Einstein once theorized that to travel back in time one would have to move faster than the speed of light which, according to the laws of physics, is impossible. There are hypothetical particles known as tachyons which are said to travel so fast that they travel back in time. Even though tachyons have never been proven to exist, I can’t help but wonder if maybe sometimes our minds are like tachyons, when our thoughts travel so fast that we find ourselves stuck in the past for a short while, sometimes longer.

It’s very easy to reminisce, maybe a song comes on and our minds start remembering moments in our past that are associated with that song. For example, maybe the song was yours and your then-partners favorite song, which you would both sing along to whenever it played. Or maybe the song reminds you of a time when you felt lost and suddenly you start questioning your life and wonder how far you’ve come since then. Sometimes it may feel like even though its months, or even years, later you’re still in the same place, but you’re not. Yes you may still feel lost but don’t forget how long you’ve survived and all the things you’ve accomplished (not matter how few, or how small) while feeling lost and never give up hope that one day you won’t feel that way anymore. One day you will hear that same song and smile at the times you felt lost because you’ll finally be exactly where you wanted to be, where you were always meant to be.

Of course, it is always easy to talk about hope and all the “one days” that we tell ourselves, but in the moment it’s very difficult to believe. The most we can do, is just feel the pain. In his book *The fault in our stars* John Green wrote “that’s the thing about pain, it demands to be felt” Think about how your muscles grow when you gym. When you’re on your last rep, it hurts so much that the pain seems unbearable, *just this last one* you tell yourself as you suffer through the pain and over time, your muscles begin to grow, you begin to become stronger than you were before. In other words, in order to grow, our muscles have to break first. It is the same with emotional pain, first we break and then we become stronger. You have to constantly remind yourself that nothing lasts forever; not pain, not even happiness. There is a story about a king who asked his wise men to invent a sentence which, in times of difficulty, would give him hope and, in times of joy, would remind him to be humble. After some time they presented him with a ring, and inscribed on this ring were the words “this too shall pass”.

The definition of a soulmate is given by *a person regarded as ones destined life partner*. I often find myself wondering if I have already met, and lost, her. If you have ever been in a serious relationship I’m sure you have thought, at least once, that they were your soulmate. I have only been in two serious relationships and at some point they both felt like “the one”. This contradicts the very concept as the phrase itself implies there can be only one. One person who makes you feel unlike anyone else. One person who you love more than anything in the world. One person you are meant to be with. But maybe sometimes, we can have more than one soulmate. This could just be the view of someone who hasn’t yet met his soulmate, or maybe it’s the view of someone who had two soulmates, and lost them both.

As a data scientist, it is my job to extract facts from data that aren’t apparent naturally. For example, trying to identify data that stands out from the rest; an anomaly. Trying to identify an anomaly in a bunch of raw data is almost impossible, but once you perform deeper analysis it becomes clearer which data are anomalies. I like to think of soulmates like this. If we consider all the people we’ll ever meet as data, then our soulmates would be the anomalies. Of course, when you meet someone new there is no way of knowing whether they are your soulmate or not until you perform deeper analysis. In the process of getting to know someone we are gathering data about them, and eventually we will know if they are like all the other people in our lives or if they’re anomalous, and could be our soulmates.

My first love was the first anomaly in my life. We had known each other as kids but when our families stopped being friends we fell out of each other’s lives, the first fallout of many to come, but at the time no one could have known that. A few years later we reconnected on Facebook. After that, for about four years, we didn’t see each other but spoke almost every single day on Facebook, BBM or WhatsApp. We became best friends. The reason she was the first anomaly is that I had never experienced a connection like that before. I have always been the type of person who lives in his head and because of this I always find it very difficult to trust and open up to people, but I became so close to her that I opened myself up in ways I had never before. When we started dating it felt like all the pieces of the puzzle that was our messy friendship were finally falling into place. The age gap between us was only two years but the gap in our lives was a lot bigger. I was already in university and she was in her final years of school. This meant that we only saw each other on weekends which, at the time, seemed like a trial but after being in a relationship where I saw my partner every single day, I realise that maybe it was a blessing in disguise. The gap between us came with other, more serious, complications too; our expectations of the relationship were very different. I think this was our biggest problem and perhaps what lead to us breaking up. I don’t regret our relationship but I do regret some aspects of who I became; jealous and insecure, feelings I had never experienced before. Even though I don’t regret our relationship, I wish we hadn’t dated when we did. I saw a quote recently that read *I think we were meant to be, but we did it wrong* and, to me, this is something that applies to us. I remember we promised each other that we’d try again and yet now, two years later, she has moved on. And this is okay, I guess, because people always make promises they can’t keep. I can’t help but wonder if she still thinks about me, if maybe there’s a small part of her that still feels the same, if maybe she’d be willing to try again, but these are questions I may never get an answer to. For the most part, I just miss the type of relationship we had and what hurts the most is knowing that I won’t find something like that with anyone else.

My second love was the second anomaly. What makes anomalies in data so interesting, and difficult to find, is that no two anomalies are the same. Another way of thinking of this is that we never fall in love the same way twice. The type of relationship we had was very different to my first. We didn’t have four years of friendship as our foundation, yet the relationship felt just as right as the first, maybe even more so. After my first relationship ended I was so sure that I would never feel anything close to that again, but then I met her. It felt as though she hit the reset button on the world. The way we met may have seemed like a coincidence but I don’t believe in coincidences, I believe in destiny. And for a long time I was convinced that she was my destiny. One of the big differences between this relationship and the first was that we saw each other a lot more, because we were in the same university. At the time I thought was a blessing but it may just have been what lead to our downfall. The closer you get to someone, the more space you leave for jealousy and insecurity and in the end, this was what tore us apart. When a relationship ends it is very easy to point fingers and shift the blame away from yourself, but I have no trouble admitting that I also played a part in our end. It has been a few months since we broke up but it still gets to me; I still have flashbacks of times we were together, and whether the flashbacks are of good or bad memories, it hurts the same. The hardest part is that I still miss her as though we just broke up yesterday. I don’t think I’ll ever stop missing her because I dedicated such a big part of myself to the relationship, to her, a part of myself that I’ll never get back. Because of the way we broke up, a lot of people seem to think that only she is to blame and one way I know I still love her is that I always get protective over her in those situations. Because I know that I am just as much to blame as she is, and just because we ended badly, it doesn’t make either of us bad people. I wish I could just hate her, which would make moving on a lot easier.

I believe that love, true love, is infinite and because of this we can’t compare one love to another. They say that all good things come to an end and using that logic I have come to the conclusion that the most beautiful things have the most beautiful endings. Beautiful in the sense that the chaos it results in is beautiful. In the move *The lion king 2* Simba talks about how fires destroy everything in their path but what comes after is growth. I think it like this with breakups; they can be so messy and cause a lot of pain but what comes after this is growth which can either be something beautiful or something dark. Considering that even though the two relationships I have been in were very different from one another but still both ended, I have become very despondent towards relationships. I am no longer the once wide-eyed hopeless romantic I always was, I no longer believe in soulmates or, at least, I no longer believe that I have (another) soulmate. I am starting to believe that one day I will just have to settle for somebody so that I don’t end up dying alone. Before you call my cynical or depressed or anything, I want you to ask yourself something; how many relationships have you been in, that you thought would last forever, which had a happy ending?