

BAZ FAITH

OR: THE LETTERS OF A HUMAN ON THE PRECIPICE OF THE VOID,
THE RECOGNITION AND APPLICATION OF EXHISTENTIALIST AUTHENTICITY,
AND A PROPOSAL TO THE BEST FRIEND I EVER HAD; THE ONLY I EVER LOVED

BAD FAITH

— OR —

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TO THE BEST
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THE ONLY GIRL I
EVER LOVED.

For
Mien Ozeanaugen,

To all the futures that
never were, and to
the future that will be.

No matter where
we find ourself in
that future, I wish
you nothing but
happiness.

Whoever I become,
Whatever life I live, I
will always love you.

A few words before we begin...

Well here we are. I honestly wasn't sure we'd ever be here. When I started writing it seemed like a small task, an act of desperation to get you back. Eventually this writing became my solace. A loving child I could nurse to feel good. It became my sounding board ideas I was trying out. This book has taken on many roles I never intended in the course of its creation. In its inception, It was going to a fairly shallow book, filled with random little texts about something I'd seen in my life that I wanted to text you. It was supposed to make you miss me I guess? It feels like a lifetime ago this all started.

This book, now that it is all written, I can say confidently, is about shaping my perception of the world. It is the story of how I fell in love with existentialism. How I melded it with my soul. This book is for you. No one can deny that, But I must warn you here, that it will almost certainly frustrate you. You may throw this book to the wall in frustration. You



may even come away from this book thinking even less of me than before.

This book is an odyssey that has no end. The pages that follow find themselves split in three sections. In the beginning, our my letters to you. Each one hand written in ink as I tumbled through the tumultuous aftermath of our separation. In them, I start I scared, confused child, licking my wounds. The letters are an attempt to understand. They are unedited and raw. Who I was in the early letters, is not who I am now. Who I am in the later letters, will not be who I a tomorrow.

There is only so long one can lick their wounds. The second section finds me making a plan. Or rather a guideline. I propose there a way forward for myself. I look inward and try to understand the gears of my being. You always seemed bewildered by my descriptions of my feelings, hopefully this will help you, as well as myself understand.

And then, wounds thoroughly licked, a guideline established, it is time for the future. I can never know what the future holds, but I make my argument in the third part of this book, for the direction I think brightest, for us both. I muse futures that may be. Some that hopefully never happen. In this section, I declare the powers I hold, and submit to the forces out of my grasp.

The pages may end, but the story continues ever on.

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LETTERS

TO THE

VOID

Dear Taya,

You were always the one I'd go to when I needed to talk. You'd always listen when I needed a sounding board for what I was thinking. I don't know if you knew how much it meant to me, but it did. It was easy to forget that you needed space though. And I smothered you. I trampled your boundaries because I felt cold away from your warmth. And now... You are gone. It's impossible to know just how much space a person takes up in your life till they are gone. Towards the end it felt like you were pulling so far away. That we barely spoke anymore. But now that you are actually gone, I can see just how close you were. I'm sorry I lost sight of that.

Being around each other we grew. Being around you I felt like a better person. I felt like I could do anything. You are so incredibly strong and resilient that I thought you could hold the both of us up. In the beginning we flourished by each other's sides. There was

no reason to be afraid. We were happy. I wasn't holding onto you. You were there because you wanted to be there and I was there because I wanted to be there. Life was good. I don't know when exactly the shift happened but recently I've been holding you so deathly tight close to me. I gave you no room to breath and when you tried to pull back away to a normal distance it only confirmed to be that you were always going to leave anyway. I clutched harder and harder panicking. Till I finally held too hard and smothered our friendship to death. I do not know when the change happened and I started holding so tight. But I can recall the exact moment it ended. We both can. I wish I could take that night back and do it all over again.

You will be fine. You will be more than fine. You will grow to be even more amazing than you already are. This I am sure of. It is scary to look upon my own path however. You were such a pivotal part of my life,

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and going forward without you, I have to figure out how to fill in the gaps now where you once lay. This letter is an attempt at that. I cannot talk to you anymore. Too many times have I told you I'd back off only to run to you clinging moments later. This time I will respect your boundaries. I promise myself and I promise you.

I told you often that this city makes me feel the way you do when you're by my side. I love New York and I love you. You may be gone, but every day I get to wake up in this beautiful city. You may be gone now, and I can no longer message you, so instead I'll sing to the city. I hope these letters may reach you one way or another, and that you can see that I am unsure about the future, but I will go on. I hope that one day we may be friends again. That I can actually be the person you can trust. That may be the future or it may only be just a hope. But these letters, I will continue to write. To you.. to the city I love.

Whatever you are doing now, I hope you the best. Bis später
Ozeanaugen

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Dear Taya,

When you yelled at me the other day for trying to figure out what had gone wrong and trying to understand the situation we were in. It frustrated me that you were just so easily cutting off and moving forward. How could you just throw everything away without thinking about it? All this, while I could not see that the only thing I was trying to do was analyze. I was just trying to save what I had crushed and refusing to move forward. I do not think I was wrong to try and analyze what had happened, but I was wrong in not trying to move forward. Neither choice, if taken alone, is a good one. It's about towing the line between the two. I am not going to stop reflecting on the situation. This letter would not be written if I was going to stop. But I always told you that I admired you for your ability to grow and push forward. I admire you for this but wouldn't adapt it myself. I admire you for this until I am the one you are growing and pushing from.

When we worked, it was because we were both growing. You continued to grow and it wasn't that I just stopped growing and we fell apart. It was that saw a future where you left me, and instead of adjusting and going forward to change and be better to avoid that, I dug my feet in the ground and tried to do anything in order to stop us from getting closer to that future. I cannot keep writing without bringing up the self fulfilling prophecy. This was not a bad way of dealing with a situation, it was a circular, self feeding spiral. It didn't start out as a full blown panic, it started as a small seed. And seeing that seed, I changed how I acted, and that only made the seed grow. And when it grew, I did not look upon my own change in actions and realize that it was my reaction that made it grow, but thinking that it grew despite my actions. So I implemented more drastic measures. And again these would make the seed grow and again I would not learn.



I did not hold on so tightly in hopes of staying like that forever. I held on so tightly in hopes that you would want to stay close and I could relax. But that's not how this works. It's never how it worked. This is the second time we broke apart because of my gripping. But it wasn't exactly the same. This time was better. It wasn't good. But it was better. The first time we broke off, I was unrelenting until you blocked me. I Didn't understand how to stop. I drove my head against the door you shut for a long time before I fell down tired. Not because I realized I was crazy, but because I was exhausted. I grew despite you. I grew because I was too tired to try and fight for you anymore. I was fighting not for us to grow better, but for us to be together. I was fighting to have you.

This time around was different. I wasn't fighting for this stagnant hold on you. I was still clinging and suffocating you, but there was a recognition of what I was

doing. I would cling and you would pull back and say you need space, and logically I would understand and accept that. I would pull away for a while before running back to you clinging. This time around I was not fighting you, trying to yank you back, but rather fighting myself, trying to viscerally understand the things that I logically understood. I lost that struggle and pushed you away again.

I am not fighting bullishly to yank back what we had this time around. I will not grow despite you, I will grow with you. We may not be talking anymore. We may never talk again. But what I loved so much about our friendship was being better people together. I cannot act under the assumption that I loved being with you and that there was a side effect of being better people. I loved the growing and I know that you will continue to grow. And I will grow too. We may not be so close anymore as we grow. But in a way, so long as we

are both growing, I have not lost the thing I loved.

There is a lot of talking on my part. Formulating and planning is comfortable for me. It is not that I don't mean to act on these plans, it is just that I never get around to actually implementing them because they are never perfect.

These letters are not just a coping mechanism. They are not an endless autopsy of problems and strategic planning. Despite how the first two letters have gone, it is not the theme I want to follow. But you know probably better than myself my need to precede everything I say with a rambling preface. This is to the future.

You are not the world, but I know you will change it. I will change it too.

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Dear Taya,

This, is the hard part. What am I going to actually do? A large part of me wants to go on and on for letters about how I'm going to do things and why I need to do things and not just sit in introspective reflection my entire life. Getting stuck in that is part of the root as to why I'm here. Why I hurt you, even despite realizing the traits that would cause me to hurt you.

I want there to be one grand thing. A big key that unlocks the answer to the future. I do that thing and voila! I'm better! If we're being honest I still haven't totally convinced myself that that's not how it works. Wanna know something utterly ridiculous? After the initial breakdown I had after that night, and I signed up for therapy and felt more calm. I thought to myself. Oh I feel better I don't need therapy anymore. I've realized a bunch of things the last couple days so who needs therapy I'm done!

I am glad to report that I...did not cancel my therapy. My first session was Tuesday night on the train home from my moms. It was weird. It was still only the first session, but it felt, familiar. The entire session was pretty much just me catching them up with my life and what brought me to therapy, with occasional butt ins for comments and questions. I said that you were my therapist for a long time now, and I meant it, but it was weird how much this just felt like talking to you. My next session is Monday night and I'm really looking forward to it.

I don't know if you've noticed, or looked into it, but I've been working on the Trello boards. You haven't left them yet, and I know you've been on the zero waste and vegan recipe boards, so I'm sure you've at the very least seen the notification dots saying there are updates on the boards. You did leave the reunion trip board though. These letters can get long and even if you are checking in, I'm not sure if

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you're actually reading them. It's a weird concept really no? Writing letters to someone very specific, but ultimately they're just going into the void and a stranger is more likely read them than you. I hope you are reading them...or will read them one day. I want to message you, "Hey you said not to contact you, but also I've been writing you long letters on Trello that you have access to and was wondering if you are reading them?"

I used to have a way of being very self aware when saying things I know I shouldn't say. I would think something inappropriate. For example, maybe "Huh, wonder what kind of porn they watch?" and I would pretty much immediately tell myself nope that's not something I should ask because obviously you fucking twit. But I'm not great at pushing it out of my head and not only would I be curious about my initial question, but I'd be also reprimanding myself for thinking it. So all in all, this

thought would rattle around in my head and I had less and less control to think anything else. Until finally I'd blurt out "Man I know this is super not appropriate but I really wanna ask you what kind of porn you watch. That's so weird right? Buzz!" But it was ok to ask like that because I was also acknowledging that I was wrong for asking.

Ok maybe I'm doing exactly that now. In a weird round about way I am doing that now. This letter is to you after all and I'm asking if you're reading them while also saying it a bad habit I have to do it. But Who knows if you're even reading these. It's still early ok, I'm working on it. I do really wanna message you directly to ask...so.... progress?

Tangent aside, I am working on the Wellness Center Board and I'm really excited about them still. You really sold them to me over the past few months. I know they will never be as near and dear to my heart as they are your's,

but they do mean a lot to me. I want to see them come to fruition. I know they will help people. Working on the board has really given me something to look forward to. After you told me it was over, the future seemed like a void. A blank piece of paper. It was terrifying. I didn't know what to look forward to, what to work for? These Wellness Centers give me that hope. I love them.

I only fear that I'm taking it from you in a way. These Wellness Centers were your idea and they mean more to you than anyone else. Your love and faith in them inspired mine. Your vision for them is wonderful. But I am the only one who have worked on the planning board, and while I love it, I just don't want to make this my thing. It's your thing, and I had hoped it could be our thing. But it feels like it's neither of those now. I hope you will add some things to the board soon

I hope you are doing ok, I love you

Dear Taya,

It makes a difference whether we conceive of ourselves as having emotions, understood as internal neurological processes, or if we consider ourselves suffering passions, understood as the external influences on the state of our souls. This is one of those ideas that I have always understood but never understood. I read this the other day, and it was the first time that this had ever occurred to me, but it felt immediately obvious. It was not this idea that stayed with me though. It was the subsequent realization that I had only ever felt emotions as outside forces. They're stormwinds and rain lashing against me. There was never peace, only changes in the maelstrom around me. Any changes I made were to better brave the storm. I learned to love the storm.

My worldview is built around doing as much good as I can in the world, so that the storm throws me into better emotions

more often. I believe that I have the power to do that too, but only to a certain degree. I am not helpless, but I am also only one person. We in this, all of us, together. Everyone doing their part to make the world a better place.

I fell in love with you when we were kids because you were pretty and smart. I fell in love with you again this year, because I saw in you the same fire that burned in my heart. I saw something in your soul that I had felt all my life but never saw in anyone else. You want to do good. Your heart is enviable. We were going to do good together. We both knew that working together, we could accomplish more than we could accomplish alone.

But you didn't feel the same about emotions. That working together and trying to help each other, we could be happier than alone. You've gone through a lot in your life, and you grew stronger largely alone. What you did, what

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you are doing is admirable but just because you can alone doesn't mean doing it together is bad. I wish you would have let me be there with you. You told me that you never asked for my help. That I didn't have to do anything. That you would be fine and you would get through it all. I never thought for a minute that I had to help you, or that you wouldn't come out fine. I want to be there for you because I love you. You can face any hurdle on your own, but no one should have to on their own.

The point I am avoiding is that you build yourself up, and grow stronger. When you are stronger you work to help the world. I don't work that way. I build up my world and make it a better place. When my world is better, I am better. I do this not out of selflessness. I'm not bragging on my high horse. I build up my world out of a selfish desire to be happier. I hate to speak on how you feel out of fear of misspeaking, but you felt emotions as an internal product. Emotions were things

inside you that you felt. When you feel this way the logical path is to improve yourself to make yourself healthier and happier. I never felt that way. Emotions were outside winds, and to make myself happier and healthier, I had to change the outside the world to be a happier and healthier place.

You made me feel like this was an invalid way of living. That I was wrong for feeling this way. This isn't a bad way of living Taya. You told me that you felt pressured to be happy because you being happy made me happy. That you would feel bad because what I was doing couldn't make you happy and I would just feel bad. For a while, This broke me a little for a while. Why did you feel pressured? I was the one who had to do something? I had to make you happy, you were in pain, you shouldn't have to worry about anything, let me worry about making it better. Confusing as I found your perspective, I accepted that you felt it and wanted to figure out how to fix

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this. I felt awful that I had only made you feel pressured when you were sad. So my brilliant solution seemed obvious at the time. I just needed to get better at making you happy. You felt pressured when I was only trying to make you happy. If I could successfully make you happy then you wouldn't feel pressured.

I worked frantically to make you happy then. Not only were you sad and I wanted to make you happy, but now if I didn't make you happy then I was making you even worse off. This... was not a sustainable, nor effective course of action. You told me this, and on some level, I did agree with you. I needed to let up a little. Sometimes the thing I needed to do was to not do anything.

If this was just my interpretation, or the actual meaning you intended, I took this to mean going away. Go away and let you deal with things and you'll come back. My idea of helping certainly

wasn't healthy, but I can't accept that this was right either. Both of these options feel extreme. On one end I wanted to dig my thumbs into your lips, tugging a smile on your face. On the other end, you wanted me to sit outside while you were in pain and let me back in when you felt better. It makes sense though, we are rather extreme people.

I tried hard, to tell myself that I was just crazy and I needed to go away. That this was normal and healthy and I was the crazy one. That you were the only voice of reason. I was a child and you were my mother. You made me feel crazy and baseless in everything I felt.

I see now that what I really wanted, wasn't to make you happy. What I really wanted was for you to let me in. I was wrong for not respecting your boundaries, not wanting to let me in. But you made me feel crazy for even wanting that. I am not crazy Taya. I am not the crazy one for being hurt after you got back with

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your ex after having grown so close over the summer. After we had fallen asleep together every night and confided in each other. After we had started planning our future together. What we had something together. We may not have called it anything, but Taya I am not the crazy one for being hurt when you very deliberately make the decision to throw a lot of that away. You said you didn't want a relationship with me while we were in a relationship. You words and actions rarely aligned towards the end, everything you did went against what you were saying. Who was I to trust? You or you?

I love you taya...and I believe you loved me too. Why would you never accept that? What was so wrong with me?

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Dear Taya,

There was a boy and there was a girl. A long time ago, or at least it was to them, they loved each other. In a world that was scary, they made each other feel better. But they made the mistake of being children at the time. The girl's father hated the boy and forbid their friendship. Their love was a secret. But the boy didn't care, because it was the sweetest love he had ever known. He didn't know it at the time, though he had a sneaking suspicion, that it would be the sweetest love he would ever know. The boy wanted nothing more in the world than to be with the girl and to make her happy. He was terrified of losing her. Any sorrow the girl felt, the boy felt. The boy could never truly feel her sorrow as she felt it. He could never fear in the same way she feared. Still, any time her world was grey, so too was his. He loved the girl more than anything else in the world. Together they constructed their future together in their dreams. She was to be a psychologist.

