

The Internet Sad Boi Journals

Farron Knechtel

A thesis

submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts

University of Washington

2024

Committee:

Mattilda Berstein Sycamore

Jeanne Heuving

Program Authorized to Offer Degree:

Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences

©Copyright 2024

Farron Knechtel

University of Washington

Abstract

The Internet Sad Boi Journals

Farron Knechtel

Chair of the Supervisory Committee:

Mattilda Berstein Sycamore

The Internet Sad Boi Journals is a cumulation of a long-term project where I archived curated and then responded to my own online journal entries previously posted on LiveJournal.com from 2001 – 2003, written at ages fifteen through eighteen. The first half is comprised of these journal entries interspersed with personal essays offering further details and a contemporary perspective on the subjects raised by these entries, such as immigrant identity, toxic relationships, sexual abuse, masculinity, queer identity and isolation, and queer mourning. The second half collects poetry from my LiveJournal in conversation with my current poetry, searching out throughlines of subjects and themes to bridge my poetic voice from past to present. The Internet Sad Boi Journals finds a place between Y2K nostalgia and memoir to radically embrace my past and present self as a writer.

The Internet Sad Boi Journals

Farron Knechtel

Intro: A Statement of Intent

In autumn 2023, concluding a PowerPoint I made for my thesis salon, I posed a question: *Why am I doing this?* In the voice of my Internet Sad Boi persona, I said, “idk for the lulz.”

“IDK” is an acronym that stands for “I don’t know.” This is still a part of texting speak and Internet slang, AFAIK (as far as I know). “Lulz” in this case is a bastardization of “LOL” which means “laugh out loud,” as in a reply-response to text that made a person laugh. LOL would be an indication that someone found text funny enough to laugh out loud – ie, in real life, outside the internet. LOLs or lols therefore were “laughs” and “lulz,” a further heightening of that term. In other words, “I don’t know, for the laughs.” The voice in which this was presented was meant to echo a millennial high schooler’s tone, such as I was in 2001 - 2003. My friends and I would often exaggerate with acronyms, misspellings, and lack of capitalization to convey a humorous tone. We weren’t actually as braindead as using those terms made us look, but that was the point. We enjoyed appearing as vapid and incoherent as adults around us seemed to think we were. This was part of the humor of the 2000s, especially on the internet.

In the early 21st century, there was a kind of wildness and excitement to the internet. In 2001 I was desperate to express myself. I was enthralled by the endless potential of the internet to share my thoughts and poetry with other like-minded people. In June 2001, at the age of fifteen, I started a blog on a website called LiveJournal, and began exploring. The posts on this website – my online journal – make up a large portion of this project.

LiveJournal, or “LJ” (also jokingly referred to as “eljay”), was started in 1999 as a personal blogging and social platform. It predates more famous social media platforms like Myspace and Facebook by a number of years. Unlike those platforms, which prioritized posting photos and other media, LJ at this time was more focused on writing with some image functionality. A LiveJournal account entitled users to their own customizable blog at [username].livejournal.com, as well as access to LJ communities. Users could list their interests on their user info page to add them to a broader database. Through searching these interests, users could find other users to add to their “friends list,” or “flist,” and join communities.

Early LiveJournal operated in a way that prioritized user-experience with little to no thought on how to keep the platform commercially viable. LiveJournal did not use algorithms to prioritize engagement-baiting posts or tracked interests, though it did have a “front page” visible on login that promoted popular posts. Aside from the LJ front page, the model of LJ at its concept was for community connection and engaging with self-selected content. LiveJournal expected users to find their own communities and friends to interact with through searching subject tags and finding like-minded users in communities of interest. Its low barrier to entry and ease of use attracted a different crowd than personalized websites or hobby-specific forums. The

English-speaking side of LJ gained a reputation for being a gathering spot of angsty teenagers and fandom weirdos. I'm honestly proud to say I fit into both those categories.

On the Russian-speaking side of LiveJournal, the website's anonymous nature made it a valuable activist space for organizing and political discourse. As LiveJournal struggled to manage its ballooning userbase and costs, it changed hands multiple times, ultimately being acquired by a Russian company in 2007. This endangered the safety of these Russian-speaking activists, and, to many of its English-speaking users, signaled the beginning of the end. The freedom of speech users assumed they were entitled to was now clearly in danger. These fears were confirmed by what was known as "the great strikethrough," "strikethrough 2007" or simply "strikethrough," where thousands of blogs were deleted without warning for allegedly objectionable content. Deleted usernames would appear with a line through them, or a strikethrough.

While LiveJournal is still in use to this day, "the great strikethrough" is when many users, including myself, began to slowly migrate to other platforms. My final posts in 2011 were mostly to urge other users to find me elsewhere, a ritual that seems to happen every few years on social media these days. Online spaces may be free to join, but they are not always free to keep using, and are beholden to the owners of the site. Writings posted to the internet, and friendships made there, are ephemeral. Histories are made and forgotten, only existing as ghosts of themselves as grainy screen-captured memes or old memories and rumors.

The fleeting nature of internet writing – communications, blog posts, and general culture – came into sharp focus for me in the summer of 2022. I lost a friend, Dani, to long Covid. She was a friend "only" on the internet, but we were close for around six years. We met via an online game and spoke via an online chat program – Discord – every single day, and often spent hours in voice chat, playing the game together. One morning, she didn't post her usual morning message to our community chatroom. She hadn't been feeling well and had cancelled some plans to game a few days earlier. I feared the worst. After a day of not hearing from her, I knew something was wrong. Since I supported her art career, I knew her legal name and how to search for it. I found her obituary and was faced with the task of informing everyone else in our community about her death. Moreover, I was faced with the reality that the things she posted to the internet were not always going to be accessible. I spent most of the summer attempting to contact her mother only to find she did not know how to get into Dani's social media accounts or computers. I was left with whatever she had chosen to post online and to her friends via Discord and social media. I had to back it all up elsewhere or risk losing it forever.

Dani's mother asked me personally to preserve as much of Dani's memory as I could: taking screenshots of the houses built and decorated in the online game we played together, the art she made for me and our friends, and any other memories her friends and I could share. As far as I can tell, I was never anything more to Dani's mother than a person in her daughter's computer that she never referred to by name. We were strangers brought together by this death.

I was struck by how little I really knew about Dani, even though I talked to her every day. All I would ever have of her was the things she chose to share with me. I was also struck by how much 21st century life is tied up in other people's computers – the data collected and stored in the so-called cloud. I knew Dani must have left a thousand fragments of herself in online places I would never think to look. I know I have done the same. Even though we were very close together in age and converged over similar hobbies and passions, the routes we took to get there were very different. We had, in a sense, grown up on entirely different regions of the internet as well as different coasts of the United States.

My own internet footprint was already something I was looking into. In 2021, I went back through my old LiveJournal to reread my entries on September 11th, 2001. I remembered September 11th fairly accurately, but other stories from that time in my life played out differently than I recalled. I discussed my queer identity and the homophobia I encountered far more candidly than I realized. Over the decades, I focused more on myself as a tough survivor rather than reflecting on how difficult a time I had growing up. It seemed useless to dwell on the past when things were improving. Of course, the tide has started to roll out on the waves of change we saw in the 2010s. The cyclical nature of progressivism and backlash has made past struggles all the more relevant.

When I graduated high school in 2003, two of my heterosexual friends talked about me in their university entrance essays. Through my patience for their homophobia and my inspirational individuality, I helped them both become better people and get their education. Meanwhile, I did not know how to talk about myself or the hardships I lived through. I had been screaming my whole life about how miserable and misunderstood I was, but these issues were routinely dismissed and minimized. To even discuss myself and say the word “hardships” feels pretentious to this day.

While my friends got into their universities of choice, I struggled in community college. I had a mental breakdown. I can't blame a single source for my not being able to handle college in my early twenties. There were dozens of factors including abuse and mental illness. However, I know why I stopped writing.

It came down to a single creative writing course putting a cannon ball through my sails. When I attempted to be vulnerable, my style of poetry was red-penned and criticized by the professor in a private one-on-one session. At this same time, the professor had, in my opinion, favored another student. That student wrote what I considered to be melodramatic, bog-standard high fantasy. It felt like my vulnerability was being punished in contrast. The professor praised the fantasy writer for their creativity. I assumed this was because the professor was wholly unfamiliar with genre and not savvy enough to recognize its parade of cliches. Here I was bearing my soul, and I was being criticized harshly, while my classmate was being lauded for boring, saccharine wannabe *Wheel of Time*. With the candor that can only be achieved by a self-righteous young adult, I gave up completely on ever going anywhere with my writing. Clearly,

this rejection was a sign from the universe. No one cared, and no one understood. Like I said, I was young.

This is not to say the professor was to blame. Perhaps they had high expectations of me and hoped the corrections would help me improve. Perhaps they were rewarding my fellow student's drive. Perhaps I was simply not in the right space to appreciate my classmate's work. At the time it was easy to assign malice, to assume it was some flaw in my appearance, my gender presentation, my queerness, or my attitude that turned the professor against me. Despite having met peers and professors I liked previous to that class; I grew deeply disillusioned. The one thing I felt I was really good at stopped bringing me joy or hope. My personal life was in a downward spiral. Feeling as though my life was a lost cause at the ripe age of 20, I simply withdrew.

During those lost years, I could never shake the feeling that my friends had benefited more from telling my story than I ever could. I don't mean to throw my friends under the bus about this, but to this day I am confused by their choice to write about me. When I asked them, they said it was because I really had changed their lives. This was hard to stomach. My narrative seemed to only exist to prop others up, whether it was to inspire my straight friends or help someone else receive an award for starting the Gay Straight Alliance. Apparently, none of the hard work I put in meant anything unless it was to polish someone else's shine. I know my friends that wrote about me meant well, and probably thought that I was destined for greatness on my own. At the time, I just felt exploited and abandoned.

Until I went back to school in 2017, I focused on very little aside from coping with my CPTSD and trying not to die. I bet everything on this path – first to finish my Associates Degree of Arts, then my Bachelor's of Arts, and now my Master's of Fine Arts, cumulating in this self-indulgent memoir as my thesis. Stupid, honestly. Believing in myself enough to take risks is a constant stomachache.

For the longest time, I thought my writing had no place but internet arguments, fanfiction and LiveJournal posts. I was too aware of the potential criticism, the gap between myself and the reader. When I went on to Central Washington University, after graduating from the very diverse Highline College, I met a lot of less diverse students who never seemed to doubt themselves. I got into a lot of fights with younger, mostly-white students about

Whether or not "I just don't see it" was a valid way to reply to a post discussing queer overtones and symbolism by queer authors, or in a class titled "Shakesqueer."

If they were in fact experts in Japanese culture because their fiancé was a Japanese major, or if perhaps the Filipino Japanese student might know more about what their own character ate for breakfast

These same bold writers were never told there were subjects they weren't equipped to discuss. They patted themselves on the back for portraying whatever their imaginations conjured, such as:

A racially insensitive story about a young girl from poverty with a drug-addicted mom who uses voodoo on a dead cat to bring her dad back from the dead.

Two old men turning into young men in an unnamed foreign country while the speaker of the poem watches on. The men whistle and call to young women who giggle and find it charming.

Two gay men who had an affair on the night before their straight weddings, which comes to light because one of the men commits suicide, which was just so super sad for their wives who were unhomophobic angels who never suspected.

The lack of self-awareness was, in a way, inspiring. Some writers have never once been encouraged to stop and wonder if maybe they should get better. Why was I always so hard on myself?

I got into a fight with a white lesbian classmate for saying I was discomfited by some Orientalist overtones in a short story we read, especially since all the characters were white. She said, “Obviously you’re overlooking the point of the story – which is to showcase misogyny and how terrifying it is to be a woman -- because you are a man.” I love it when I read as male scum.

The category of male scum is ever-changing if you exist between genders. Common parlance these days is nonbinary, but I am genderqueer. To be outside of the binary I would have to acknowledge the binary. I would have to acknowledge that there are two choices, and I am neither of them.

Some people think that gender is a binary choice, like choosing cake or pie from a table of desserts. I explained all this once to a professor who didn’t quite seem to get the idea of queering gender. In reality, you could be:

A plate of spaghetti

The tablecloth

A nearby goldfish in a bowl

A rafflesia arnoldii, aka corpse flower, in the jungles of West Sumatra

The sun

The sun in another solar system

A black hole

The slowly encroaching heat death of the universe

You could be all of these things at the same time, and also the cake and the pie, layered within each other, infinite and unmeasurable. Binary gender is an illusion of choice. We are all made up

of matter that can be a million different things. I am the things, and I am the container of the things.

I've often struggled with trying to explain my gender to others. It's been made clear that because I date women, and I am not a woman, I must be male scum. I am the opposite of a woman, a historical perversion, a historical inversion. The opposite of Barbie. The opposite of an angel Christmas tree topper. Am I a man or a lesbian? Am I scum because I have a penis, or am I scum because I think it might be fun to have one? Am I scum because I am a lesbian, or because I am bisexual but should have been a lesbian? Am I scum because I never understood womanhood, or am I scum because I refused to be sacrificed on the altar of womanhood as intended? I do not exist as male, yet I am male scum. I was never a woman, but I am a failed and fallen woman. When I was a teenager, I thought because I was not a woman, I must be a man. I thought if I was a man than everything would make sense. My life has yet to make sense. It hasn't fallen into place for me yet. And I think I was a boy. I think sometimes I am still just a boy.

The hypocrisy of Barbie being everything and nothing was not lost on me even before the blockbuster film. I did not need to be told that life is terrifying for beautiful, thin blonde women. Just because that is true doesn't make it a compelling story, or something most people need to be told. I am well aware, and I think it's fair for me to roll my eyes about it a little. After all, no one cares if the world is terrifying to me. The bigger concern is how much I terrify the world.

While at Central Washington University, I asked my professor, Maya Zeller, how she had the confidence to get her first novel published. She said, "I simply have the unearned confidence of a white cisgender heterosexual man." I think a lot about that. I think a lot about how much she encouraged me to seek my MFA. As the child of an immigrant, the only proper way to ever thank anyone is to succeed. I have to do well because of the work others put toward me doing well. Otherwise, it is a disrespect. I've thrown away the efforts of others.

I might have done all of this sooner if I'd been encouraged the way mentors like Maya Zeller, Taneum Bambrick and Gretchen Schraff did for me sooner. Receiving wholly positive praise of my work alongside the critique was enough to give me the energy to keep going. I began to see more value in what I had to say. Knowing that these writers I admired believed in me gave me the drive to succeed.

I began to confront why I felt that art was a luxury that I should not be allowed. Like with my gender, I don't fit into the correct categories. I am overly aware that I am the size of at least two attractively skinny starving artists. Who would pay to enjoy me? I'm no designer handbag. I keep my clothes in a huge black pit in the middle of my floor. I did wind up getting into an MFA program, obviously. Since I was there, I would have to find ways to justify my artistic existence.

In October 2023, my first year of grad school, I watched poet Wo Chan perform in their drag persona, The Illustrious Pearl, *for Gamut: A Literary Series at University of Washington*.

Though far from the first drag performance I'd ever seen, merging the worlds of camp and poetry was a new joy to witness. With my emerging interest in self-expression, I was interested in doing my own performance with a similar sense of both vulnerability and fun.

It's difficult to untangle my creation of the Internet Sad Boi Persona and my desire to archive my old LJ entries. They were not exactly concurrent ideas, but they fit together hand in glove. I first performed as the Internet Sad Boi for one of my classes in my master's program. I had written a lot about grief and the internet, inspired by Dani's death a few months prior. I just wanted to be wild and unabashed. I decided there is nothing wilder and more unabashed than an angsty teenager. I could lose myself in despair and absurdity. So I put on a ton of black eyeliner and black lipstick and just went for it. I got such a great response from my cohorts that I continued to perform the Internet Sad Boi several more times. Any time a class included a performance aspect, I performed as the Internet Sad Boi.

Decades earlier, I had erroneously decided I couldn't wear black lipstick or eyeliner or dye my hair anymore. The dysphoria at being called "she" was just too horrible at that time. If I didn't properly portray masculinity in ugly polos and shapeless khakis and buzz cuts, how could I expect to ever pass as male? If I didn't want to be a woman, then surely, I wanted to be a man. And because I wasn't born a man, I had to be the most basic kind of man.

Like a lot of people, it took a global pandemic to realize I loathed close to everything about my current gender presentation. I grew my hair out, and when it was safe to return to a salon, I bleached and dyed it. I played with dark make up on the overly optimistic promise to myself that I'd wear it once I got to go out again. I began to embrace myself as genderqueer – or nonbinary in more mainstream terms. This is another theme that I explore heavily in my work, both my own current feelings on gender and the feelings of dysphoria I felt as a teenager.

Since I decided that I was allowed to do fun things with my appearance, I decided I wanted to do the same with my work. The Creative Writing and Poetics program at University of Washington Bothell was the perfect place. I decided to play with the inherent appeal of being campy and dark – finding the humor and absurdity within my own grief and unhappiness. I spent so much time crying about my dead friend in 2022. I wanted to do something I thought I'd have a good time doing. I had faith that if I kept seeking things that interested me, I would find the art in exploration. After the gauntlet of emotions everyone passed through from 2016 – 2022, I wanted to find humor and beauty in despair. I wanted to do things for myself, and trust that art would come from it. I wanted to claim agency over the type of story I was telling, too.

Some of my cohorts have called the Internet Sad Boi a drag persona. I don't because my make up is awful. After all, the Internet Sad Boi is a costume, a persona, a vessel. Though I wasn't searching for truth, I wound up finding it. In embracing an idea of being too much, I found a sort of honesty I would have otherwise held back from. Through the Internet Sad Boi, I could be more circumspect. The Internet Sad Boi doesn't worry about editing or being unrelatable. The Internet Sad Boi only feels what he feels. Through the Internet Sad Boi, I

regained the boldness that I once had as a teenager. I no longer feared whether others would listen. I would make them listen.

Reading as the Internet Sad Boi is a heightened performance, a reenacting of my teenage self. I read old poems, journal entries, or new things I've written more in the style of my old work and present my work on a projector made to look how I remember my LiveJournal blog looked. I sing karaoke and embrace the dramatic child of darkness I wanted everyone to believe that I was. I realized that while my online journal existed in a space of confession and honesty, I was also performing a version of myself that was funnier, cleverer, and meaner than my real-world self. The Internet Sad Boi is myself if I was never self-aware. I'm poking fun at what it felt like to be that angsty teenager, but also reveling in it.

The creation of the Internet Sad Boi was born from this love of performance and my interest in my old LiveJournal writing. This desire to look into my past was also informed by my academic journey. I feel far too young to start talking about history or retrospective, but the truth is, I'll be choosing between a big graduation or 40th birthday party this year. I've been having an extremely prolonged midlife crisis since deciding to finish my undergraduate degree in 2017. I assume at my age that it's normal to want to take stock of where I've been, especially since returning to higher education was a radical life change.

There's nothing that slaps you in the face with your own "old" age than attending classes with young college students. As I befriended classmates in their late teens and early twenties, I became extremely aware of how different their queer existence was from mine when I was their age. Donald Trump's presidency demonstrated a new era of ignorance, and yet I couldn't shake the feeling I had lived through equally fearful and stupid times. I was a little less fearful and panicked than my younger friends because I had lived through two terms of George W. Bush. I began to seriously consider what it meant to be queer over the decades. I began to reflect on what it meant to be a Millennial now that there are two named generations after me.

I feel a bit of responsibility to younger queer folks. Not in a self-serious, encouraging, crying-in-front-of-a-rainbow-flag way, but in an elder sibling, "trust me, mom and dad are fuckups" kind of way. I want to be honest about the things I've gone through. I don't hold any illusions about being a role model or being an inspiration, even though that seems like a standard motivation to select when talking about queer art. Frankly, I don't want to take on those mantles. I don't want to model a role when I don't believe in roles. I find inspiration in all kinds of things, and rarely are those the things that are set out to inspire. Broadly true aphorisms are great for Pride-themed merchandise at Target, but the creativity I admire most is intentional, boldly unique expression.

I've always had esoteric, eclectic tastes. I'm just as in love with legendary power metal band Blind Guardian and the cello goth band Rasputina as I am queer dance pop music like Chappell Roan and legendary Broadway showtunes. Neil Gaiman's *The Sandman* graphic novels have influenced my tastes just as much as Richard Siken. To be honest, my influences are so

varied as to border on incoherent. Whether it's the purple hair and complicated gender of a character named Nuriko from the 1998 anime *Fushigi Yuugi*, or the painful intersections of relationships, racism and generational trauma on colonized land in Kristiana Kahakauwila's *This Is Paradise*, I pull resonance from stories of complicated, sometimes problematic outsiders. I am a magpie, pulling fragments of myself out of all kinds of strange places.

I cannot remember who first gave me this advice, only that I received it repeatedly throughout my undergraduate and graduate education from mentors and peers: art is better when it is specific. One of the questions that drives my poetics is "what is it I do that no one else can do?" I always strive to bring my unique voice, life story, and humor into my poetics. In other words, I want to bring the world my truth, even if it is the truth of a person who is scattered, esoteric, even a bit ridiculous.

I think it's funny to research and treat myself as a primary source. It's audacious to imply anything I've done has historical significance. I did perform a meaningful bit of activism as a teenager in the early 00s in starting the Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) – permutations of it now exist in all of the high schools and middle schools in Federal Way school district. I was also a silly little idiot on the internet, but that just makes the stories even more charming.

On the online video platform YouTube, there has been an increasing interest in archiving internet history and highlighting lost media. YouTube channels like STRANGE AEONS archive internet subcultures and shake ups (sometimes on LiveJournal!) and presents her findings in a humorous manner, while channels like nerdSlayer Studios and Li Speaks cover online games that were shut down and now only exist online in fragments. There is a similar push to find lost physical media, as there are entire communities and YouTube channels built around tracking down obscure television shows and movies in order to upload them archive.org. These efforts seem united on the idea that every bit of media is worth preserving. Not only is there historical merit in archiving when first ideas and trends first appeared online, but these efforts often highlight the effort and artistic vision of the individuals responsible. "Someone worked hard on this, it deserves to be seen," seems to be a prevailing idea.

These movements convinced me that there was some interest in work from the early 2000s beyond the incoherent, inaccurate Y2K aesthetics that are popular in popular culture and mostly inspired by nostalgia. My original goal for a thesis project was a poetry chapbook or to expand the Internet Sad Boi into a more surreal or fantastic narrative, perhaps even a narrative video game. I did not think this was the route I was going to go initially, but in Spring of last year tragedy struck my life again.

On the evening of March 31st, 2023, I got a call from my friend Megan. Weird. I'd just said goodbye to her a few previous. We'd spent the day together in the city getting our hair bleached and dyed and getting dinner in advance of the yearly anime convention we planned to attend. She'd had a rough go of things. Her father, Lloyd, had taken ill suddenly and was recovering from a very serious surgery that was probably going to result in an advanced cancer

diagnosis. It wasn't the first time she struggled looking out for her parents. She lost her mother a few years earlier, and previous to that, her father had suffered a major mental health episode.

"Dad's dead," she said, "He killed himself." She described the scene to me. I very calmly told her she needed to hang up her phone and call the cops. Not much later, I was at her house while she talked to the chaplain and her house swarmed with cops.

Suicide blows through your life like no other kind of tragedy. It's stupidly hard to describe, considering how fundamentally banal it is to die. Though I've lost a lot of people over the years, Lloyd's death hit me with a different kind of grief. I was still processing my grief over losing Dani, and now I felt I had to set some of own life aside to make sure my friend made it through hers. She was an only child who now lost both her parents, so I promised to be her family instead. I lost a lot of my inspiration to write, but I had to keep going. I was almost done with my first year of grad school, after all.

I have struggled a lot with mental health over the years. Back in my LiveJournal days, I talked openly about self-harming and my own suicidal ideation. It's something I still consider myself in recovery for, though I haven't relapsed since around 2016. I spent a lot of my teenage years wanting to kill myself, and yet I didn't. Why was that? I'd get the feelings out and bounce back a day or two later.

There was such an unsufferable amount of silence around Lloyd's death, around the suicide. I struggled to understand. A question emerged, though. Why had I survived my ideations? Why me and not him? Of course, there were many factors in Lloyd's death that were different than mine, but that wasn't the answer I was looking for. I looked to my old writing to find understanding. Not just of my own mental health struggles, but the first death I experienced of someone I cared for whose death felt preventable – my friend John (renamed to Jack in my thesis), who died in a motorcycle accident. I also ruminated on the kind of things that people leave behind when they die. Megan wound up finding out so much about her father as she went through his things, things she wished he'd taken the time to tell her about.

