The Public Journal

An anthology of truth.
A journal for the public.

May 2005
Tufts University
“You’re an irresponsible voyeur.”

This is what a Tufts senior said to me regarding the Public Journal. He argued that disassociating authors’ names from their pieces is somewhat cowardly and that the anonymity factor detracts from the writing’s artistic value.

I feel that the anonymity helps both writer and reader. The former is freer to submit things she or he otherwise would not, while the latter is free to read others’ thoughts without the experience being tainted by previously formed opinions on the author. In the microcosm that is Tufts, this likely occurrence could be a dangerous thing. Additionally, I believe that the anonymity takes away from the pretension so often associated with the writing in other literary publications here. In the pages of this book, people find enough satisfaction in their own words, with no extra need for recognition because they write for themselves, for their journals. That’s it!

And as for the question of artistic value, should the renowned XVI century painting, “Gabrielle d’Estrées and One of Her Sisters,” not be hanging in the hallowed halls of the Louvre because it is unsigned?

Even if you disagree with me, read us. Find out a little more about the people around you: they’re a lot like and nothing like you. And I think that’s nice.

(Ir)responsibly yours,

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Nancy Leeds
My Longest-Term Relationship

I dropped acid because it was supposed to unplug me from the matrix. But the acid was too weak. The restaurant walls—painted in my favorite shade of orange—morphed and grew; but I remained securely plugged in. A great disappointment, to be sure. That day was the saddest day of my year. Perhaps I should be sad about that fact. Instead, I am profoundly grateful.

I have a good relationship with drugs. We haven’t really been together that long, having only met four years ago, and who knows how much longer we’ll be involved. But the uncertainty of our future bears little on the fact that some part(s) of me (my awareness, my curiosity, my memories) will remain inextricably linked to the hallucinogens, the uppers, and the synthetics.

Ritalin was my first. Late on a spring night she and I swallowed the pills. I would think back on this first encounter with drugs less than a year later when I was again de-virginized—this time in the more traditional sense. The two experiences were strikingly similar; both definitely an adrenalin rush, but both failing to live up to the hype or warnings of severity. My age of experimentation had commenced. Marijuana, Vicodin, mushrooms, Adderall, Ecstasy, Percocet, Valium, opium, cocaine...

The floor moved. Bounced. I couldn’t decide if I was in pain or just extremely relaxed. One hand looked older than the other. I remember loving the feeling of being isolated from noise, like I could observe it but not experience it. I noticed the beating of my heart and the dryness of my throat. This was a better experience than the Ritalin. I had grown up a bit.

Mushrooms are like seeing sheets of paisley in the sky.
Layers that slide back and forth like panels of patterned glass. Sometimes you can control it, make it surround you. Enveloped in hallucinations. Trees that pulsate with the beat of my breath, animals in the discolorations of wood and cities in blades of grass. I am sure that these realities must always exist, that somewhere, on some level, this is always happening. The irony of drugs is that the weirdness that ensues is only weird because it makes you realize how weird normalcy is. They take you somewhere, to some vantage point where you can see so clearly the ridiculousness, the humor, the falseness, the idiosyncrasies, the sadness.

You may say that doing drugs is a difficult thing to defend. And I will admit that drugs have broken my heart. But drugs are not a matter of fear and regret and immaturity. To me, they deal explicitly with vitality and love and reality. And it is only through the alterations that drugs employ that I am able to find honesty.
How delicious is it to read your book when you’ve got piles of homework being neglected?

How often do you sit in the library and pretend to be working, but really you’re just looking around at everyone else, wondering if they’re really working as hard as they look like they are, or if they’re screwing off just like you, watching for someone interesting to walk by, or checking their phones to see if enough time has gone by to justifiably get up and pretend to be on some important phone calling or tea fetching mission?

And how great is it when you actually do see someone IMing, or when someone interesting stops by, and you realize that people are sometimes just as unproductive as you, and that’s OK, ‘cause for the most part we’re all relatively smart, interesting people even if we don’t spend every second occupied with an immediately rationalized occupation?

How stupid is the male fascination with empty booze bottles? And empty beer bottles, even? How many times have you been in some guys dorm—especially your freshman year—and had an entire empty liquor stock staring down at you from some shelf or sill, like someone had a very large party, and afterwards, instead of cleaning up the bar, decided to neatly arrange all the empty bottles, label outward, on the fucking bookshelf?

In terms of personal conviction, how certain can we be that we’re right, when perception and then belief is just a result of what I choose—or happen—to be educated in?

How sexy are men who smoke? How horribly, perversely, dead-sexy is it when there is some moderately beautiful man who doesn’t give enough of a shit about anything, enough so
that, not only does he not mind saying it, he owns it, makes it his, makes it hot and hot-and-cold and dangerous, a ritual with a history, and makes it beautiful—when really all it should appear as is a disgusting habit, even if that’s all it is for the smoker—but so often it seems that it’s not, that it’s more of a self-assured and deadly articulate “fuck everything”?
I am deathly afraid of butterflies.

I love that you like me more than I like you. I am oh-so-powerful.

I love heretics. I want to be a revolutionary. I want to be a martyr for a cause.

I once convinced someone he had wet himself while high and watched him try to locate the wet spots on his jeans for thirty minutes.

In a very small way I am relieved to be diagnosed with a relapse of my life threatening illness, because it gives me something to obsess over besides my ex-boyfriend.

I can think of at least 5 people who I would have killed if it were feasible.

My parents are sickeningly in love.

I miss my friends from freshman year.

I really like being naked.

I am turning into my dad. It’s frightening.

I constantly need to be adored by someone.

I think life would be a lot easier if I were a boy.

I am incapable of keeping a secret about myself. But I am practiced at keeping them from myself.
I will do almost anything for money.

I usually hate to say and do cheesy clichéd things, but one of my life goals is to kiss someone outside while it’s snowing.

I don’t just think I’m a better dancer than most other people—I know I am.

As much as I’m all for gender equality, I will NOT date any guy who is smaller, weaker or dumber than I am.

There is no person on Earth who I don’t find at least moderately annoying.

I miss you.

I don’t care what goes into making veal; I think it’s delicious and I will eat it forever. *Agnolotti di vitello!* Yum.

I don’t remember when was the last time I had a *really, really* good time sober. I don’t need the alcohol, the drugs, but they sure seem to help a lot.
Freshman year. I was young and stupid then. That’s what I say about everything that happened freshman year, pretty much. Not only was I young and stupid, but I was in love. Well, at least the closest to being in love that I’ve ever been. Probably not all that close, to be honest. He was my best male friend at the time.

I called him and invited him over one Saturday night. We had a mutual friend who happened to be on her very first acid trip. Hallucinogenic drugs are on my “Do Not Do” list, so I was babysitting. But just so I didn’t feel left out of the substance-induced fun, I had smoked myself into a pretty decent stupor. The whole thing was pretty amusing, and I thought he would appreciate a good show. I thought right; he was at my dorm in less than ten minutes.

It was a nice night, so we decided to go hang out on the library roof. I watched as he dipped into his reserves of crazy things to do to freak out an acid-tripper. This was apparently not his first babysitting experience. I can’t quite remember the things he did; told some weird stories, a spastic dance or two, and maybe an optical illusion of some sort. What happened next has made the rest of the night, both before and after, more or less a blur. The marijuana might have had something to do with that too. But anyway.

“Oh man, I got another one!” he said, and he sprinted over to our friend like some sort of, I don’t know, person who’s really excited about something. I think it was the combination of having had enough scares for one night, plus the fact that (as we later found out) she had accidentally taken two tabs of acid instead of one, that made her throw her arms up in the air and run away screaming bloody murder. He turned to me. “Whatever. You’re stoned, it’ll work on you too.” I couldn’t wait. Right.

He walked up to me and put his hands on my face. I’m not
really a cuddly person. While I would have let him put his hands just about anywhere, I wasn't generally used to people touching me, so I just sort of stared at my shoes uncomfortably. Apparently this wasn't good enough.

“Look up.”

I lifted my head. He was a full foot taller than me, so I was looking straight into his chest. Mmm. This is improving.

“No, look me in the eye.”

And all of a sudden, there we were. Standing on the library roof on a perfectly clear night, with the stars above and the Boston skyline to the left. His hands were still on my face, and we were just staring into each other’s eyes. Not talking. Not moving. Just looking. I had seen enough chick flicks to know what was coming next. This is the pre-kiss moment! The one where all the girls watching the movie start squealing like idiots and usually I’m the one that tells them to shut up but holy shit this is way better now that I’m starring. I would have melted into a puddle right then and there, but I knew he wouldn’t be able to kiss me if I were on the floor. I wondered exactly how long we were supposed to stand there. It seemed like forever, but I was loving every second of it. My mind was racing, full of thoughts of the heated make-out session to come, with a soundtrack of wedding bells. And all the while, we were still standing motionless, his hands on my face, looking into each other’s eyes. Finally, something happened.

“I’m a monkey, and I’m going to bite you in the leg.” And then, he kicked me in the shin. Hard. He bounded away, so damn proud of himself. I, on the other hand, couldn’t move for about ten minutes. No wedding bells. No romance. No kissing. Just a boy who told me he was a monkey, and a fucking BRUISE forming on my right leg. And all I could think was, “Damnit, my movie SUCKS!”
Better Than Masturbation

It was during those long, lonely afternoons that I took to crying for hours at a time. Sometimes, as tears from deep inside flow up toward my eyes, I can feel the tingling water rushing up underneath my skin, through my stomach, lungs, and heart, a sensation fantastic and better than my average orgasm. I fall asleep unaccomplished when I masturbate, but when I cry for hours my loins tingle and pulse and my body reels in sexual energy. A sense of erotic nausea. My vision clouds up, blurred by sheets of water, bodily fluid spilling out until I’m dry, stuck, and still alone.
Contributor’s Note: My dad writes me a postcard everyday that I am away at school. Here are some of my favorites.

