



*autumn
reason*

(excerpts from a book published 1996)

7-2-82 10:00 p.m.

I took care of the neighbor's kids today. They're so cute, but I was feeling a little tired so I wasn't in the mood for them jumping around all day long. But we colored and made some pictures, they both made ones for you. By the time you read this letter, you should already have the pictures. Ellen, their mom, melted down old crayons and poured them into bunny molds, so now we have a bunch of crayons that are shaped like rabbits. The kids love them.

And I've been playing with my Zen rock garden, too... I've had it ready for a while, but I never got sand for it. Well, I finally did today, and once I started to use it I loved it, so I learned how to use Dad's saws and made you one, too (but you already know that by now, too - I really hope you like it. It's quite addictive, and slightly creative - very relaxing). When I called Susan later on I told her that I made one and she said that she had always wanted a rock garden, so I made another one this evening. I feel like such a busybody.

Let's see, what else is going on? There's still a bunch of things I have to do. See a professor about getting a job as a history professor... I don't know if I want to move to another city to do a job I'm not even sure that I want, much less can get.

I wish I had other options. I wish I could get on track. Sometimes I know what I want to do with my life, and I'm determined to let nothing stop me. But there are other times when I feel as if the entire world is pitted against me, that others don't want to see me happy specifically because they don't know what they want to do with their lives and they want to feel like everyone is in the same boat as they are. They want everyone to work in the same mind-set that they do, because they can only compete in their little world. If someone doesn't want to climb their little success ladder that they chose to climb up, others can't handle it because they don't want to believe that their standard is wrong.

It's like this: people don't know what they want with their life, so they do what is expected of themselves, climb the "ladder" of whatever career track they choose, mix in the appropriate social circles, work toward making money, even if they don't know if that's what they want and doing it doesn't make them feel any better. So then they see someone else that has decided to not even acknowledge the ladder that the people with no direction have decided to climb because they don't know what else to do. And this other person won't have as much money or as many friends as these ladder-climbers do, so it becomes really easy for the ladder-climbers to dismiss them and unsuccessful - and therefore they must be unhappy.

But I think that these ladder-climbers don't want to admit to themselves that they are jealous of these people that have found what they wanted with their life.

But in order to achieve their dreams (if they even chose to acknowledge them consciously), the ladder-climbers would have to give up their social circles, their prestige, probably some of their money. And they're too afraid of not succeeding, because they're only comfortable with the efforts that they have been putting forth in their ladder-climbing lives, they're so afraid of not succeeding and losing what they already have that they don't see the effort as worth it.

So they hold a resentment toward someone they see as a visionary - someone who

does what they want with their life.

So then what? They make fun of them for not having enough money, for having no friends. They may even try to sabotage the plans of the creative one, solely because their value systems don't match.

It's amazing how people need a mob in order to have a belief in something. Shouldn't that be evidence enough that they really don't care about their beliefs, if they need the support from others in order to live with those beliefs?

Anyway, my point from all of that was... Well, I'm no visionary, and I haven't decided to chuck the whole system into the toilet. But I do want to use the system for my own needs, so that I may be able to do what I want to with my life, whether or not that fits in with what people expect. And I think that scares every person I meet, and I think others resent me for that, and I feel like all these artificial barriers are put up in front of me so that I may get discouraged and quit.

And the thing is, I know what kind of work I want to do, but I'm wondering if and how I can do it.

Sometimes I feel like I shouldn't even try, like the odds are against me. And I have to try to fight that.

It's a constant battle.



7-11-82

You know, I don't even know if I would want to teach at a university, live on a campus, in a campus town. I mean, I like living in a big city... But it's more than that. I went through the university system, I learned about being politically correct, I supported women's groups and minority groups - I even took part in protests and rallies. But I start thinking about how giving special rights to certain groups takes away rights from other groups, even if those other groups are white men. And then I start thinking about how people in these groups blame a whole group for the problems of society, and in turn pre-judge everyone and assume they're bad. And then I start thinking about how most people in these groups are scorned people - scorned by the system - and yes, the system is often pitted against some people - but maybe the answer is that internal struggle, learning to accept yourself and not fight these enemies - enemies that are not only real but also that are created. Maybe the answer shouldn't be a fight against everyone else. I mean, if people want to fight you, that's their problem, but it's your life, and you have a right to live it. Don't bother spending your life telling everyone to let you live your life.