After death, other people's emotions are one of the most concrete thing left behind. I've written a few poems about that, at least. Death is almost always about someone other than the dead. "*A carcass full of nothing.*" Maybe I've lived this far out of fear of becoming that. I am alive and overstuffed with Things. Not just wobbling fat cells and drying blood. Things. I think and speak in paragraphs. Slice my skull in half and you'll find a cavity full of speech balloons filled to the edges. When I am excited, the speech balloons flood out with suffocating volume. I am an unnatural disaster. Some writers struggle to find the right words. I struggle with stopping them.

There's so much art on my friend Dani's computers that no one may ever get to see. There's so many stories, notes, and thoughts that Lloyd must have had that are only available as scraps now. I thought about my LiveJournal and how I'd backed it up in some alternative places

in case LiveJournal.com ever went away. Though my journal had been locked to private view for over a decade, it still hurt to think that someday the record of that time spent would no longer exist – that once I was gone, no one but me and possibly some website administrators would ever be able to see it. The latter would probably never bother to look. The callousness of the great strikethrough had spurred me on to make back-ups of my LiveJournal, but I hadn't looked them over very seriously.

Everything just sort of seemed to lead me back to my LiveJournal. I decided to reread them and take it on as a serious archiving project. Doing this was its own practice: I set a goal to finish a month a day, which mostly worked. I meticulously copied each journal entry into a separate document, often reading them (though I skimmed some longer entries) and put together long playlists of the things I took down myself listening to. I did this from midway mid-August 2023 to October 2023.

Initially I interspersed my archiving with research into the prisoners of war during the Japanese occupation of Indonesia. My mother's mother ("Oma," grandmother in Dutch), an Indo (mixed-raced European – Dutch, Portuguese and Indonesian) suffered in a POW camp as an adolescent and spoke very rarely of her experience. One book I found was so obviously biased toward Dutch colonialism that I needed to take a mental break. Indos are not a well-known ethnic group. Even records of a time where they suffered and died at the hands of the same occupying force, they were nothing more than a footnote to white colonists. Worse still, the independence achieved by Indonesians in the post-war era ushered in a period of military fascism and corruption. According to my Indo family members, rampant prejudice and ethnic cleansing of Indos took place. According to the Indonesian government to this day, this is not true, and they in fact aided in protecting Indos from "extremists." From afar, as a descendant of an Indo child who fled this danger, it certainly feels as though I am a child of erasure and politically inconvenient narratives.

Oma rarely spoke of her time in the camps, but what she did tell me was deeply affecting. Her reticence means there is a piece of history missing that I can never claim. When I asked her about it, she simply said, "I do not want you to see me as a victim. I want you to think of all the things I am now. I went on to do so many things after that."

Once again, I felt haunted by shadows of a past I had no way of accessing. How many stories go untold out of shame or a desire to move on in life? How much history is lost because the story is difficult to tell? What would change if certain truths were said outright?

While my struggles are not remotely the same as my Oma's, I have access to my own documents. This history need not go missing. Perhaps it is not entirely my decision on whether or not any of it is significant. I can only give the world the truth, and let the world decide where my words stand in the larger picture of the 2000s and millennial internet culture.

In the end, I archived about 1.7 million words. I had hours of playlists. Using the fill-in moods I used for my entries, I was able to determine my “biggest” mood, and other points of data that I present within the thesis. I struggled to find a way to sum up the totality of my findings. I wasn’t sure what the missing piece was – the thing that bound together all the information, art, and history I found.

This dive into the Internet Sad Boi became a vehicle in which I could love and accept myself. When I talk about my past, mostly I focus on being tough and managing to survive. I joke about my terrible taste in relationships and how dramatically I wrote about my passions. I’m afraid to be a little too sincere. Through the unabashed expression of my past work, I can admit that surviving wasn’t easy. The things I joke about are in fact painful. The brash, stupid, dishonest, rude, profoundly sad, profoundly angry person I was is still a part of me. I did tongue-in-cheek performances out of a sense of fun. Yet it lacked weight because I struggled to acknowledge the darker truths at times.

It’s funny to tease a privileged suburban child over thinking their life is the worst life ever. Even at the time of my old writings, I was aware that I was lucky. If anything, that made me lie to myself about how badly I was suffering. I thought I had no right to my misery and anger. After years of untangling the abuse, toxic relationships and queerphobia I suffered through, I realize these feelings were justified. Perhaps the reason I want to celebrate myself as the Internet Sad Boi is so I can celebrate myself – as the dramatic little teenager I remember myself as, but also as the person I find evidence of in my past writings.

With the help of advice from my peers and mentors, I realized I needed to place my current self within this narrative of my old work. This thesis is not just a retrospective, but a look at my current self as a writer. I spent a long time feeling like none of my work was worthy, that my story was not one that was interesting enough to be told. In sharing these pieces, and my own work, I am confronting my own internalized critic: the person who says the world does not want to hear from me.

It helped that writing “writing to the past” was a concept I explored thoroughly during my post-graduate education at University of Washington Bothell and during my undergraduate studies at Central Washington University. Some of the memoir works that I found instrumental in my approach to this thesis were Simone de Beauvoir’s *Memoirs of a Beautiful Daughter*, Annie Ernaux’s *A Girl’s Story*, and Bhanu Khapil’s *Ban en Banlieu*.

Khapil’s book, a fragmented and often-surreal work, was scattered and nonlinear in a way I found fascinating. The book seems to exist as a response to the absence of a book that “failed” to be made. The difficult-to-define, shifting persona of Ban within *Ban en Banlieu* also provided some insight on how I began to view the Internet Sad Boi. Many more attempts may be made to explain the Internet Sad Boi, but with this thesis, I hope to begin with historical context.

So much of my own work exists as a response to the absence of the years I felt I lost as a writer, of the things I wish I'd written, or the things I wrote but did not have the courage to share widely. *Ban en Banlieu* made something out of an apparent failure and found poetics in the process of the failing itself. Similarly, I feel like archiving and then responding to my old writings is a process of poetic examination. I am revisiting things I wrote off as being useless in the past and finding their value. These pieces, long abandoned, are building blocks to the writer I am today.

Like *Ban en Banlieu*, Jackie Wang's *Alien Daughters Walk into the Sun: An Almanac of Extreme Girlhood* expanded my concept of what a literary work could be. I admired the unvarnished honesty with which Wang presented her old zine writings from 2006 to 2016. There were many moments that could be considered embarrassing, over-dramatic, or not portraying the writer in a good light, especially so many years after the fact. Yet to read these honest, first-hand accounts of young queer love and hitchhiking was utterly refreshing. To me, these were acts of reclamation and radical vulnerability. I borrowed the idea of writing essays as a way to give context and bring past writing into the present. I also looked for ways in which my poetry was already in conversation with this past self and included poems that were inspired by what I unearthed in my LiveJournal.

Wang's boldness in archiving works from an era of my recent memory really shifted my perspective. Her inclusion of personal insights on gender and queer culture as she experienced them also encouraged me that my own perspectives were worth sharing.

While my LiveJournal is anchored in some significant moments, such as September 11th, 2001, the death of my friend John, and the formation of the GSA -- the more I've worked on this project, the more interested I've become in the things that lurked in the background of my entries, the silence, and unspoken narratives. I was suffering deep wounds I didn't always know how to name. I was frequently shocked to find off-hand remarks my friendship with an older man in my friend group who raped me, and an entry about finding porn on a relative's computer. Years later I realized this relative was a pedophile who actively abused me. My vague remarks on disliking his company meant so much more than I even realized when I wrote it. I wrote around these problems and others, such as my troubled love life, as if completely oblivious. I found many entries that were savoring moments of brief happiness despite my deep depression and desires to self-harm. I wrote many entries about my daily life as a high school student.

My time at University of Washington Bothell taught me the importance of daily practice, both through the works we studied and through instruction. Clearly, that was another piece of my writing self I'd lost -- the desire to sit down and reflect, for however long I wanted, on my own thoughts. While I sometimes use social media these days, it is often with a mind to be witty and insightful above being honest. I think there is significance in reflecting on an entirely different writing landscape on the internet. My peers and I were still learning to tread the line between a

personal diary and an outward-facing blog. I was, in a sense, performing myself. I could create whatever kind of person I wanted to be and simply be that person.

One interaction I ran across while going through my old LiveJournal was by someone who pretended to be the twin sister of a girl who was harassing me-- fascinating, awful, and a little hilarious all at once. I was naïve by comparison. I think it is interesting that in the face of all this, it never really occurred to me to be anyone but myself, even if it was with some exaggeration. I used a different name, a name I thought it would be cool to have, but I spoke candidly on my real thoughts and experiences. This observation, this idea of *playing* myself yet *being* myself, was one of the core ideas behind the performance of Internet Sad Boi.

In 2024, the performative aspects of social media lead the conversation on their use. Character count limits, short video times and a focus on appearances have all led social media to become a glossy magazine version of reality. Yet instead of a team of writers, photographers, and editors creating a work, we are expected to do all of these things ourselves. Be our own magazines. It's an exhausting prospect. I miss being messy and complicated. I want to allow myself to be messy and complicated.

I made the call in 2017 to educate myself and return to college. Now, in 2024, I am reeducating myself, and pulling the pieces of me I abandoned back into my work. It has been extraordinarily cathartic for me to approach my own work as a historical document. I really do feel a bit young to be writing a memoir, but I'm not sure what else to call this work. It exists with a foot in the past and in the present – and in my future as a writer.

This is not just about the Internet Sad Boi, the writer I was, but the writer I am currently. I think of it a little bit as a historical document of the Internet Sad Boi. An origin story. These are the thoughts, past and present, that Internet Sad Boi comes from.

Awhile back I posted on Twitter (now X), "I'm a creep, I'm a weirdo, I know exactly what I'm doing here and I belong here." This was a parody of the famous Radiohead song "Creep" (1996). It got 3 likes. But it is with this philosophy I try to approach the world. It is my hope that my thesis also helps to explain this. I just want people to know the truth about me, and I think that's why I've chosen this.

But also for the lulz.

Warning

This project comes with a warning.

The following work includes:

Depression

Self harm and suicidality

Gender dysphoria

Misogyny

Anti-immigrant prejudice and racism

The national tragedy of September 11th, 2001, and the ensuing wars

Homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, slurs and crude language

Discussion of childhood sexual abuse and rape by a family member

Discussion of grooming, sexual abuse and rape

Ableism

Spelling and grammatical errors presented as-is

The thing that really kicks me in the dick about all of this is that I really, deeply, sincerely don't want to be vulnerable. I want to vomit out explosive words about my past then run from the emotional impact. I don't want to stick around to be applauded for self-vivisection. At some point I sewed my armor beneath my epidermis. I'm afraid of the gaps it would leave if I removed it. Or maybe I'm a bit more afraid of the gaps I could fill in.

The names of the living have been changed. For my own sake as much as theirs.

Journals and Reflections: 2001

Internet Sad Boi Song of the Year:

“Mazohyst of Decadence” by Dir en grey

June 4th, 2001

look who's in action. w00t w00t.

10:48 pm

i really can't believe i'm doing this. nope nope nope nope nope. really can't. just a CRAZY idea to get this journal. for God's sake, i don't WANT to talk about my feelings.

wait, i do. i just don't like the idea of people thinking about me, suffering for me, and worrying for me. that bothers me entirely too much. i'm afraid of hurting people. i don't want to hurt people, it makes me feel not-good. and who wants to feel that?

my name is Liam, or it ought to be, and my life is entirely a mess right now. everything about life is so tiring. if i could define how i felt most of the time, i'd say, tired of living. i'm tired of school, i'm tired of my parents, i'm even tired of the people i love the most yanking on my chain. i'm just TIRED. TIRED. TIRED!!! and it doesn't matter how tired i get because i just keep going, it's this frenetic pace and i know i'm going to slam into a wall and i just don't know how to stop.

my arm hurts, and that bugs me. i cut myself at least once a week, like it says on my bio, i love blood. i think about killing myself constantly. on the other hand, i'm really quite intolerant of people who are like "boo hoo. i want to die." i guess i don't really have a high tolerance for depressed people because of the selfishness involved. i dunno. i don't know if i'm even gettin anywhere w/ this.

i think having this journal will help me, if i'm going to be honest w/ myself. i'd like a place to just rant and rave all i want w/o worrying about hurting some one. anyway-- it's rather late and i should be getting to bed. so... yeah, it's been real. or virtual. whatever.

June 6th, 2001

stupid windows

2:53 pm

i've recently felt like giving up on my life... i started writing my goodbye letters... each is just an apology... "i'm sorry i didn't try harder..." i was pretty bad last night, even worse than when i wrote that lovely monologue about love. luckily my friend Simon described in poetic detail what it would be like to slit my wrists, so it scared me off that option. i'm not afraid to kill myself-- i'm afraid of changing my mind when it's too late. there is a lot about life i love. but sometimes it's like that feeble love isn't enough to help me... and i don't know what to do, because everyone else i know is just as depressed. why do people even stay alive when they're so unhappy and pessimistic?

my day at school was pretty eventful! i bombed out on my zoology exam, and my math teacher harassed me for zoning out in her class. the fire alarm went off five minutes before class was out, i think there was an actual fire because we were dismissed so long as we didn't go back into the building. w/ any luck the whole damned school will go down.

this guy on the way home from school asked me if i had a smoke. i of course did not, but it made me wonder if i looked like some one who would. then there was this big German shepherd on the way home that was barking at me. now, i'm not particularly afraid of dogs, but German shepherds are police dogs and they could rip my arm off or something. the smoke-guy yelled something at me. well a neighbor og that's friendly ran up to the weird German shepherd, barked at it, and they sniffed each other's genatalia and went off to some one's yard. i bolted into a run the rest of the way home. the smoke guy was laughing his ass off. ~_~; oh well-- what does he know?

my mother is bugging me about math. i don't think there's any way in Merry Hell i'm going to pass this semester. my parents will know no end of their disappointment in me. that's all i'm good for after all-- disappointing them. i don't deserve to go to Japan-- i don't even know if i want to that badly. my parents are going to put me

through so much Hell... i just don't even want to think about it. they never ask me why it happens, just that it won't do, just that it's not good enough. nothing i ever do is good enough. if i get a B, or even an -A, it's, "why didn't you do better?" so if my best is good enough, why even try? i know i should care about what happens to me, about my own grade, but i'm not even doing it for me. i'm not even living for me. i'm just living because i don't want to think of the way my mother is going to cry and ask what i did wrong over my coffin. i can see that expression on her face, she's used it on me before.

what kind of mother asks you where she went wrong?!! is there any worse a condemnation than to be told you're a failure by your own parent? i guess i should be grateful that she doesn't hit me or something, but i've been abused before, you can usually convince yourself that's it's ok. it's not ok to be thought of as a failure, as a burden.

there's a bee buzzing and hitting the window near my computer again and again, trying to get out. eventually it may beat itself to death there, or starve to death trying to get out.

i empathize.

Mood: pessimistic

Music: "Daysleeper" - R. E. M.

June 16th, 2001

purple no more

8:40pm

i had to dye my hair back for my trip to Japan. i haven't had normal dirt-brown hair since elementary school, i think. i've always highlighted it or something. i look in the mirror and i don't recognize myself. in khakis and a faded Gundam Wing T-shirt, i look totally ordinary.

i'm terrified of that. i just realized that today as my mother dragged me around shopping that i looked like anyone. i don't look like me. i just look like... i dunno, some zit-ridden, overweight, short-haired teen with glasses and a tired expression. unless you looked at my wrist or arms, you'd have no reason to suspect i was anything besides typical (although, from various accounts it seems like everyone's "doing it" these days), perhaps until you spoke to me.

i hate shopping. most people do, but i absolutely abhor it. it's very deeply psychological for me. it's always me and my mother... i'm singled out. my Dad gets out of it because supposedly he's an adult and can shop, and my brother is sucking a fskering whiner that she can't take him along w/o me pummelling him. plus i had this really lost sense of identity...

shopping shows me how much i'm not anything next to what anyone in the world seems to want me to be. the media and my mother are out to get me. it's not anything i can explain further than that... i don't know if many people in the world have the same problem.

and i'm going to Japan on Tues. i should be totally stoked, but i'm more like dreading it. i just know i'm going to get lost on a train by myself, or, my host family won't like the Kazu Sasaki hats and Ichiro stationary i got them, or something (they were all out of Ichiro stuff at the Mariner's store-- Japanese tourists come in and buy the whole GD place out). i dyed my hair back to being an ordinary brown but

it doesn't mean i'm ordinary brown i'm going to miss a beat i'm going to mess up no matter how hard i study i don't know who i'm kidding trying to believe i can make a go of that i don't want people to think that i'm like this because it's only me on the outside i'm not really shy and ugly really i'm a hero inside i can do anything because i'm selfish and magical and horrible and smart and witty and sarcastic and i'm amazing even if i'm the least person in the world inside of me inside my head really i'm a worthwhile person.

and i hate myself for being depressed. i try so hard not to let myself wallow in this kind of despair. but it's difficult. the only way i feel even fair about it is if i don't inflict myself on other people, so, that's enough of me for now.

Mood: blank

Music: "What a Good Boy" — Barenaked Ladies

June 17th, 2001

stupid, stupid, STUPID!

2:50pm

well, i finally found the dress shirt that i've been looking for. i've been looking for one because i'm meeting the mayor of Hachinohe, Federal Way's sister city (even though technically i don't live in Federal Way, that's where my school is...). rather, my mother found it. it's nice and army green. there are pink and white sea stars bordering the bottom. i almost lost it right when she showed it to me, worse than when we went shoe shopping the day before. i did wait until i got to my room to try them on. i was hoping it would be ugly on me, that it wouldn't fit, but it was perfect. perfect for the girl that's supposed to be in my body and isn't.

i hate myself. i can't help myself and be a girl, i can't do girl things or wear girl clothes without feeling like a cheap fake, and ugly and stupid. but the media and my mother won't let me be a boy. they don't understand. wearing boy clothes isn't a fashion statement for me, Mom... don't you remember when i was a kid and i always wanted to play the boy, always pretended to be the boy? don't you remember i had a crush on the girl who lived next door...

well, i broke down and cried like i'd been building up to do since that horrible, horrible, fiasco with the shoes at the mall. i now own nice, sensible, girl shoes for special occasions. i wore them this afternoon.

i hate crying. it is such a stupid, stupid, STUPID, feminine way of dealing with your tension. i cut myself on my arm, too, but it was too late, i was crying too badly, i just curled up and cried and cried. i'm still crying. man, i feel rotten. i just want to disappear. it's not like i can do anything else with myself. i don't know who i am, or where to be, or anything. i can't be who i want to be, or who my mother wants me to be...

today i had to play commencement at graduation. it made me think too much to see a few of my band buddies move on... Eddie is so talented. he's the sweetest guy you'll ever meet, and he smells really good when he hugs you, and, he can play all these instruments and he has this talent and this personality you just know he'll be great at anything. he came out in the newspaper last year... i always wanted to ask him how he managed. how does he manage this lable people stick to your forehead and hate you for? dyke, lesbian, homosexual, gay, i just HATE that. it's more than that... or maybe it's just less. i'm just human, just another sheep, just a sheep that happens to have the "wrong" ideas about things. i'm a little girl sheep who used to have long hair and wear dresses and loved the Little Mermaid who at some point got turned all around and wanted to cut her hair and hated pink and dresses and The Little Mermaid and just wanted to be anybody except who she was supposed to be when shee was born.

when i was fourteen i swore i'd never sixteen. now i'm afraid i'm not going to make it to eighteen. everything is just like this pressure on me, i can't do this!

i can't speak Japanese worth a damn, no matter what anyone says. i can't draw or write worth a damn, and i can't do girl things and nobody wants to let me to do boy things. when i was fourteen... God, i can't help but hate myself for being such a selfish person. it's been two years and i've failed to get past this all. it's been two years. will it be four? six? eight? ten? will i even go that long before i realize that i just don't have the strength to put up w/ being pulled in two different directions?

the internet helps, but it hurts and makes me feel worse that this could be the only place where i can gain even a little understanding, a little acceptance. sometimes i wish i could just kill myself emotionally and become whatever little girl my mother thinks i am. if it meant no more of this crying, maybe i'd be ok. but wishing never gets you anything except more misery.

i'm not unhappy with my life-- it's pretty good most of the time, i'm lucky, i'm not easily angered and i don't take most things so seriously that it can bother me unless it's that bad. but... i'm unhappy with who i am. i'm stuck in the middle with all the other people who just won't kill themselves.

Music: "Hey Jupiter" -- Tori Amos

July 4th, 2001

open your hearts, i'm coming
home...

1:17pm

i just flew in from Narita...

...and boy are my arms TIRED!

crickets chirp

ok ok ok.

sixteen hour jetlag is a BITCH. i don't know what time to think it is right now, i'm ill, and i'm trying to readjust from "sumimasen" to "'scuze me". two weeks away from a computer... (excluding a Japanese word processor at a school we visited)... well, i've been cured of a lot of thing in this trip. i've been cured to my temperature wimpiness— nothing will ever be as hot and uncomfortable as tramping through Osaka in midafternoon and being shoved onto trains during rush hour. yay— my hatred of heat, my claustrophobia, and my hatred of being touched all rolled into two weeks of Japanese adventuring!

but don't think i didn't have fun. i had so much fun, and did so much, i don't know if i'll have the energy to explain it all. it's very weird— i've got that "no want to sleep" kind of energy, but my attention span is very short right now.

anyway... just droppin' a message to let y'all know i didn't get seduced by a hot Japanese girl in a gothic French maid outfit and forced to stay in a harem for the rest of my days. *swears softly under his breath*

Mood: awake

Music: "Breakout" -- the Foo Fighters

July 9th, 2001

okay day

4:36PM

i'm kind of in a good mood today. as in, "not totally fucking horrible". ^_^ i don't feel bad. i don't feel like killing myself. i don't feel overjoyed or anything, just kind of... good. it's odd.

actually, i have plenty to be totally overjoyed about! Lexilex may come to visit me! that's so joyifying that i could cry. man, i hope that works out!

i am a lil worried. i've been accused more than once (by both g/fs of the past) that i'm just GENERALLY not affectionate enough. maybe that's one of my problems.

i'm not affectionate enough, i'm not nice enough, i'm too serious and depressing (accused of this every day i saw my classmates in Japan).

but oh well-- today's an okay day just the same. ^_^

Mood: good

Music: "Leather" --Tori Amos

My Mother the Pilgrim

As a child, every time I was in the presence of a globe, I would walk over to it and give it a slow spin. I would find the chain of islands called Indonesia, the island of Java, and the little dot called Jakarta. I would place my finger on it, unintentionally crushing the place my mother was born. Trying to feel its texture. Telling myself, this is a real place that exists.

Other children called Indonesia a fake place. They said my mother was lying and made it up because they had never heard of it. Some children are taught that nothing exists until they are told about it. What confidence those children had. My mother visited my classroom in a batik dress sewn by her mother. She sang some songs with her guitar. Later, on the swings, an older child told me, “Your mother’s a dumb Indian.”

My reply: *She’s not an Indian, she’s a pilgrim.*

I didn’t understand what the older child was trying to say. I misunderstood her prejudice.

Similarly, when my mother was new to this country and just learning English, a white child called her the n-word in the bathroom. My mother was a first grader, the other child in sixth. My mother was still learning English. She didn’t know what that meant. My grandmother (my Oma) explained to her it was a nasty word. It meant a mean word for people who are Black. It was a word that was only said to hurt people and make them feel worse for the color of their skin. Oma said mother should feel very sorry for this child, being raised by terrible, ignorant parents. She did, however, go to the principle. The child was disciplined. This was in the 1960s.

Reactions toward my Indo heritage tend to miss the target all the time. There’s no getting away from the fact that I have both Indonesian and colonizer heritage. In Indonesia, the Indos once shared a privileged class and Dutch traditions. To be Indo is to be proud of being both:

To be the colonizer and the colonized.

To live outside the language of what our culture explains.

After a coffee shop poetry reading, my mother cheerfully provided translations and context for the Dutch and Indonesian words I used in a poem about my Oma. It did not occur to her I might want to leave things unexplained and mysterious. She has cheerfully explained where she is from a million more times than me. She always keeps her head high about it.

