Dear Diary,

*Listening to the rain trickle down gently on the vines and ivy that frames my basement windows in my room. Sitting on my white, cozy couch. High. Breathing in the crisp air as it enters through the screen covering of my window. Feeling the cold seep in through the outside air, kissing my cheeks, nose, and fingers.*

10 people were killed in a mass shooting down my street on Monday. It was at my grocery store. **At *my* grocery store.**I recognize some faces of people who were killed; those who worked at the grocery store.

I can’t stop imagining if I had been in that store.

Thank god I wasn’t. I was in New Mexico with Dylan. We were on our way back from the Grand Canyon for my Spring “pause” from school.

It happened on Monday afternoon at the King Soopers a minute away from my house. I was literally in the pharmacy line at King Soopers (where several people were shot and killed) ***less than a week before this shooting happened***.

It terrifies me to think that I could have been there.

*Mondays are my grocery shopping days.* Because I get back from Dylan’s place on Mondays usually, and I don’t often have meetings or class on that day.

**It could have been me.**

I can’t stop thinking about it.

I drove past the store for the first time since the incident today. There were news reporters underneath tents with crews and lighting fixtures, covering the story. The entire front portion of the store and parking lot is barricaded with a metal fence. The fence is covered in banners, letters, pictures, and flowers; remembering those who were murdered.

People are crowded around the metal fence, paying their respects and looking at the scene. Cars in the parking lot are being towed away by the police, with missing or shattered windows due to gunshots. One wall of the front of the store is covered in plywood, to cover up the giant gaping hole that was created from the semi-automatic murder weapon.

The rest of the area is covered in police tape. No one is allowed to enter for the time being.

I’ve heard that the rest of the grocery stores in the town have armed security guards at the moment.

I’m too afraid to go to the grocery store, but I’m out of food, and I don’t know what to do…

I might order out.

I sometimes fear reading old diary entries. I don’t know why. Maybe it’s because i’m afraid to read old updates where I was actually doing okay? Or maybe because I’m afraid to read old updates where I wasn’t doing okay?

I’ve gotta say… *I don’t know if I’m doing okay.*

I definitely feel all over the place.

Dylan and I had an amazing trip to New Mexico and Arizona… *but also,* we fought quite a bit. And I am starting to question to myself if I should continue to be in this. I told him on the way down to Santa Fe that I know that our relationship has an expiration date, and he either needs to choose to break up with me now or to wait until I hurt him.

It was pretty rude and not well thought out on my part, but at the root of the fight, I think I actually meant what I said.

I invited Dylan to Paige’s wedding. And after we got back from our trip last night, we booked another trip to Mexico for the first week of June.

I am worried that I am getting far too enmeshed with Dylan. And also worrying that I am losing my sense of self with him; mostly in terms of my independence. I wonder if part of the reason I’ve been struggling so much with weed lately has been because I don’t actually want to be in this, but I don’t know how to end it because we have such an intense overlap of our lives at this point.

Well… I just went and spent about 30 minutes going through old journal entries from around this time last year. It’s so weird reliving the beginning of COVID through my thoughts… it seems like that was *ages* ago.

I was killing it. I was sober. I was so stoked on life…

What happened this year?

How am I going to bounce back from this?

Will I need to break up with Dylan?

Is that a solution or something that will make things worse?

I don’t know…

Like I said earlier, I feel all over the place right now.

The rain has picked up gently. It’s getting colder and colder in my room now. I can hear people driving past through the puddles of water that their vehicle splashes up onto the curb.

I am waiting patiently for spring to arrive. I have a feeling it’ll take longer than I’m expecting.

I heard the voices of several of my Ya Ya’s… they were offering support.

It has been so long since I was that version of Jess.

Who was she? Where did she go? Do I really want to be her?

Who am I?

Who do I want to be?

How do I get there?

Taking some time to reflect and cry and think in the midst of this rain. Slowly getting more and more high. Taking it all in.

~ Jess

Age: 24