Maybe these groups, this separation, maybe the political action on the parts of women and minorities makes people too angry all the time. Maybe these groups actually make people more antagonistic toward one another. Maybe they remind people of our differences more than we need to. Maybe it's a matter of giving the people running these rallies more power, making it an internal power kick instead of an issue of empowering the entire group they represent.

It seems like a noble thing to do on the surface. I see the benefit of supporting women's rights, minority rights, etc.

I did it myself for years.

And whom did fighting the system help more? The system, or me?

7-23-82 2:45 p.m.

hi, i'm back, and i've decided not to use any capital letters in this letter. i'm such a rebel.

i don't want to be here. i don't want to work for pennies at a mindless job. i don't want to have to hate my home. i don't want to be bored off my ass. i don't want to be alone.

i had a dream last night that i was out on the patio with catherine and i had a shotgun, or a pellet gun or something. we were complaining about animals running all over the driveway, so i aimed for a cat across the public pool. i don't know if i hit it or not, but it jumped into the pool, started bouncing around in the water, then bounced out of the water, over my head and under the fence off the patio. it was the scariest thing i've dreamed in a long time. catherine woke me up as it bounced off the patio. she started blaring the television in the other room and woke me up. i was hyperventilating for a bit. it was very strange. i don't know what it meant.

8-24-82

Here I am again, bored. It's still the first day, and I hate looking like I have nothing to do here. I have my own office and no one else is in it right now, but I'm afraid that someone will walk by and see my feet up on the desk and fire me or something. I wish I brought some work from home to do while I was here. I wonder if this is what careers are really like - a lifetime of trying to find something to do so you look important.

I'm starting to worry that this is actually what people do for all of their lives. That their occupation is trying to look important, or busy. Worthy of a raise when they're really not doing anything. This one guy, Tom, told me once that the trick to being respected at the office is to always look angry, always look like you're in a rush, that you always have a lot to do. Put extra papers on your desk, make it a little messy, always have stuff in your "in" box (even if it isn't work to do), always remember to make a phone call or jot down a very important reminder when someone is trying to talk to you. Always make everyone wait to talk to you - even if it is just for ten seconds - while you attend to some sort of made-up "business" - whether it be finishing up a fake phone call or writing something "very important" down. Act like you have to get up to do something, even if it's only getting coffee. And always have a furrowed brow. Sigh a lot, try to look a little tired, or a little sick (that way you are thought of as a "trooper" for coming into the office even when you're not feeling well). People think that you have so much work to do that they want to give you time off, even when they don't know what you're doing.

Is that what life is all about?

I can't believe that this person actually thought this way, that this friend of mine had actually put that much effort into trying to look like you're doing something when you're actually doing nothing. Don't you think that's a problem to actually get to that point?

But I think I'm starting to get to that point too.

I don't want that for myself. I want to do something I like. I'm driven, and I can't live like this.

Or does this just happen when nothing else in your life works for you, and you finally get tired of striving for dreams that never seem to come true?

I remember having a teacher in high school and he seemed really smart, but it just seemed like he got so tired of the screaming student, and trying to make kids care, that he always walked a little slower, never smiled, just gave us our work to do and then went to his desk to finish his work. And I remember thinking then that he was burnt out on the school system, that he tried for so long to make a difference, but faced one too many kids who just didn't care. And now he's like a robot, making almost no impact on anyone's lives.

Including his own.

Is this what everyone else in the world ends up like?

There's this 8x10 of Oliver North tacked to the wall above my computer. Working here is going to be fun, I can just tell. They're going to love the things I put on my walls, aren't they?

8-25-82

I share an office with someone, and their phone always rings, the secretary always transfers the line to his office, but he's never here, so I have to sit in here by myself and listen to the very loud ringer on his phone ring all the time. It drives me nuts.

