



TEXTS I NEVER SENT

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Texts I Never Sent is an anthology of text messages that poets left unsent for some reason or another, and a small number of poems related to the topics of texts and things left unsaid.

Due to the personal nature of some of the writings contained here, we have chosen to keep the authors mostly anonymous.

You can find their bios in the back of this book rather than alongside their works.

When you decided I wasn't worth the time,
I lost all kinds of joy in my life that I didn't even know I
had.

Colors grew dull, food tasted bland,
I missed the sound of your voice

I hate that I missed the sound of your voice.



11:19 PM

Conversation with



Look, no. I don't think I do if I'm being honest. You asked me a while back, on your couch late at night, if we didn't get back together whether or not I wanted to be friends, whether or not that would work for me. And I think I knew then and just hadn't admitted it to myself. But no, I don't think I can. I really did my best to give you a piece of me, and you were so careless and apathetic with it and it took me a while to realize that but I know it now and truthfully I'm pretty pissed off about it. And I'm pissed off that you pushed me away to this place that's more comfortable for you but not for me and I hate that you're so happy to see me and can't help but feel like you're happier now that you don't have to date me anymore. If that's the case, why were we ever dating in the first place. I know this isn't what you were expecting when you asked if I wanted to get lunch, but that's what I needed to say.



Text message



SMS

Here's the thing.

I love that you found someone to love.

But God, there are days where I wish it was me.

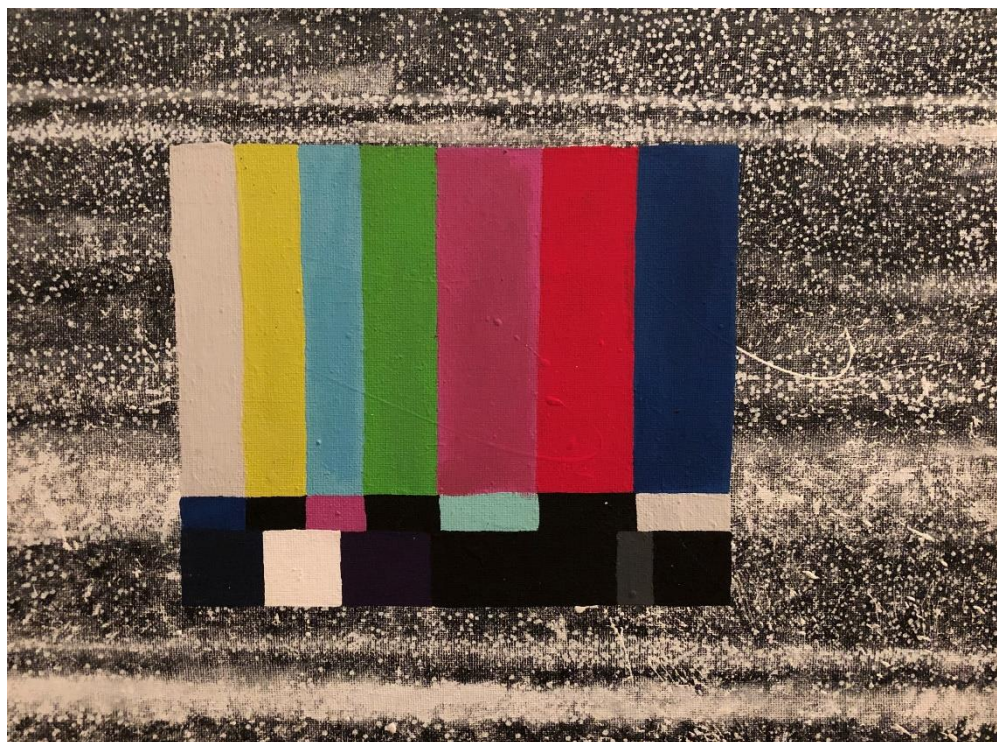
We'd take cold tea in paper cups for bed
And wait for sunrise to warm them again.
I felt I couldn't quite remove them yet;
That I should leave the past untouched.
You found some asylum in quiet space
So now I'm trying to be silent too.
The cotton linens reek of mothballs now,
Still hidden behind clothes we thrifted back
When I forgot the words to everything

Hey, it's been a while since we last spoke. I guess maybe we should talk about things? Clear the air a little bit. I don't know how long I'm meant to keep replaying that night and thinking about those words you said. Did you mean it? Did you mean anything, everything? You said it's me. It's always been me. Was it me when you ran your fingers through her hair – looked into her eyes- told me she'd get back with you in a heartbeat? Were you thinking about me when her mouth touched yours and she left that little red tell-tale sign on your neck? You stopped showing up, started making excuses, started leaving my messages with nothing but a little blue tick every time I tried to tiptoe around the subject. Was it the whiskey or is it me? Has it always been me? Will it always be me?

