Dear Diary,

Wow there’s so many things I want to write about right now. I think that mental clarity is generally accompanied with epiphanies. I’m experiencing both in full form right now. I decided to not smoke with Eric so that we can stay in solidarity with one another for a full month. Instead of no shave November, it’s no smoke November. I’ll admit these first four days haven’t been without struggle, but I’m proud to say that I’ve made it through them without blowing smoke (haha).

I do have a lot to thank towards Sam. He has been extremely helpful and nice with me and my needs right now. I think that he helps people in a very unique way, but it works so well. The way he has handled Sarah and her suicidal tendencies is so diplomatic and emotionally removed, but he is still there for her so well. He is treating my situation similarly. I can’t feel shameful or hide what I’m going through because he is shameless and unfiltered. It is kind of opening my eyes to a lot of habits that I’ve unnecessarily formed because of my environments and the kinds of people that I’ve surrounded myself with for a lot of my life. It’s definitely interesting for me to see.

I was reading my astrological sign about an hour ago. I do actually think there is so much truth to it. I was astonished how accurate it seemed. It was telling me that I am incredibly open minded and that can be both good and bad for me. I’m able to empathize with people very well and see both sides of things, but I’m also incredibly susceptible to be coerced into ideas which can be bad. I am so open minded about both sides that it often comes across as indecisive (or actually leads to me being indecisive).

I wanted to write about two things in particular today:

1. Claudia and I
2. Emerging from the fog

First, Claudia and I. I honestly don’t know if I already spoke of this in here, I’m sure I’ve touched on the fact that Claudia and my relationship has been incredibly rocky the last year. I think I’ve placed a lot of blame on her, but I honestly can take quite a bit of blame too. I think that I got so frustrated with our changing relationship and with her unwillingness to fight for us that I wanted her to fuck up. I wanted her to bail on our plans and feel bad about losing me as a friend. I was being selfish and I was approaching our friendship as a win-lose situation.

When I approached her in April(ish) about how I wasn’t okay with her prioritizing me after Andrew I was voicing these frustrations. I was acting out of love for her, but it was based off of a culmination of jealous thoughts. If I’m being honest, I think that I have blamed Claudia for too much of our changing relationship. I *do* think that she would be much closer with me still if she hadn’t started dating Andrew. There’s no doubt about that. But, I think that there have been points in the last year that I’ve given up on her and our ability to remain in each other’s lives. It was waranted a lot of the time, yes. But I think as I mature more and reflect on the people that I keep in my life, I always come back to Claudia. She is such a genuinely good and empathetic and nice and loving person that I know I’ll always want to keep her in my life.

This is why the other day when I finally had some one on one time with her for the first time in months, I didn’t say everything I had been preparing to say for the last year. I could have told her that I’ve cried countless nights over how much I miss her and how much I wish she cared for me the way she does for Andrew. I could have told her that I am jealous she chose him over me this last year. I could have told her I am jealous that she has found a new friend in Varsha instead of me, which has made me feel self conscious about my abilities to be a good friend. But I didn’t.

We were sitting in her car, in front of my house. I was in the passenger seat and she was in the driver seat. She had just told me some of her frustrations about her career path and her fears for the future. She asked me how I was doing. I told her.

I told her I’ve been struggling. I’ve been struggling since this winter, and I’ve been hiding it. I tried to mask my symptoms with weed and adderall and I lied about it. I created addictions and found cures in vices that weren’t sustainable. I have been in a constant loop of binging and restricting my eating, accompanied with sobriety and complete submission to drugs and addiction. I’m afraid to be sober because I realize that I am secretly morbid and depressed. I felt like I was at war with myself. I was scared and confused and lost.

I looked at her, finally with the ability to say everything I’ve wanted to say to her, and instead; I said this:

“I miss you Clauds.”

I cried. She cried. She said she missed me too.

I told her that even through everything, I’ve realized more than ever that I just can’t lose her. That I *won’t* lose her as a friend in my life. She’s too important to me.

She told me I’m the best person she’s ever met in her life.

That felt really good.

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I felt really great that I didn’t blow up at Clauds. I don’t think it was necessary to say the things that I had been thinking about saying. Some things shouldn’t be kept down, but I’m learning as I get older that some things really **are** better left unsaid. As hard as it is for me to admit. Transparency is golden, but sometimes love is more important.

I love Claudia. I really do. She is such a beautiful soul, and I’ll always love her for who she is. I know that she and I will stray from each other at points in our lives. But I am confident that we will stay in each other’s lives forever.

Just as Morgan and I have stayed in each other’s lives. We have been back and forth and haven’t stayed the closest as of the last few years, but she is also someone who I will never let myself lose. She told me over the summer that she was so lucky to have me in her life and that she loved me so much as a person. That made me so happy.

