



Flame

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You Are My Sunset

gibberish Love, Please

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BUT LESS THAN LOVERS

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You Are My Sunset

Seonsaeng

I watched the sunset alone
On the sand, I sat, 'twas my throne.

I stood, had my feet kissed by the sea
Tinkled by the water so cold, like you to me.

Fondly, with the waves, I played
Jumped with ecstasy, however dismayed.

I wished you were near me, no, with me
I would have stopped the sun setting, never to free.



The sunset and the sea were at peace
But without you, I was not on ease.

I really longed for your presence
I was melancholic with your absence.

I wondered when we will be together
Waiting, as always, seemed forever.

The sunset was my sole company
The waves washed my agony.

Waiting was never my passion
But my limit was the horizon.

For as long as the sun sets in the west,
You will forever be the reason of my zest.

You only exist in my dream
It's like a film ready to stream,
More than those clear pixels
But how could you still whistle?

gibberish
© Bryan Xandrix Espiritu

You only exist in my dream
It's like a film ready to stream,
More than those clear pixels
But how could you still whistle?

I dreamed of you, always
I dreamed of you for days
I called your name so loud
For you to hear me out

Those eyes and running tears,
I know you have something to fear
Believe me, I'll always be here
Ready to hear you out, near

I know you have something to fear
Believe me, I'll always be here
Ready to hear you out, near

But let me tell you this first,
Listen, it's about I thirst:
"I dreamed of you, always
I dreamed of you for days"

Yes! I am falling but you said, "Don't"
I stopped calling, for I know you don't
Is this a wish?

But let me tell you this first,
Listen, it's about I thirst.
"I dreamed of you, always
I dreamed of you for days"

Yes! I am falling but you said, "Don't"
I stopped calling, for I know you don't
Is this a wish?
I guess, it all sound gibberish



Love, Please

◦ Sarah Synteché Lucas

*Love, is it fun to watch me suffer?
Do you know how hard it is not to treat you as a lover?
Was I only meant to be in the shadow?
Was our relationship supposed to be kept on the down low?*

*Love, do you know how awful I feel?
Despite my desire to make this real,
This can never come true
Because I can never and will never own you.*

*Love, I wasn't always like this.
Not the type to love, not the type to miss.
But even being a skeptic of love has an expiration date
Your only mistake was coming into my life a little bit too late.*

*Love, I didn't mean to ruin anything.
It wasn't my intention to come in between, I'm not lying.
But I guess it was too late to realize what I'd been doing
I had no idea what I was destroying.*

*Love, you always say that you feel the same.
If you do, please do me a favor and let's end this game.
Only one request to put an end to this frenzy,
Please let me go and set me free.*

MORE THAN FRIENDS BUT LESS THAN LOVERS

- Gemini

We both know each other
We talk, we play, and laugh together;
As days pass by, our friendship becomes stronger
Until worst things became better.

As we are happy and good being together,
It's like I want to be with you forever;
And the words you have uttered so tender.
Keep inspiring me, and made me feel better.

Whatever I do, you are always in my mind;
Your funny words keep smiling me all the time;
Your advice keep bringing in my mind:
What will I do, I don't know, if you're not already mine.

Our friendship is what I fervently need,
To keep me away from any wrong deeds;
For this, for me, I will surely lead,
To a life that's full of sparkling beads.



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I Love You No Matter

• Grace Arana

*I love you no matter how you upset me,
I love you no matter how you make unforgivable mistakes:
No matter how your actions
Will cause me to worry*

*I love you no matter how you make me cry
And bring sadness to me
I love you no matter how you make unwise decision
That disappoints me*

*I love you despite the lies you told me to test me,
I love you no matter what you've done
And no matter what you will do
I love you no matter what others say about you*



It's About Care

• Bryan Xandrix Espiritu

*I know you don't deserve me,
You said I don't deserve you
Why would I care?*

*I know that you're straight,
And you know that I'm not
Why would you care?*

*I know that it must be right,
While you said it's not
I guess you never really care*


*I should've known that you don't,
Before I become a just "don't"
I guess, nobody cares*

Longing For You

• Gemini

*Why leaving me out of nowhere?
I don't know even a single reason
This I could not really endure
And causes my life into tribulation.*

*This life I cannot accept
For you, I cannot forget
Specially, when we first met
Happiness enveloped myself.*

A person's legs are visible on the left side of the image, wearing denim shorts and high-heeled sandals. They are standing on a forest floor covered with fallen leaves. The background is a dark, dense forest with green foliage. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

*And now, you are away,
Happiness turned into dismay
But I still hope and pray
Someday, you'll come in my way.*

*How happy I am may be,
If you are always with me
For I love you so, truly
And even dream you, to eternity.*

*Wherever I go, I tried to search you
What an alas, I have never seen you
For I just only want to let you know
That still, I am in love with you.*

If You Love Someone

• Lapresa

*If you love someone
You must be willing to sacrifice;
Something that cannot done by everyone
Just to prove how much you love her.*

*If you love someone
You must willing to accept heartaches;
Because loving is not all about happiness,
It also deals with sadness.*

*And if you love someone
It must be because of the person himself;
Not for anyone,
And not for any reason*

Life or Death

- Saminamina_eheh

*Is it okay to be okay?
Or pretend and just say "hey"
I'm sure you want to walk away
And be on that so-called "far far away" place*

*Life is full of surprises,
You wouldn't know when you will say goodbye;
Don't quit and you should be strong
To prove them that they are wrong.*

*I was depressed and tried to surrender
But God gave me a reason to live forever;
And I wanted to be braver than ever
Although ups and downs make me stronger.*



Overcoming
The
Maze
of Life

• Shane Lyka Rosete

Complicated roads with hinders on the way
That's the problem that adorns us everyday
A confusing path that we must overcome
The twists and turns that seems to be burdensome

Life is a choice of something nice and faulty
Of something conservative, sometimes sultry
A game of decisions that always seem wrong,
It's a howl of error like a pitiful song

Having faith and courage is what we all need
With our God Almighty we walk as He lead
He takes away fear and replaces it with joy,
He comforts us when problems come to destroy

Journalistic Life

• Irra May R. Ganot

Justice is seen somewhere
Outrageous anywhere
Until there's a profession
Relinquish by a passion
Nurtured with news
Acquired through voice
Looking for change
Igniting awareness
Singing to you and me
Telling - be JOURNALIST!

Ang Niyel Ohang Kape

- Bryan Xandrix Espiritu

Araw-araw hindi ka nawala sa isip,
Hinahanap-hanap maging sa panaginip
Ni minsá'y sa'yo ay may pumalit
Pagka't gustung-gusto ang 'yong pait,
Niyelohan ka pa upang lumamig


Ang kapeng dati'y mainit,
Ngayo'y napakalamig,
Nasasarapan ang sinuman kada sipsip
Mga mata'y dapat ipikit,
Pagkat ang madarama'y langit


Salamat sa Poong nasa langit
Siya'y natafangi't mabait
Biyaya man niya'y mapait,
At may pera mang kapalit,
At least, worth it

Payo Payo Lang: Pindot o Buklat

- Gemini

Sa isang pindot, pangyayari sa paligid kaagad malalaman mo;
Malalaman din nagaganap sa buhay ng kaibigan,
kapatid o kamag-anak mo;
Anumang oras, araw o kailan mo gustong malalaman rito mismo
Kahit sila'y nakatira saan man panig ng mundo.

Sa isang pindot, saloobin mo rin'y malalaman ng lahat
Pati ginagawa mo at saan ka pupunta dapat,
Lahat makakaalam at ito ay magkakat. 
Kaya naman sa isang pindot hindi nararapat.

Sa isang pindot natutuwa ka na dito
Like doon, comment diyan at share dito
Dimo na namalayang nasasayang na oras mo
Sa isang pindot nawawala ka na sa sarili mo. 

Sa isang pindot asignatura nakaligtaan mo na
Pati proyekto at pagrereview napapabayaana;
Imbes na ballpen ang ipindot at aklat ay buksan na,
Iba ang tinititigan, sa pagpindot nakakonsentreyt ka na.

Payo-payo lang ito mga kaibigan ko
Sa isang pindot maraming pwedeng maibigay sayo,
Pwedeng kasiyahan pero ito'y isang temporaryo
Pwedeng kaalaman pero ito'y isang limitado.

Kaya't ang masasabi ko sa inyo mga kaibigan ko,
Mas mainam pa rin ang aklat na bubuksan niyo;
Dahil saganang kaalaman ang tinataglay nito
Na magagamit nating makipagtunggali sa buong mundo.