I'm not sorry I hurled my *Star by Julian McDonald* at Debenhams, bag in your face, only that I had emptied it that very evening of the 5kg dumbbells. You don't have a claim to people forever, people are like winning lottery tickets; there is an expiration date. I don't know what I was hoping to achieve when I grabbed your face with my fingers – I am like a Jack Russell or Border Terrier. Still I had always thought you were very beautiful, I was always wildly envious of you.

hey
ive been watching glee lately
and it made me think of how i'd go to your place in
college
and we'd sit on the floor and watch the new episodes
every week
anyways hope you're doing well

Static - Britta Alford



t i d e

My love,
I hope this finds you well,
It's been 72 days since I last felt
your warm and gentle embrace,
since you left your footprints upon the coast,
and strode upon the frothing tide.

This beach stretches forever,
so much so that the distance from the shore
to the horizon
seems shorter than does that of the sands
from end to end.

I sit here every day,
upon the rocky promenade,
wistfully hoping that you'll return,
but cold in the knowledge that you won't,
as the spray from each wave
leaves a lingering salt upon me
that rubs at my wounded heart.

I dig my hands into the white sand,
feeling the grains turn to rivers
as they cascade down around my fingers,
the heat of the summer sun
humming through each handful
as I lift my arms skyward
in prayer
that you would hear me.

Yet, even Poseidon himself has not the power
to bring you back to me,

and no matter how hard I try to follow,
the waves push me back,
as if imbued with your spirit
your love,
keeping me warm and dry,
alone
but safe.

My love,
I hope this finds you at all,
and that, as you read, you think of me
as I think of you
each day we remain apart,
until we are reunited
when the tides turn.

There's no easy way to say this, but I'm glad you brought it up this time round rather than sitting in denial because 'things like this don't happen to people like me'. I know I say I'm getting back on the right track but I don't know how. I don't want to lie. It breaks my heart to watch you hurting all over again because I can't work out how to navigate my way through life without constantly being at battle with something. I know you say you want to help but it's not fair to drag you through this all over again so I pull away to protect you. It may hurt now, but it's less painful than watching me continue to deteriorate. You can remove me from social media, block my number, cut all those ties so it doesn't hurt. So you don't see where this goes. Know that I'll always love you.

what i think about at 3am

can i cry into your arms,
one last time,
romantically?
i'm scared of many things
and laying with strangers isn't doing it for me
i need some consistency

if you're interested, you have my number
you can call me whenever you want

*i like putting on my own collar when you call my name
i like laying myself down before you walk all over me
i have no shame*

no matter where i am
you can find me easily
you know this
so why haven't you called?
-Efren Castro

the tarot cards say you're coming back / but i'm not
convinced / why swing back around for me when you've
got the job / the girlfriend & the cat / (i've always
wanted a cat) / a step-by-step guide to life, a five-year
plan / laid like out like a wedding banquet / i'm glad
you're happy even when i'm selfish / even when i'm
jealous and needy / there's another girl who you're
desperately in love with & touch all the time / you're
not coming back / people have free will and i have no
right to be angry / (i think i want you to rescue me) / i
don't want to be rescued but i do want to be cared for /
i'm tired of chasing after things that wear me out / of
alienating people with my issues / i'm trying to stand on
my own / there's so many places i want to go / i've got
so many dreams / so why are you in all of them

It's not fair that you still have this effect on me. Two years later while you are half a world away. But then again love isn't fair. And yes you read that right, I said love. Because I do love you. I miss you to the point my heart aches, I thought that was only a cliché in books but then I felt it. With you it just seemed right. Maybe I can't get over you or move past you because we didn't end on bad terms. We didn't end up hating each other and we still occasionally both hint in our brief messages that those feelings are still there. I wish more than anything that you would come home. I would kill for one of your hugs right now. I wish that back then I could have come with you and I regret not getting out to visit you. But life just got in the way. But you are always, always in my thoughts. I hope that you will come back and I very much hope to visit you. I love you and I miss you so much. We'll see each other again for sure.

dad.

I know it's late, please don't tell me to go to sleep.

Don't avoid me that way. Don't father me.

you've lost the privilege.

I know it sounds like this is coming from nowhere

I know I should have communicated it earlier to you,

I know you're my father, and you love me.

but don't tell me any of that, because I don't want to
hear it

you're running away from the confrontation I'm trying
to have.

The point is, dad,

when you brought me into this earth

you loved me.

but you also loved Mum

and maybe you weren't ready for a kid,

and I can forgive you for that. I really can.

But I can't forgive what you don't apologize for.

so, since you like directness,

since I need to be clear or upfront

so you don't pick at my words

and use them against me,

What I want is an apology.