Because I was such a very gifted child, my mother always told me I was intelligent enough to be mature. I needed to take the high road with every bully. She deplored me to remember that angry children come from broken homes. I was always supposed to have sympathy.

I suppose that sympathy is part of the immigrant assimilation story. When you come to America, it is not supposed to be complicated. Like a child of neglect, you’re just supposed to be grateful you’re allowed to exist where you landed.

My mother's family left Indonesia during the Indo Diaspora and attempted to repatriate to the Netherlands. Too European for Indonesia, and then too Indonesian for Europe. My mother's third language was English. The folks from the immigration office were surprised, with the name Van Hout, that she wasn't a little blonde girl with pigtails.

When my mother was living in the Netherlands, she asked Sinterklaas (Sint-Niklaas; Saint Nicolas) to leave blonde hair dye in her wooden clogs instead of chocolate or toys. She wanted to be that little Dutch girl in clogs near a windmill and a field of tulips. My serene and quiet Oma grew quite angry. "You're beautiful just the way you are," she told my mother, "And you will never look like them." She was right, of course. My mother's obsidian waves would not easily turn to cornsilk.

There is a picture of my mother sitting on Sinterklaas's lap. Standing next to him is Zwarte Piet (Black Pete), a Dutch man in blackface. He is Sinterklaas's servant. In some iterations he is his slave.

My mother told me this story when I asked her why I wasn't allowed to have blonde Barbie dolls. She told me she never wanted me to think I had to look blonde-haired and blue-eyed to be beautiful. I grew up very conscious of that difference. White friends of the family and aunts from my father's side said my dark hair and eyes were exotic. I thought that meant they thought I was rare and endangered, like an ocelot. I thought it was rather silly, after all, I grew up surrounded by tons of children with dark hair and eyes. I wasn't that rare.

One of my earliest memories of my mother is a conversation we had about how we are "people of color," and that is different from white people, and it means sometimes people will treat us unfairly. I told her that white is a color, so the term "people of color" didn't make any sense. She didn't disagree. I was four or five, but she did her best to explain the complicated dynamic of a world where white beauty is a default.

It took a few more years to understand other things: I am light like my white father, especially in the winter, even though my face and build are almost identical to my Oma.

My mother's immigration story weighed about as much as the two huge steamer trunks left on the docks in Indonesia. The weight remained even as my grandparents rebuilt their whole lives with only the clothes on their back. I think I found the weight in the items stacked to the ceiling in their basement after my Oma and Opa had to move in with my aunt. By the end of their lives, my grandparents were ten times heavier. From World War 2 occupations to long careers to floor-to-ceiling mirrors for their daughter's dance practice in the basement.

My mother was a straight A student. How could she not be, with how exhaustively her parents provided for her? She used to tell me how much she and her mother fought when she was growing up.

“Your Oma didn’t understand that I wanted to go out, have fun after school, hang out with my girl friends,” my mother told me once. “She said she didn’t have any of that during the occupation.”

Just this year I learned that my great-aunt, my Oma’s older sister, had a child by a Japanese soldier. I have tried my best to become an expert on the Japanese occupation of Indonesia, but I didn’t know that. My mother, her sister, and I all tried to get Oma to talk about her time. She said she didn’t want us to remember her in that time, but to remember all she accomplished for her family.

This is sort of a diaspora child cliché, but knowing where my mother and her mother came from, I struggle with the knowledge I am a spoiled brat by comparison. I asked Oma once if it bothered her much that her grandkids liked Japanese anime and Japanese food. She said it was fine – she worked with many Japanese American women. She stood in solidarity with other Asian American women and worked with an organization that helped immigrant women start their own businesses. She and Opa even had their honeymoon in Tokyo when their flight to Singapore was cancelled due to a storm. Wonderful people, the Japanese. Ordinary people suffered during World War 2. Ordinary people didn’t want the war.

As long as no one ever asked her to eat with chopsticks, she was happy. She was prouder of being an American than anything else in the end, anyway.

During her single return to Indonesia in the 1970s, my Oma was called out by a man on the street for criticizing Opa loudly. Good Indonesian women don’t speak to their husbands that way, the man said. Oma said: “I am an American. I will speak to my husband however I like.”

July 25th, 2001

no more yeilding but a dream...

1:49PM

i think that livejournal is safe. i don't want to add any of my RL friends to my list, or even tell them i have it.

i guess, i write everything here because i want to pretend that some one will read it and care. or maybe that isn't even it... i dunno. not what i came to write here about.

sometimes i have dreams... and often enough, these dreams have clear meaning to them. i often wake up and understand what it meant, what my subconscious was tell me. i can't really relate what i dream about, because some of it is sick, and some of it applies too much to people here and elsewhere... it might just get hurtful, and weird, to talk about them. but it's weird how much stock i put into my own dreams sometimes. and then if i can't make sense of it, i just ignore it. i'm a good American like that. ^_^

i had another one of those dreams last night, and i woke up feeling really good. it assured me that situation w/ a friend of mine would be worked out w/o more hurtful conflict. maybe i believe it because i really need to. i hate fighting. i don't think anyone LIKES it, except arch villains and stuff, but i really, really hate it. even if some one is attacking me for no good reason, except not acting a certain way at a certain time though how was i supposed to KNOW what way i'm supposed to act and loving some one instead of some one else and all that BS... i'll sit there and be crying inside (oh, drama!) and be like, "oh God. what am i doing wrong, to get this anger from this person at this time?" it's hard for me to accept that sometimes people just act however they want and you might not even have anything to do w/ it. if there's a problem, i immediately think it's my fault. and i have to fix it no matter what the damage to me. the sad thing, is as you can tell i KNOW i do this, but i don't try to stop no matter who tells me that i just need to accept so-and-so is being a meanie-head. this is mostly a problem w/ me and girls. i feel like i have to prove something to them, since i'm not one of them. does that make sense?

anyway... i've been obsessing over my ghost dream the last few days. have i mentioned how terrified i am?

i don't know how it came up in a conversation w/ my folks about it. i hadn't planned to tell them, or ANYONE anymore about it, because it's JUST A DREAM, right? i mean, why am i so psyched? things like this don't happen to me. things like this happen to overbored girls in my history class who make up stories to make some sense in their life. things like this happen to my aunt, who is very seriously Wiccan. not me.

my parents believed it. believed more in it than i have the courage to. i figured they'd be like, "ooookaaaaay" and just change the subject. but my Dad gave me the same speech he's given me when i told him i wasn't gonna go to church anymore... "i think that things happen to us that are beyond human perception."

maybe they were humoring me? i realized last night how much i want to believe i could be capable of something like that. but i'm just an ordinary Joe. i'm not going to run around yelling, "Hallelujah! i talked to a dead person in my sleep! woo!" i mean, c'mon, that's a good way to get sent to the funny farm. and i know if i were some one else and i told me about this dream i had, i wouldn't believe me (woo! TRY MAKING SENSE OF THAT ONE!)...

but maybe it was real... i mean, nothing has ever scared me like this. just the possibility of it. is that weird? i mean, everything about the circumstance is just so bizarre. and i can't stop thinking about it. i don't know if i'm afraid or excited, i think i want it to happen to me again. i want to ask him another question.

it was strange telling my parents about it. i kept laughing nervously. sometimes it surprises me how intensely spiritual my folks are. my Mom, i understand, but my Dad is such a rationale (is that a word? some one who is rational?).

y' see, my Mom, for those of you who haven't heard the stale-as-biscuits tale, was born in Jakarta, Indonesia. she tells the tale of her grandmother, whose husband died before her. but he came back to protect her in the form of a great tiger, who would come and sit with her, tame as anything. just walk right into the house.

i really would've liked to have seen that.

my Opa (grandfather) was an unbeliever like myself until he visited one of the most haunted places on the island and his hair stood on end.

my mom's little sister was born w/ the umbilical cord around her neck and to all they swear, has some kind of honest ESP. she hates it though, being a bit of a fundamentalist nut-case who won't eat food w/ preservatives, and has spent most of her life repressing it. but before they bought this house, my parents asked her to sort of give the house a feel. she said it seemed like a happy, friendly house (and it is! 'cos we painted it yellow!).

i've heard these tales into antiquity, to the point where i can finish my mother's sentences. but... something occurred to me last night: maybe my Mom isn't a sentimental nut case.

maybe it's true.

and maybe i have some of that... extraordinary-ness in my veins. maybe just a little.

and i have enough common sense not to be all goofy about talking to a dead person.

i wasn't waiting for it. i wasn't asking for it. and i'm not now, although my curiosity and fear have been provoked. my Dad says... something like this is more likely to happen to some one than to aforementioned bored girls in history classes who claim to have ESP.

part of me hopes that i could accept this, that once in my life i had a supernatural experience... and the possibility of it happening again excites that part of me.

the other part of me is screaming "WAKE UP AND SMELL THE COFFEE! YOU'RE NOT A SENTIMENTAL FREAK, YOU HAVE COMMON SENSE!!! JUST FORGET THE DREAM! YOU ARE SENSIBLE, LOGICAL, AND RATIONAL."

^_^; oh dear. Ghost, you should've picked some one more worthy.

this is my second journal entry w/ a line from "A Midsummer Night's Dream". i LOVE LOVE LOVE that play, it's my favorite Shakespeare although i also love "Hamlet" (speaking of dreams of speaking to dead people...). both of them were lines of Puck's, too. i had a period of my life, sixth and fifth grade mostly, where i WAS Puck... my ideal part. maybe still.

oh, i just mentioned to Simon this "possible supernatural experience" i had, "talking to a dead person i knew very little about" and he's just like, "wow!"

another person who believes me. ^_^;;

Mood: thoughtful

Music: "Kiss From a Rose" - Seal

July 30th, 2001

when i'm all alone and i'm
bored...

12:33AM

Simon sent me pictures of girls in various states of dress in order to make me feel better about getting my wisdom teeth removed. and yet, he thinks he can change and get w/ this uber-Christian girl. riiiiight. ^_^^;

Mood: naughty

Music: "Porn" — Leah Andreone (the PORN SONG! woo!)

August 8th, 2001

i'm just scraping the social dogma
from the bottom of my soul.

3:56PM

"You're just like a boy with a period, aren't you?"

"HELL YEAH! high five, man."

"Are you a boy or a girl?"

"i have to be one or the other, don't i?"

"I believe the internet are expressions of people's soul."

"does that mean i have an incorrect soul? ha ha... oh, i mean to everyone else."

Lexi's gone. of course i'll see her online, but it's going to be forever until i can be w/ her again. maybe literal forever.

and now i could never forgive myself for killing myself. i can't leave her like that. i love her too much. but sometimes... i just want to do it. everything i've experienced has built up to be a brick wall around me, to make me this person i am, this awkward, butch, silly person that i am.

i wonder what people expect from me.

sometimes i want to just go crazy and scream at everyone. it isn't fair that i'm treated this way, after all, i deserve better, don't i? but wait... wasn't every worthwhile inch of me used up when i was in the first grade, or maybe when i was thirteen, or fifteen. used up from keeping my mouth shut about my problems when i ought to have gotten some one arrested. used up from not crying. used up from having a sense of shame, not to talk about the things that have happened to me until it's crippled me on the inside and nothing seems real.

it hurts, and even if Lexi holds me, or my mother, or something, it still hurts. that kind of thing doesn't go away. why me? i ask that constantly. why do people fall in love w/ me? why do people think i'm so attractive or gullible that they can take advantage of me? why me?

and why do i play along? why do i care about people? hasn't experience taught me better?

i can love and i can finally reach out to people, i can finally let some one i love touch me. but still sometimes i seem to just kick off from the world, i freak out and i want nothing more than to just cut myself raw and be left alone to cry and cry and cry.

i don't want to be in love. i want to be alone, and miserable, so i can take myself out of this miserable world and stop hurting people unintentionally. yeah, i must do it with breathing, people i care deeply for seem to be hurt like razor by the slightest things.

my ex said it all the time... i just enjoyed seeing her pain.

i'd make a good villain, i have excellent, bitter motives. but i honestly believe that i'm a lover, not a hater. i just appear to provoke vicious reactions in people. even Lexi's chewed on me for being such a sightless prick. i just need to... i don't know.

i don't know what i was thinking saying all this. is it lying, to keep information from people? something you find unnecessary to friendship?

you have to draw a line on where you share information, in my opinion. i just drew mine a little further away from my personal life than most people. so what's the big deal? no one harasses Michael for obfuscating all the time. why me?

Mood: melancholy

Music: "Neo Universe" -- L'arc~en~Ciel

August 25th, 2001

mother should i build the wall?

11:26 PM

GodFUCK, but i've had a day today.

it started out w/ getting up early. how many days are good that start out that way?

we drove to Chehalis (about an hour, half hour drive?) to go to this little one-town gig called the Garlic Festival. we were meeting friends of the family who used to live across the street from us. their son, Jack, was a very good friend of mine. he's a year or so older than me. we were best of friends until he went into the sixth grade and we basically grew apart, although we remained friends... after a while he seemed more interest in being around the girl who lived next door. i've always thought it was either because she was younger, which didn't make sense because he *had* a younger sister... or because she was much more submissive and feminine than me. then they moved away and we hardly heard from them.

Jack has a sister, Jessica, who is turning ten. this is scary because Jack spent the night at our house when she was being born. ^_^; she's a sweet little girl.

the thing is, Jack's really flipped out in the last year or so. just totally shutting everyone out and acting crazy, getting into car wrecks, getting into all this trouble, just being destructive and rude and acting totally unlike himself. it's been a hard time for his family.

the last time i've seen him, really, was summer at this time going to the Garlic festival. it's honestly a pretty boring scene set on somebody's anchorage, lots of good food but very little shade. if you don't have anyone to talk to it's dull. last time he went with us to this thing, he brought a friend and i was badly left out. this time, he didn't come at all. he was out w/ his g/f.

i knew he wouldn't come. Mom knew he wouldn't come, but she still made me go, and i'm angry about that. all i did was eat some junk food and sit under a tree watching kids pet animals and listening to live country music. ugh. then we went back to the their house and i slept, read, got on the internet a little, read, ate dinner, and played some video games. i could have stayed home for that. and then i didn't have to hear Mom talking through all of Jack's problems w/ his Mom, Liza.

my Mom's a damned good lady, i tell ya. she's a teacher, and she's had her experience w/ troubled kids. plus this isn't her first time helping out w/ this kind of a kid, she's been through aaaaaa of this before w/ my friend Taylor's older sister. you just have to live through it, she tells Liza.

i don't remember the last time she asked if i was ok. that's kind of wrong, she asked if i was sick today, a couple of times, or if i was running a fever because i kept falling asleep and just sulking and generally feeling ill. this was because i got too much sun at the festival, i think. but... i don't know if she's ever just asked me how i was doing. maybe she thought she had a handle on it.

you know exactly how to deal w/ a kid who is bipolar, or looks as if he may be.

do you know how to deal w/ me, Mom? DO YOU EVEN HAVE A FUCKING CLUE??!!!

you don't get me, do you?

you don't even see me. you don't see who i am anymore. you just pretend... i'm... some one else...

and she also bragged about my cousin Cleoh and her boyfriend whom i know i should know the name of because they've been together for years... Brendan maybe. he's a nice boy, an Eagle Scout, totally suited for Cleoh's uber-Christian-semi-ditziness.

i've met him, he's funny and i like him. maybe better than Cleoh, but she's known me all her life of course.

anyway, for a while my parents were seperated because of my dad's work. they had these necklaces, the kind you can buy where they make a whole piece when you join them together, like in movies. Cleoh and Brendan are going to be away from eachother for a year at their difference courses, and my Mom gave them those necklaces.

i feel left out. it could well be that long till i see Lexi again, and it's going to be MUCH longer until we can be together... for real. which i sincerely believe can happen.

i mean, maybe i shouldn't feel hurt by the fact i've been overlooked. it's not like i went up to Mom and said, "i am dating Lexi." i thought it was pretty obvious... i mean, we kind of tried to hide it, but not really. i just didn't want to hurt her by being overt... but i think it was one of those things where you couldn't miss it unless you tried.

she doesn't know me at all. she can know all about how some one else's kids works, but does she even comment about me? am i even there? these scars on my wrists don't exist, and neither does my being a lesbian, and neither does Lexi. as far as she's ever shown me...

she doesn't care about me, because she doesn't know who i am anymore.

she cares for some other kid she imagines is, maybe.

if that.

Jessica's ten and she's won all these ribbons for 4H at fairs, she's even going to the big Puyallup fair w/ her pet rabbit and some sewing she did. i don't think i've

gotten a ribbon for anything more than passing a class, or something like that. i sure don't sew. i felt so small. i don't win awards. i don't do anything that could make my mother so proud... maybe that's why she doesn't see me... maybe she'd see me if i acted like a girl, like she wants me to act. but i think i'd really, really kill myself if it got to that. i don't need her that badly... honestly i don't...

and then Jack finally did show up in the evening but did he speak a word to me? not a word to anyone, so i shouldn't feel miffed. after all, who wants to catch up w/ some one who was your best friend for about a six or seven year period? who wants to do that at all?? fuck you too, Jack. go work on your crappy car w/ your girlfriend and ignore everyone. see if i give a fuck. i hate you too. i wasn't even mad when you didn't show up for our Christmas get-together. i was forced along that time, too, but i wasn't mad at all. i don't care what you do.

and she and Dad talked about it in the car... i started crying. i wanted to bawl my eyes out but i couldn't of course. at least it was dark so she didn't see.

they talked about how hard it was... to be dealing with it.

she didn't ask if i was ok. like i had such a fucking *grand* time, having it rubbed in my face all day how i had totally lost a friend and getting soaked up w/ all this sympathy she had for other people's kids???

i don't know why i thought she would. she never does.

i just feel like shit today. maybe i'm really nothing. if i didn't have my love for Lexi, i would be nothing. my Mom thinks i'm nothing because nothing that's me is real to her. she doesn't see me.

and it's my Mom... i can't deny that what she thinks matters to me...

when you're a baby, it means the world, and it takes a world of time to get over that... if you ever do...

Mood: pessimistic

Music: "Edward Scissorhands" -- Danny Elfman

August 30th, 2001

skool

3:41 PM

arrgh. school started today. *HATE*

i might as well give an overview, since a lot of people will probably ask me what it's about. heh, maybe i'm vain. you know you take mental notes when you first meet your new teachers...

1st Period-- Accounting, Mrs. Burstein

ugh, MATH. but at least this should teach me how to do my taxes and stuff, and we get to work on computers. this class is cool because i have it w/ Henry and Olivia. it is uncool because there are no windows in the room and i have to go through a hall as crowded as the Osaka train system at rush hour.

2nd Period-- Japanese 3&4, Mrs. Ellis

yay! Japanese! ^_^ i kicked my classmates' ass by introducing myself... "Watashi wa D desu. Federa Uei koko no ninensei desu. Shuumi wa ongaku kikukoto to kakukoto desu. Dozo yorishiku." everyone was just like, "what the HELL?!"

only a few kids came close, including *SHUDDER* Kayla, who tried to do a cute-schoolgirl impersonation. i implored Ash and Olivia to protect me from her, and they did, the dears. even though the sound of her obnoxious voice just makes me want to beat my head in until it *stops*...

i talked to Scottie most of the time. i'm psyched about learning kanji.

3rd Period-- Symphonic Band, Ms. Wickler

ok, i'm not a band geek, but it looks like i'm going to have to really bust my ass for this class. i wanna quit, honestly... i don't like doing things in large groups. or being a role-model, even though i tend to follow all the rules w/o trying. i like the teacher a lot and stuff... but it's around this time i start wishing i'd signed up for drama.

4th Period-- Junior English, Mr. Noah

i like this guy already! he says the thoughtful question is more important than a shallow question, that learning isn't just regurgitating facts, and that he despises worksheets pounding facts into your head. i think i'm really going to like this class a lot-- besides, i excell in English. i also met this guy, Ken, who's really cool. and this preppy football/wrestling type actually approached me when we had to get our obligatory getting-to-know-you exercize. we had to talk to some one, and then introduce them, and one of the facts would be a lie. most people thought the fact that i listened to heavy metal was a lie. -- jeez, just because i wear a primary color one day of my life. isn't music supposed to be about music and not wearing band T-shirts and wallet chains?

Lunch

it looks like the only person i'll have to eat lunch w/ is the aforementioned cool Ken. no friends, and a lot of rocker-types that i honestly can't stand. they're just like preps, only they pretend they're better. or maybe they're even sadder and actually think they are.

5th Period -- Earth Science, Mrs. Fearnan

yay, earth science. this teacher seems nice, and the class seems cool enough, but, i'm not entirely enthusiastic. interestingly enough Mrs. Fearnan originated from a town near New Orleans. you'd never guess, because she doesn't seem to have an accent, except on certain words! like "author" becomes "awtha"... and then she'll just talk totally normal (well, what we consider normal around Seattle).

6th Period-- US History, Ms. Andersen

she's twenty-eight and she *loves* FWHS and she *loves* Juniors and she *loves* history. if i didn't have this class w/ Olivia, i'd be worried if i could survive it. and it looks like we'll have a lot of group projects. whoopee. good thing i find history interesting.

i'm kind of tired out right now... maybe write more later.

Mood: peaceful

Music: "STAY TUNED" - Glay

September 1st, 2001

Hypocrisy, Stupidity and Unfairness Regarding Homosexuality

12:23PM

that'll scare off a number of my readers, more likely than not. ha ha, that's assuming i have "readers". ^_^;

i guess i'm considered gay, even if i don't consider myself so. i'm a heterosexual MAN, dammit! manly! ^_^

on the other hand, i can't lie, i find same-sex relationships much more interesting than heterosexual ones. heterosexual romance is every-freaking-where! it's in almost every movie you see, it's on TV, it's in the books you read. and what's worse that *most* books that have content w/ a gay or lesbian romance treated as normally as a heterosexual ones get thrown into the obscure sections of the bookstores and aren't reviewed except in "gay" magazines that i think are dumb.

a little background info on me: i "came out" when i was thirteen. i was attracted to girls before then... i'd have the burning desire to be near pretty teachers or girls, despite their personality, and i liked to play that i was boy in all my pretend games. by the time thirteen rolled around, i realized i was attracted to girls in a sexual manner. i fretted about it for maybe two weeks, told my friends, and moved on w/ my life...

one of the most hurtful things was i didn't feel like i had a role model. i didn't have anyone to talk to, i didn't know where to turn... i didn't have half a clue about how lesbians had sex, or if lesbians even existed... who was out there showing me how i could behave? i didn't know who i was, or what... there was no literature that i could find on it! i was stuck in this world where the only homosexuals that existed were the bad ones everyone said those horrible things about... that made me feel like they were turning my stomach inside out...

things have since settled down. i found Oscar Wilde and shounen ai manga and anime, and i finally felt a little better. i would like to point out right now that all my friends are great about me, most of them are totally understanding of my "boy with a period" identity, and if they don't get that they're fine w/ me being a dyke.

i tend to like m/m romance for several reasons- f/f romance feels a little too close to home sometimes, and i'm kind of scared of girls. plus there's a lot more misogyny than you could imagine. i HATE HATE HATE lesbian magazines. they're just women's magazines written by lesbians, and i don't like women's magazines because they're dumb and boring. i've since realized that although when i was younger i craved a role model, that i really don't have much of a desire to join the "queer" community. i'm just a person, and i happen to like women. a lot of people do. i don't seek to laudify it... i just... want to know i'm okay as who i am... and that i'm not going to get beaten up or molested because of who i am...

women have to put up w/ so much! i think the statistics are one out of five women will be sexually abused in their lifetime. and *every* woman, for no more crime than the fact they were born w/ a uterus, will at some point face sexual harassment, just because that's how the world is right now. it's wrong.

lesbians have it worse in many aspects. guys say they like lesbians, but in the presence of one (even one that's a total tomboy/butch like me, and really not date material...), often guys will just be like "WTF? why aren't you attracted to men?!" my retort is, "i dunno, why aren't you?!"

two of the guys in my group in Japan were bugging me about that while we were wandering through the Ginza area (i think it was). i guess both of them were attractive guys, it's not really something i notice, but a lot of the girls were pretty crazy about them. i guess they thought they were hot shit, because they were both asking me if the idea of performing certain sexual acts with them interested me. and i was just like "ew, gross, shove off you perverts". then both of them looped their arms on me and rubbed my shoulders, and they were like, "you really don't like this?"

i punched one of them enough that he shouted "SHIT!" really loudly and then he called me a bitch, probably the first time anyone's called me that since i was in grade six or seven. i got him on the arm... which is too bad. i'd really meant for the stomach. they stayed away from me after that.

i hate all the stereotypes about lesbians... when i first got online i identified myself as butch lesbian and i'd get all these messages from old guys asking me about my habits. i was fourteen, and they're asking me if i'd had sex, or if i masturbated... totally lewd questions that i knew nothing about! it was just... horrifying. this was what people thought about lesbians???

it traumatized me especially considering the things i've been through... even being a lesbian doesn't make me "safe" from all the harassment. by the time i got to Illusionary Minds Chat, most people thought i was a guy already (because i played male characters's) so i just went w/ it, because that was how i felt...

homosexuality *isn't* unnatural, and it isn't always the product of transgenderism, or painful sexual experiences in the past. being gay doesn't make you less of a person... it doesn't make you more masculine or feminine, that's just personality. i'm sick of homosexuals being treated like they're different from everyone else, amongst themselves and amongst "normal" society. they're no more different than a heterosexual person in that they're a human being and every human being will vary.

i'm sick of "hot dyke cunt" being acceptable among men, but not "i'm gay."

because in the end, women are sex objects, and men are only men if they treat them as such.

right?