Ah, crap. It's 4:40, and I still have nothing to do. I have a ton of crap to do at home, but nothing to do here.

8-27-82

Hi. I'm very depressed. When I left work yesterday, I cried as I drove all the way home. Three people like my dad to deal with is just too many. Three too many. I got photos back yesterday, from our road trip in Tennessee. I brought a photo of you and Betty to work today. My mom bought me a mug for coffee at work. That's about all that's new. I just took a sip of my coffee and it's cold.

2:00 p.m.

I've been drinking from my new (spankin' new) coffee mug all day. I've officially declared today as caffeine day. I'm going to shake until tomorrow, I just know it.

My boss even said, "Hi, honey" when he first gave me the work, and he gave me a little side-to-side hug. A little refreshing.

Now I'm frightened that I'm pleased that he called me "honey." What an awful name! I suppose it is better than his usual grunt, but it's still degrading.

I was so aggravated when I left here yesterday. As I said, I cried half the way home in the car. It's just that this isn't what I want, not at all. I don't want to be a secretary for some pig and live with a woman that sucks and have my parents meddle in my life all the time and drive through a shitty part of town every day and basically be a very "type A" person. I don't want that for my life.

God, it's scary that I'm thinking about winning the lottery instead of doing something that I actually want to with my life. I wish that there weren't so many blockades up in my way when I'm just trying to live my life and make myself happy.

8-28-82

It's lunch. They all go out and buy food for one another and eat lunch together, and I sit here in this little room on the side, bringing my own cheese sandwiches because I never talk to anyone. Like I even have enough money to buy my own lunch. Like I could think of anything to say to these people. Half of them have posters of naked women in their work areas.

2:10 p.m.

Hi there, honey. People are talking in the other room about the new health plan we're getting. It seems like it pays 100% of most everything, which is a damn good deal, if I can believe it. This is an interesting job. The secretary is on vacation, so I took a letter for the boss and faxed it. Ah, the many tasks I have to do.

4:50 p.m.

I've decided that I hate him. My boss, that is. I've decided that I don't want to be a secretary, too. This man is a jerk. I hope the secretary is sick and not on vacation, because if she's gone for 5 weeks (that's how much vacation time she gets), I sure as hell don't want to be doing her job for that long. Get a temp, you cheapskate.

9-1-82

Why can't people figure out what the need done ahead of time, so everyone can be more efficient? It seems like half the work I do here is not actual work, but corrections on the work I did - and it's not because I did something wrong, but it's because someone else forgot something and needs to rearrange the whole project. A lot more could be accomplished if people knew what they needed ahead of time.

But then I guess we'd all have to fill up more of our time by faking looking busy, wouldn't we?

But the thing is, they give me changes because they forgot stuff, but they give me all these changes late when we had a deadline for getting the project done. So ninety percent of the time I'm bored doing nothing, five percent of the time I'm working, and five percent of the time I'm running around frantically trying to get their corrections done in time for the deadline because they were late in giving me corrections that should never have existed in the first place. We could at least spread that work out so I'm not bored here as much as I am.

Does that make any sense? It just seems like people are so inefficient.

Wait - did I ever tell you about that? The time when I was walking to the women's rally? It was right around when I met you, so I might not have. Well, I was walking to this rally, to photograph it, it was a huge march for women's rights and women's safety, and I'm walking down the street and I see this other group of women (an organization of their own, not just a group of friends) walking to the rally too. Their group was some black women's organization group, and they were going to march in the rally as a group. They had signs, and they were saying chants, and stuff.

So, I thought I'd show my support for their organization, so I walked across the street (originally we were walking parallel to each other), and walked with some of them (there were about 25 black women walking in this group). We were going to the same place anyway, so I figured I was just being supportive... I even started saying one of the chants that they were all saying.

Now, I know I'm white, and yes, I was the only white woman walking with them. But the group was to support the progress of black women, and I supported it enough to walk with them, even if it was only because we were going to the same place. Seems innocent enough to me.

