

Waking up in Vegas
-- the Magnetic Fields
www.youtube.com/watch?v=vXB_p9qwy10

Sb

© 2010.

Monday the 4th of April, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

Notice #: P8146087
Date: 26-3-2008
Rego: TG3996

I am writing to ask if the \$40 parking fine I incurred last week can be wiped.
I had paid for parking when I was ticketed, I just failed to place the receipt from the parking machine the right way up. If I must tell you the truth, I had farted in the car and was trying to get out of there as fast as possible. The fart was so toxic that when I returned to the car 55 minutes later I could still smell it.

Yours sincerely,

Drus Dryden

closer

a collection of letters
from Drus Dryden

I need you so much closer
-- Benjamin Gibbard

letters

parking ticket

certain people I know

family

hi school

england

bristophe

advertising

london

girls

megan

shoeshine. a short story

jessie

mat & kristy, & jessie

mali

memory reminder

29 hitting on 30

deeply superficial dot com

pop-up store

tobi

boyfriend business

car

toilet flush

dear me

certain people i know

Letters to some people I know. Ed and Rozzy are old friends from high school. Everyone else I know through Rozzy, who is what you might call a 'social connector', or 'drunk.'

2nd of October, 2009

Dear Rozzy:

email is probably the wrong way to talk about this, but if our friendship is to continue i think there are some issues we need to discuss.

please try and think about how you act towards me.

you reflect everything back onto the other person. it's a defence mechanism, so that you never have to accept culpability for anything you do. instead you put guilt and blame onto others.

do you see this behaviour pattern?

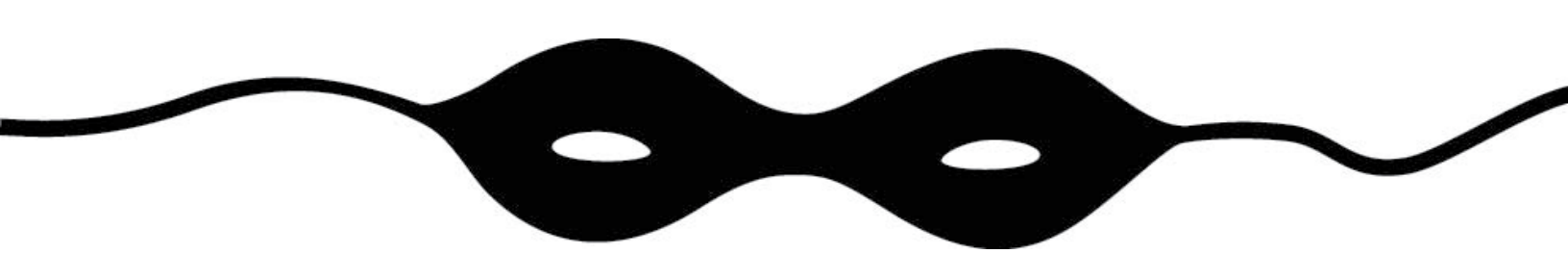
i ask you why you don't know what i do with my life, you say i didn't tell you.

even if this is just a minute example, i am done with the larger pattern of behaviour.

just because someone did it to you (family/ school/ whatever) doesn't make it acceptable to do it to me, or anyone else for that matter.

i'm only writing this to you because i value having you in my life, some other friends i wouldn't bother.

D R U S



Thursday the 8th of October, 2009

Dear Ed:

You were asking why I was writing Tim Costar. Well, I'm writing to lots of people.

You're one of my oldest friends, and no one cracks me up like you. But I have to drop some information on you.

I used to know when something bad had happened to you not because you'd talk about it, but that you'd call me up to ask about things that had fucked out in my life. I also try and deal with some of my issues through people, but I try and bring other people up, not pull them down. I just want you to think about it.

On a more positive note, I'm glad you've let go of Foam Rave-gate.

Please accept this man love sex charm as a token of my enduring friendship.

Sincerely,

Sb

Monday the 19th of April, 2010

Dear Kim,

I was about to write you a lightly abusive letter. It was about a question you asked me once. But then I realised I should actually be writing to Rozzy's Uncle Peter about it. You're so easy to confuse, you and the gayest man in the universe.