He was to be an engineer. They would make the world a better place. He knew even then, that she was going to do amazing things in life. He wanted to be there for her, support her and be there with her while she did. But children are stupid. The boy was stupid. He so desperately just wanted to make her happy and flailed frantically to do so. He was terrified that she would leave. One day he hurt the girl. Shortly after the girl moved away and their love turned into a rocky sea. He clung so desperately to her, to the imaginary future they dreamt together. Tears clouded his eyes. Through them, he could not see that he was clinging so hard that he was hurting her. The boy was alone. The girl was across the country and living her life. The boy tried to do the same. The boy made friends in his high school and dated a few girls. The girl did the same. Though by now there was no contact between them. The boy never forgot how sweet that love was. Every girl he kissed felt wrong, but he

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tried nonetheless. He loved his friends but they always felt far away. He never forgot how close he had felt to the girl. The boy realized that he did not want to be an engineer anymore. He pursued design and moved away too. He left the city where he had loved the girl. He had many reasons to leave. But deep down in his heart, he hoped that in this new city, he might forget her. He hoped that at every street corner, there would not linger a ghost of a moment with her. He did feel better for a time in the new city. He loved the new city but still felt alone. He kissed girls, but their lips were still bland, and he had new friends that he loved with all his heart, but they still felt so far away. One bad night, while the boy was curled up in bed, swallowed in the abyss, he texted the girl. The girl, much to his surprise texted back, albeit days later. The girl told him of her life since they had stopped talking, and he told her of his. She had a rougher life than his, getting into all sorts of chaos, but she pulled through stronger

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and better. Years had passed but it took minutes for the boy to feel at home with her again. He admired her more than anyone else. He knew she was going to do amazing things in this world, and he wanted to be there with her while she did. But the girl said she didn't love him in the same way anymore. It hurt the boy, but he loved her and even if they couldn't be together, he wanted to be there for her. He wanted nothing more than to be her friend. And so they were friends. By the day they only grew closer and closer. They texted nonstop and soon moved to video calls. He sent her necklaces for quitting smoking. She motivated him to learn a language. He would tell her bedtime stories after late-night movie sessions. The boy and girl were a country apart, but he had never felt so close to the girl. She maintained that she didn't love him like she used to. They built a new future together. She was going to be a psychologist, and he a designer. They would live together in his new

city while she studied and eventually they would build a house together and help people. He had never loved her more. The boy wanted nothing but to make the girl happy. And for a while, they were so close, and the world was good again. They had planned for her to fly out to visit him in the summer. The idea of holding her in his arms again was a feeling beyond words. He looked forward to it every day. She told him she didn't love him. They planned the trip, full of massages, cuddles, movies, and dinners. For a week they would be together. She told him that he was her best friend. Then one day, just before the trip, the girl told the boy she had gotten back together with her ex. She had told him that she didn't want to talk as often. She told him that they would no longer fall asleep together. The boy's heart shattered. The blue skies suddenly went dark. The world didn't make sense anymore. He didn't understand what had changed. He was scared and flailed frantically to make

it better. He tried to scramble together the pieces of their dreams and reassemble them. She told him nothing was wrong and that she had always told him that she didn't love him. That he shouldn't be hurt. She told him that nothing had changed and that she was still coming. Every day he told himself this. That the trip would come and everything would be ok. The trip came and the boy met the girl at the airport. Even as he wrapped his arms around her he could not believe it was true. She was even more beautiful than he remembered. She was in his arms and nothing in the world was wrong. They went out to dinner and they laughed and they talked. They went back to his place. She said she had to get into her pajamas and went into the bathroom. He turned out the lights and put the show they both loved on. She came back and jumped into bed with him. She curled up and laid her head in his lap, and held his hand. At that moment, the world was perfect. The boy and the girl were happy.

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They say that life doesn't care about your narrative. That there are no happy endings. Life just goes on. But that is only partly true. Life isn't a narrative, but it is made up of countless narratives. They overlap and twist, but if you look back, they are there. The story of us is there too. The story of the boy and the girl who wanted to change the world.

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Dear Taya,

I would do anything just to wish you goodnight one more time. I love you so much. Please, this can't be the end. I am going to be better. I am I promise you. I know I'm not better yet. I won't message you yet. Not while I am like this. But I promise you. I promise me. I love you so much. Taya please know I love you. I love you. I love you.

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Dear Taya,

Call me slow or stupid or whatever you want, but I figured it out! or.. one more piece at least. I said that life is stories, that it's hundreds of stories all overlapping at different parts. This entire time, I've been looking for Truth in everything. A universal answer that would explain everything. But there is no capital T truth. Not here at least. The truth is a tangled knot of strings. The narrative that I had painted the longest till now, was that you were (subconsciously) withdrawing from me and had been acting in ways that would cause me to blow everything up. And That I had played right along and thoroughly blew everything up. And after I had done so, you completely cut off. That's what really hurt. That you could care then not, so easily. That you could just not. I don't make the claim that you didn't turn off, but rather that it was only A truth, not THE Truth. You have always been better at keeping a level head and being smart about your actions

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than me. There is another truth that is so blindingly obvious now. you were trying to hurt me! I have never been so elated to realize you were hurting me, or rather that you were intentionally doing so. You well know that the deepest dagger you can dig into my heart is to just stop and not care. all this not to suggest your actions were entirely a ruse just to hurt me, quite the opposite actually. both truths can live together, both different yet simultaneously true! It's beautiful! It unlocks so many possibilities! Though perhaps it is particularly elating because it means that you both do and do not care. That the future exists!

This moment right here is the most important moment to date. it is more important than any that have passed and any that will come. This moment is NOW! It is the acceptance of time. A thing I have all but disregarded to this point. The future and the present are one and the same but do not exist in the same moment! I

can hear your frustrated sigh already. In hindsight, you have probably been sighing this entire letter. But hear me out. I think you'll enjoy this next part.

I have always collapsed the entirety of time from this moment to forever into a single point. I constantly am picturing the future and hastily planning in a moment, my entire life. And in the next moment, I will plan it all again. Every second, I plan a life. In twenty years I have planned a million and one lives. Sometimes I plan a beautiful life of my dreams, other times I plan crisis recovery lives. Usually, the plans only shift slightly, but sometimes, when the moment brings a plan that is so much more perfect than any of the others, it makes even the second-best plan seem miserable by comparison. I never want to plan another life ever again. I am so eager to live it that I jump beyond the present moment. My eagerness, however, is not the only reason I jump.

The larger and probably more problematic reason I jump, is a lack of confidence and trust. I cannot yet say exactly the relationship between these two traits, only that they go together. I would like to propose that my lack of confidence is the reason for my lack of trust. Though some evidence exists that would suggest they occurred simultaneously, each one only exaggerating the other. But this is a topic for another letter.

When I jump it is not from lack of trust in you. It is broadly a lack of trust that the future would happen as I in that moment would hope and plan. That suddenly it would change. This lack of trust, I believe, stems from a lack of confidence. This lack of confidence is largely attributed to my weight, though it certainly stems out into much more. It is a lack of confidence in my ability to make people happy. That people wouldn't enjoy me for me but rather the good I could provide them. I convinced myself that since I

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was fat and unattractive, that I had to work tirelessly to be liked, let alone loved.

I seek constant performance reviews, so that I can do better. So I can be better. I didn't... I don't have the confidence to course-correct on my own. It's hard to give you space, when I need to constantly ask, "Am I doing a good at giving you space?" The idea that you just needed time and space, made sense to me logically, but I didn't have the confidence to believe it viscerally.

Earlier I declared that this moment is paramount. This because it is the moment that I change this. I declare in this moment, that I will have the confidence. I will tread more comfortably forward with my decisions. I do not do this from a point of power, but desperation.

From you, I have reached my highest highs, and my lowest lows. This, mein Ozeanaugen, is my low, and this moment, I will reach a new high. I

promise.

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Dear Taya,

I have not yet capped my pen since closing the last letter. This moment is a cascade of pieces falling into place. How many times have I told you at this point, that I thrive and think in a design crit mindset? How I thought (and still think) that this is a good way to live. I think in a way you embodied this more than I. A large part of it is to break things and try new things to create a new! The other day when you got back with Atticus, you told me that you needed to try things, and fail to grow. How did I not put it together? That's design crit thinking!

I now realize how I could idealize this thinking, while finding it foreign and terrifying on you. Honestly, how did you not call me out on this hypocrisy? There is one huge difference between designer me and me me. Confidence. CONFIDENCE, TAYA ITS CONFIDENCE! I am a cocky mother fucker! I am if anything too confident with my work. It

is exhilarating to rip it apart, because I KNOW I can make it better, even if it looks nothing like what I had pictured. It is a beautiful feeling! and I believe you know this feeling too! just in the context I never knew. You knew it in the context of life. Design was... is the only thing I have ever had confidence.

Again we approach a crucial known flaw in my head. I... logically know this. I know in my head, that I not only need to be more confident, but deserve to be more confident. But in my heart, I am still nothing. God, you know the song "I am shit" by Crywank? Yeah... I know its cringey, but it's true. Though as I said in the last letter, I do not make this change from a position of power, but desperation. So... what am I going to do to live this way?

That question still remains unanswered. But I think I have an idea... an idea that I both desperately want to work, but also quickly burn so I stop

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feeling stupid. Any guess? Yeah, its mantra. I don't know what it will be yet, but I'll get back to you on it when I do. I love you.

27

Hey Taya,

Are you still thinking about college in Ireland? I really hope you do. I know our plans of the Wellness Centers in upstate are dashed, but I hope you still go to Ireland. You'll do good there. You are bigger than this country, bigger than any country. I know You're pessimistic about the US right now, that Ireland... that anywhere else is better. I am worried that when you get to Ireland and realize that it has its own fair share of problems, you will lose hope. Please never lose hope Taya, never stop caring and loving and trying. The world has its problems, no country is free of it. There are no safe havens. Only those we make for ourselves. Most people can only ever hope to make that for themselves. I am hopeful that I can do more than that with my life, and of you, I am sure you can. I am sure that if you try, you will change the world and the lives of so many people, for the better. I have never been so sure of anything

in my life. You tell me that you feel like it's a lot of pressure to be the person I think you are. Like you have to be happy. That there is so much I build you up to be, and you feel like it's a lot to live up to. I'm sorry. I don't mean to pressure you, or stress you out. Everything I say of you, is only what I observe. You are kind and loving. and brilliant. There is an air about you that is electric and a drive in your soul that I know can't do anything short of extraordinary. I do not say this because I know it's what you can be, but because it is what you are already! My biggest fear in the world, is that the woe and pain of the world will weigh on you and snuff out your flame.

You were right. I don't trust you enough to be ok. But I will have to now. Mein Ozeanaugen, I love you. Please go to Ireland. You are immense, never let anyone or anything snuff your flame.

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Dear Taya,

The weather is no longer hot. The coconut oil is thick and viscous. I can pull it out with a knife. Just like you were saying the other night. I think about you every morning when I spread it on my toast.

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Dear Taya,

Did I ever sing “she’s always a woman” to you at night? I could never tell the connotation of that song. Whether it was in praise or disdain of the woman. An odd thing not to know, because it always felt so resonant with me. The song Was I how felt about you. The song came on today and it struck a chord with me again that I still didn’t understand. It was a slow day at work so I looked up the lyric analysis and you will never fucking guess. There must have been a nice handful of people all recounting stories of loving women with BPD. I’m not alone Taya, I didn’t understand it but I guess I wasn’t the only one. It saddened me to read, but It did also feel nice to know I’m not alone. My therapist pretty much just said “yeah no duh other people go through this you’re not alone” I dunno, there isn’t really a neat ending to this one. I love you Ozeanaugen, you’ll always be a woman to me.

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Dear Taya,

I’ve decided on my mantra, OZEANAUGEN. It will be OZEANAUGEN. Let me never forget why I do this. DO you remember when we were lying in the grass that Saturday in Philly? You were talking to someone on the phone and I was reading a book on seeing things in a philosophical way. It spoke of everything being connected. How an ice cream and a cloud were the same in their sharing of water in them. I was lying on my back reading, book held over my head. I dropped it to the side after reading that section and I noticed how blue the sky was for the first time that day. It was so incredibly blue. Like the most perfect ocean floating above me. The sight was the best approximation of what it is like to look into your eyes. You kept asking me why I would keep staring at you. It’s because I knew that I would never see you again. It’s because you are so amazing and no matter how long I would stare, you only became

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more so. I was terrified of you leaving, but lying in the grass, looking up at the sky, I saw your eyes and remembered that the world was beautiful. I realized in that moment the joy you are, will always be there. You are mein Ozeanaugen, my blue skies. And as long as the skies are blue, you are with me.

When the world shakes beneath me and I am about to succumb, I will look to the ocean above me and call mein OZEANAUGEN.

When times get hard, I often think about calling you. It is in these times that I have called mein OZEANAUGEN the most. To remind myself why I am doing this. I do this all for you. and I can’t say that, if i continue to trample your boundaries and ignore what you want. For a long time, I held that I am selfish in wanting to make you happy. That making you happy made me happy and thats why I did it. I did not see until recently that a sentiment like that, was

ultimately a perversion of love. The sentence should not read, "Making you happy, makes me happy, so I will make you happy to make me happy." But instead, "You being happy makes me happy, and I will be there if there is anything I can do to help you be happy"

I have confused the act of making you happy with you being happy. This fundamental perversion of the idea has had extremely unhealthy repercussions. I became incapable of finding joy in your happiness. I Was only finding joy in making you happy. That's not how it started though...

In our first romance, I stood idly by in the shadows as you dated other guys as we fucked and told me you loved me. This was in no way a scenario that was good, but I did what you wanted and was happy when you were happy. I do not wish to dwell on this time any longer that to just show that there was a time where my relationship to your happiness

wasn't perverted.

It was a feeling of uselessness and lack of confidence that plunged me into this perversion. Both concepts bound with the idea that the skies were grey without you. Given this idea, I enter my lack of confidence. I had an all-encompassing fear that you would leave. There was not a drop of confidence that you would stay. There was one thing I did have confidence in though. That was my ability to work hard. I could work harder and harder to make you happy and if I did, that you would stay. My entire mindset, my purpose in life, became making you happy. I worked tirelessly to do that. I did it blindly. Now enter stage left, my uselessness. Having shifted all my efforts, any time I could not make you happy, were moments where I had failed. They were moments when I was useless.

The objective, among others, is to do this perversion. To bring myself back to the time where

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I valued your happiness, not making you happy.

For the millionth time, however, to say these things and making them real can be two very different things. For the moment I still reside in this perversion. But knowing the mechanisms of it, I hope to escape. I WILL escape.

In this moment, I can say however, mein Ozeanaugen, I sincerely wish and hope you are happy now and till the next time we see each other again. Until that day comes, I will hold your pet name with me as a reminder. Goodnight Ozeanaugen.

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Dear Taya,

Of all our differences, the thing that perhaps is the greatest, is your love of language. Where you find beauty, I find a horribly inadequate and frustrating means of communication. The fact that we are bound to it to talk makes my skin crawl. I wish I could unhinge my jaw and utter into the world, a call of pure unfiltered emotion. You didn't use say jequ'taime as often as I did, and I don't know if you really ever understood the muscle wrenching pain that is held in it. I do not know if I hope you can experience that one day, or if I am happy that you will never have to come close to it.

It is not uncommon for typographers, and really anyone who cares to think about it, that a typeface is the clothing of the written word, and that the word cannot exist without the typeface. In a similar way, words, are the clothing of ideas. An idea, cannot be communicated

without it. We can barely hope to hold a grip on an idea without a word. But the difference between fonts and words, is that a font works to enhance the meaning of the word. A word only garbles and misconstrues the emotion.

Whether it is my own incompetencies in language or a fundamental shortcoming of language, I cannot say without bias. However, I would readily assume that neither are innocent.

I don't mean to come off as against language as a concept. Language is the communication of ideas, I can't be against that. What discomforts my soul is the state of language as it is, as it has always been. We have hundreds of half baked, chaotically thrown together languages, that on their own, quite frankly shit the bed at representing emotions and concepts. Concepts here and always in this letter meaning nonphysical concepts. I think language does a fine job

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explaining how an offset crank words. It is less so adequate at explaining the exact way the flesh wrings around bones like a rag under tectonic plates.

Point is, I think I might dip my toes into Russian.