So then a woman from the group starts walking next to me, she was obviously the leader of the group, and she asked, "Do you know what group this is?"

And I said yes.

Then she asked, "Then you know we're a group for black women's rights?"

And I said yes.

And then she said, "Well, some women in this group are uncomfortable with you walking with us."

I was stunned. I was just trying to be supportive, right? So I said, "I was just trying to help -"

When she said, “I know, but some people here feel uncomfortable.”

And I didn't know what else to do. We were going to the same place... Was I supposed to look for an alternative route?

So, I walked to the other side of the street again, and turned a corner so we didn't have to look at each other the rest of the trip to the meeting place.

And for the rest of the time, that incident just sat there, in the pit of my stomach, and stewed there, apparently with all the acids and bile and stuff in my stomach, because it just started making me feel more and more uncomfortable, more and more tense. If they didn't want help and support from all people, what did they want?

I guess it still bothers me, and I still don't know what to make out of it all.

I don't want to look at all the crap that's around me, all the things that I don't want to be doing with my life, but it's all right in front of me.



9-22-82

I just heard about your fender-bender. You really should be more careful, young man. I don't appreciate you getting into accidents - especially when I can't be there to nurse you back to health. Yeah, yeah, yeah, you said you weren't hurt, but I wouldn't be surprised if you're in a little pain tomorrow, you know, soreness and all.

I had a bad dream last night - one where my mother died. I normally don't have dreams that are that violent, that vivid, that scary, or that hit so close to home. I woke up a 4 in the morning shaking.

9-23-82

I'm so aggravated, and if I don't get any time to relax, I'll go nuts. I've driven myself crazy before by giving myself too many things to do. It's happening again. I've run myself ragged trying to do too many things at once, I've driven myself to the hospital because of it. I don't want to do that to myself again. I know people who gave themselves ulcers from stress, and they were in high school. God, I don't want to be like that. The more stress I feel, the more my joints hurt, the more aches and pains I have. To literally feel pain from stress manifesting itself in soreness, in an inability to move, that's horrific. Not lethargy, but pain. When you feel stress, you know you have to get a ton of things done, and then it hurts to do it. It just makes everything going on in life that much worse, until all you can think about is the pain, and how you have to overcome the pain to get everything done in your life.

And I can feel myself going down that road again, and I don't know if I have to hit rock bottom before I can get any better.

9-24-82

Okay, I just went into the bathroom. The whole "bathroom environment theory" failed. I couldn't bring myself to go to the bathroom, so I just kind of stood there for a while, looking at myself in the mirror, thinking how ugly I was. Then I noticed there was an old padded living room chair in the corner of the bathroom, so I sat down on it. It was comfortable, but after about a minute of just sitting in silence in the bathroom in a padded chair staring at the wall, I realized that this was pretty stupid and I got up.

So here I am.

It's 4:11 and a half now.

10-1-82

Everyone told me at work yesterday that I looked really sick. Pale, you know. I'm just telling you this because I'm starting to get a lot of pain again, like I did last year because of stress.

It's amazing how stress can make someone physically sick. We as Americans like to pop a pill for everything, and we like to assume that we just have to handle the stress, like something is wrong with us if we can't handle the pressures of our work or something. I think stress should be paid more attention medically. We should do more for ourselves to eliminate stressors in our lives, and then our health problems would probably go away a lot faster. I'm finding myself taking a lot of medication again lately because I'm in a lot of pain. I didn't like having to take medication before, and I don't want to get into the habit again, even if it is over the counter medicine. There has to be a better way to feel better, right?

Last night I wanted to get so much done, I wanted to clean my apartment, Jessica was coming over, I wanted to do computer work... I felt so bad that I sat on the couch almost all night. I finally dragged myself out from under two blankets to get drugs and dinner at 8:30. But then I took a shower, tried to relax, and I started feeling better. I think having a positive attitude will do a lot more for me than fretting over it. I tried to dress up more today, put on make up, just so I'd feel better about myself, my appearance. That might have a positive psychological effect too.

