



scars publications 2002

# change rearrange

music by original & communique's arrangements.

Kein Mehrheit für Die Hitleid & others

janet kuypers

communication  
why i'll never  
get married  
right there by  
your heart  
farmer  
high roller  
what do we say  
holding my skin  
together  
against my will

written pieces changed, rearranged,  
interpreted, convoluted & integrated with music

# gears get caught in The mud

I've wanted to be so much for you  
I've wanted to to cook your meals  
and clean your clothes  
And even wanted it to surprise you  
I've wanted to do things  
To catch you off guard  
To beat your intelligence

And once I want to start  
My gears gets caught in the mud  
And they start spinning  
And I try to get them out  
But I usually never learn  
And I spin them and some more  
And I get further buried in the ground  
And it's like I'm digging my own grave  
By spinning my own wheels  
And trying so hard  
To be everything to everyone,  
No, wait, to you

I'm trying to be so much  
And do so much  
I'm trying to accomplish so much  
bit I'm spinning my wheels  
and I'm burying myself  
And I want you to know  
(At least)  
That I'm trying

# AFTER THE WRECKAGE

I can't leave this funeral that never seems to end  
I can't leave this funeral that, in a way, never started  
And all I know is that I have been doing all of the mourning

And is that the way it goes?  
Is someone mourning for you for too long  
And you, the deceased, didn't know anyone would care  
And you, the deceased, didn't know they were dead  
So

So was it just me  
Do I feel this alone

Does your spirit rise after the wreckage  
And you watch from above  
And see how everyone reacts  
And see how I cry  
And see how I suffer

Is this what you're doing to me?

And now, after the funeral,  
And I have to clean up the room  
And I have to put away the flowers  
And I have to escort the people out  
Because they don't deserve to be here  
Because they don't even clean up the mess

I should know by now  
It's still me  
It's only me  
Isn't it?  
Is that the way it goes?

# ALL YOUR FAULT

you know i could kick your ass  
for not calling  
for not showing you care  
for moving across the country  
for leaving me

you left me, you know,  
let me repeat that, you left me  
and that's how i'll remember it  
nothing more, nothing less  
and god damnit, i wanted a future with you  
i planned it all in my head

and hindsight's 20/20  
i know i was a fool  
but i still know it was your fault  
and i won't accept any other explanation

i've got to put my foot down on something, you know

and so i left you  
and i thought that would surprise you

but you have so much on your mind  
to worry 'bout 'lil ol' me, don't you

i wonder if you even knew i was there

there are many things i could have told you  
and never did  
and i want some kind of closure  
so i can put you behind me forever  
so i will no longer think  
that i was your only hope

# ANDREW HETTINGER

I never really liked you. You never revealed yourself to me and why would you: you, who never had anyone, you, who always had the bad breaks. Everyone looked at you as different. Where would you have learned to trust. Who would you have learned it from.

I never really liked you. I met you through a friend and he explained to me that multiple sclerosis left you with a slight limp and a faint lisp. Faint, under the surface, but there, traces of something no one would ever know of you well enough to fully understand.

I never really liked you. You never revealed yourself to me and I never wanted you to; you scared me too much. You, plagued with physical ailments. You, with a limp in your walk. You, with a patch over your eye. You, who stared at me for always just a bit too long.

They told me the patch was from eye surgery with complications and now you had to cover your shame, cover someone else's mistakes, cover a wrong you didn't commit, cover a problem not of your own doing. The problems were never of your own doing, were they.

I heard these stories and I thought it was sad. I heard these stories and thought you had to be a pillar of strength. And then I saw you drink, straight from the bottle, fifteen-year-old chianti. And I saw you smash your hand into your living room wall. This is how you lived.

The house you lived in was littered with trash. Why bother to clean it up anyway. It detracted you from the holes in the wall, the broken furniture from drunken fits. This was how you reacted to life, to the world. You didn't know any better. This is how you coped.

I never really liked you. You would come home from work, tell us about a woman who was beautiful and smart that liked you, but she wasn't quite smart enough. And I thought: We believe anything if we tell ourselves enough. We weave these fantasies to get through the days.

I never really liked you. Every time you talked to me you always leaned a little too close. So I stayed away from the house, noted that those whom you called friends did the same. I asked my friend why he bothered to stay in touch. And he said to me, "But he has no friends."

This is how I thought of you. A man who was dealt a bad hand. A man who couldn't fight the demons that were handed to him. And with that I put you out of my mind, relegated you to the ranks of the inconsequential. We parted ways. You were reduced to a sliver of my youth.

I received a letter recently, a letter from someone who knew you, someone who wanted me to tell my friend that they read in the newspaper that you hanged yourself. Your brother died in an electrical accident, and after the funeral you went to the train station,

and instead of leaving this town you went to a small room off to the side and you left us forever. Strangers had to find you. The police had to search through records to identify your body. The newspaper described you as having "health problems." But you knew it was more than that.

And I was asked to be the messenger to my friend. The funeral had already passed. You were already in the ground. There was no way he could say goodbye. I shouldn't have been the one to tell him this. No one deserved to tell him. He was the only one who tried to care.

I never really liked you. No one did. But when I had to tell my friend, I knew his pain. I knew he wanted to be better. I knew he thought you were too young to die. I knew he felt guilty for not calling you. He knew it shouldn't have been this way. We all knew it.

