernels of meaning I've extracted are all before me and I can't string them together in a way that's comprehensible to anyone who wasn't there at the time. I'm in love with you, completely, but sometimes when I'm in your presence I forget that because I'm too busy trying to understand what you're saying. You give a half-smile, a token sigh of a laugh, and you look up at me, and I know the smile is a sad one. And so I wait for a rainy day, when my insides will match my outsides.



There's nothing like...

By various authors

- Masturbating at 11 a.m. on a Saturday morning because my roommate is out of town for the weekend, and she *still* doesn't know he sent me a vibrator in the mail.
- Knowing you made the right decision
- A push-up bra
- Rubbing your eyes. It's addictive.
- PMS
- A sunrise
- Sitting next to a hot guy on the plane
- Proving someone wrong
- Talking about the ridiculous events of the previous night
- Watching someone trip
- Truly feeling at home
- Watching someone be a drunken shit-show
- Wearing sexy lingerie even though you don't expect to get with someone. And then, when you do.
- Believing you're right, even if you're wrong
- The feeling of my mom's hands on my face when I'm sick
- Having friends who are fatter than you
- Watching those friends who are fatter than you get even fatter
- Cold macaroni & cheese at 8 a.m. in the morning
- Tropical weather
- Pollution in Paris
- Macaroons
- Taking your winter coat out of storage and finding money in it
- Chocolate-chip pancakes



• photography • Roberts • old film stills • crows • zines • forests
• coffee • big noses • sleeping • clavicles • sprinkles • scars
• green bananas • fire • mushrooms • hillings • corona
Wes Anderson • spider monkeys • chuck palahniuk
• post its • homebrew • keys • steep city streets
• avocados • polaroids • loose leaf tea • comfy beds
• pandas • the wild west • rain • pomegranates • little metal pieces • the mealy feeling & toothpaste
• installations • oil spills • jumping in puddles • plath
• risk • camping • mawhauks • spoken word • bangs
• guacamole • forests • oil pastels • cheese • tattoos
• the smell of one's back • pregnant women • indie films • mixed media • lavender • eating organic • wild flowers • petticoats • pumpkins • sunsets • gasper johns
• vegetarians • lucky strikes • frozen dew on green blades of grass • hammers • broccoli cheddar soup • the smell of soil • the pacific ocean • campfire smell
• the sound of wind rustling through dry leaves • loud music • the universe • dancing • talking a really big shit • mary Ellen Maril • garlic • big headphones
• thrifting • snuggling • the first bite of a really crisp apple • rubber stamps • foggy windows • Michel Gondry
• plastic army men • barcodes • squeezing lots of paint out of small tubes • museums • full moons • hippies • ~~the~~
• hearing the music my parents loved come over the

- Feeling completely out of control
- Sleeping with your dog at your feet
- Having a guy take your arm and walk you home
- The Internet after a week without contact with the rest of the world
- Getting up whenever you want on a Sunday, reading the paper, and drinking coffee.
- Finding a great article of clothing in Dollar-a-Pound
- Finally taking a piss after your parents have forced you to hold it for five or six hours on a road-trip
- A bad mushroom trip
- Being a certified genius
- My fingerprint
- A hot summer rainstorm
- Curling up in a comfy chair with a cup of tea and a really good book
- A really good 80's dance party
- A really violent fuck
- Sex-a-thons
- A chocolate milkshake
- Kissing my lady's cheeks
- Having red wine, dark chocolate, and then a cigarette, all while sitting in a deep leather chair
- Having a boyfriend who looks like a Hitchcock hero
- A charred steak
- Being rich
- Slicing open letters with a letter opener
- Carpentry (in theory)
- Buying hardcover books
- Being in a pool in the rain

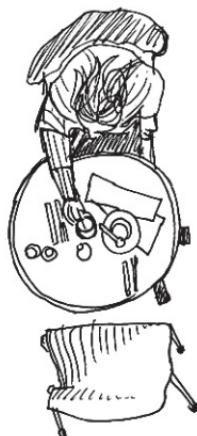
Doughnuts

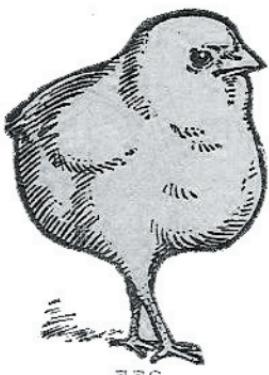
My world smells of doughnuts.

My big, red bath towel snugly envelopes my wet body in the scent of glaze. Whiffs of sweet, yellow dough rise up off of my coat's left sleeve. The cold air that hangs above the sloping path I take to class smells ever so delicately of that torus-shaped wonder.

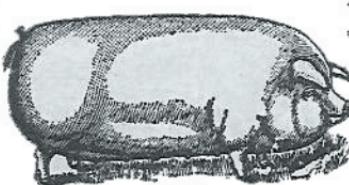
The aroma is not persistent; it comes and it goes, but when it reappears it arrives suddenly, quick. It instantly floods my nostrils with all that warmth, that fragrance of granulated sugar, *sifted sifted sifted*.

It winds about lazily, cradling me in its syrupy perfume. It holds me in its cozy saccharine embrace, lingers, and then simply fades.





262



454



321

The End