Geez, my bedroom is a mess. There are clothes piled all over my bed, some of which I'm throwing out, some I just didn't have the time to put away. Sometimes I have to run from one job to the next, and all I have time to do is throw some new clothes on. And throw the old ones on the floor.

I think it's colder in my office than anywhere else in this place. I just asked someone to come in here and tell me if I'm crazy; they thought there was no difference in the rooms. It must be because of the way I'm feeling. I must be getting even more sick. Great.

10-19-82

I'm revising my resume today, too - and I'm going to make copies and start sending them out to places in the want ads. I'd like to see what my other options are. I can't afford such a cheap job.

10-19-82 7:45 p.m.

I designed a new resume today. You would almost think I was someone successful or important or something by looking at it, too. Someone who wasn't earning an income below the poverty level.

I can't stand Catherine. She's driving me absolutely insane, I've got a huge migraine from her (I mean, I can't even turn my head without being in pain), and she HAUNTS me.

And she yells at me, often for no reason at all. She vents at me, but somehow transfers her anger toward me, instead of facing her problems. She's just such a moron. She can't do much of anything right, and then she gets so stressed out that she gets even less accomplished, and then she feel like she can do nothing, and she becomes less successful, and the vicious cycle goes on. But it's all her fault. And I can't pity that. It only makes me sick.

I think it would kill her if I said any of this to her. I think she would just shrivel up and die or something. She's not very healthy. I'm glad I'm not like her. I mean, I know I have plenty of faults, and I know I'm not the best at a lot of things, and I know I get stressed very easily, but at least I TRY to be the best and I GET OVER bad things. Bitch doesn't try, and if anything goes wrong, she flips out for weeks. She's still flipping out over the leak from our bathroom, which was over a week ago. I mean, it's a leaky faucet. Don't cry over it. It's fixed. Get on with life.

She just came in again. She keeps coming in and she keeps bothering me. Why does she think that I actually want to talk to her? I just want my privacy. It's just so irritating to deal with a roommate that is so incapable of living or excelling when I feel so driven.

But what am I driven by?

Speaking of being driven, I almost cut off my boss on the street as I was driving home today, yes, I'm the type A driver... This guy in a wagon was going slowly, so I eventually passed him, thought nothing of it... Then he came along side of me, rolled down his window, honked and asked, "Where did you learn to drive like that?", and then he drove away. It was actually kind of funny.

I should have said "your mom," but I didn't think of it until now. Damn, another opportunity lost.

10-20-82 9:05 a.m.

I'm so bored with my life. It's quite a depressing one, you know.

1:29 p.m.

Hi. I just had lunch, and I can't do much more of the tile catalog. I need more images, which are being mailed to me. I'm going to use cool paper and cool ink. It'll be nice, I hope. A catalog that someone did came back from the printers and arrived here today. It's really ugly looking, the cover is bright red and bright blue ink on bright white paper and it just gives me a bright headache. But that's what they wanted, something to jump off the page and attack you, as if it had a big stick or something. But it's still nice to see a finished product.

Almost as nice as it is to see you (that was a pretty good transition, wasn't it?)... This weekend will be nice. My car will be clean, my oil will be changed, and I won't have anything that I'll HAVE to do for 2-1/2 days. And I'll have you. What more could I ask for?

2:04 p.m.

I want to learn how to make paper. I want to mash stuff into a pulp, put it in a press, roll it out, dry it and make my own paper. I've been thinking about that for a few weeks. I want to learn how. I wonder if a kit is necessary, if all I might need is a bucket, a rolling pin, stuff like that.

Hey - an evergreen bush... I could make paper with needles of an evergreen bush in it (you know, the needles that are about an inch long, we have them all over our courtyard). That would be kind of neat.

I could put human hairs in my paper. That would look kind of cool.

10-21-82 10:28 a.m.

I tell you, that can't be a healthy thing to have to deal with on a regular basis. It can't be healthy for her, because she's going to kill herself after a while. But it's not healthy for me, either, for I don't like the stress of not knowing how she's going to react to anything, whether or not it is my fault. Yeah, I would like to live alone instead of this. I would like to have my privacy, to not have to worry about offending others or having to listen to people throw tantrums because they can't find their checkbook, or have to listen to someone like that. I actually enjoy being here at work because I don't have her around. It's frightening when this place gives me solace.