I never really liked you. But now I can't get you out of my mind; you haunt me for all the people we've forgotten in our lives. I don't like what you've done. I don't like you quitting. I don't like you dying, not giving us the chance to love you, or hate you, or even ignore you more.

My friend still doesn't know where your grave is. I'd like to find it for him, and take him to you. Let you know you did have a friend out there. Bring you a drink, maybe, a fitting nightcap to mark your departure, to commemorate a life filled with liquor, violence, pain and death.

I never really liked you, but maybe we could get together in some old cemetery, sit on your grave stone, share a drink with the dead, laugh at the injustices of life when we're surrounded by death. Maybe then we'd understand your pain for one brief moment, and remember the moments we'll always regret.

# expecting The STONING

I

you know how  
you want a popsicle  
and you want it for the longest time  
and you don't even know what it's going to taste like when you get it  
and then you finally get it  
and it tastes oh so good  
and you have some if it  
and you want to save it so you can have it later  
and then you realize  
that in order to keep the popsicle from disappearing  
it has to stay in the freezer  
to avoid melting  
and becoming just a liquid pile of remains  
instead of what you wanted

that it had to stay in the freezer in order to survive  
and you couldn't stay there with it  
that it was meant to be cold forever  
or consumed

it was either one or the other  
they taught you that fact when you were little  
you can't have it both ways

you can try  
and it might be fun at first  
but everyone knows it will hurt later on

and it will

II

I think what I liked the most about us  
was the theory of romance

no, wait, it wasn't that  
it was the fact that it was forbidden

that you were a friend of a friend  
and this wasn't quote unquote supposed  
to be happening

but I liked the idea of being with you  
I would travel across the country to see you  
the thought of you and the times we had behind everyone's backs  
those times were like poems to me  
and maybe looking back we weren't technically together  
when we couldn't even tell anyone that we we ever together in the first  
place  
but it was still nice for me to fantasize

and what did it get me

III

maybe my problem was that it was all in my head  
and maybe I didn't realize  
the novelty would wear off for you  
that you were like the average American  
and after twenty seconds of watching a television show  
you'd want to change the channel with the remote on the arm of your chair

I didn't know you were a popsicle that would melt  
when you were exposed to ANY sunlight or ANY heat at ANY time

I didn't know you had problems. don't we all.  
we all don't go to psychiatrists and stay on medications  
maybe I didn't know how bad your problems were

I didn't know you were a snowman  
that I made in the backyard at my house in the winter when I was little  
a snowman that was fully equipped with  
a carrot nose, like pinocchio, no, wait, like you, with  
no hair, like you, with  
black rocks for eyes, like you

and yeah, that snowman melted with spring, like you  
and maybe I should have learned my lesson  
from that damned snowman

I guess there was a lot about you I didn't know  
because in so many ways I didn't know you

IV

I remember how little kids would want to build snowmen  
in the winter  
they didn't seem to mind the snowman eventually going away

I hated the cold, so I didn't play in the snow as much

maybe in playing those little games  
everyone else learned their lesson, maybe they learned something  
that I should have learned

V

I should expect the stonings that I am bound to receive  
for telling you that I know what you have done  
and that I want the rest of the world to know it too  
I will expect the stonings  
with time, I have been getting used to the punishments  
for telling the truth, even when people don't want to hear it  
and I don't want to be your savior  
and I don't want to be your prophet

I don't want to be that for anyone

I think I am too cocky to be a good leader, anyway

so, thank you for getting my hopes up and then blowing them away  
with one breath from your lips  
like anyone would do to a pile of sand

or table salt spilled on the counter

because I think I needed to learn that lesson  
and in a way, for now,  
I only have you to thank for it

# Will be JUST FINE

there's a pot on my window sill  
terra-cotta, i think  
and it used to have a spider plant in it  
once  
now there's just a pile of dirt  
shaped like a terra cotta pot  
with a few dried stems  
coming out of the top

i could never take care  
of anything, you know

and i wonder what i've done  
to you

could I find you again  
hold you in my arms  
rock you like a baby  
stroke your hair  
and tell you everything  
will be just fine

# being god

I'm tired of dying for your sins  
over and over again and why is it that  
I am the one that's doing the dying  
when you are the one that's doing the sinning  
I don't think you're learning your lesson

I'm tired of taking this knife to my hands  
over and over again giving myself the stigmata  
the blood gets all over my clothes  
and I can never get the stains out  
and for what, for you to see how I suffer

I'm tired of being humble when I'm  
supposed to be the one with the power  
over and over again I become your servant  
and never are you bowing to me  
I don't even get a thank you

I'm tired of preaching to the converted  
when the converted aren't even really listening  
they're snoring in the back rows while I  
deliver my sermon and there's not even air  
conditioning in here and I'm sweating

I'm tired of coming to you and healing the sick  
taking away the problems, over and over again  
giving you something to look forward to  
and all I have is an eternity of waiting for  
someone to take my place and tend to my wounds

I'm tired of giving the earth up to you  
watching the devil's work be done, and you know,  
he's just sitting down there looking at me  
and laughing, over and over again because it's  
so easy for him when he doesn't have to work

I'm tired of being your salvation  
over and over again you turn to me  
and I have no one to turn to but myself  
it's a bitch, you know, being your own god  
since no one can save me from me

I'm tired of being your teacher, handing you  
what you need on a silver platter and waiting  
for that damn collection plate and someone  
is always stealing out of it from the back row  
I know who you are, you who leave me nothing

I'm tired of wearing this crown of thorns  
over and over again the needles prick my skin  
and even gods bleed, at least this one does  
and when I ask you to wipe the blood  
out of my eyes, well, I can't see you anywhere

I'm tired of being something for everybody  
when everyone is nothing for me  
maybe the devil has the right idea, you know  
maybe I'll sit back and wait for you miss me  
as you wonder who's your messiah now

# FARMER

And just north of his corn field  
there is a college, the university  
has bought up the property

right to the edge of his land. And  
at that university there is a man  
studying plant biology, he wants to

do research in food genetics, create  
the perfect ear of corn. And the farmer  
knows this.