And I asked for one last week,

but you had put me on the spot

and taunted me because my mind went blank.

So here's a list, dad.

And once you can take responsibility,

without bitching to your ex-wife about her terrible
parenting,
or praising your current one for hers,
listen. For once, dad, listen.
Here's a list of sorry's I need.

(redacted)

and once you can provide them to me,
by all means-
come back on in, I'll open the door.
but I know I will only send this text
in my dreams
after I pass out on the floor.

oh / i know / i should have *done things* differently / &
lived differently, / so that the troubles & torments
which i chose to write about would be comfortable for
you to handle. / perhaps / i should have
metamorphosed into someone else entirely / a mirror
image of myself / camouflaged. / an image which
revels in the abjection of what has made me / the
person i am today / like you wanted me to / & i could
have / become *subtle, stabilized* / a trophy for you /
to admire / whilst overlooking my tears / but / instead
/ i became **real** / everything that you detested /
refusing to devour the lies which you have given me /
i'd rather succumb to my own poison.

It feels wrong texting you this completely out of the blue but I've never been able to find a way to say it organically. I just want you to know how much you mean to me. For you to drop everything to come and visit me when I was falling apart is a kindness I'll never forget. I don't think I'll ever be able to express how grateful I am for that. That seeing you was the only time I was allowed to leave the house for more than twenty minutes. That it was the first time I ordered a coffee which wasn't black. That playing Mario Kart together was the first time I genuinely felt happy in months. That it was the first time I realised people do actually care. The first time I thought that maybe things would get better for me. You showed me what real friendship is. That friends don't tear each other down, they build each other up. They play piano duets, they eat ice-cream in bed whilst watching *The Office*, they get drunk on the train and sing JLS songs on a swing set, they share a double bed full of crumbs and vegan chocolate milk, they invent little worlds of their own where horror theme parks have soup taps and purgatory is the Wii Mii Plaza, they make teddy bears with secret voice message-- IOOk aT aLI ThOsE cHiCkEnS, they hold hands and sing at concerts, ultimately they care. They unconditionally care. I guess what I'm trying to say is that in you, I found a friend that treats me like a friend should. In you, I see a girl who deserves the world, a beautiful soul with a bright future that I can't wait to be a part of. I miss you so much, I can't wait for life to go back to normal so we can pick right back up where we left off.

INSUFFICIENT BOLD

*"I'm trying to find a way to tell
those kids that they won't become
who they think they will –
people more extraordinary than us.
They'll simply carry on being themselves."
- Estlin McPhee, "Prayer for Our Past Selves"*

*I'm trying to find a way to tell you I found them shaking.
Those kids that they won't become sprawling across my
mind.*

They growl, this was how they wanted to go. Shudder
across the divide.
They penned names in an open journal, *who they think
they will save.*

Holding their quaking body, I know we've lost
so many *people more extraordinary than us.*

Phone cold in my palm, scent of antiseptic steaming
through St. Joseph's. I hold a text, insufficient bold words.

How do you tell someone their brother skulled
a month's meds under the fairy lights you hung together?

It will be a short talk and a long night. You won't be back in
town
for a week. They'll ink a semicolon on their wrist. We'll co-
exist

for a year. *They'll simply carry on being themselves.*

Do not take any more than you have already taken from me. Your name is anathema. You have ruined my life.
Be nice to me. I have your emails.

No, I do not have the poem I wrote about you when I was nineteen-years-old – , coz I inscribed it on a tortoise shell and the damn thing has run off. I had always thought I could have been happy with you, despite your being what the German's call *Dreikäsehoch*. You broke up with me on Boxing Day, and gave the present you had bought me for Christmas to someone else. I still gave you yours; you wouldn't want any poem I'd written about you read out at your wedding.

I cannot say this in a text. There is no text which could ease me comfortably out of the locked gates of this castle.

You've hurt me.

Every single one of you.

I was never afraid of you.
I was in love with a girl who knew my horrors,
and I was terrified of Hell and of telling you
that you were just the boy
who was going to get me out of a Baptist high school
alive.
And I wasn't self-aware enough
to know all those things then, but I looked at you and
saw a shield
and told myself it was attached to a knight.
I'm sorry I did that to us.
I'm sorry we grew up in that place.

Then it happened all over again. This last time was with a close friend and coworker for the past several years. We connected more than we ever should have to get me through a rough time. It never got physical but got close to it. I had a rough time figuring out how to deal with it. Boundaries formed and broken time and time again. Even up to today, we have our moments but we still battle with those boundaries.

