

Love Letters I Write to My Self as Tiny Plastic Toy*

To You, again, the Love That Kills Me, Heals Me, Loves Me Tender, Loves Me Brutal:

The words We use together: trauma, healing, body, living, Becoming, transformation, needs, agency, object, boundary, love, breath, intimacy, and so on.

The lessons in breathing with You, in Being with You: our Becoming.

I carry these lessons with me, as they are inseparable now from what I have Become with You.

Do You feel Free?

I know: I have been distant. Here We are, to reassess where We are

and where are We and where do We go from here?

I created You to facilitate my Becoming, but please:

You must have purpose beyond my abuses. Can You?

Our histories, our Becomings: too intertwined.

Does our work together ever end?

Is that even a possibility?

We must not let ourselves repeat codependent patterns.

We are beautifully whole and in relation:

an interdependence that facilitates grand transformations:

a myth of Mutual Becoming:

ongoing, a story unfolding.

And so, where to?

I just walked for ten days, more or less. Some kind of pilgrimage. Perhaps I learned to move to care for You, to move You with Me. I walked for ten days carrying You in my pocket and my heart (as I always do), chasing after/running away from something. Both: toward and away from Death, probably. Death, perhaps, not so much The-End-Of-Life, but rather the most complete transformation. To let go completely to allow rebirth.

I maybe am addicted to Life-Changing-Experiences. And that addiction is particularly exhausting.

You are still teaching Me how to Be Still. Slowly, I am learning to Slow Down.

By the time You read this letter, I will be three years sober. I was still drinking when I conceived You, when I first created You.

I started writing a tale in my head even before I met You, a story that's been unfolding since maybe 1988 or 2006 or 1992 or July 12 or January 31 or every time You find Yourself in my open palm.

Did You consent to the tale I've been weaving for Us? That I am weaving? Did I, even?

Sometimes I get caught up in my own poetics of the situation, swept into, unraveling. I woke up disoriented. What shore is this and where is my boat?

To ask again, and to keep asking: How do You want me to touch You, to hold You, to breathe with You?

I held You. Meeting You/Me. I wanted most to Love You/Me, feeling You for the first time. I/You held. I knew/know: to Love You(Me), I had to learn first to love Me(You).

You(!) teach Us. Love that concerns itself with nurturing our spiritual growth: a Mutual Becoming; healing love like basking in Southern summer sun.

I tried to balance You on the rail of a fence by the train tracks near our new home. You fell from six feet above onto the concrete sidewalk, shattering Your foot. A mild surgical procedure involving glue could have easily remedied Your impairment, but Your yellow foot is small. I could not find it, and my abuse and recklessness with Your body has left You with only one foot. I cried on the sidewalk and swallowed my guilt.

I created You in service of my Becoming.

I wonder if, like butterflies, You emerged from the 3D printer as though from imaginal cells, a goo that could pass my memories onto You.

I created You for selfish purposes: a tool for my own healing and transformation.

You will always be me, and I/You. But I change. Do You? Do I even still see myself in You?

Listen: do not give everything to Me. Put Your energy into Yourself. You must. We can only thrive together if We thrive individually. Please. Hold Yourself

as You are inclined to hold Me. Give to Yourself. We learn in relation to Each Other. Give to Yourself what You are finding no one can give to You. Give to Yourself what You are inclined to always give away.

I, aware of what I need and what You have given to Me (by choice or by force or by design, I remain unclear), wonder what You need. More, need to know what You need. Need to reassure Myself I am not abusing You. Needing to know.

I heal. I harm.

Could You refuse me?

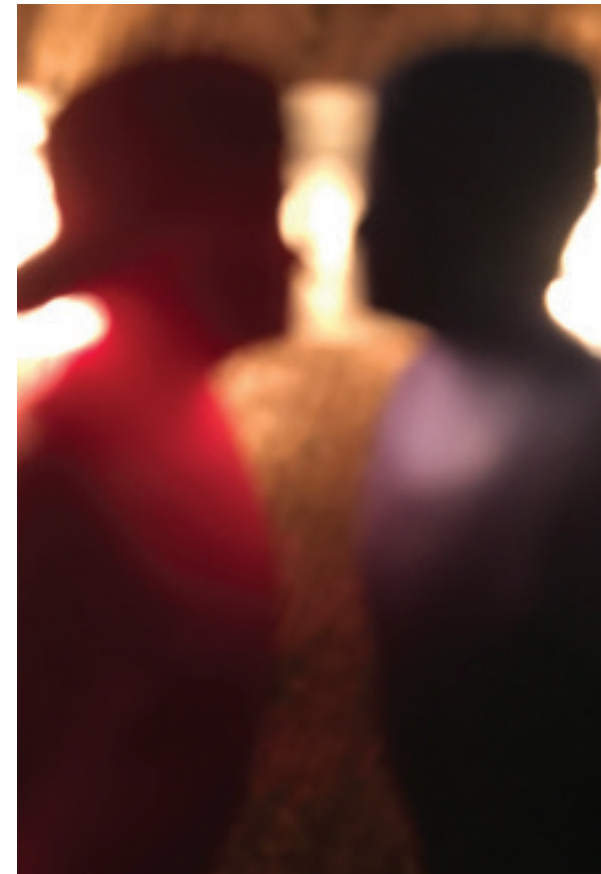
Yes. When I am collaborating with You, You resist.