You asked me, once, what I did. Uncle Peter asked me the same question and when I told him he asked if that was all. Although even that wasn't *très* offensive because rowing coaching wasn't all I did then.

The thing is I quite like you and don't want to abuse you, even lightly. You're a journo, you ask straight questions. Uncle Peter is a gay sex lord. From the look of his sex dungeon, he wouldn't mind a bit of heavy abuse. Everyone's happy.

Hope you're good. I am.

sensitively,

Coach aka Drus

Sf

12th of February, 2010

Dear Kat:

I am pleased to inform you that your application to be my friend* has been successful. These are just some of the reasons why I am able to extend the hand of friendship to you:

You are highly intelligent, super-smart. Even if your scientific intelligence is in some ways opposed to my creative one, I respect it and it has a common root: a sense of wonder at the universe. I even referenced you once in a heady conversation about immortality . . .

You have a dizzying sense of fashion, unafraid of strong colours, or dazzling prints and embellishments. Even if they are sometimes Michaela's clothes, you make them your own. Rather the fact that Chae trusts you not to Anna-rize her chi-chae couture is another testament to your good character. As your new friend I'd be happy to lend you my clothes, although I think we may be different sizes.

You have cute friends (well, one in particular.)

And many more reasons, which will become evident over the course of our budding friendship. Glad to have you on the team.

Sensitively,

Drus Dryden
Sb

* This refers to a conversation we had at the engagement party in which you stated that your friends are friends with me, and you would like to be friends with me too, in case you can't remember.

Sb

Tuesday the 29th of March, 2010

Dear Mat Q,

Fuck I have been meaning to send this to you for agggggessssss. So long in fact that the date is now the 9th of April.

I'm sending you Tourette's album. Whatever I was going to say about it, I can't remember anymore. Megan just said that you wanted it too. I sort of liked the album. I went running to it, listening to it right through. And that was good, but afterwards I didn't need to listen to it ever again.

At one point he says something mean about people who have a lot of sneakers. For that I think you should waste him next time you see him. Incidentally I'm about to go and buy my first pair of sneakers in quite a while. Maybe. I've been having some colour dilemmas, grey/maroon vs black/highlighter green, that's what's been stopping me. I can see why you go classic and white.

I've only written "fuck" once in this letter. It's probably not bad enough for a letter about Tourettes. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. All this fucking is reminding me of a game we used to play at boarding school. You would have to chant, while clapping, "____ fuck, ____ fuck, how about a ____ fuck?"

e.g. "warm fuck, warm fuck, how about a cold fuck?"

And then whoever was "Cold fuck" would have to keep it going. To "Dry fuck" or "Slow fuck" or whoever. The more original, the better. Maybe you can teach the kids that when school starts again.

Anyway, how are you?

From

Drus

Sb

Monday the 19th of April, 2010

Dear Anna J.,

I am writing to you about what you said at your place at Easter. You said that you had been working as a cleaner that day, that it wasn't the glittering jewel in the regal crown of your working life. I thought you may be interested to know three people that disagree with you.

I'm one of them. I might be a little biased because I myself am a cleaner. I clean up around a commercial building once a week. Some days I feel like a graphic designer and the building is my page. Others, an Eastern mystic, the building my Zen garden. Perhaps I should wear a Kimono on those days? OK it sucks as a job, but I like that I do it. I like that I'm prepared to do it to fund the other things I do, like write you a letter. I like that it shows I'm a fighter. It reminds me of a quotation, "by far our greatest achievement is that we are alive."

My Homeopath made a good point when I was talking to her about work. She said "where would the world be without cleaners?" We're all so fucking messy. On a philosophical level cleaning represents a profound belief in the future; if the world was ending tomorrow, I probably wouldn't leave it very shiny.

And finally Noel Gallagher. He says that the souls of working people are purer. Just as well for us because I'm not sure how pure your liver is.

Anyway I know you were probably only doing it as a one-off, and you do so many other things. I love that you look after that girl, I can't think of anyone who could do a better job at that. I'm sure the economy will get its shit together soon, and the cameras will start rolling.