All he wanted  
was to be able to make a  
living, maybe save up enough  
so his kid could walk over to campus

every morning, maybe meet some new  
kids. The government assistance has  
run out, the state wants to push the

school south an extra mile, put up  
a research lab, another dormitory. The  
drought has done nothing good for his

field anyway. And the doctors say the  
lump under his shoulder is from the sun.  
All of these years

he would wake up early Sundays  
to work, and he would find tire tracks  
from souped up cars digging in his

property edge. Kids leaving beer cans,  
junk food wrappers, condoms. And he  
would pick up what he could.

In the upcoming years, would his  
little boy do this to someone else?  
And this was his labor:

he had sewn the seeds; the plants  
running, hurdling the rolling hills,  
sprinters uniform in a marathon.

And all the way to the street at the  
edge of his property, the green sign  
reading “1800 S”, all the way to the

end is his life, his little earth,  
in straight rows, like the peas  
on his son’s plate when he plays

with his food. And now the rows of  
corn are less straight, as if in recent  
years he didn’t care. This year it’s the

worst yet, he didn’t bother with the  
right chemicals, and there are weeds  
in between the rows. The grass next to

his house is almost up to his waist.  
And he’s awake now, it’s four  
in the morning, and he’s wandering out

in it all, and he’s almost crazy. The grass  
waves, almost staggers, like him. And he  
thinks:

let the weeds grow.

# COMMUNICATION

## I

now that we have the information superhighway  
we can throw out into the open  
our screams  
our cries for help  
so much faster than we could before

our pleas become computer blips  
tiny bits of energy  
travelling through razor thin wires  
travelling through space

to be left for someone to decipher  
when they find the time

## II

got into work the other day  
and got my messages out of voice mail:  
mike trisko left me his pager number  
and told me to contact him with some information  
mike wright told me to call him at the office  
between ten thirty and noon  
lorelei jones told me to check my email  
because she sent me a message i had to read

so i first returned mike wright's phone call  
but he wasn't in, so i left a message with a coworker  
and then i dialed the number for mike trisko's pager  
listened to a beep, then dialed in my own phone number  
then i got online, checked my email  
read a note from ben ohmart, emptied out the junk mail

realizing i didn't actually get a hold of anybody  
i tried to call my friend sheri  
but i got her answering machine  
so i said,  
"hi - it's me, janet -  
haven't talked to you in a while - "  
at which point i realized  
there was nothing left to say -  
"so,  
give me a call, we should really  
get together and talk"

### III

sara and i were late for carol's wedding rehearsal  
which was a bad thing, because we were both  
standing up in the wedding  
and we were stuck in traffic, and i asked,  
"sara, you have a cel phone, don't you?"  
and she said "yes"  
and i asked, "well, do you know carol's  
cel phone number, cause if you do, we can  
call her and tell her we'll be late -"  
and she said, "no - do you know it?"  
and i said "no"

### IV

I was out at a bar with Dave, and I was explaining to him  
why I hadn't talked to my friend Aaron in a while:  
"You see, we usually email each other,  
and when we do, we just hit 'reply.'  
when you get an email from someone,  
instead of having to start a new letter  
and get their email address, you can  
just hit the 'reply' button on the email message,  
and it will make a letter addressed  
to the person who wrote you the letter originally.  
so one of us sent the other a letter, and  
it had a question at the end,  
so i hit 'reply' and sent a response,

with another question at the end of my letter.  
so we kept having to answer questions for each other,  
and we just kept replying to each other,  
sending a letter with the same title back and  
forth to each other. well, once i got an email  
from him and there was no question at the end,  
and so i didn't have to send him a response.  
so i didn't. and we never thought  
to start a new email to one another.  
so we just lost touch."

and then it occurred to me, how difficult it had become  
to type an extra line of text, because that's why  
i lost touch with him

and then it occurred to me, no matter how many different  
forms of communication we have,  
we'll still find a way  
to lose touch with each other

V

now that we have the information superhighway  
we can throw out into the open  
our screams  
our cries for help  
so much faster than we could before

but what if we don't want to communicate  
or forget how  
too busy leaving messages, voice mails,  
emails, pager numbers  
forgetting to call back

what if we forget  
how to communicate

## VI

i wanted to purchase tickets for a concert  
 but i was shopping with my sister  
 and wasn't near a ticket outlet  
 but my sister said, "i have a portable phone,  
 you can call them if you'd like"  
 so she gave me the phone, and i looked  
 at all these extra buttons, and she said,  
 "just press the 'power' button, but hold it down  
 for at least four seconds, until the panel lights up,  
 then dial the number, but use the area code, because  
 this phone is a 630 area code, then press 'send'.  
 when you're done with the call, just press 'end', and  
 make sure the light turns off."