Sala Sa Lamig, Sala Sa Init

• *saminamina_eheh*

Sa pag-init ng iyong ulo na nauwi sa diskusyon,
Kasabay nito ang paglamig ng ating relasyon;
Di ko lubos maisip ba't ka nagkakaganyan?
Sa tuwing may gusto ka aking sinusunod,
Pero pag ako na ang humiling, tila wala ng imik.

Sadya bang nagbago ka na?
O di kaya'y ayaw mo na?
Hirap ka mang intindihin
Aking pipilitin na ika'y aking unawain.

Sa tuwing tayo'y magkasama,
Ewan ko ba't akoy binabalewala;
Di ko magawang iwan ka
Dahil sobrang napamahal ka na.
Kaya kong tiisin ang lahat lahat
Kahit ang sakit sakit na.




Pangako

• Lapresa

*Sa panahong lumipas, tayo'y sumumpa sa isa't isa,
Na kahit anuman ang ating tatahakin;
Hiling natin na tayo parin,
Hanggang sa dulo ng buhay natin.*

*Napakasaya ng aking damdamin
Sapagkat binigyan mo ako ng pag-asa;
Para ako'y magpatuloy muli
At para makamit ang aking mga mithi.*

*Tayo'y nagpatuloy na nangarap
Sa mga bagay na alam nating mahirap,
Pero hindi lyon naging hadlang
Para ating kalimutan na lamang.*



*Marami na tayong napagdaanan
Pero heto tayo, patuloy paring lumalaban
At umaasa na balang araw
Lahat ng pagod at sakripisyo ay matunaw.*

*Hanggang sa ika'y nagbago
Kaya mundo ko'y naging magulo;
Hindi ko alam ang aking gagawin
Kung tatapusin o ipagpatuloy parin.*

*Nasaan na ang sabi mong walang iwanan?
Hanggang sa panaginip ko nalang ba mararamdaman?
Sabihin mo ng akoy' makalimot
Sa isang pangakong masalimuot.*

Saning-i

- Meslo Juano

*Ay anian nga Innak panaglaksaw
Bayat idi sika iti pimmawan,
Karirinkak Innak Indung-aw
Ta naawanannak tay-aw.*

*Baton-lagip iti napalabas,
Insansaning-ik itan Innas;
Ayatta a napuan ganas,
Naminpissan a napugas.*

*Pusok itan tay mauwaw
Arignan a saanak makagaraw,
Iyurayka sadtoy ridaw
Agtaktakder ingga matalimudaaw.*

*Luluak saanko payen mapunas
Sangsangitko saan metten malpas;
Agayat manen saankan malpadas
Ta saan ton a kas sam-it ti unas.*

*Agyamanak iti ayat nga inka inpukpukkaw
Ta nakaadayo pay ballasiw taaw;
Pakawanennak met, saanko unay naipadlaw,
Lumlumdaang iliwko itan, di mapilaw.*

NASIMBENG A KARIRIKNA

- *Meslo Juano*

Minatmatak wanawanan,
Addaka sadiay kaspagarigan;
Dikanto pulos maasekgan
Baetta, nalawa a karayan.

Nalidayak ngem umisemak,
Kenka, awan pagbanagak;
Sanga ti namnama, naspak
Bayat idi tinallikudannak.

Siak itan ti agsagaba
Ayat nga inka inwawa;
Pusok toy gumawgawawa
Agraman toy kararwa.

Dinto pulos agmawmaw toy ayat
Kasla wanawanan a saan mapugsat;
Nalawag, kasla init nu bumigat,
Bumtak, aglaplapunusan innak iyuswat.

I, too was heartbroken with things I didn't expect to happen
I was once the prima donna of the paramount chief
 but it seemed the world was legitimately atrocious and inimical
Not in the least did I look forward for this to appear immaterial
My dresses and jewelries were like Elizabeth's,
My bags were uneconomical, and my kitchen was neoteric
Closets were filled with long greens, the garden was suffused
 with the deep pink glow of Juliet roses,
And it was on my garage where the most
 highly-coveted vehicle was parked
But it was indeed an unpleasant event
 when all of these glided like the wind
Like a light alone in the darkness
I felt like I was kicked by strong hooves,
 punched by relentless eyes
My room was built to be big enough to contain
 the many shortness of breath
I am no longer highly flavored
I am no longer of upper class
I am no longer prosperous and loaded,
But to mind you,
I am just a tangible soul
And you'll hear no word from me
 while you are drinking your piña colada

A hand with red-painted nails holds a single red rose against a black background. The hand is positioned in the center, with the rose pointing upwards. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the texture of the petals and the skin of the hand. A tattoo is visible on the forearm.

Displaced
QUEEN

by Jose Francesco Alonzo

The Meteorological Outlook

· Jose Francesco Alonzo

We managed to arrive scratch less
to the nearest door beyond drifting negotiations
We're tired and delusional of the smell of sedated words
copper fluids and secondhand emotions
Until we decided to travel a pace
swifter than walk but less than sprints
And without negation,
we found the place we can catch our breathes
I turned the knob
You turned down back into childhood,
A bed was lying on the floor and our footsteps rippled
from the concrete below fragmented pipe dreams
Suddenly, we dove into it
So sudden we forgot its meaning

A sunset over the ocean with a poem overlaid. The sky is a mix of orange, red, and dark blue, with some clouds. The ocean is dark with white-capped waves breaking. The text is centered in the upper half of the image.

Like swimming for the first time
in pool of tap, immature water
I said the beds are islets
Fragile to casuals but strong to believers
You moved and realized we're floating
below trenches and said I was right
The opposite wind blew
The west was you and the east were always end
A collision is expected
Might as well, a monsoon
For how many times and how deep are doubts of past,
The weather forecast tells again a tale
that surfaces in many consciousness

Think Before You Speak


• *Katelene Caacbay*

"Chismosa", the term used to call those people who talk about someone they barely know, spreading rumors that aren't even true. They say that these kinds of people are the ones who fire up the neighborhood. The official media partner of every individual who knows a story, so juicy that it has to be shared to others.

Spreading rumors is like scattering leaves in your backyard in the evening and then trying to collect them in the morning. It would be very easy to scatter them but it would be hard to collect the same leaves. Once the rumor was passed to other people, it would be hard to undo the damage that has been done. It's like this kind of behavior is already built-in to every man. We people judge others a lot. I too, admit that sometimes I mistakenly judge somebody. We judge them by their looks, their behavior towards us, the way they dress, how they act in public and many more. It is a bad habit but we can't help ourselves from doing so. Others say that they are being "helpful" to the one they are talking about but there are also cases which are different from being helpful.

The reasons are probably the following: jealousy, insecurity, self-pity, weakness, lack of courage and lack of effective communication. The





person who's gossiping about you might have been jealous of something you have. Money, good education, a happy love life are the most common ones. People talk about you in a destructive way so that they may feel better for themselves. People who pity themselves talk bad about others to make themselves feel or appear superior in front of others. When they believe that they can't get their rights back, they'd talk behind your back, scheming on how to make fun of you and get revenge to avoid them from showing their weak side.

Good communication towards others can eradicate these spiteful habits. Before spreading the "hearsays", know more about the person you're talking about. Approach him/her and confirm what you've heard. If you're really trying to help, at least be sincere. If ever that the rumor was true, then respect the person. There must be a reason why such thing happened to him/her. It is not your business to monger over their lives especially when you don't even know them. When one tries to embarrass you by spreading rumors, think positive and let them see how strong you are. Show how mature you are to deal with such nonsense.

The Creator gave us a tongue to be able to communicate with each other. We mustn't take this gift for granted and use it to cause problem to others. Words are just words and tongues are just but a piece flesh but they are sharp enough to pierce a person's life. It could help someone grow, it could inspire and heal them but it also gives you the power to hurt other people. You are responsible for the words that come out in your mouth so always think before you speak.

NAILAKSID TI PANAWEN

• *Meslo Juano*

Siak ba ti nagkurang wenno dakkel la unay ti ekspektasion mo?

Nangrugi iti amin iti maysa a nabara nga aldaw. Mumalem idi ket ammok a napanunotam met iti umay agpalamiis sadiay mall.

Malagipko la unay iti nataraki nga arwatmo. Puraw a bado, nangisit a pantalon, kabbaro a puraw a sapatos ken nangisit met a kallugong. Nagkebbba-kebbaak ta kaslaak la nakaimatang iti artista, iti banglom ket makarukar ti rikna.