Mood: productive

Music: "Blue" -- Gackt (piano solo)

September 10th, 2001

yeah, yeah, yeah...

8:16PM

i'm on such an insanely short fuse.

i'm a selfish, lazy prick.

i'm a freak.

i hate myself.

i hate my family.

i don't understand why anyone can stand talking to me.

i know a lot of people have it worse off than me.

i still complain.

i'm watching myself fall apart all over again.

i don't care.

i have to hold myself together.

i am living on borrowed time.

i'm pathetic.

i'm worthless.

i'm a whiner.

i'm a crybaby.

i'm weak.

i'm stupid.

i burden people with my presence.

i worry too much.

i'm tired of everything.

i want to let go.

i'm selfish. i'm so selfish.

i want to kill myself because i'm curious.

i don't want to die.

i'm afraid.

i'm trapped.

i've trapped myself.

i'm lazy.

i can't handle it.

i'm done w/ bitching.

Mood: smallish

Music: "Anemone" -- L'arc~en~Ciel

September 11th, 2001

it's the end of the world as we
know it... and i feel
fiiiiiiiiine....

2:41PM

so i get online and i'm going to hash out this mood i'm in because obviously hearing about the Twin Towers disaster has got me severely shocked. i wouldn't say depressed, sad, or angry, because honestly... i don't know how to feel. i'm just in awe, in some kind of way. this doesn't happen in real life, this doesn't happen, this doesn't happen.

i'm scared to death.

just because it shakes my foundation. i'm in no particular fear of my life, or war, because it seems that it's an isolated terrorist event. all the kids are like, oh, what if it happens to us next? yes, that's fair paranoia, but i was sick of hearing it all day. Seattle has some big military bases nearby, but they're not as big as others on this coast.

anyway, back to my rant. i get home and some one instant messages me about it, asking me if i'd heard, although she said she didn't know how i couldn't have. i said that was true. i just wanted to write a small piece on this because i figured everyone will be beating it to death. just to let people know i'm ok. they talked about how sad it was, all the families broken. i don't know why, but i felt incredibly annoyed. all i'd heard about all day was this. i wanted to get ahold of Lexi, tell her i was ok, and go from there. i know it's terrible. and then they went on about how horrible it was and it was all Bush's fault.

now don't get me wrong. i never, EVER advocated Bush. but if we needed a president, it's now. hopefully he doesn't screw us up. but that just seemed like such an immature, uninformed way to react. and everyone's doing it. and they say there's going to be a war.

I DO NOT WANT TO HEAR THIS ANYMORE.

the minute our happy little window frame is shattered, we suddenly lose total faith in what we preach and pray every day? our allegiance to the flag of the United States of America is suddenly shattered because something like this happened? we no longer have faith that the people in power can take care of this in a peaceful way? although we've all seen the footage of the kids celebrating in Palestine, all i ever heard people commenting from the government was how they DO NOT condone this, and what a tragedy it was. i sincerely disbelieve it is a country-to-country war threat. these were TERRORISTS.

and hopefully it's an isolated act. if anything else happens, Olivia and i are moving to Canada to complete our education. somehow. we'll live outside the law.

i'm tired of it. this makes me angry, but more angry am i at the people surrounding it... my own people. before we had much information, everyone was STILL pointing fingers, saying it had to be the Middle East. now we have more reason to suspect particular terrorists from that area, but before we had no idea, and people just wanted some one to blame. i thought i was going to be beaten to death for suggesting that it might even have been Americans who did it. i HATE the human nature to just blame people.

it's awful, it's terrifying, and the deaths will probably be over 1,000 in the end... Mom was just telling me that there's a Korean Air that called in because they were being hijacked, and they've been escorted down to Whitehorse, Canada, by both American and Canadian fighters...

as far as i can tell, all we can do is mourn and respect those lost, pray, and stay calm. something big will come to light soon enough. we have to wait for the smoke to clear...

... then maybe i'll work on panicking.

Mood: pissed off

Music: "The Crystal Lake" - Grandaddy

what about action?

6:30PM

what about it? hm? what about going and kicking their brains? what about skinning them? what about "nuking the the motherfucking bastards, regardless"?

what about action?

yes, let's go cause more violence! i know i'm all for it!

Mood: a little drained & sarcastic

Music: "Yes Anastasia" — Tori Amos

September 28th, 2001

i love all of you, hurt by the
cold...

4:21PM

i'm not low, i'm up, i'm up touching the blue sky with my fingers. i'm going to
worry, i'm going to pray, but i'm also going to breathe.

Mood: wonderful

Music: "My Friends" — Red Hot Chili Peppers

October 5th, 2001

it's Lexi's birthday today!!!
everybody make sure to wish her
happy birthday and really
embarrass her! ^ _ ^ _ ^ _ ^

4:12PM

i love you, Lexi!!

anyway, i did my little English presentation that i was really worried about. the results were surprising. ^_^; i got more of "That was great, that was really brave" than i can count. it scared me.

shut up, SHUT UP! i HATE being called brave. i am NOT brave.

Mood: silly

Music: "Electric Cucumber" -- hide with Zilch

Girlfriends: Abigail, Kayla, and Lexi (pt. 1)

My propensity for disastrous relationships has reached a legendary status amongst my friends. I can't seem to stop meeting people online and taking them up on the offer to date, despite their wardrobes comprised of red flags and vocabularies full of toxic rhetoric. I wish I could say that I just don't know any better but with all the hope and despair of Sally in Cabaret, I say, "Maybe this time I'll be lucky," and I soldier on. I like the feeling of security of getting to know someone online. I pull the wool over my own eyes preemptively and fall in love with people before ever meeting them.

Dating in the 2000s was never going to be normal for me, especially since I only dated girls. I met my first ever girlfriend, Abigail, through my family friend Taylor (female). We were in ninth grade. Taylor and Abigail lived two hours away in Longview, so I saw her only sporadically. We sent each other e-mails through Hotmail.com and sent each other handwritten letters. We spoke in code due to a fear of being discovered. I was fine with her calling me her boyfriend, secretly it gave me a thrill I now know is called gender euphoria.

Around that same time, my friend Kayla and I had unprecedented amounts of sexual tension. Dumb and horny, we kissed a little bit. Kayla kissed me first, but I kissed her back before pulling away and reminding her I had a girlfriend. Kayla was angry with me, we had a fight, and I threw her under the bus when I told Abigail what happened. Surprisingly, we did not break up. Abigail and I rung in Y2K by making out at Taylor's house. Abigail later dumped me over fears that someone in her life would find out she was a lesbian.

Last I heard from Taylor, Abigail is happily married to a woman.

Kayla and I had a fraught relationship. We were part of the same friend group, but she was hyperactive and often self-centered and socially inept, so many of our friends didn't like her as much as they did me. She was also strangely competitive with me, rushing to compare anything I was doing to whatever she was doing. She was also from a rich, stifling family.

It's because of Kayla I really learned the difference between upper and middle-class. Kayla grew up in a hideous 1980s mansion with a view of Puget Sound. She had a pool in her yard, and a shed in the back where her father kept several boats. Every bedroom aside from the master suite was the size of a shoebox. I suppose this is how rich people in the eighties thought of their children: "They'll be fine in a small bedroom. I need a room with a view and a living room with a vaulted ceiling connected to a weird loft." The floors were covered in cream carpeting. I have never wanted to intentionally spill a glass of grape juice more.

Kayla was obsessed with the fear of losing money and becoming homeless. I heard similarly from my friends who were actually in poverty, which made it all the more baffling. I, who grew up comfortably, could not understand how her parents could fight so often about money. If something happened, couldn't her father just sell his boats? Didn't they have family they could stay with until they got on their feet?

Kayla and I dated for awhile after Abigail dumped me. I don't recall how it started. It felt like a natural progression from stealing kisses. It was mostly a secret thing. Her mother always wanted a girly girl. She thought I would be a good influence, which was hilarious. She all but bribed me to spend time with Kayla at times. She even took me along on a vacation the Disneyland over spring break in eighth grade.

Perhaps because of her mother's hopes for me, I always felt like a sinner when I kissed Kayla. I was filled with teenage lust, but the closeness made me panic. I'd been shy with Abigail, too. I felt disgusted at the particulars of physical arousal.

I think I broke up with Kayla because I didn't want to wake up early to attend her dressage competitions. I am not a morning person and I'm deathly allergic to horses. I think Kayla broke up with me because I wasn't ready for sex and because I didn't have a car to take her places. She dated my cousin Phil instead, because he had a car. She broke up with him, too, but they married in their thirties. I like to tell people this story even though I don't know the particulars. I'm not actually angry about it, it's just funny. Mostly because I am such a mess.

I had been dating Lexi ("Lexilex") for a short time when I started my journal in 2001. I met Lexi in an html-based roleplaying chatroom. We would make up characters with stolen anime art or pictures of androgynous j-rockers for avatars and write stories about them together. This is how I met several of my most frequent commenters in my journal. Lexi and I liked to play out male/male romances complete with sex. I was 15 and she was 19, or around that. Lexi was also a lesbian, but she 'figured out' I was not the boy I was 'pretending' to be online. She seemed alright with my online persona, but often belittled my trans confusion as a betrayal to the patriarchy.

The little wrinkle of her being a lesbian dating a younger "boy" became a point of obsession to her ex-girlfriend and her friends. Out of "concern" that I was dating Lexi at all, they forcibly outed me and shamed me for lying about my gender, but also warned me to stay away from Lexi. Lexi did not really defend me. She also did not like that I was trans.

I remember our relationship as desperate and miserable. I felt like I was constantly waiting for her mood to be good enough to even bother talking to me.

October 9th, 2001

i must live.

2:38PM

fear is a school of self, a discipline we force ourselves from. there are bars on the window, at this school.

you can leave this school in two ways. graduate, or die.

i will not be a hostage at this school.

i must live.

Mood: someday i'll get there

Music: "A Man of Constant Sorrow" -- Soggy Bottom Boys

October 11th, 2001

...murder, maim, kill, etc.

4:11PM

it is not hard for me to imagine that if we transported all of the kids at the pep assembly to a desert island that they wouldn't soon be wearing loincloths and sporting sharpened sticks yelling "KILL THE BEAST SLIT ITS THROAT SPILL ITS BLOOD" instead of "JUNIOR POWER" and "SENIOR POWER". God, pep assemblies are just such a headache.

Mood: sinus headache

Music: "Don't Let it Bring You Down" — Annie Lennox (cover)

November 2nd, 2001

wherever you go... there you are.

3:16PM

Jeff and Michael, guys i've known since elementary, were teasing this girl Harmony, whom i've also known since elementary... basically they were saying how could she hate on smoking weed if she'd never done it, that wasn't fair.

i pointed out that they say, "oh that's so GAY" all the time, but how could they hate on it if they'd never "tried it"?

they had to admit they were stuck. ^_^

anyway, it's the weekend. *stretches* that week went quickly.

Mood: calm

Music: "Du Yi Wu Er" -- Sammi Cheng

November 22nd, 2001

my favorite, i think, is the
yams...

4:53PM

so my Opa says, "You realize, this is the greatest country in the world. I have been all over the world, and this is the place where we settle. Not many other place have this kind of... of... oppurtunity."

i didn't realize that my great grandmother on my Mom's side was Porteguese. or that we owned the Bible that is the record of her and my great-grandfather's marriage. they were married in 1918... can you imagine?

Mood: relaxed

Music: "Bad Day" - Fuel

November 23rd, 2001

when i die.

1:36AM

i think more than anything, i'm afraid the time will come when there are simply no more words to write. some days i think it's fast approaching.

Mood: guilty

Music: "The Headless Waltz" - Voltaire

December 1st, 2001

an addition:

6:07PM

in my dream, i had to take an elevator to look inside the heart. it was an oval-shaped room around a smaller room, that was sealed away. the outside room was pink and red, with many screens and video games, illustrating how mechanical and petty so-called emotions were. in order to get to the center i had to out riddle something that was a cross between Mr. Freeze, Robbie the Robot, and a pig. when i went in, the door locked behind me. and i was trapped rowing a gondola across an endless, motionless sea. it was pitch black, and raining hard and cold. i couldn't stop, and i couldn't leave.

Mood: sad

Music: "The Sun is Burning" -- Simon & Garfunkel

December 30th, 2001

perverted grandfathers, and other horrors.

1:36PM

it makes me really, really uncomfortable to know my grandfather-of-step looks up teen sex pages on the internet. he does a pretty good job of hiding it usually, but last time i was over here Phil (my cuz) found incest sex vids on the hard drive. since then i'm guessing he spent more time hiding everything... and... umm... there are gross stains on this chair... *shiver* God, i just hope i'm wrong at what they are.

Mood: dirty

Music: "The New Wild West" - Jewel

Grandpa Bob

One of the things I secretly sought to find in these journals was evidence of my step-grandfather's abuse.

It started when I was four.

I wanted to see if I drew a veil over it. I knew something was wrong. I felt it. I knew I didn't like how he spoke to me, and I knew I didn't like being left alone with him.

I don't like horror movies or murder mysteries. I don't like the part where something bad is going to happen and you don't know who's going to do it. That perpetual dread is torture to me. It's how I felt at my grandmother's house, being trapped alone with her husband. It's how I felt when she asked me to wait in their bed.

Something waiting in the dark, for me to be alone.

Something was waiting, but I didn't know what it was yet.

It would take a lot of time. Time beyond the years chronicled in this project.

I couldn't let myself know it. Couldn't remember those nights or the horrible silence of that house. I was terrified even in daylight. My family complained about my attitude.

Grandpa Bob died in 2006 or so. My maternal grandmother lingered long after I stopped speaking to her. She lost her memory to dementia. She got to forget her complicity. This grief and anger, like so much of my grief and anger, is mine alone to bear. There is a struggle I have in this project, which is that truth and emotion are not the same thing as certainty and precision. I have, blessedly, forgotten huge swaths of the sexual abuse I experienced in my life, from Grandpa Bob to Simon to being randomly groped by a 19-year-old at a church dance when I was 14. It is common for a young mind to gloss over, to intentionally forget, so smooth over gaps.

Here, though, is the faint outline. A shadow of ash where the first bombs went off.

Journals and Reflections: 2002

Internet Sad Boi Song of the Year:

“Macy’s Day Parade” by Green Day

January 1st, 2002

Best/Worst

12:51AM

Best Times of the year

- Lexitimes.
- Japantimes.

Worst Times of the year

- deathtimes
- crueltimes
- abusedtimes
- mourningtimes
- lonelytimes

Resolution(s)

- not to have a resolution
- to better myself as much as i can.

Mood: tipsy

Music: Cowboy Bebop Music for Freelance

January 18th, 2002

Loss...

8:43AM

one of my best childhood friends, Jack, is dead. we got a call this morning, he died in a motorcycle accident. my Mom was sobbing hysterically, and i felt a little angry: he'd been *my* best friend, after all. but it seemed so petty.

lil bro was the one who told me, though. i'd been getting ready for school in the bathroom, and i just knew it was something bad because we don't usually get calls this early, and she said "OH MY GOD..." and... i just knew something bad had happened. lil bro told me...

"Jack? Jack's dead?"

"Yeah."

"Shit!"

i haven't really said anything much since. it doesn't seem real... it doesn't seem *fair*. now i'm not so naive to believe that Death is fair... but... why him, why now? he was finally getting his life together, he had a job and was going to school and had made amends to his family... why didn't i die, i'm the one who's screwed of their life, the one who is so uncertain right now?? why did he have to die, after he'd already put his family through so much heartache?

the last solid memory i have of him is him showing me how to play Diablo2 on his computer... so when we came over to visit his family he could blow us off to be w/ his girlfriend. i didn't get a chance to see him when he'd pulled his life together...

he was my best friend from grade 2 to about grade 6, when he started going to a private school. he wasn't like the other boys on the street-- he didn't tell me i had to be Vicky when we played Batman or April when we played Ninja Turtles because i was a girl, he didn't ask me to take off my clothes when we played doctor...

basically, i thought he was the greatest. in fact, most of the time i would get to be the hero prince, while he'd be the strong princess type in our little games. all those afternoons we owned... the stories and games... i'll never be able to reminisce over them w/ him now... i have to keep them alone now, i'm the only one who remembers...

i realize now why it's so essential i believe in a forgiving, loving God: the idea that he's gone breaks my heart. if i thought like i once did, that Death was just blackness and emptiness... i would lie down and never get up. he was only a year older than me... that's how crazy this is. in reality these tears are for myself, Jack's suffering is over. but i just can't believe it. i don't want to believe he's gone and it's likely i'll never speak to him again. this happened so suddenly.

i've recently started to learn how important it is to let everyone know how much you care for them. i try to be open in my dear love of my friends, it's much more difficult to communicate w/ my family members...

but...

i guess there will always be that one person you'll miss. honestly, it'll probably be more difficult dealing w/ my Mom's crazy grief process than it will dealing w/ my own. when my Uncle died at least we were expecting it... and then too, i felt so confused, my parents just fell apart so badly.

but... for God's sake... he was my best friend for so long...

what gave anyone the right to take him away? i know consciously that life is not fair. like i said, i'm not stupid. but... i can't help it... i'm just so angry, sad, and confused right now.

Mood: sad

Music: "Endless Rain" -- X Japan

January 22nd, 2002

give me something that i need,
satisfaction guaranteed.

7:58PM

you can learn a lot from TV.

for instance, there's a Confederate Memorial Day. *cough* South Carolina, get yourself UN-hicked quick, or maybe we'll let you secede after all. we're not so financially dependant on your slaves now! i mean, why not just call it Big Dumb Cracker Day? i can't believe that a man in office is trying to get it more seriously celebrated... 'we deserve our rights', says he! well why the Hell not? after all, according to him, his ancestors did the African Americans a favor!

anyway, what REALLY concerned me, was what am i going to do if i wear these Superthen Kotex Panty Liners and i don't *want* become the boy magnet i always knew i could be? i mean, the whole idea makes me kind of uncomfortable!

Mood: smile till it hurts.

Music: "Macy's Day Parade" -- Green Day

January 23rd, 2002

argh.

1:06AM

i can't write a damned thing. what am i supposed to say? Jack is dead. long live Jack.

Mood: unreasonable

Music: "These R the Thoughts" -- Alanis Morissette

meat and chemicals.

8:24PM

Christian funerals are masochistic.

Mood: spiritually & emotionally dead

Music: "The Drugs Don't Work" -- The Verve

Jack

On January 22nd, 2022, Magdalene Visaggio tweeted,

“Kurt Cobain was a trans girl. she is ours now. we will not be returning her.”

I never really identified with Kurt Cobain. I did grow up listening to a ton of Nirvana, as was my god-given right as alt kid from the Pacific Northwest. People associate the 00s with the glossy artifice of Max Martin, but there were plenty of kids who still listened to grunge. Nu metal was starting to happen. Marilyn Manson, unfortunately, was starting to happen. I didn't like nu metal as much as grunge or the German metal my friend Henry got me into. Papa Roach and Limp Bizkit just seemed like frat boys who wanted to yell about hating their lives or hating women. It seemed like a violent “no homo” to the quiet seething of the grunge era, much like low-rise jeans and brightly colored PVC seemed like an eyeroll at thrifted T-shirts and flannel. Boys in backwards baseball caps called Kurt Cobain a whiner. Marilyn Manson was for guys who called David Bowie a faggot. Like my pretentious predecessors in the 80s and 90s, as a youth, I was deeply sure that music was moving in the wrong direction.

Nu metal and Marilyn Manson were what people thought you were into if you were an outcast that wore thrifted clothes, so perhaps that's some of my bitterness about their rise. I was more obsessed with Japanese rock, or jrock, and the fabulous gothic glamour of its visual kei scene. When it came to the pick of self-destructive artists, the mysterious ‘accidental’ hanging death of hide, guitarist of X Japan, captured my imagination more. The vocalist of Dir en grey, Kyo, was another I idolized for his dark lyrics and gruesome theatricality, which included displays of self-harm.

I liked the idea of Kurt Cobain, though. I had several friends very similar to him: quiet, justifiably angry at our bullshit world, broken home, kinda greasy and smelly, druggies, moments away from getting shoved into a locker. My friends all kind of thought Kurt was cool, too, like that Filter song: “Hey Man, Nice Shot.” Like he put his money where his mouth was. We wouldn't do the same, but we respected it. We made ugly jokes about it. When his aunt, Mari Earl, came to sing an acoustic song to us about how we should just reach out if we're sad, we all thought she was kind of a dipstick.

The hero worship of Kurt Cobain was very alive and well in Seattle in the 00s, though, and by the time my friends and I were in college, we felt the harping on his legacy was selling him out retroactively. Kurt was over, it seemed to be his fondest wish to just be allowed to rest, and nobody seemed to want that for him. It makes me a little sick to my stomach to think that the fame he so hated is enshrined forever. He could've just faded into obscurity and embarrassing irrelevance like so many of his living peers. I think he would've enjoyed that.

Was Kurt Cobain a closeted trans woman? That just seems like an idea that escaped its proper containment. It wasn't a question *I'm* meant to ask or take any meaning from. Unfortunately for Visaggio, we queers cannot just say weird shit to each other and our small

count of followers without causing a controversy. Anything you say on Twitter (now X) might as well have been mailed with rainbow stickers to the front porch of a transphobe. The same kind of people Kurt complained about in his journals pretended they cared about him and were insulted on his behalf. As if being trans is an insult.

I hear a lot these days that it's against queer etiquette to assume someone's gender or sexuality from outside observation alone. Even if you can "totally tell" someone is queer, aside from politely and supportively offering them the idea as a peer or mentor, best practice is that it's not your place to make assumptions. Unless you're fucking them and they're being weird about it, I suppose. It is also considered especially rude and invasive to do this to living celebrities – folks have been forcibly outed due to weird social media speculations and accusations of authenticity or inauthenticity. Personally, I don't think Kurt would have been insulted to be considered within the group of trans women no matter what the truth was. To live a transsexual truth is to live in rebellion, after all. Kurt wore dresses and was friends with RuPaul. But we cannot know how he felt, only how the people around him might feel now. We don't know his heart. He made sure of that in the end.

That's part of the whole mess, too, I'm sure. Kurt didn't make it. And to be honest, that's the part I dislike the most. Do we need to baptize the dead into our ranks like the Mormon church? What need does this assuage? Is it all just because Kurt committed suicide? Who knows what middle-aged, graying gen Xers are still alive in the closet. Hell, who cares about the people who came out? Who cares about the living but un-famous trans folks who came out and survived? That would move these discussions outside of the realm of theory, and to a bigot, we all only exist in theory – in their nightmares.

Is it disrespectful to try and understand the secrets of the dead? Legacy is not a static thing, nor is it entirely informed by truth and reality. Speculation is always part of someone who's raised into the pop culture canon, especially if the ascension was spurred by a death at peak relevance. So, let me reword my thoughts until I'm truthful about what's bothering me. Is it wrong to speculate on the hearts of the dead? What about ordinary people? Is it wrong then?

Are the feelings of the dead completely unknown to us? Is it wrong to speculate if they are still within living memory? Is such a feeling something that can be agreed or disagreed with?

Is it wrong to believe something about the dead because they never told us? Is imagined potential a disrespect?

I think my friend Jack was actually a trans girl.