In any case I would prefer it if you did not talk yourself down in my company. You're a bold, beautiful Warrior-Princess, and I love to hear your rousing battle cries.

sensitively,

Drus

ps Stephen King used to be a 'janitor.' So creepy when the blood comes out of the sinks in *It*.

pps Last year I saw a crew of cleaners lining up outside Centurion, the gay sauna, at 9 am. Not as I was exiting. It wasn't like that.

Sb

Monday the 6th of December, 2010

Dear Bone-crusher,

I'm replying to your email of September.

You have sometimes deferred to your Diabetes to explain your irritable personality. I, myself, suffer from Anxiety. I think our afflictions make strange bed-fellows.

My vulnerability with your crudity? You're taking up all the bed.

I sometimes think of when I was sitting on the deck at Rotoiti, like a number of your other guests. The boys were sailing ships, in the sea. You asked me what I was doing? I was doing precisely nothing, but I said I was reading *Vogue* over your shoulder, to appear chic-er. Then you said:

Can you NOT read Vogue over my shoulder?

I presume you just wanted to talk to your GIRLfriends about the fight you were having with your boy-friend, but the manner in which you convinced me to leave your company was not becoming. Imagine if you had whispered in my ear . . .

I need to talk to my girls about my unusually heavy period

. . . how much more charming I would have found that. I might have thought

what unusually heavy charm. you're crushing me. don't stop.

All I can hope is that you are in London to study under Professor Henry Higgins, My Fair Lady.

I am in a meeting,

Drus

Sb

Saturday the 3rd of December, 2010

Dear Sam Eichblatt,

You're an intelligent, sensitive (I presume) writer, so it surprises me that you're so surprised by what you call 'awkwardness.'

I'm shy, always have been. So is my Dad. When I meet someone just as shy as myself, I understand that they're just not at ease. I try to make them feel comfortable. My kind words are an easy chair, my soft manner, a poof. *Nothing to be afraid of here.*

I appreciate it on the rare occasion that someone else gets it. Yesterday when I ran into someone at a café, their smile melted me. I'm going to call him 'Magic Teeth' from now on.

I'm not saying you're in need of a major attitude adjustment. Just that in your capacity as a journalist, you may wish to develop a more sympathetic rapport with shy people. For one, they're conscientious, thoughtful readers. And you won't be able to write about loud, obvious jackasses all the time.

sensitively,

Drus

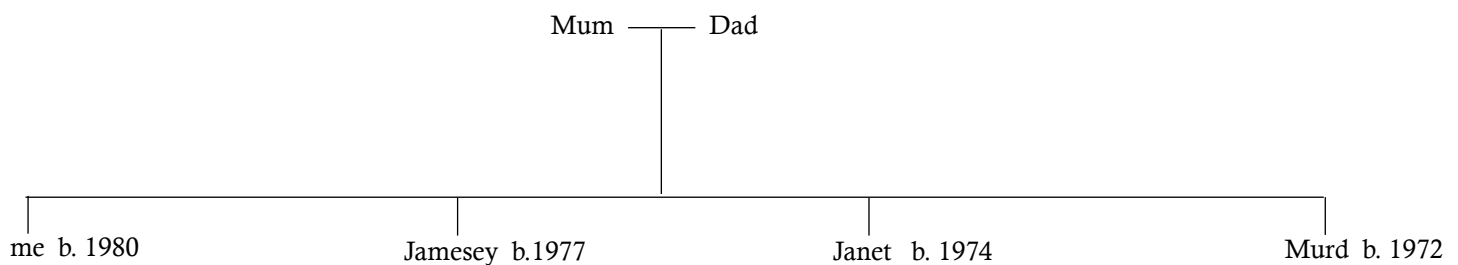
ps

Doesn't Jens Lekman have a lyric about shy people?

People seem to think a shy personality equals gifted
But if they would get to know one I'm sure that idea would have shifted
Most shy people I know are extremely boring
Either that or they are miserable from all the shit they've been storing

-A strange time in my life

family



Vicki is my paternal aunt.
Rebecca is my brother's wife, Rosa is his ex-girlfriend.
Harry my sister's newborn son.
Craig is the family dentist.
Murdoch and I work at the Nosh supermarket.