I wish I could afford to live on my own. Four years of college, one of the best schools in the country in my field, graduated with honors, and this is what I get.

I've been looking in the want ads, and there is NOTHING in my field. It feels like I'm going to be stuck with this life forever. Promise me you'll take me away from this. Promise me that, please.

12:56 p.m.

You remember the list - this guy I knew made a list on his computer of all the women he ever had relations with, then he accidentally gave me the list when he gave me a bunch of other computer files... What a freak. And he doesn't even know I know, and he wants to be pals with me. Like I'd want to be pals with a guy that writes up lists of women who have given him blow jobs (although I did have to laugh that there were only two women on the blow job list). What a pervert.

I just feel bad for all the women who didn't know what a freak they were dating, and now they have their names on this list of his. What was his point in doing that? I'd love to go to his computer and destroy that list. On behalf of all the women on it.

10-28-82 8:38 a.m.

I feel like I'm selling myself every day here. The work I do, if it's good, people don't appreciate it, if it's crappy, they're in love with it. They ask me to change the good stuff. I hate that. And I take it as a personal slam on me if they don't like what I consider to be good, and I know I shouldn't do that, but I can't help it. Everything I do becomes a part of me because I did the work. And they tell me it's crap, a bunch of losers in this stupid business, and I'm not supposed to take it personally.

10-30-82 9 something a.m.

Boo. did I scare you?

See, a lot of problems all go back to people not taking the time to figure out what they want on any given project. That so much time could be saved if people only thought coherently the first time. Then they wouldn't waste the time and effort of a number of people after the job had been finished.

10-31-82 12:05 p.m.

I'm dressed in orange and black today. wow, she got festive. Happy Halloween.

So I'm going out to a local bar (and I'm not frightened? Should I pack heat?) after work here for this woman's last day. I want a beer. Then I'm going out with Susan to a party that her friends from work are holding. She's going to the party as an expressway, wearing black and putting little matchbox cars all over her with the hood up or overturned. Creative. All I could think of that would be easy and not very costume-like would be to wear all black and a beret and go as the rhythm method of birth control. Just an idea.

11-16-82 9:17 a.m.

There are times when I want to take positive steps toward making me feel better, I want to take charge of my life again. And sometimes I feel as if there is nothing I can do, and my mood becomes more and more depressed and I feel like it's never going to end. If I'm successful, my vacation time with you is a departure from my depression. I just wish I could be happy here.

I need to get the problems out more, to study them more, to understand them more and maybe to then I'd be able to put them to rest. I don't know how to approach doing that, though.

I can't afford a therapist. It's that simple.

I remember sitting in the basement when I was little. I was really little, because mom was still around at this point. I stayed in there all the time, especially when dad was expected home, or home, you know. Mom always had a Manhattan ready for him for when he got home. She'd put the glasses in the freezer so they were cold and the edges were frosted.

I remember him always being a beast when he got home. Didn't talk much. You had to make sure you didn't bother him when he first got home.

Actually, I don't think I saw him that much when I was little.

I just read the paragraph and I remembered that I'd think about dying then, too. Killing myself. I'd think of different ways to do it, getting a big knife, or taking pills. But I knew I wouldn't like the pain, and the thought of dying scared me, too. What's after it? Nothing? Can I really think of ending my existence forever? I'd probably screw up anyway...

This is what I thought about when I was really little.

I knew I'd never really try to kill myself, I was too chicken. Maybe I wanted to scare them. Maybe I wanted them to realize how much they were hurting me. Maybe it would make them feel guilty, look, we didn't pay any attention to her, and look what we've caused. If only we showed her we loved her, if only we paid her some attention, if only we made her feel like she was a worthwhile person...

That's the one that always gets to me. They never made me feel like I was a worthwhile person.