Jack moved in across the street when I was six or seven. He was a year older than me. We played a lot. He loved books about dragons. He had a creepy Teddy Ruxpin doll that he used to play The Judds. He had a poster of The Judds on his wall. Within minutes of meeting him, I learned The Judds had broken up and this was very upsetting for him. I never listened to The Judds.

When we played X-Men, I was Gambit, and he was Rogue. When we played pretend, he wanted to be the princess Rapunzel, and I played the prince. Jack told me we couldn't ever tell his mom. I knew instinctively that this was true. We hid out under his bed frame, giggling and whispering to each other and joking about whether or not we might kiss. It only ever made sense to talk about kissing when he was the princess and I was the prince. It was not something we were really interested in. We only liked kissing in theory. When we did our yearly Christmas play at church, we confided in each other that we wished to swap parts. Son-to-mother, mother-to-son.

When I picture Jack, I picture that giddy, girlish joy of playing princess. I picture freckles. And I picture him climbing the box elder tree in my front yard. I couldn't manage to lift myself onto the lowest branch, and I was afraid to try, besides. Jack climbed higher than the power lines. Now when I picture Jack, it is in that tree, sun lighting his face, nearly out of reach.

Instead of entering public junior high, Jack went to Seattle Christian. He bragged about it, but it sounded very boring. He got a bit sanctimonious about all the Bible stories he was learning. I was confused. I thought we learned plenty at church already. That was how things began to drift apart. I'm pretty sure I never came out to him. Eventually, he moved away to Chehalis. His parents seemed to think that a small-town life would be an excellent influence. Jack, of course, found pot and alcohol and sex to get into. He got a motorcycle and a leather jacket and got in trouble with the law for smoking pot at a party or some other bullshit that small town cops with nothing better to do pin on kids. It all seemed rather pedestrian to me, but his parents were scandalized. He shouted, he argued, their sweet little Christian boy was long gone.

Small towns loom large in the imagination of white Christian conservatives as utopias where their children will never learn bad habits. No thought to the boredom. No thought how the unburned energy might result in disobedience. As a young adult, I was bitter about what happened to Jack. If only he hadn't moved away, he would've gotten on the debate team or choir or joined the collectable gaming club. It wouldn't have turned out that way. He wouldn't have needed to rebel.

He was getting his life together properly. He was going to become a marine, like his stepdad. He was coming home for curfew.

He was speeding home to curfew on his motorcycle.

He was speeding home to curfew on his motorcycle and there was sand on the road that made it slippery.

He was speeding home to meet his curfew and his life was quickly stopped by a telephone pole.

That's not what's supposed to happen to princesses. Princes are supposed to protect them.

They held his funeral in the auditorium of his high school. It was open casket. He'd slammed his whole fucking face into a telephone pole. Now he looked like he was sleeping. The marines gave him a flag and a military send-off, though he hadn't started basic training yet.

The artifice of these rituals still disgust me. This memory sits in my bile ducts. Recounting it yanks a sour taste up through my throat. The putridity of vomit lingers on my tongue and nose.

I saw his dead body and it was just... nothing. They sculpted up a big sack of empty meat and stuck it in a carved white box for everyone to cry over.

We weren't really friends at the end. I didn't really know the person that Jack turned into over the last few years. He turned into a boy with a scowl who laughed about running over a pigeon. His death was hardly the first betrayal I felt. As an adult I can rationalize it – people just grow apart. I grow apart from people all the time.

As I watched his girlfriend cry over him – I think they'd even exchanged purity rings – I thought, I wonder if she knew he liked to play princesses. I wonder if anyone knew, or if I'm the only one.

To this day, I wonder if his hyper-masculine posturing was all in service of silencing the sweet, girlish princess I knew existed inside of him. It's almost a cliché, the woman who tried to be the manliest man to ever man until she realized that she couldn't anymore.

When someone young dies, you start making up equations in your head about that person's potential. As if they were a battery full of unspent energy thrown into the trash prematurely. The potential lays dormant, fresh in its plastic packaging, and spoils in place. The tragedy does not just become the loss of that person, who they were when they died and how the absence of that person will hurt the people who loved them, but those vanished years of potential. Bursting with sentimental longing, we imagine a perfect life, rushing to fill in empty corners with golden light. That person would have only used their potential for the good things we imagined for them. Flourishing careers, marriages, families.

This romanticized potential is also why cis people typically have a hard time when their more interesting relatives come out. They have a period of mourning over the imagined cis and heterosexual potential. They mourn not the reality of that person, who will continue to live and generally be happier, but their own self-dreamt illusions for that person. It is cruelty and ego wrapped up in a white tablecloth.

So, it feels a little strange to try and project a future onto my friend. I could say, “He had his whole life ahead of him,” but that is an obvious fucking lie. He didn’t have his whole life ahead of him. He had a life and it came to its end.

It’s probably self-indulgent to imagine a future in which my friend lived, came out as trans, and had a radical, geeky life. It’s self-indulgent to imagine we would have become friends again. It’s self-indulgent to imagine Kurt Cobain in some kind of Sisyphean happiness, living in a world that seemed committed to misunderstanding him and his art, in a world that always demanded more from him. It’s self-indulgent to imagine the dead still alive.

Kurt Cobain probably would’ve overdosed on heroin by now.

And Jack might’ve died in Iraq.

February 17th, 2002

greetings from Canada!

2:35PM

well, i wanted everyone to know, i got to Lexi's house ok. i mean, other than my flight being delayed 2 1/2 hrs, and getting crap at customs because i brought some coffee as a gift for her Mom. it wasn't really so bad. i'm here!

Devon really is a magical place, where there's snow on the ground, nothing but flat land all around, and there's an overabundance of red meat.

and well... the other stuff, you don't really need to know about. about. ha.

so far her folks seem nice, IE i haven't scared them so badly either of them need to be hospitalized. her brother ignores me. 's all good.

anywayz, just got done watching the Dir en Grey DVD that Lexi has. *drool* Kyo is my hero. i love it when he barfs ramen and fake blood during concerts. how admirable!

we talked about how much we loved this or that outfit, now i want to go out and buy spikey clothes and cool make up and get piercings, just because DeG is my favorite!!!

i think we're going out to a nice place for dinner, except that it's supper according to Lexi. things are just positively wonderful on this end, even though i left some of my Canadian money, my toothbrush, and PS memory card at hom. i couldn't be happier! except maybe if i were here for longer than a week.

or such huge trips weren't necessary...

Mood: loved

Music: "Macabre" -- Dir en Grey

March 26th, 2002

you have the right to remain
ignorant.

6:05PM

who's brilliant idea was it to ban non-rated and rated R movies in the Highschool?

well, i could say who, but i don't want this to be a rant about stupid white fundamentalist Protestant cowboy-hat wearing people. Dean says those types put their names on their belt buckle upside-down so they can look down and say HOLY SHIT THATS MY NAME...

no one's doing us any favors by trying to keep the real world away from us just because they personally find it offensive. what are they worried about? high school, as i see it, would be band from many nations. and so would that Holy Bible that they thump so ecstatically. except this country i think because we pretend to believe in freedom of expression as we stick our American flag stickers to our cars and say "United We Stand."

it's funny, i thought i came to school to learn.

every day, i'm proved more and more wrong.

Mood: angry

Music: "HURRY GO ROUND" -- hide with Spread Beaver

April 9th, 2002

who and what will be missed, really?

8:46PM

i'm just thinking about how i didn't tell Simon that my old cat, Callie, passed away last June. i don't think i even wrote about her in my journal. it was very sad. she couldn't walk around, she just laid there and meowed in the end. i'd grown up w/ her... it was really, really sad. i didn't feel much about it... except that kind of detachment: this is really sad. something that i've loved all my life is going away. that was back, i think, before i remembered how to cry.

i didn't tell Simon that Jack died either. he says i'm one of his best friends, but i don't tell him things. i don't know why i keep up this journal, i guess as a public record that i do in fact exist, and feel things. i'm not sure i really want people to know about me. i'm not sure i want anyone to know me at all.

i want people to love me. i want to be on the CD that people all over can put on and sing along w/, i want to be the story everyone knows by heart, it's not love that i want, so much as to be known. it's a weirdly conflicting desire. i want some one to hear my message, without having to know who i was, or thinking i was weak.

all i can really do is be a good person and live the life i've set up for myself. i'm not a crusader, i'm not a musician or a writer or anything at all that much. if i'm lucky, maybe i'll go down in a few people's personal history as a good person. maybe.

Mood: tired

Music: "Macy's Day Parade" -- Green Day

Simon

Let's start with how it ended.

I deleted the conversation. I've checked many times over the years, but I can't find the exact post where it all went down. That follows how our history played out. I can't find evidence any of it happened at all. I remember some things clearly, but they're the wrong things.

It would have been spring 2004 or so.

The main players were me: you know me. At least you know what I've told you so far.

Simon, a nerd who rented a basement (no joke) while he attended the University of Washington. I believe he was 19 when we met, or a little older. He held LAN parties in his basement – networking a bunch of computers together so everyone could play shooters together. These parties long into the night, and so I slept over once or twice. One of those times, he raped me.

I did not remember it for a long time. Then I remembered in great detail.

Simon, with curly honey hair in a puff. Pale blue eyes with very long lashes, almost as pretty as a girl's. Simon, who dragged us out in the middle of the night to walk to the UW campus to see the cherry blossoms. Simon, who made me feel important because I was cool enough to have an adult friend. Simon, whom I thought relentlessly cool for being into the same things I liked.

Simon, who:

Stared down the cleavage of a video game cosplayer, then bent down to sniff the chair she sat on after she left. "She was on her period; she left a stain."

Looked to me for lewd approval when it did that.

Sent me his personal collection of pornographic incest comics.

Sent me gravure pics – Japanese idols in bikinis, sixteen and older.

Gave me gifts included figurines of harem anime girls in junior high.

Unzipped my sleeping bag.

Covered my mouth.

Told me to stay alive, because life gets better after high school.

Gave me his old computer and always helped me fix it.

Always had the latest anime pirated with fan-subtitles.

Burned me mix CDs of anime music.

Took me years to shake off.

Simon, the:

Mansplainer before that was the word.

Groomer.

Rapist.

Simon who probably only committed a crime of convenience.

The way that it ended was me posting something like this:

I posted something like: *While I've been reading up on sexual abuse, I found out that child porn was legal until the 70s. Sickening!*

He wrote something like, "But the laws were too vague. Much of the art banned was very artistic. It's attack on freedom of speech. Pictures of naked children aren't necessarily pornographic, and it probably got a lot of people in trouble. And there have been plenty of issues with people getting in trouble just for artistic pictures!"

So I replied something like: *But it's porn if pedophiles are getting off on it.*

And Simon wrote back: "To be attracted to a girl under the age of 18 is not technically pedophilia. Some men are not attracted to children, but they like young teenage women. The word for this is ephhebophilia. It is a perfectly natural thing."

I have no memory of words after that, just white-hot anger surging through my veins, igniting my cells to my fingertips. The rage burned every kind sentiment I ever had toward him out of my body. I had no words left for him. Only fire. Does it really matter what I said in that moment? I called him gross and blocked him.

On the internet, friendships end like the period at the end of a sentence.

On that walk with Simon and his friends in the middle of the night to look at the cherry blossoms on campus. My legs burned. His eyes so pale under the copper of street lamps. It was beautiful, but it was damp and cold, and I was annoyed because I said I didn't want to go but everyone made me come with them. Simon kept trying to say insightful things to me, but mostly I remember his pale eyes. We went to a restaurant afterward. Me, never with enough cash. Simon, thoughtfully treating me. I don't remember the food. Diner food, probably. Simon was 21, I think. Simon got a beer.

That scummy little basement with a mattress with no bed frame. The dingy curtains. Rectangles of dusty burnt orange in the early morning. The scroll of the anime girl in a yellow dress. Look at Asuka in the yellow dress, don't look at what was happening. It's stupid, it's all stupid. Simon loved the scene where Asuka gets tortured by alien monsters while she's trapped in

her giant robot. He called it mind rape. He loved the scene where she goes catatonic, laying in an empty bathtub in the wreckage of a world killed by men who never cared about her.

Simon, groping me on my way out of the bathroom at a party. Simon, who came on a family trip to the beach when Phil couldn't make it.

Simon, I don't really remember his friendship. He posted a lot of comments to my LiveJournal. I deleted all of our instant messages. He told me to stop cutting. He told me I wasn't a lesbian. He told me I wasn't a trans man. I'm not sure why. Did he think he wouldn't have succeeded in fucking me if I was those things?

I used to think he was so cool. I used to really want him to think I was cool. Every comment left in my LiveJournal was so cheerful. So belittling. When I was angry with my mother, he told me to understand her. When I was upset, he told me I'd outgrow it – just like Lexi. When I got something a little bit wrong, he wrote a long correction. He also spoke and thought in paragraphs. Maybe that was the connection.

This world is full of parasites. They feed on whatever oxygen is left when you suck in a sharp breath of concern. They see the filthy stains left behind by their vulgar acts and sit in the center, stinking of old blood and jizz. They smile at you and dare you to do anything about it. They smile the same way they did when they ripped your tongue out.

I hate them for making me into something as banal as a victim of rape. One of nameless sobbing masses. If it happened just one time, I could write it on a page and flip past it. I could write out the scene just once. I could reference it rarely. I could joke about it defining me, a la Tori Amos, "I've got my rape hat on, honey, but I always could accessorize."

But it didn't happen just once.

My cousin Phil had a falling out with Simon a year or two later after I did. Simon bragged about going to Japan to pick up schoolgirls for compensated dating. That's slang for prostitution. Phil kicked him out of the car and forced him to walk home. This was how Phil told the story, at least. I wonder sometimes what they talked about leading up to that incident.

I wonder if they talked about me.

April 28th, 2002

con stuff.

1:20PM

well, i had a good time at the anime con. i'm a little tired. met some great fangirls, and some awesome CosPlayers. there was this really sweet guy dressed up in the most amazing Mana (Malice Mizer) costume i've ever seen, and he sewed it himself! he was having wig issues so he ran off during the dance (i danced w/ him rather than GF... but well, if Lexi and Dross don't LIKE Jpop, they can certainly stand around and talk about how everyone sucks if they want, i love them anyway...) and then we all had to go before they came back and Simon said he saw him and his friends leave... i hope they didn't and that Simon got his e-mail to me, he was really sweet and lives nearby and i'd like to talk to him again. i would've asked him into doing the Dir en grey cosplay we're all talking about next year, but Lexilex already got supremely pissed at asking a Toshiya CosPlayer if they were interested. i forgot that even at a convention w/ people w/ similar interests as me that i'm still supposed to be exclusive and unfriendly. silly me.

watched the bootleg Pierrot DVD Lexilex bought at the Jrock stand. all i got was a hide plushie but i was happy, Lexilex bought it for me just like it was promised. fell asleep because i spent a good few hours dancing hard w/ Mana-boy. felt cranky and lame when i got home. took a shower and tried to relax while they watched Pierrot and still felt cranky and lame. in fact, i still feel cranky and lame... hopefully we can go out today...

Mood: cranky and lame

Music: "NEW DAYS DAWN" - Hyde

May 2nd, 2002

and suddenly you find ten years have gone...

3:53 PM

um, um, um. i was going to post one of the songs i'd written recently, the one about Audrey the doll or the one about the women who killed her children or the one i wrote today about sleeping w/ some one you hate.

and i miss Lexi. and i miss Dross. and i miss myself when i was normal. i wonder why suicide got to be such a part of me, why i never really shook it when i said i did, why i let myself down, why i let everyone else down. i wonder if immortality is being made into a plush doll to be carted around by some homo who's friends like to toss you around and let you wear their spiked bracelets as collars...

i wish... fuck, i wish i had something useful to say. i wish all the times i ever tried to say something that something useful had come out, that i'd never opened my mouth or worried about anything, that i never fucked my own despair on a bed of misery, that i had to be jealous of some one who was dead because he'll always be loved... and maybe he doesn't doubt himself anymore.

this morning i was thinking about Jack. it's his birthday in about a week i think. he'd have been 19 or 20... and i'm just thinking, why did he die? why wasn't it me, who wanted to die for so long? why did he have to be the one to die? he had a life. he had things going for him. all i have are dreams and wishes that i'm afraid of fulfilling, and friends that i don't really deserve. i'm an innocent who pretends to be ugly. i'm nothing.

*the day is done
the song is over
thought i had something more to say...*

Mood: temporarily insane. :b

Music: "Time" -- Pink Floyd

Girlfriends: Lexi (pt. 2)

Right around the time I first went to visit Lexi, she began to obsess over a friend of ours, an agoraphobe from Oklahoma who went by the name of Dross. Dross was thirty, or nearly so, enough that it seemed a little odd she would take a Greyhound to come hang out at an anime convention with a 17 and 21-year-old. Lexi's condescension was amplified by Dross. She and Dross were the type who rolled their eyes about everything. And yet they also complained about me and my attitude, calling me "a black hole of negativity." The term stuck with me so much I used it as a tag to sort out depression-related posts even years later.

July 8th, 2002

(no subject)

2:52PM

my Dad uses a detached voice when leaving a message on his father's machine.

i told my Mom i'd rather have my teeth pulled than go help my Dad and his look for computer parts, and i meant it.

i didn't realize he was around. it must have really hurt my Dad to have such a prick for a father.

Mood: weird

Music: "Undecided" -- Dir en grey

Family

My father is the fourth child in a family of six. A twin brother and sister and a golden boy ahead of him, his younger sister and one more surprise son after him. For me, five aunts and uncles, ten cousins. I don't expect anyone to keep track of all of them. To be honest, once adulthood hit, I was glad to drift free of their bullshit. Every family Christmas was marked by a fight between my parents forty minutes before departing to see them.

Dad's father, Chuck, did not like outsiders. Anyone who married into the family was an outsider. It was probably a particular betrayal that my dad and his sisters married nonwhite people, though I am not sure he ever directly stated such. Then again, I cannot really recall Grandpa Chuck saying anything directly. I can remember being told not to expect him to come to dance recitals. I cannot really recall any words he said to me. I can recall a halting, forced-sounding voice. Though he had five kids, speaking to children did not seem to come naturally to him.

What I recalled most about him on his deathbed was that he occasionally sent me checks or bonds for my birthday and did not know how to spell my given name. I was in my twenties, already glad to be drifting free of the broken family he led with such ineptitude. I looked at him, frail and eaten alive by prostate cancer, and could only think to thank him for the checks. The weight of the tragedy in that room was not so much the cancer as it was all the wasted possibility. When he died, I wondered why he never bothered to know me. He died on my mother's birthday. A decade later and she has not forgiven him for this.

The specter of masculinity cast a shadow over every man in my family. Though I never colored in the lines of girlhood, that shadow seemed to fall over less of me.

I grew up close to my cousin Phil despite the fact he was straight. He was perhaps the most annoying kind of straight, which is rigidly traveling in a straight line. Kind and loyal and respectful, but god forbid you ask for a squiggle. A promise is a promise is a promise. To a male friend, to "blood." This sort of stubborn loyalty was the reason I cut ties. It wasn't because of Kayla. It wasn't even because he's the reason I met and stayed connected to Simon.

My grandmother understandably divorced Chuck in the seventies. Less understandably, she married my step-grandfather. Grandpa Bob blew through her retirement funds betting on online poker. He was also a pedophile.

When I asked Phil why he was helping Grandpa Bob move back to Washington, he said, "He's blood, I have to help." I pointed out that as a step-grandfather, he was not in fact, blood. Even Phil's own mother didn't want Bob in our grandmother's life after he ruined her financially. Phil insisted, "I promised I would help." When I asked how he could help Bob after he raped and molested me, he said, "I have to keep my promises. I hope you can get your mental health sorted out."

So many people grow up trying not to be their fathers. Phil was trying not to be his father through his loyalty. My father was trying not to be his father when he grew his hair long, learned empathy, and fell in love with an Indo immigrant. Amongst my father and his brothers, my father has a reputation of being the only one to take the correct lesson from Grandpa Chuck.

One of my aunts told me, while I was trapped in her passenger's seat, "Your mom got the good brother." She actually told me this on two separate occasions.

What kind of desperation led my aunt to say that to her niece-shaped thing? Strange and unwarranted, but I couldn't disagree. My father and his brothers live in the shadow of their mediocre father. We, the grandchildren, suffered more from his indifference, and the presence of Grandpa Bob.

My extended family aren't overtly bigoted (aside from the one that screamed at me at a wedding), not all horrendously abusive (aside from the one who was arrested for domestic violence), not noticeably racist (aside from being part of racist religious institutions and disrespecting the nonwhite family members), yet still, little by little, I floated away from them. I would like to say everyone is happy with this arrangement, but I don't know if they are. I don't care. My mother used to hate me for being such an inconvenience. It's taken her decades to overcome her desire to martyr herself for these uncommunicative white people. I have no desire to be that way. It's easier to be selfish.

I came to the same conclusion about my mother's side of the family after her parents passed. My mother gets sharp and defensive when I mention it: her sister's family are all Trump voters, somehow. I'm fine with being the asshole who makes her explain that I coincidentally always happen to be busy every time a family gathering happens.

After all, we queer people force such unpleasant decisions on our families, such as:

A comfortable system of values they've never much examined vs... a queer deviant.

Keeping the peace... vs valiantly exposing the queer deviant's readiness to fight

Concerns new social problem your pastor just warned you about (trans women ruining sports, trans women ruining bathrooms, confused women ruining their bodies with top surgery, wedding) vs... the whining of the queer deviant who makes appeals like "please listen to me, I'm a human being."

To come out of the closet is to commit to being an inconvenience. To commit to being viewed as an existential threat to be met with violence. To the less-than-queer, coming out is a statement of intent. They feel entitled to disagree with your choices, like the color of a shirt they find unflattering or an announcement of impending war crimes.

The best thing an inconvenience can do is just walk away.

I've walked away for my own sake too. It is a privilege I claim as a queer person to be bored of straight people's drama. I'm already selfishly claiming space by being genderqueer, fat, outspoken. I might as well also be selfish by being uninterested.

Recently, I have tried to be *aggressively* uninterested. I wasn't planning to write about that side of my family at all. Writing about them runs me a terrible risk of having to talk to any of them. I see the tone I take, the way I'm relieved to not have to talk to them. I experience grief and guilt for the emotions I think that I ought to feel. I mourn the affection I know that I'm supposed to have. I feel cruel, but I don't feel love.

When I started this essay, my father's younger sister, Marla, had fallen suddenly ill. Cancer somewhere. In less than a week, her health collapsed, and she was taken off life support. I lost myself in a sea of existential dread, roiling with waves of resentment toward my father's family. Marla deserves more than to be a lightning rod for my own bitter feelings. She deserves more than to serve as a symbol of the family's failures.

Marla was born with the umbilical cord around her neck and suffered brain damage. She was profoundly intellectually disabled. Grandpa Chuck worked at the hospital where she was born. He knew the doctor, and that the doctor had hurt another baby through negligence before, but did not join in the case to get him fired. He did not want to make waves or lose his job. He did not want to admit the problem.

Marla's inability to care for herself became all of her siblings' problems. They were expected to be caregivers and escorts, to simply give into her tantrums. Yet they were never told by their parents that she was different. It took my mother's disruption to call attention to the problem. A single question from my mother, an aspiring special education teacher, shattered over a decade of unreality. "So, what's Marla's diagnosis?"

To hear her siblings talk of Marla, her life was defined by disability, neglect, and the lies of omission her parents irresponsibly shielded her with. Surely, she was more than the failures of the people around her. I know she had her own joys and strengths. But if I accept this, then should I also accept that every member of my family I avoid is more than the open wound I've turned them into? Should I also accept I didn't do enough to help Marla as well?

I used to think I could get a bestselling novel out of my family drama. I joked about it with my cousins all the time. I could write a play that could turn into an Oscar win. I could see Jane Fonda returning to a heavier role for my grandmother. I'm not sure who could play my dad. I guess we could get one of the three older female Asian actors circulating Hollywood to play my mother, though they would all be the wrong type of Asian.

Most of the drama lies in the cavernous void of the unsaid. In tense conversation. In the hundred facets of gendered and religious expectations. Since my father's family is white, the Oscar thing is still possible. The Oscars love a dysfunctional white family. These days, though, it would probably be a prestige drama on a streaming service.

I used to think the dysfunction of my father's family was uniquely shocking. Now I wonder if a gradient from awful to indifferent is more common in families than closeness and love. Everyone is complicated. Everyone hurts each other. Everyone holds meaningless grudges because we remember the feeling of hurt long after we remember its true source.

