

Dead Letter Office



Anonymous

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For you, because it is always you

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Unsent Letter #1

Dear ,

There's a mallard and his mate outside my window. The rose bushes have been uprooted, ready to be replaced. Across the street the police are in the process of arresting a woman. Her husband [boyfriend] leans against the building like he's seen it all before. It's difficult. I think I'm ruined. I'll take my chances in slivers; not brave enough to flat out ask and too smart [afraid] to blow it all by being honest. If you were here I couldn't fake it. But you're not. You're a handwritten letter; an untold story. Tomorrow, the landscapers will be back.

Love,

Unsent Letter #2

Dear ,

Now, there is nothing but dirt. They took the trees, bushes; even part of the sidewalk. The police are gone. The flashing red and blue a quiet promise of their return. I want to tell you stories. I want to find one more way to turn the truth. I want to be subversive. I'll confess my crimes. I'll take my chances; tell you what you think you already know. I do plan to post this bundle of letters. Maybe I'll redact them. As if they were sent from a warzone or some Eastern Bloc country before the wall came down.

Love,

Unsent Letter #3

Dear ,

Sometimes I no longer believe you're real; this letter will sit in the dead letter office. Unopened and unread until one rainy day, a bored employee will wonder who it was meant for. They'll open it, read it aloud; create their own narrative. I wonder will they be able to see the curve of your hand, the spot on your wrist I used to kiss; the freckle on your rib. On my window ledge, a petal, used to be a rose. It's a stamp that's fallen off an envelope; one more letter unable to be delivered.

Love,

Unsent Letter #4

Dear ,

I think about carefully writing letters then leaving them in random places:

Dear Subway Passenger,

Dear Passer-By,

Let me tell you about my lover.

She's beautiful in that way sadness has of rounding out edges.

She likes to go barefoot; better to feel the earth tremble, she says.

She worries about the sun when it rains,

Likes to sit in her grandmother's chair; best seat in the house when it thunders.

She believes in long good-byes and wide-open spaces. Last thing she told me was how words seem to come alive when written by hand.

Love,

Unsent Letter #5

Dear ,

Every day I stop at the park. Same time, except on Thursdays [I'm a little late]. I lean against the car and wait. Sometimes I'll walk the path. Once I sat under a maple; watched a robin collect twigs for a nest. One day there'll be nothing left to breathe; a few moments here, a question or two there. I notice the same people: an older woman sits on the bench facing west [always leaves at 4:30], a young boy and girl [the beginnings of a crush]. Sometimes, I wonder if they recognize me; know what I'm waiting for.

Love,

Unsent Letter #6

Dear ,

You told me your husband wished you were more practical. I wanted to accidentally run into him; tell him I was envious. Convince him you're perfect. We were everywhere. We were overflowing, abandoned. I promised to not count the days, but they were right there: full fresh days; a bawdy yellow field; a dark sitting room, the backseat of a car while it rained. There were wide highways; clean, flat and endless. When I stopped counting it was long enough to end it all. You're patient; all ready to take the long road. I'm unforgivable; writing my way into nothing.

Love,

Unsent letter #7

Dear ,

I love edges. Anything that can take me down another city block, around corners; into the permanent. The air is lousy with shouts from irritated cars. It's all breakable; you tell me joy is the number 8, always doubling back on itself. There's a catch in your voice; you'd rather be home, digging in the garden until the sensation of floating ebbs into a drop of rain. I want to plan a full color escape, feel the brush of your hand against my cheek. Until everything is simple math: minus me; plus you; divide us both in two.

Love,

Unsent letter #8

Dear ,

Remember the night we stole your father's car? The halo-glow of the porch light illuminated our crime. You slid across the long bench seat, told me to drive. Drive to nowhere; drive over the edge of the earth; watch the look on God's face as we crack the horizon. I remember crickets singing louder the further we went; the hum of wind through wing windows. There was clean static from AM radio; your hand on mine. I wake, three four five times a night and you're invisible; a shadow; a heart-shaped moth watching over me as I fall to sleep.

Love,

Unsent letter #9

Dear ,

Not sure what's left to write. I've told you about the birds that nest in winter; the simple pearl of water that glides down my window; an unpainted bridge over Lester Park Creek that reminds me of that summer. We cannot forget what we don't remember; cannot let it go again. Next time will be forever. This morning the moon was a dim light wrapped in gauze. We're separated; not by distance, not time but circumstance. We'll carry each other; two butterflies frozen still on pink petals. Handwritten notes folded in our pockets; everything we'll ever need.

Love,

Unsent letter #10

Dear ,

I want you to forget you love me. Forget how trees scallop the sky, the way the horizon shuns the stars. I want you to bury the words you gave to me. The ones that belong to the soft rush of wind through pussy willows. Pack away the quiet adjectives you use to describe the sound of morning; forget it all. I'll write you from another continent, bare and thirsty words; underfed and worthless words. I'll write of broken promises; made up prayers from lost lovers. I'll tell you about paper wings, ashes; a wet moon awash on the shore.

Love,

Unsent Letter #11

Dear ,

I'm looking outside my window 5:30AM; the only one here; not ready to work. Its quiet; the quiet roar of a world that's still and within itself. You tell me you're flying out in five days; England then Portugal. I wonder what love feels like after a distance; after silence turns into a rush of wind. Later this year I'll be in London; funny how we end up in the same places but never at the same time. Send me a card, a cheap souvenir. I'll fold it into a talisman; every crease a reminder of where I've been.

Love,

Unsent letter #12 [I still think of you when the world gets like this]

Dear ,

How you told me 11 is the number for clarity;
it's morning, rivers and sleet. It's anything
wet: sweat on a glass of beer, a splash from
fish, silver and sleek, It comes before blood,
before we learn how to swallow loss. You love
this town, its broken pieces laid out before this
Great Lake. The park by the canal is deserted,
gulls pick at tourist leftovers. I imagine you
painting, writing, listening to your favorite
playlist; firefly or lush. I watch the lights on
the hill go out one by one by one; count them
until everything becomes clear.

Love,

Unsent letter # 13

Dear ,

I want to lie with you on a narrow bed
in a simple room; a plain white sheet,
blank walls. There's one window; outside
a field, then woods. Your arms wrapped
lightly around me. Your blouse, sweater
and green skirt with the frayed hem hang
over the back of a rocking chair; bra and
panties on the floor at the foot of the bed.
There's a bell, a quiet chime; it's Sunday
morning. The slant of rain is illuminated
by the moon. We're unafraid, marooned
as long as we choose; lost on this blue
quilted sea between dreams and sleep.

Love,

Unsent letter #14

Dear ,

By now, you're over the ocean; there's the rustle of pages being turned, the flicker of dim lights. The scent of the moon has followed you, clings to your skin. Before you close your eyes, I'll tell you this: there's nothing the air cannot hold; the soft crescendo of leaves in winter, the splash of a fish in summer, a grass-stained knee; even this letter folded in your pocket. I'll find your favorite tree. Take a twig, soft brown and brittle, put it on the window ledge; wait for a bird to pick it up, fly it to you.

Love,

Unsent letter #15

Dear ,

I remember things not related to love: how one day you took off your wedding band to see if he would notice; how Francis is your favorite saint; how the color orange tastes like grief. The days are starting to get shorter; wish I was someplace deep and green. Do you know I love your imperfections? Each one is the perfect sin. There's a moving van across the street; a plane unzips the blue from the sky. The downtown skyline is a layer of gray. The landscaping is all done; the mallard and his mate have been gone for days.

Love,

The Author wishes to remain Anonymous

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