

I've always had a close relationship with letter boxes. I guess the first time it started was when I managed to write my first letter to my grand mother. We were very close and I usually spent all the summer vacations in her place. And when I had finally mastered the written script and realized that words could be an effective way to communicate with people across distances, I began writing to her. Each week, I would pen her a simple letter outlining the interesting activities of the week and would drop it off in the mail box. A couple of days later, as I anxiously waited by the letter box, the mailman would come and promptly hand me a letter written in her distinctive handwriting. Those were among my most cherished memories.

A while later, especially after grand mother passed away, I began to dread the letter box. Not because of any association with her or even her memory, but simply because my report card would land in the letter box. On the first couple of instances, I managed to make the letter disappear from the letter box before my father had a chance to review it. But he got wiser and began using a combination lock to keep me out. This didn't bother me once my grades picked up, and the letter box continued to track other aspects of my life and growth.

When I grew up a little more and had my first real girl friend, it was again the letter box that became an instrumental part of my life. While my girl friend initially lived across the street, she managed to move with her family to an altogether different state. We still stayed together, through a long distance relationship and I firmly believe that it was our ability to write letters to each other that cemented our relationship and made it last.

The final stage of my life was also under the shadow of the omniscient letter box. This was when I started working and took up residence in the city. First, it was the attack of the direct mail. Day after day I would come home to see an overflowing letter box that was filled to the brim with useless catalogs. Then later, it was the dreaded letters from the IRS. Occasionally, the letter box would bestow me with a letter from a loved one. And once, my old girl friend (yes, the letter writer herself) managed to drop me a line offering to met. Come to think of it, I must say that the letter box has been amarker of sorts for my life.