Love feels almost like an incidental, accidental occurrence.

I don't want to be cruel to Marla, to write her as a spectacle or a tragedy. I didn't know her well. I have no excuse aside from not wanting to spend time with people from my father's side of the family. None of those things are her fault.

But it strikes me, as my father's family scrambles to deal with the death of their sister, that my father won't acknowledge this is a sad situation. If I say, hey, this is really sad, he just shrugs and finds a task to complete. Dinner needs doing. So does a memorial slide show. I suppose both of these things are ways of coping, but I don't know how to talk to him about all the ways things went wrong.

I know if I texted my brother right now, he might say it's sad, but not much else. And he might not return my text at all.

Is that the shadow of our father's masculinity? I don't know how to feel either.

August 11th, 2002

update, la la.

5:26 PM

well, i made it to Lexi's just fine! and i've had a great time so far. been chillin' and watching the Nightwalker anime, which would be totally torturous if it weren't such a blatant ripoff of Interview With the Vampire. anyway, i can't really think of much to say. i'm having a good time. i'll probably be around, but not a lot.

Mood: loved

Music: "Tayou no Ao" — Dir en grey (remix)

August 22nd, 2002

:B

1:20PM

ah! yesterday was such a great day!

Phil, Lexilex and i all dressed up and went to the Fringe, which is this kind of artsy festival in Edmonton (although they have it in other cities in Canada i guess?). we got to see all sorts of cool things, most memorably the World's Fattest Contortionist and these guys playing the African drums accompanied by a bagpipe player. they were all in costume too, i think it was just a spontaneous thing but it was so awesome, musically. *_* we ate and walked around and we saw a show spoofing pop culture w/ a very cute, very very talented Asian girl. it was also incredibly funny. afterwards we bought tickets to go on the Edmonton street car trolley thing... it was fun because the scenery was nice and the street car was bought from Japan! all the instructions and signs and advertizements were in Japanese. oh yeah and Lexi had her first shaved ice which she shared w/ me. and i ran out of Canadian money except for cash... i was a very big mooch. ^_^; we got to cross the biggest streetcar bridge in the whole world, come to think of it Edmonton has a lot of the world's biggest things. well, two at least, a mall and a bridge...

all in all it was a great deal of fun and i'm only sad that we couldn't afford to go see more shows.

Mood: bored

Music: "In the Springtime of His Voodoo" -- Tori Amos (in my head)

August 25th, 2002

gee it's great to be back home,
home is where i wanna be.

7:18PM

so i'm home.

it's great.

my cat got all fluffy in my absence.

the ride was great. Phil is a saint.

i'm tired. +_+

Mood: weird

Music: "1979" -- Smashing Pumkins

one little thing...

7:44PM

oh, by the way, Lexi and i are no longer what you would, under strict oath, define as 'together'.

rather than a break up, let's call it 'ceasing creative activity'. as far as i know, she doesn't hate me. and i love her but i know this is what has to happen right now. i just know.

and this runs through my mind now:

i have this image of my face as a bar of soap, i'm taking a sharp knife and i'm carving and carving and the pieces flake away but i know one of these days i'm just going to slice right through and cut my thumb on accident.

one shouldn't dive too deep when you know you don't like the water in your consciousness. besides, i have to be as strong as ever.

Mood:

Music: "Fake Plastic Trees" -- Alanis Morissette (live cover)

Girlfriends: Lexi (pt. 3) and Noelle

Lexi dumped me at some point during the visit to Edmonton. I couldn't say exactly when, but probably before that cheerful entry on the 22nd. It's funny to me that I still wrote like nothing was going wrong. Lexi did not want me to write about her. I believe she said something like, "Don't you dare complain about me on your journal like you do about Kayla."

I remember being stretched out next to her in her lumpy twin bed. She calmly told me she did not believe I was trans, that I was just a victim of internalized misogyny. Nothing against me, really, but she didn't want a man, nor did she want to date someone who thought of herself as a man. So even though she didn't think of me as a man she couldn't date me. I knew how she felt about me being trans already, I just hoped that at one point love would change one of our minds. I suppose she made the same mistake. Mostly, Lexi framed it as her own failures: depression, her own disinterest in sex and love and dislike of herself. But her first complaint was that she didn't believe in what I was. Years later, I would write in my LiveJournal about finding her new Jrock website under a brand-new screenname and a brand-new set of he/him pronouns.

Even before the breakup, Lexi spent most of my visit upstairs in her room chatting with Dross while I sat downstairs in the living room watching 90s anime and playing *Final Fantasy X*. I was stuck there alone for at least another week until Phil was done with his visit to Calgary.

I was already friends with my next girlfriend, Noelle, then. We met through LiveJournal, intersecting at roleplaying and Jrock, similarly to how Lexi and I first met. Noelle was comforting. She focused on telling me all my positive qualities and comforting my sadness. She loved talking on the phone and was always eager to speak to me. At a time when I was feasting on scraps from Lexi, she provided a constant buffet. She even told me she loved me every time we said goodbye. She was primed to take on the position of girlfriend from the moment we met.

Lexi insisted on remaining friends after she dumped me. She anonymously lurked in chatrooms she knew I frequented only to pop up and yell at me when I complained about my heart break. Before Noelle and I publicly acknowledged our relationship, Lexi talked me into letting her onto a three-way call with her then pushed us to admit we were dating.

Years later, I ran into a friend of Lexi's at a Jrock concert I attended with Noelle. The friend recognized me from a photo taken of me in the snow in Devon Alberta during my winter visit. I was sixteen or seventeen in the photo. Apparently, Lexi kept it framed.

Things with Noelle ended in summer 2007. By that time, we were living together in a squirrel-infested apartment in North Seattle. Noelle came out as polyamorous in 2004, right after she moved to Seattle to attend the now-defunct Art Institute. This was because she wanted to start dating her friend Nat, a rich high school senior. When I told her I really wasn't cool with that, and I wanted to break up, Noelle sobbed and said I was her pillar of strength. That it was through my support that she could learn and explore about herself. That she wouldn't be able to go on without me. So, somehow, I just had to agree to let her date other people

I recall at least three distinct times I told my best friend Henry that I was seriously going to break up with her for real this time. The next day I'd always say, *we talked and we're going to make it work*. To be honest, I can't recall how she convinced me each time. It's a complete blank. It was like she spoke me into hypnosis, and I suddenly became the idiot who agreed.

We cycled through this conflict repeatedly. No matter how much I wanted to break up, Noelle wouldn't let me. Eventually I took some advantage of this power. In 2005, I convinced Nat to break up with Noelle. To be fair, Nat was already on the fence. Noelle was bossy, condescending and mean to Nat right in front of my face. I was open in my feelings that Noelle should be nicer to Nat. No connection in my own mind that I didn't deserve to be treated that way either.

After Noelle was suddenly too busy for a movie date I'd planned, Nat volunteered to go see the movie with me instead. Despite being busy, Noelle texted and called us repeatedly while we were out. *MirrorMask* and Thai food. No romantic tension whatsoever, just friends having a bit of fun. I recall telling Nat she was young; she should leave while she still could. I must have sounded like a battered mob wife talking to my husband's mistress.

I am proud I intervened with Nat. It's one of my greatest shames that I didn't help the others.

After Nat, Noelle befriended several other younger girls online, each with richer families than the last, each with daddy issues even worse than the last, and each with life-threatening eating disorders that landed them in the hospital. I'll be honest, I met a few of them and even at the time had trouble keeping them straight. They all dyed their hair black. They were all doe-eyed waifs, in awe of Noelle and confusion of me. They seemed nice enough, but I wonder if Noelle told them never to talk to me, that I had a problem with them being there.

In 2007, a few months prior to our breakup, I screamed at Noelle outside a Qdoba. She had forgotten her lie and was crying to a mutual friend about how one of her 16-year-old girlfriends had "broken her heart." I was 22 at the time, Noelle was 20. I said, *hey, what the fuck. You told me you were just friends. You let this girl in our apartment. You gave her my alcohol. You fucking lied.*

I was Noelle's pillar of strength and she couldn't do any of this without me. Without me, she couldn't have afforded to have multiple mentally ill underage girlfriends or an apartment to store thousands of dollars of shoplifted clothes from Nordstrom Rack. She couldn't have kept her job if I wasn't able to drop everything to take a taxi from North Seattle to downtown to bring her keys multiple times on my own fast-food dime. She couldn't have recruited or driven off every female I friend I had with her advances.

The summer we broke up, Noelle made a pass at our roommate, a girl who was like a sister to us both. Our roommate pulled me aside the next day to tearfully recount the story. In retrospect, the whole thing was skeezy and awful toward our friend, but I mostly just thought *I*

can't have a single friend she won't try to fuck. Though my guy friends hardcore avoided her because she would sit on their laps and say, "This is the most action you nerds are ever going to see! Lucky you!" My friends threw up their hands and said, "Look, I'm not touching her." In return, she called all my male friends creeps who hated her. Funnily enough, they were the only friends I had left after the break-up.

Similarly, Noelle was "creeped out" by Indo family traditions, such as having a *Slametan* for Opa when he died. She thought it was weird that we would share stories or sing songs and have a happy feast to celebrate his life. She didn't like Indonesian food. "Why is your family so obsessed with food?" she asked me. I could think of no answer that would appease her.

Noelle was the reason I stopped cutting for good. During her first visit, she found where I hid my box cutter blades and threw them on the roof. Yet our relationship came to an end because, on that day in 2007, I pressed a plastic knife to my wrist. I said, *I seriously am not going to survive this.* That was when I realized I needed to get away. I told her I was tired of our lifestyle, that anyone outside of it would think we were insane. I needed a break. I needed to move out and think about my life seriously.

She told me I needed to get the hell out of her apartment, or she'd call the cops. It was the second time she threatened to call the cops on me in a month. The first time was for leaving the apartment and refusing to return late at night after an argument. I would not come back, even when she called my parents "worrying" about me, so she threatened to call the cops and tell them I was suicidal. I was a little suicidal, but I mostly just wanted to get the hell away from her for a few hours after a long day working a fryer.

In the back of my mind, I must have suspected it would get that bad. I planned our little talk for the night my parents were visiting a friend nearby. When she told me to get out, I threw together a few things in a duffel bag and had them collect me. About fifteen minutes into driving away, Noelle called me begging me to tell her I didn't think she was a bad person. I realized that the break I wanted would have to be an ending.

Months prior to the break-up, Noelle bought me a cell phone because she wanted to text me. My old phone was pay-as-you-go and charged a nickel per letter, so I didn't text much. One day she came home with a silver Nokia flip phone to replace my little purple candy bar, informing me she had done me the favor of adding a new line to her account when she wanted to upgrade. After we broke up, that phone became a point of contention: she insisted I pay her back for the cost to end the cell phone contract. I could not immediately pay that \$200 as I had to buy and set up a new phone and change jobs.

After the breakup, Noelle hounded me so much for the money – eight calls in twelve hours – that I simply shut the phone down, taped it up into a box and mailed it back to her.

She has attempted to contact me about every two years since then. The first time was a 3 AM heavy-breathing call. The rest were a little more normal by comparison. She called my

parent's house multiple times over the years. She e-mailed me. I ran into her at the local anime convention once or twice, and on the streets of Seattle. Every time we ran into each other, she turned and quickly walked the other way.

The last time she tried to contact me was via Twitter. I found that she was running a GoFundMe to "recover her hopes and dreams after alcoholism." I genuinely hope for the best for her with that. Sometimes I think it would be nice to see her and to apologize for my own mistakes and toxic behavior. I was awful to her at times, just trying to force her to get fed up enough with me to break up. I do have my regrets and things I think warrant apologies. My friends always talk me out of it. They remind me I shouldn't reward her stalking, and she would probably just try and get money out of me.

But things started nicely enough. In 2002, we were both just teenagers, 15 and 17. She was the one who approached me. She was the one who fell in love. We became mutually obsessed. It probably wasn't the best thing for me to just jump from one long-distance relationship with a rather cold and distant older woman to a younger girl who was, in retrospect, far too invested in me far too quickly.

Like I said, my propensity for disastrous relationships has a legendary status.

September 16th, 2002

my club is gay.

4:08PM

i went to the GSA meeting at my school, started by this really sweet guy Lucian. Elijah and Dean came, and some friends of Lucian's that i knew from Jr. High actually, and this girl Carla. apparently she's a mtf, but i didn't know the difference so whatever. ^_^; doesn't matter much to me.

we are apparently going to be the first GSA club in the district. yes, the district that banned rated R movies. our school generally is more tolerant than some, but, also a lot less tolerant than others.

all i can think is, what am i getting myself into?

i'm tired. and putting up a front for that long makes my shoulders hurt. tomorrow i won't even get to go home, i have Japanese club and marching band practice. i'm already so tired the idea makes me want to go hide somewhere.

Mood: hungry

Music: "Yeneh Ababa (Rose)" - Kenna

September 23rd, 2002

school daze

3:41PM

GSA is great and i'm vice president. Lucian is president-- i mean, he WANTS to organize everything, and he was the one who started. but i wanted to steal some glory. XD actually, i'm a pretty good leader type, i think, so it's good for me to be in a position. when i made my speech, Mr. Moon-K asked me what cartoon character i'd be and i said Hobbes... i considered some anime people, but went w/ who first popped into my head.

Lucian's such a nice guy. he's like, enthusiastic in that really gay way. slapped me on the knee on the drive home. he really, really loves men. he, Janie, and Nicki (they're these artsy punkish girls, ie, bisexual) were talking about sex in the car. of course the girls were comparing male and female sex, and Lucian's just all about boys. i'm all about... NO ONE. right now. sex... makes me queasy. and when i said i don't think about it all that much Janie said all that changes after you do it. and personally, i don't want mental images of people i hang out w/ having sex. i don't want to break my brain.

i'm a kind of a perv and a sub, but i'm just not... hugely sexual. the whole idea kind of makes me nervous.

anyway, Lucian's going to LA for this National Coming Out Day thing and they were all talking about sex and i just realized how much i want to crawl out of this ugly, stupid skin of mine. i want to slice it away. i want to disappear.

as nice as they are, as much fun as i have at the club and as much good as i know we'll do... i don't belong there. not even there.

so yeah, something that should make me really happy really intensely depresses me.

Mood: depressed

Music: "24ko Cylinder" -- Dir en grey

September 30th, 2002

more updates from the 'gay society'

4:26PM

so today at GSA, Mr. S-K, our head administrator was gone. further, Lucian had some kind of bitch fight w/ his friends and they didn't show up. so it ended up being just me, Lucian, and Mrs. D (i cannot for the world of me write out her hyphenated name) talking, and the meeting went an hour over. :o it was kind of cool. Lucian and Mrs. D are devout veggies and i'm just like GIVE ME VEAL GIVE ME LAMB. anyway, we're doing a mail-in voting drive, basically we sit at a booth and hand out packets for people to sign up for voting (i gotta sign up 0_0). we're not allowed to do announcements that say 'sponsored by the GSA' or have signs on our table, which is utter bullshit because the district naturally is putting off having to deal w/ us... even though they have no way they can legally deny us, until we're recognized we're not allowed to advertize other than writing stuff on teacher's boards. no announcements, no fliers, no posters. it's utter bullshit. we can't do much for membership if we can't get the word out... i tell every person i know about GSA but most of my friends are busy, forgetful, or afraid of being labeled as gay.

Lucian's known his boyfriend about three months and they've already had sex, like, a lot. and i wonder if i'm weird... a lot of people i know are very sexual. then again, an equal amount aren't. i don't know, it's just something i don't think of all that much generally. and Ms. Browne (we ran into her in the hall) was talking about "Carl", the mtf at our school and how she got crap because she was changing in the girl's room for dance team and the girl's volleyball team went in and practically rioted. i hope she starts coming to meetings... i really admire her. she's only a sophomore, but she's following her heart. i... let myself down every day. we're getting uniforms for band and i'll probably have to wear a dress. it's black, and velvet, and very pretty. and the whole prospect of it just makes me want to cry. like a girl.

i hate compromising myself. i keep telling myself it's only one year. and that what they think and see doesn't matter-- i know. but how long can i tell myself that? their opinions do matter. they dictate how i dress and how i'm classified. i can't get away from having to fill in my gender for taking tests, or not knowing which race to fill myself in as. i can't get away from my ugly name. it's all here w/ me, and i avoid it rather than confront it. i've given my family enough trouble. it's hard enough for them to accept i date women. my mother clings so tenuously to her 'little girl'.

Lucian and Ms. Browne were both calling Carl "he" but i insisted in calling "him" her, because after all, that's what she's fighting for. so slowly they began to correctly address her as well.

i wish she'd come to meetings. she needs the support, it sounds like. i want to protect her. beat up the guys who would give her trouble. it's the least i can do, for some one who's got a lot more guts than i do.

i have to sign up for my stupid math classes today too. i just don't want to. i just want to lie down and hide. i wish i could find my phone card so i could call Noelle.

Mood: _ _ -

Music: "The Great Below" - NIN

October 7th, 2002

Monday, Monday. -_-

4:14PM

the club is constantly tabled by the school board. Lucian's getting a law firm that supports GSA to... nudge them a little. he was embarrassed by the student counsel, who put GSA on the schedule and ridiculed him just because he hasn't been approved by the school board.

there's a poetry club and some kind of HAM radio club that just popped up. i'm pissed off because either a) they have been approved before we were or b) they're allowed to advertise when we're not.

oh. and i have to call Noelle, i'm worried about her. and then Lexi. i forgot her birthday and am therefore the most horrible and self-centered person in the world (this is what i said, not her, worry not).

it's Monday, again folks. try not to shoot anything.

at least we're having waiver days on Thursday and Friday. -_-

Mood: cranky

Music: "Italian Leather Sofa" - Cake

November 6th, 2002

the world sucks and should die. or
maybe just me.

12:42PM

our GSA was not approved by the Student Council.

fuckers. they were all like "why do you need to be an official club to get together and talk and do community service?" i don't know, assholes, why do you need an official club to write poetry or do HAM radio? and we're pretty much the same as Pride club except we're sexual minorities, not racial ones. they didn't give the Game Club any shit. oh, sure, it makes sense to have an officially sanctioned school club for D&D and chess and cards and Warhammer and whatever the shit after school, approve them w/o even looking at their constitution, but don't approve us. we've worked so FUCKING HARD. now we're going to have to take legal action and i just don't have the energy. i've been thinking about quitting lately, because being around 'other sexual minorities' has made me examine myself too much. i know it's stupid. but i'm in the closet w/ them, and they're exactly the people i shouldn't be. so what's the point?

now i have to stay. i can't let this just pass.

to top it all off, i have the State marching band competition on Saturday.

Mood: kill me. --

Music: "Northern Lad" -- Tori Amos

November 21st, 2002

common worries, common comebacks.

3:50PM

today this asshole Greg in my Japanese class was clowning on my buddy Lucian. Lucian's in sports med and Greg's on the basketball team. apparently Lucian was applying some icyhot to him, and according to Greg, Lucian was checking him out. of course, Greg says, he has no problem w/ Lucian being gay and all, but that's just gross.

i said to him, very loudly and directly in front of his friends, "Lucian has a boyfriend, there's no possible way he was hitting on you. i don't know why you want attention from him, but that's pretty sick to blame it on him."

that felt really good. people suck and i should kick them in the head.

Mood: drained

Music: "Humbug Song" - Zigzo

Journals and Reflections: 2003

Internet Sad Boi Song of the Year:

“A Sorta Fairytale” by Tori Amos

January 12th, 2003

nobody said it was easy / no one
ever said it would be so hard

9:27PM

Noelle, i promised i'd call, but it's like, past midnight there, and i just got home.

and i feel rotten.

tomorrow i'll be doing more studying. school, GSA, and studying.

stupid fucking January 12th. last year at this time, Jack was alive.

Mood: depressed

Music: "The Scientist" - Coldplay

January 14th, 2003

i llusions, al lusions.

1:07PM

in dreams

in my dream there were several children, possessing of a strange energy that these scientists wanted to tap. they adopted the children, because they were orphans. the older sister had the most energy, so much that particles of light were visible on her clothes. she was excited to be adopted. she was about 16. her brother, 14, was silent w/ a Buddha-like calm.

they drove the children (the sister, the brother, and two little girls, 4 and 2) through a magical harbor land w/ glowing green water and ancient clippers, before reaching their destination: a lab, but the kids didn't know it.

they were fed gruel w/ drugs, and all but the silent boy ate up, happy at their new home.

but soon they came to learn that all was not right. they were being used. the Buddha-like younger brother sacrificed himself so his older sister could get out of there. she ran through the British countryside, and up into a twisted courtyard of trees and brick walls. she climbed through huge twisted trees, sliding over and down branches, just running running. she had to jump from branch to wall a few times. i can't write this down like it was...

but finally one branch gave through, it was rotten. so she fell into the dirt, cornered.

there resting in the dirt was a gun. and she used it...

my dreams are like movies so often. i remember them clearly. i don't want to let go of them.

i don't do many great things. at least something happens in my dreams.

and in reality.

the GSA is under fire. we've been refused for the 3rd time by the ASB. Lucian, the president, was recently suspended for cause unknown... although according to his friend (who was there, unless something else entirely happened)... he's on the sports med team, and was down in Kentwood (another school) doing his thing for the wrestling team. some wrestling guys in their getup saw him putting down toilet paper for the bathrooms and started calling him fag and pushing him around. in the end, no discipline was taken against these boys, and Lucian was asked to just take a leave of absence for his own safety, even though it didn't happen at our school. he's quit sports med, and in fact, wants to just continue his classes at high line.

abandoning us, his project, the GSA.

i'm the only ranking member who even shows up on a regular basis. also i'm vice president.

i want to sue their asses off, sue those motherfuckers, they have no right to tell us what we can't do. if the GSA is so bad, why did they let the Gamer club go w/o contesting it? everyone knows that Dungeons and Dragons is of the devil. everyone living in the past, sucking their teenaged thumbs w/ their stupid mommies and church telling them what to do and think believes that.

but our supervisor points out that we don't want to alienate the community.

i think the community alienates itself from us. i don't want to be some kind of crusador for the lifestyle, not when i'm not what they think i am, not when i just want to be left alone. i thought about quitting but then this whole thing came up. i couldn't quit... i couldn't leave it alone, because it's wrong.

on the other hand, most of the members are graduating next year. what will the point be, if, in a few years, we get it, and no one wants to keep it on anyway?

it's just a shitty situation. Lucian had better come back.

Mood: angry

Music: "Blood Brothers" — Iron Maiden

February 4th, 2003

i just had a bizarre moment of sensetivity.

10:33PM

it hurt like getting punched, but it was more gentle.

i miss her and i miss her and i miss her lots and lots.

i wonder if i'm selfish, if i really just move from person to person looking for gratification because the truth is i hate myself, i hate what i am and have never learned to accept that i'm different, even after 18 years of being a different race, a different gender, a different way of thinking about things... a certain person has expressed curiosity in my sexuality more than once, and they aren't the only one asking me things, like if i want to get an operation, or what i'm going to have to face.

these are things i've considered carefully and researched.

honestly, it turns my stomach, the idea of a gender reassignment operation. it employs a lot of trust in the medical profession, even if my surgery went just fine. and then come the issues: am i less of a man because the idea of these procedures literally makes me nauseous? am i less of whatever i am because i might have more of an interest in men than i did previously? what am i? is it weird that i seemed to have 'changed my mind' along the way, for all of those who have known me a significant amount of time? even if it wasn't a one day thing, it must seem so strange...

and all i want to do is just find somewhere far from here w/ Noelle and hide. i don't want this world, i don't care how beautiful it is or how many endless people can impress me w/ their sheer wonder. i don't fucking care, i just want to hide, i just want to hide and be happy.

music is so bad for me. i can watch sad movies and i'm fine if the music is contrite. but if i'm emotional a certain kind of song can reduce me to a quiet, blubbering heap, or worse, just turn me totally numb. it's like hurting myself, i keep listening to it over and over again until i'm done, until i'm satisfied that the song has done it's work, showing me that i still feel things.

it just makes me want to cry and lay down and be held like a small child, god i wish i could remember a time when being held like that didn't feel contaminated. it always made me feel so sick. w/ others it made me feel so sick.

what do i show and what do i keep inside? what do i express my true worries over? do i confess to my fears of true insanity, do i relate every nightmare i have? where's the limit, when am i showing myself too much, when am i not cloaked enough? when do i start realizing that people care and read these stupid, scattered thoughts of mine? when do i realize who i'm hurting w/ said words?

i never hurt a girl i really loved w/ my internal battles, they would smile and tell me honestly they knew exactly what they were signing up for and they loved me just the same. even Kayla knew what she was taking on, and wanted to help me w/ it. for all the stupid shit i say about her, i believe she cared about me. it's just she didn't know how to because she doesn't even really care for herself.

other things drove Lexi and i apart, i can finally tell myself, it wasn't my fault. not mine alone. and i'd say more but she's fed my paranoia, and i know it hurts her if i say a single word in her direction... and maybe it's illogical, because she thinks i always talked about our problems to any old person and that i talk shit about her now, so i might as well because it won't change her mind even if i say i don't, even when i make a point to pretend she didn't happen because i know she hates me talking about her, even in veiled terms. she hated when i'd write in this journal, write about my depressions, things i couldn't talk to her about directly. i'm beginning to understand that, feeling cut off from some one, knowing that they can type something into a screen and they can't say it to you. but i also know the other end, and it just simply... didn't seem to be what i needed to tell her.

a lot of my friends are planning to go to Sakuracon (read: practically everyone i know) and i'm ambivalent. for one thing, it's not a great con. for another thing... that's when it became obvious she no longer loved me. read those entries if you want

to, read between the lines. i hated her, and i hated Dross for getting more attention from her than i did, and i hated myself because i didn't know what i'd done wrong to make her stop loving me. i concluded that she must have been disgusted by me.

because i am.

and that's the root of all my problems, children! i announce myself and ask for acceptance, but the truth is i think i'm disgusting. if some one came out to me i'd be just like "what?" because it's fucking ridiculous, it's fucking ridiculous what i am.