02/09/05
Dear N.,
Sometimes when I don’t like someone, I criticize the way they walk up stairs. This is bad.
Love,
Dad

02/10/05
Dear N.,
I got Mom a Pilates video she wants for Valentine’s Day. I hope she likes it.
Love,
Dad

02/15/05
Dear N.,
For Valentine’s Day, Mom rented “Treasure of the Sierra Madre” which was the movie we saw on our first date, also she made hot chocolate. She wins.
Love,
Dad

02/26/05
Dear N.,
Tonight is the dinner where I will be presented with the Nabokov set of Eugene Onegin. Most of the people there will think that it is Eugene, Oregon.
Love,
Dad
03/09/05
Dear N.,
    Sorry a window fell on your computer. What a pane.
    Love,
    Dad

03/11/05
Dear N.,
    Pardon my jittery handwriting. I am on the train. Actually, not so bad.
    Love,
    Dad

03/15/05
Dear N.,
    The flesh on my fingers is saggy.
    Love,
    Fathership

03/19/05 (on a business trip to Cuba, picture of Ché on the front)
Dear N.,
    Lots of sexy pictures of Ché on postcards available. I had already purchased this less sexy picture.
    Love,
    Dad

04/01/05
Dear N.,
    Don’t know what to think today.
    Love,
    Scott Evil

04/04/05
Dear N.,
    This is a “post” card, but what does it come after?
    Love,
    Fathership
Unfulfilled dreams/fantasies...
by various authors

- be emperor of rome (give it time)
- to be able to finish one of the brownies at City Bakery in manhattan in one sitting
- Airplane washrooms
- Be a courtisan in a Renaissance court.
- Sex and the City. I'll work at vanity fair and have a penis, though.
- Have sex without a condom.
- owning an island!!!!!!!!!!!!
- curtis martin and a trampoline.
- wednesday classes only.
- competing in the x-games
- To be a completely arrogant prick that retires at 35
- I wish I had the guts to be a slut.
- Go to my funeral. See who goes, see what they say. Are you pretending to be sad or are you truly devastated? Will you wear black or will you go to a really cool concert right after the service is over? I guess I'd like to be a ghost and haunt my old life too.
- I wish someone would make me a painting. You don't have to paint it with me as your muse, as your inspiration, you just have to give it to me and be really happy that you're giving it to me and that I'm receiving your art. And then maybe we'll kiss.
- Be a Pulitzer Prize winner.
- that i will be the one to change you, that i am not just another girl on your list.
- Ménage à trois in my very own private jet.
- Sunburned in white, drunk, a humid midnight and dancing with you on the porch on my farm.
- Bringing the literary community down to my feet
- Being friends with kurt cobain
- Going mad, shaving my head, flying to Mexico while
tripping on peyote and bleeding from the head

- Spending a year as a French Legionnaire
- Pampering my unborn children with absurd demonstrations of love and loyalty. And making love to my wife in our large foyer.
- having a map with little red lights that went off whenever/wherever someone was talking about me (and being able to zoom in on those conversations)
- To have my own lightsaber.
- To have sex in a jacuzzi filled with the “pearls” they use in bubble tea.
- Have the guts to make the first move.
- love at first sight.
- twins
The feeling of being drunk is unlike any other. Your head feels as if it is slightly disconnected from your body. Interestingly, your body is not your own. It’s as if you have this really messed-up head which is severed from a body that is not yours. Your head floats, swaying gently. In your drunken state, you feel as if the swaying is only your intoxicated brain, suspended weightlessly in the grayish fluids that make up your head. However, upon looking in a mirror or listening in on the conversations around you, you discover the melodic movement is not only in your head; it is also a real-life phenomenon, visible to all.

This swaying has the uncanny ability to totally screw up your thoughts. Take tonight, for example. I was so smooth until the very end... ah! I was so freaking close. In my drunken stupor, I couldn’t see what was really happening. Instead, I asked him if he would kiss me before I left.

“I’m really sorry,” he said. “I think I may have mono.”

*I’ve been sick for a week,* I thought to myself. No offense, buddy, but I was willing to give whatever random, possibly deadly sickness I have to you. Oops. OK, so your kindess completely revealed my bluff. I tried to pout, act all sad—as if his refusing to kiss me was actually going to ruin my night. In my drunken state, I’m sure my masquerade didn’t come off as planned in my mind. Who is this guy anyway? I totally chose him because of his notorious reputation as a sleazeball—it’s four weeks before the end of school... I don’t want a relationship. I want to kiss you tonight. Guess what? I don’t even care if you call me. OK, that’s a lie. I do care, but I really want you right now. I’m willing to lower myself to have you for one night.

God, I want you. It’s unlike any desire I’ve had before. Well, that’s an exaggeration. But I do still really want to make out with you.

In your sober kindness/willingness to wait another weekend to make out with me you promised you’d call tomorrow. As if
hanging out for an hour tomorrow is really going to make up for the lost opportunity tonight. Well, I can promise you that’s the last time I decide to come on to a guy.

To think, I even dressed up for you! I put on makeup that will definitely make me break out in a week. Oh yeah, I’m not wearing a bra. Talk about easy access. Hi! Here are my boobs! My lips, too. Because they were well-defined by an expensive brand of lip liner! Did you even look at my eyes? Because they, too, should have looked full and lush—the kind of eyes you could stare deep into, right before you kiss the lips of the girl they belong to! Minus the kissing part, of course. Because you might be sick.

Well, I want to let you know that your stupid “sickness” caused me to sulk in my room, defeated, questioning my femininity. I did this for you. I thought you would like it. You are that type of guy, aren’t you? Come on. Who are you trying to fool? You don’t want me as a girlfriend. I don’t want you as a boyfriend. I wanted to make out with you. Tonight. And you let me down.

And then, I let myself down. I came back and ate Chex cereal. I ate so much it made me sick. Why? Because I was hungry. But if I were kissing you, I wouldn’t have been. That’s right. Another reason why you don’t want me in a week. I’m going to be fat. Well, I pretty much already am. That’s probably why you didn’t want me tonight; another girl sent spiraling into depression because one stupid guy thought she was fat. And thus begins the rest of my life.

I thought I was better than that.

But then, I went to bed. But when I went to bed, I was alone, without you. My loneliness made me sad. Not because I needed you. I don’t (do I?). I was sad because I thought I needed you. I’m trying to be independent, but I can’t be. I need the validation your kiss would have offered.

I sighed and rolled my head. It lagged a second behind the actual movement. I thought, *Fuck. I’m drunk. And you’re going to call tomorrow.*
The Virgin List

*Contributor’s Note: Discovered and confiscated shortly before the commencement ceremony at an East Coast Catholic girls’ school.*

R O’F  
After closing a coke deal on the nature trail

HF  
Hotel room at 9th grade Model U.N. conference, with a U.K. delegate

PJ  
With the U.K. delegation

AK  
Perhaps her eyebrows, which resemble enormous terrible caterpillar mutants, frightened away fuck buddies and suitors alike

PG  
Has not yet met guy who will endure incessant debate about/discussion of Frodo Baggins’ genealogy

GB  
Post 8th grade barbecue with Boychoir boy

MB  
Guest bedroom, Christmas Eve, friend of the family, before her boobs were big and her hair was blonde

CB  
No one knows she was off the list at age eight. Brother home from college, in the toy room, who told her he would break her arm if she tried to scream). Most people know her as having hooked up “accidentally” with her best friend Clara
JG  Routinely has sex with her gay boyfriend, who attends the all-boys school down the road. Regarded as platonic amusement between them, because she is a lesbian. Both know and understand this though it is never spoken of.

TCM  *As You Like It*, Act 2, between scenes 3 and 5. With RS, imported male lead from school down the road.

HY  *As You Like It* Cast Party

BB  RS, *Anything Goes* Act 1

AD  Female lead. Horribly, terribly in love with RS, yet he pretends she doesn’t exist despite their dramatic love songs and when they finally kiss mid-Act 2. Goes home from Cast Party at 1 a.m.

GD  RS, *Anything Goes* Cast Party

GH  Fundamentalist Evangelical waiting with great impatience. Already engaged to guy she met at Toah Nipi - they have pledged to keep themselves pure until earliest possible marriage date in three and a half years.

MJ  In empty cabin one night at Nantucket Sailing camp

KF  Seat of Buick escalade with BF while cutting gym class when she is supposed to be doing a “fitness run” outdoors
UV  Is extraordinarily beautiful but very shy. Watches soap operas daydreaming about mysterious men who will take her away in pink limousines while sipping away delicately at spoons filled with sweet honey.

YT  Never takes off enormous down jacket in public.

JC  Has only been on one date in her life, going to feed ducks with a family friend. Awkward conversation as they threw the ducks chunks of stale whole wheat hamburger rolls that had been in the back of her freezer for weeks. Later the plastic bag the rolls were in is still in the back of the drawer of her jewelry box, folded neatly, because she cannot bring herself to throw it out.

TY  Always says with her characteristic mild stutter that she hates random hookups, yet is extraordinarily jealous of those who handle two a week and takes out her frustration by eating extra pastries from the coffee shop where she works.

KJ  Got pregnant, went to school until she showed. If she’d had an abortion she would have been expelled. Carried twins to term and they now live with her mother who is happy to have real children again.
GS Was later expelled for doubting Catholicism and talking trash about teachers on her

RP Barred from Prom when she cut gym class when she was supposed to be doing a “fitness run” outside but really hopped in her car to see if her acceptance letter to elite music school had arrived.