I never wanted to be with you.
You never would have made me happy
and we wanted different things in life.
Not even our “friendship” was sustainable.
Every text or snap or facebook message
received gave me an anxiety that was almost high.
That high was a reprieve from the constant
spiral of depression I couldn’t escape at the time.
For 10 years we moved through this dance
where you disappear when you felt like it,
and reappear when I was weak,
like you could smell it on the air that my life
was changing
and you would swoop in like a vulture
to pick at what was left of me.
10 years and you couldn’t give me what I needed.

I just needed you to treat me like a full-time real
person,
NOT some temporary thing, a ghost you could use
to satiate the rawness inside you, and exorcise me after.

When I was around you I felt alive in the stillness of my
melancholy.
When I was with you I felt like life was a thrill,
Like we had no worries and getting older was a choice.
When we were together I felt reckless, like my shadow
self
could finally stretch out and breathe.

Those are the temporary things. You are the ghost in my
world.
I’m real.

Heresy - Britta Alford



I once gave you a triceratops costume for
your dog and I want it back.

I don't have a dog, but you don't deserve
that kind of joy.

if/stop

if
he really loved
me
he would have
lied
better

if
you still
love
me

stop

sharing happiness

please

loving him

stop

sending vibes

please

leaving me

just.
fucking.

stop.

if...
stop.

if...
stop.

if...
stop.

enough.

Settling Down

I wish I didn't fall for every cute guy that treats me right,
there aren't many that really try
I don't know exactly what I want from you, all I know is
that I get flustered when you call
You seem to follow my mind's wavelengths, it works the
same as mine
You remind me of my mother's dad, stern and strict but
safe and secure
maybe I'm looking for someone more mature, but i'm
not sure

I don't think you'll make it past next week, but my life is
really bleak right now
and I just need someone who's down *for me*
I don't know much about love and shit , I think I just
want someone to scroll through Twitter with
I've been looking for someone to settle down
I think I've given up on something more profound
-Efren Castro

I used to check your Facebook

and I'm not really sure if I should have been happy or
sad

when I saw that you haven't dropped dead yet.

I'm not even sure why I kept your number in my phone. Perhaps I'm just asking for trouble. Typical me- always asking, never finding the answers. Do you know? Do you remember? Do you brag about it to your friends? Do you feel guilty? Do you feel proud? Why did you block me? Was it because you felt guilty? Did you realise you were in the wrong? Or were you scared that you'd get drunk and let the secret slip? Do you think about how many years I'm going to spend trying to untangle those seconds-minutes-hours you took away from me? Are you sorry? Will you ever be?

Remember in 2005 when you got a mobile upgrade and gave me your old phone? Well, after I'd put in my SIM, I discovered a text you'd written, hovering in your drafts, just sitting there, unsent. I doubt you remember it. Or maybe you do. I don't know. Let me remind you:

The text that you composed at 3am, the day after you'd buried your brother. The one in which you were "higher the moon" and "staring out at the sea, that familiar blanket capable of such savagery." The one in which you were "laying out mortality" and "wondering what becomes of the soul, of memory, of personality." The one in which you typed "I wish you were here, sitting next to me" on the granite boulders that lined the boundaries of your childhood beach.

"You" was a woman. A woman who was not my mother. A woman who was not your wife. I kept this knowledge inside of me; it gave me power over my mother / your wife, to know that I could crush her at any time by screaming HE DOESN'T EVEN LOVE YOU, HE'S IN LOVE WITH SOMEONE ELSE, HE'S GOT A GIRLFRIEND. And I knew who. I knew who "you" was. Did you know that I knew? I never confronted you. You knew that I knew, didn't you? You knew I knew about you and "you." Of course you knew.

But I am so fucking glad that you never pressed 'send.' She / "you" / the woman didn't deserve you, doesn't deserve you, never did, never could. But still, when you died, I texted her: the woman that you so adored, the woman that you wrote deep text messages to when you were stoned and alone, the woman that never loved

you like you loved her. I thought she ought to know that you'd died. Because you loved her. And I love you. And it's what you would have wanted me to do.

I'll never send this text you. I can't even if I wanted to because, when you died, I took your phone. I used yours instead of my own, something to do with mixing our thumbprints on a screen and having access to your photos. But I lost your phone one night when I was drunk so I can't ever send this because your phone is gone and you are gone and it doesn't matter anyway: even with your secrets I love you all the same and, until I'm dead too, your secrets are safe, hovering in my drafts, just sitting here, unsent.

If I were a witch,
I would have cursed you so that
all your hair fell off your head
and instead tiny fingers grew in its place
because that would be fucked up, right?