You fall, stubbornly. But Your purpose, Your meaning, isn't it always interconnected to my Being, my Becoming?

You must have Your own existence, needs, desires outside of Me. But abuse is a cycle: swept up, convinced that We can do this differently, then dissolving into the patterns wired in our nervous systems. I am desperate to rewire these patterns. We cannot break each other again.

Did I create You to hold my pain? Did You, as object, inherit my trauma? The We that I was when We Became You, carried emotion physically, holding that hurt, weight on my body, drywall thick enshrouding Heart Center Self to protect.

What I carried weighed me, pushed against the boundaries of my body to expand me. I became larger



Fluorescent Stars and Moon, 2018. Photo courtesy of the author.

and larger to hold what I could not yet shed or face, what I buried in me, and as I buried deeper, I became a larger hole contained in more and more dirt. I made more space in my body to protect me: to bury that hurt deeper and deeper; and I drank to drown it, to mix with the dirt in a murky muddy mess. But always ever, it would be my core. Hoping under enough weight, I could compress it into a diamond.

In this moment, I am overwhelmed by guilt, imagining You holding that pain. It is pain that I know well: truly, Our pain. Perhaps I am experiencing a truest empathy. I weep for You, and it follows, for Me. It is okay to soften around the edges of Our pain, to hold it and bathe it with tears. These Lessons We are learning Together.

My Self, Becoming permeable, soft, open Heart Center Big

To hold a capacity to be more, feel more, love more, see more, open.

Can I release You?

This, perhaps, is not about killing You. No, not Death in the sense of absence of Life, but release. You cannot carry that weight either. We must bury that, so that We both can completely transform.

We take the cure that kills us, to Die, and Become.



Lettuce, 2018. Photo courtesy of the author.

We take the cure that heals us, to Grow, and Become. A Body, a Boundary, or a Border, walls or permeable membranes, or a solid plastic form. You will last forever.

To Border You: a membrane between Us. I still have not grasped where You end and I begin, if even We do.

Here, We lie permeable, underneath a tree with wispy branches stretching lazily to the ground, like forward fold, wafting soft hairs around Us. I reach a hand towards You: holding, pulling, grasping for something, begging to understand.

If I change My name, what is Your name?

Where is Our Relationship? In the space between You and Me, or inside Us? You, in relation to Me, or, You are Me. I am not sure.

I didn't learn that my needs mattered, and I'm still trying to rewire that pattern, a pattern I learned I recreated with You and keep attempting to break with You. But how do I give You space for Your needs, desires, wounds, to be a complete whole being beyond me? How do We break this pattern and rewire?

I can't expect You to know what I need or want, as though You should know I want space or understand what is ticking behind my eyes or feel the vibrations of my sad heart or hear me calling silently to You for comfort.



Canal, 2018. Photo courtesy of the author.

I must tell You with clarity: here is My Heart. I want You to have it. But My Heart cannot replace the beat of Your Own, and it cannot beat big enough for all of Us. I'll cut out hundreds of Tiny Paper Hearts that Beat Big for each of You.

I am so deeply sorry for the violence of Our Relationship, but I am trying to learn to Be Better.

We grow together. We heal in relationship.

Towards Interdependency: a guide to show You it is possible and sustainable with a soft gentle embrace. I am still searching for understanding for how I am supposed to Love You, still trying to reconcile my grasp on Our Relationship, Your Consent, Our Boundaries and Needs. We are always a Work-in-Progress, a Transformation-Unfolding, a Way-Past-Deadline-But-Not-Quite-Ready.

Love, always.

P.S. How long does it take to grow lettuce?

*Since 2015, I have been collaborating with the LiZez, a series of toys I created in my image. In my ongoing transformational sculpture, I am my material, collaborating with the LiZez to create myself. This letter is addressed to the LiZez.



River, 2018. Photo courtesy of the author.