GY Devout Muslim who covers her hair; she got engaged to her fiancée for nine hours before they could have sex and before he was killed in the World Trade Center on Sept. 11

OZ Thought she was a lesbian until she found a guy she loved with 6-inch spiked green hair and then decided she loved him very much. His shower, November 1999

AP Is driving down the road behind the Land Rover of a boy she knew in 5th grade. She calls him for no good reason:

Girl: (on phone): Hey
Guy: (on phone): Hey
Girl: Do you want to go hook up now?
Guy: OK, do you want to have sex. too?
Girl: Cool.
I was sitting in the Health Services waiting room today when this beautiful girl strolled in. She flitted over to the desk, designer bag in hand, and gave her name to the receptionist. Everything about her was perky: perky smile, perky ponytail, perky tits and a perfect perky little ass. It made me feel so good to know that she was – under all the perkiness – sick.

* * *

On a lighter note, one Sunday morning I was savoring a delicious bowl of Frosted Mini Wheats mixed with Cinnamon Toast Crunch (yes, I mix my cereals and yes, it’s better that way), enjoying the greenhouse effect of Carmichael’s windows and picking up snippets of the post-partying conversations going on around me. Here are some of my favorite excerpts:

...But Kenny! You’re not a horse...

...There was nothing wrong with the teapot until the acid kicked in...

...Faster! Faster!! OUCH! Stop!!...

...and his mom had her head back...

...seven. No, I’m not shitting you. S-E-V-E-N...

...and she was like, “I’m sorry, I want a real man,” and I’m like, “Does this look fake to you?”...
I lie about...

by various authors

• How cool certain people are.
• what really & truly is the thing i hate most about my body.
• everything.
• how my sister died.
• my GPA.
• where i was born.
• not watching laguna beach. i want it back but they already graduated.
• being half-french. it’s really more like 35%, but ‘half’ is just so much easier to say.
• How many people I’ve had sex with
• My family situation
• Why I missed a semester of college
• anything when i get bored. it’s like mad libs!!
• My activities on New Year’s Eve.
• Facts supporting any argument I’m making
• Not lying
• How much money my dad makes
• not wanting to experiment with another girl.
• caring about your personal problems. let’s talk about me!!
• I should lie more... people don't give a damn about honesty.
• Lusting after my best friends.
• my height
• My age and the amount of hair on my chest.
• how I only want to date amazing girls. There’s plenty of room for incredibly hot, cerebrally vacant hookups.
• How well I get along with my brothers and sisters. I could care less.
• My ‘morals’
• picking my nose. EVERYONE PICKS THEIR NOSE!
Maternal Instinct

Oh, Mom.

A month from now is my father’s fifty-third birthday. It’s odd, to think of him seven years from sixty. To me, he will always be young. Perhaps because he devoted all of his forties to his children. For the love of god why did he marry my mother? He’s so happy and easy-going and it kills me when he tells me that he wakes up ten minutes earlier than he has to so he doesn’t have stress getting to the office. That he avoids stress when at all possible. Why hasn’t he left her? I’d leave her—I would. Stress CITY. And I understand that he has to side with her over me, that he is her husband. But, she’s wrong and cruel so much of the time. I’d like to have one birthday where it doesn’t end me with blowing out the candles and running to the bathroom before I burst into tears, running cold water on Kleenex so it doesn’t look like I’ve been crying. There seem to be less and less people on my side these days.

It was her birthday last week and it took me twenty minutes at CVS because I refused to lie to her. I refused to buy a mushy card, a funny card that said, “Mom, remember all the hard times I gave you?” “Mom, I’m so lucky to have you.” “Mom, you make my life better.” NO. NO. NO. NO. NO. You make it worse. All the time! You make me doubt myself in every which way. You make me doubt my friends. You instill this lack of good faith in others. Oh, I’m so ashamed—still—of earlier this year. All day long she’d planted in my head ideas that J., N., and R. (oldest high school friends) didn’t really like me, for NO REASON. Worse, I believed her. She is the worst influence I could possibly imagine. I didn’t go into the city with them because of it. And then N. called, R. called, crying, telling me how much they love me and how loyal and sweet I am and how they will not hang up until they were assured they knew how much they love me. I can’t believe it. I just want to trust Mom so badly. N. started crying on the phone and said it tore her
heart out how my mom treats me. It tears mine out too. I feel quite embarrassed and dumb.

I just—why does she see me as competition?

I’m sorry I’m smart, okay? I’m sorry that she feels threatened by me for some stupid reason. I still can’t believe she didn’t talk to me for a month after I got into UMichigan. I pray on Yom Kippur every year that she finds happiness. More than anything, I’d give anything, really, I can’t think of a thing I wouldn’t physically trade, if she could be happy. If she could see the good in people, just once.

Maybe that’s why I’m so happy most of the time; I need to balance her out. Dear lord, please let her be happy. She only hit me once, though. She only grabbed my arm imprinting her fingernails round my wrist once. I suppose I should be grateful for that. When I was trapped in that house, I thought about killing her. I would never ever do such a thing, but I thought about taking a knife from the kitchen and the look on her face when she saw it was me. Thankfully, I can use sarcasm instead. I feel torn, between wanting new, exciting events to happen to me and yearning for normalcy, like Linda, wanting to start a little happy family of my own. And I know this is a mark of failure—to think I am capable of raising a child. But the way I see it, I am a good person. I could just never leave my kids with my mother alone after the age of six.

I wish I could stop loving people.
Things I’ve Learn In College, cont.

Note: This is a continuation of a list published in Issue One; a list of things that I, a Tufts student, have either done, observed done, or been told of by reputable sources.

74. If you chew 30 pieces of nicotine gum in a night, there will be consequences.
75. If it says under *May cause vivid dreams*, prepare for a trippy night.
76. Telling a girl that some one who hooked up with her described her oral sex skills as “simply painful” will probably lead to consequences.
77. When finally allowed back at the house that the party in #43 was at, if you have to pee, use the bathroom.
78. And at above party DON’T TRY TO SELL DRUGS YOU DON’T HAVE.
79. Strippers think I look like Jack Black.
80. You *can* drunk-dial yourself.
81. Don’t pre-game with 151.
82. Later that night, don’t tend bar at a party where you only know one of the people who are hosting it.
83. Especially if she’s high.
84. *Do* convince the high girl to give you bizarre titles in Facebook groups.
85. When tending bar at above party, don’t give people random drinks left on the bar and tell them, “Eh, it might be good.”
86. Don’t bang on doors at 3 a.m. in Hodgdon looking for someone you only vaguely know the room number of.
87. Gin shots are a no-no.
88. Your local library will not let you take out books if you have $28 worth of late fees.
89. If you wake up buck-naked and wearing women’s eyeliner you probably had a good night.
90. The downside to hooking up with two girls who are best
friends at the same party is that they may get into an argument about who gets to go home with you and have to be separated by their housemates and you go home alone.

91. Girls mistake anything nice you say when drunk for being sketchy.

92. You have a lot of explaining to do when there’s lipstick on your roommate’s shot glass and you didn’t bring anyone home during the weekend.

93. Touching a girl’s boob while a picture is taken is a bad idea, especially when the girl’s uncle is a head of state.

94. When not even gay guys approve of your dancing, it’s probably time to put your shirt back on.

95. If a girl keeps on saying how hot she is, she probably isn’t.

96. The only people that did well in Genetics were on Adderall, and a lot of people did well.

97. Nothing’s funnier then running into your Bio TA and your RA at the same party.

98. Commandeering an ice luge is a good way to meet girls.

99. Nothing ruins the possibility of hooking up with a girl like her thinking you have a girlfriend.

100. When you do pre-game with 151, from what you can reconstruct, it was a night to remember.

101. Never pick courses based simply on the name.

102. If you do pick courses based on the name you may be stuck in 3-hour long seminars on religion in South Asia taught in the most pretentious, most post-modernist style known to man.

103. Nothing is more amusing then your 80-year-old Latin teacher using the phrase, “Well, the literal translation is ‘I will insert my penis into your ass.’”

104. Overthinking a homework assignment can be just as bad for your grade as underthinking it.

105. Waking up buck-naked in a pool of your own sweat with no idea how you got there is no way to start a day.

106. If you vomit in a trash can in the Campus Center you’ll get surprisingly few looks.

107. Some girls just like to have their clit ring touched by strangers.
108. Even if a drunk guy insists on it, never mention to your professor father that you got trashed with one of his students.
109. You can make a lot of money in Harvard Square by kicking yourself in the head.
110. Vomiting at 7 p.m., is usually followed by an interesting night.
111. Never mention to your parents that the last time you went out to dinner with them you wore a rugby shirt because you had a “massive-ass hickey.”
112. If you don’t bring a girl home for a long enough time, your dad will start making subtle references that imply you’re gay.
113. A bottle-and-a-half of 35-proof fortified wine is nowhere near enough to make AOΠ girls attractive.
114. Never ask a girl that walks with a limp due to multiple sclerosis if she walks like that because she’s drunk.
115. Nothing is more hilarious then some 40-year-old guy giving a speech and trying to be hip by using phrases like “I’m going to poke you on thefacebook.”
116. When you refer to a girl as a whore, make sure the guy you’re talking to isn’t currently hooking up with her.
117. Drinking a fifth of Goldshloger at 1:45 p.m. can lead to drunk-dialing your parents.
118. It can also lead to drunken, shirtless Wiffleball.
119. Telling a girl that you were the one that wrote the scathing article about her in the Daily can lead to her cornering you and repeatedly calling you a racist.
120. Bumming cigs from gay guys to give to a girl can lead to bad things on so many levels, from people thinking your gay (not that there’s anything wrong with that) to people thinking you fell off the wagon.
121. Nothing’s sexier then being woken up by a girl saying, “Oh fuck, I have conjunctivitis.”
122. You can’t smoke a pizza.
123. The one guy in the parking lot is always the owner of the car you’re peeing on.
That summer, you might say that my aunt had gone on something of a Home Makeover, the ridiculously ostentatious kind you might see on shows like *Pimp My Crib*. She had just inherited a castle from an elderly family member who could no longer afford to live in such a great residence by herself. *La noblesse déchue*, as they call it. After summarily dumping the unfortunate soul into a nursing home, my aunt rolled up her sleeves and hired a veritable army of carpenters, decorators, architects and florists. She has a thing for flowers.