Immasidegka kaniak ket nadlawko met a na-lab at pers saytka kaniak. Saanmo mailibak ta nakitak iti matmatam nu kasanonak a binigbig, arigna payen a kayatnak aprusan ken labusan. Wen, sino met ti saan a makapansin kaniak? Nalasangak, presko a kitkitan ken kasla modelo nga aglaplapunosan iti pintasna uray man pay siasino't kaabayko.

Immisemka ket sinagidnak. Minitirmo iti aminko ket ammok a nariknam a siak ket para kenka ken sika met ti pudno nga agbalin a makinbagi kaniak. Nasam-it daguiti is-isemmo a narway iti nakagwapwapo a rupam. Nu la kuma met mabalin, tagergerennak a kasla sumayyet.

Iti dayta met laeng a malem, inawaganak iti baby. BABY. Kasla diro't uyokanmo nga inbalikas.

Insursornak iti amin a paggatangan ken mabalin a pagpasiaran iti uneg ti mall ngem awan pulos sabali a minatmatam nu saan a siak. Saanmo man nga inbalikas ngem ammok a nasarakam iti ragsakmo kaniak.

Nanipod idi, saanmo mailibak a kaslaka la mutit a nakaisem latta. Saanmo binibiangan iti panangkitkitada kaniam daguiti sabali a tattao ta kasla laeng pinta a saan mapugas iti isemmo.

Kadayta met laeng nga aldaw, inyawidnak iti balayyo. Awan

naaramidak nu di ketdi simmurot ta isu met iti pagayatak. Inyaammonak iti dadakkkelmo ken kasta met iti kakabsatmo. Nakitak iti panagselos daguiti kakabsatmo. Nu wen ken mabalin siguro, kayatdak met para kadakuada. Ngem awan maaramidan ta immunaka, baginak laeng, baby.

Iti ummuna a rabii nga inta panagkadwa, nagpatpatnag a siak laeng ti miningmingmingam. Saan pulos napugsat iti isemmo uray man pay idi makaturogka't alas kwatro.

Naglabas iti aldaw, lawas, bulan ken nasurok a makatawen a siak laeng iti kadmaw.

Inbagam amin kaniak a sikretom ket uray man pay saan a nasayaat, awan naaramidak nu di ketdi aklonek a kas panangaklonmo kaniak. Inyaammonak iti amin a papagayammo. Naimatangak amin a saritaan ken gan-ganwatyo.

Addaak latta ti sibaymo iti panawen a nakaisemka, iti panawen a nalidayka ken makapungtotka. Saan a limed a siak pay nagipapasam kadaguita a kaririknam. Iti kinaragsakmo, nairot nga arakop iti inpaaymo, iti met kinapungtotmo, agkurang laengen nga ibalibagnak. Nasaem man, awan maaramidak ta siak tay inawagam iti baby.

Ngem saan unay a nagbayag. Nadlawko a naumaka met.

Kadayta a narway a panawen a panagkadmawata, ammok a naumaka. Saanakon nga awawagan iti baby.

Nakitak nu kasano iti panagimonmo kadaguiti kakabsat ken papagayammo ta adda metten nalalabang nga awawaganda't baby.

Kailiwko la unay daguiti lailom. Kailiwko daguiti kanito a siak iti kadmaw uray mapanka't uneg kubeta. Kadaguitay kanito nga ap-aprusanak, lablabusanak kada suksukatannak. Wen, saan lumabas iti maysa a bulan idi igatgatanganak iti arwatek.

Ngem awanen. Awanen daguidiay a panawen. Saanen a kasla idi iti panagkitam kaniak. Makapanganka payen nga awanak, makapawayka payen nga awanak.

Kailiwko pay dagidiay bigbigat a nu riingenka ket nakalamlamuyot panangaprosmo kaniak. Itan nu riingenka, makaungetka payen.

Kailiwko dagidiay rinabii nga itugtugotnak iti panagraragsakyo nga agbabarkada. Daguiti kankanito nga ipagpanpanakkelnak. Ngem saan itan, kasla ibainnak payen nga itugot. Ibainnak payen nga iparang kadakuada.

Pinagbalinnak laengen a tagaitulod mensahe iti papagayammo. Iti nasakit, pati kadaguiti babbalasitang nga

inawawagam payen iti baby, honey, mahal kada biagko.

Awan karebbengak a mangpawil kenka ta nagmawmawen iti ayatmo kaniak. Awan karebbengak nga agreklamo ta awanakon para kaniam.

Saan payen a nasakit nakemko idi intugotnak a nangkitaka't kasukatko. Addaak abaymo idi naimatangak manen kinas am-it isemmo a nangibalikas iti baby iti sabali, iti nalaslasbang ken mas presko nga amang kaniak. Insurotmo pay kaniata a nagawiden. Nakakaskas-ang.

Ngem sa pay laeng kuma ta malagipmo daguitay naipaayko kenka. Saanko ipagsidir ngem tay laeng pananglagipmo iti idawdawatko. Saanmo met siguro mailibak nga adda met naipaayko iti biagmo bayat kaaddak dennam.

Nagbalinnak a maysa a parte't biagmo. Nagbalinak man a daan ti pinagkitam, ragrag wenno saan makabael, sa pay laeng kuma ta makitam latta't importansiak.

Saan a nasakit riknak nga iwawawanak a kas gagangay nga adda sabalimon. Ngem nu man pay kasta, idulinnak ngem sa pay laeng kuma nga agbalin a baton-lagip daguiti amin a nagkadwaanta.

Itan, iti amin nga inbensa-bensak, ammok a sika a mangbasbasa kadaytoy ket napasagidanka. Ta iti maysa a kanito wenno dwa a naibaga, daytoy nga ababa a sarita ket pagsarmingan. Sublyanam iti maysa a kanito wenno dwa a naibaga ket ammok a maamirismo a kastaka met idikua.

Iti kinaagpayswananna, maysaka kadaguiti ado a kas kadayta maysa a karakter kadaytoy nga istoria. Nu man saanka a maysa kadaguiti ado, sika mismo iti ibagbagak.

Itan, saludsodek manen, siak ba iti nagkurang wenno dakkell unayti ekspektasionmo?

Ket sa pay laeng kuma ta maamirismo a nu man pay umelak ket saanko maibalikas iti karirikna ken saadko, kadaytoy nga ababa a saritak nga idalan. Sika, wen SIKA, saanak tagibassiten ta kadaytoy a moderno a lubong, adda importansiak uray man pay nalaad wenno daanen iti langak a CELLPHONE.

Message sent!

**To The Man
Who Will Pursue Me**

*Love Notes:
Through The Years*

**STRONGER,
WISER, BRAVER**

Think Before You Speak

**NAILAKSID TI
PANAWEN**

essays

To The Man Who Will Pursue Me

~ Jannahry Ann L. Campos

As I put into scribbles the very words running into my mind, I am just so much excited to write such piece with all these twitter patted feelings of mine. Writing letters to you or writing letters about you as early as now might sound stupid to most people. This might seem cheesy and cringe-worthy to some but explaining myself that writing is my passion would be a waste of time. I love writing. I would always write topics anything under the sun but writing to you and about you will be one of the sweetest things I will do for you.

I've often wondered what you look like but I hope I already met you. Of course, I don't want to be with someone whom I don't know yet or should I say, with someone whom I never built a friendship with. Because if not, I guess, that sounds creepy!

But, who are you? And how are you? I don't know if you will ever read this but I know, God will give me the right time to be with you. Until that day, I will wait patiently (and sometimes not-so-patiently) to the man whom I will be with in chasing the glowing stars and the golden rays of sunlight.