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Dear Taya,

Sometimes it feels like my therapist is only making me more confused. He's making me feel like a battered housewife. It's like he only wishes to see you as awful. He insists that I wasn't in the wrong that night. He won't even let me say that is was grey. I keep trying to tell him that you're not bad, but he just dismisses it. I know his job is to help me, but he won't even let me say that I hurt you. There is another session today after work. I don't know what he wants... I think he's trying to get me to avoid people like you. He talks a lot about warning signs. How am I supposed to get better if he won't let me analyze what I did, analyze my thoughts and actions?

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Dear Taya,

I worry that these letters might be misrepresenting my thoughts. Not that anything said here is false, but rather that it paints an overly obsessive portrait of where I am. These letters would have you believe that I rock frantically in the corner thinking of nothing but this. While I have to admit that much of my action has been dictated by it since you left, it is rarely front of mind. I suppose I am in sort of a crisis recovery mode. A mode spurred on by the loss of the girl that I loved magnitudes more than I've ever loved anyone else. I haven't written a lot about what I've been doing to move forward. Probably because in those moments, I am not thinking about you as much. You are always on my mind, it is more the role you take on that changes. When I am writing generally, your role in my mind is one of loss and woe. You serve as a reminder of everything bad that I am, everything that I wish not to be anymore. You serve as a

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mirror for my insecurities. But that is only half the story. The story that these letters don't tell, are when you serve as my inspiration. As my hope and faith in humanity. Moving forward, I am going to try and tell a more complete story of this period of my life. I promised you I was going to take action and I am working on improving, on actually doing things.

I have found great comfort in philosophy. Particularly the existentialists of the early 1900's. I read them on the subway every day and I find myself bouncing rapidly between mania and depression while reading, as new ideas are presented to me. Sartre and de Beauvoir actually the only time I have broken my promise to you and contacted you. The way they hold their relationship was exhilarating! We often discussed love and relationships, and though we rarely ever saw completely eye to eye, I always enjoyed it, because it was the one subject

that neither of us has figured out yet or even holds more than an ambiguous morsel of and opinion. Talking with you helped me figure it out more. Deep down, I think that we both wanted the same thing, but could never quite put it into words that each other could understand. When I sent that link over, it was because I thought you might find some understanding in it. It reminded me of how you talked of Anais Nin. Whenever you talked of her relationships that made me feel insecure and confused as to why, there was almost a sadness. But hearing of these two philosophers similar relationship, it appeared to me in a whole new light. I cannot say I am entirely comfortable with it, but I can understand it better at least. I would love to know what you think about it. I'm dying to discuss it with you.

I often talk of you as my friend and my love, but in moments like this, it reveals a third aspect of our relationship that I often don't bring up. You were my partner Taya. The lens that

helped me understand the world. You were the person I would walk beside as we created the brighter future of our dreams. Perhaps the scariest fact, is that I must walk into that future alone now. I will do just that though. I will strike boldly into the future. I love you Ozeanaugen. I know you will go boldly into the future too. I hope some sunny day in that future, we may be together again.

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3

Dear Taya,

It is easy to forget the exact details of what I have written about. Forgive me if I have made this allusion before, but when we listened to Hamilton, you grew frustrated with him when he couldn't say no. When I could not say no, you burned it all. Now it is I who stand in the eye of the Hurricane. On the matter of self-regulation and No, you didn't sympathize. But I hope you can understand as I try to write myself out of this storm. "overwhelm with honesty" as is was put. I plan on recalling that night soon. Put it down in words before time blurs the details. You may not want to read it now or ever, but I will write it with every drip of detail I can recall. I believe that a just world is possible. We must be vulnerable and open with our sins, not to punish and self flagellate ourselves. Not to erase them, but to understand them. The sins of ourselves and the sins of others. I believe that we must be the future we wish. The day does not hold enough

hours to recall that night, today, but I will recall it shortly. I hope someday soon, you might recount to me how you saw that night. How you saw the entire trip.

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Dear Taya,

Governors Island is quiet and peaceful. You'd like it here. I wish I had been able to bring you here while you were still on your trip. This is my first time here. I'm here to talk about a logo with the woman who runs the Center for the Holographic Arts. I committed to designing it for her back when I graduated, but life happened and it never happened. I was elated when she emailed me again after I had disappeared on her before. These holograms are incredible. I'm going to look into if there are any places like it near Denver. You would love everything about today I believe. Everything but the ferry that is. It is more wobbly than I would've thought but you get used to it pretty quick. The water is beautiful, then again you said you never were a fan, that it gave you anxiety. I'm sorry that I could never ease you enough to see its beauty. But this is all besides the point. This trip is about the Holo Center. Even though close to

no work was actually done about it, since she was quite busy, and we only really got to say that I'm back on and I will work on wire frames for the website. But I don't mind really. I met a cool couple and their kid while there. Just being able to be outside and socialize was incredibly refreshing. And Martina, the woman in charge of the Holo Center seemed so grateful to have me back on board... I'm glad to be back on too. She gave me a hug, this was refreshing too. I wish a could hug the whole of New York City, but it is often a world of handshakes. When she leaned in for a hug it was just the respite of seclusion that I needed. today was a good day. I hope it was good for you as well. Goodnight Ozeanaugen.

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YOU DO NOT LOVE.

YOU DO NOT SYMPATHIZE.

YOU NEVER LOVED.

YOU NEVER SYMPATHIZED.

YOU DON'T KNOW LOVE.

YOU DON'T KNOW SYMPATHY.

YOU HURT

YOU USE.

YOU ABUSE.

YOU WILL NEVER CHANGE.

I WILL NEVER LOVE YOU.

- The chorus' declaration on the fate and condemnation of my soul.

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Dear Taya,

The next round of debates is tomorrow. This one should actually start to resemble a debate and not just a screaming match, like the one we watched together. Have you thought about your choice candidate yet? You gonna hate me for not remembering her name, but the woman you liked isn't really in the running anymore. I hope you'll think about Warren. She's wonderful and I've actually gotten involved with the grassroots campaign in midtown. It's just a small ragtag group of people in an apartment right now, but I really feel like I'm part of something good. It's not the Wellness Centers, but I know getting her into office will be for the country and the world.

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Dear Taya,

It has been an amazing week! It's not even Wednesday yet. Starting with the Holo Center, then Warren, the Carnegie events today, and the freelance work with Isaac's mom, I'm doing good Ozeanaugen. Our children will live in a better world, if even just a little. I'm actually developing something you might enjoy as a researcher, and someone who reads and writes papers. It's a new kind of advanced footnote system for the internet. Though I would eventually love to implement it into word, PDFs, and ebooks too! The idea came to me from a small book called "The Truth Matters." The author was complaining about footnotes and links in online journalism. I remember the first time we talked again on the phone, you were nerding out about how much you liked papers. I'd love to know what you think of the idea. I can just hear you now, asking what's wrong with how they work now. I'm really just going off of this one guy's complaint.

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The more I get out of my obsessive hole and start to actually do things, the biggest void is your feedback and opinion. I don't trust anyone quite the same as you. It's easy to see you as Human. It's easy to sympathize with your opposing viewpoints to mine. The obvious hole in that statement is how hard it was to sympathize with your turning off, but that is the exception, not the rule. I loved how different we were. Your mind worked, works, in the most beautiful way. You know I always thought that existentialism was as human as it got. The way it so perfectly describes how I feel, of course it was human. It was raw and visceral and emotional. But when reading my book today, someone critiqued it as inhuman. They mentioned how a romance brought out the human that was previously lacking in existentialism. The way Simone de Beauvoir applied existentialism to people, to women in particular. The more I read, the more I see you as the Beauvoir

to my Sartre. Perhaps if I was half as bold as him, then we might be happy. I do know one thing for sure though, you are twice as bold as her and the world is lucky for that. Never stop dreaming Taya. Never be discouraged. Take the world!

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Dear Taya,

I've started reading a new book called "Creating Freedom: the lottery of birth, the illusion of consent, and the fight for our future." It stands in stark contrast with the lovely philosophy of existentialism. While their writing was of complete and total freedom, this is about the lack of freedom we have as humans. It is hard to not immediately put a wall up and disregard everything it says, but I think of you and it becomes easier to listen.

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Dear Taya,

Everything is happening. In every moment everything past and present happens again and again. There is so much I have to tell you. But as soon as I put pen to paper, there is not one idea, but a million. I have not written in a while, not for lack of motivation, or of things to say, but for a crippling profusion of things I must write to you about. How badly I want to fuck you. On the train I rehearsed the words I would write in this letter when I got home, but by the time actually grabbed my pen I had no clear thing to tell you. I needed to tell you everything all at once in that moment.

Do you know what I have been trying to do in the past two months? I have been trying to craft a life without you. I've extended my internship, I've been furnishing the apartment, getting good at Beat Saber, working freelance, going out. Taya I have not been sitting inside wallowing in my pity. I have been leading

a life, and I'm not here to say oh boo hoo, it's nothing without you. I promised you that I would get better. I have been working feverishly for a good life and I have one. I am happy. I am happy without you. It is bizarre saying that. I don't mean to say that I'm over you. That I don't still cry myself to sleep some nights. That the idea of you with someone else isn't the most gut-wrenching thought. What I mean to say is that I will live without you. I will be successful. I will be happy. I have made more progress in these past few weeks since you left, then I have made in the rest of my twenty years on this earth. I always thought that getting better meant becoming someone else. Becoming a better me. I thought that I was the problem. That getting better meant becoming someone better. But that's not what getting better is. Once upon a time, you loved me. I was a scared, stupid, and a little bit of an asshole, but you loved ME. I guess I was just never confident enough to believe it. I have tried for

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almost seven years now to become someone else; to become someone you could love again. I was too blind to see that you loved ME and I should embrace and accept that. I've started to do this. The hard thing is accepting I can get better and be the boy you used to love, and you might still never even want to be friends again. The point I'm getting at is, I am getting better. I feel better and am thinking more clearly. I still have a long way to go, but I'm coming to a realization that scares me. Almost every day I try to picture what a better life without you looks like. I structure arguments against us, but they always fall apart. I can genuinely say that I believe that we belong together, that we are good. I know this is where I have always stood, but I promise you it is not from lack of trying to move. I have been trying every day to argue otherwise to myself but it always feels like a lie that falls apart. It just isn't true. The argument of "it just doesn't feel right" or "life

as made it impossible" don't satisfy me. But to drag a tired metaphor out, life is like pizza. Even a bad life is still amazing. I do not have a bad life, far from it, but I don't believe it can be the best life without you either. I will always love you, but if I am relegated to "eh" pizza for the rest of my life, then I'll be happy that despite it all, I still have pizza.

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Dear Taya,

I have talked to you a lot about myself. "I feel this," "my best interest that, "I want this." But rarely do I ever figure you into this. It's easy to do when I'm alone here with my pen, but I want to change that. this has been a journey to find truth. I've noted before on truth, in a sort of manic fervor. Not that I disagree with what I said, but I kind of ignored it afterward. I talked about stories being different and infinite, but then just continued to talk about my story. I partially have to admit, it's because I don't want to make assumptions about what you are thinking/would think, without you here to corroborate the assertions.

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Dear Taya,

So I did something that's usually unhealthy and well if I were being honest, part of it probably was unhealthy. I was watching Bojack Horseman, and getting life advice from it. There was a scene where Bojack was asked by Dianne if he'd be ok if she moved away and he said "if you want to go, go. I can't ask you to stay, that's not a friendship, that's a hostage situation." I've been realizing that it's what I have been doing. I wasn't trying to get you to stay for us, for mutual happiness, but for me. I needed you and was holding you hostage, because I was scared of what would happen when you left. But like I always said "Birth by fire baby!!!" Well fuck, guess I had to live up to it eventually. I was afraid, but I had no choice but to jump into the fire of being without you. It was really scary, but after the initial shock, I can look around and see that...I'm...fine? I'm fine. I am alive, the world didn't end. There is a lot of repeating

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myself in these letters, but they aren't edited at all. The point is to be raw Ozeanaugen. My therapist said something the other day. When I was telling him about bad relationship encounters, he noted that all of them had the linking factor of being ambiguous. I was on the verge of tears, telling him that I was the common factor, that I was bad. I had never linked the ambiguity to it before though. But he's right. I told you once that the natural state of the world for me is vague and ethereal. I told you that my goal is creating structure and order that I could hold onto. How I never linked this to my relationships is beyond me. It's totally right though! Everything is fine until it gets vague. I crumble.

When you told me you were leaving, period. I had this weird clarity, I was broken and needed it not to be real, but it felt weirdly better than just the night before when we were in bed. I can never eliminate ambiguous situations, life by its very nature is ambiguous. This

is just a first draft, But going forward the plan is this:

- 1) try to avoid ambiguous situations whenever possible.
- 2) If I find myself in an ambiguous situation, then try to clarify the ambiguous situation with the other person.
- 3) If the situation is unable to be clarified, then respect overly cautious boundaries, based on worst assumptions.

This in itself is a vague set of guidelines...to combat vagueness. I get the irony. But it is something.

I just had an idea that it would be cool to write a sort of "manual for living." the idea that I of all people might write such a book is a little terrifying. Also, the idea of contributing to the heap self-help books, is a bit repulsive.

But perhaps it will be just a manual for me. I quite like this idea. Let me not rush into it though.

Goodnight Ozeanaugen <3

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Dear Taya,

Have you listened to Billie Eilish? She's so wonderful. Nat suggested her ages ago, but I never listened. But holy shit I'm sorry I didn't. She's lovely, so so lovely.

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Dear Taya,

The concept of instability came up in therapy this week. It has never been a thing I considered myself before. Quite the opposite, I was proud of my stability. I was practical and marched with unwavering lockstep to the same goals for years. I kept the same breakfast for years, I meal prepped, laced my boots tight. I was the one in high school who knew exactly the job and major, right from the start. It was disorienting when my therapist said I scare people because I'm unstable. How was I the unstable one? I think this goes back to a conversation we had the other day. Where we were talking about the future. You seemed uncomfortable making any clear plans. Vague ambiguity was your game. But in the short term, you were fairly stable. I on the other hand was incredibly unstable for the moment, swinging wildly from moment to moment. From mania to a violent depression and back again in the course

of several minutes. But over the long term of years, I am incredibly stable and consistent. I never focused on the short term because it changes so fast, it's like static. My therapist said this short term instability can be frightening to people. I'm still trying to really understand how. I mean I can logically understand why, but to say I truly understand would be untrue. The scariest thing for me has never been speed and irradicism, but stillness and slowness. To be honest, I'm still trying to cope with viewing myself as unstable, when my whole identity was built around understanding myself as the stable giant; mentally, physically, and morally.

On seeing myself, feeling myself is a relevant transition. You always seemed to be amazed by how physically I felt my emotions. My therapist is equally wordless as me describing my flesh as moving under my skin. I can only imagine your reaction when I tell you I feel more intensely

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now. Or rather I have been repressing less. I have been famously been ashamed and scared of some of my feelings, or felt like I wasn't allowed to feel or express things. I try not to do this anymore for two reasons. The first and most obvious one is that suppression turns things vile and destructive. No matter the feeling,, letting it be free is always the less destructive option. The second more logical and philosophical reason is that there are no bad feelings, only bad actions. The feeling may be lustful and violent, but the root of the feeling is not as vile. I have spent so long taking my emotions at face value and stereotyping and demonizing them, that I never tried to understand them.

This series of letters has been about exactly that though. Really understanding as a way of learning and growing. Understanding as a tool to be better. As it would turn out, welcoming emotions has meant I feel them more.

I laid in bed writhing and convulsing, sound oozing from my lips as I learned to cope with it. In all honesty, it still happens sometimes, but it's getting much better. Learning to navigate and channel it all for good.

What happened that night was pent up ashamed energy exploding in the worst way. Or no, exploding isn't quite the right word, more like guiding me, or oozing. I can control explosions. They are easy to understand and release healthily. But oozing is deadly. It takes over from under my nose.

The scary thing about me is not the outbursts or explosions, those are almost always positive or if not I can control them at least. The scary things are the slow oozing repressions, that leak out and guide my hand without me realizing. Speaking of repression, there is a topic I will have to broach eventually. In the spirit of not holding any emotions back anymore. I

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WANT TO BREED YOU. But
I am also very tired and it is
late, so I'll divulge that later.
Goodnight.