That summer I was fourteen. I used to visit them at their summer house every year. That summer would be the last time I stepped into *le Château de X*, and there are ghosts there. When I arrived in June, the place was a disaster; perhaps what a concentration camp might look like after a tsunami. Great trees that had lined the drive lay on their sides, in various states of brown. Statues of women with their arms broken off were scattered haphazardly around the property, and my cousins and I would dare each other to run through them late at night with only the beam of a flashlight as solace. Various ditches, pits, and holes consumed parts of the property as some pipes were unearthed and new ones buried. A pool was installed where a marble terrace had once stood in cracked ruin.

Inside, things were considerably more hospitable. The majority of the work had been completed by my arrival, with all the elegance of the home’s former grandeur frozen in a marble state of icy modernity. Though the weather was often hot there in the summer, the massive rooms echoed a chill. And there were eyes everywhere. Every bedroom, every salon, the dining room, and especially the attic were tombs for the house’s former residents, their ancient, domineering faces peering from portraits as large as I was.

It was in this setting, one night, that I watched T.V. with my aunt’s daughter. She was two years older than me, a breathy girl
who had already lost interest in life. Everyone had already gone to bed except for the two of us, and we sat on a particularly uncomfortable antique couch in the petit salon. The pale flickers of the T.V. projected hazy blue shadows only onto the wall it was closest to; the rest of the room’s darkness, no match for the feeble monitor, lay heavy and black. The portrait of a young girl, placed high above the television set, was intermittently hushed in darkness and consumed with a cold wash of muted color.

As the house, ever more like a crypt, gathered its silence like the dark folds of a cloak, my cousin and I worked our way through a bottle of vodka. She was a smoker, of course, and eventually we were chain smoking, our small island of unstable light enveloped in the bluish haze of cigarettes. I had noticed, through all these mists, my drunkenness, the smoke, that my cousin had been inching slowly towards me on the couch. I had by then reached the vaporous state that only alcohol could usher in when an impressionable American boy drinks with a jaded European. I was reeling, the heady thud of drunkenness soothed with the dizzying effects of too many cigarettes, until I felt her lips on mine. Suddenly, the smoke had parted for us; we were in some incredibly alien universe where the babble of French re-runs was our only anchor to sanity. I’ve never experienced an out-of-body experience, but this was as ethereal as I have ever been. Holding my cousin in my arms, her breasts pressed against my chest, and as our tongues chased each other in the bluish mist, I forgot who I was.

She grabbed my hand and then we were laughing, running through the house. Our bare feet slapped against the cold marble of the massive entrance hall, resonating against the faces of our ancestors peering down from impossibly high perches. We caught each other again, frantically licking and biting each other’s neck, her drunken heaving eclipsed only by my own. Suddenly, we were racing each other down the worn stone steps to the courtyard where the pool lay covered. A flick of a switch and the metal cover was rolling back. The lights of the pool and the heat of the water emitted the same blue haze
I thought we had outrun in the salon. Again, our two bodies were cocooned in an embryonic blue sterility, engulfed by the larger black. We dove into the water fully-clothed, the shadow of the imposing house a much darker form against the night sky. We swam and laughed and kissed more, beneath those ever-watchful eyes of the statues my aunt had just had placed around the water’s edge.

We tired, eventually, and stripped naked but for towels. The run back was wet, our footsteps leaving sloppy puddles. We raced upstairs to the whiteness of her bedroom, her chandelier exuding a brilliant brightness against the ivory walls. She threw open her heavy curtains just as the sun broke over the property’s lake, the water’s steam trailing wisps onto the dewy grass three stories below us. Climbing into her huge bed, we held each other, smelling the chlorine in our still-wet hair, neither saying a word. Just breathing.
Batting Average

I want to smack the girl in my history class. She is so atrociously annoying that I literally need to bite my tongue and stop myself from spitting on her. It’s absurd the amount of rancor I have towards this girl. I barely know her. She is not the classic suck-up, she is worse. She is a freak transmuting her freaking freakish freakosity into freaky suck-up stardom. And I hate her.

When she asks the professor how his weekend was, he politely and curtly responds. I can tell that he too is secretly infuriated by her. How could he like her? For a college student, she dresses like a 42-year-old bag lady with three cats. She’s also unnecessarily kind. Nothing kills me like people who are overly nice. What exactly do they get out of being so goddamn nice to everyone? If I were nice to everyone, I probably wouldn’t have any more friends than I do already. Stop it, freak. In addition to her polite inquiries to the professor, her utterly sorrowful wardrobe, and her unnecessarily pleasant disposition, she has one more egregious fault: she uses the word *heck*. On more than one occasion, I have heard her comment that one country or another needed to extricate some militant people “the heck out” of its borders. Excuse me, we are in college. Although I shamelessly admit I am remarkably immature, I would like to believe we are past the age when we use the word heck. That is why I’d like to tell her to “Shut The Hell Up.”

I’m thinking of bringing a bat into history next week. I’m pretty bad at baseball. Nevertheless, I cannot wait until I no longer have to deal with her. I think the really sad part is that I’m actually jealous of her. I want to talk to the professor. I want to ask the fucking professor how his weekend was. And I wish I could speak more clearly about history and who kicked who the heck out of where.

I, however, do not want to dress that shoddily, ever.
Things I do behind closed doors

by various authors

• I hold a hand-held mirror to my vagina after I get a Brazilian bikini wax. More than once. I peek down my pants. More than a dozen times.
• dont wear pants
• i always look at the toilet paper after i wipe myself. i don't know why.
• master the lyrics to a good rap song, knowing that i will never be able to sing them aloud in a serious setting for fear of being scorned and chased with sticks for being That White Girl.
• Scratching my head until i get dandruff and then washing my hair with head & shoulders right after.
• Rhymes with Nose Picking
• Sometimes, I listen to sad songs just to force myself to cry because it feels good.
• Watch chick flicks and like them.
• After a shower, naked in my room, dancing and singing along a good trashy cheesy song. great to wake up in the morning.
• Tiptoe when I go pipi
• smoke pot and then study myself in the mirror. for a long time.
• I shave the warts on my knee, but they always grow back.
• I talk loudly with myself just for the sound of it.
• I eat baker's chocolate straight up
• I steal my brother's deodorant and also snoop to find evidence of his high school love life
• I smell my armpits
• I watch soap operas
• Listen to sappy Eagles songs and pretend the lyrics mean something to me
• Use the self-timer feature on my digital camera and
take pictures of myself. Mostly in going out clothes but sometimes naked too even though I always delete those.

- i push the blackheads out of my nose.
- I jiggle my boob when I’m studying or watching TV.
- I have a serious porn addiction. Pornography is a mental drug, you get hooked and you need more and more of it. And suddenly even the most hardcore videos don't satisfy you any more.
- Fart with abandon.
- Sleep
- talk on the phone with ex-girlfriends and tell them how much I miss them.
- sleep naked (and get turned on when I wake up and realize I have no pants on)
- Secretly enjoy my Japanese foam pillow because it reminds me of a breast
- pluck all my body hair off, i hate it.
- Bite my toenails and then count them.
- I pick my nose... I eat it too. I smell the toilet paper before I flush it.
A History

This is what I remember of you. The highlights, anyway.

No. 1: You surprised my fourteen-year-old self even though I kind of expected it. People were watching and I ran away even though I kind of wanted to stay.

No. 3: The lab technician caught us petting in the chemicals closet. I got over you sooner than I expected but I still have all the maudlin e-mails we sent each other in the month after we said goodbye; they’re on a neon green floppy disk. (Do computers still have floppy drives?) I didn’t really love you at all—I know that now.

No. 6: You were my first unhealthy obsession. You played guitar for me over the phone and you scored all the goals that day; you kissed me, sweaty and hot. Your penis was the first I ever touched. (Congratulations.) You phased me out, you asshole! Two years later, we hate each other but then I hear you still refer to me as one of your best kisses ever so that makes me respect you a little more. A year and a half after that, we’re in college, we run into each other at our favorite club and you almost kiss me again but I wiggle away and then wonder why I did. It would’ve been harmless and fun.

No. 10: My friend wanted to kiss you but I kissed you anyway. She and I were never really close after that. We left the club together and made out on the beach where we saw two men having sex on the shore. You were an awkward dry humper and at 8 a.m. I realized you’d been calling me “baby” all night and didn’t know my name. I wanted to go home. I really got what I deserved.

No. 11: You! My summer-long obsession! With your Lost Boy
hair and weird clothes and homemade accessories—you were my first quirk and got me hooked to your type. I’ve never dressed the same since you. You are still my best kiss.

No. 12: I thought you were my age! You were just under sixteen! So humiliating but at the same time you were so hot in your shin guards and you really did kiss beyond your years.

No. 13: The dark-haired musician. You were so obsessed with my lips you scared me away.

No. 15: I spent a honeymoon week with you in the snow. You were sexy and smart and you signed your subsequent e-mails “love, No. 15.” You were my first real connection. I imagined having your last name. Over a year later, I still thought you were the ideal one. On Haight Street, we laughed as we flipped through the Anarchist’s Cookbook. We watched the sunset from a museum roof overlooking a lake full of swans. You were my first fellatio, my first cunnilingus. In the morning I could not have left any faster. I thought you read a lot of books, that you were a reader, but you weren’t at all!

No. 16: I met you on a cruise. I kissed you somewhere in the middle of the ocean and you were awful. Dried, white spit all over my mouth in the mirror of the ship’s elevator later. It was one of those elevators with mirrors on all four sides so I saw the spit in a million different reflections, magnifying my mistake for me. Gross.

No. 17: My first real man. Five years older and absolutely gorgeous. You adored me and treated me so well. I still look at the pictures of us kissing.