There are people in my life that I am realizing I need to keep forever. It won’t be easy, and honestly a lot of the time it isn’t going to be logical. But I have crossed paths with them for a reason, and that is reason enough for me. Some people I’ll always keep in my back pocket (in no particular order):

* Claudia
* Morgan
* Sam
* Yeng
* Cole/Connor (in some way or another)
* Paige
* Kayla/Mina (in some way or another)
* Maxwell
* Tori (as weird as that is to admit)
* Obviously all of my family

Is it weird that I can’t think of any other obvious people to add to this list? I guess there are a few others on the peripheries, but if I’m being honest I really don’t know if I could confidently say that Ian/Nadia or Margarita or Trevor or Miles or Elvis or Katie or Liam or Dustin or the polo girls or Logan or John Chapman or others will remain in my life past my time in SLO.

I know that the future is impossible to predict… but I guess that will be up to me to find out.

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Anyways, onto my second topic for the night: emerging from the fog.

Whenever I can make it past the third or the fourth day without weed, I can definitely begin to tell a difference. I feel my brain emerge from a fog and dazed-like state. It is usually pretty liberating. There’s a peak I think around the seventh day where I go from craving weed to craving not having weed. Of course, if I get stressed or upset or hurt then I definitely crave it again. But for the most part, I enjoy that sobriety is generally accompanied by the following:

* No binging! Especially at night. I find that my compulsions towards food are almost entirely regulated now as long as I don’t smoke weed. My living environment helps with that so much. I’ve began to really be able to associate food with health well now. When I get old cravings and compulsions that would have originally shook me to submission, now I can visualize the future of my decisions much more rationally. In the past, I would have felt like I needed to eat half a tub of peanut butter. Now, if I’m sober, the thought of doing that makes me think about what I would feel afterwards and how I would just have to eat that much less in the future to make up for it both physically and emotionally. It doesn’t seem worth the aftermath anymore. I’m gettin much better at omitting the simple and instant pleasures so that I can enjoy them later. *I’ve effectively stopped stealing happiness from tomorrow for today. I’ve chosen to keep it for later.*
* Happier, healthier, glowing skin. This is also due to the fact that I’ve forced myself to stop picking my face. I’m not sure if I’ve written this down before, but one of my compulsions is that I pick at ‘zits’ on my face way too much. I put them in air quotes because I actually don’t think I have bad acne, but when I pick at my face for a half an hour every night, I almost create acne for myself. It gets so bad when I get really stressed. It is sad because when I pick at my face, the aftermath will stay for at least a week, which I would usually never realize because I’d pick at it every night. I thought my acne was natural and stemming from my weed smoking and stress and hormones from puberty… but it turns out it was mostly self caused. Now that it’s been two weeks since I’ve popped zits on my face, I actually have basically none at all. My face looks great and glowing and tan and happy and not blemished or scarred or bleeding or pussy or tender or pink. It feels great. I feel *confident*.
* Surprisingly more flexible and stronger muscles. I noticed this today quite a bit in yoga and my climbing after. I used to think that I was more flexible when I was high. But today I surprised myself quite a bit during yoga. I think that my body is able to get better rest when I don’t smoke at night, so I am much more capable of performing physical activities. Today I remembered that my last season of water polo was during my onset of depression and weed abuse. I remember showing up to a majority of the first half of season completely high. I remember doing swim sets while high and wondering how much faster I would be without the weed. I remember showing up to many practices after binging and feeling physically weighed down by the food. I remember jumping out of the pool in the middle of swim sets and forcing myself to puke so that I didn’t have to deal with the repercussions of my actions in the pool. I think I repressed a lot of these memories actually. I haven’t thought about that in a long time. Talking to Sanam and Hallie about Amy and Bria tonight reminded me of my time in polo for the first time in a while. That felt a little bit weird to talk about. I forget sometimes how HUGE polo was in my life for so long. Polo *was* my life. I’m glad to have moved on, but I also miss it a lot at times. I’m so grateful and glad to be living with polo girls this quarter. I couldn’t have asked for a better living situation.
* Gratefulness. Today, at the end of the chabasana during yoga, I found myself smiling. In fact, I couldn’t hold back my smile. It naturally reached both corners of my face. I felt so *happy*. I don’t know if I’ve felt a sudden urge of happiness in that way (unsolicited, unwarranted, out of the blue) since this summer when I was at the height of my time with Lazare. It felt **amazing*.*** I am definitely at a transcendental point of my life right now. I can feel that this isn’t my normal cycle. I can feel something changing in a way that I haven’t experienced before. It’s been four days and something is different. I don’t want to speak too soon, but I am so confident about this.
* Time for hobbies. I have started playing the piano again, I have been more adamant about falling asleep to reading a book, I have been taking more time to walk and sit with my thoughts; disconnected. I have been reading articles and writing my thoughts down. I considered long boarding again today. I have been going to yoga and even climbing by myself. I have so much time given back to my day, especially at night when I used to just numb my brain and be counterproductive to my lifestyle.
* Health. I already mentioned food and exercise a little bit, but I think sobriety brings a sense of mindfulness with it that is unparalleled. I can attribute a lot of this, again, to my living situation. But I do think that the more clearly I think, the more I can slow down and be rational. I don’t feel compulsive nearly as often, I don’t feel impulsive nearly as often, I feel **calm**.