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Dear Taya,

Tonight was certainly a night.
For starters I went on a date.
A girl I met on tinder. It was
fun, saw a movie and talked.
It felt wrong though, felt dirty.
It feels really nice to say I was
on a date, but I don't love her.
I don't even really know her. I
love you. I know we were not
dating and haven't been for
a long time, but it almost felt
like I was cheating on you. Oh
and her name was Lilly, I think
we might go out again I don't
know. (the movie was jojo
rabbit and it was absolutely
amazing! you have to see it!)

Something else happened
tonight. I talked to you. I
talked to you about these
letters, though you only know
it as "my project." God how
I wanted to talk all night. You
actually were talking and I
really wanted to keep going
but I promised you in these
letters, I would not try to talk
again until I was better. I hope
by the time you receive these
letters, I am. I feel so intensely
right now, but I don't know

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how any of it translates to
words.

I'd be lying if I said I was
there, but tonight felt big to
me. I left. I left and I am fine.
I don't need you. I can't talk
to you while I need you. I can
desire you, lust you, admire
you, I can anything you, but I
can't need you, if I ever wish
to talk again. What I must also
do is maintain a vast world
and connections. Everything
is weird now, or like words?
Like my tongue is broken, so its
abrupt but goodnight.

Dear Taya,

I will start from the best of my recollection, when the lights went out and you hopped into bed. You put some music on your phone and I showed you how to connect it to the speaker in my room. We laid down and I was setting in to get comfy when you asked for a massage. Not really being tired, I happily obliged and got up. You peeled off your shirt and I got the oil. The back strap on your bra was big and I asked if you could take it off and you happily took it off. Laying down so I couldn't see anything. I straddled your hips and pumped oil onto your back. I massaged you, asking how it was and you said good, happily snuggling into face into the pillow. I leaned down and kissed your back, massaging you deeply and slowly. The scent of the lavender oil with your musk was intoxicating. I don't know if you noticed my crotch was hard, and pressed between your cheeks as I straddled you. Not entirely on purpose, but I

definitely didn't mind it either. I massaged your back for a good while before leaning down again, my chest pressed to your back, and pulled my head next to yours, asking if you wanted a leg massage too and you said sure, helping me wriggle your pants off, I think they were sweats. I kissed your back down to just above your panties, starting to massage your legs. God your musk was unchanged from all these years. Your legs spread as i massaged, making the smell even stronger. I was knelt between your legs, going back up and down, going back and forth between each leg. I was careful to keep a distance from your upper thigh, but it was like my face was pressed between your legs with how strong your scent was. Your heat was intense, wrapping around me velvety whips of a song. Even at this moment in the present day it is with me. I do not know if this is a blessing or a curse that it is still as clear as that night. I moved up and down your entire body at this point, legs to back and

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back to legs. kissing up and down every inch as I went. I leaned back in and asked if you were enjoying it, and you moaned an "mhm" and I asked if you wanted a foot rub and again another positive moan. I started to massage your feet, kissing the soles as I rubbed. Before moving back to your legs. My hands crept slowly up your thighs. Each inch cautiously, till what felt like years. Here is a moment of uncertainty. I do not remember if that happened first or this. I also massaged down your back, teasing your panties down little by little, till they were off. Again thinking if you objected you would let me know. No matter what one came first, I eventually found my finger knuckle deep in you. I waited for a reaction. There was no reaction... I called out again and still nothing. My heart sunk. I pulled my head next to yours... and that's when I knew you were asleep. The room swirled and I broke. I didn't know what to think anymore. I just needed it to be morning. I put the oil on my

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desk and cuddled up next to you and tried to sleep

It was not long before you started shaking and breathing heavily. I jumped up and called your name, asking what was wrong. You kept saying you were a bad person incessantly. I took you into my arms, sitting up against the wall, telling you that you weren't, that you were the best person I think you talked more about being tired after that and wanting to sleep. As you drifted to sleep in my arms, I started to question what just happened. Were you awake for before? Did you like it and just change your mind? Would you have stopped me? I felt my hand creeping lower and I shook it off. What the fuck me? I helped you off me so i could lie down and sleep. But when we were cuddled back up, my mind kept racing. I asked you if you would have stopped me. I just needed an answer, even if that answer was yes. That night was so confusing and vague. A part of me was sure the answer was no and you did

want me, you did love me, and I was afraid if I let the moment slip away without confirmation, then you'd change your mind in the morning. I was not prepared for your answer. You said "maybe." MAYBE. or was it, "I don't know."? Either way it broke me even more. I immediately followed up with, "Would you stop me now?" you just grumbled something. I asked you again and you again grumbled. And in a final act of scared desperation, I pulled myself out and it pressed into your back, just above your ass. That's when intentionally, or unintentionally, you pushed yourself up a little and gave me a much better position. It still wasn't a great position, but my head slipped between your thighs. I asked you if this was ok, and you asked "what?" Kind of annoyedly. I thrust forward a little. I said "this, is this ok?" You asked what again and this happened a couple more times. What did you mean? I thought it was pretty obvious. It was then I shifted you onto your back

and pressed against you in a very clear position. "this Taya, is this ok?" I pleaded in a shaky voice. I needed you to just say anything. That's when your head kind of fell to the side and I fucking died again. Fuck. I felt like even more of a monster. I immediately pulled away from you. You took the blanket and cuddled up against the wall.

Soon again you started to shake and tremble. I called out your name again and but you didn't answer. terrified, I turned the lights on and shook you awake, sitting you up. When you were finally up, I asked if you were awake, like actually awake and you said yeah. Not sleepily like it was before. But still there was this far away look in your eyes, lost and confused. You looked at me and asked why you were naked. And I explained the entire night in detail at that point. You just said "oh" and then asked if I could get your clothes for you to put on, and I immediately leaned off the bed and gave you your clothes.

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You got dressed and we actually fell asleep this time. It was a nightmare I was happy was over. And in the morning it seemed like it was just that... but it was real. You know the rest. How the following days went.

This is as I remember it. I would be overly arrogant to claim, there are no details out of place. But it is to the best of my ability, the night as I saw it. This still leaves your perspective. I know it may be difficult for you, and you never have to, but I would appreciate greatly, if one day, I could hear your side of the story.

I maintain this all was a miscommunication of the worst variety. But that doesn't change how terrifying and confusing it must have been for you as well. I can only hope you know I did not mean any of the harm I caused. I love you, and I will always love you, and be your biggest fan.

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Dear Taya,

Here I am again, on the train to Philly. This time without you. And this time, the chai latte is mine. Fuck I love chai. Though I'm kinda awful at making it. I don't know what I'm doing wrong, but it never comes out good. I switched from oat to soy milk and that helped, but something is still off. Also fuck, sugar man. I've gained like ten pounds since you left. I'm working on my head, but my body is slipping. I still can't bring myself to do yoga anymore. It hurts too much. I really hope you can watch skins... that's all for now. Talk later

Kätzchen

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Dear Taya,

You told me that you didn't want to be proposed to. That you wanted to propose when the time came. You want to feel in control. Yeah you like to pampered, but who doesn't? I bring this up because I ignored that fact. I pressed and pressed, always played the leading role, in the tango of our friendship, unless you physically ripped it from my hands. And oh would I blubber, before accepting that you were right. I needed to be in control. Like I said, my whole life was creating rules and structures. The part I conveniently left out was how often I was breaking rules of others. I recited an entire lecture on the just-ness of rules to the administration of my high school. This is a tangent though. I need to learn to give up control sometimes. Or let me be more precise actually. I need to be better at trusting people and letting them wield power. I am well acquainted and comfortable with giving up control to the chaos of the

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universe. It is when there is a leader with actions not my own. Oh fuck can't I just get to the point? The night it fell apart was more than just me doing something that you didn't want. The night it all fell apart was me insisting on the lead. Even if you were fully wanting to fuck that night it was besides the point. If you would've wanted something during that trip, then you would've made that move. I can't say for sure, but I think you would agree, maybe this isn't important, but Looking back, I think something would've happened eventually. But again, non of that matters now. Going back to my issue of confidence, this is striking for me, not because the past can be changed, or it changes the effect, but this change in perception for me is revolutionary. Like seeing the world in a whole new light. The perception before was of grabbing onto something fleeting or almost but not quite there and gripping it till it suffocated, being the only way not to lose it. I don't feel that way anymore though.

Now it's more of grabbing to something that wasn't ready to come to, yet. Whether or not my assumption is true, it completely changes how I would've acted. It changes how I will act in the future.

I have said before, but it will repeat, the biggest source of confident action is in-confidence. It's an oxymoron that I'm still coming to grips with. Perhaps one day I'll also be able to wrestle with the dominant submission with which I've related to you. I wanted to take care of you and protect you, while also being your obedient servant.

In our recent friendship, I wished to empower you, but empower by my own means and ways. Going forward, I wish only to empower you by your own wish. The power has always been yours. Ozeanaugen, I just have never felt comfortable acting according to or accepting it. I love you.

Dear Taya,

Today is day one. Day one of the new era. I am not lost anymore. I have a long way to go, but for the first time since you left, I know what I'm doing again. And I can proudly say that I have not planned past December! So what am I doing? I am proposing one more shot at our friendship. I can't say too much on that now, I don't want to rush it you know. I've been writing the proposal and you are too important to me to rush it. For if this is a chance at all, and if it so exists as my last one, then I have no choice but to proceed with it right. Here is what I so far have of it. Firstly I must prioritize and respect, your power, wishes, and autonomy. I hope to elaborate on that more, in what I will be sending you. You have already consented last week, to me sending this to you. It will be a book of three parts.

Part 1) The letters to the void, of which this is one. All of the raw, unedited things I've been

going through, all the things I've wanted to say.

Part 2) An introspective analysis and guidelines on maintaining healthy functions. (Hello, present me here to say that this is no what part two is called anymore, but hey what a fun plate of word spaghetti eh? no? ok keep reading then.) In this part I will describe in detail how my head and body works, and the actions being taken to take control and live healthier.

Part 3) A proposal on the reinstatement of relations. The part where I detail a plan that I believe would make us both happy.

My therapist was told all of this today. He didn't protest. he simply said as long as I think it's what's healthiest for me. I really appreciated his answer. He has gotten a lot softer on the subject. Speaking of him actually, he recommended I see a psychiatrist, to get diagnosed. If I do go through with this, I would rather it

be a psychologist. I am still uninsured though so I'm not sure if it's something I can do right now. Or perhaps I'm just scared to be assigned a label. Funny how something that gave you so much relief, could give me so much anxiety.

A few letters ago i mentioned everything happening at once, crippling my hand from writing. Tonight, it is with such ease and patience that ideas do flow from my pen. I am not my own maelstrom. Tonight, sleep weighs heavy on me. I must wake at five to go to the gym in the morning, so I should resist its sweet lure. I can't say its pull has been sweet for months, but you know I never liked to fall asleep before you. I love you Ozeanaugen, sleep tight

Dear Taya,

I talked with you again last night. You have me your address. I did withhold for several hours before looking up the house on google maps. It's a cute house. It makes

me feel more comfortable. I haven't written here in a while actually. I have insisted on focusing on the other two parts of the book. I told you last night that I wasn't able to finish the other parts by December and would just send the first part by itself. But immediately after you agreed to that I realized that I cant just send the first part and not the rest. They all live and rely on each other. If you just read this part you might think I'm a pool of pointless obsession and that I'm doing what I've always done and talking about being better and not actually doing anything. In a way, I'm not even sure if i expect you to read all of my letters to the void. I promised you earlier in the book that I would not try to contact you again until I was better. Taya, I feel better. It's still fresh and I'm not sure how stable it is yet, but as you'll see in part 2, that I'm developing a system ti help me maintain this. So far I've really been trying to follow them as best as possible. I'm hesitant to say it yet, but I think

its working they key to the system is that it's incredibly flexible and forgiving. <y life can go through turmoil or be in nirvana and its still relevant.

You know, I listened to an episode of the Ezra Klein Show today that felt like a personal attack on myself haha. They talked about the perversion of gameifying of "goodness."

Dear Taya,

I started Yoga again last night. I forgot how wonderful it is. For a long while I would get these awful tremors when I even rolled out the mat, let alone start a video by Adrienne. I cannot say how happy I am to be able to watch and follow along to her videos again. My new Routine is:

Go to the gym in the morning
-> Yoga before bed.

I've slept so much better since starting. Hardly any convulsions at all! I didn't even have to masturbate before falling asleep!

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Dear Taya,

Can you please send over some of that cold snowy Denver winter, east to New York? It barely even feels like winter here. Google has decided to give me Denver new and I get so jealous hearing about the cold and snow. Please send it here Ozeanugen.

In other news, I'm drawing again. Though I see your Instagram isn't being updated anymore. I hope you're still drawing and writing but just not uploading them. I miss your art and poetry.

The book, this book I guess (whoa how meta) is almost done and I'm getting so damn impatient. It's not going to meet the December deadline I was shooting for. I promise you'll get it eventually. I just feel really good. I think I'm finally figuring out the whole healthy mindset thing. It's really nice being able to think about you without paralysis, without breaking. This state of being

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feels foreign and unreal. Like I woke up in a different universe.

Oh! My therapist is breaking up with me. Or I don't know if that's the right way to put it. yeah probably is. He thinks the better help phone therapy isn't enough, that pure verbal discussion with no physical presence, isn't as useful for me. He's right. i mean this was never supposed to be permanent. I just got complacent I guess. I'm glad I'm going to be seeing someone in person. I'd be lying if I said that I wasn't a little sad. It's like I'm gonna have to start all over again. Not like start over my recovery, but like explaining everything again ughhhhhh. And he gave me this resource to find a therapist and there's a million types of therapy. Existentialist philosophy sounds nice, or I think there's one called reality therapy. Oh and psycho dynamic therapy. I'm really about to just throw a dart at a board. Oh and there's a guy near me that does gestalt therapy.

Dear Taya,

Did you know that they're
developing a nasal spray
psychedelic? How awesome
is that? It's designed for micro
dosing I believe. Depression
yeah?

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Dear Taya,

If a moment without you

is a hundred years.

Then since august, I must have
lived

a million lifetimes.

And with them Ozeanaugen

I have been a student and
practitioner.

I would like to thank you

for the gift that king and
peasant

alike have fruitlessly dreamt.

That of more given time.

Time to breath.

To understand.

an eternity I owe to your grace

but a million more of ecstasy

for all the good, and the bad

Mein Ozeanaugen

Thank you.

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A hundred thousand years of
woe

Dear Taya,

This book is almost filled. I remember when I started writing in it. I thought I'd fill maybe half of it. But here we are, only 9 pages remain. Even less when typed. You wanna know what I'm really excited about? You've already noticed I'm sure and I bet you're thoroughly annoyed by it. I'M GONNA SET THIS BOOK IN TWO COLUMNS! I fucking LOVE two column layouts. So yeah, this section, the letters to the void, is almost done. I fell like these letters have probably gotten a lot less cringey and awful, but simultaneously more boring. They've just become meta accounts of me writing the book you're reading. (Speaking of meta, I wrote this entire thing in cursive and yet somehow my handwriting is worse?) But there's no exciting turmoil.

God fucking dammit This cafe is playing music and it's all good but like in between songs they play the first four notes of "a taste of honey"

and I get all excited thinking it's going to play then it just switches to a different song.

The place I was though. Yeah there's no exciting drama to talk about anymore. There is a perfusion of beauty and excitement all the time, but I'm hesitant as I wonder how you might react to me detailing how beautiful this wooden tile floor is, and the clatter of the baristas and the words floating past me on the ceiling. How absolutely entrancing a scene it is! Fuck! So my therapist wasn't exactly happy. We had talked about better regulating my emotions since they sway so violently. Well writing the analysis on the physicality of emotions has helped me significantly! Understanding has brought to light so many methods of emotional control! Well it's less of control, and more so navigation. Learning how to bounce and recoil with grace. My therapist was fairly happy for me when I told him this. He was... less happy to say, when I told him

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I learned how to maintain a high almost constantly with very short periods in the low. Fuck mien Ozeanaugen! fuck its glory. AND AND AND, are you ready for the Pièce de résistance? I'm maintaining my high, not by ignoring, denying, or warping the less than great realities, but by a mix of more effective channeling of emotions in the flesh, and practicing gratitude and appreciation. I'm thinking less about how beautiful the world could be and more on how beautiful it is! (This is absolutely not to say that I do not think about doing good and improving the world!) This is a subtle but important change. A change that help me be happier in the present. I have never felt before, such pure intoxicating love run through my veins. No longer just the potentiality, the past reality, or the actuality of a being, but the entirety of a being! I was and have been criticized for being too extreme, and for a moment I thought it may have been valid, yet glory glory Taya, mien Ozeanaugen, that

is not the factor! Rather I was not intense enough. I was restricted to only a few routes, but slowly I am exploding. Where once I thought there was too much inside and I was going to explode, frantically flailing as my seems burst. Now I can radiate and.. and.. fuck whats the word? Like a brilliant energy is tearing, forcing it off from the inside. Like windows bursting in a house, as an explosion tears through it. Glory! and this new theory of operation is proving beyond all else, to be stable. Mien Ozeanaugen, how I love you for giving me this. Without you, for better or worse. I would never have gone on this journey. I have never felt so free!