No. 18: My first college hook-up, you lived on the floor below me. You were my first kiss on the library roof. That’s all, I guess.
No. 19: My best friend. Strange that this happened. But not. You kissed me first!

No. 20: You stalked me, you crazy motherfucker. You watched me from behind the trees in front of the library. You sent me 76 text messages in 36 hours and you were a pathological liar. Too bad, because you were hot.

No. 22: Coke addict, liar, crazy dresser, reckless driver. You were the Badass. You liked the same music as me, which was rare in that place. You looked over the stick shift at me and very seriously, told me I was your soul mate after less than one week and it amused me. I could not take you seriously.

No. 24: You kissed me so hard—smothered me to the tune of the Grateful Dead, which is actually pretty appropriate, in retrospect—I couldn’t reciprocate. One night I finally said, “You’re smothering me!” and you laughed because you thought I was joking. I wasn’t. All my friends know this story now.

No. 25: You were my chic one. You bought me and anyone I knew champagne and several rounds of Black Label shots. You thought I was magnificent and brilliant. You were bright lights, D&G jeans, and trust fund.

No. 26: You’re my best friend at college. It was Spring Fling so it was okay to grab you on the President’s Lawn. Some weeks later you told me you’re in love with me and it scared the shit out of me. We’re still best friends and sometimes I have a mini-crush on you.

No. 27: Same day. Oh, Spring Fling! You were visiting from some Big 10 school and we apparently did some pretty crazy things against the wall at a party that night. People took pictures.

No. 28: I met you at a Bavarian-themed bar and knew I’d kiss you. I held off and finally grabbed you on the night of my
birthday. I lost my virginity to you. You drove me everywhere in your funny little car and I gave you a homemade birthday present. There are approximately 250 songs that remind me of you. I eventually realized I’d fallen out of love with you. I’ll see you again someday.

No. 29: I walked around the city with you all evening and it was sort of like Before Sunrise (in my head). I still wanted to see you again even though you don’t like dogs and didn’t carry my stuff for me until you saw I was struggling. I liked how we looked in your bedroom mirror.

No. 30: You’re the virgin, the one who wants to be President. You idolize me and will one day be the best husband and father. I whispered, “This won’t mean anything tomorrow!” Ugh, you’re too good. It kills me. Kills. Me. Why do you like me? I’m such a bad influence on you!

No. 31: I actually want to see you every day. I have this ridiculous, jolly crush on you. I like that you are impossibly mellow and that’s all I’m going to say for now because you’re still sticking around.
Good Friday

Jesus, I hate your guts. But I also miss you like fuck.

You are the wildest lover I have had, but always out of exponentially reach. You are pure beyond compare and hopelessly flawed. You make me orgasm and you make me vomit. You come with me to bed and pull me out of the depths when I cry. You are my first real loss of virginity—perfect, sweet, beautiful surrender to something higher than myself. You are magnanimous, supernatural, always quivering on the edge between maniacal insanity and the seductive genius.

I both miss your refuge, the pull of people who actually value life, whose souls are overwhelmingly luminous with light that only I can see. Prayer throbbed with life, with a sexy simplicity. I miss being able to slide out of self-conscious peppiness, to sing corny songs until I went hoarse, to cry without it having to matter, to be disarmed and told with absolute sincerity and conviction that reality exists.

I have literally hundreds of pages of correspondence with you. Five and a half years, Lord Christ. Journal after journal piled on my shelf. Every entry addressed to you in a supreme effort to align every bodily cell with your directives. Two hours of prayer a day at the lowest points.

So many days I want so badly to just swallow it all, to ignore the incongruities and ignore all of the hard questions. Fuck, it, I tried. I tried, for years, to walk around every day, my head pounding in cognitively dissonant pain, to accept that truth comes only through Christ. Your yoke is easy, my ass. Regardless of how I tried, meaning cannot only come through a ten-point checklist of theological directives.
It is the night on which you were betrayed, and I realize ironically that I am wearing black half out of mourning for the holiest enigma of all, and half because it’s symbolic of myself—a shadow of something that can never be, a hollow vessel of blood that cannot conceive its own depths.

I am reading, out of a sense of obligation, the memoirs of Rigoberta Menchú, a Guatemalan woman part of a guerilla movement; and I read most avidly the dismemberment and torture of her family members. How they cut off her brother’s ears and the soles of his feet and made him walk miles and miles before burning him alive. About how they cut off her mother’s breasts and ears before leaving her flesh to rot while preserving her heartbeat.

I once believed that you loved me so much and were dismembered like this for me. But no, faith is a double-edged sword, and too often I am blinded to the other side, the consequences of my own convictions. Because you too, dismember me, numb me with sweet assurance and then subversively amputate my intellect, my independence, my tolerance for plurality, my respect and reverence for Mohammed, my love of alcohol.

You constantly create me and destroy me beyond repair. I cannot swallow you without castrating my characteristic cynicism, my relentless questioning, my doubt that over the years has evolved to be darker and more unique and more beautiful than my faith itself.

You are dead to me, and the grief of nihilism, the pain of bottomless sadness will always be in the pit of my stomach. Part of me has died, too. I am left outside, stuck in perpetual free-fall into the deep abyss of ambiguity. Most atheists/agnostics have a cynical, debonair, condescending attitude towards religion, because it has never been very important to them in the first place. To group me with this camp would be
ludicrously misplaced.
On Easter, there will be colorful, saccharine-coated joy. My phone vibrates in my pocket next to me, I put Rigoberta between my Lucky Shopping manual and Econ textbook, back on the shelf and begin smearing foundation over my blotchy face, pull on a tank top and affix a smile firmly to my face.

I will evolve from this collapsed mess on my bed, I will go out and be tolerant and be cheerful and lead a useful life. But this unfulfilled ideal weighs on my shoulders; the cross of sincere, bloody and desperate ambiguity is far heavier to carry than that of blind faith. But I take a step. And another step.
Ramsey emailed me—he’s such a nut—asked if I was saving myself for marriage. I hate that phrase—as if marriage was the second coming. If I believed in the, uh, first one to begin with. He asked what kind of relationship I have with my father—he claims that his greatest fear is his future daughters giving themselves away like popcorn or something. Why is there such a difference for girls and guys?

AHH the more I think about his e-mail the more ticked off I get. My own life decisions are uniquely my own—not the female gender’s! Who broke his heart? Was it that girl from his story? Emily? I really liked kissing him. A lot. Well, I’m not saving myself—agh, I hate that phrase. Anyways I have no limit for sleeping with someone, but I just found out that I have a body and want to savor it, consider it. Also, I’m a bit romantic. Dana told me this freshman year and I believe her—the best way is to love the person you sleep with for the first time in some capacity. I believe in actions speaking loudly. Often I don’t follow through but... this is for certain, I don’t look at my virginity as a gift. That’s Victorian and ridiculous. But it’s a part of me, and I’d like my first time to be with someone I want to remember.

He kept telling me how beautiful I was, then said I looked like I didn’t believe him. It’s not that. I just feel like I don’t know what the word means anymore. Had he told me I was alluring—soft—I don’t know. He loves my hair, and said that just for the night, he loved me. I said, “OK.” Didn’t know what to say. I still can’t believe he has a Superman tattoo there.
Musical Associations I
by various authors

“Like A Rolling Stone”, Bob Dylan:

The summer I lost a lot of weight, this was always on the radio when I was driving back at night from swimming laps all day. I used to drive around at night with my windows open, even though I was still wet and it was freezing.

The disheveled, good looking guitar player in a square in Temple Bar, Dublin, summer before freshman year. I wish I were that free.

“Satisfaction”, Benny Benassi:

Watching the *horny music video medley* with my buddies every weekend in South Hall. A devastating ensemble of Toxic, Stacey’s Mom, Call On Me, and Satisfaction. Feeling sympathetic because my buddy’s gay roommate couldn’t appreciate the videos the way we did.

If drugs were ever put on vinyl, this would be like dropping acid on your ears. And I’d like it.

“Free Falling”, Tom Petty:

One of the few songs I can play on guitar.

Post-party in Jungle Juice-stained togas (bed sheets).

“It Had To Be You”, Frank Sinatra:

Three years. Twelve break-ups. One person. “Despite your faults, I love you still.”
“Dragostea din tei”, O-Zone:

Skipping arm in arm through the snow with a West Point cadet.

The kid whose Internet video made this song so famous is from New Jersey and is apparently ridiculously upset at his new fame. Hearing this song makes my heart hurt a little because I hate to see anyone from New Jersey suffer.

Jumping and jumping at Harvard-Yale.

“Mr. Jones”, Counting Crows:

When I was younger, I had no idea what flamingo dancing was and certainly didn’t care. I belted those lyrics like nobody’s business. I think I was 20 years old and talking to a friend abroad in Madrid before I ever heard of flamenco.

Who is this Mr. Jones, anyway?

“Like A Prayer”, Madonna:

My high school volleyball team would sing this song on the bus to and from every away game and then we would talk about sex. This song always makes me feel sad all over again about the fact that I wasn’t even kissing boys in high school so I had to sit quietly while this was happening.

Dirty Catholic school girls.

“Thong Song”, Sisqó:

Sweat.

Makes me depressed that I have never been thin enough to wear a bikini.
Makes me very aware of how the 90’s were a black hole for pop music.

“Tubthumper”, Chumbawamba:

Falling down and then getting back up again in front of my mirror as a dance move because I didn’t know the song was about getting drunk.

Seventh grade, playing this song full-blast in my room, pretending that the cutest boys at school were watching me, thinking how great I was.

“Your Body Is A Wonderland”, John Mayer:

I hate John Mayer. I think any woman who would sleep with him purely because of this song is an insult to all women. Some of us are above swooning over some cheese-ball lyrics.
This is the breakfast of champions; wine and lemon soda combined, only 2 Euros; a bowl of cereal; and I am pathetic and lonely. I suppose it’s embarrassing that my confidence is so liquid.