I always liked to play in small cramped places. I liked playing in the basement, because at the time part of it was closed off with a bookshelf and it made the corner like a little room at the far end that was hard to see into from the door. It was my private space. I'd decorate it like it was my own home, and I always had private things, secret compartments and codes so no one could get to my stuff. I was very secretive. I even liked to play in my closet, because there was a shelf in the back of my closet used for storage I could sit in if it was empty. It was like my own private room, in my closet. I decorated the walls, put pillows in there for comfort. I always kind of hoped they didn't know I played in there, that they didn't know it even existed, that they could come looking for me and they wouldn't know where I was.

Adultism is what they call it, treating children like they're shit because they're not as old as you and they don't have your experiences and they're not as knowledgeable. That's why I try to treat children more like adult, and I don't use child voices with them and I don't give them ultimatums and I don't threaten them and I don't cut down their ideas. I listen to them, even if their ideas are obnoxious, hell, at least they're original ideas, I mean, they are THEIR ideas. Making a fort in my closet as a stupid thing, but if anyone in the world respected it they instantly earned my respect. It helps when people don't treat you like an idiot.

11-16-82 3:47 p.m.

My childhood friend Nancy was over all the time. We always played Barbies or house or something, and I was never over there, although I wanted to get away from my family. She had a way of convincing me it was best for her to come over. But that put me in control of the friendship, in a way, because they were my toys, it was my house, she was only a guest. I think I used that advantage to exert some sort of power over her, to make myself feel superior to her at times. I wonder if I treated her second-hand.



11-18-82

The first night I moved into a place with my new roommate, Alan came over, and the two of them had liquor. Loretta had grape schnapps, that's all I remember. And we were drinking out of plastic cups, and I remember that he kept refilling our glasses. But he was refilling hers faster. I even thought about that that night - why is he pushing drinks on my roommate? I could see him wanting to get me drunk, but why her? I know he's not attracted to her.

I don't know when we decided we had to go to sleep. I don't remember much from the evening. I think we might have gotten the cue from my roommate passing out in her own bed. I'm not sure. I had no idea what was going on. I figured he wanted to stay over, that we'd mess around or something. I hadn't thought about it.

One of my guy friends as a joke gave me a condom as a going away to college gift. He thought it was funny. He was trying to be cute. I told him I'd keep it, and I knew I wasn't planning on using it. I think Alan knew I had it.

I was just laying there when he got the Goddamned thing. God, I wish I knew what was going through my head. I know I wasn't thinking clearly; I just wish I was. I didn't fight. I was too drunk. I didn't know if I should be fighting, or why I should be fighting. I knew I didn't want it, but I had no idea of what to say. I almost felt like I was resigned to it.

I remembering him telling me to relax; it was hurting me. He was telling me to calm down, to relax. I remember him trying to push my legs apart with his. I didn't want them to be apart, I resisted, but it just seemed like there was nothing I could do. I was still daddy's little girl, I couldn't tell anyone I didn't like something or that I was right and they were wrong. I couldn't raise my voice, I couldn't even think of what I would have said if I could get up the courage to argue. This was how it was supposed to be, wasn't it?

Now I know why he was pushing liquor on both of us, but my roommate more. He wanted to make sure she passed out drunk, so she wouldn't hear anything. She didn't hear a thing. And I never told her.

That night messed me up. He was happier than ever when it happened. Just give me some room.

I don't want to write about this any more.

11-19-82

I hate myself for not stopping him. I might not have wanted to do anything because that's the way I was taught to be all of my life, but they never prepared me for this, they never prepared me for anything, but I still wished I did something. Why did I let this happen?

I wish I could stop living in the past.

I think that's why I act so dominant in a relationship now, I think - I don't want to be looked down upon again. Nothing is ever good enough for me. I have to be strong, I have to be stronger. I never want to tell my problems to the person I'm dating because I don't want them to think less of me, I don't want them to view me like I'm a beaten child. I want to have a healthy relationship, and I guess I think that if I cover up what could potentially make the relationship unhealthy, then there's a better chance of the unhealthy stuff not happening. If I act like a normal person, I'll have normal, healthy interactions, which will make me more of a healthy person. It sounds like it would make sense.