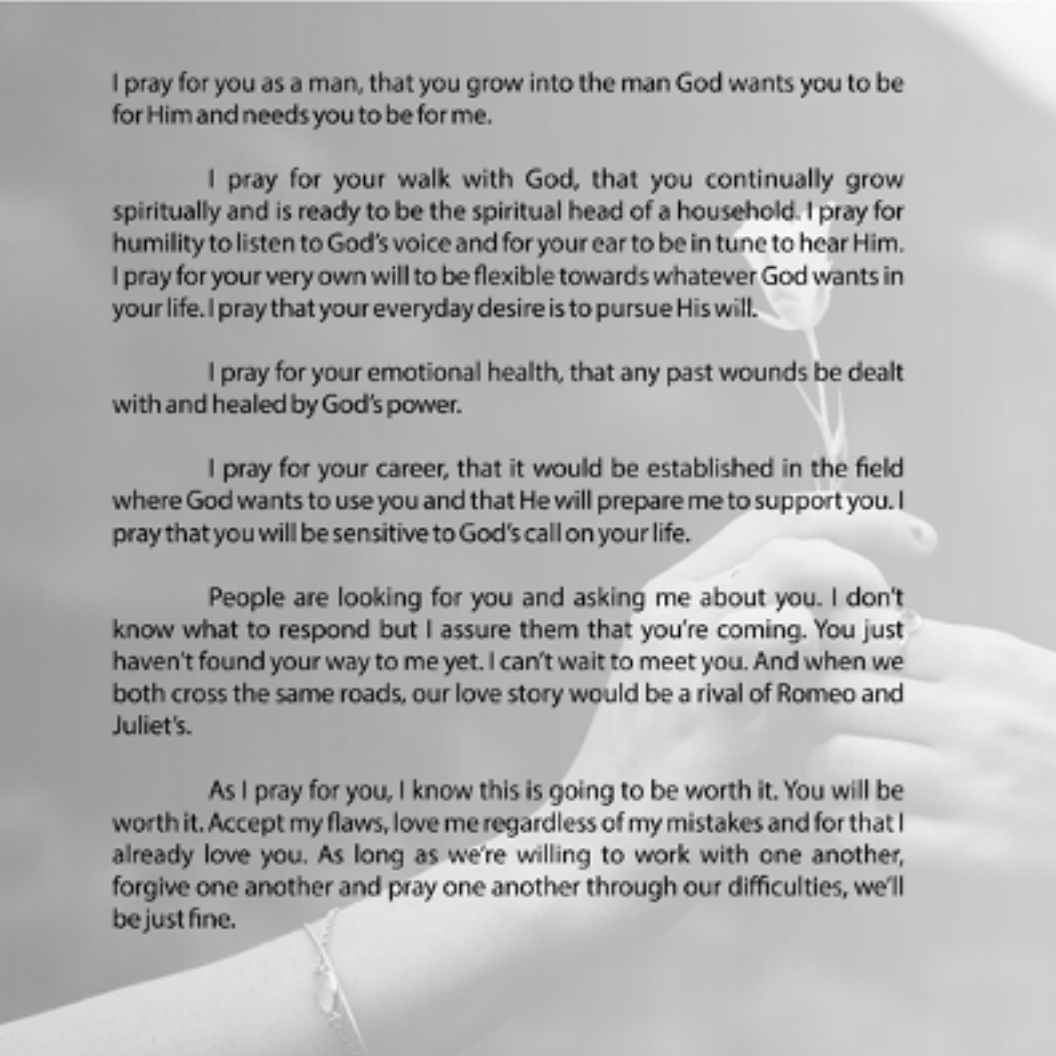
Be the man who will pursue me. Be the man who will have the vision of marriage as you lay down your intentions to me. Because if not, don't dare to pursue me. Don't dare to date me if such relationship will not end into marriage.

There are times I've questioned whether marriage is for me at all but as long as we are growing individually in our relationship with God, if it's His will, then He will construct the bridge for us to get closer.

I am surrounded with friends who are in a relationship; others received clarity from men who clearly laid down their intentions; and some were in the process of courtship. I feel like there is this weird pressure, not too heavy but not too light. But I'm trying not to feel this way because I know in my heart that these social stigmas and pressures are nothing compared to what God has already orchestrated for me in the future. I already know that you are the best thing aside from God that will ever happen to me.

You are resilient. You are a warrior. You are a leader. You are the man of my prayers and the husband of my dreams.

I pray for you, every day. I know that I'm God's piece of work, so not only do I pray for you but I pray that God prepares me to be the best partner. I'm striving to submit every area of my life to God so He can mold me to be the woman He wants me to be for you.



I pray for you as a man, that you grow into the man God wants you to be for Him and needs you to be for me.

I pray for your walk with God, that you continually grow spiritually and is ready to be the spiritual head of a household. I pray for humility to listen to God's voice and for your ear to be in tune to hear Him. I pray for your very own will to be flexible towards whatever God wants in your life. I pray that your everyday desire is to pursue His will.

I pray for your emotional health, that any past wounds be dealt with and healed by God's power.

I pray for your career, that it would be established in the field where God wants to use you and that He will prepare me to support you. I pray that you will be sensitive to God's call on your life.

People are looking for you and asking me about you. I don't know what to respond but I assure them that you're coming. You just haven't found your way to me yet. I can't wait to meet you. And when we both cross the same roads, our love story would be a rival of Romeo and Juliet's.

As I pray for you, I know this is going to be worth it. You will be worth it. Accept my flaws, love me regardless of my mistakes and for that I already love you. As long as we're willing to work with one another, forgive one another and pray one another through our difficulties, we'll be just fine.

To the man who will pursue me, I don't know who you are but I respect you and I love you. I'm sometimes difficult, I can be moody but with God's grace, I will always be willing to have your back.

My heart beats in anticipation of meeting you. But I'm patiently waiting to be the woman who encourages you and the partner who never gives up on you. I am preparing and submitting to God so that I will turn out to be the woman who is an answered prayer to you. I am in God's face every day, letting go of doubts and fears that may ever have the potential of causing havoc in our future relationship. I'm learning how to be accepting, forgiving, loving, trusting and understanding.

One day, I'll be in a stunning gown while you will handsomely wait at the altar. On that very day, it will be glorious and celebratory. Through the ups and downs in the future, I pray that we stick together and look to Christ for every unanswered question needed.

I need you to know that I want nothing less than a relationship built on the foundation of Christ.

I'm writing this because it excites me for the future to come. It helps me realize that the best has yet to come and you are that "best". I want you to know that you have my heart.

I am patiently waiting and praying for you.



Love Notes: Through The Years

• Jannahry Ann L. Campos

It is amazing how time flies so fast. As days pass by, change is very evident. Indeed, change is the only constant thing in this world. It seems like it was only yesterday when I would save the film strips of black Kodak camera to capture memories and would wait for an hour for the pictures to be developed. I still remember how I would rush into a local bookstore to buy a floppy disk because I just ran out of space to save my school project. It is funny to look back at those days when I had to write my friends who live far away from home and expected a response a month or two after.

Through the years, technology has been improving and became our necessity. Gone are the days when I have to keep the negative strips of the photos I captured. I don't think that we still have computers that read floppy disks and I wonder if there are still people who drop their letter at a local post office to be transmitted.

I was cleaning my desk trying to make room for the gifts I received from my relatives when I came across a familiar envelope. I opened it and it took me back to that day when I received a hand written love letter. Enclosed was a picture of him and a dedication was written at the back. I know that it took him courage to face me and hand me the letter.

As I read the letter once again, I felt his sincerity. Every feeling was scribbled in the small piece of white paper. I know how many sheets of paper were crumpled just to make sure no error as made. Of course, I can't really stop myself from laughing at some minor grammatical errors he committed but I know he exerted effort to have grammatically correct sentences as possible. The feeling of receiving handwritten letters is incomparable knowing that someone actually took effort to write down his feelings for you.

At present, saying 'I love you' to someone is as easy as counting 1-2-3. With the advanced technology that we have today, it is not impossible to send an 'I love you' note to someone in a few seconds

without taking a lot of courage. Who would need a courage if it won't be a face to face interaction? Distance won't be a hindrance for we can now send e-mails and instant messages to people who are miles away from us. Did technology worsen the quality of love at present? No.

Writing e-mails and sending text messages to a very important person is as valuable as scribbling it in a piece of paper. For a girl like me, the feeling of receiving a sweet e-mail or text message is the same as receiving a hand written love letter, only it reaches me faster. There is still the effort to compose a group of sentences to express feelings. There is still the agony of waiting for a response.

I would always ask my sister how it feels like to receive love emails from her boyfriend who lives 3,000 miles away from the Philippines. She would always flash her sweetest smile as she shares how grateful she is for technology made the distance closer.

Every 25th of the month, she would always compose an email to show her boyfriend how thankful she is for the month that has passed. I see her one or two hours in front of her cellphone screen trying to type such long sentences and would delete them after a while because she wants to make the love note genuine and perfect.

There was this time that I advised her to send a hand written love letter to Papua New Guinea to make her boyfriend feel her genuine and sincere message of love. Nowadays, to get the heart of someone, people just tend to 'copy-paste' and I accused my sister guilty of doing such. My sister answered me but did not defend herself. She emphasized that

there is also no assurance that handwritten love letters are original. It looks real but who knows if someone copied it from somewhere. If it is handwritten, it won't always mean that it is real. A love note is real if you feel the love as you read word by word.