If you couldn't tell, I've been reading more existentialist works again. I love it. Just the way they write feels so right. This kind of scattered side not filled blobs of flow. Let me quote:

"Perhaps you are killing time in a bookshop while you wait

for your lover to arrive on the three O'clock train. You have no intention of buying this book because there are, after all, more important things to spend your money on."

or the even better:

"I said in my introduction that being an existentialist requires a certain amount of effort. Becoming an existentialist is not for the week minded or the faint hearted, for the sort of person who gives up at the first hurdle. You have certainly cleared a few hurdles to get here. So, well done and all that. If you find such praise patronizing, as many would be existentialists will, I'll say get your arse in gear soldier, we've still got miles to yomp." But appealing method writing aside, this book is much less a biography of influential existentialist, and more an actual introductory piece to existentialism. With this point, I have fallen in love with the existentialists, but now I am taking a deeper dive into existentialism. I will be a

devout existentialist. In it I will lay my faith, because it lays its faith in humanity.

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Dear Taya,

Merry Christmas mein Ozeanaugen. Merry Christmas and of the entire season, of every celebration. I hope you are warm and loved. I will always love you. I know you don't normally like the holidays themselves, but I hope you can still feel the love and spirit of the season.

I know you're probably a little sick of the ooshy gushy emotional stuff. Peace on earth and love for fellow man stuff. So let me then talk about this: I do not know if I will continue therapy. My therapist from better help, has been talking with me about moving to in person therapy and was giving me all the resources, and I believe I told you in one of these letters about my excitement about all the different types of therapy. Well after thinking it over a great deal, I have concluded this: therapy was much needed and valued resource when I existed in great turmoil after the trip and your departure.

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However in recent weeks after the turmoil had subsided, I have gotten very little from therapy and in turn have found increasing support and growth from existentialism. Much of the clarity and stability I've been able to build into my life has come from it. I know you might not think this is good course, but I promise you mien Ozeanaugen, I would not be doing this, or rather, not doing therapy, unless I was confident. Every day I grow closer to the promise that I will not contact you until I am better.

Dear Taya,

I'm planning the wellness center again. Well, I'm planning the sustainable house again. But those are the early steps. Can't just jump ahead. Not especially when it's something this important. I talked with my brother about it and he was saying that it's better to find a plot of land that already has a water main going to it, because they're super expensive to get installed. But that was making me wonder if a rainwater collection system would be the best course of action. You have a lot of people who have project cars, or fixer-upper houses, well I guess this is mine now. When I get more settled, I really look forward to actually buying some land and working on building it. maybe someday, I'll be able to invite you to it. Ugh I gotta get a real paying job first. I've got a goal starting tomorrow, I will apply to two jobs a day. I have this awful habit of writing a million cover letters and then never actually sending them

out. So yeah, less quantity, and more follow through and quality. Though getting back to the wellness center, I've really been thinking about water collection systems. See I want to do it on a curved/angled roof, but also want to have the roof be a green roof so we can lay on it. Oh oh oh wait! What if there was a central beam/column. I don't know why, or what the shape of the house would even be. Do you ever just have the urge to say I love you? I love you Ozeanaugen. See now I'm just getting mushy and like its so warm. This is why I love you. You know. The future and...oh let me not. Before I melt into a puddle of mush again, I'll call it goodnight. Sleep tight.

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Dear Taya,

This is the end of the book. Well not the book you're holding, but the end of the book that I'm writing in. The last letter to the void. I feel like there is some grand conclusion I should come to on this page, some big take away. But I don't really. I guess there rarely ever is in life. There are many things I didn't write in these letters, that I should have. But if I wrote everything then you'd never get this book. This book is a result of my life. This book is not my life in itself. Some of those things, probably would've made the book more interesting. Like the time i sucked a dick. Or the time I had a failed threesome that lead to a sex filled romp throughout the night and into the morning. THE SQUALL! FOR THE LOVE OF GOD THE SQUALL! VR is a big thing about me getting better too. I talked a lot about existentialism, and therapy and introspection, but VR has really helped me too. But yeah, this is the end. This is the beginning.

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This moment is just that, a moment. Without falling into some philosophical nonsense (or rather not nonsensical, but irrelevant.) about time. I just want to say that the date is December the twenty sixth. This book will not reach you by the years and will be two feet into twenty twenty by the time it is. One thing I can say for certain, is by the time you read this, I will have realized my promise to you Taya. I will be better. The future is going to be magnificent. I love you mein Ozeanaugen.
Talk soon ♥

Dear Taya,

It's appropriate I suppose, that there is another letter. "The End" was never really my style. The date is February the third. I was reading nausea on the train yesterday when I read this passage.

"I recognize her love of perfection there. She always wanted to have 'perfect moments'...

...'Listen, do you want to make an effort or don't you? You were so stupid the last time. Don't you see how beautiful this moment could be? Look at the sky, look at the color of the sun on the carpet. I've got my green dress on and my face isn't made up, I'm quite pale. Go back and sit in the shadow; you understand what you have to do? Come on! How stupid you are! Speak to me!'

I felt the success of the enterprise was in my hands: the moment had an obscure meaning which had to be trimmed and perfected;

certain motions had to be made, certain words spoken: I staggered under the weight of my responsibility. I stared and saw nothing, I struggled in the midst of rites which Anny invented on the spot and tore them to shreds with my strong arms. At those times she hated me."

Is this how you felt of me? In hearing the declarations on Anny, I could almost feel my lips move with hers. I speak often of the glory and beauty. How perfect the world could be! "cant you see how amazing it is!?" In my state, drunken and high, eyes glazed with sugar, like a slack jawed corpse in a den of opium, I could not read to that second paragraph quoted, even as you tried to tell me.

I danced gaily to music only I could hear and asked that you danced along. "It's so beautiful! Take my hand and I'll lead this ballet for two!" No music was playing for you.

The other week, I had a girl

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over. When we arrived back at mine, she collapsed on the bed and asked for a t-shirt to change into. I happily obliged. She poured absolutely, the woes of the day, as I could not even fee the floor under my feet. "Can we just like lie down and relax?" she asked, less a question and more a declaration. "I just had a long day, I just need a little bit."

Begrudgingly, I laid with her, all the while the world burst with color! the ceiling seemed to swirl like the clouds, dancing for us. A great show formed and oozed like poured paint down the walls. with great globs of it splattered down and she just laid there like some dead animal. The world had consumed the bed. The dancers and acrobats, the socialists in their hundreds waving great red flags down the avenues, the evils wrung dead and submissive with golden rings from the angelic crowns above, all snuck like parasites into my face. A great procession over the lips, clawing into the eyes, the

nose! She just laid there! The universe was vibrating!

If it were you lying next to me, if it were a friend, I might have jumped up and started shaking you. "Look! Look! Glory Taya glory! Feel the glory! I love you! I want you to share this great euphoric love and glory with me!" My fingers might dig into your shoulders. Pleading desperately. How i might go mad, translating to you, of the wondrous goop that the world was melting into, fruitlessly. My heart would break a hundred times knowing you couldn't feel it. It is the best feeling in the world. I could smear it on your face, but nothing. How I've cried in the fact that so many I love could never feel it.

I did not love this girl Not any more than I love everyone. Not like I love you or my friends. I did not jump and plead desperately for her to feel it. I found a bitterness in me form. This glory swept around us and she CHOSE to ignore it. Like the younger sibling with their finger

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plashed in your face with not a centimeter of air between your souls, as they bleat relentlessly mocking "I'm not touching you!"

As we lie there, I soon started to protest. Jittering out of my skin like a child, shot up on pixie stix. She asked me at one point what I do when I get stressed or have a long day. I didn't hesitate to say that I work more. It was true after all. For me, stress is stillness, nothingness is overwhelming. I am and always have been a glutton. Shoving myself full as a child, I grew obese, a great ball of fat, seeping out of myself, yet not stopping, burying myself in food. I have since matured from food, but the scars of its glutton on me fade slowly. I know a new gluttony now. A phrase from nausea again:

"All is going to end, I know it... I shall never rediscover this woman or this night. I grasp at each second, trying to suck it dry: nothing happens which I do not seize, which I do not fix

to myself forever..."

For a long time, I have loved the world. I have felt it ring my spine like an orgasm. For a long time, I have felt pain in knowing you didn't feel the same. I feel in multitudes, the pain of yours and others that lack this glory. I feel this clenching on me when I am in the midst of pain, of suffering. I called this sympathy. Is that not what sympathy is no?

Spending a good part of the evening with that woman. feeling the bitterness in me, had given me a new theory of sympathy. The pain I feel is the pain of lack, not the pain of being. Or, no. I rather have never distinguished between the pain of being and the pain of lack before.

Let me propose two forms of pain: the pain of lack and the pain of being. The latter of the two, is probably the most often associated with sympathy. It is when you see someone punched and can feel it. It is when you see a hungry

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person and feel their hunger for yourself, feel their fears and worries. That is the pain of being.

The former of the two, the pain of lack, is different in that it requires me to be feeling something that you do not feel. It is projected rather than received. The pain of lack is when you sit in a lovely cafe, enjoying a beautiful cup of chai, when you look out the window and see a man waiting in the cold outside for a bus. You cannot parse what the man feels, but you wish him to also feel the warmth and comfort of the chai. It hurts you to know that he lacks this joy.

Both the pain of being and the pain of lack, are broadly speaking, pain you feel because of the state of someone else. One feels the pain of the pain of the actuality that is, one feels the pain in the face of an actuality that could exist, but does not. These pains are brothers, but uniquely different. For my life to this point, I have never

distinguished between the two. Both to me, were sympathy. (My room mate has since brought to my attention, a word by the name of empathy. It is defined as: "The ability to understand and share the feelings of another." where as sympathy is defined as: "Feelings of pity or sorrow for someone else's misfortunes." or "Understanding between people; common feeling." Perhaps it is my lacking cognition, but the second definition of sympathy feels rather the same as that of empathy. To avoid a needlessly long tangent through the weeds of empathy, we shall stick to sympathy.)

This overly broad definition of sympathy, I will mark, as the point of issue. With language being the primary method for parsing and self regulating emotions and actions, it is paramount that language be precise and clear. The dual meaning of sympathy in my eyes, allowed for a deficit of sympathy in the order of the pain of being.

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In being with this woman, lacking sympathy, in either order, I was allowed the lens to see that there were in fact two orders to the word. As she was shackled with sorrows of her own, I felt from her a pain of lack. But instead of feeling bad that she was unable to feel the job I felt, or try to give her the joy I knew, I grew bitter at her for not choosing to feel it.

It was not immediately clear to me, the absurdity of the situation, but when it did eventually land, I was swept into an adrenaline thrill of glory as my world unraveled. Slowly at first, then all at once, I saw a path of my reality shattered to bits in front of me. Everything I once understood, I was forced to reconsider.

We can talk another time about if my masochistic joy as the shattering of the conventions of my reality, is healthy or not, but I tell you here that it's this shattering that lets me grow. I wish, if I could, to smash my reality to dust,

smash that dust to dust, so that I may be free. That I may build the life, the world, the reality I wish.

I was on the train when it hit, the absurdity of the situation. I was writing, when the train rocked my pen beyond a legible letters. It shook despite my trying to write and I wrote despite it trying to shale my pen. And with increasing frantic energy in my pen, words turned to scribbles. My book snapped shut. Suddenly the train was so full! Had it been full before was irrelevant. My skin buzzed. There was a man in front of me, tired, resting his head against a pole. A woman sitting across the aisle shook, book in hand, with anxiety. Two school kids laughed with each other. Their being had shifted without me knowing. While my face was in my book, my eyes had shredded to slits, breathing in through fresh wounds of reality. A perception that was altogether foreign to me and beautiful!

08

What one word, split in two may do is phenomenal! The pain of lack is being projected, the pain of being, being received. When before there existed a binary switch between the two, an either/or, there was now a division, a dance, a simultaneous current of spirals, tore through my veins like yarn, all wound to an elaborate web of pulleys, that wrung each soul around me, pain multiplied by pain in a brilliant orgy or states!

I nearly shot from the train, a dog choking itself on its collar, when it pulled into the station. The yarn, winding itself so taught as it sought every drop of sensation in train, being a veritable feast! To feel the anxiety of the woman in the seat, while also wishing her my joy! IT seems to trivial written, so obvious in the pasted congealation of the past. But in the moment, it was perfection perfected in life!

The platform was empty. Lying in stark contrast to the train car. Serene in a new way. Emotions clung to the fabric of the station, a hundred million of them smeared in its fibers, and I could see them all. Only now do I breath calm once more, adjusted to the new reality.

To conclude this overgrown of verbal perfusion now. You yelled at me in Philly, during the trip. You accused me of having no sympathy. Those words, sunk so deathly deep into my soul. Of course I had sympathy! My very being shook with pain. Shredded agony, blurred the world to anything else. My best friend in the world could not feel the happiness of the world. My sympathy was all consuming.

But there was a factor in this scene that I was unable to see. My pain of lack was a projection, I could not see the pain of your being. I focused not on where you were, but where I wished you could be. Focused on your being happy. Being anything but the

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state you were. As I revisit this scene, I do so with a clarified understanding of the orders of sympathy.

I wish the apologize. To crawl back into the moment and smack myself, but an anthologies of sorry will change nothing. The future is the only control I have. And I enter it with eyes anew. I love you Taya.

82

Dear Taya,

I struggle to find meaning. Oblivion wraps itself around me. Its embrace is heavy and warm. In all my struggles. all the progress I make, it stands beside me, a doom, that all of my work will mean nothing, that I can never mend this. We may never be mended. I grow tired, so tired. I wish not to have this agency. I wish not to hold this responsibility.

I wish to submit, if only for a time. Take me in your arms and be my mistress. Use me, hurt me, so that my rubbered limbs may know motion once more. I find myself in a dream, on my knees, head fallen back, limp, as my flesh weighs heavy on my face, like the rotting pulp of a peach, losing its will to cling to the pit. Soft warm solace in your bush, jaw slackend and drooling. Your musk the opium, and your being my god. No mothers plump bosom to a babe, could compare to you.

can no longer run, let me give myself to you instead. See me not as a burden, I beg. Consume my flesh raw, or set me to be your guard in chains. Lash my skin to shreds or put my on my knees to pray, to worship in your musk, for light. Just please, don't condemn me to live free. Each step, each bat of the lash, weighs so heavy on me, not to even think half as far as the Goliaths of choice, like going to work, like withdrawing the covers from myself in the morning. Mien Ozeanaugen, I submit to you. I am your slave.

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Oblivion awaits me, and if I

Dear Taya,

I must keep faith. The void and its oblivion keep unwanted company. Who am I, to once have sung on its grave, spit in its face, a cocky child/ The reality I found myself in, being god of all perception, feels a swamp, growing stagnant beyond repair. Despair, one but a collared minstrel, consumes me. What irony, that these imps of existence that I once declared cucks, defiled and spit in their faces, with fiery bravado, would repay me not with wip nor lash, but a warm blanket. Soothing me into a compost pile. Sedation to dusk, that sweet promise of respite. When the time had must come, I had believed it would be by fire and fury. The lashing of blood, painting the walls, a new great Pollock piece. What irony then now that I should but sleep among the unwanted friends in mush. Despair, my excuses. Oblivion soothes reassurances in my ear. The void, holds my hand in tender embrace and understanding.

I must keep hope. I long for the bolt, the fire, the thrill once more. This cannot be my fate. Oblivion could not yet be my mistress.

It is so cold

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Dear Taya,

I propose a path. Not to sleep. Never to ooze my life complicity on the floor. I summon thee muse. What do you inspire me with, that I do so lack in my natural state? What is here that lacks when you are gone? What do you possess, that draws back oblivion into the unreal and abstract? What are you but me?! I have read what you are, what power you possess. You are the trumpeting fanfare. The beginning. You bestow permission and indication to start. So let me propose, that I take just one trumpet from your band. So that I may declare my own start when you are so fickle to leave me. Quote nausea:

“The beginnings would have had to be real, alas! Now I see so clearly what I wanted. Real beginnings are like a fanfare of trumpets, like the first notes a jazz tune, cutting short tedium, making for continuity.”