so i turned it on, dialed the number,  
 pressed 'send', pressed my head  
 against the tiny phone

and the line was busy  
 and i couldn't get through

## VII

i wanted to get in touch  
 with an old friend of mine from high school,  
 vince, and the last i heard was that he went to  
 marquette university. well, that was five years ago, he  
 could be anywhere. i talked to a friend or two that  
 knew him, but they lost touch with him, too.  
 so i searched on the internet, to see  
 if his name was on a website or if  
 he had an email address. he didn't.  
 so i figured i probably wouldn't find him.  
 and all this time, i knew his parents lived  
 in the same house they always did, i could just  
 look up his parent's phone number in the phone book,  
 and call them, say i'm an old high school friend  
 of vince's, but i never did. and then i realized why.

you see, i could search the internet for hours  
and no one would know that i was looking for someone.  
but now, with a single phone call, i'd make it known  
to his family that i wanted to see him enough to call,  
after all these years. and i didnt want  
him to know that. so i never called.

VIII

now that we have the information superhighway  
we can throw out into the open  
our screams  
our cries for help  
so much faster than we could before

but then the question begs itself:  
who  
is there  
to listen

# high ROLLER

I long to see you sitting again  
cigarette in hand  
walkman on the table

I want to be able to walk up behind you  
rest my hands on your shoulders  
lean my head next to your face

I long to have my cheek near yours  
not touching  
but so close  
that I could still feel your warmth  
your desire

our skin wouldn't touch  
but I would still feel the rush  
from your presence

# holding my skin together

is life pre-ordained?  
i've been trying to remember  
all the little details  
that i'm supposed to take care of  
and i know i'm not even getting  
half of them done  
and i wonder if you feel what i feel  
is it just me  
is the stuffing falling out  
of my insides  
through the stretched seams  
holding my skin together  
because i keep finding  
bits of stuffing fallen out  
and i try to put it back in  
but damnit, i don't see the holes  
and i just have to work faster  
so that maybe  
i'll have a better chance  
of not losing my insides

is it just me?  
probably  
but i'll keep frantically trying  
to hold myself together  
so i can be a bit more normal,  
no, wait,  
so i can be a bit more like myself  
and i won't have to be pre-ordained

# i don't want to

I don't want to make a million bucks  
I don't want to worry about beauty first  
I don't want to do everything myself  
I don't want to let everyone do things for me  
I don't want to help the poor  
I don't want to give up what I have earned

But I don't think I earned this  
And I don't think I'm being punished  
For a deed I did not committ

Who am I supposed to apologize to  
Who am I supposed to accountable  
Who am I supposed to forgive

I don't want to think about the bad stuff  
but the bad stuff keeps coming back  
To haunt me  
And I don't like it

I don't want to live this way, and  
I don't want to keep paying for someone else's sins

people tell me I'm being pessimistic  
when I say I don't want to  
But at least it proves, at least,  
That I am angry, and  
That I live  
And I do

# LOST IN THE BREEZE

I have only seen you through my rose-colored glasses  
I know you thought of me  
On the most important day of my life  
And well, wouldn't you think of me anyway  
We've had enough of a track record together to earn it

I know you thought of me  
you did things for me  
But a part of me ask for you there  
Because I knew it would matter to you

I know you thought of me  
you worked for me  
But the minute you're our obligations were met  
Well, my name flew away like a feather on the breeze  
Caught up in the wind  
And then muffled noise  
That was my night  
And was my life  
Was forgotten

I know you were doing me a favor  
And I am grateful for that  
And all that I afraid I will carry with me  
Is that you did what you felt you had to do  
And then  
Like my name, a muffle sound lost in the breeze  
I left you  
In you went on your way

# Medication

I

I set my alarm for 4:30 instead of 5:30 so I could roll over, take a pill, and fall back asleep. I'd leave two pills on the night stand with a glass of water every night. I could feel the pain in my leg, my hand, when I reached over to take the drugs. I'd feel it in my back, too. And sometimes in my shoulder. The water always tasted warm and dusty. It hurt to hold the pills in my right hand.

I closed my eyes at 4:32. I hated that damn alarm clock. And taking the pills early still wouldn't make the pain go away before I woke up. I knew that. But I took them anyway. And I tried to fall back asleep. And I dreaded 5:30, when I'd have to move.

5:40, I couldn't wait any longer, I couldn't be late, we couldn't have that, so I'd finally swing my legs to the floor. I'd put on my robe and limp into the kitchen. The trip to the kitchen lasted for hours. And picking up the milk carton from the refrigerator hurt like hell. This wasn't supposed to be happening, not to me. Just pour the damn milk. I'd wipe the tears from my chin and sit down for breakfast.

II

The doctor doubled the dosage, and he was amazed that I needed this much. He told me to follow the directions strictly, STRICTLY. "You can't take these in the morning the way you have been," he'd say. "You have to take them with food." That doesn't help when I'm crying from the pain in the morning. But I could get an ulcer, he'd say. And I wouldn't want that. Of course not. I just wanted the pain to go away.

Take one tablet three times daily, with meals.  
Do not drink alcohol while on medication.  
Take with food or milk. Do not skip medication.  
Do not take aspirin while using this product.  
Do not operate heavy machinery. May cause ulcers.

