



*To Not Be
Human*

*the 1999 chapbook
janet kuypers*

paint a suicide picture

to the family of Jocelyn Burn

I found these letters, you see, and I didn't know what else to do with them. I just moved into an apartment on the lower east side, and there was a box of belongings left in a storage space in the back of my pantry. There was mostly old pots and pans in there, so I didn't think anything of it, but then I came across these letters. I assume they are from your sister, because I liked her music (I even saw a show of hers in Phoenix), and the date of the last letter corresponds with the day she passed away. I didn't know what to do with these letters. They weren't in envelopes, so there was no address, and my landlord refuses to tell me who used to live here. Security purposes, he tells me. They haven't tried to get their belongings back, and I waited a while for them in case they did. I almost wanted to keep them for myself, they just seemed to say so much, I felt like I had almost felt these things. I didn't want to give them up. But I know your family would have wanted to read them. They belong to you.

Let me just tell

you to prepare yourself for these letters. They are from the last month of her life. She was going a few shows... I don't know why she felt the way she did. Her band was starting to make it. The radios gave her air play in the last two months. These letters are sad to read.

I don't know who the letters are addressed to. Maybe you do. I wish I did. I suppose it doesn't matter now, though i would like to see the mystery revealed. I'm sure you feel more strongly about this than I do, but I would like to know why.

The fame and love she looked for she received partly because of her death. She is now revered. If only she could feel it.

I hope these letters answer some questions for you, or possibly bring you some peace. They are strong letters. I am sorry for your loss.

Joe Pagliano
New York, New York

September 23

i hate everyone and everything. why can't i find someone that cares about me? even a best friend? even someone who claims to want to spend the rest of their life with me? even if i can't stand them? why do i feel so worthless? why do people stab me in the back? i hate you all. i really hate the fact that you hurt me so much.

i really want to not exist for a while. i'm tired of people hurting me. i'm tired of people. there are some times when i feel so lonely and unwanted that i want to die. i want it all to end. i just hate having to deal with the people in life that make life difficult.

when i start in this cycle i just know that i fall farther and farther down. who do i blame for this? i want to blame someone, so i can think it isn't my fault. that i don't have a terrible fault that brings all this pain on me.

i really need to get away from here. i need to find someone that cares.

i think i care about myself, but god, i want to know that i am not the only one. i feel so lonely, so betrayed. i have no friends.

everyone is so fucking fake. why can't i count on anyone? why can't i find someone to lean on, just once? Every time i try, every time i start to feel confident about myself, someone has to come along and shatter it all.

i hate feeling like this. i wish i had people i could count on, for once in my life. i hate crying. i hate feeling this way about myself. i hate it.

it's over

October 1

i keep getting screwed over. i'm supposed to do this show. i make plans for it. then i find out though the grapevine that i'm not going. my managers couldn't even tell me. i have to ask and pester and bother in order to find out what i'm doing.

then i'm not going. then four days before the show i find out that i am going, it's back on. how am i supposed to prepare for this?

October 3

i really don't like tom. he doesn't understand that i just want a little attention. he thinks i really like him. i couldn't like that. no, i just want an ego boost if i can't have someone real.

October 4

i just want to feel like i'm alive again. i don't feel that way now, and i don't know how to get that feeling back anymore. i was sitting in the hot tub yesterday evening, and it put me in the best mood ever. i was in a good mood all night, until i realized that i wasn't going to be going out, then i just went to sleep.

i like doing the shows, i guess. i like going to different towns for shows. it was nice for a few hours to be in another city, high up in the air in my hotel room, half dressed, thinking that i owned something. myself, maybe, or maybe just some ideas. for a little while i felt alive. i miss that. i want to feel alive all the time. i want to feel alive.

October 11

i hate feeling lonely. i hate feeling alone. i can't believe a one of the managers wanted to sleep with me last night. a part of me still doesn't want to have to deal with it. i wouldn't want to date him if he was single because not only do i work with him, but i also know what a woman watcher he is. it's not as if i should think it was because i was special, though. i think it was pretty much because i have breasts. what a joke. always me.

i didn't wait for tom to call me back yesterday, and he didn't. i thought at least he would try to screw me. i didn't even get that effort.

and i'm sure todd won't ever want to call me back. i'm just sure of it.

and i'm sure jeff looks like a horror movie creature.

where is my soul mate?

maybe i have no soul. that's why i can find no one.

i think i should just start fucking everything that moves again. at least then i had an ounce of physical satisfaction.

god, and i know my life is a self-fulfilling prophecy. the more depressed i get, the more people don't want to be with me and then the more depressed i get.

why do i have

October 16

all of my true goals are destroyed by other people. i want someone to lean on. i want someone who doesn't make me feel like shit. i want to achieve my goals. i want to be successful. i want to be famous. i want to be rich. i want to make everyone jealous and feel like they are worthless compared to me. i want to feel like i am above everyone else.

everyone hates me. i am so worthless. i hate everyone. i am so worthless. everyone hates me. i am so worthless. i hate everyone. i am so worthless. everyone hates me. i am so worthless.