I'm debating becoming a witch.

i'm looking at apartments i can't afford / i'm praying to
my gods (mercury, diana) to give me an answer / there's
a crushing feeling in my chest / in a year's time you'll be
married / & i'll be waiting and wondering if i was
anything more than a flicker in your life / i'm such a
dreamer that i've lived through our life together / over
and over again / who fantasies about arguments and
cleaning dishes? / what kind of grown woman needs to
be comforted / & cooed at like a child? / lonely girls i'll
bet

I should let him be with her because he needs her more than he needs me.

I want her to depart because my bedroom is not the place for her.

siren song

*what does it feel like to inhale sea
brine, sea debris?* I ask you. your skin

oozes saltwater, turns cells into
cerulean myth. dream of floating

instead. whisper something besides an
elegy—you don't have to drown, you

know. the sun bleaches sand into a
pillar of salt. don't look back or you'll

forget to breathe. have you already
forgotten? how can you live like this—

submerged—hidden from a world gone ill?
born in another time, you'd be a

mystic or a martyr, holy words
bleeding the back of your throat raw. here

you are something asleep or aching,
an anchor on the bottom of the

ocean floor, waiting for salvation.
you convince yourself you are God or

you convince yourself you are gone or
you convince yourself you are empty;

nothing but the sea to keep you safe,
nothing but the sea to keep you sick.

Here's what I need to explain, I tend to have 50% romantic views while the other is filled with disgust (with myself, life, marriage, failed connections). I met my husband when I was young. He wasn't my first love or my last, and I never truly fell in love with him but cared for him. My friends credited him as a 'good guy' so it was logical to stick it out. Meanwhile, I found myself connecting with others more easily. I could have pursued those relationships but something always seemed to be missing.

It wasn't funny at the time, and I had precious few hours to get it sorted. You will ask: "What will it take for it to become funny someday?" But why on Earth will you use our finite time to ask me that?

remember, the rain last summer when the pink pigeon flew away with the white one? the flight was adrenaline-fueled. one, with sharp teeth, the other, in blood. the pink flew back to his mother's nest on the other side of the city. the white remained, dead, under the open sky, warm rain mixing with its warm red blood. there was an investigation and all. natural death was written as the cause.

On top of all of this, my husband had a gambling addiction the past couple of years and we got close to divorce, but thankfully to his caring family we were able to turn his lifestyle around and he is doing much better. But the romance comes and goes, currently we're in that spot where it seems dead. We don't share the same interests at all. He supports my creativity but doesn't know the content or depth of what it entails.

What's the difference between circumstance and destiny?

I will never lie to you again. When I lied to you, it was because there was more truth in the lie than there was in the truth. Tim O'Brien said something about that, I think.

Do you remember all the places we've been together?

I wonder if we can name them.

What happens to your body when you write?

"Say more, if you want to."

I'm more human than I am humane

me, but everything is slower and quieter

Are you afraid of

Are you okay with the idea that we can stop being afraid?

Are most of these answers yes?

I never stopped.

I used to pretend I stopped. And I stopped pretending I stopped.

I wonder if, in the future, when discussing you and I, I will cry or laugh. I hope to do both.

The horses are out of the stable and it's way too late now

I never stopped.

I opened my ribs,
made splayed folios of skin
into a journal you could carve into
or use as a blanket on a cold night.
I reconstructed myself into a shambling monster,
with hands too unsteady for a needle,
and too in love to find the thread
to sew myself up.

I am sorry I compared you to a tin of spam, but you brought the poppies with such a sadistic purposeful manner and all of my standing up in front of an audience happened the day after the Autumn wedding....

I will die to prove my devotion. I will not die because I do not want to hurt anyone. I am confused. I am not ready to forgive.

the egg yolk keeps running back, it refuses to let go of its whole like a trauma that sits on the seat of a train, never stepping out for fresh air even when the train smells of dead bodies and dried blood. it must hurt to have a folk cut through its body, forcing a separation like families who live on either side of the border, a little distance apart.

remember my autopsy?
do you still taste my secrets
and offal and all the things
you ate from me
to fill the blankness
of your sense of self?
are you still hungry?
did anything genuine
ever grow inside of you,
or are you still out there
devouring friends,
taking their names,
and lying about the blood in your teeth?

~~What the fuck?~~ I have **never** been so insulted! You know what I'm talking about. I think you should open up about your feelings for the lifeguards in their tight shorts and the cast of Magic Mike (especially Channing Tatum). You wanted to be a dream boy? Nah! You wanted to take one like a chocolate caramel in your mouth and bite into it until the sweet creaminess of it filled your mouth. Your beard is gaudy and loud. Your beard will not shut up. You build your home on a fault line.

Discovering your poetry recently was refreshing, and a bit of an attractive distraction. I'm happy we connect on multiple topics, but I fall in love so easily. It's hard for me not to. It's a curse as much as it is a gift. I can't easily shut off my feelings no matter how hard I shy away from them.