III

All I had to do was get through the mornings. The mornings were the hardest part. Just take a little more pain, and by the afternoon it will all be fine. Just fine.

An hour after the pills, and I'd start to feel dizzy. I'd stare at a computer screen and it would move, in circles, back and forth. I wanted to grab the screen and make it stay in place. But I'd look at my fingers and they would go in and out of focus. I'd feel my head rocking forward and backward; I couldn't hold myself still. I'd sit at my desk and my eyes would open and close, open and close. Before I knew it, ten minutes passed and I remembered nothing. I could have been screaming for ten minutes straight and I wouldn't have known it. Or crying. Or sleeping. Or laughing. Or dying. I had just lost ten minutes of my life, they were just taken away from me, ripped away from me, and I could never get them back.

And I could still feel traces of the pain, lingering in my bones.

IV

I'd sit up at night and just stare at the bottle. It was a big bottle, as if the doctors knew I'd take these drugs forever. Hadn't it been forever already? I'd open a bottle, look at a pill. They looked big too. Pink and white. What pretty colors.

And then I'd think: If one tablet, fifty milligrams, could put me to sleep in the morning, could make me dizzy, could take a part of my life from me, then think about what the other thirty-six could do. 1800 milligrams. It could kill me. I wouldn't want that. Of course not. But just think, the bottle isn't even full.

May cause ulcers. May cause dizziness. Side effects may vary for each patient. May cause weight gain. May cause weight loss. May cause drowsiness. May cause irritability. Medication may have to be taken consistently for weeks before expected results. If effects become severe, consult physician immediately.

V

I began to count. In the mornings I took eight pills: one multivitamin, one calcium pill, one niacin pill, one fish oil capsule, one garlic oil pill, and one pink-and-white pain killer that I was special to have, because you need a doctor's permission to take those. Then I took diet pills: one starch blocker, one that was called a "fat magnet." As if the diet pills worked anyway. But I still took them.

And then I had to watch the clock, take a pink-and-white at one in the afternoon, a different pill at five o'clock, another pink-and-white at six o'clock, and there was also usually sinus medication that I had to take every six hours in there, too. Or was it eight hours? I started to watch the clock all the time, I bought a pill container for my purse so that I would always have my medication with me.

When I'd feel my body start to ache again, I'd look at the clock. It would be fifteen minutes before I had to take another pill.

# CIVIL WAR

I

the confederates are winning the battle  
but I know the north will win the war  
and all they'll get is a ravaged battlefield

II

a civil war is raging inside me  
but I'm tired of fighting from within  
when all I want is a revolution

# MOST ACCURATE METAPHORS

*rape is one of the most savage  
one of the most accurate  
metaphors for how men  
relate to women in this society*

*it is a political crime  
committed by men  
as a class  
against women  
as a class*

*rape is an attempt by men  
to keep all women in line*

*Bob Lamm, 1976*

now there's two ways  
this can happen, little girl  
you can keep fighting me,  
and if that's the case, i'll  
have to keep my hand  
over your mouth and  
this knife at your neck,  
or you can relax, enjoy  
yourself, make this easier  
on the both of us

you know you want this  
so stop fighting it

i saw the way you were  
looking at me earlier,  
the way you stared at me  
the way you were dressed  
i know what you were thinking  
so don't say a word

did you think those drinks  
were free

how long did you think  
i could wait  
it's my turn now  
you owe it to me

just do as i say  
and no one gets hurt

# MY dead daughter

I keep getting this image in my head  
 of a little girl, and she has long straight dark hair  
 and she is quiet and she comes to me and asks me questions  
 and I am working, but I turn around to answer her  
 and she sounds really intelligent  
 and I treat her that way and I answer her like an adult  
 and then I wonder if I'm not spending enough time with her  
 so while I'm answering I turn off my computer  
 and I turn around to her and I continue to look at her  
 I make a point to make eye contact when I communicate with her  
 and I get up so we can walk to the library  
 as I finish answering her question  
 and we get to the library and I ask her  
 is there is anything else she wants to know  
 because I want to be the one to tell her the truth  
 and she says no  
 she says she doesn't need anything  
 and underlyingly she makes me feel as if she doesn't need me  
 and I think,  
 I gave birth to that girl, she has to need something from me

and maybe she's a smart girl  
 and maybe she's learned to do things on her own  
 maybe she does all the things I have had to do in my life  
 maybe she understands more than I ever did

but these are my memories  
 these are the memories of something that has never happened  
 and will it ever? I always imagined a girl  
 maybe that's the maternal side of me,  
 being a mom and knowing women  
 but I never knew who the father was  
 and I never got her name, whenever I would have these memories

maybe she never had one

# ONCE WANTED YOU AS MY FRIEND

I should laugh about this. I know  
 that people will probably hear your stories  
 and think I was a bad and evil girl.  
 I don't care. I didn't want to be  
 a part of your life any more.  
 I wanted you as my friend  
 after I was falling apart  
 and I thought I had no one  
 and I wanted my life back  
 and because I believed you.  
 You told people I was your best friend  
 and you are a liar, plainly put.  
 I didn't know you'd fuck  
 your best friend's date. Hell,  
 fuck the guy for a month until  
 your neurotic ego can't take it.