But it's still there, buried, in the back of my head, and every once in a while it comes out and there's nothing I can do about it. Anything small can set it off. And then I'm crying, and I can't even explain why.

I guess my determination in my work stems from the fact that I want to fight, I want to get over all these feeling I have. This is my way of doing it. But I think my depression stems from the fact that I've been taught all my life that my work isn't important, won't make a difference. That I won't succeed.

Now I've got a job that pays me next to nothing, I live with a roommate I hate - I deal with people that I can't respect, people who continue to give me pain. How am I supposed to heal now?

I want to get on with my life. I want to get away from this limbo I'm feeling. I want to start progressing. I feel like I've already hit a huge brick wall and there's no way I'm going to get around it, over it, through it. I'm going to work here forever, live here forever, be miserable forever.

I was driving tonight and I thought about suicide. I mean as an option. I haven't thought about that since high school. Since I lived in my parent's house. There are times when I wish I wasn't afraid of death.

There are other times when I wish I wasn't afraid of life.

2-16-83

God, I don't know if I can do any of this.

I don't know what's right for me anymore. sometimes there is just a part of me that wants to get out of here so much, to start my life. I just want it to begin. But I don't know which path to take.

What can I do? What can I do to make myself feel like I'm accomplishing something? What can I do to make myself happy? What other steps do I have to take?

Should I hand-deliver every resume I send, and give them a little speech about how great I am?

I can't afford to move to a better place with the pay I make here. Am I supposed to spend my savings on that?

I was saving all that money for my house. So when I got married, when everything started to happen for me, I wouldn't have to struggle quite as much to make ends meet. Maybe it could mean that my children would have a better chance of going to college. I don't know how I'm supposed to save any money for my children's future with my life going the way it is.

I think of all the ways past problems have affected me, and it drives me insane. Do you think I like being emotional? Do you think I like my mood swings? Do you think I'm happy with the direction my life has taken? I feel so alone, and I feel like everything has just gone so wrong.

It's times like this when I feel I can't do anything right.

Why is that I can't see myself as a success? Why is it that I find myself unattractive, fat, and unsuccessful?

Why is this happening to me?

I just want to figure out why I get like this. What I'm supposed to do.

A psychologist would have a field day with me.

Today I feel so persecuted, and I can't explain why. I feel like everything is out to get me, to sabotage my happiness. The feeling is more that I have to fight with the very nature of things in order to get something accomplished. I'm not just fighting a person, I'm fighting the world, and I'm fighting the way things have always been done, the way I've always been taught to do things. No one is particularly against me, but no one is receptive to change, and would rather not deal with me because of it. And now I feel like I'm failing.

I get tired of fighting. What am I supposed to do then? give up? I don't know how to. I don't know how to change the way I feel. If I gave up, it would be me resigning and then losing all touch with reality. I couldn't do it any other way. I couldn't just become a cog in the wheel, and be happy with it, like all the fucking peons here at work. I'd die. I couldn't do it. I could never be happy here.

Is something wrong with me because I can't just be happy working, making money, and there you go, that's life? It doesn't seem right to me.

I don't know what the solutions are anymore, but I don't think I ever did know. And it

drives me crazy not knowing. You mean more to me than I want to admit. You're my best friend, right? So, best friend, tell me what I should do. I can't think clearly anymore.

I feel like i've hit a brick wall. I don't know what the next step is. I think I need a vacation.

I like to plan things. I like to know what is going to happen next. I like to feel secure. I hate not knowing where my life is going. And that's exactly how I feel right now. And how i've felt for months. I can put it out of my mind for a while, but it always comes back.

2-17-83

Who knows what I what to do. I know I want to live out on my own, but who knows how I want to do that. Working, school. I hate this. I've felt awful all day. My head hurts. I really have hit a wall.

I have to work at my second job tonight. I don't remember what the place looks like.

I'm so depressed. I was crying over at Ellen's, and I was just bawling on the phone with you. Crying on the way home last night. I don't have the energy to cry anymore. I think i've even lost any motivation I might have once had.