Love letter and love emails are the same, only the latter made things faster. Receiving a handwritten letter makes us feel extra special and important because someone took effort to write legibly to express love. E-mails on the other hand are made special because of the genuine feeling as people type the letters. In my sister's case, she is thankful of Skype, Facetime and Facebook not only because her boyfriend won't have to wait for the letter to arrive and she won't spend twelve hundred bucks to send it, she gets to see him through a video call. They will be celebrating their first year anniversary next month and going strong despite the distance all because of e-mails and text messages.

Love, if genuine, will be felt no matter how you express it.



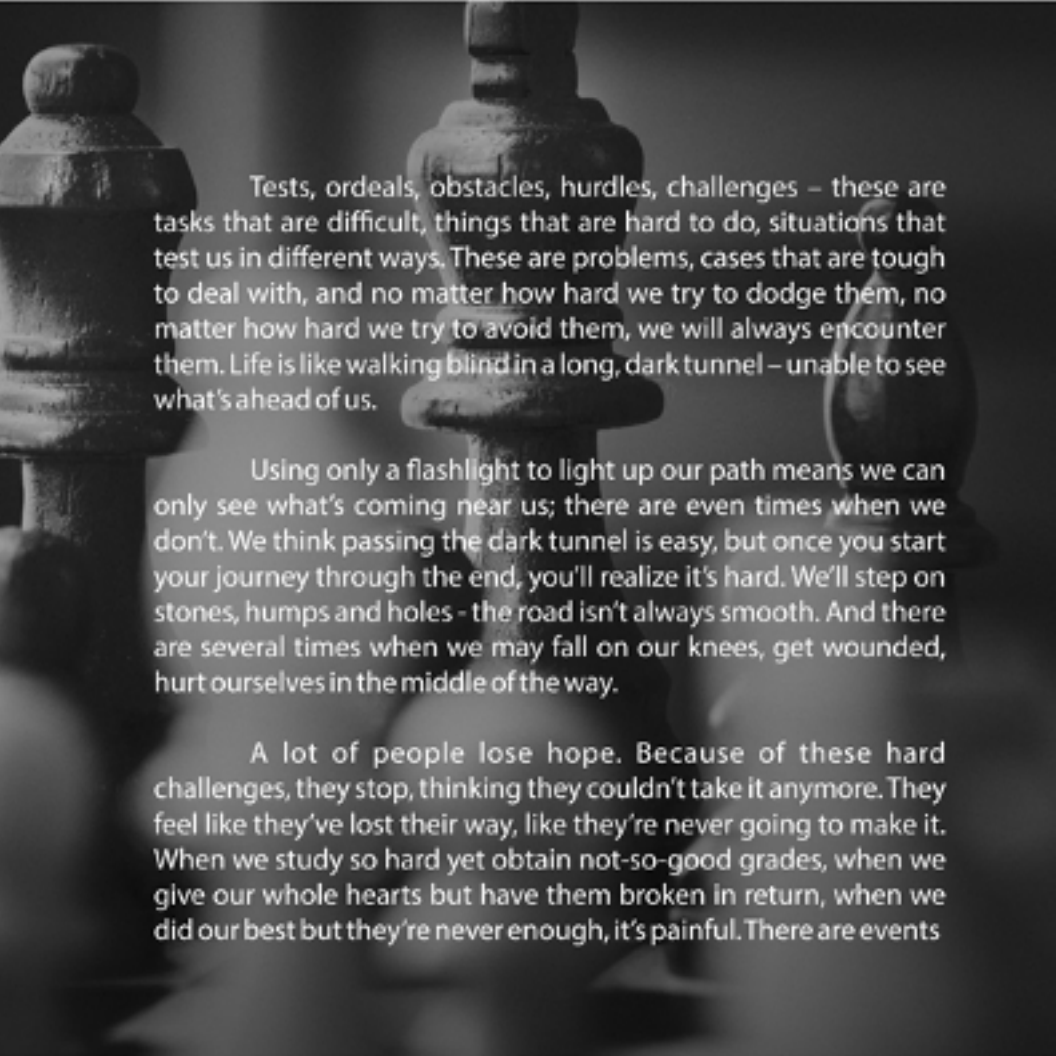
STRONGER, WISER, BRAVER

- Mara Erum

"When we meet real tragedy in life, we can react in two ways - either by losing hope and falling into self-destructive habits, or by using the challenge to find our inner strength."

-Dalai Lama

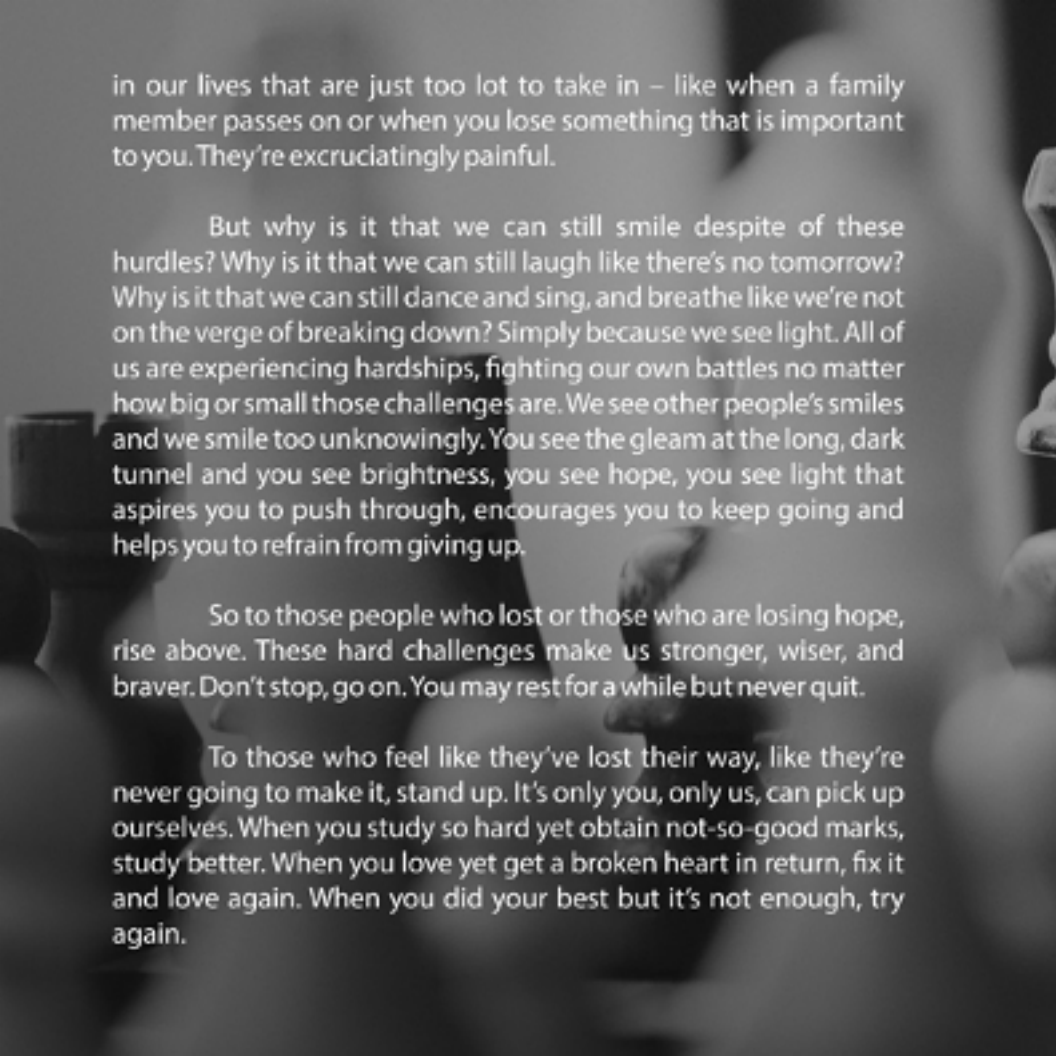
Challenges are, indeed, part of our lives. In the early morning when the alarm rings, it's a great challenge to stand up from the bed. A great challenge to take a bath during the cold season. A great challenge to have an exercise when all you want to do is sit down, eat, and watch your favorite movie. And a greater challenge to surmount these hurdles every single day of our lives. Isn't it amazing how we survive these?