I don't give a shit  
 about a year and a half  
 recovery from that  
 evil spell of yours  
 but I should never have forgiven you.

Maybe you need attention  
 from every penis you can get it from,  
 maybe you're more of an attention whore  
 than I could ever be,  
 than anyone I know could ever be,  
 by my neurotic tendencies  
 didn't keep me in my parent's house  
 while I studied for another job  
 because I didn't know what the Hell I wanted  
 and maybe my tendencies didn't make me  
 lose my friends  
 or go through men like hand rags  
 or give me sexually transmitted diseases

and didn't leave me fucking someone else  
while I was engaged

    "I've never orgasmed  
    while having sex with him," you'd say  
well, I don't know what to tell you.

All I can think

is that you've made this bad  
    out of straw and fabric scraps  
    and I don't care if it rained yesterday  
    and your precious bed smells like shit  
    and you've got nothing clean to grab on to

well, you've made that bed  
and now you have to lie in it.

so  
so have a good night's sleep  
while you try to make sense  
of what you think is insane

    God, the only insane thing  
    is that your man still puts up with you  
    or how much of your story  
    haven't you told him?

So yes, I should be laughing  
because you're the one filled  
with so many questions. Please,  
for your own benefit,  
for OUR own benefit,  
get them figured out.

I wanted to cut off ties from you sooner  
but I would have had to lose one of my  
closest friends in the process  
and we couldn't have that (of course not).  
But I'm glad your warped mentality  
misconstrued what I said

    and that is exactly what you did  
    nothing more, nothing less  
but you at least got the idea  
because no, I don't want to be a part  
of your life any longer  
and I don't want to openly condone

what you've done to your man  
and what you're doing to your man  
and I want to walk away from this unscathed  
  
so I think I will.

## TIMING IS EVERYTHING

timing is everything, you know  
just when you say you've had enough  
just when you're ready to wave that white flag  
and step out of the ring and stop playing the game  
and stop feeling the pain because you're numb

that's when for a brief moment something  
wonderful happens and reminds you why you live  
and reminds you of what hope and joy and  
even love is

and suddenly breathing is no longer a chore  
and suddenly nothing is a chore and suddenly  
there is no pain and suddenly you remember  
what it's like to be alive and you start to like it

well, that's when they pull they rug out from  
under you, right at that moment, so that  
you can fall to the floor and then the biting  
sting of pain hurts that much more

timing is everything, you know, they do it  
that way on purpose because they can't let you  
go on feeling hope and not feeling pain  
this is their key, it's all in the timing

# PRAYING TO IDOLS

every once in a while  
i question whether or not there is a god  
but i changed my mind  
i thought i have found him

he had dark hair  
almost black  
just like a god should  
and he had these blue eyes  
not just blue  
almost white  
so light  
they look like glass  
and you could almost see right through them

and could i see right through you  
if you gave me the chance?

i'd clasp my rosary necklace  
and pray to the right gods  
and wouldn't they be you  
and i'd let the necklace drape over my shoulders  
around my neck  
and i'd let the rosary fall between my breasts  
and you would forgive me that much more for my sins

how many hail marys  
would you want me to say  
i'd ask

i cannot believe i have seen you  
and i have talked to you  
and does everyone get to see their god like this  
and does everyone remember

why do you have to be my god  
why did i have to see you  
and talk to you  
and realize how young you are  
and realize how inexperienced you are  
    i mean, you're supposed to be the god  
    you're supposed to be teaching ME

is this what people think  
when their gods let them down  
    did you let me down  
    or did i just never know  
    what i was looking for?  
is this what people think  
when they realize  
they are only praying to idols  
what then?

# RIGHT THERE, BY YOUR HEART

## I

i had a dream the other night that i was in a bathroom, sitting on the toilet seat, i think it was the one in florida, but it could have been anywhere. it was a small bathroom. i was stretched over this seat, and i think the lid was up. i was naked. there was a wall right next to me, and i felt cramped, like i couldn't move. and then kurt was there, with me, in the bathroom, naked, standing over me, screwing me. i was sitting on a toilet seat and he was fucking me, and in the entire dream i couldn't get comfortable, i felt very awkward, it felt like he was pressing on my chest, i couldn't breathe, it felt like there was a rock in my stomach that would stay there forever, but the entire time i didn't complain.

## II

have you ever had that feeling before, you know, the one when someone is telling you something you don't want to hear, like if someone was about to tell you that someone died and you knew what they were going to say and you still didn't want to hear it, or if someone did something to you you didn't like, like when you were little and the kids at the bus stop shot pebbles and spit balls at you every day because you were smart and you still had to go to the bus stop every morning and just try to ignore them? and when that happens it feels like a medium sized rock just fell into the bottom of your stomach, and you don't want to move because you're afraid that the rock will hurt the inside of your stomach and so you just have to sit there and hope

the rock goes away? or else you get the feeling in your chest, right between your lungs, it feels like someone is pressing against the bone there, right there by your heart, and you've got to breathe, you're not going to be able to take that pressure, that force any longer?