January '08

Dear Murdoch

I am writing to you because, well, for the last year I've got the feeling that you're angry (etc.) with me. At least you only really talk to me for two reasons, to tell me to do something, or to tell me that I've done something wrong, and neither of those reasons is to indulge me in conversation.

Maybe you're not so much angry with me, just angry with the responsibilities of having a family. Or maybe I'm angry and I just project it onto everyone, but you most of all.

Anyway I just thought, with you being the most favourite oldest brother I'll ever have that I would broach the subject . . .

Andrew

March '09

Murdoch

My favourite memory of you is from my Summer of Bed, 1999-2000. You are one of the only people I have ever met who knows how to deal with mental illness. I had arranged the bed so that I wouldn't knock my head against the wall, and a few other reasons which I won't go into now.

You came up to your old room to talk to me. You eventually put your hand on my head, and told me that my family loved me. We're WASPs so that's not an easy thing to say. Of course I felt the impulse to say something bitchy back, but thankfully I refrained. I'm good at that. I remembered this moment, out of the blue, a couple of months ago. You were very patient and tender, kind and unjudgemental, and it completely changed the way I feel about you.

I remember trying to hurt you, during one of our chats. It's what crazy people do. I asked you if you think you might have made the Atlanta Olympic team if you hadn't ingested petrol (my phobia) when you were trying to siphon it into your car. Also you looking at my passport photo and saying I looked much happier when the photo was taken. Some of the simplest observations are also the best. I also remember you saying that you had told the homeopath that occasionally when you saw people walking when you were driving, it occurred to you that you could run them over. Apparently this phenomenon, which lots of people experience but no one talks about, is a symptom of obsessive-compulsive disorder.

James also came to see me around this time, but his bedside manner wasn't as good as yours.

That note on my Christmas present that year was a bit mysterious. "Sorry for being a shitty brother." Do you remember writing that?

Little brothers can't help but idolise their big ones. I know we're different, but you seem to have a real interest in fashion lately. You often comment on what I'm wearing like "no one would accuse you of not having interesting pants." Did you know that you can make quite a good living from fashion commentary? This guy was listed as one of the top ten fashion influences last year:

<http://thesartorialist.blogspot.com/>

Perhaps you should start a style blog, too?

Murdoch. Do you accept this as our favourite memory? (The summer of bed.) Or would you like me to select another from the vault?

May, 2009

Dear Rosa:

Thanks again for the baking help. The cookies are incredible.

Taking the first bite 5 minutes reminded me of a chocolate bar they have in South Africa:

It's called "I'm sorry" and you're meant to give it as an apology. A family friend, André, had a massive family feud after his sisters sold their share in the treasured family beach house in South Africa, without offering to him, and without telling him. Subsequently his sisters were not invited to his daughter's wedding, which I managed to get invited to, when she married a South African apple baron (another story.) Of course they knew the wedding was happening and he was in town, so they sent across an "I'm sorry" bar. No note, not in person. I don't think the apology was accepted. Fucking families.

Anyway I think that chocolate bar is the commercialisation of the belief that being really super-cute excuses you for anything.

I guess the traditional way of enacting apology is punishing yourself. I'm about half way through the cookie by now in the email, and the sugar-overload is paralleling the cute-overload of the giant cookie. Maybe instead of giving giant cookies as apologies, I should eat them! Maybe the exquisite sensual pain of eating a giant cookie, sort of feels a bit like being really, really sorry, that full-tide of emotion. Or maybe I should just be sharing my cookie with someone else . . . maybe I'll take some of this health cookie around to Jamesey for afternoon tea.

Well nice to see you again, let me know about running. I probably need to burn some calories now.

xo,

Andrew

ps: something magical happened to the cookie during the night: it broke when I put it into the pizza box, like a giant cookie heart, but I pushed it back together and in the morning it had joined up again!

Tuesday the 6th of October, 2009

Dear Murd:

I was about to write you a letter, about how we haven't had a meaningful conversation in at least four years.

But fuck-it, just because we've got the same parents doesn't mean we have to be best friends. On another level it's kinda amusing to be the people in this photo.



In my writing I always feel like I am walking a line between expressing myself and alienating myself . . . further. But if you have time for it, I can speak frankly with you.