I lie face down on my bed in the semi-dark. In the pictures on the screen in front of me, I look drunk and elated. At second glance, I look fat and vaguely unhealthy. It’s hard here, I won’t lie. I’m too old to keep on masking my weaknesses and faults with those of others. I tire of my own style of writing. I begin to hate the true timbre of my voice, a sound that usually startles me—that is how sick I am of myself. I crave something to move toward to, a reason to be. My fingers itch with the need to scratch my own surface in the desperate hope to prove something lies beneath. I’m having an attack. This is not unfamiliar. I lose interest in my soul and look without recognition at my own reflection. I am sure it is just another strange face that bores me. I can’t offer anything to cure my own ennui.

I make deals with fate while my own shadows chase my clarity of vision. If someone calls, I won’t—if someone opens the door, I won’t—it’s not that I want to, it’s just, it’s only...

I call my friends and a disinterested voice tells me in Spanish that the numbers I have dialed do not exist. I see this as metaphorical and stare at the whitewashed walls, feeling alone. I have to turn up my music to drown out the sounds of a loud soap opera. I’m scared to laugh too hard; I might start crying. I’m scared to start crying; I might not stop. This is low and this is loneliness. I’m bored, I’m so bored I can’t do anything. This is interminable and indefinite and I have only what’s inside me to fall back on to make things better. Dreams within dreams; each time, I fall, I tumble, children hit me and the dream ends with things flying through an open window in my direction, carried by a strong-arm gust of wind, when all I have to do is
go out this window the opposite way. I begin to feel that as many times as I wake up I’ll never be awake; I realize that this is all just a dream, anyway. I watch as a girl smears red oily make up all over her face, then her hair. I am in a cookie factory. Men pass in pairs and taunt me. Fat babies push at me and run screaming at my legs until I trip. It’s like I’m being branded by feminism even while sleeping. When I finally do wake up, I’m scared to open my eyes and see the whole scene begin again. At least I got to hug Mike at one point in the dream.

I fall in love at least five times a day with every floppy-haired boy in tight jeans who smiles at me on the Metro. And yet, by the time I’ve changed trains I’ve forgotten them in favor of the same stupid boy I dwelled on Stateside. And to him I always say all sorts of stupid things like: Don’t forget there’s someone on the other end. Because god forbid I spend a few hours crying in bed in my underwear listening to sentimental music; I’m only pretending to be twenty and heartbroken, after all. And maybe if someone were by my side here to hold my hand or my hair back or to laugh over times past, I wouldn’t see things as clearly. Maybe if I had other ears to hear my spoken words, they wouldn’t echo back to me to scribble down. brave enough to bear and realize what I feel is so much more than simple loneliness.

I need to be myself around myself. I need to stop staring at me with others’ eyes, stop talking to myself with others’ voices, stop feeling my body with others’ hands. I may be all I have but that reason is precisely why I need to view myself as something given, not a burden. Let my own two feet and a belly-burning glass of wine propel me out of the cave of my house and on to the streets of the city. And I’m gone.
This is me: loose, laced bows at tips of loafers, cuffed jeans and purple-veined feet, skinny pale wrists and two greasy braids, a snail’s trail of snot underneath my left nostril—I look like a little kid.

This is him: devil-may-care hair and glitter-catching eyelashes, fat sneakers and bad jeans, speckled skin covered by a rusty beard, squiggly lips. A V-neck sweater—he could be my father.

“I don’t know what to say,” he says.

I do, I think.

He is very selfish and I feel very dirty. I look at his overflowing dresser drawers. I washed those T-shirts, I folded those boxers, I finger-combed his hair and cleaned up his puke and held him when he cried and smelled his burps and counted his freckles and kissed his scars and sometimes, apologized when I was wrong. Everything in his room that I don’t recognize—when did he read Maus I?—begins to strike me as vaguely unclean. Like at their surfaces cling pubic hairs and razor-toothed insects. Like their underbellies are tattooed with pictures of dancing topless girls.

He kneels at my side where I sit on the bed and buries his head under the blankets. His voice is muffled: “I’m so sorry.”

I have a million questions. I don’t want to know any of the answers. Who, What, When, Where, Why? I wish I could dramatically puke, or even quietly puke, just a little. Instead, my stomach growls, which I don’t think is a very compelling effect. “Tell me if you want to kill me,” and he peeks out one
eye, just a little, enough to blink at me. *Fuck you,* I think, and say absently, “No. No, I don’t want to kill you.” I pluck at a loose thread in my sweater. Who-what-when-where-why. It’s all in the details, darling. I think of all the things I could say to hurt him and they lodge awkwardly in my throat because the thing is, I’m not cruel, I’m just insecure, and I happen to think that’s a lot worse.

We got tested, together, before I left and he got upset, before we spent enough time apart to want to pretend it never happened, before we knew the wet heat of shame, before things.got.so.fucked.up. I remember the cold brightness of the Charles out the window of the T as we stood among commuters in winter coats and held hands on the way to the clinic. Clean bill of health, they told us, the only fresh-faced kids among the waiting room of young pregnant mothers and scraggly men. Good to go. I tried to act cool, like it was no big deal, but it was a relief just to leave behind the dirty linoleum floors and posters in Spanish promoting prophylactic use. And now here we are again.

And he is (no, I am) such a goddamned whore.
You gave me my first non-self-induced orgasm but I will never (ever) admit this to you.

My first kiss lasted three hours and took place in an ultra-king bed in the Shangri-la. Both of us somehow knew how to start but apparently not how to stop. I couldn’t feel my mouth when I got home. I could barely move my lips as I told my mother that I had been at the guitar store all day.

I feel sorry for myself.

I really like Ace of Base, a lot.

I have never given a blowjob successfully. Not even once.

I want people to be in awe of me.

I wish I were anywhere but here.

My mom lost weight because of irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), but tells everyone she lost it through exercise.

I broke up with this guy yesterday, and now I miss him the way I miss my family when I’m in a different country, the way I miss water during a fast, the way I miss truth during elections, the way I miss summer and grass and laughing until the air’s gone too. But we will not get back together, because I am an asshole, I am too proud to talk him. I hurt all over.

I love the smell of cigarette smoke.

I have never seen Star Wars.
I worry that I am not sexy enough.

I don’t care what they put in hot dogs.

I have slept with more people than he has kissed.

I come up with excuses to tell people my SAT scores.

Tonight I watched a Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen special on E! Television.

Before I came to school I accidentally bought a pair of jeans two sizes too big. Now they fit.

I get turned on whenever I hear my housemates having sex.

I need lots of hook-ups to validate my self-worth.
The Dot Game

Player one:____  Player two:____
I don’t really want to talk about some of the deeper things because I’m afraid to think of them. I am capable of applying my life to every bit of philosophy I learn, which can be good or bad depending on the kind of philosophy. But for months back when I was a freshman, I was depressed because of these things. I felt like I had no identity. No purpose. My emotions were a product of my body, my psychology. I can’t say I felt small or weak, because I felt the sense that there was no such thing as great or strong. I was insignificant. And as much as I could be conscious of it, stand outside myself and say “I am just another person,” I could not separate myself from it. My passions grew dim. Blackness crept into my chest and sucked the air in my lunges. I couldn’t even be dramatic about it without criticizing myself. That’s when I started wanting to become a god.

I had dreamed of being a superhero when I was a boy—this was similar, but also different. Now, I wanted to be someone or something supernatural because it was my only hope. If I could be more than a measly person—a body, a psychology, a goddamn rat in a patterned maze—then I could be happy about my emotions and passions and feelings because they were actually mine. They would be art—products of my creation. I could finally transcend the nature that defined me.

But being a god is not something you become. It is something that you are. So if I was going to realize it, I’d have to train myself to recognize it. I had to assume that mentality of knowing I was above the natural and the material world. Walking down the city streets, I’d see cars and buses, and I’d imagine them being lifted by my own will. It wasn’t easy, and I decided I wasn’t concentrating hard enough. I began lifting my hand in each automobile’s direction and I’d tighten every finger muscle. Now LIFT!—still, no use. I tried redirecting my efforts on people. They were naturally weaker. I’d try to elicit a movement, or a laugh, but they kept moving in their own
directions.

These vain pursuits lasted only another couple weeks. I grew out of my depression phase eventually, but I have not yet forgotten the thoughts that carried them. I have put them to sleep for now, and some call that faith. The same kind of people would also say I in fact do transcend the natural world, with my soul and my free will and all. I’ve read Pascal, Simone Weil. They tell me I am the artist of myself, but I don’t believe them. I have not decided the matter for sure, but I’d like to say those people are even more weak, but very clever.

I still pretend, though, that I do have these powers. Sometimes I think that the only reason I haven’t been able to lift the buses or control the people, or do things like fly, is because I know it’s something impossible before I even try. One day, standing at the edge of a small slope, I decided to jump without preparing for my landing. I hurt myself pretty badly.

That doesn’t mean I don’t close my eyes sometimes when the wind blows and pretend I am moving the air. That doesn’t mean that when the subway train is arriving, I don’t sometimes stick my hand out and pretend I am the one who brings it to a stop.
The Poet Eats Sushi

Tonight at work, a cute girl with an eccentric guy walked into the sushi restaurant. She gave me eyes as I waited on them, he asked her if she wanted a ginger ale too. He looked maybe ten years her senior.

She kept giving me eyes, they spoke about sandwiches at Bartley’s (the famous local hamburger shop) and how his favorite, I think one with blue cheese and mushrooms, was amazing. She whole-and-big heartedly disagreed. She looked comfortable. He looked like lightning was coming out of his hair strands.

They ordered a somewhat simple dinner; oshitashi, pickle roll (the first I’ve seen ordered), I think a Cali roll, and maybe a shrimp tempura roll. He spoke flamboyantly, if you couldn’t guess. He spoke things such as “I am great at...” and it didn’t burn, it didn’t ooze with pretension, just excitement. I kept smiling at them, I kept smiling because they had energy.