### III

it had already been a long day, sitting in the back of someone else's car for two and a half hours, knowing that if elaine's dad wasn't such a slow driver it would have taken less than two hours. I was trying to get home so i could make it on time for the christmas party but still have enough time to pack for my early flight the next morning. airports have become a second home to me. so i walked in through the melon doors only three hours late, those melon doors that scream of the perfect fifties home, of the perfect fifties family that everyone believed we were. i walked through the doors, sarah hugged me, and dad walked into the hallway from the kitchen. wait a minute. he was supposed to be on the other side of the country... well, don't ask questions, just act happy to see him. so i smiled and laughed, until he hugged me. then the rock settled in. he didn't have to say a word. my mind started going through the checklist: okay, what would have brought him back here? who was the one who had died? i said 'grandma' before he did. i cried for fifteen minutes, wiped the tears from my neck, my ears, and i got ready for the party, trying not to move too quickly, so not to disturb the rock.

### IV

i got the mail, like i do any other day, and by then i had almost forgotten about waiting for the test results. i was just getting the mail, like normal. when i saw the letter from the hospital that day in that little metal box the pressure on my chest came rushing back like wind when it rushes around the side of a building and

it takes you entirely by surprise and you lose your breath trying to live through it. what if the test results said i was sick, and i wasn't going to get any better? i had too many symptoms, the results had to show something. something, damnit. maybe if i never opened the letter, i'd never have to deal with illness. maybe then i'd live forever. but i opened the letter. it said the doctors still know nothing. i just wanted to know what was wrong with me. why i wasn't perfect. the pressure on my chest didn't go away when i threw the envelope on the ground by the mailbox. i walked upstairs.

## V

i needed to talk to someone, so i threw my bathrobe on the floor, pulled on some sweats, and walked over to his apartment. steve was supposed to be coming home from work soon, and i needed to talk to somebody, i couldn't keep everything bottled in. i must have looked like an idiot standing on his stairs looking like i was about to cry. i felt like an idiot there, too, not knowing why the rock in my stomach wasn't going away. i wanted to ask him if he ever felt that rock, felt that pressure, even if there didn't seem to be a reason for it at all except for maybe life itself, which everyone was supposed to manage through anyway, i mean, everyone has stress, what's your problem if you can't take it? i wanted to figure it out, whatever the hell it was that was bothering me, i really wanted to. this panic was driving me crazy, and i couldn't even explain why i was panicked in the first place. i didn't tell him i wanted to light a candle and some incense and just curl up in the corner of my bed, holding one of my pillows, probably the black one, and cry for a very long time. i sat there in his apartment when he got home, but i didn't speak. what could i say? that the rock in my stomach wasn't going away?

## VI

i don't know how many times the idea of seeing him went through my mind. at least once a week i'd imagine a scene where he'd confront me, and i'd somehow be able to fight him back, to show him that he didn't bother me any more, to show him that the rock wasn't there any more. to somehow be able to prove that i wasn't a victim any more. i was a survivor. that's what they call it now, you see, survivor, because victim sounds too trying for someone who has been raped. so i keep saying i'm over it but i keep imagining mark all over again, not raping me, but following me on the street, coming to my door with flowers, or sending me a valentine. but once, when i saw him walking out of a record store as i was walking in, the rock fell so hard that i thought i was going to be sick right there by the cash register, right there by those metal things at the doorway that beep when you try to take merchandise out of the store, you know what those things are, i just can't think of what they're called. but if i did that, then he'd know he was still winning, to this day. how many years has it been? how many years since he did that to me? how many years since i've been wanting to fight him, since i've been feeling that rock in my god-damned stomach? i managed to hide my face from him in the store so he didn't see me as he walked out. when i saw he was gone, i wondered why i still felt the pressure in my chest. i thought the pressure was going to turn my body inside-out. i reached for my heart, grabbed at my shirt. maybe the pain was always there, right there, by my heart, but i try not to think of it until i go through times like those.

# TWO MINUTES WITH AYN RAND

I don't believe in things that aren't proven,  
that we have no evidence of, but sometimes,  
sometimes, I still think about what I would do  
if I had two minutes to talk to you

when someone asked me what I'd say  
I said I'd rather hear you speak  
I'm sure the words you would part unto me  
would mean infinitely more  
than what I could say to you

and if I could talk to you  
I wouldn't know what to say

But I know I'd have to tell you  
like so many of your fans in the past  
that I thank you  
for showing me  
that there are logical people in the world  
that man can live by reason  
that reason is a virtue  
that selfishness is a virtue  
that I have a right to what I earn  
to what I create  
to what I know to be true

I would have been still searching blindly  
for philosophical answers  
to the meaning of life  
if you never told me  
that I am worth something  
that I am my own end

and it's nice to know  
that even when I'm surrounded by these  
unthinking masses

that there are people who hold their minds  
as the highest value  
out there somewhere in the world

and the fact that they exist  
helps me through my days

but you knew that  
you wrote about these heroes  
over the years  
and how could you manage to write  
gripping, thousand-page novels  
about heroes that a rational mind  
can't help but love  
and did you really find that hero in real life?

because I'm still looking.

You've created these heroes  
but are they just created  
does anyone else understand  
these values as I do?