Noelle loves me for who i am. Lexi says she did. Kayla thought i needed to prove it. Abigail didn't really know, except she knew i liked being called her boyfriend. that's everyone, everyone i've even felt anything for that was the least bit real.

i love Noelle. that's clear. but i told her in the beginning, is it possible to love if you don't love yourself?

i'm starting to realize that's the point of love.

we can't love ourselves so we love other people. otherwise we'd have our hands down our pants all the time, right? we'd sit in front of reflecting pools and waste away into flowers. and yet we hide ourselves so well that we don't believe love is real. it's such a horrible and confusing paradox.

i can't claim to understand it. i've a cold and it's late and i may go delete this entry later, because it's all bullshit and i don't want everyone on my friend's list reading it, not really.

goodnight.

Mood: empty

Music: "Sonnet" -- The Verve

February 13th, 2003

an oh-so-very interesting update.

3:37PM

soo. GSA meetings have now been moved to Thursday! exciting!

Lucian's back, thank God, and he's all goofy over a new guy. Lucian is really... the gayest gay guy i've ever met. he does all the gay events and stuff like that. he wants us all to go to this Mardi Gras thing on the 1st of March... a masquerade ball and auction and stuff. it sounds like a lot of fun... but i'm apprehensive about situations like that. situations where strangers will hit on me, even possibly touch me in unwanted ways. _-; you get screwed up if you have bad experiences at church dances, ok?? the last one i went to i only did a few dances and then i curled up on the couch in the hall, all traumatized and shit. on the other hand, it might really be fun.

i'm not sure. if i could only be assured my own brain wouldn't wreck it for me.

the prez has been in contact w/ the ACLU, and the lady he's been talking to is going to contact the district's attorney on this business. and they want to back us on litigation if it comes to that, which is good news, but kind of a pain. the only regular non-graduating member is Mizuki, and she's in *every* extra-curricular activity, i'm seriously afraid she'll fall over. the other Sophmore, Ayesha, repeatedly gets into trouble at school. ^_^;

anyway, things are going pretty well, all things considered. Lucian's a lot of fun. i listen to him talk a lot. i wonder if he knows he talks a lot... i'm just being an active listener, i don't really know what to talk to him about. and he has an interesting life, and he's so enthusiastic about everything.

i've been thinking about coming out to them, but i don't know the words. it's weird, being scared of coming out to the GSA. maybe scared isn't the word. i just don't know how to bring it up. it isn't really their business... but on the other hand, i wonder if i'd feel better if i could get their support. but i've never told them too much about my life before.

oh, btw, Lucian says i come off as goth. ^_^; he was talking about this flamingly gay guy at our school who says he's bi but Lucian doesn't "bi" it. Lucian said he embraces his fem side, and really, he isn't fem to the point of being annoying, just cute.

i asked how i came off as, since i was honestly curious, and he said goth! i couldn't believe it. ;-; my heart is shattered.

but it doesn't mean i'm throwing black out of my wardrobe or anything. ^_^;

sigh i have a paper to write on a fake initiative i'm making for civics. and i have an assload of kanji study i need to do. i don't want to.

Mood: satisfied

Music: "LONG * DISTANCE" -- Psycho le Cemu

March 6th, 2003

YES.

3:28PM

i came out to my GSA!

being a freak never felt so good!

Mood: YES!

Music: "Excitable Boy" — Warren Zevon

March 9th, 2003

an interlude necessitated by the current situation.

8:36PM

me: i mean, it's not like Saddam Hussein's going to be the one suffering for this. his people are. it's not like they had a choice.

Dad: Little or none, yes.

me: so... they're going to suffer for being born into the wrong life.

Dad: Well, you're right. It's not like he's going to stand in front of the tanks with his sword drawn. He'll be in his bunker where our bombs can't get them.

me: so what did these people do? they had the wrong religion, they live in the wrong area, and they're going to be made to suffer.

Dad: ...

me: ...

Dad: ...

me: ...

Dad: ...

me: ...this is really good rendang [Indonesian beef dish w/ a spicy coconut milk sauce]. i think i'll get a little more... the red rice turned out just fine.

.....

yes, yes i am a fucking tool.

i live in comfort due to the suffering of other's. it's not usually so publicized. i wish it didn't bother me so much, because, after all, what would happen, were it to change?

i'd be uncomfortable. i'd be compromised. i might understand real suffering.

i have no idea. i really don't. i feel guilty for being angry, feel more guilty for not being angrier.

Mood: used

Music: "New Sacred Cow" - Kenna

March 19th, 2003

the world is a vampire.

6:40PM

we didn't say much to each other at dinner today.

not that we usually do. i never say anything to them because they don't hear me. i ramble about my stupid classes and they tell me i need to get it done like i'm too fucking dumb to not have heard them the hundredth time and act like i don't want to get through high school. dinner is the time we're supposed to commune, so we can pretend to touch bases (read: hear my mother bitch about her job).

i'm listening to a lot of angry music lately. i try to listen to nicer stuff-- Gackt and Ben Folds and all, but when i get home, i blast my 'angry music' winamp list.

we're getting into something i've opposed from the start. returning violence w/ violence is not right. WE KNOW THIS. the Bible teaches us an eye for an eye... indeed, an eye for an eye only. how the hell did the anger over September 11th (no way in fucking hell i'm deformatizing it into numbers for the sake of a few syllables) turn into hatred towards Saddam Husein? and yes, i know how he's a risk, and how Kim Jong II is. i keep myself well-informed, but i don't feel like cataloguing such ugly things in a personal journal. i guess, naively, like a lot of people, i like to pretend that if i don't have to look at it, it's not there.

i feel like something very small is clenched up inside of me and i can't loosen it. i'm a good kid. i do the dishes. i try hard at school. but i feel like i'm dead inside, all the fucking time i just feel dead inside. then my mother says something dumb to me meaning well and i imagine stabbing my parents eyes out while they sleep.

my Dad was talking about bringing some of his work home... in case he couldn't go for some reason because of the war (yay for fear of getting our brains bombed out by Kim Jong II and paranoia over terrorism) he could still work. what?

and for some people, this is a lot more than reality. i'm not talking about stupid middle class Americans like myself who might lose a friend to the military. there's people suffering, all over the world, there's so much violence, and nothing ever stops. more violence has not worked to stop it. there's starvation. why can we afford enough weapons internationally to kill ourselves over and over again 15 or 20 or 10000000000 times and we can't feed the hungry? what the fuck is wrong w/ the world?

and people wonder why i want to quit the human race. i fucking hate this place. i don't belong here, i don't fit in here, and i can't do a fucking thing. we're warring for a democracy that doesn't seem to exist.

the weirdest thing is that the likelihood is it won't effect me much. i'll go on w/ my life, stress over graduation, and read about how sad things are in Time and Newsweek and The Seattle Post Intelliger.

why am i so upset? it's not that much different from September 11th. i wasn't all that shocked then, and i'm even less so now.

all this anger and no one to kill. i guess i should head over to Iraq, then...

Mood: despite all my rage...

Music: "Bullet With Butterfly Wings" — Smashing Pumpkins

April 12th, 2003

internet fun time.

9:05PM

chat idiot: Text messaging is gay as hell. You have to press buttons and scroll through menus and shit.

me: how the hell does text messaging have a sexual preference?

chat idiot: because I just said it did.

me: so you'd know from experience? :D

chat idiot: it's gay as in retarded. I did not say it was homosexual.

chat idiot: whomever the twit was that attached gay to homosexual is a misguided fool, and fools who continue to do it.

me: wow, i didn't realize that gay was synonymous w/ 'retarded', i guess my dictionary got it wrong. how offensive! it's not nice to make fun of the mentally disabled.

he didn't have much to say after that...

Mood: amused

Music: "RAPPERS WE CRUSH" -- KOMPRESSOR feat. MC Frontalot

May 3rd, 2003

“everybody hurts sometimes.”

12:17AM

i hate the fact that i get along better w/ the adults in the GSA then my own peers, i hate the fact that i go to social events and always come back from them feeling lonelier than before. i hate the fact that i'm not stronger, that i don't just demand Lucian and everyone refer to me correctly, that i just shrug it off and mumble that i don't really care, whatever, i'm out of here in a few weeks and then you'll quickly forget me. i hate the fact that i need other people. i hate the fact i know i can't possibly survive myself by myself. i hate the fact that i'm sitting here, writing this, wishing it either could stop hurting or that it could just hurt a little more so i could have a bit of a breakdown already and just sleep and not feel so fucking strung out. i hate looking in the mirror and seeing some one worthless. i hate the approval i get from others. i hate myself.

Mood: worn thin, worn out.

Music: “Everybody Hurts” - REM

June 1st, 2003

so. prom.

1:26PM

well first Lucas was late with the limo which was not, by anyone's technical definition, too cool. then we headed over to his grandparents after picking up Joe so they could hem and haw at us for a few seconds. they couldn't tell i was the 'young lady', which made me happy. i wouldn't get out of the limo. i should never have gone to prom with Lucas-- i was sick of this date shit the first five seconds in. maybe that's my fault, but, ugh.

anyway, we headed over to Ash's house and took pictures, which was also mostly unexciting. i'm starting to think i was a pretty big jerk to Lucas, but, once again, ugh. i just... maybe it was me. maybe i was being a poor sport. but i didn't want to be his date. everyone else had a date except for Miranda, who was a great sport about it.

after that we headed to Verazzano's. the waitress called me sir in passing and Dean pointed out how much i loved that and was beaming. perhaps for that reason, she continued to call me sir all evening. that was pretty much the highlight of my evening.

Verazzano's was very expensive, but the food was great. i had a mushroom and chicken dish with cream sauce. we had a good time at the restaurant.

after that we headed to prom in the limo. it wasn't the first time i'd been in a limo, but it still felt cool. prom was at Union Station, an absolutely magnificent old building, and the decorations were very elegant and neat. they had little orderives and smoothies and stuff. i had a smoothie, that in retrospect, was probably poisoned by the Mormons, who, noticing that Joe was not wearing his Mormon Pimp Ring, had decided to take us all out.

the music they played sucked completely and utterly. and prom is pretty much like school, except with more sucky music, sucky dancing, and nice clothes. there were definitely some nice outfits going on, and a couple, especially for the girls, that will be utterly embarrassing in 20 years. one couple showed up in matching white and seafoam outfits. the guy was the swishy guy from pottery that claims to be bisexual but Lucian swears is gay. well, the boy spent the whole time talking to some guy. the only time i saw his date was when they came in.

Lucian and Travis showed up in their matching tuxes. they make a nice couple, but i honestly don't see the chemistry between them, and they're practically married already. they were stuck to each other all night so i didn't get a dance. talked to some people-- it's surprising who will talk to you and who will completely ignore you. i saw Leslie for the first time since last year-- she looked great and was as sweet as usual.

i also used the men's bathroom. apparently i scared some guy.

the only decent song they played was the Time Warp, requested by a bunch of us in the group. weirdly enough... the whole writhing orgy of bad dancers on the floor prettymuch stopped. the only non-rap, non Y-dance they play besides Justin Timberlake and they just kind of stand there. i guess they like to dance to what they're used to, not what's actually danceable.

so i didn't do much dancing, and my poisoned smoothie thing was getting to me. i felt like puking by the time we left, an hour early because we were bored. i ended up going home and to bed at 11:45. i'm still not feeling too hot.

Mood: puketastic

Music: "Rainy -ai no shirabe-" -- Janne Da Arc

June 10th, 2003

rant: the gay community.

4:46PM

uhh. quotes used without permission. ^_^; the bold is what this guy on the message board said, the rest is all me, baby.

*for the sake of this post, i'm going with 'homosexuality' and 'gay' to be an umbrella term, because i'm unwilling to write gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered etc etc in each post, and GLBT sounds like a sandwich you order in a really nice hippie-dippie organic food shop.

lastly, some gays are actually confused about their sexuality and need psychological help. sadly, the atmosphere, at least with the gay community in America, is that the more gay people the better and heaven help you if you try to leave the lifestyle. there has been hazing done by gays on those wishing to leave the gay community.

i'd like to see evidence of this and see how much it stacks up against, say, how many people kill themselves because they know they won't be accepted as homosexual, and how many people are beaten, raped, or killed due to their sexuality, or have endured cruel treatment for long periods of time. but perhaps i'm just bitter that even though my school's Gay Straight Alliance has more members than the Poetry Club, that we had to get the ACLU to get normal rights as a club and be recognized by the ASB, which is our legal right under the Equal Access Act of 1992. this is Washington, where people are supposedly more liberal. i've never been pressured to act a certain way or maintain a certain sexual preference or lifestyle by a homosexual or bisexual person. i have encountered this pressure numerous times from heterosexuals.

and yes, some people in general need psychological help. but confusion with sexuality is also a normal part of growing up. please don't confuse homosexuality with mental illness.

lastly, in the Peoples Republic of California (among a few other places), there have been incidents of roulette sex where groups of gays get together, engage in unprotected sexual activities and at least of them is currently infected with the HIV virus. there is a large possibility that another of the persons in this group, or more, will also end up with the virus because of this kind of promiscuous behavior. these sort of things do not help the gay community advance its cause in the least. it becomes a detraction from those just trying to live a normal life.

it's amazing how minority groups get typecast by the poor actions of a few (or maybe a lot, hell). why isn't there a 'heterosexual lifestyle' taking the blame the history rape and child molestation that's gone on since life began, most of it being acted out by men who identify as heterosexual despite the gender of their victim?

there's no excuse to judge the gay community. that's bull. i wish there didn't *have* to be a gay community, a place where people who band together to meet each other and hopefully not get the beaten / raped / killed for expressing that. i wish that it wouldn't be considered 'flaunting' for my gay friend to take his boyfriend to prom, or for a lesbian to talk about her girlfriend, just as heterosexuals do. the truth is, we are different, but that difference *isn't* bad. i believe no one person is inherently bad, their actions are what determine the quality of their character, not who they fancy, not what color their skin is, not how much money they have, not their gender.

Mood: rantalicious.

Music: "Bloodsport" -- Sneaker Pimps

September 12th, 2003

it's because i never wanted to be
a figurehead.

12:31AM

Lucian's winning an award from the ACLU for teen activism. i should be happy for him, right? he does a lot of great things.

except he didn't contact me over the summer except to tell me this when he said he would. he said i was 'totally invited' to go to the Gay Pride parade with him and then i couldn't. fucking. get ahold. of him.

except that there were plenty of times he didn't show up, and left no notice and i had to run meetings.

except he didn't even come to the end-of-the-year party we had when he said he would- - he did something with his boyfriend instead.

except he wouldn't have gotten there without my help and the help of others.

except he didn't respect my "gender identity" (UGH DOES THAT PHRASE EVER TURN MY STOMACH) even after i admitted how difficult it was to come out.

the GSA was his pet project, for certain, and not something i would've wanted anyway, but there was also a time where he threatened to drop it too, and it would've been my responsibility then. he bailed on our last meeting, in fact, he completely disappeared the last few weeks of school. sometimes i wonder if the GSA was more than just his 'project'... like he even cared there were other people of other sexual identities at the school. the guy's a machine, a major activist, involved with all the gay rights groups with acronomical names that i don't have half a clue about. he has a lot of responsibilities.

he wanted my address today so the ACLU could mail me an invitation to the special award he's getting.

i know he's worked hard, and i guess he deserves it. but the whole time this thing has gone down you'd think he was the ONLY fucking person who was in the GSA, the only person who constantly got harassed with "why do you want a club about sex at school, you fucking pervert?" bullshit. like he was the only one who was ever harassed because of his identity. like he was the only one to give a speech to the Student Council to try and get them to take us seriously.

i don't think anything i did deserved an award— i certainly didn't spend any time on the phone with the ACLU. but i'm sick of everyone acting like he did this all by himself, or with the help of our gay mechanics teacher, who went to *one* event the whole year.

it just feels like everything we worked hard on has been cheapened.

but i'll probably go to the ceremony anyway. i might even wear a tie.

Mood: i am a fucking tool.

Music: Dir en grey -- Schwein の 椅子

The GSA

One thing I keep coming back to as I read my old words is just how fucking homophobic everyone really was. Queerphobic, and barely any language for what it meant to be trans. Whatever I was – whatever I am – feels like such a dramatic departure from the heterosexual woman I was defaulted into. I imagined the person others wanted me to be as some kind of evil twin, a twisted bimbo Barbie. I hated the person everyone else wanted to be, and anyone who resembled her.

To this day I feel that my body is a strange prison. I am not part of “male” or “female” and I don’t desire to be. I call my past self an internet sad boy, because I feel like I *was* a sad boy. There was a boy-ness to me when I was younger. But that boy-ness was also because I was a lesbian. I looked at alternative pronouns back when that was mostly *ze/zir* stuff, before ‘they’ took hold. I thought about what it might mean to be genderqueer or androgynous and wondered what it might be like to not pick one of two. Now it feels like every queer above the age of 15 has an expansive idea of gender and pronouns, and I’m the one in the dark. Jokingly-but-not-really, I refer to myself as an ancient genderqueer tortoise when younger people ask me. I am not 40 yet. The social media message these days is that being queer is for the young, white, and conventionally attractive. I am about 60% white and young. Jury’s out on attractive, but I have never been conventional.

There are words for the things some of us are. I feel pulled in a direction I don’t understand, upwards or downwards when everyone wants me to choose right or left. In eschewing the choice, I choose incorrectly by definition. I resent having to make a choice.

To accept I am outside gender is to accept being misgendered with a blank expression. It’s having conversations about why my name keeps changing with people who haven’t seen me in years. It’s having the assistant at my doctor’s office squint at me, and say, “You realize this is hard for me to get right, don’t you?” when I try and explain my pronouns, which are on my chart. So now I’m an asshole for filling out my pronouns on my chart and causing difficulty for someone who doesn’t speak English as their first language. I’m too fucking old for this. I can’t be a trendy purple-haired enby at the age of 40. I should probably be wearing polo shirts and making dad jokes. I would rather die than ever wear another polo shirt. But there’s no time for big box corporate trauma today.

My gender is in contradiction with expectations. Growing my hair out actually makes me feel more masculine, more like myself. When I was a short-haired butch, I would get into the worst fights with my mother because I refuse to wear a jacket. I hated every man’s jacket. Too formless and lacking in style. My teenage obsession with the gothic glam rock subculture of Visual Kei epitomized my gender desires: beautiful, dark, tortured androgyny. I was a beautiful boy, a boy who would be called girlish if I hadn’t been born one. I would have always been straddling worlds. I would have always been a category outside the Venn diagram of boy or girl.

I think girls are tougher than me, anyway.

I can't really find evidence of how I got involved with the GSA at my school aside from possibly hearing about it on the school announcements. Here are a few things I do recall:

1. In my junior year, we had an assignment to draw or make a collage of our dreams for the future. I drew, with Magic Marker, a picture of me kissing my girlfriend. This caused quite a stir. Most of the boys performed a lot of embarrassing heteronormativity. Sports cars and underwear models. But people called my poster inappropriate.
2. People screamed, "Hey, are you gay?!" in the halls at me.
3. People asked me if I was a boy or a girl and I would pretend to just get really confused like "oh my god, I don't know, what am I? I can't figure it out! I left my gender at home!" instead of being hurt.
4. I was routinely called both fag and dyke and gay itself was kind of already just a bad thing to call someone.
5. I got in trouble for wearing a pink triangle pin on my jacket. I had already gotten into trouble for wearing a trenchcoat to school (even though it was just a thrifted old navy-blue jacket) after the Columbine massacre, even though I was the only kid at school who wore one. I was shocked that my mother stood up for me over the pin but not the jacket.
6. I was pretty openly a lesbian. I came out to my mother in ninth grade because this kid on the school bus kept harassing me about it, and I was upset not because he was doing it (he was a seventh grader), but because he was clearly trying to unfaggify himself in the eyes of others, and in stumbling along in explaining this to my mother, I said, "He's way gayer than me. He's swishy and he's not fooling anyone."
7. That kid was indeed gayer than me. I can't remember if he ever apologized, I was never much in the business of accepting apologies from kids who bullied me. He did, however, come out of the closet as gay. Duh.
8. My mother freaked out about it until she joined PFLAG and invented queer activism in this family.
9. The narrative around kids coming out was not affirming. My parents stressed that they were scared for my safety.
10. At some point, I found out about the GSA and attended a meeting after school. As the second founding member, I became vice president.

I wish I had catalogued more than how upset I felt about how things went with the GSA. I wish I had talked about meeting formats and paperwork and particulars. I didn't really think about how I was living history at the time. I was just pissed off at everyone being so unfair.

I was jealous of Lucian. He didn't necessarily ask to be credited over me, but I'm not sure it occurred to him to give me credit, either. I judged him, and I shouldn't have. He was living through some genuinely terrifying moments, but I felt he abandoned. I resented him. In retrospect this was silly. I did not understand the concept of celebrating the queer joy he felt in

his own young love. Especially since I was living through queer purgatory. The girls were confusing and mysterious. The boys were rude and stupid. I was stuck between them, and everyone seemed obsessed with sex.

It would have been nice to grow up knowing I could change my mind and say no to things like sex. That it wasn't weird to not be ready for sex, or to have shifts in desire depending on the partner and my level of comfort and trust with them. It would have been nice to not feel so obsessed with sex as a teenager, to grow up thinking I didn't have to think so much about it. Sex always seemed to make me miserable when I was dating because I was always doing it wrong somehow. And so many conversations seemed to revolve around that when I was a teenager, because we were all very horny.

I was horny too, but I got so sick of everyone thinking being queer was all about the sex I was or wasn't having. Not so much about the love I felt, or the discrimination I faced. No, I came out to people and they just wanted to know if I thought Britney Spears was hot.

I'll be honest, Britney Spears leaves me dryer than a mouthful of Triscuits, limp and cold as day old macaroni in the fridge. In the 2000s she was too polished, too curated an illusion of an unintentionally sexy ingenue with no inner life. She was an image to be drooled over, and I resented the implication I was stupid enough to be manipulated into believing she existed for me. What difference did it make whether or not I wanted to fuck her? What was going to happen if I met her? I was so unlike Justin Timberlake I could qualify to be his nemesis. Was I supposed to imagine she'd be impressed by my dark poetry and self-harm wounds?

I understand that the straight boys I knew were just trying to find a common ground with me. To be female-desiring, or even worse, masculine, was to point at cheerleaders and say, "Her, huh?" This was apparently how most of them understood it. All of them could understand my plight of some women being utterly repulsed by me. What they understood less was the girls who seemed to flock to me. All I did was talk to them like a human being. When I told guys this, they wouldn't take the note.

I will never get to know what Ms. Spears smells like, the exact sound and vibration of her laughter, or if she had time to get really obsessed with Sailor Moon while she was in the Mickey Mouse Club. To be clear, I didn't truly hate her as a person. At the time, it didn't occur to me I was responding to an ad campaign. I just saw her as the ideological extension of the pink toy aisle at Target. That shade of pink made me want to vomit for the longest time.