I’ve been trying to think about how I used to act before I started smoking weed on a regular basis. I remember when I first started doing it a lot, at the beginning of 2nd year when I would stay at Nick’s place a lot, that I already had an unhealthy relationship with it. I remember that there were nights when I would be so stressed about school, so unhappy with my physical appearance and health, so unhappy about my career path, so unconfident in my intelligence, so unsure of my personal brand and self worth, that I would be unable to fall asleep because those problems would make me feel physically uncomfortable to the point of my skin crawling. I would tell Nick that I wanted to smoke to help me fall asleep, but really I just wanted to numb all of the bad and sad and scared and unhealthy feelings that were going through my head. My relationship with weed started as a numbing mechanism.

I think writing this down is actually very meditative for me. I don’t know if I fully realized this fact until now. Damn.

I wish that Nick didn’t delete himself from my life. Or rather, delete me from his. I guess I’ve pseudo-done the same thing to Chandler. I tried calling him to catch up the other day but when he could only call back an hour later, I wasn’t interested anymore at that point. I know I’d like to hear about how he is doing and fill him in on my life, but I struggle with it for some reason. I think we have diverged in life so much that it doesn’t seem to make sense to reignite any kindling of friendship that may still be there. At the same time though, I think about Nick and I and how much it confuses me and hurts me to know that I’ll never be able to mend things with him or be in his life in any way, and I can only image that Chandler feels similarly.

I stalked John Detlefs on linkedin today. I was thinking about him a lot. I think he is single handedly the person I’ve had anything beyond a fling with that I’ve been the most attracted to out of everyone. He has a girlfriend now. I hope they are well. I think part of me secretly hopes they are not… which doesn’t make sense because he lives in Texas and I know it would never work out for he and I, but I guess my attention seeking tendencies will not die young.

I am genuinely curious who will stay in my life in the coming years.

If I do end up going to Switzerland for the next five years and getting a PhD, will I inadvertently isolate myself from the people that I’ve spent my entire life getting close to? I want to connect with as many people as I possible can, and I want to surround myself with the greatest diversity of thought possible, but I don’t want to lose those that I’ve created such great connections with already. I haven’t been great at keeping up with people outside of my physical proximity in the past, so I worry that this would easily happen in the future. I have been working on getting better at this though. I do genuinely think that I’ve been doing a great job at getting closer with each individual member of my family. I think my relationship with Eric is the best out of everyone in my family right now, it definitely helped that I spent a week with him in Escalante, a weekend with him on the PCT and a weekend with him in Seattle. Time is the best way to get close to someone. Disconnected time (like backpacking and camping) is the absolute best way to get close to someone quickly. I think I’m almost just as close with my mom now. After coming clean to her about everything I’ve been going through and confronting her about her alcohol vice, I feel like I’ve been able to be much more real and candid with her. I still have struggles with bringing up her side of the battle, but I will work on that more with time. I need to make sure I’m putting in enough time to my relationships with Wesley and my Dad. I have been closer with Wesley than I ever thought I’d be since he moved to California which is great. But I think if my car was better (and let me drive to LA with it), I would have been able to further this opportunity a lot more. I’m excited for the upcoming Thanksgiving break though, that will be some really good time for he and I to spend together. In terms of my dad, I’ve been realizing lately that I was so worried about mom getting jealous of Dad and I’s relationship that I ended up putting it on the backburner. I haven’t been trying to reach out to him or call him solely in a long time. I did it the other day. He was in the airport so we could only talk briefly, but it was nice I’m going to make sure I do this more often. I think that if I call both mom and him enough, then it will balance out. How they react to who I call and how much is their own task. I have to keep remembering myself that I’m not responsible for other people’s tasks in life. This was one of the biggest lessons I learned from reading *The Courage To Be Disliked*. I wish that I could somehow merge my written journal and this one. I think that my written journal has an entirely different version of my thoughts. I can’t go on tangents as much, but I am usually outside of the house, often high or on drugs, and I think that I might have a different perspective when there’s a pen in my hand.

One day I’m going to learn how to compile all of my thoughts and diary entries. I’m going to data science my life. I’m going to discover my patterns, thoughts, cycles, tendencies, emotions. I’m going to truly learn about what makes me, *me*.