Yes, thank you  
for giving me the answers  
I've been looking for,  
but tell me that someone else out there  
found the answers too

so maybe, if those who posed  
this unreasonable illogical ethical question  
in the first place, if they could give me  
another two minutes  
so you could do some talking  
maybe then you could explain to me  
how to get through the days  
when no one understands you  
how to accept less than perfection  
when you've seen the purity and the clarity  
of the thinking mind

# WHAT do we say

What do we tell our youth  
when we let them out on probation  
for violent crimes  
because there's no room in our jails

What does it say of us  
when a painting of a clown  
by John Wayne Gasey  
sells for millions

What does it say of our self-esteem  
when hundreds of women write letters  
to Charles Manson  
asking for his hand in marriage

What does it say of our media  
when it glorifies these  
dark heroes

Dear  
Hero  
I want to know how your mind works  
I want to know why you did it  
I want to know how you feel about politics  
and love  
and marriage  
I hope you're not suffering too much  
I love you

What rights do we really take away  
from those who take our rights from us?

I hope you're not suffering too much

Richard Speck, convicted of killing  
eight nurses, was videotaped in his  
prison cell by cell mates with his  
male lover, counting hundred  
dollar bills, snorting mounds of  
cocaine,  
showing off his hormonally-  
induced shapely breasts

When a member of society commits a crime  
they relinquish the rights  
they have taken from others

in theory

One man in prison filed a lawsuit  
against the state  
for serving peas to him too many  
days in a row

One man in prison filed a lawsuit  
against Ann Landers

because she published his letter  
where he wrote he killed his wife

One man in prison filed lawsuit  
after lawsuit against the state  
solely because he felt a great joy  
in uselessly spending  
the taxpayers' money

What do we say to all of this  
What do we say?

# AGAINST MY WILL

There have been so many times  
Where I have been raped

Not that some man  
Some quote unquote man  
Had physically held me down  
Has forced himself inside me  
Against my will

That way is just too obvious

Not the “someone tried  
To beat me up” thing  
Because that is old news

If you have done the research I have  
If you have gone through what I have  
If you have lived the life that I have

Because  
You know  
I should be above this  
I should be a feminist  
With a capital fucking F

I guess with that in mind  
I should not mind the cat calls  
Or the whistles

Or the fact that the word “woman”  
Is the word “man”  
With a couple of letters tacked on  
Like how “she is “he” with an “s”

Like we’re an extension of them

Or the fact that men  
First look at me  
By looking at my breasts  
And not my eyes

I should be aware  
That a woman with power  
Instills fear  
And a woman with power in a company  
Can still be demoted outside of the company  
Where she can still be down-played

I can handle the jokes  
About being a blond  
Or being dumb  
Or being both  
I can hear the line  
Always said insultingly  
That we HAVE to be irrational  
Because we are so damn emotional

I mean  
How can you trust something  
That bleeds for five days every month  
And doesn't die?

Fine  
If they want to brush off  
Everything that makes us strong  
Fine  
If they say we can not hold a job  
Fine  
We will just depend on you for money  
And work on our OWN jobs  
On our OWN time  
And stash enough away for our OWN little nest-egg

And how much money  
are you boys going to have  
when it comes to the end of your family line?  
How much of a life  
are you boys going to have  
when it comes to the end of your family line?  
How much happiness?

\* Note that "Feminist with a capital F" is from a poem by Joanna Marshall. Also note that "End of your family line" is is reference to "The End of The Family Line" by Steven Morrissey.

# WHY I'LL NEVER GET MARRIED

at work we've been looking  
for a new employee  
we've sifted through resumes  
we've interviewed a few

and some were good  
some were very good  
and we took some time to decide  
and then we called our #1 choice

and they said they wanted  
more money than we offered  
so we said our goodbyes  
and we called our second choice

and they said they couldn't work  
at such a small place  
so someone at work said  
we should interview some more

and that's when i knew  
at the rate we were going  
we'd never find anyone  
and no one would want us

# Why do you

Why do you make us wait for you to come back?

Why do you allow suffering?

Why do you aim all hurricanes at mobile home parks?

Why do you let us destroy ourselves?

Why do you obstruct people from gaining knowledge?

Why do no major Hollywood film companies collapse in one of your earthquakes?

Why do you let innocent people die for crimes they didn't commit?

Why do you let the guilty go free?

Why do you fight against progress and technology?

Why do you fill this earth with so much pain?

Why do you not come down here, right now, and show us your face?

Why is it that the less intelligent people are, the more religious they are?

Why do you treat women in the Bible as possessions?

Why do you allow pro-wrestling?

Why do you insist we have faith in you and make us denounce our brains?

Why do you think we'd think you exist?

# FANTASTIC CAR CRASH

and our life is one big road trip now  
and we set the cruise control  
and make our way down the expressway.

and most of the time we're just moving  
in a straight line, and the scenery  
blurs. there's nothing to see

but I know what's inside you and I  
know what you're made of. I know  
there's no such thing as a calm with you

you are a fantastic car crash. you stop  
traffic in both directions as the gapers gawk and  
the delay grows and they slow down and stare

everything shatters with you, you know.  
it's a spectacular explosion. I try  
to duck and cover as metal flies

through the air. and every time you leave  
the scene of the accident  
I am left picking up the shards of glass

from the windows. you know, the glass breaks  
into such tiny little pieces. they look like  
ice. it takes so long to pick up the pieces

even though I'm careful  
I'm still picking up the pieces  
and I'm still on my knees

and the glass cuts into my hands  
and the blood drips down to the street.  
think of it as my contribution

to this fantastic car crash  
that is you, that is me, that is us  
as I pull the glass from my hands

and I wave my hand to the line of traffic:  
go ahead, keep driving, this happens  
all the time, there's nothing to see here

change/Rearrange

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