Earlier that night, I’d looked at the phone number of the café next door, (617-688-something-something) to see if I could call and order a coffee. I thought I’d probably fall down that evening from exhaustion, that I’d be tired, and I wouldn’t remember to take people their Miso soup and soy sauce dishes. But their energy grew. The girl used her arms... big, slow, hunched almost-movements. A story, yes. A smile, warm. Kept making eyes at me. I realized they weren’t eyes as in help me, they weren’t eyes as in I want you (I don’t think), they were eyes that said “I think you might be invited.” So I gave them their check.

He went to the restroom and she and I started talking. I told her that I kinda just am here in Massachusetts, she told
me that she wasn’t on a date, even though I didn’t really believe her, even though I don’t think she was lying to me. I told her that their energy filled the sushi restaurant. I think she was happy about that. I told the chefs in the back that she wasn’t on a date, that she had made eyes at me. They laughed, and I did too.

I asked if they wanted their leftovers in a box. Yes. I put the wasabi in too, told him not to jostle the Styrofoam box or else he’d have very hot and gingery shrimp tempura. “But I may want that,” he said. True. It’s possible, I laughed. A laugh as I removed their soy sauce dishes. They left (me) without their names, a non-deliberate choice of mine.

Later that night, after work, after I bought the Swedish fish, the New York Times, I saw him. Briskly walking through a moderately cool Davis Square with plastic bags of, presumably, groceries. “I know this sounds like a weird question,” my hackneyed introduction while crossing the street. I asked him “what is your non-job?” “My what?” “The job you don’t work.” “Well, I have a full-time job actually.” “Oh, what do you do?” “I’m a poet.” “Really?” “Yeah. I edit poems, too. I do that full-time.”

I spoke with him briefly, he having the pseudo-weight of words that only your idols before you know them will have. I told him I came here to live. To find if I could love someone. He said that it took a long time. It takes a long time to love someone. And that he thinks he found his. I asked him if the girl at the sushi place was it. And he lifted his index finger to his mouth. “Shh.” And all kind of a joke. He told me that it took him a long time to find what he wanted in life, that he had made it difficult for himself because he wanted to be a poet, that it took him a long time to find it. That he’s happy now, after lots of unhappiness, that he knows that could change tomorrow.
This was on the corner, in front of Someday Café, around 11:20 p.m.... I'll show you where that is sometime. His name is Ben. His eyes have a composed fire about them. I want the two of them to be my Neal Cassady/Dean Moriarty (the hero in *On The Road*) and Luanne Henderson/Mary Lou. I don’t think it could happen now, I mean I think he’s got his head on his shoulders. And I think he loves her more than she loves him.

But maybe we could be a new trio. And I’d journal on megabytes of ram rather than long rolls of paper. Or maybe I’d be Dean.
I don’t get why...
by various authors

- they pack cd’s and dvd’s so tightly. wtf?
- my twin brother is having sex in the kitchen right now.
- people can’t tell the difference between your/you’re, it’s/it’s, there/their/they’re, to/too/two.
- so many people financially and proudly support the career of celine dion.
- Whenever I put a quarter in a parking meter that already has some time on it, I don’t get a full half hour. Rather, the quarter will simply round up to the first 30 minute mark.
- I’m filling this out.
- Sex has become so casual and impersonal to our generation. “Hey person I’ve known for a week, instead of getting to know one another more intimately could we just skip to the part where we fuck?”
- the shallowest things in life always seem to be the most important. why?
- Dubya is in the White House. Again.
- Who Wants to Marry a Millionaire?, As The World Turns, and the Andy Griffith Show were ever on t.v.
- I still like him and even worse why I still think he likes me back
- girls don’t want to be friends with me. i’m a girl too!
- people join fraternities and sororities.
- everyone on this campus is exactly the same. For example: those girls with those huge jackie o glasses smoking cigarettes at the campus center or those guys wearing pastel polo shirts w/ the collars popped up playing beer pong at ATO. everyone on this campus drives a lexus suv. i swear that not every single one of you is going to be a top diplomat or neurosurgeon, it
is just statistically impossible. enough already, people.
• Someone who claims to be pro-life can also be pro-death penalty. Religious people in America are schizophrenic psychopaths. Jesus preached tolerance people!! I suggest all of those crazed, anti-gay marriage, moral-value voting hypocrites read the Bible from time to time.
• I fall for men who treat me like shit.
• I am still friends with her.
• I have stopped feeling anything but curiosity and lavishness. Can you feel lavishness? I do.
• The world seems like a dream or a play to me
• My physical health is not as strong as my optimism.
• What are those little white neck things at the barber for anyway? Do they actually do anything, or is it just so the haircutter can tie it real tight and watch you squirm?
• There’s such a huge east coast bias.
• This left can feel so right? How wrong can be so right?
• Straight people (and inmates) can get married but I can’t.
• Girls don’t just tell me what the fuck they want me to do. They need to order us around more. I don’t think they know what fuckin’ animals we are.
This Is What I Was Thinking

This is so fucking hot.

Your hands—the ones my mother and gay friends swoon on and on about—they cup the right parts with appropriate pressure and they’re strong and so in control and, oh, I feel completely possessed. In French, one of the more popular ways of saying “to have sex” is to say that the man possesses the woman: “il l’a possède”. I scoffed at this little bud of sexism when my professor discussed Michel’s first night with Marceline in The Immoralist, but now I know what they mean. You are such a man with your six-foot-five frame and impending Harvard degree.

It’s dark and the most brilliant iTunes play list is showering us with Iron and Wine, Al Green, and Carla Bruni. I remember telling you I lost my virginity to Sadé and how sympathetic you were to my plight and now I realize I’m in a sexual situation with someone who knows me really well.

You bite my bottom lip and the tang of Merlot on your tongue has meshed with the same taste on mine and I think of how we watched Sideways together at the Commons two weeks ago, two rows in front of the screen because I met you at the subway too late and they were the only seats left. After the film was over you waited for me to go to the bathroom and when I came out I saw you from the corner of my eye and while at the same time I knew it was you, I didn’t, and I realized how good looking you are and wouldn’t it be funny if we were actually here as a couple, the way the other men outside are waiting for the women in the stalls inside? I thought this for approximately one millisecond before I remembered you’re just you and I actually wouldn’t want that at all.

You’re making your way down my stomach now, my arms pinned down by those big, gorgeous hands, and I’m glad you haven’t shaved in awhile. You are what the other boys aspire to become.
This isn’t new, really. Over a year ago we did this more than once but between then and now, I’ve fallen in love, had my first one-night stand, changed my double-major thrice, and don’t talk to anyone I used to hang out with every night last year. I feel I’ve started coming into my own.

Oh god, you’re so creative. Surprising, yet… not?

And then you say something, I forget what it was about, but you said a word I always associate with you because you say it all the time (I think it was “parenthetical”) and it’s like the proverbial light bulb goes off over my head, ding and all. I remember who you are and while you’ve forgotten the anecdote and moved on to my more private areas I’ve suddenly reconnected this man’s body to you and the memories I have of you. I officially met you when I was sixteen and had a crush on your best friend—you were obsessed with mine. You wrote her overwrought verses; he gave me the tackiest gifts known to mankind. We’ve laughed about all of this together and maybe in a way tonight is fitting.

In the morning I’ll order a taxi when you go in for a shower before class. I’ll send you a text message once I’m in the car with some lame excuse I don’t actually expect you to believe. I will not want to talk about this and I hope you won’t either.

But for now, rightnowthisverysecond, I can only think of what your hands—I kind of can’t believe this is you. And me.
“Every Breath You Take”, The Police:

I want to bone Sting whenever I hear this song.

“Californication”, Red Hot Chili Peppers:

The first time I smoked pot...

Being uncool in high school. Ha.

“Rock Your Body”, Justin Timberlake:

This song started playing and a sleazy guy that I was dancing with in the club leaned over to kiss me. I tried to avoid him and slipped right on my ass in the middle of the dance floor.

Why does everyone think they’re black?

The only redeeming quality to this song is the grinding it induces.

“Billie Jean”, Michael Jackson:

My obsession for Michael Jackson. I wrote letters to him and signed them Billie Jean.

Driving stoned over the crazy bridge into Boston and trying to psychoanalyse the Prince of Pop.

“The Sign”, Ace of Base:

When I was the Coolest Girl in the fifth grade and I had to memorize all the words to the song to maintain the hierarchy
even though I secretly thought it was a load of chirpy Swedish crap.

I divined this song one night in a co-op on Mass Ave. I did.

“Tears In Heaven”, Eric Clapton:

To be honest, dead baby jokes. But that’s awful.

My father.

“Such Great Heights”, The Postal Service:

How I’m a smug hipster in disguise who put this song on all my friends’ mix-CDs way before anyone had even heard of Deathcab For Cutie.

I want the freckles in my eyes to be perfectly aligned with somebody’s.

“With Or Without You”, U2:

Soft focus, warm-toned, lip nibbling, implied rather than grotesquely realistic, Hollywood-type sex.

“Oops! I Did It Again”, Britney Spears:

Using two shots of vodka stolen from a friend’s parents’ liquor cabinet as an excuse to dance all slutty-like

“Ironic”, Alanis Morissette:

Flannel shirts, baby tees, and fimo-bead necklaces

I’m sick of people saying “actually, that’s not what ironic means.”
“Time Of Your Life”, Green Day:

Freshman year, a guy who lived in the room above me joined this band called Bonesaw and was learning guitar, so he started practicing Green Day. When it was warm, I could sit on my bed with the window open and this song would drift into the room with the breeze, which was so cool the first twenty times. Also, cheesy graduation ceremonies.

You were the time of my life, you know.