You won't miss one trumpet among your hundreds will you?

Good.

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Dear Taya!

Freedom and freedom compounded! My love there was an event unlike any before! As you will much remember, the melodramatic moaning in my past few letters. I was in a place, a slow space. Speed is how I would like to think is the most proper way to relate in words the phenomenon of my states. I was slow yesterday. No not bad. I would have once called it bad. Very bad bad, but it is not, it is slow!

In that state, I expressed a desire I do not believe I have ever before told you. It was a picture of self subjugation. It was a desire I can't say I even would admit to myself before. To admit it would be to admit a fault line in my identity. To admit a fault in the core of who I was. It would destroy me. Who was I if I was not me?

This love of identity is a dangerous, narrow way of being. Identity is not a permanent, rigid being. We have a desire to cast in stone "I AM!" and will fight against anything that might challenge our identity, our role in life, our

purpose.

To say I am dominant, I crave control, is not necessarily a description of a fact, but a declaration that is made continually! I declare I am dominant, and crave power, in a moment because I choose to declare it, I choose to declare because of the current situation I find myself in. I may just as easily declare in this moment, that i wish to subjugate myself to you a slave, and it would make no less true the declarations past. Declarations are continuous and fluid! I may just as easily declare myself dominant again tomorrow. I can declare myself anything in the world! This is my freedom. It is not to lie about the self, declare oneself something they are not, but to enact a truth into being via declaration!

Given this freedom of declaration, it empowers me to live with a dynamic open identity. It empowers me to make more logical, rational, free choices of action and identity.

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Dear Taya,

This will actually be the last letter included in the book. I can say that I will probably continue to write these beyond here, but the book is finished. If I waited until I finished writing letters, the book would never reach you. It is time to print the book, to get it to you. So yeah this is it. In the package should be a blood bunny stuffed animal, a necklace, this book and maybe some other goodies.

A few closing notes: I'm going to burning man. Yeah haha bet you didn't expect that. Or maybe after reading this book you did? Who knows? But yeah, it's planned for 2021 hopefully. Spencer and I planned to go the other day after much talking about it. Gonna make a road trip out of it along with Isaac. Driving through Denver actually, so yeah, we'll see if we're talking by then or not. Either way, it will be nice to see the city. I can't lie, you did sell it pretty well. Even with the complaints of what it's becoming.

take acid. Or shrooms? some psychedelic. I'm going to be walking him through it. I feel really happy that he would trust me with it. I love him, I really hope he gets something from it.

Beyond drugs, I've been exploring my own submission as a part of me in addition to my dominate stance. Breaking my identity and reality. I wish to destroy me, to be me, to be free, to be Harrison. But yeah, there's not much to report on that front.

I hope that we'll be able to discuss it live soon. I love you Ozeanaugen, bis später.

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Speaking of Spencer actually. He's coming up this march to

**AN ANALYSIS
OF THE
PHYSICALITY
OF EMOTIONS**

There is a noble intention, that I have firmly instituted as the foundational element in my relationship to you, that in actuality has been an element of bad faith. This intention is such that I am your humble servant, oft described my submission. Yet from this submission, I am in a role of guardianship and protection, as appointed by myself. This paradox suggests that in the same moment that I relinquish all my power to you, I assume the power of the same charity. This paradox, is one I cannot resolve. This paradox is an embodiment of bad faith. In symbolically relinquishing power to you, is to claim that I do not hold ultimate responsibility of actions committed in pursuit of the paradox of power. In the creation of hierarchy, I allowed myself to sit as a permanent, being-for-other, or an object, simply responding the only way I could without choice. Like a ball hit by a bat, the ball does not choose to fly across the field. This ignores and attempts to destroy my

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being-for-myself and ultimately my responsibility.

The alternative that I did in fact consider, was that I was in fact, being-for-myself. That I was in fact, an individual consciousness, acting in sole reason for my existential lack. This felt immediately repulsive and wrong. (Though I would be amiss in saying that my existential lack was and is not a motivator) So if it was not my own being-for-myself, then it had to be the paradox of power relations and my state of being-for-other. But what was not considered, was the possibility of a third option.

That option being being-for-us. This addressing the faults in the original two alternatives. Where being-for-other, or in this case, you, I had relieved myself of any burden of responsibility, being as a group, keeps me in good faith, binding myself with responsibility. And being-for-us addresses the initial reason I dismissed being for myself too; the gross myopia and dismissal

of the larger world. Being-for-us, transfers myself to the group. I am being being-for-myself, as the self reflects the group. In this case the group being US, or our relationship, whatever form it may have taken. (Note must be made that being-for-myself still exists in other forms in relations differing from ours.

This being-for-us as I mentioned before, extends myself to encompass both of us. This is not to imply that myself extends to encompass you as an individual, assuming that I think of you as myself and act in a selfish selflessness, but rather that myself extends to extends to us. Us here being not you and I as individuals, but as a unit. Us being the relationship and relations between and involving us. I am not us, and neither are you us either, yet we are both collectively us.

This is also not to say that you or I do not exist outside of the us. The us is not a car to you and I being a wheel. A wheel

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does not exist outside of its car,
we can and do most often live
and exist outside of the us.

With all that lead up on the
being-for-us, and the us, this
section will not be about that. It
will be about myself apart from
us. Before talking about myself,
it was important to define what
"myself" is.

There was a time when I saw
myself as a noble servant,
a willing slave, for mein
Ozeanaugen, for the greater
good. It is only now that I
can see myself as an agent of
glory. Not bound by any role,
but a force within the world,
free with my own volition, to
choose my own path, my own
action. And mark me on this
moment, January the fifteenth,
twenty nineteen, at six on
the dot, that I am an agent of
glory!

Myself defined and specified
apart from the rest, the
following section will focus on
learning how I work, and how
to live as myself.

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$M^a + T = A$

- | | |
|--|--|
| M Mechanism
Here meaning a constant
trait of my personality.
These are neutral
forces, not to be judged
positively or negatively
Ex: obsession, mood
swings | T Trigger
Here meaning a stimulus
that causes a reaction,
usually negative, from a
mechanism |
| a adjustment
Here meaning any
number of other
controllable variables
in life that can effect
how triggers react with
mechanisms.
Ex: going to the gym,
making dinner, certain
thought structures | A Action
Here meaning any
result of the interaction
between any mechanism
and a trigger. Actions
can cover anything,
internal, or external to
the being. |

This equations is not infallible,
there is no archive of possible
variables to account for.
Triggers alone could fill a large
library. This should not be
used as a reference. Pouring
over pages to solve for X. It
is for this intention, that there
will not be a thorough catalog
following. There are only four
notable mechanisms that I
would like to touch on.

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OBSESSION

I am obsessive. My mind isn't satiated till I've inspected every inch of it. while it can be useful in places and I credit it with much of my creative success. Obsession is a multiplier. Any source for a productive means is greatly aided by it. If I want to create something I will create it. Obsession however does not know, productive paths apart from destructive ones. Thankfully mine has trended towards productivity. Obsession needs fuel to burn, and if i recognize it and give it something healthy to focus on then all is good, but if I do not direct it to productive means, it will consume anything. It is a tricky force. On one hand, it is vast, covering every last inch of a topic. On the Other hand it can be incredibly myopic, narrowly focusing on the smallest detail of a single subject. This dichotomy can be deceptive, tricking me into thinking I am not obsessing when I am in fact.

THE PROJECTOR

The projector is the unrelenting visualization of event, past and future, that outshine the present. The projector might also be classified as an action, but for two reasons, it shall here be forth be categorized as a mechanism. 1) Projector is a neutral force, there is nothing inherently good or bad about it. It is simply a force that needs to be directed. This is unlike actions, in that they are largely the result of a force, not the force itself. 2) Directly following the previous point, the projector serves a function. It is the planning mechanism, or at least a component of it. The projector plays through scenarios past, scenarios to predict how similar futures might play out, as well as future scenarios as a way to understand and visualize places, I might find myself. In its best cases, is an incredibly useful tool for road mapping. In its worst, it is a crippling obsession that loops irrationally.

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LUST

Lust is the drive to fuck. This mechanism will disassociate itself from the more biological breeding drives and the more intimate, emotional drives. The lust mechanism, when in place properly is acting in conjunction with another mechanism. When lust is combined with romantic attraction or affection, or drive for intimacy, it can be great and beneficial. However, lust, when it acts own its own is a violent force. It is a reliant drug. Upon its triggering, lust will circle around and be its own trigger. It is unique in this way. a trigger and a mechanism in two ends of the same stroke.

MONSTERS IN THE DARK

It is an entirely rational mechanism, to seek understanding. Understanding is control, power, and safety This is more so true in less modern times, but the brain is not a thing of modern times. While they are much less life and death matters now, they are much in the same. It is the hesitance in buying the product I don't know much about before reading reviews. It is most of all, hesitation. This is it's form in low risk, slow moving environments. In higher risk, faster moving environments, it is not at all a hesitance. This type of environment takes me from outside the dark forest, to smack dead in the middle, unable to see and knowing, in any moment, that I could die. A wolf could rip me limb from limb. This is not a time for hesitance. This is a time for running as fast as I can out of the woods. In this modern time, we have few dark forests. While the hesitance form of the monsters in the dark, is still useful, it's other forms are largely false alarms when triggered now, and self destructive.

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The head doesn't have much physical impact. The head might actually be the lowest of all impacts. Even psychological effects such as headaches or migraines are almost non-existent. Internal propellers of thought can spin out of control and result in impact for other regions of the body however. This is not an issue though, and should not be thought of as one. That propeller of thoughts is a source of energy for good and for bad. The goal here is to harness and direct that energy towards good, productive action.

The eyes are much like the head, are less physically impactful, and more metaphorically so. The head are not driver of/creator of thoughts, but a visualizer of the thoughts generated by the head. Depending on how the thoughts are visualized, they can be cast into the body as negative or positive. In this way, the eyes are an intermediary between the head and the body. It is curious in this regard, being able to visualize the propeller of thoughts, (all being abstract) while the visualization of solid concepts is fairly hard for me. Things such as "visualize an apple" are near impossible, yet "visualize the night of august 8th" is so easily and readily done that I do it involuntarily. That however, is not more than a side note.



FIGURE .02

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THE THROAT + NECK

The throat is a muscle of paralysis. That is that it forces almost a freeze; an intense moment of clarification. This convulsion is rarely a short thing, lasting anywhere from a minute to several minutes. One can find the muscles in the neck and throat can grow incredibly sore after more prolonged convulsions. The convulsions can run the gambit from the erotic and spiritually high nirvanas, to absolute dread and fear, peering into the depths of ones own personal hell.

The neck is not the throat. The neck would seem to function as a valve or regulator. It is usually not felt immediately, but rather when an emotion gets too intense. The craning and rolling of the neck is incredibly effective at relieving excess energy. True to anatomy, it almost feels as though much of the excess emotion from the body is routed through the spine to the neck to be released. It must be understood however that the neck is NOT a primary method of release, it is a valve to release excess. The vast majority is more properly dealt within the rest of the body.

The wrists, similarly to the neck, would seem to be release points of emotion. More localized, smaller release points, not meant for excess, but to take the brunt of the tide. Unlike the neck, the wrists store emotion as well or rather, feel a physical stress from them. Almost like metal shackles that constrict ever tighter around them. This tightening can only currently be explained as a congestion of pent emotion being stored in the arms. A wrist flex might be helpful here, however the current theory holds that while the neck releases raw undelt emotion, the wrists primarily are optimized to release emotions that have been processed by the arms.

The take away here is to keep the wrists in motion and that if they feel tight or in pain, that there is probably some emotion in the arms that needs to be processed.

A key segment in these areas, that being the wrist and

forearms, is the central tendon that (forgive my metaphorical anatomy) runs from the tip of the middle finger to the wrist and up the bottom center of the forearm about halfway.

The hands are an important factor in relation to emotions for the reason that they are extremely tactile. Emotions often amplify the sense of touch in the body. This is one matter when it is the biceps, that don't usually play a tactile role. But when the hands are amplified it is a whole other story. To this point, touch is not a detrimental factor. The factor of reaction to emotions that is detrimental, is the de-coordination of the hands. De-coordination is well linked to frustration and other emotions with a sense of helplessness. Almost a physical manifestation of not being able to do anything. The hands feel as if they are broken and lack any sense of coordination. Many manual tasks become nearly impossible. Drawing in particular is greatly effected by this.

FIGURE .03





THE SPINE

The back is a conduit, directly linked to the neck, and rest of the limbs, especially the biceps. The stress lies in the nape of the back, like water in a pothole. Arching the back seems to direct the collected stress, or emotion up the spine and into the neck and other outlets, to be released.

The flesh is the waves of mycelium that lets energy flow throughout my body. When I say that the spine is a conduit, I mean a conduit of flesh. One might allude to the blood humors of our ancestors. Though of course, their mistake being in mistaking this psychological perception as a physical one. Their mistake only naturally extended to assume that the humors then need be let out via the blade. We however, live in the twenty first century and know that it is, to say, all in your head. All in my head.

note to understand is that there are no good or bad energies, it is instead, the perception of them and how I choose to flow them through my body, that is good or bad. The manner of living where one expels negative energy, and holds onto the good is then flawed from the beginning. Instead, flesh must be utilized and danced through the body in a particular, productive manner. The following pages largely concern on how this flesh flows in different regions and how to flow it.

All in the head aside, it is useful and necessary, live in the metaphor of flesh. The key

The groin propels forward. It is yet to be decided if it is a glorious or violent motion. The motion itself does not pull straight forward, but rather swirls, or rather grinds. (a smooth grinding, non of this rough gravely wrong grinding) It swirls back around in an arching velocity. The density seems to collect at the points between the testicles and the thighs. One might visualize two plates sandwiching the genitals, joined by an axle, pinned through the internal continuation of the cock. The density presses inwards before snapping, sending the plates spinning towards the back, sending momentum upwards and frontal.. The density does not snap into a rotation more often than say once or so a minute.

The proven way to ease this density is masturbation. Masturbation soothes away, build ups of energy. A soothing, weighted blanket that enrobes me, is an orgasm. One must be wary of this, as

a catch all solution however. For under the comfort of the weighted blanket, is also one of loneliness. The specific cause of the crippling loneliness found post orgasm is not yet clear. However, the prevailing theory is that it stems not from the act itself, or the orgasm itself, but the pornography ingested in order to induce the orgasm. Little is known in my own experience, of the self induced orgasm, not aided by pornography. I must question what the nature of the orgasm and in its part, sex really is.

The months between August 2019 and February 2020, I have known three affairs. On no occasion had I known the other well, lest going even half as far to say that I had any feelings for them. During these affairs, I had only just lost my school boy anxiety and was granted to clearly address the actuality of the situation. Not least to say, I was taken aback to realize that there was not the pleasure I had previously

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assumed, from the stimulation of my cock.

That is not to say that there was no pleasure, or a reduced sensitivity from masturbation, but rather, that i was a very physical, localized pleasure. This is also not to say that these affairs were cold or despondent. On the contrary, it was the realization of the true source of sexual pleasure lies. The true Pleasure lies in the transference of heat and contact. The tangling of fingers, the touch of a breast on my lips was a far shot short of the physical pleasure of my cock, but to a more important extent, it was a full bodied and psychological pleasure.

Only once in the course of four occasions (Three different girls, one twice) did I actually orgasm. In that moment, I further realized that while the center of pleasure originated in my groin, with specificity, in the muscle just below my balls, the area of focus, was anywhere but that area. The

pleasure was felt strongest in areas of contact and heat. The directionality of the flow of flesh under the skin was universal.

This compared to masturbation, when the focus is more focus is more centralized to the groin. During a sexually induced orgasm there is a directionality of the post orgasmic flesh tides, however, a post orgasmic situation, induced by masturbation is more out of body, or rather more accurately, the numbing of the body, a comatose weighted blanket.

I will experiment with a sans-pornographic, more meditative masturbation, to see if the effects change at all from previous methods of masturbation.

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FUTURE(S)

Now is the part I never quite handled well. The future, or rather, actively striding into it. The future(s) of today are uncontrollable field. As you well know, this multitude of futures has frequently crippled me. I have historically become a clawing frantic mess in its midst.