What is the self that I love… what do I want?

[Alan Watts (Interlude) [feat. Alan Watts] - a very reflective piece.

I get worried that I’m chasing ideas and wishes that I’ll never be able to achieve. I’ve seen my dad’s struggles with finding fulfillment in life and I see that in myself. It’s good to set goals and wishes and desires for my own life fulfillment, but not if they become so unrealistic that I’ll never actually find that fulfillment in the end.

This is one of the reasons why I love meditation so much. I think that being mindful and slowing down helps me see the beauty in simplicity. When I am mindful (and sober) I can actually sit for thirty minutes and stare at the world with wonder, with excitement, with gratefulness. Small things feel big again.

As I learn more and more how to find fulfillment in smaller things in life, maybe I’ll stray away from the need for world-changing events to find fulfillment. I will always strive to help others and to make good differences and to live the best life I can possible live, but not at the expense of forgetting how good and important my life is right *now*.

When I inevitably read this… I wonder what my thoughts will be.

(Hello future Jessie by the way … how’s that for breaking the fourth wall??)

Will I think that I was naive at this time, that I had no clue what the future would hold for me and what the real world is actually like? Will I think that my hopes and desires were idealistic and unrealistic? Will I laugh at my sentiments toward others and myself and career and changing the world as if that isn’t truly possible? Will I not speak to anyone whom I’ve listed above? Will I look at my grammar mistakes, spelling mistakes, and incomprehensible tangents with disgust now that I’m arguably a much better writer?

Or will I look back in awe? Will I be so proud of who I am right now. Will I be so appreciative that I was able to have this sense of reflection and self awareness at the beginning of my twenty second year on this Earth? Will I be astonished at how much I’ve experienced and come to terms with. Will I be understanding of who I am write now (or I guess, who I was to the future Jessie reading this).

I feel like I always look back at my past diary entries and think about how far I’ve come. I generally think that my past self was idealistic. But then again, I wonder if that’s because I write with an idealistic voice and mentality. I generally sound more optimistic on paper than in my head. Actually, I 100% feel more optimistic on paper than in my head.

This past year, I’ve had times where I’ve had suicidal thoughts.

Never enough for it to be worrisome, but I’ve reached that level of anger and depression.

The first time was that infamous day in February where I battled my two selves on the top of Terrace Hill. I wondered what it would feel like to just jump off of the rock I was standing on and stop the battle. That thought worried me and made me cry at the time.

The past month or so (more so in September and early October), I would get so frustrated over my friend’s seeming uninterest in my life and well being that I wondered what life would be like if I just died. I would be in my car and wonder what if I just crashed. What if I was in a coma, or if I died? Would my friends care about me then? Would others care about the things I accomplished and cared about then? I wondered what it would take for others to appreciate me.

I’m learning that those thoughts are definitely incredible mental distortions. They are very common for people to have in times of desperate sadness. I’m going to talk with my new Therapist about this a lot more, so I’ll have more to say about that soon.

These are the things that I would have never ever thought to write down in a journal or diary before.

I love that I’ve become so candid with my thoughts over the years. This is the real me that I’ll want to look back on in an attempt to understand myself. If I edit myself and my thoughts to only write what I want to hear, then I’ll have a much harder time seeing where I’ve come from. Being candid and raw is the best way to show my truest forms. If I really want to document my life and my struggles and wishes and dreams, I need to be honest with myself and with the paper.

I’m learning this as I find my public writing voice too. I’ve been writing on Medium weekly and I absolutely love it. I’m so proud of myself and how much work I’ve been putting into that. If I stay consistent, I’ll continue to see my writing get better, my voice get more honest, and my stories get more compelling. With every article that I write, I learn so much more about technology, ethics, my field, my future, my passions, and the world. I want to constantly continue to learn.

A big part of the reason why I want to get a PhD is because I don’t think I’m ready to stop learning yet. There’s so much more I need to figure out about this world and about technology and about my passions and non-passions, I don’t trust myself to enter the workforce before learning as much as I possibly can about these things and more.

Honestly, I’m so proud of myself. I have been working my fucking ass off this last year. I work almost all day, everyday. I rarely take days off. In fact, outside of camping, I don’t think I ever take a full day off.

I have shifted my mind and my work ethic to be greater than I ever thought it could be. I struggle with feelings of inadequacy constantly, and I’m working hard to change that. Both through my actions (learning more) and my thoughts (self confidence and self love).

I’m on a good path. I’m living the best life I can right now.

And that’s the best I can do.

Until next time.

Jess

Age: 22

11:15 pm

At home, in SLO, living with Hallie, Sanam, Gabi, Josh, and Shaner.

Much love to myself, to the world, and to life.

THANK YOU.

Sat nam.

<3