Tests, ordeals, obstacles, hurdles, challenges – these are tasks that are difficult, things that are hard to do, situations that test us in different ways. These are problems, cases that are tough to deal with, and no matter how hard we try to dodge them, no matter how hard we try to avoid them, we will always encounter them. Life is like walking blind in a long, dark tunnel – unable to see what's ahead of us.

Using only a flashlight to light up our path means we can only see what's coming near us; there are even times when we don't. We think passing the dark tunnel is easy, but once you start your journey through the end, you'll realize it's hard. We'll step on stones, humps and holes - the road isn't always smooth. And there are several times when we may fall on our knees, get wounded, hurt ourselves in the middle of the way.

A lot of people lose hope. Because of these hard challenges, they stop, thinking they couldn't take it anymore. They feel like they've lost their way, like they're never going to make it. When we study so hard yet obtain not-so-good grades, when we give our whole hearts but have them broken in return, when we did our best but they're never enough, it's painful. There are events




in our lives that are just too lot to take in – like when a family member passes on or when you lose something that is important to you. They're excruciatingly painful.

But why is it that we can still smile despite of these hurdles? Why is it that we can still laugh like there's no tomorrow? Why is it that we can still dance and sing, and breathe like we're not on the verge of breaking down? Simply because we see light. All of us are experiencing hardships, fighting our own battles no matter how big or small those challenges are. We see other people's smiles and we smile too unknowingly. You see the gleam at the long, dark tunnel and you see brightness, you see hope, you see light that aspires you to push through, encourages you to keep going and helps you to refrain from giving up.

So to those people who lost or those who are losing hope, rise above. These hard challenges make us stronger, wiser, and braver. Don't stop, go on. You may rest for a while but never quit.

To those who feel like they've lost their way, like they're never going to make it, stand up. It's only you, only us, can pick up ourselves. When you study so hard yet obtain not-so-good marks, study better. When you love yet get a broken heart in return, fix it and love again. When you did your best but it's not enough, try again.



As long as we breathe, as long as we live, there's always hope. As long as you don't surrender, there's always a light, a chance that you can grab to make things better.

Challenges - they either make us or break us. So when you experience one, don't let it break you. Don't let the challenge turn into a monster that will eat you and swallow your light. Let it be a stair, a ladder. It's not easy, no, it's never easy. But try stepping on them, and little by little, using these hurdles, climb up.

Step on the challenges of life in your journey, and with Him, you can be victorious. You can triumph over these obstacles. You can win against these battles. Let us rise to the challenges and together, we can be champions.

To The Guy Who Left Me,
THIS IS FOR YOU

I Am The Memory
You've Forgotten

I'LL BE BACK

short
stories

To The Guy Who Left Me,
THIS IS FOR YOU
- Jannahry Ann L. Campos

"Those are only just words."

I will never forget that line of yours. I will certainly not forget your thick face and your sheer guts of saying those words to me. You were even excessively buoyant. Look, you are not that handsome like the other men I know. You are not like them who are being screamed wherever they are, being stalked on Facebook, being followed on Instagram and Twitter and being beseeched to take a selfie, groupie with millions and even billions of ladies.

Yes, I must not be in the position of saying these words to you because I've spent years of my life with you, giving all my love for you.

Listen, what I'm telling here right now is not only just words like what you told me before. These are not only just words. These are words that will surely kill your buoyancy or it will even kill you. These are words that are not just coming out from my mouth and running on my mind, these are words that will tell you that the pain I felt when you said that

before, isn't killing me anymore.

You were struck with me. You saw something different in me that made your heart fell in love with me. You even asked my phone number to the people who knew it. You were like a kid begging for something just to satisfy your longings. You made ways just for you to start a conversation with me. You were obsessed with me.

With all those actions and words, I precipitously felt smitten by you.

I didn't expect that we stole each other's hearts until promises and plans began to form.

In fact, I still remember those-are-only-just-words promises of yours. I still knew every single imprudent promise you made.

That's how much I treasured everything between us. That's how much I valued your very words to me. That's how much I cherished a man like you. IT WASTOOD MUCH.

You never failed to surprise me with letters and presents almost every day.

"Hello my love. Thank you for accepting me and loving me despite of all my flaws. Thank you because you do care for me. Thank you for making my days

full of your sweetness and full of your support. I appreciate your efforts. I appreciate you for finding your time to talk with me even how busy you are in school. I appreciate your wisdom, your strength and your charm. I appreciate you. I'm sorry for being jealous most of the time. I just don't want that guys are surrounding you, guys are texting you and guys are laughing with you. I'm afraid because you might forget me. I'm afraid because you might feel happier when you are with them instead of me. I'm afraid because you might leave me. I'm afraid to lose you. I'm sorry if that causes you to get angry because of these what-ifs of mine. You don't want to be hearing these from me because you will never do things that will break my heart. God gave me the best gift ever; He gave me a beautiful and a witty woman like you. I'm forever grateful to God for giving you in my life, you just don't know how blessed I am. You just don't know how happy I am. My love, you are the woman I was dreaming in my entire life and I can't believe that I'm now starting the infinity with you. I'm thrilled to be with you for eternity. I will do everything for you and for me. I will do everything to make this relationship worth enduring. You will always be my love, my forever. You will always be the love of my life. You will always be the focus of my eyes and my heart. You will always be and nothing will ever take that from you. I love you every day. I love you forever. I love you so much!"

Tears fell on my cheeks every time I read your letters. Your messages were my stress relievers. There was no single day that I didn't read your handwritten letter and cry. I felt the warmth.

Laptop on, books opened and notes scattered, a perfect description of my every day scenario. My schedule was always occupied with different stuff. Crying was a part of my hectic schedule. But what

inspire and motivate me to do all those things and to finish those things were your messages that will always remind me that I can do it and that you will be there for me. Those stressful days and sleepless nights, you were my strength.

You loved giving promises and you were sure to fulfill those. We'd exchanged a lot of promises until one day, everything became a mist.

You finally said goodbye. You finally said that you can't take it anymore.

I was hurt, deeply hurt. I can't believe that you were the one who broke my heart when you promised not to break it. I can't believe that you were the one who gave up when you said that you will fight for me and you will fight for what we have. I can't believe that you replaced me while I'm enjoying our relationship. You looked for another woman.

Before you left me, I kept asking you if you were hiding things from me. I asked you if there was someone better than me. I asked you if you were now in love with someone else. I asked you! I asked you not only hundreds of time but zillions of time! EVERYDAY! EVERYDAY, I NEVER FAILED TO ASKED YOU THOSE QUESTIONS. I kept on asking you that because you knew exactly that I felt something different in you. I felt something wrong in our relationship. You exactly knew that because we made an agreement to be in pure honesty and that includes what we're feeling. Those were the things I felt and I asked everything to you but what did you say? What did you keep on insisting? What was your only

answer? IT WAS ALWAYS A NO! You said that you don't have other girls in your heart except me.

Before you left me, I also asked you if you're still enjoying our relationship. I asked you if I'm still the woman you want to marry and be the mother of your future kids. I asked you if you're still obsessed with me. Your answered YES!

But what happened? You left me hanging. You easily dumped me. You lied to me. You cheated on me. You played my heart. Worst, you didn't become honest.

The moment you left me, every part of my physique was in pain.

Wounds all over my body.

Heart extremely bleeding.

Eyes obviously crying.

Hands were shaking.

We had years, not months... not even weeks.

I still tried to fix everything between us. I let you remember each other's promises and plans. Plans like, we'll be going for an adventure, and we'll be touring those famous places we knew, our dream wedding and our dream house. We even planned about our future family and a

plan of putting up our own business.

I unexpectedly heard the greatest excruciating words in my whole life after telling about our promises and our plans over and over again.

"Those are only just words," you said.

It totally broke my heart. You ended our years together with just those words.

And look, you're too confident of saying those words after being so confident before to know more about me, asked me to be yours and made unending promises.

Weeks after our break-up, you were already dating that woman whom you fell in love with when we're still together. It gave me so much pain again. You easily moved on while I was still there hardly crying and longing for your love.

That's how desperate you are.

Months passed by, finally, I moved on.

I realized that you're not only the guy in this world. There is someone better than you. There is someone who deserves me more. There is someone who deserves my love and my care and that's not you. I stopped putting my world to you. Your world is filled with mendacities

and flirtatiousness. I don't deserve that kind of world like yours. You don't deserve me.

Thank you for saying, "Those are only just words." Yes, you're right. Those are only just words. Words are cheap but what you did is cheaper and the one who said it was the cheapest—and that's exactly you.

Thank you because you made me realize that there are more beautiful happenings out there than ours.