Though ultimately, the arbiter of time will tell, I pen this section for you, as my proposal. A proposal and demonstration of possible futures. Futures for the us (as described in the previous section's introduction) I propose these not as the exclusive options, but a small slither of the infinitude of paths. For all that we can tell, we may find us bathing in a lavender pool, preparing poison dart frogs for a ritualistic joint suicide.

Though I cannot say that it would be very likely at all. To be honest I cannot say for certain that anything in these pages is very likely to

happen. The only guarantee is that something, will happen. Though I will also admit, that if you would like, I'll go find us some frogs right now.

Before we explore this slice of infinity, we must discuss how exactly we find ourselves in a particular future. We are free without constraint, to aim towards any future. Choosing a future we wish and working towards it however, is not a guarantee that the hopeful future will be realized. the reason being the facticity of the world, or simpler put, sometime your idea of the future runs contrary to the ideas the rest of the world has for the future. Or perhaps that you just aren't very good at achieving said future. (this not to assume that one should not try, one should always try, this only to explain why one may not always succeed.)

For our purposes, the important thing to note is that the only thing you are in control of are your own actions, just as

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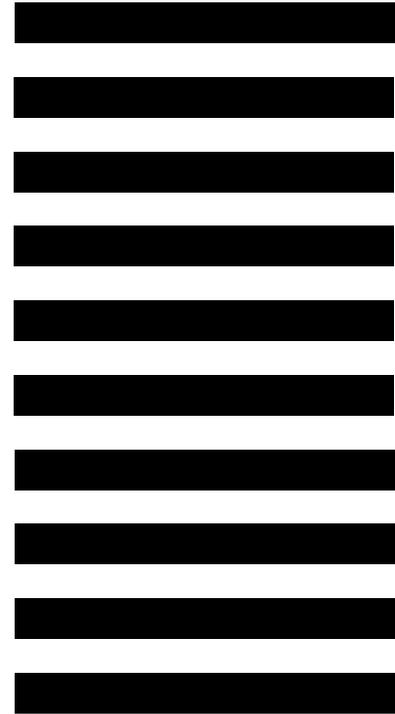
everyone else in in control of their own actions. One can act to achieve a certain desirable future. however if that future is not achieved. then nothing can be done to change that. We must always be fully accepting of the future we find ourselves in and act with that in mind.

Given that I must consider the future I want, what characteristics do I wish the future of us to have? In the following pages permit us a luxury that we can never enjoy in the real world. We may explore the possibilities of multiple futures. Note, inclusion here, does not necessarily imply a future I wish to know or think we will know.

Here we are, slaves of time, yet gods in mind.

Shall we explore now?

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In which we live the american dream

The door thuds shut. Well fuck, can't say I thought I'd ever own a car. But after Anaïs was born, we decided that we needed it. She was anything but shy. We both credited that to each other, but neither of us would accept it. Long story short, Anaïs is....very friendly, and now we own a car. Fuck

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to me on the couch, having just gotten home from work. "I already said yes you paranoid boy." Your lips press onto my cheek. "Ok,, maybe I started to enjoy it. Plus, who says I wont need a second book?" I say cheekily, snapping it shut. Though I didn't show it as much anymore, my heart still

skipped a beat every time I felt your touch. Even so, Anaïs was getting off of school soon and we were going to be picking her up, so no time for my dramatics.

Fridays lost no magic over the years. Fridays were family

I never thought I'd leave NYC either, let alone the east coast, but Denver is definitely growing on me.

"Why are you still writing those?" you plop down next

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day. We'd pick up Anaïs from school, the both of us. Today the plan was ice cream, then off to the museum. She's only ten, but I can tell already that she takes after you. She's brilliant. Soaks up information like a sponge. "I remember when

she was younger, she would drag us to every plaque in the museum and make us read every one to her, before she was able to read for herself.

She can read now though,
and we can barely keep up.
I take your hand in mine,
watching her make her way
down the long hall. "Thank you
Ozeanaugen" Squeezing a
little. "For what?" you ask
"For reading the book, when
I sent it, I wasn't sure if you

would even look at it, let alone
read it"

A silence wraps around us.
I've since learned that your
silence wasn't always a cold
shoulder. I softly stroke the
ring on your finger. Anaïs

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working in the governors office
doing design.

All that mattered is that we
had our family, and we were
happy.

disappears around a corner
and the silence is broken. "Hey
wait up!" we call, making up
the distance, to her before shes
too far out of sight.

It was not the life that I had
thought I'd live. I'm not sure
either of us would've thought
we'd own our very own white
picket fence one day, but we
were still doing our part in the
world. You in research, me,

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In which we burn gloriously in annual circuses

“This isn’t what I had in mind when you said mending ties.” You laugh a little, our bodies still glistening with sweat. “I promise it wasn’t what I had in mind either.” I reply, stretching out a little before pulling you closer than you already were, nuzzling into you. “seemed like you enjoyed it though.” your nose scrunches “shut up” your

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a post orgasmic clear, with you in my arms, I didn’t fall. I stood on the edge of that familiar cliff. This time, I did not throw myself off. “She’s still here” I tell myself, taking a deep breath. “ok.” We lie in a warm silence for a long moment, but cliff or not, I could only take so much. “so...” I broke the silence. “I can still

the design the identity for the wellness center?” You chortle “Why does part of me feel like this is more about the centers then me at this point?” “Maybe it is” I jeer, turning on my side to look at you, smiling. “So, is that a yes?” My finger prodding childishly into your nose. “Fiine yes yes okay the job is yours, but

cheeks flush as you hide your face. “You know this doesn’t change anything right?” I sigh. “But it could...” My head rests heavy on the pillow, looking up at the ceiling. “Look,” you start “ I did have fun, it was really nice, but it just wouldn’t

work. We can’t go through that again, I don’t want to ruin us again.”

My heart sank. I could feel it all slipping away again, spiraling. Yet somehow in

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like I said, It doesn’t change anything between us” I salute you “Aye Aye! Nothing more than business associates.” I say, even while my free hand caresses your thigh lazily. As if the irony wasn’t already thick in the musky air of the room.

“Of course we’ll have to have to meet occasionally to see the progress of the construction and work out details yeah? Lets say, annually yeah?” You giggle and stretch, pressing your hips in the air slightly. “That would only make sense

I guess" I say, shrugging into your stretch. "In the meantime... we do still have a good chunk of the day before your plane leaves." My palm, cupped to your soft mound. "Do we now?" You turn and look at me with a devilish smile.

And that is how it started. Three

years now of our unspoken circus. You flew in for a couple of days every spring and we would dance in the sheets and site out the future Wellness Centers. It could end at any moment, but for once, that was the beautiful thing about it. About us. When you left, we seldom talked beyond business.

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was holding my hand. I hadn't told you about her before the trip. That wasn't the end of us, not exactly. Ruby was happy to revel in our circus. As fun as our menage a trois with Ruby was, it just wasn't the same. Not to say that Ruby was a damper on the whole thing, or it wasn't enjoyable, but it wasn't US anymore. We may

never have us again, but it will always be in my heart.

We did try once again a year later without Ruby, but as much as she insisted she was ok with it, I knew she wasn't. That was the end. Our us was strictly business now. What the future held for us, neither of us knew.

Six years in, the Wellness Center was breaking ground for construction. All this time, I thought it would be you who ended it when the time came. I knew the end would come eventually, even if that end meant us becoming more than

this. Either way, I didn't know how I'd take it. But life has a way of going where you wouldn't expect it.

Year seven, as you stepped off the plane, you met Ruby. She

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And for once I could accept that, that was precisely the beautiful thing about us.

In which we have an understanding

"Mommy Mommy!" two young voices call out. Their feet plopping in the mud as they run to you, arms outstretched. They almost knock you on your ass, their bright eyes looking up at you. "Welcome back Ozeanaugen." I lean over the kids and kiss you. "God they got big. Are you sure it's only been a month?" I laugh and nod as our kids strip you

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I stayed at home. I can't lie, France was one of the few places that I actually had any desire to visit, but I would make my pilgrimage another day. This was your trip, this was yours. That was the arrangement.

"So how was Paris? Did you fall in love in the city of love?" I jab you jovially with my elbow.

"You know," you start "you're the one who proposed this whole arrangement, but I swear sometimes you don't seem so sure about it." I come back with oozing inflation. "Oh non non madam!" Unable not to laugh at myself. "Taya, can't I jeer my old self? Plus, who knows, maybe you fell in love with existentialism? eh? eh?" I was well acquainted with the sigh that nearly oozes

of your bags, carrying the luggage nearly half their size towards the house. "Though it always feels like longer." I add, kissing you proper, with them out of the way. "And I see they have manners now?" You ask almost suspiciously.

"Okay, I may have paid them off." I admit.

You had just gotten back from France. You teased me about going to the mecca of my existentialist loves, while

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with a skip from your lips as it did now. "I love you, but how I do when you're hooked on that nonsense, I will never know. You know what else? How have I still not gotten used to the fact that guys in Europe are usually uncut?"

I just shrug. "So it was a dry trip then?" You laugh "oh you wish. I met this absolutely adorable girl, Collette." I stop you right there. "Oh oh oh oh what? So we can't name our kid Collette but you can fuck a Collette?" You pay me

no mention. "She had this perfect little bob cut, and not to mention her mouth was good for more than talking." As you ooze, your phone comes out to show me.

"Wow she really got lucky." I laugh. It was what I always said when you showed me your exploits from the trips. "Maybe I could get lucky

too?" I coo, slipping my hand around your waist and pulling you close. You pull away giggling. "Isn't it crop day?" You look at me with the eyes of a mother telling her child they have to do chores. "Anais and Otto (one of my absolutely proudest moments, when you agreed to naming our son that) learned how to while you were gone." You knew my stupid smirk well at this point. Almost

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mean to cut ourselves off from the rest of life. I tried not to allude too much to Sartre and de Beauvoir as much as possible, you were never one for existentialism. but it would be a lie to say our relationship wasn't modeled off of theirs. We were both free to act and do as we please, just under the understanding that we come first.

I was the one who proposed it, but in all honestly frightened in the beginning. But it's working out remarkably! We're both free to do as we wish, but largely you're the one who travels and explores in several natures of the word. That's not to say that I don't have the odd affair here and there. We go on trips together occasionally too, but largely I find my joy at home in the earth ship with the

as well as I knew your sigh. "Fiiiiiiiiine" You laugh. "Oh c'mon, like it's such a chore." I tease. "Whatever, shut up and c'mere."

We fell, tangled into the sun bath on the roof of the center. This was the normal now, and I wouldn't have it any other way. It's the way it had been for as long as I'd like to remember. We were partners, lovers, but that didn't

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kids. I miss you it's true, when you embark, but it only makes your embrace all the warmer later, and I know you are happy. Though most of all, we are free, in the truest sense of the word.

In which we build the future we dreamt of

“Ready?” I ask you, as I stand behind, rubbing your shoulders. “Are you?” you ask. “Well,” I start, “I’d be lying if I said I yes. My main job was helping build the Wellness center you and to brand and get people to come. But now Taya,” I lean forward and kiss your cheek. “now its your time to shine. You studied and worked for years all for this moment. Do you remember when you first told me about the wellness center you went to? You know the sound in your voice alone was enough

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Well... at first at least. They were rude and nihilistic. One girl snuck a box of cigarettes in and nearly lost it. This is precisely why I was only in charge of graphics, marketing, and general operations of the campus. You, however, had a much more loving touch. Your yoga sessions, that you lead every morning, weren’t quite as talkative as Adrienne’s, but I still insist that she has nothing on you. And as long as it took me to warm up, the kids were actually... pretty great.

I think you were a little puffed when I started to radicalize them. Sneaking in political philosophy and government classes in between your scheduled curriculum. But hey, I think it will be useful in helping them enact change when they leave in the world. Though I should probably keep a close eye on Jackie, they can be interested in some rather... extreme means, sometimes.

Thankfully, Jackie never did blow up time square as a

to make my heart swell. I’ve never heard anyone ooze with like that. Not selfish love, but pure and true. There is no one on this planet more ready than you mien Ozeanaugen. You’re going to do great, and I’ll be by your side the entire time

whenever you need backup. I love you Taya” I squeeze your shoulders and peck you on the cheek as the bus full of kids pulls up.

Oh fuck were they awful.

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symbol of capitalistic gluttony. They did however get a senate seat, representing Kentucky. My fucking girl! Needless to say, it was really hard to say goodbye to that first group of kids. I’m even more proud of us, to say that we

survived the year completely carbon neutral! Completely off the grid. There were some concerns early on about heat and water and food. It was one thing for the campus to support the two of us but we hadn’t tested it with a full class.

There ended up being more than enough though! Alex and Brian even set up a stand in town to sell surplus food we'd grown, from time to time.

That was four years ago now. We uh, aren't in that Wellness Center anymore. We had secured funding for our first expansion center in Europe. Two good friends of ours are manning the center while we fly over and scout locations. We are actually on that plane right now. You're sleeping next

to me. Needless to say, we are almost certainly going to pick a lot in Ireland to build, but I'm still hoping you'll consider France or Germany, maybe even Russia. And sure, is this also partially an excuse to tour Europe with my favorite person in the world? I mean... yeah.

My pen is running out of ink now, or maybe it's just the air pressure in the plane. Either way, there's not much more to say, I'll update when we've chosen a location.

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(Spoiler its probably gonna be Ireland.)

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In which we dawn balaclavas

I am not exactly sure how we got here. We are two Americans with fake passports and IDs, bound for Ireland on a cruise. See, the airport had too much security. If we wanted to in, we had to go under the radar. I think it started when we met Clarke. Neither of us were in a particularly clear head space. Not that we were sad or distraught. No no, quite the opposite actually. We were about as high on a cloud as we could be.

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an understatement. You were vehemently opposed to the very notion.

It took two years to convince you. With the legalization of psychedelics passing the senate, it was easier to get our hands on some reliable and safe mushrooms. After all the prep, when the day came, we did undeniably have some cold feet.

We agreed to do this in your room. We were to stay in the

room for the duration of the trip. We had food and water enough. We had between us, months of preparation. Despite all of this, I will admit, this was canonically, an awful idea in retrospect. This could've ended so awfully.

I will not, nor even could I attempt to describe the events past us brewing a pot of the mushroom tea and taking the first sips. We relaxed into the floor and the next moment I can understand, we were held in each others arms on the

Ok, maybe I should start back at the proposal actually. Yeah that seems to make the most sense right? In our separation, I had proctored my friend through an acid trip. Before that point, sure, I had been interested in it sure,

but never for me. Yet as I was with him, watching him falling deeper, I too fell deeper into my curiosity. by the time we started talking again, I had my mind made up, I wanted to trip with you. You were... less fond of the idea. Or rather that's

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floor sobbing.

You told me once, on our last trip to Philly, that on acid, you become you, all the walls come down, all the boundaries vanish, and you are left to

confront yourself. I have never been a man of god. I have never been particularly, a man of faith, of any sort. It was true, this statement, until the dawn of the new decade. In a strike of irony, a philosophy, famous for its absurdist atheism, would

teach me faith. I was in that month that I found faith in US. It was this faith that had me convince you to take this trip with me. This that could've, that should've, gone so so bad. For the first time in my life, in a moment of faith, I knew, it would not. For the first time in my life I was without doubt.

There in our embrace, tears staining each other's shirts, we were invincible. Our minds were so clear, like we figured it all out. We ruled the fucking world! There wasn't a

day passed, before we found ourselves at the airport. Every last dime of our savings in hand to go back to New York.

Here we find ourselves back at the beginning, or closer to it. This is where we met Clarke. They were, as we both will confess, a gorgeous human. It also so happened they were sitting next to us in the cramped plane seats. We must have seemed absolutely insane. Our jaws were about to snap off, going on about the future, our extremely expensive

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easier you know." Those words still play in my head even now. You will never hear words like that from a stranger, in relation to a good idea. From that first sentence, it was so clear that it was an awful idea, but yet here we are.

You were now Joanna, and I, Greg. I would be lying if there wasn't in the chaotic scramble of thoughts, a bit of jealousy. You getting this beautiful poetic name, while I was stuck with Greg.

We didn't talk much. We both understood the absurdity of what we were doing. Our hands clasped, clung together. We looked like any other couple on the dock, excited for the cruise. But it felt as if we were stood there with obscenely bright balaclavas, that somehow no one could see. Neither of us spoke up on our concerns, thinking the other didn't share them.

"I don't know about this..." we started almost in unison, but before we could continue

and convoluted plan to get to Ireland. It involved working in the back of restaurant, cardboard boxes, and a gnome apparently? (I do not recall the gnome, but Clarke swears up and down they heard us mentioning it quite

enthusiastically, as if it was the keystone that held the whole plan together.)