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people are such liars. i hate them all. why did i let myself get like this? why did i let people do this to me? i've just destroyed my future musically and it was all because of someone else.

some one i thought i could count on. someone i thought loved me. some who i thought would always love me.

i was wrong. i was terribly wrong. no one loves me. no one loves me at all. i am not important. i am not important at all. i am worthless. i mean nothing to no one. i am worthless. i could just drop off the face of the earth and it would only matter to the people who had to prepare my remains for the funeral. and to them it would only be another client in their day.

why do i have to be so alone? why do people have to be so fake? aren't i talented? aren't i successful? aren't i funny? aren't i important?

if you're so funny... why are you on your own tonight?

i can't do anything. i can't sing. i can't perform. i'm useless. i'm worthless. i'm nothing. i wish i could be something, but i am only nothing, and i will always be nothing.

i wish i could count on someone. i can count on no one. everyone i thought was important to me, well, i was not important to them. i hate being nothing.

even the people i thought would always love me, well, i should know better, they don't care about me either. every single person i thought was a part of my life, well, i was wrong, they aren't. i mean nothing to them. i always thought i did things to improve myself because i care about myself. i was wrong. i still do things because i care about how other people think of me. and i have failed.

i have no one. i have no talent. i have nothing - even in myself - to count on. i have no one.

i feel so alone and i feel so incompetent. and i feel as if no one cares.

no one does.

October 18

life is so interesting sometimes. it's amazing how one conversation can change my whole outlook

on life. i need to be reminded sometimes of what i am doing, of who i am, of what is deep down inside me. i have to be tested.

i don't know if i will ever get to sing - and be appreciated for it.

i don't know who i want to spend the rest of my life with. who they will be, when it will be, anything.

it is almost nice.

here i am, in another country, sitting once again in some lounge with absolutely no soul, drinking something. i figured i have \$27 canadian, oh, probably \$30 with my dollar coins, that i won't be able to spend in the states. i could go window shopping, but that would require motion, besides, david might be trying to get a hold of me, and i don't know whether or not i should wait for him.

never have enough time. when i do, i do the same things - drink, and think too much.

amaretto stone sours are particularly good.

and then i will get on the plane and... uh... mark will pick me up (yes, it really did take me that long to think of his name).

david was laughing at how i throw men around. well, none of them are good enough for me to keep.

show went okay tonight. i do like the travel. it makes me feel better for some reason to be alone in another city than in my home town.

October 20

why am i that worthless to you? am i that worthless to you? i guess i am, since you treat me the way that you do.

i came here hoping to get out of my depression. you only succeeded in sinking me deeper. i want to die.

you succeeded in your mission. i hope you're happy. now i know that everyone hates me.

i can't do anything tonight. tonight was supposed to be the beginning of the rest of my life.

i was supposed to start anew. you've destroyed that for me.

you've used me, that's all you've done. you've succeeded in making me feel even more worthless than i already did. are you happy? were you looking to destroy me? probably not, you were probably not even thinking about me, giving my a single thought in your head. that's how little i mean to people, and i know it.

don't worry, i guess you're not the only one, but i think you were the straw that broke the camel's back. i wanted to hear it from you because no one else would tell it to me. but you didn't either, and now i know the truth about myself and what people think about me. i guess i should almost thank you, for showing me the light. it is a painful light, but it is the truth nonetheless.

i've always said i wanted the truth out of people, and now i guess i've got it. no one cares for me. i am useless in this world. maybe i'll be more useful in the next. what a fucking joke. if there were a next world.

when i die, i don't want any ceremonies done. i don't want to be filled with any chemicals so my body can be displayed for people who claim to mourn, i don't want to be a part of that modern-day ritual. i want to die, and i want body to decompose that way it normally would so that maybe at least my remains may benefit nature somehow.

i feel like kurt cobain, except i've done nothing that would make me revered. i've done nothing.

no one appreciates what i've done in my life. i've overcome so much, and it still isn't enough.

nothing ever works out for me. ever. i'm alone

October 22

my dreams are always just that, dreams. if i ever achieve anything, it is in a half-ass way that proves that i really can't achieve my goals after all. i feel so lonely. lonely even when i am in a crowded room. alone.

i want someone to know me and appreciate me for my talent. i want someone to feel as if they can follow me just because of the work that i do. i want to be accepted and appreciated in that realm. when that doesn't happen, i look for someone that appreciates me in a physical sense. then i find them and i realize that it is only temporary, that no one has any respect for me, that i have still lost. that no one really cares about me. that i am nothing. that i am worthless.

i wanted to think that you would always care for me. i should have known better. i should have known you were just like all of the others, even after all we have been through.