You made me realize that in love, it's not just about having good times together and learning the things you want to happen in a relationship. But it's about laying down your desires and do the things that are best for the two of you. It's about caring for each other when there's nothing in it. I realized that love is expressed in patience and in self-control.

Thank you because I was able to enjoy my life even more. In fact, there are great opportunities waiting for me and I'm so glad about it.

Yes, our love story maybe one of the many good things happened in our lives but our break-up was the best!

Now, the bitterness I had before is not ruining me anymore. I was delivered from your lies. I was delivered from you. Endless thanks to you for saying goodbye because if not, I will still be in your foolish world. I would still stupidly loving a man who is relentlessly cheating on me.

Thank you for hurting my feelings, it opened my eyes. Thank you for doing that stupidity of yours, it woke me up. Thank you for replacing me, it unveiled everything.

I appreciate you for breaking my heart. This letter is for you.
THESE ARE NOT ONLY JUST WORDS.

*I Am The Memory
You've Forgotten*
- Jannahry Ann L. Campos

Once again, I find myself staring into a dark abyss, trying to stop my tears from falling. This has been the seventh night in a row- seven nights of sorrow, pain, suffering, misery, hurt, anguish, and grief.

I was told that grieving for the dead is easier than grieving for someone you lost but still alive. Because among all of the ways to die, love can kill you and still keep you alive to feel it.

I felt the usual sting on my chest as I tightened my grip on the pink box sitting on my lap. I knew I had to start letting go of the things that remind me of you because you don't remember me anymore. I was once the only girl in your life. But I turned into the memory you've forgotten.

If only I had known that you would be the one to bring me this excruciating pain, I would have never taken that plane to Manila. If I had known you'd bring me unimaginable sorrow, I never would have let my cousin drag me to that coffee shop. If I had known you wouldn't stay in my life, I never would have begged my parents for that vacation.

I was recovering from a heartache when I begged my parents one summer for a well-deserved vacation. I wanted to stay away from him. I wanted to stay away from someone who never became mine but hurt me so much beyond repair. I wanted to stay away from him because I would just be reminded of how stupid and naïve I was for not noticing that he was in love with someone else. I wanted to stay away from him for my own sake. I wanted to be fixed.

As soon as I left the plane, I promised myself that I would leave my memories of him. But it wasn't that easy. I got in my cousin's car expecting we would go straight to their house so I can rest but I was so wrong. And as we were travelling, a song came up the radio- a song that reminded me so much of him. One song was all it took to make me remember all of my mistakes for two years.

I have loved him in the shadows. I have loved him in the dark. I have loved him and no one knew except me. I have loved him like he was the last man I'll ever love. And that is why the pain he brought me when I saw him dance and ask the girl he was in love with to be his girlfriend never left my system. The hurt reminded me of the first time I lost a tooth. The first time I fell down and got a wound. And yes, he left a mark. He left a scar that will forever be a flaw in my existence. He left a huge hole in my heart which needed to be repaired before it swallowed me whole. And that is why I was in Manila with my cousins.

"San tayo pupunta? Gusto ko magpahinga," I complained as we

stopped at the parking lot of a huge mall.

"Sama ka na, Sasa. I'm sure mag e-enjoy ka," she responded.

I let her drag me in that coffee shop where you were waiting. It was as if my instinct told me that this was a bad idea. I wanted to bail out. I hated boys. I hated the idea of falling for another boy and not being caught. I hated the feeling of falling in love. Because I learned the hard way that everything that fell broke. And that's what he did to me. He broke me. He tore me into a million pieces, some parts I don't even know where to look for because I gave so much to him.

I sat down half-heartedly on the chair across you. I didn't want to talk to anyone. I wanted to be alone. That's when it got worse because someone who looked exactly like you came and joined us at our table. My cousin must have read my mind when she said "kambal sila" with a laugh. It turned out that my cousin was dating your twin. They looked cute together with the braces and the brown eyes and the blonde hair. And then there we were, sitting awkwardly across each other, avoiding eye contact and a conversation.

I screamed internally when they stood up and held hands because that meant I was stuck with you, a boy. They walked so fast that my tired legs couldn't keep up. I was so tired of chasing after someone who never even noticed that I had feelings for him. I was so tired of chasing a finish line which kept running away from me. I was so tired.

We ended up by the bay at sunset and decided to ride the giant Ferris' Wheel. Maybe watching the sunset at a high altitude would ease

my mind. Maybe relaxation would take over me as I watch the sun sink into the horizon, kissing the sea at some point.

It was tense inside the gondola. I wanted to say something. I wanted to start a conversation. But I couldn't. I felt like it would be the longest 15 minutes of my life.

The silence was deafening. The silence was killing me. So I decided to take my phone out and played a song. Since it was a melancholic atmosphere, I went along with the feel and chose "I Choose to Love You" by Hyorin.

I saw how your expression changed. You smiled for the first time today and I have to admit, it was a beautiful sight. I totally forgot about the sunset that I was looking forward to see. Everything around me seemed to stop when you sang along.

You liked K-pop. You listened to K-pop. You were a K-pop fan. It felt like the world conspired to bring us close to each other. My day felt a little bit better. We talked like we knew each other for a long time. We started to bond, to get along. I didn't feel like a chaperone anymore. I felt like I was on an actual date. We became closer and the rest was history. We continued to talk when I came back to Laoag, I longed for you. I wanted to see you again. I wanted to be with you. That's when you sent me a package. A pink box.

I was excited to open the package on that 10th day of September, year 2013. It contained something that I never would have

guessed. Inside the pink box, were three red roses, withered and wilted from the time it took to get to me; stolen pictures of me when we were in Manila with notes at the back, which were all handwritten, by the way; and a flash drive with a small note ordering me to watch whatever was in there.

And I watched, just like you told me to, because I was stupid and naïve.

You were dancing to SISTAR's Loving U. It made me laugh. It made me reach a level of happiness I never thought was achievable. But the next scene brought tears to my eyes.

You took the same three red roses and put them inside the box. Then you took the photos and dumped them inside the box. You ended the video with your question, "Sasa, will you be my girlfriend?"

I cried. I cried hard. Not because of pain. For the first time in my whole existence, I cried because I was happy. I immediately called you to tell you my answer. It was a yes.

Our relationship was perfect, almost too perfect. We went on for two weeks without any arguments. We were happy. We were happily in love even though we were not together.

It wasn't until the last week of September when I noticed that you've changed. You became cold. So cold that I was afraid to talk to you because I thought I annoyed you.

And then it happened. You asked for a cool off. You promised me you'd come back. But I wasn't expecting anymore. Everyone who told me they'd come back never did. They left and never looked back.

I asked my cousin what was wrong with you or your brother but her response was "break na kami." I didn't know what was going on. I was lost. I was lost without you. I wanted you to come back to me. I wanted to hold you so bad.

One week passed by without any news from you or your brother. I was afraid, but I never told you. I was so afraid of being left again. And then you returned. Just like you said you would. You returned to me like nothing happened.

Until one day you posted a status update saying "good morning" at 3 pm. I laughed. I thought you were stupid. I thought wrong.

I got in touch with your brother who immediately became my best friend. He understood what I felt. You felt distant. It felt as if we weren't in a relationship anymore. It felt like we were just friends, acquaintances even.

I wanted to tell you my problem but you were too preoccupied with your new found friend whom you called "Monay." She called you "Jopay" and I thought it was the most stupid endearment ever. I tried to befriend your Monay. I tried my hardest and it worked. We became friends. Or that's what I thought.

It was going well with you and me and your friend, our friend, actually. But then it came to a point where she knew more about you than me. She knew where you were, and I didn't. She was the one who told me you were in Canada. And that's why you posted that status update. Because you were in a different time zone. Why didn't you tell me? Didn't I deserve to know?

I confronted you about this matter but you only said "I didn't want to bother you. Baka mag-alala ka lang kasi. We're here for a vacation." But you lied.

November 12, 2013, I was sitting in class. You wanted to talk to me so bad. I didn't understand you anymore. One day you were cold, and the other you were warmer than your fireplace. I was seated at the back of the class as we watched a movie that we were supposed to write a review on. But I never made that review. I never had the courage to stay inside the room after you told me what you needed to tell me.

"Biek, may brain tumor ako. Remember the cool off? I came to Canada and I needed to go on a lot of check-ups. I was confined kaya I didn't have time to talk to you. Maooperahan na ako sa 15. I'm sorry I lied to you."