"Isn't Britney Spears hot? What kind of things would I want to do if I got her alone?" You might as well have asked if I wanted to fuck my Barbie dolls. I did not want to fuck them. I whacked their plastic boobs together like a clacker toy and sent them to war with the My Little Ponies.

I feel for Ms. Spears, honestly. She was Björk's Bachelorette, a fountain of blood in the shape of a girl. She was surrounded by vampires. It was not easy to be beautiful or desired. She had less options to escape than I did. One of our many differences is that I can choose where and when I air out the stink of undead rot.

I am not attracted to the sight of a girl without agency. I want to ask them how to set them free. This is something I think that many men cannot understand. Yet I ask my deepest heart, is the kinship that I feel with feminine people an indication of womanhood? I answer the question with distress and detachment. My heart wants to peel itself away from itself like an orange at the thought of calling myself a woman.

I might not have understood how my straight male friends felt about girls, but girls? So many girls thought I was disgusting. "Don't you dare look at my boobs," they'd say, "Don't you dare get weird." It was always girls who weren't my type that would tell me not to get weird. My type was the type of girl who'd be interested in me, not girls with bleached hair and Old Navy shirts. I was a boy because the boys would accept me as their own. Being a lesbian placed me in an entirely separate phylum and class than the girls at my school. I imagined that even the girls who hovered at my elbows and wanted to know me saw me as a curiosity rather than a person.

I have always hated feeling as though the truth of my queerness only existed in the observation of others. I feel as though I am a million things, but after I get done listing those million things, I'll just laugh and try and think of a single word. I'll usually just say I want to be an elf. Why do I always need a million words to say I reject the words that are too human, too arbitrary?

When I came out to Lucian as a trans man, he said he'd never see me as a man because vaginas grossed him out. He had a boyfriend, I had a girlfriend, I did not understand how my vagina got to be a point of conversation between us. Never once did I want to fuck him, not even if he'd asked me nicely. I'm still insulted by his lack of imagination. If I had a magic spell that turned me into a handsome man, or suffered a terrible cell-scrambling accident in a teleporter that brought me back the exact same except I was born with XY chromosomes, would that judgement still have stood? Or would I always just be a guy with a vagina he didn't want anywhere near his body, as if I even asked? Because I don't recall asking his permission to exist. I don't recall asking anyone's permission.

Somehow, things seem even more transphobic now compared to then. Increased visibility means more people think they know enough about trans people to think they are entitled to an opinion. It's a fascist obsession with gender oppression.

For the sycophants and beneficiaries of a killing machine, every mortal life exists to be molded into two specific shapes. Everything that exists outside of them must be exterminated. The things that get fed into it will also be exterminated, but more slowly. Maybe some rich cis white Republicans will explosively orgasm at the very moment their heads are crushed by the machine. The average person will feel the pain of the slow, continuous violation of being molded into a shape that will kill them. If they're an asshole, they'll look around, see a queer person on the run from the machine's grasping claws, and blame that queer person for their misery.

Anyway, I didn't go to the ACLU ceremony that honored Lucian. I wonder if he would have thanked me if I'd gone.

Graduation/Findings

I didn't include any entries about my graduation because frankly, they were boring, and I was pretty bored with the entire process at the time. I just moved from one space to the next aimlessly. Trying to discern purpose from the entries was too much. That last note about the GSA ends the saga, even though technically that entry was made after I started community college – a separate chapter. My life started coming apart in new and exciting ways as I went to college. Noelle moved out to Seattle, and we've talked about how that went. Grandpa Bob came back into my life, and somewhere in the chaos of coming to terms with his abuse, I broke ties with Simon.

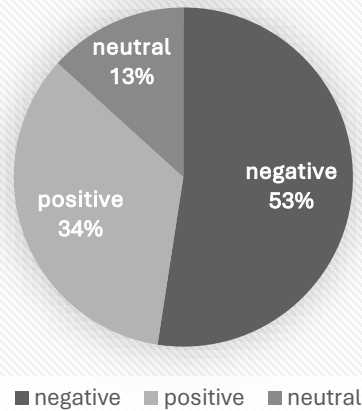
For this project, I originally chronicled my journal entries from June 2001 to June 2004, but felt that the natural conclusion was to that final note about the GSA in 2003. That story more or less ended while others were beginning.

The decision to end my work earlier was made rather late in the process of this project, so the data I collected goes to summer 2004. I took note of the emotions I noted in each entry and determined my biggest mood. I thought this would be funny. I suppose it's another way to sum up the millions of words I weeded through.

On LiveJournal, there was always an option to report one's emotions from a premade list with coinciding emojis. One could also write-in an answer. This encouraged me to always fill in something in that box in each entry. After I gathered each emotion into a separate list, I sorted them out and made a graph, assigning personal emotional values of positive, negative, or neutral to each feeling. These were all rather arbitrary – “vibes-based” as Generation Z says.

As you can see from this chart, I had depression. (: Just in case all of the times I wrote about wanting to die and hurting myself wasn't enough an indication.

Emotions as Self-Reported June 2001 - June 2004



- My largest **NEGATIVE** emotions were HUNGRY and TIRED (47 uses each), because I'd often stay up all night on the internet, or post before breakfast or after school.
- My largest **POSITIVE** emotion was AMUSED (56 uses), because I'd frequently post jokes, personality quizzes, or mean it in a passive aggressive manner when I was annoyed. However, it was also used a myriad of
- My largest **NEUTRAL** emotion was BORED (44 uses)

I also recorded using my own custom emotion 452 times. These were often ambivalent or negative emotions, but many custom-written emotions were also silly despite being paired with a serious entry. Here are some of my favorites that weren't part of the entries I shared.

- **2001:** one long, resounding ARRRRRGGG
- **2002:** i'm a jellyfish of flesh!
- **2003:** angsteriffic
- **2004:** I HATES THE LINKIN PARK

Another interesting artifact I encountered was information about my music listening habits at the time. I wrote down about 1430 entries where I included what I was listening to, though this also occasionally included entries like "my mom yelling at me" or "my brother blasting Linkin Park." Sometimes the music I listened to was better than I remembered, but a lot of times it was worse.

Poetry in Conversation

2001 – 2003

speaking to 2024

smile!

July 10th, 2001

2:59AM

smile!

smile for the photo, child--

everything's all right.

there's no reason to be crying

in the middle of the night...

smile, you ungrateful child!

don't give me those sad eyes

we've made you what you are today

don't giving me quiet sighs!

smile for the photograph,

you've no reason to complain!

if you don't smile in this picture

we'll all hold you in disdain.

(and we'll all

talk about you

when you kill

yourself

again...)

smile for the photo, child!
this is the only way
that we can lie to relatives
and show them we're okay.
smile for my pleasure, child!
give every appearance
that we would let you die smiling
with little interference.

Mood: blank

Music: "Wish You Were Here" --Pink Floyd

This Is About

This is about a laugh
so loud I cowered in the back
of the van.

This is about a name
mispronounced for 20 years
on purpose.

This is about sitting still
on the couch, palm to mouth
in the dark.

This is not about lowering
my voice, or speaking well
of the dead.

Goodbye to Spring

December 8th, 2001

10:02PM

they kissed the honeysuckle sky
the subtle oak
protective of every child.
colors more vivid in hindsight:
that cloudless blue
that fervent green.
those colors are
long gone.

our friend the tree
has been uprooted
years ago.
nothing more than a patch of mud,
ghostly and rootless
just like anyone.

and our friend the sky
is nothing but gray and airplanes
leaving this place.
i sit where they made chains
and feasts of clover.

as always,
the lone mourner.

Mood: offensively poetic

Music: "Last Letter" - Pierrot

Black Friday

In the winter it smells like cold, sharp hunger. No more saltwater smell. All water is still. The snap-shut of a till, glancing off steel water. Chime of the PA: "Attention shoppers." Rustling of facing bills. You would welcome the beady red eye of a ringneck, the nervous flutter of a bufflehead. The absence of birds scrapes you inside. You do not expect color, but why not at least the soft gray of a seagull?

It is not yet time to clock in. It is not yet the point of sale. Keep your eyes on the water. Search for the ripple of a harp seal. The slush is stinging your toes.

When you turn, you'll start the transaction – dragged beneath the nearest snowbank by crushing weight. You will once again become the sleep.

Focus on the water. You brought a girl here once, with a picnic and a pot of coffee. You asked her if she'd like to go out. She said no. It was green when it was spring.

Suicide Note

March 19th, 2002

2:55PM

the world is slowly bleeding
crying, beating, and receding,
dripping tears of pain and hate
waltzing towards uncertain Fate.
rising smoke is on the news,
children wearing mourning hues.
no place to breathe, take off, or fly,
so watch TV while thousands die.
the silent truth is never told...
end it before it gets too cold
becoming ice. this loving Hell...
it's time to bid the world farewell.

Mood: blah

Music: "Hydra" -- Dir en grey

Translating Bones

How can we translate the crack
of bones? Their whispered bleach,
their lonely songs.

We splinter legacies
into dead dog cries.
Congealed flesh floats
in formaldehyde.
Some things we love
and pretend back to life.

Dinosaur feathers,
insects in amber
ancient water cells
trapped in rocks, alive.

We hate their silence,
but think it wise.

In my closet, a baby cries
in a metal box. Exhumed from home
My uncle drew less breath than I, but
oh. The things he's known.

I wish I spoke the language.

Under Earth

May 15th, 2002

3:54PM

i'm the type of person who doesn't believe in violence.

but i might. i wear a trenchcoat and i listen to some violent tunes, and professionals have named me as unstable. if they kill the fine arts department at my school, i will go bugfucking crazy. i'd say there's no way they could ever make it, after all these are voted officials and for God's sake most colleges require a substantial amount of fine arts to even be looked at it.

but those bastards have push past things i never thought would get through. who knows?

The superintendent is becoming a dictator. sieg hiel!

as proof the fine arts are important: the closest thing to a love song i've ever written:

Under Earth

dreaming of an icy field
creeping along the orchard of bones,
setting posies on the graves
of relative unknowns.
tonight i'll slip to your silent world
and sleep with you in your resting place
against your skin. though you'll be cold
you're all i know of grace.

we'll be together, darling
we're wed beneath your stone
though all we face is blind decay
at least we're not alone

i grieved another when we met
but read your epitaph,
the only lasting words of you
carved in: an elegant laugh.
i then loved you completely
you lived as i still did!
a life of ordinary sin
delighting in what they forbid.

we'll be together, darling
we're wed beneath your stone
though all we face is blind decay
at least we're not alone

tonight we'll dance under earth
intertwined as lovers do.
we'll touch and move and celebrate
though in the morning i must leave you
cursing the life that seperates us.
i'll kiss your brittle hand
heavy is my skin until the night
i can join you forever in your silent land.

we'll be together, darling
we're wed beneath your stone
though all we face is blind decay
at least we're not alone

Mood: angry

Music: "Agitator" - Pierrot

Keith Haring, "Unfinished Painting," 1989

I am the last dancer in the corner,
the only complete figure,
one foot held high.

It smells of sweaty paint and skin,
smoke and spilled drinks, summer sticky.
If I put my foot down, I'll step on bodies
but I cannot stand and ache forever.

Last night I dreamed of my lover's ex-wife
scolding me, listing the casualties
of my sickness. As if
her hate is mine to carry.

Before this, I would have begged forgiveness.
Why should I apologize now? In this violet decay,
clarity is luxury.

Listen. The others stopped moving.
They don't stomp their feet,
the music they dance to has ended.

Insomniac Song

July 7th, 2002

2:44AM

here are some things
i never wanted to be:
your dancer, your whore
or midnight fantasy.
i have a right to be angry
but you see i'm not mad,
what good is it to dwell
on things i never had?
my family won't hear
the promises you never keep
sometimes in your house
i'm still afraid to sleep.

every day TV tells me
there's something dying for
still i live underground
with all the things worth crying for
and all that's in my head
is all you never knew
i say goodbye to my adversary
goodbye to you.

i learned how to tie knots
build shelters and fires
even Good Touch Bad Touch
but nothing about liars
i wonder if you liked
how i kept my hair long
and i wonder if sometimes
you'll hear this song
with my hair all cut short
and my face made into a sneer
because i still can't sleep easy
whenever you're near.

every day TV tells me
there's something dying for
still i live underground
with all the things worth crying for
and all that's in my head
is all you never knew
i say goodbye to my adversary
goodbye to you.

sometimes it gets too hard
my veins boil with black
all the grime and the words
that can't be taken back
and i know next time i see you
i'll turn small and quiet
and you'll needle and tease me
they'll all think it's a riot
i used to always wonder
why no one took me seriously
or what would happen
if i vanished mysteriously
but i'm too old for that now
it's high time i moved on
but i won't ever sleep
until i know that you're gone.

Mood: ...

Music: "Blurry Eyes" — L'arc~en~Ciel (stuck in my head)

Popcorn Ceiling

Lately I've been wondering how to grieve, as in

this ancient couch has me pinned.

The muttering fridge

the clock's loud tick

are pouring

thick black sick

into my lungs, but still I think

you have not earned the privilege

to know why I keep

myself so weighted.

Lately I've been wondering how to speak, as in

above me spinning are old dead men.

Swollen balloons stitched

strings to my skin

ignoring

how they rip

my scars open, but still I think

you have not earned the privilege

to know why I keep

close to me the things I've hated.

Lately I've been wondering how to live, as in

bland cakes tomorrow, still-foreign kitchen.

Pale dawn curtains lit

fluttering thin

devouring

to forget

the plundered night, but still I think

I'll spare you my stark knowledge

that while you sleep

I'm witnessing

the stains that you're afraid of.

Becoming King

July 17th, 2002

3:00PM

because God i still remember
the pink feathers, the teddy bears
because when i was a child i was a wolf
because when i was a child i was a mouse
because when i was a child i wanted to be king

and king someday i still could be

wearing a dyke haircut and an ugly hat and a long coat
the first in a long line of obscene songs
rattling off my favorite dirty verse:
he was a girl but wasn't really and his word was integrity.

and i might not be what you wanted me to be, leaving
muddy boot prints on the rug sometimes
i'll be scolded for leaving my tap shoes at the studio again and
renamed for how i left my heart in the land of the rising sun.
too many telephones are ringing off the hook
in my heart like sand traps or landmines
all of my signals are flaws, all of my flaws are brushstrokes
and brushstrokes are what comes from bleeding. still i know

nothing is better than the man i know i can grow up to be
no place is better than behind my eyes
and every word i breathe is more sacred than texts backlit in chapels
because though i'm not Christ like anyone
i can grow up to be king.

Mood: hungry

Music: "San Andreas Fault" -- Natalie Merchant

Jelly

it might have seemed a simpler thing,
to only ever get bigger.
evolving as expected - calm,

familiar. with thousands
of long-fingered limbs,
listlessly combing the scaly seabed,

a curled and clinging little plant,
nerveless, aimless
yet anchored.

in curiosity, i unmoored,
spun out like a pinwheel,
buffeted by underwater winds.

straining for the skin of the sky, i snatched
a star. swallowed it, bloomed and
burst open wide.

I swim.

To you, a bell-shaped threat,
catch-barbed and razor-ribboned,

A precious polyp transformed to a
Medusa, a tangled accident
of dangerous limbs.

I say: better to dance
than scream, stifled, crushed
beneath miles of water.

I say: my touch only blisters
when you get too close, and
I have not invited you near.

Somewhere in Utah

September 17th, 2002

9:00PM

my 'concrete imagery' poem for poetry class tomorrow. read. or don't. whatever.

Somewhere in Utah

old gods are remembered here.

the lonely wind sculpted them spires
whispering with a sandpaper tongue
and a dry taste.

beneath the rough sandstone the
memories are buried.
their name left nothing but a harsh feeling
and a warmth from daylight where they rest.

the ghosts of a crippled traveller
dances, playing his flute to the tame the wind,
a shimmering heat distortion
stretched between the turquoise sky
and the ancient gravestones the color of
a million hardworking hands.

Mood: tired

Music: "Gold Dust" -- Tori Amos

Blue JPEG

after Taneum Bambrick's *Vantage*

On our way to the Grand Canyon, I exhaled my teenage angst into notebooks and onto my skin with a red Sharpie. It was hot and I wouldn't wear anything short. I wouldn't wear colors. I was sweat-stuck to the seat, sandpaper tongue scraping the roof of my mouth. Did I think I was really hiding the problem? We took photos with a new digital camera. I couldn't be forced to smile.

At my grandparents' house, I did dishes: digging soupy detritus out of every glass divot, slime clinging to my hands. Wilted lettuce and soapy food that still make me gag. My grandfather grabbed me from behind. The next images are over-compressed, pixelated: a frequent problem with those old school cameras, if you didn't save them in the right format.

Silent Night, my first vilanelle

October 19th, 2002

12:37AM

i decided to call this, rather than my theorized title, "I Fucking Hate Villanelles", to um, "Silent Night". it is not happy or even that good. it's also my first crack at a very complicated and strict way of writing poems. i also ripped off something Kyo wrote as well as the timeless Xmas Carol... to give it both a sense of innocense, irony and horror.

i juggled a lot in my mind whether or not i should share this. but. i worked hard on it and am pretty proud, if worried and/or embarrassed by it.

Silent Night

they say for these thoughts i am far too young.
painting the night red, i'm only 16,
prone on the floor. the victim has no tongue.

like a broken chord waiting to be sung,
no one can hear me and i'm never seen.
they say, for these thoughts, i am far too young.

not a word can hiss from this dying lung,
refusing to gasp, wail, sob, cry or keen,
prone on the floor, the victim has no tongue.

they don't know the vein from which my death sprung,
an accident, surely it must have been,
they say. for these thoughts i am far too young.

in this note all of my sorrows are hung,
the scribbled red lines and corpse set the scene.
prone on the floor, the victim has no tongue.

my pulse suggest the fight's only begun,
not alive or dead, i'm torn in between,
they say. for these thoughts i am far too young.
prone on the floor, the victim has no tongue.

How We Found Your Body

A carcass
full of nothing,
a discarded
plastic bag.

In these moments
with the chaplain,
We've forgotten
all your threats.

But your swollen tongue
comes crawling,
like a rotted
ghostly slug.
In these moments
nightmare common
slimy trails glint and spread.

It's not your fault,
your empty body,
your black tongue
speaks no regrets.
In these moments
there's no message
but the silence of the dead.

Sick Day

October 21st, 2002

1:51PM

it's a gray day
rotating between silver 50's B
movies stale comedy and the lush landscapes
of Heaven.

the phone is ringing and i'm picking up
but there's no one on the other end.

if i go to bed all the blood will well up again
inside my head and a jellyfish will sting in my mouth
till i free it.

curled up on the couch, smoky gray robe
just doesn't cover the blue chill of the box.
i'm not really watching the evil doll that makes house calls,
i'm thinking about a dream i had
where i'm a vampire and i'm happy
not bleeding
never bleeding
not ever
not ever again.

Mood: sick

Music: "Creep" — Radiohead (acoustic ver)

Sick Day (Pandemic Poem)

It's my chronic illness,
those same old rapists
sleepwalking on front pages.

Beloved ruins of truth,
hobbled by people like me.

Others fence their fears in, with ease,
quarantine them, audaciously
spinning their truth into candy
even their white friends can enjoy.

Will I outlive this virus? Cracks
keep splitting my surface. My blood
isn't that sweet, I'm so sorry.

A Letter of Apology From Not-So-Prince-Charming

November 8th, 2002

8:59PM

the bell's ringing in the forest,
but already i know i'm too late:
sleeping beauty's dead.

i thought we forever, but we weren't,
and i thought we made sense together, but we didn't.
anyone could tell you, that's just the way it goes.

we fed each other pieces of our lives
in anticipation of a grander stage show
that never quite happened.

sorry i missed my cues,
but me and the scrawny white steed
have other sunsets to ride into now.

Mood: sick

Music: "Eyes On Me" -- FF8 Piano

Trophy Husband

I want to get rich, impossibly,
so you can be my trophy husband -
because, deep down, I know
you won't help me with the dishes.

If we got together now,
we would let the plates pile up
into sky high pillars, build
a disgusting castle dream.

We would climb each teetering
tower of trash to engage
in our unwashed arguments
with sharp words and cutlery.

I want to get rich so you'll marry me,
and become my trophy husband –
we could stay together always
if someone else does all the dishes.

Cut

March 5th, 2003

1:47PM

it burns and bleeds across my skin,
such a failure, the red ink leaving a mark.
i'm a pain junkie, this is my favorite passtime.
i still hate, so with my razor
i do it all again.

get rid of the hate, cut it all away.
get rid of the ugliness, cut it all away.
soon nothing will remain beneath the surface.

preferring to be selfishly alone,
others only wish to dissect me.
i think pulling the wings off a roach is cruel.
i still love, so with my razor
i do it all again.

get rid of the love, cut it all away.
get rid of the relationship, cut it all away.
soon nothing will remain beneath the surface.

now i might be suffocating
dizziness and pain wells up in my chest.
i make sure no one can hear me cry.
i still breathe, so with my razor
i do it all again.

get rid of the breath, cut it all away.
get rid of the feeling, cut it all away.
soon nothing will remain beneath the surface.

i am completely lost in this world,
unable to continue, i won't take the time to try.
i can't make wings with these lesions.
i still write, so with the razor
i do it all again.

get rid of the words, cut it all away.
get rid of the emptiness, cut it all away.
soon nothing will remain beneath the surface.
nothing will remain beneath the surface.

nothing remains beneath the surface
nothing remains
nothing remains.

Mood: angsteriffic

Music: "Zakuro" -- Dir en grey

Blood Speak

When I was young, I used to cut myself with safety pins, and later a box cutter. Little crescents like mouths. I used to dream of cutting my wrists open like a fish, my raw arms flapping like lips and muttering. My dream came true one day while I was cutting. As my blood dripped, it began to speak:

You know you are not this you know. You know that you must stop you know. These marks may fade in time but you know you know you know you will remember.

We are reborn every few years you know. From your marrow we become you know. But we are part of you you know. And so. And so.

We do not wish to be lost to you you know. We are a part of you you know. We inhabit you you know. You are our earth, our vessel you know. You know. You know. You know.

I did stop cutting myself after that. Sometimes I still bleed, but I remember. I am not just myself, I am a home for the blood inside of me, and more than anything, the blood wants to live. My veins are their rivers and paths. My tissue is their home and sanctuary.

The blood inside me wants to live, you know. You know it wants to flow you know.

Outro: Etiolation

Racing toward paleness on the information superhighway. Late nights on LiveJournal. After puberty, tans turned to freckles. Perhaps it's the Cathode rays scattering my melanin. Perhaps it's my birthmarks exploding, looking for light.

I've been looking for something. I don't think I can find it outside this room. I don't think I can find it in this room. Life is a paralytic poison. Life is humiliating. Worst enemies include society and my mother.

I'm screaming at the void to tell me I'm okay. Someone, anyone, tell me I'm okay.

I must be okay. I will be okay. I will be,
someday.

Works Referenced

- Chumbawamba. "Social Dogma." *WYSIWYG*, Republic/Universal Records, 2000.
- Coldplay. "The Scientist." *A Rush Of Blood To The Head*, EMI Records, 2002.
- Green Day. "Macy's Day Parade." *Warning*, Reprise Records, 2000.
- Leah Andreone. "Porn." *Alchemy*, RCA Records, 1998.
- Pink Floyd. "Hey You." *The Wall*, Pink Floyd Music Publishers Ltd, 1979.
- Pink Floyd. "Mother." *The Wall*, Pink Floyd Music Publishers Ltd., 1979.
- Pink Floyd. "Time." *The Dark Side of the Moon*, Pink Floyd Music Publishers Ltd., 1973.
- R.E.M. "Everybody Hurts." *Automatic for the People*, Warner Bros. Records, 1992.
- Red Hot Chili Peppers. "My Friends." *My Friends (Single)*, Warner Bros. Records, 1995.
- Simon & Garfunkel. "Keep The Customer Satisfied." *Bridge Over Troubled Water / Keep The Customer Satisfied*, CBS, 1970.
- Smashing Pumpkins. "Bullet with Butterfly Wings." *Mellon Collie and the Infinite Sadness*, Virgin, 1995.
- Visaggio, Magdalene. "'Kurt Cobain Was a Trans Girl. She Is Ours Now. We Will Not Be Returning Her.'" *Twitter*, Twitter, twitter.com/. Accessed 22 Jan. 2022.