gone through? what the hell have we gone through? you followed me like a puppy dog. you have a small penis. i don't know, i guess other than the harassment i felt from you after we broke up, after the bout with arthritis after dating you again, you haven't brought me much. i want to think that i have happy memories in my life, but i can't think of any. with you or with anyone.

life will go on without me. i just wish a lot of the time that it would end for me sooner than later. i've always said that i know that i will always lead a long life because i know that with my luck, i'll be forced to live this miserable life for the longest time possible. what i've never said is that that notion really depresses me. there are a lot of times when i just want to die. i just want to disappear and never have to deal with anything - never even have to live - again.

sometimes even breathing seems like a chore.

i wish i could feel alive

writing used to help me, but it doesn't seem to anymore.

i don't even feel like getting drunk now. usually that is my answer for anything. i don't have the answers anymore.

October 23

when someone reads this, i will be gone. i want to die. no one loves me. i am worthless. every time i tried to reach out to someone they always failed me. i'm tired of being there for people when they are never there for me. i'm tired of being strained, i'm tired of being pushed around, i'm tired. don't you understand? i'm tired of crying. i'm tired of hating myself anymore.

i'm never going to make anything of myself. no one will let me. let me die.

i haven't felt like this since my father beat me. now i should be stronger, but i can't fight the whole world.

fuck my dreams. i can't achieve them. fuck the causes. fuck them all. i can't beat everything in this whole world. i give up.

give me some pills.

wait. i have some.

soon it will be over for me. don't let the world remember me. i want to die without a trace, the way i lived. i never found the answers.

why couldn't anyone love me? was i that difficult? why did everyone destroy me? i can't fight you.

why aren't these pills working? i'm so tired.

by the time someone reads this, i will be dead. i will die crying. i will die knowing no one cared.

i wish someone could have loved me, once.

god eyes

It was a stupid point to argue about at 2 a.m., sitting in the lobby of the Las Vegas Hilton listening to the clink and whirr of slot machines and the dropping of tokens onto metal. You believed in God, I did not. Even after two rounds of Sam Adams and three rounds of Bailey's I knew you wouldn't change my mind, and I had no desire to change yours.

You told me of a dream you had: in it you and Christian Slater played a game of pool. You won. He looked at his hands and said, "I've got a beer in one hand, and a cigarette in the other. I guess this means it's time for me to seduce someone." And he walked away. You're a funny man. You make me laugh. Your brother even noticed that. And you even spoke like Slater, rough, mysterious.

You were the optimist: yes, there is meaning to life. I was doomed to nothingness, meaninglessness. But to me you were the pessimist: you believed you were not capable of creating the power, the passion you had within you. I had control in my life, even if in the end it was all for nothing. You think we are so different. We are not.

It's now after three and we listen to music:

Al Jarreau, Whitney Houston, Billy Ocean, Mariah Carey, Natalie Cole, with her father. "That's why darling, it's incredible -" you mouth as you walk toward the washrooms - "that someone so unforgettable -" take a spin, watch me mouth the words with you as you walk away - "think that I am unforgettable too."

I tell you about the first time I got drunk - I was maybe ten, and asked my sister to make a mixed drink mom had that I liked. She made me a few. So there I was, walking to the neighbor's house in the summertime, wearing my sister's seventies zip-up boots, oversized and unzipped, carrying my seventh drink and sticking my tongue out to see the grenadine. You liked my story. You laughed.

Passion is a hard thing to describe. Passion for life. You must know and understand a spirituality behind it. You do your work, the things in life solely because you must - it is you, and you could not exist any other way. It is who you are. It is a feeling beyond mere enjoyment. You said that the spirituality was a God. I said it was my mind. Once again, we lock horns.

All of my life I have seen people espouse beliefs but not follow them. Tell me you're not like them. Our values are different, but tell me we both have values and will fight to the death for them. I need to know that there are people like that, like me. We are different, but at the core we are the same. We understand all this. I'm grasping straws here as the clock says 3:45 a.m. and the betting odds for football games roll by

on the television screen. You don't gamble. Neither do I. Why must you be so far away? You reminded me that I have a passion in life, that I have to keep fighting. But I get weak and tired of fighting these battles alone. I, the atheist, have no God and have to rely on my will. When I am low, I struggle. You have your God to fall back on, I only have me.

And you looked into my eyes as it approached the morning. You stared. We locked horns once again. I ask you again what you were thinking. And you said, "I see God in your eyes." Later you said it to me again. I asked you what you meant. You said, "I see a God in your eyes. I see a soul." Whether what you saw was your God or just me, my

passion, well, thank you for finding it. "Good-bye, Ms. Kuypers," you said when you left for good that day. I said nothing. Good-bye, Mr. Williams, I thought, then I closed the door, walked to the window, started singing unforgettable. I was alone in my hotel room, and the lights from the Stardust, the Frontier, the Riviera were still flashing. I'm not alone. Good-bye, Mr. Williams.

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