“Yesterday”, The Beatles:

Ice skating in sixth grade and being “asked out” by a Texan named Rachel. Saying yes because my friend paid me ten dollars to see it happen. Later regretting said expenditure when purchased girlfriend got freaky on my leg during an in-class movie.
Drugs, Direction

Twelve, Twenty Two, Two Thousand and Four

I just want to be lost. Not in life though, otherwise I’d be all set. Music is where I’d like to go get lost. It’s that world the club scene used to create for me. The world where everyone was happy. Happy with themselves and the others around them because they too were happy. Even when that wasn’t the perception I was getting, my world was always perfect. Me. The music. The DJ. Friends. It used to be a place where I could go, as I liked to say, re-center myself; find that all-important balance that, for me, requires weekly adjustment.

*   *   *

Never needed any substances to amuse us, just a well-developed and marvelously-designed set. Even when that didn’t happen it didn’t matter. I was happy. Years later the unavoidable reality that clubs are really just boxes with good music and shitty people set in. No one cares about you there. Most of the people that frequent the club scene everywhere I’ve been are really just frequenting a place they enjoy being whilst taking drugs or consuming alcohol. Same people. Same drugs. Different night. Different DJ. That’s it. Most of my close friends have also lost that spunk for dancing they once had. Now we pre-game as to more efficiently allocate our money between cocktails, the door fee, and the taxi ride back. I sit here listening to a set I recorded on November 11th, the first one where I don’t stop bobbing my head, and I feel calm, at rest with myself. The pure euphoria I feel when I mix is so evident to me when I hear the recordings later. It makes me glad to have once experienced this and to bring it back without tearing apart the technical mistakes. I’ve reached a very comfortable stage in my skill; inversely related to the stage I’m at in life. My only real solace
in music has become the production I share with no one, and the lovely time spent spinning at home.

* * *

The stereotypes out there scare me. I don’t want to be any type of gay man that I’ve ever met. Don’t want to be the one addicted to drugs, stuck in the club scene. Abhor the überscandalous nature of a lot of gay men I see. Not really liking the I’m-gay-so-I-became-an-activist thing. Maybe I’ve never met a gay man or woman that really seemed like they were justly happy in life. Not that I wouldn’t say the exact same thing for any straight person I’ve run into. I don’t like what I see in too many people, including myself, and that’s weird. Jon, I think, is coming to a lot of these same realizations. We discussed a lot of what I now write during the wee hours of this morning... One of the things he said is that it’s really hard to sit down and go through the reasons why someone is unhappy with their life, doing drugs, or thousands of other things running the gamut.

* * *

Since I can’t really speak for everyone else outside of my observations, I’ll use another revelation story to illustrate this point in regard to my life. I forget when exactly this was—sometime before Thanksgiving this year—but Rick had swung by earlier to hold me up to an earlier-made commitment to go to one of his friends’ birthday party, finally meet some of his non-school friends, and just relax. Ironic as it is, he’s normally the one telling me to quit working, quit reading. Jon and Tom had recently purchased some maryjane with extra-high THC levels... hydro they may have called it? Since I had yet to taste this crazy-good weed, assured that just one hit would do the job, I took up the offer and got pretty high. On the way back, Rick had to run into CVS to grab something, so I sat in the car. Wondering why I was high. Why I felt the need to be high.
Why I went out of my way to get high before meeting people that already respected me, wouldn’t judge me, and wanted to meet me. One thing I bounced off Jon this morning was the conclusion I reached in that CVS parking lot: people do drugs because they hate themselves. I believe that drugs are an escape from reality. I also believe that your reality is what you make it. If drugs are an escape from reality, a reality that I concocted, what is it that I so fear or hate that drives me to these escapes?

* * *

I grew up being told that I’d go places and I always had the proof to back it up. I could pursue the cubical life, or the life of a marketer... but those both seem wrong. Programming for what? What good or change has that accomplished when my time has past? Marketing, hah! From a book Rick sent me this summer, *The Corporation*, I’d like to paraphrase the head of marketing for McDonald’s. In discussing the ethical issues surrounding marketers and the work they do, he said, “Oh, I know I’m sucking Satan’s pecker.” Nix that option out. Corporate America just seems like one big shithole to me.

All said, I have no direction in my life.
To Write

I wasn’t going to write. But I decided today that I have something to tell myself. It will be a fancy way of writing a letter back to me. So much more cost-effective, too.

I don’t talk much to American students, especially American guys. I haven’t socialized like the average Tufts student has. My feeble interactions have taken me to the fringe of the American social scene. The internationals know who I am, not me, necessarily, ha ha, no no, and the Americans don’t know me at all. Unless they’ve kissed me. Have you? I am so comfortable being the peripheral nod or cold handshake, the murmured name, the who? Yes, the who, the who who cut her hair recently. Very dramatically and recently, both. I will smile at you later, too. Even if you said who? I don’t quite mind, I am self-assuredly aware of whom I am, and maybe that party and myself are missing out on each other.

It is 2:13 a.m. and still I write this because there is some end in sight for me. I think it is either in recalling those kids playing Frisbee and lacrosse on the Residential Quad in the heat of a sun that works better back home, or the log-on of that ‘someone before the spring break hook-up’—the same someone I have never talked to on MSN but who is so unequivocally on my contact list. Never mind him... The Spring Break hook-up was a dream, a dream of a night that I want to re-live when I go back to Canada. Perhaps spring and all this romance showering on so many people’s heads will take fashionable summer shape and hang out with me on a Friday night, 6’2” and dark-haired.
Things I’m ashamed to want, badly
by various authors

• One of those nightstand lights that turns on when you touch it. Once, low. Twice, brighter. Three times, brightest.
• some sort of career where im a media darling but never actually did any thing to get this status, but somehow have an assload of cash
• A Yes poster
• A hairdryer to warm my feet while I’m studying.
• Those vegan condoms, yes, it seems they exist.
• To sign a girl's chest, and then make fun of her weirdly-shaped boobs.
• labels, labels, labels (clothes, hotels, cars, addresses).
• maalox and liposuction.
• Enough money to buy happiness
• acceptance
• To be famous.
• My sister. Just kidding.
• I want to be rich rich rich and live rich rich rich but I don’t see how that’s going to happen. What’s strange is that I also want to live on a crummy mattress in a cold apartment with no food and be surrounded by dirty people. I want both of these things at once! I want goblets of wine and servants and I want cigarettes in a broken room with a sad, green-skinned woman there shivering beside me. Fuck this. I just want love.
• My father’s nurses. The ability to hug my best friend very frequently without it being considered ‘gay’. And most of all to be James Bond (Connery).
• gorgeous friends.
• An extremely fast metabolism.
• To be a Victoria’s Secret model.
• a flow-bee and a rimjob
So we were in the library today. You know, it was one of those quietly frantic Sundays where you wake up just a bit later than you intend to, and spend quite a bit longer at brunch than you really should, and if you’re lucky you finally get your ass to the library around 3 p.m. Quietly frantic because really in your head you’re calculating all the things you should’ve crossed off your list by now, and the things you should be starting, but really you haven’t started any of it and instead that other part of yourself always wins out; the part that takes a leisurely shower and enjoys sitting for a long while over coffee and muffin tops, telling and re-telling everybody’s respective Saturday nights. Anyway, so we’re all sitting around, finally, in the library. A. and I thinking about beginning to study for a French test, E. doing reading for some class. When we study together it’s a process, and the sun was really very pleasant slanting through the tall windows in the Tower Café, and somehow the conversation drifts toward orgasms.

I think it started with A.’s night, and how her boyfriend had kinda dropped the ball, more literally than figuratively. Then J. shows up. J. is almost aggressively open with her sexuality; loves sharing stories about various experiences, and it’s great because everyone else loves hearing them. She’s excellent at immediately tearing open conversations to a level of intimate detail. Here we are, surrounded by people working; studying, reading, drinking tea, seemingly oblivious to our conversation and all I want to do is take a poll of the room, and find out about this particular Tower Café sample and their ability to orgasm. L. has joined us at this point—she’s never had an orgasm with a guy. She’s only ever been able to do it on her own—and I don’t own a vibrator, but maybe I should invest? Because that’s been her saving grace, otherwise she might think that she’s not capable of climaxing. I mean, we’re all young, but I just think she might have been hooking up with the wrong guys?
According to J., she masturbates all the time when she happens to be separated from her girlfriend, which I think is good, as a stress reliever. Which makes me wonder why there seems to be such a high percentage of women who actually do not have clitoral orgasms. I wonder if those basically unbelievable magazines like *Cosmo* and *Redbook* take that into consideration. I stopped reading them and can’t remember. But it seems that in terms of sexual evolution it really shouldn’t be so hard for some girls to get off. And it shouldn’t be so hard for that substantial minority of men who seem to find it such a difficult and complex task? Wouldn’t you think that evolution would have endowed those of our species—and especially people in our approximate age group—with maximum possibilities for sexual pleasure? It’s not hard at all for some people, but there seems to be such a gradation of difficulty for both girls in terms of having an orgasm, and guys in ability to induce one. I guess that’s the point at which one actually picks up some literature on it.

It’s almost 4 p.m. now, and we’re trying to convince L. that really, letting him go down on you is worth it—if he wants to it won’t be bad, and it might even be good. But generally that’s just a starting point. J. is describing clit sex when M. comes to say hello. I turn around and to talk with him about trivial things, diverting attention from our conversation. But after he’s gone I wonder why I did that. I look at these beautiful girls—we’re all so frank in our divulgence and curiosity, it makes me feel like a kid—this is the same conversation that we had about kissing, somewhere around the fifth grade. I wonder if maybe M. should have been allowed into the circle, because maybe these intimately technical details are the kind of thing that should be in an open forum, maybe then this conversation would have some constructive value. I imagine the Tower Café on a Sunday afternoon, and instead of the five of us sitting around wasting time while everyone else works, every person here is sitting around having a nice chat about orgasms, asking opinions and telling stories, learning something useful before they finally settle down and study for that French test.
The End