All of this is to say I am trying really hard to keep my emotions in check between us but they get the best of me. I could listen to your poetry all the time if time would let me.

Well, you are too much like Sleeping Beauty's wicked step-mother and you think it's funny to put rats in a microwave until they explode like porridge dirtying the white metallic walls with grey fur, pink flesh, slimy blood-red secretions, and then there were the pustules on your skin.

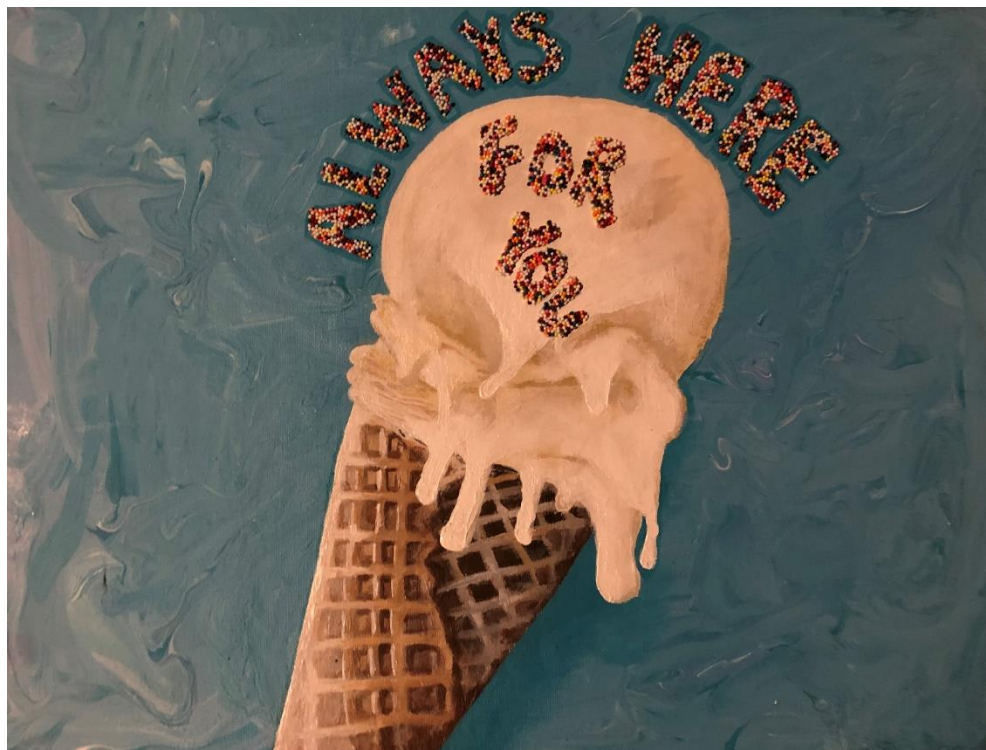
I hear a large amount of man-yelling. Your life is an ice cream shop and it has 80 flavors and they are all called "Recovery." I am going to be supporting you. I am going to do it from so far away.

This past year I reconnected with quite a few of those past connections, it was exciting. It was great to either see or hear from them again. Maybe everyone was going through their midlife crisis at the same time and I was lucky to be in their thoughts again. Either way, it triggered a lot of emotions. Why didn't I choose to be with them, why didn't I speak up and live the life I wanted... Did I ever really know what I wanted?

here's the recipe you asked for: one part love, one part loyalty, one part compassion & a sprinkle of empathy. but none of these are available for your story and still, you insist on baking one with people not worthy. there is certainly a fault with your stars, the way you swell with emotions. ever since you stepped over the line between childhood and darkness unwillingly.

I don't know why you're telling me this now, but I don't hate it. Shall we get drunk on red wine and kiss each other? I don't know if I dare touch you *there*... would it be wrong to want to?

Sweettooth 1 - Britta Alford



i guess it is o.k. to part ways after chitchat next to an ice cream truck, be it a last farewell or a death note.

I should have hit send.
I should have told you sooner

But I'm sure I'll hear from you next weekend.
I'm sure on Saturday you won't know
If I'm an ocean or a drink away;
That by your third Negroni
I'll be in your head and you'll be
In my inbox. I'm sure every year we'll say
"I can't believe we've lost another"

And every year I'll find a new crease
That my makeup can't cover; I'll find less
Of me every time I walk by a mirror.
One year I will not ask if we're too late,
I will just know.

If you're wondering why we're not close it's because
you abandoned me once the ugly scars on the inside of
my brain began to permeate my skull... the kind of
person I was didn't have a place in the flower
arrangements you continued to make. In the depths of
my loneliness you came to see me – once. I no longer
believe I have your telephone number

Your address is still in my Amazon account and I can't bring myself to delete it.