It was just before landing that Clarke finally spoke. "I can get you two into Ireland much

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the thought, we were next to board. We walked onto the ship, and suddenly you were Joanna, I was Greg, and we were Irish citizens.

It is a curious thing, time. The ink of my pen, seeps into the future, glistening in a sun, a future, I may myself never go. I am bound simultaneously to the present that holds me hesitant to describe the events of which I am also present, in that only my pen's ink can know for the time being. Needless to say, none of me does not want to describe the moment.

"What is this nonsense... god" you ask, holding your head, annoyed, by the very idea that I would even think about writing anything like

Atticus yawns, walking into the room. "Soul pain? I don't know what we're talking about but it's too early." "It's always too early for it." You sigh, finding solace in your oatmeal. Atticus plops down and picks up the book. "So this is that book you were gonna send to her before?" Anna cuts in before I can say anything. "Before I talked him out of it." She was good at cutting people off. I think that's why I fell for her at first. She cut me off before my lips just started to pour unnecessary nonsense. Damn that woman had a bite!

"Okay okay I get it my book is cringey, lets move on." I laugh and pull the book back into my lap, under the table.

"It's nice that we can actually all just sit as friends in the same room." I say as you sip on your chai. "Yeah." you sigh. "Though I'm still a little torn about you building a wellness center behind my back." I scoff. "Well I'd hardly say behind your back, aaaand, I did invite you to see it didn't I?" "I knowww," you come back. "I just wish I could've built one too."

In which we know each others lovers

the paragraph you just read. "He's trying to be meta." Anna laughs. "Cause he writing about a future about himself, and therefore is able to feel both what he's feeling now and how his future self is feeling." She shakes her head

and lays it on my shoulder. "I love you hun, but for everyone's sake, maybe stick to design." You shut the book "Please, your writing hurts my soul hurt in all the wrong ways."

"Well." Anna chimes in, "Harrison and I did actually invite you and Atticus down here for a reason." I never thought I'd love getting cut off so much. "There are five administrative bedrooms. We only take one, and we

would be absolutely honored if you take one for yourselves and join us." There's a long silence. Looks are exchanged between us all, trying to gauge reactions. Anna continues. "I know it may seem kind of iffy, with everything that happened

between you two in the past, but things are different now. You and Atticus are the most stable you have ever been, and we just got married last December. I can't lie, I used to seethe when he would talk about how brilliant you were and how much you loved the Wellness Center." Her words did still linger with a bit of decaying resentment as she spoke. "But his inability to shut up doesn't change that even if he was exaggerating double, this place clearly means a lot to you and I would love to have you. Plus, do you really want a designer and an artist in charge of a bunch of kids

all alone" She laughs, before the room falls silent again. Waiting for your answer.

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In which we are old

I have less to live than I have already lived. I do not know this for a fact, but at seventy three, I do not think it is a pessimistic thought, to think that I will not live to a hundred and forty seven. Memories are an interesting thing, I would like to think that as for as they go, even back to when I was a boy, mine are still fairly clear. I can recite the stories of my life in vivid detail. Yet what an off occurrence they are, when those pictures in my head, are not those real, lived moments. They are more so akin to the images on night envisage when reading a particularly vivid book. Crisp and clear perhaps, based in reality perhaps, but not me as I was.

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Here I sit in a cafe in the city that has given me love. Warm chai, topped with coconut whipped cream, at hand, relights a faint feeling I used to know. The people pass so quickly by, but I remain seated, savoring the memory of a feeling. The bell on the door snaps me out of the memory, on this otherwise slow day. My attention is caught for just long enough to see a young woman. Though young may not be the word, Almost everyone is young to me at this point. She looked remarkably like a girl I once knew. I let my gaze linger, perhaps longer than I should have. Her resemblance was not exact, but remarkable non the less.

Then it was who she held the for, that would mark even more remarkable. If remarkable even is the word. Your skin was perhaps more wrinkled than it used to be, as so was mine. But it was unmistakably you. Your eyes shone brighter than I remembered.

It started with a swallow. I remember that much clear, before my hand suddenly found itself so immensely uncomfortable on the cup. All at once, I was again a boy. The memories, the stories, all suddenly returned to reality, surging into my soul with such intensity. There was no way to tell if it was a great wibbling

These stories are of a me that I no longer am.

From time to time I will tell the story of my first love. I will detail in great clarity, how the flesh tore under the skin like

violent waves of the maelstrom. How the world might be engulfed by a great gulp of glory, vibrating my soul. But even as I recite the tale, I do not live it, I am not it.

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jello, that had suddenly taken the place of the world, or if the very constitution of my flesh collapsed into energy. In the moment, either explanation, I would cling to if I could. But even as reality was shredded, distorted and warped around

the enormity of a moment, of a person, of you. I would not have even heard the snapping of the bones inside my very own flesh. There was only you. For a moment, US existed.

The moment existed in a way that I thought could never again. All the glory, all the dread of seventy three years, from a sight alone. And yet how could I have know a velvet dagger, no not a dagger, I cannot obscure this with metaphor. The velvety forceful embrace, sunken, speared, slipped into my being, that was your voice. "Harrison? Is that you?" Innocence and inquiry, but a wave non the less that smothered me like a mother does her babe, in the softest linen, if not her bare bosom.

Neither my hands more my neck seized when the lights

went black. I did not feel my forehead slam into the table. I did not feel the hot chai spill on my leg. I did not hear the subsequent screams. Perhaps what would have saddened me the most, is to not have felt your touch on my still warm corpse.

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“WHAT THE FUCK?!?”

Perhaps no one had ever heard your voice pitch in that particular way before. For good reason I must confess. My knuckles glowed white, as my fingers dug into the sides of your father’s face. My lips, pressed to his. My hat tipped back, a tuft of hair puffed wildly out the front.

Perhaps we need some context.

Biden had just one the Democratic primaries. SKDK had just let me go. I sat at my desk, bleeding my black tears

was irrelevant, for right or wrong, for there was nothing that could be done about the history of your father not liking me. Who ever said that to have daddy issues, it had to be about your own daddy? I needed something, anything in my despair. I needed him to like me. It would all be different if he liked me. It had to be.

I had a plan. Plans? I swear to god I had something when I was on the plane. I had something, I swear even as I stood outside his front door, waiting for him to answer. But what is a plan in the moment? “Can I help y..” He started but before four words could slip his lips, I lunged myself at him.

I heard myself ooze “I love you.” Before my lips pressed against his.

You weren’t supposed to be there. You said you were living with your mom now. I don’t know why you were there. But in that moment I was on him, my tears smeared between our faces. The next moment, I was on the floor, convulsing. No one could tell, least of all me, what the garbled noises spurting from my lungs were. Tears or laughter, it didn’t matter. If there was no future before, I had only just not secured that in stone. I had felt the anxiety of freedom. And I had thrown myself from the cliff.

In which I feel your father’s lips on mine

through the nib of my pen, when the ink ran dry. All of my work. All of my improvement. Was it all four naught? One friend didn’t answer the phone. Two friends didn’t answer the phone. YOU, didn’t answer the phone. My pit, ever a faithful

friend, spun my thoughts for two weeks in solitude.

One morning I found myself on a plane. No luggage. Barely a plan. Whether or not it was true or false, or even valid,

In which I love her like my own

She stood behind you, clasping at your legs. Wide eyes, peering out from around the side at me. I smile and wave. "Go on Anaïs, say hi... this is mommy's friend." You encourage her and step aside. Your hand on her shoulder, squeezing it a little. Little Anaïs steps forward timidly. Her eyes shone just like your, and my heart swelled. "Hello Anaïs. I'm Harrison." My lips trembled as I dropped to my knees. "Your mommy and I have been friends for a long time." She nervously fingers at the hem of her dress.

She had every right to be a little nervous. The past year had been rough on her. Days in the hospital with you and her dad. She was too young for death. Too young to lose a father. Your marriage was too young to lose a husband. The sound on your voice when you called that night, will haunt me forever. That was three months ago. That was six years since the last time we spoke.

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I couldn't know what the future would hold after I landed in Denver, but after all these years, I couldn't say no still. You didn't tell me that you had a child. If I were a younger man I would have burst to tears at the very site of her own ocean eyes.

"Do you like hugs?" I ask. She looks at the ground and nods. "Would you like a hug?" Her lips scrunched to the right and I took her in my arms. It was only a moment before I felt hers reach around me tightly. I collapsed in to tears, her dress soaking them up. My face was buried in her shoulder. We stayed like that for a while before I looked up at you through tear glazed eyes. I saw your eyes welling slightly, but you never were the one to cry, not letting a tear spill.

It was arranged that night, over dinner, that I would get an apartment in town. My work had thankfully gotten to a point where I could afford

to move on a whim. It was not the future I had dreamt of back when, but I got to watch her grow up. The first time she called me daddy, it made my world. It did eventually become hard to explain to her why we didn't live together. After all, her old daddy lived with you both.

Sometimes I ask the some question, but I never push it. I loved us. Whatever us was, no one could tell. Perhaps it changed with the days. Whatever us was, I loved it. I loved little Anaïs. I loved you.

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The package arrived on time and you opened it. That is all I know for sure. Perhaps you read some of the book too. Maybe you even read the whole thing. Did you like it? Did you think it was silly or stupid? Maybe it made you mad, or cry. But none of that is important now. The reality I must face, we must face, is that there is no us anymore. Not as friends. Not as lovers. Not even as acquaintances.

The book sits on your shelf, collecting dust. you live your life, I live mine. It hurts, for a while. Just like the death of anyone hurts, for a while. But we live separate, amongst the death of us.

In which there is no us

How I would love to pen an epic. To detail the detail-less. But I can bemoan it no longer.

Here lies us.
It was good.
It was bad.
It will never be forgotten.

As the moment stands, there is no us anymore. Not in any form. In the pages of this book, I have spilled needless words, but here I shall be to the point. It is my stance, that regardless of dorm, our lives with us, are better than our lives without us. It is undeniable that the existence of us has thrown tumultuous waves toward us both, that have shaken us to the core. Together we have caused great pain to each other. I cannot speak for you, but the greatest pain in my life has been at the hands of us, and I do not believe I would be far off to suggest the same or close for you.

In this light, why then would I hold the stance that I do? In the past, I may have argued, "Because I love you." But if there has been any development in recent months, it is that, I love you, is not an argument. I love you, may very well be a declaration, of feelings, and of intent, of motivation. I write this letter. I write this entire book, because

I love you. I would travel to the ends of the earth, strap myself into one of the terrifying metal birds you're so fond of, because I love you. But I cannot, and will not argue on that basis here.

Whether it is a net positive, or net negative, there is undeniably an energy in and between us. There is something there that even after years spent apart, let us fall so close again in less than the space of a couple months. That if even shortly, held us near inseparable. The nature of this energy may be up for debate, but its existence is not.

Over the years, the nature of us has taken many forms. From resentment, to friends, to lovers. The nature of us, the form it takes, in kind, forms the crux of my argument. The nature of us, and our perception of that nature, is the difference between agave nectar and arsenic. The difference between a sip from

the golden chalice, and the greatest existential dread and fear.

What then in our nature determines what it will be to us. Firstly, we must lay out the axes on which it can be measured. We will measure on the axes of Intimacy, Romance, Sexuality, Closeness, Attachment, Obscurity, and Schism. It is true that many of these lay close to each other. That in a scale less precise, one would even consider them the same metric.

The axes functionally, fall into two categories. There are those that measure the facticity, or actuality of our relationship. These include, Intimacy, Romance, Sexuality, Closeness, and Attachment. There are then those that do not measure facticity, but rather, perception. These metrics of perception are Obscurity and Schism. Both categories, facticity and perception, both present their

own unique benefits and issues.

In measures of the form of facticity, imbalance is the problem. Most relationships (not all but most,) scale fairly equally on all axes. Intimacy, Romance, Sexuality, Closeness, and Attachment, are not the same, but do in most cases go fairly in hand together. In addition to that, the axes are fairly stable in most cases. If a relationship takes the form of a close friendship from childhood, the axes of facticity might all be fairly high, with a lower bar for sexuality and romance. There will be slight fluctuations, but overall the bars remain stable. A relationship will form in the beginning and the axes will level out and stagnate.

Our relationship however, has not followed a trend of that stagnation. We have swung wildly, pushing those axes around almost at random, like a toddler playing with an

abacus. In the course of us, we have been lovers, we have been friends, we have been resentful acquaintances, we have been everything at one point or another. To further that point, I would say that we never fell neatly into a label of any traditional relationship. Even when we were “just friends” it would cross some boundaries of that.

I make this distinction not to point to is as the fault, but a feature that can, be perceived in either a wonderfully comfortable light, or awful light. While there are certainly concerns to be related in measures of the facticity of form, I believe that they are ultimately secondary and serve to exacerbate other more major issues. Those major issues being those of perception. While form of facticity can take things from good to great, or bad to awful, it is perception that defines toxic from glorious.

So let us now talk about perception. Obscurity, is quite simply, how obscure the form of facticity is in our relationship. The measure of closeness may be high or low, but it is the measure of obscurity that shows, or rather doesn't show how clear it is the measure of closeness. When there is low obscurity in a relationship, it is clear where any particular measure lies. When there is high obscurity in a relationship, it is hard to see where the measures lie. Obscurity also applies to labels. How cleanly, does a relationship fall into a particular label?

Our relationship has existed for almost its entirety, in obscurity, in other lands. These other lands are not good, nor bad, but they are volatile! The volatility of these other lands of obscurity, stem from our second axis of perception, schism. Not of hopes, but of the perceived present reality. In short, when it is obscure where we fall, a schism may

arise about where we fall. It is schism, beyond every other axis that I blame for the corrosive degradation of our relationship. So if these are axes, and the issues, what then is the fix? Further and foremost, why should be fix it?

Obscurity, despite much of my bemoaning about it, I believe, is the thing that has made the great times so great. We have never fallen into any traditional presets of relation. As a result, we have never been subject to the traditional expectations of what it means to live within a given preset. So our relationship is a dance without steps. We do not dance the mamba or the tango, but let us dance and meld organically when and where we need. This is the je ne sais quoi, the beautiful thing we have both enjoyed.

When a pair dances the mamba, there is communication needed of course, but for a large

part, there are given steps we both assume without having to discuss it. But we have never danced a set dance. Communication is the paramount feature, more so than it already is in any other relation. It is only with communication on how we feel internally, but as well as how we feel externally toward the other and as part of the us, that we may prosper.

I do not insist that a schism was the extent of the problems with us. But I will insist that it was the spear in the heart of it. I have my fair share of problems that, as I have addressed in the following pages, spent the last several months, addressing and overcoming. I will not however concede, that the problems stopped with me. But as part of my growing, I can concede that I have no say in those that are yours. I can only be myself.

In the past I have played the role of Orpheus. I could work

tirelessly, and trek into the river styx, without complaint or sweat, but with you in my arms, homeward bound, I could not but peak over my shoulder. And just as Orpheus watched his beloved turn to pillars of salt, my confidence wavering, too, has spelt death in my own way.

My case is made now. I have written twelve cartridges of ink dry,. I have delved into myself and enacted a change in my soul. There is a world of things I can do, and gladly would, if it would mean we could be friends again. But for once, I must resign, that my power ends there. If there is to be a future, if we are to be us again, that is your dominion.

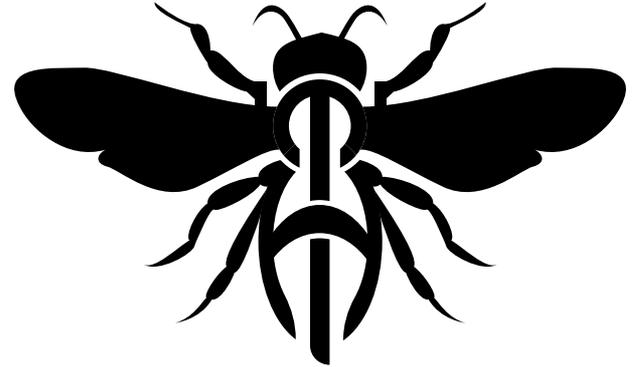
This is my final play. And if these may be the last words we ever share, let me here declare, that together or alone, I will continue to grow, that I will work till my dying day, to make this world if even a little better for our children and

yourself. let me here declare, that I wish for you, a life as extraordinary and beautiful and you are.

I love you Taya.

Be it soon or far, may we speak again.

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