It’s already my birthday, because it is 12:06 am - but I’m going to pretend it isn’t my birthday just yet.

It is just a day after all.

I’m only one day older than I was yesterday, and this is true of every day… I don’t need a birthday to remind me of something that happens regardless.

Birthdays however are good for reflection. I’ve never felt so sad about an upcoming birthday as I have this one… perhaps it is PTSD from spending my last birthday alone. Although, I must admit that part of me really loved that.

This year, given COVID, I unfortunately will not be able to do my breath of love session, but instead I’ll get to spend time doing schoolwork and picnicking with Dylan in the evening. My plan is to spend a lot of time journaling and drawing, to just relax and let the troubles of work and the world fall away… to remind myself that it is important to slow down.

I’ll be journaling a lot tomorrow, so I will leave most of my words for then (especially considering I’m already exhausted and I want to get a good night’s rest so I can enjoy tomorrow).

*Side note: I think I might have COVID given how exhausted I am…*

Anyways -- I am going to outline a few things here. I just finished going through a bunch of my old diary entries from the last few Octobers (this appears to be something that I do around my birthday and I love it). It has inspired me to say some of the things that I did and left behind in my year of 23, and the things that I look forward to in my twenty fourth year around our sun.

**Things that I left behind or did**

1. I left behind weed for 110 days.
2. I got addicted to weed again.
3. I left weed again. This time… I have no end date. That makes me happy.
4. I left Boulder to be with my family during the summer.
5. I left relationships (Matt and Kyle) that weren’t serving me.
6. I started a new relationship (Dylan).
7. I started a business (RAI).
8. I got successful (RAI).
9. I learned how to lead climb.
10. I got certified in paragliding.
11. I visited my friends in California, multiple times.
12. I told Sam that I thought he was an abusive friend sometimes and that it wasn’t okay (I actually did this last night… it went really well).
13. I told several people that I’m bisexual.
14. I travelled to Spain.
15. I went on a camping trip with my roommates.
16. I got into running.
17. I stopped doing yoga for a while. Then I started doing it again.
18. I fell in love (Dylan).
19. I finally found a therapist (today).
20. I finally told my mom my feelings about her and my dad.
21. I had open and honest conversations with my mother around addiction.
22. I took care of my dad during his accident.
23. I made it through some of the hardest moments of my life in the week after my dad’s recovery from his accident.
24. I started to create my environment in my home in Boulder.

**Things I am looking forward to doing when I’m 24:**

1. Continuing to keep weed out of my life. It no longer serves me. It hasn’t for a while.
   1. In the past, I’ve built the narrative that I need weed to relax and have an excuse to stop working. Instead, I think I’m just going to stay sober… and *also* stop working - lol.
2. Be true to myself in my relationship with Dylan and with other men and/or women.
   1. This might mean ultimately deciding to be single. Or to be with a woman. Or to be with multiple people. I will see what unfolds (hence the therapist).
3. To focus on self love and building my relationship with myself back up again to where it was when I was in Thailand. <3
4. To continue to do yoga, to try to teach yoga when I can.
5. To get back into meditation on a more regular basis.
6. To keep spirituality as a big part of my life in some way.
7. To journal on a regular basis - both in here and on paper.
8. To work on my artistic skills, whatever that may mean.
9. To prioritize spending time away from screens and surrounded by loved ones.
10. To prioritize myself, especially in terms of self care.
11. To spend more time playing music and singing.
12. To dance whenever I get the chance.
13. To fly.
14. To continue to make my space my home in Boulder.
15. To prioritize friendships and building a community of some kind in Boulder.
16. To stay true to myself, in whatever ways that mean.
17. To stay humble.
18. To always continue to pursue growth, learning, change, and happiness.

There are probably many more for this list. I’ll keep brainstorming throughout tomorrow. I like the idea of leaving myself a note to reflect on in a year when I inevitably look at all of these again around my birthday. Tomorrow (today technically) might not be easy for many reasons… but I am at least going to focus on self care and self love, and then see where the universe takes me from there.

So… for now -- I suppose this is my last entry at 23. Next time you hear from me, I’ll be 24.

Wow, I’m getting old. I’m sure I’ll look at this entry in several or many years and scoff or laugh hysterically at what I thought was presumably “old”... but for now, it’s the oldest I’ve ever been, and the youngest I’ll ever be again ;)

Until next time…

Yours Truly,

Jessie J. Smith

Age: 23.