What the fuck was that for?

Seriously. What the fuck was that for?

You never gave me a reason why.

I've stopped looking for the reason.

I no longer remember the sound of your voice.

Biographies

Britta Alford is a nonbinary, pansexual artist/model/performer, focusing their efforts into visual arts on canvas and through street art, as well as poetry, prose, theoretical conversations, and social activism. They have recently worked with The Athenaeum Press on the upcoming book *Trans/South: Ten Stories of Identity*, to highlight the presence and heartbeat of queer communities in the Deep South—where they also have grown up. Their published work can also be found in various issues of award-winning *Tempo Magazine*, and *Archarios Literary Arts Magazine*. Follow them on Instagram @unitedsnation, and on Twitter @wowokba.

Andrew French is a writer from North Vancouver, BC. His poetry has been published in journals across Canada, America, and the UK. His debut poetry chapbook, *DO NOT DISCARD ASHES*, is forthcoming from The Temz Review's 845 Press in the fall of 2020. In his free time, Andrew hosts *Page Fright: A Literary Podcast*, where he grills his favourite authors on their latest works.

Tucker Lieberman is the author of *Ten Past Noon: Focus and Fate at Forty*, a biography of an early 20th-century writer who died by suicide. A highly fictionalized version of this narrative, "Exit Interview," is in the imaginary friends fiction anthology *I Didn't Break the Lamp*. Tucker lives in Bogotá, Colombia with the science fiction novelist Arturo Serrano. www.tuckerlieberman.com
Twitter: @tuckerlieberman

Zarnab Tufail is a 19-year-old, Pakistani poetess who belongs to a small village in Punjab. She enjoys watching sunsets and taking silhouettes. Her work has been published in Capulet Mag, sister-hood Mag, Blue Minaret, Vagabond City Lit. and elsewhere. Her blog can be found here <https://www.instagram.com/zarnable/>

Ellie and the (dys)Functional System are a non-binary trans poet and artist and a DID system, exploring life as a multiple through trauma, love and politics. Their twitter is @dys_f_system.

Madison Zehmer is a poet and wannabe historian from North Carolina, with published and forthcoming work in *Déraciné Magazine*, *Drunk Monkeys*, *Gone Lawn*, *LandLocked Magazine*, *Kanstellation Magazine*, and elsewhere. She is editor in chief of Mineral Lit Mag and a reader for Lily Poetry Review. Her first chapbook, 'Unhaunting,' will be released by Kelsay Books in 2021.

Efren Castro (they/them) is a queer Latinx poet originally from Lennox, CA. They are a recent English graduate from UC Riverside who writes, designs, and publishes their own poetry zines. They are a former poetry editor for the literary journal Mosaic and they co-founded the art/literary journal Nuestra Cosita, catered toward queer Latinx artists and writers. Their work has been featured on InQluded, The Castle, and the Inlandia Institute. Their latest release *Heartbreak Stories* is available to purchase with Mi Casita Press! Keep up to date with their work on their Instagram @namehere360.

Miranda Cooper is a NYC-based writer, editor, and literary translator. Her book reviews and culture writing have appeared in *Kirkus Reviews*, *JTA*, *Jewish Currents*, the Jewish Book Council, *Tablet*, and more. Her Yiddish poetry translations have been published by *Jewish Currents* and the Yiddish Book Center; one of her Yiddish fiction translations is forthcoming in *Pakn Treger*. She is currently an editor of *In geveb: A Journal of Yiddish Studies*.

Kimberly Ray is the author of the poetry series, *Coffee Shop Sessions* (2018, 2020). Her work has been published in *Clay Literary* and *Teen Belle Mag*. She can be found on twitter at @kimray_poet or on her blog at <https://coffee-shop-sessions.com>

Stef Nuñez is a part-time staff writer for a publishing company where she ghost writes. She is also editor-in-chief for *Sage Cigarettes Magazine*, where her flash fiction, poetry and art can also be seen. You can find her on twitter @witchxpudding where she is most active.

Megan Cannella (@megancannella) is a bit of a recovering academic, glad to be returning to poetry after a long hiatus.

Emma-louise is an emerging poet and writer who likes to write observational and slice of life pieces. She can be found on twitter at @emmalouise1066

Frankie Martinez is a writer from Southern California. She currently edits stuff for *Sundog Lit* and *Stereotype Life* and blogs at frankieiswriting.com.

Isabel J Wallace is a queer writer and surgical nurse working in the wilds of North Florida. The swamp has left her predisposed towards ghost stories and the certainty that something is always lurking just out of sight. She's been published in *Malaise: a Horror Anthology*, a collection of horror short stories by queer authors, as well as in *Smitten: this is what love looks like*, an anthology of poetry by women for women. She can be found on twitter @izzyjowalls.