My whole world crumbled. I wanted to scream. I wanted to cry. I was confused. I didn't know what I was supposed to feel. I was blank for the rest of the day. Three days? I had three days left. November 15 came. You were inside the operating room. It was agonizing to wait for eight hours as I talked to your brother waiting for updates. I

cried the whole day praying you'd survive and remember me.

One month passed without any contact and news from you or your brother. I was afraid. I had no one to talk to. Until I remembered Monay.

I vented out to her. She was my diary. I told her everything I needed to say. I told her how I missed you. I told her how I longed for you. I told her how much I loved you. I told her everything.

Until Christmas day came and I woke up to a message from you. I couldn't contain my happiness. I couldn't contain my joy. I immediately told Monay that you were awake, that you were back.

You remembered me. Thank goodness you remembered me.

We talked casually. Too casual for my own liking but talking like this was better than not talking at all.

Everything went well. We talked about the things that made us happy. We talked about your surgery. We even talked about your nurse who was totally hitting on you. But I wasn't mad. I was happy that you were back. That was all that mattered to me at that moment.

The night was getting deeper at your place and you told me you were getting a bit tired.

"Sasa, matutulog nako. Pinapatulog na ako ng girlfriend ko," you

said.

I never told you to sleep. Who told you to sleep?

"Sino ba girlfriend mo?" I asked out of curiosity.

And to my disappointment, you said Monay's name.

You hurt me for the second time.

But I was more furious with your Monay than you. I never thought she could do such a thing. She was so sweet, damn it. That was why she wasn't surprised when I told her that you were awake. She already talked to you and deceived you.

I felt like I was being stabbed multiple times in my chest. I felt like I could die at that moment.

You remembered my name. You remembered who I was. But you didn't remember that I was your girlfriend.

I let you be. I set you free. I felt like you were not happy with me anyway. I just hoped at that point that your monay loved you more than I did.

I told no one about the misery you've brought to me. I just told them that we broke up because I couldn't handle a long distance relationship. I took all the blame. I lost friends. And I lost you.

I'd have to admit this wasn't the best Christmas for me. It had to be the worst.

Today is the first day of January and I need to get ready to start a new beginning. A new life where there is no you.

I stood up to take the box of matches from my nightstand and went to our backyard. If I wanted to get rid of your memories, I needed to get rid of the things that reminded me of you. And I will start with this pink box which contains all of what we are and what we were.

I let the flame engulf everything that was you, everything that was you and me, everything that was us, and everything that we will never be.

That is the story of how I lost my first love and how I became the memory he forgot.

I'LL BE BACK

• *Spotlight*

I was looking for clothes to wear. My room was filled with books, notebooks, scratch papers and clothes. I hurriedly packed everything, I quickly cleaned my chaotic room and I swiftly fixed my bed.

There was a ligneous desk beside my bed where my music styled vintage box was placed. I slowly unclasp my box; this box is where I hide my treasured journals, sweet love letters from people who are so dear to me, colored papers where I secretly write my feelings every single day and pictures that will always hark back a thousand memories. I suddenly noticed a brown plastic bag. In it were photographs and withered petals of a stemmed red rose. A smile began to form in my face while gazing at them. Memories keep flashing in my mind.

It happened during a memorable and unexpected night, our socialization. It was my first time to be in socialization wherein students from two schools were combined. I used to attend socializations and balls in our university with people that I almost see and interact every day in other words, socialization events that is exclusively for the students of our college. But, this socialization party was drastically different.

I dressed up in a white off-shoulders blouse tucked in on a bandage skirt. I wore silver doll shoes. No make-up at all, just a powder and a lip balm. My hair was not even styled. Again, this is my first time to join socialization with no great preparations at all.

Awarding was the first part of the program; it was an awarding for the dual meet happened earlier. After the awarding, they prepared icebreakers for us.

Awarding is done! Icebreakers are done!

Time for a dance!

I was sitting on a bleacher when he approached me with his sweet voice,

"May I dance with you?" he said, as he stretched his arm towards me.

I slowly held my head up high. Yes, slowly. I don't know what to say. I don't know what we'll be doing during the dance. I don't know if it will be just plain dancing or it will be a combination of a dance and exchanged conversations. I really don't know because we already spent time talking with each other after their game and before the socialization. What will be our topic again during the dance if I already asked him the things I wanted to know? But who would ignore a man who was brave

enough to approach me after their game, who was brave enough to ask my name, to know everything about me and to spend his time with me during his break hours?

There he is, wearing their gray-colored uniform. He's a disciplined, a virtuous and a good-looking man.

"Sure," I answered him with a low-toned voice.

Lights were off. Dim lights enthralled the scenery. A slow romantic song was played by a known band. The spotlight was focused on us. I was staring at his exquisite and sparkly eyes. I put my arms on his shoulders. He wrapped his arms around my waist. We're standing at one place and we danced with turns and sways. We were getting closer and everything moved slower.

"You look so beautiful in white," he said as his eyes looking into mine.

"That's a song right?" I answered him laughing.

He laughed too.

"Yes, it's a song. But I really want you to know that you are undeniably beautiful. You are gorgeous in my eyes."

"Thank you. You also look gorgeous on your suit tonight," I answered as my heart beats faster. I can't even look at his eyes straightly.

My knees were trembling. My fingers seem to be shaking.

"Are you okay?" he asked.

"Um, yes,"

He hugged me as we were dancing together.

It was the second music and we were still both enjoying the night, swaying and talking to each other.

He looked into my eyes again as he touched my face.

Then he said, "I like you. I want to spend my life with you. I want to dance you every day. I want to hold your hands forever. I want to be with you more than the seconds in a minute, more than the minutes in an hour, more than the hours in a day, more than the days in a week, more than the weeks in a month and more than the months in a year and more than forever in the infinity."

I was shocked! I was extremely speechless!

All I ever did was to hug him. I hugged him tightly.

I was the happiest woman that night. I will never forget the man who painted my life with colors and butterflies.

I returned the stemmed flower on the plastic bag. I also saw a short message in one of our perfect photo saying,

"From the first day I saw you, it was just the very first time I felt affection to a girl from the first sight. Thank you for allowing me to know more about you and to spend my time with you. I also thank you for the dance; it was a wonderful night dancing with a wonderful woman. I'm excited for our story of infinity, beautiful! Let's continue striving excellence in our studies. I'll be back. Please wait for me as I'll wait for you. I love you so much!"

I put everything back in the box.

My heart was still pumping with joy. I can't believe that the man whom I was clandestinely cheering and looking during their basketball game came to me. I can't believe that he liked me and he loved me. I can't believe that these things are really happening in reality and not on a dream, or a dream inside a dream.

Times passed by, I also wrote a message for him. In my message, I expressed what's in my mind and what's in my heart:

"In you, I've already found the kind of love I'm searching for. That joy inside of me was starting to question things. I was starting to look for your words you said that you will come back to me. I was starting to find that story of infinity. No text. No call. No communication. Nothing at all. I'm waiting, hopelessly waiting.

I was drowned in the sea of tears and sobs. The walls of vehemence and abhorrence congested the paradise of freedom. I'm mistreating myself inconspicuously; it seems that there are just

unrestrained things done. Here I am, bringing up the rear of all my feelings out from nowhere at no sagacity of point.

I am in dejection. I am all alone. I can't retain myself to focus. This is how it goes. I have loved a man who means the whole world to me. Regrettably, I've been a fool-loving to an impassive man.

All of a sudden, he just walked away with no single thought, not knowing he will never come back again. He has brought thoroughness and melancholies to my whole being, to my precious life.

Let me say the things you need to know.

Why can't you love me the way I love you? Is it too hard for you? I've been waiting you for so long years. It's all gone! I've wasted pursuing of a lifetime love. Yet, I've waited for nothing.

Here I am, all alone, thinking the memories left behind. I'm compelling chances to fix the broken pieces. If only I could hold your arms and be filled by your love, I'd undoubtedly wait. I'm greatly needed by your warmth. My happiness is where you are!

Every day, I'm hoping...hoping...and hoping...

How about your promises? Will I still hold on or shall I forget everything? Oh, how I wish it was easy to disremember all those things. Shall I ignore these feelings? I'm about to lose you now. There are lots of question with no answers. I can't find ways to be happy. I thought I've

already found the kind of love I'm searching for. I was wrong! Maybe someday, somehow, time will come to restore this broken heart and make things right."

While reading the letter, I wonder the certain moment of falling in love, there will be a collision of two hearts. And when the contradiction between the state of fondness and animosity meet, it is just the heart decides. Time can mend a broken heart and renew the torn, just wait. Love is waiting.