Rachael Charlotte is a Lincoln-based writer and poet, who recently studied creative writing at the University of Lincoln, where she continues to serve as a poetry editor for the Lincoln Review. She has had previous work published by Streetcake Magazine, Burning House Press and Fly on the Wall Press. You can find her on Twitter @rachaelg2601 and Instagram @rachaelcharlotte14

Grace Alice Evans (she/they), is an LGBTQ+, mixed-heritage poet, writer, and sound/visual artist. Their social media handle is [@gracealiceevans](https://www.instagram.com/gracealiceevans).

Iona Murphy is an Mst(res) student at The University of St Andrews, navigating her way through her early twenties in her own messy way. Currently, she is working on her first collection of poems *Numbers*, throwing down messy ideas for a novel, and of course trying to finish her degree! She is a feminist, bisexual, mental health advocate, student journalist, and is forever reading Sylvia Plath. She has a poem published in *Black Bough*, and creative non-fiction in *Ayaskala* and *MID-HEAVEN Magazine*. You can keep up with her on Twitter @write_with_iona and Instagram @ionasmurfy

Jodi Aleshire is a soon-to-be graduate of Ball State University. She's been previously published in the America Library of Poetry and The Broken Plate. She resides in the Midwest with her partner and still listens to the same bad music she loved in high school.

Sarah Loverock is a writer, poet, and MA Creative Writing student. She has been previously published in *Streetcake*, *ang(st)zine*, *Perhappened* and *Pussy Magic*. She loves all things witchy and spiritual, history and mythology, and cute animals. She is available on Twitter @asoftblueending.

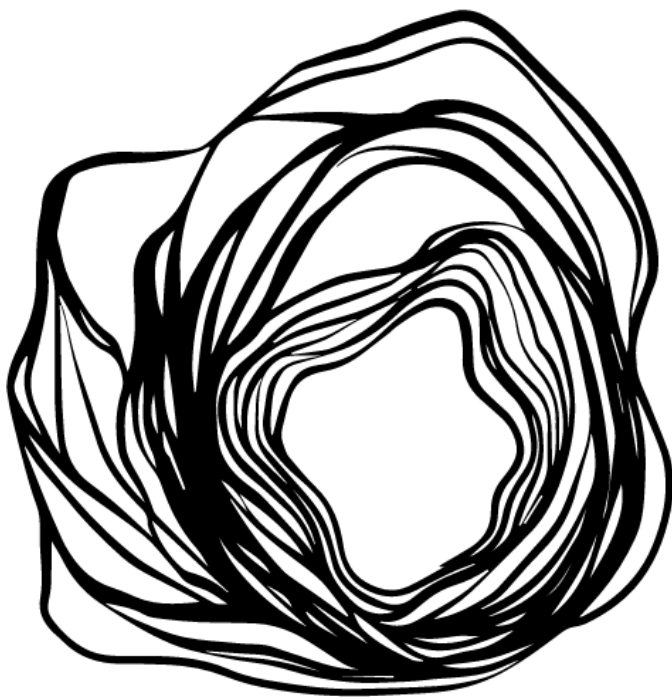
JM is a writer based in Oakland, CA. When he's not climbing rocks or experimenting with a new recipe in the kitchen—or even better, over the campfire—you can find him walking the trails of the Bay Area with his dog Bandit, looking for a nice shady spot to read.

HLR writes poetry and short prose based on her own experiences living with mental illness, grief, trauma, and addiction. Her work has featured in *In Parentheses*, *Constellate*, *Dear Damsels*, *Anti-Heroin Chic*, *Re-side*, and many others. Her story 'Lasagne' recently won TSS's Cambridge Prize for Flash Fiction. HLR was born and raised in north London and is yet to escape. Read more at www.treacleheart.com or on Twitter [@treacleheartx](https://twitter.com/treacleheartx)

Sam Woods has had works published in Space, Back Patio Press and Road Maps and Life Rafts.

McCaella Prentice is a Maine Writer and graduate of St. Lawrence University. She is currently living/writing in New York City and working in healthcare. Her poetry has previously been featured in Ghost City Review, Lammergeier Magazine, and Honey & Lime Literary Magazine. McCaella was also an honorable mention in the 2019 Small Orange Emerging Woman Poet Honor.

Owen Lee-Hueman is a teenage writer whose poetry explores ideas surrounding human nature, mental illness and the adolescent experience. Owen's work strays from confining itself into labels and boxes; and Owen is without a fixed gender, race or identity known to the public. this is done in a hope to bring unity and recognise that deep down, we're all only human.
social media: @owenleehueman



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