Otherwise best of luck with the new Dryden. I have a vintage bottle of booze for HIM on his 21st birthday, I'll give it to you next time I see you.

Love From,

your brother

Sb

3rd of February, 2010

Dear Mum & Dad.

Our conversation on Monday night, I remember having the same one in 2003, 2006 and now. It breaks my heart that you can't accept that I AM doing something with my life. Every day is a struggle to motivate myself and it just makes it harder that the people who I should be able to rely on for support don't give it.

I look back on the last 12 years and remember that I had a promising future when I left school, and wonder if every decision I've made since then has been the wrong one. The fact is that I've chosen a very difficult path in life, but I've done that because I have difficult gifts. I'm a writer and I simply have to find a way to make it work. What hurts the most is that you seem to think I don't work hard. I pushed myself to the limits of physical endurance when I was overseas. And it just broke me. I feel like you don't actually know who I am sometimes, how determined I am, how much I've given. You need to value me, and what I do.

Please try and consider my feelings the next time we discuss my life path. I know that you have my interests at heart. I respond well to encouragement, no one responds well to being told that whatever they've done is wrong. It's much harder to say something constructive, but ultimately that's what I need. Just try it.

In the next year I have two major projects I want to get off the ground. One is a film script that a director has asked me to work on, and the other is getting a grant to get a business off the ground. I aim to support myself with side jobs like cleaning up at Apirana, another part-time job or any writing work I can get. If a full-time job came up, obviously I'd take it, but in the current climate I'm more interested in taking charge of myself rather than hoping someone will do it for me. This means I'll be really busy, but hopefully learning a lot and moving towards fulfilment. I'm prepared to have a modest lifestyle if it means that I'll be happier. Please understand that I am doing my best, that I am still fighting after nearly ten years of constant struggle and disappointment. I don't want to add a feeling of shame on top of that, because you won't support me emotionally.

Thank you for all the opportunities you've given me, I want to make you proud of me.

Love From

Andrew

Sb

22nd of February, 2010

Dear Mum:

I am wondering if you feel like you have to reclaim your family's honour, after the tragedy that occurred to your mother and her family. Talking to Berry about it, it is terribly sad. And thank God it's over and we don't live in 1920. I know that some people sometimes feel irrationally responsible for the things that mercilessly happened to them, but the horrors your mother endured are the fault of no one except the step-mother and outrageous bad luck. It wasn't her fault she was orphaned, there is no need for her to feel ashamed of it, nor for you to feel like you have to reclaim any lost honour on her behalf.

If you're wondering what I'm talking about, I can feel your resistance, it's just that I have noticed that you are keen to look for illustrious ancestors in your past. Is that not why you chose to buy the farm, because your, our family broke that part of the country in? As well as your insistence that the Bullens were descended from Anne Boylen, or the Norman derivation of Warren. Your recent insistence that I contact Prince William, I assure you he's just a normal guy who has got lucky, or unlucky depending on how you look at it, the same as your mum got unlucky.

Perhaps I pick up on your heightened sense of shame because you've often tried to make me feel ashamed. I guess an example of this was when you told me to 'get a life' when I had just come back from Amsterdam. Or when you asked me if I looked at child porn. Or when you thought out loud that I was going to be like the guy who does military drills in the park in the middle of my OCD summer. Criticizing my hypochondria instead of helping me through it and when it so obviously stems from you. When you told me you thought I was capable of making a contribution to society. . . gee, thanks mum. When I tried to eat avocado as a seven year-old so you'd like me. Your ever-vigilance about any potential embarrassment I might cause you, like when you seemed to take Sam's side in our break-up. I haven't got anything to be ashamed of, and I won't act like I do just because I don't have a steady job or I'm not rigidly conservative or whatever it is that you want from your children, like you even know what that is. Sometimes life is just down to luck and all you can do is be thankful for the things that are going well and try to improve anything that isn't. That staying true to your beliefs, despite things not going exactly as you planned is something to be proud of. It means you have something left when everything else is taken away from you. That's when you find out who you are, when a torrent has stripped all but the most stubborn grit away. I'm not trying to make you feel guilty, just make you realise the impact you have on others and to stand up for myself.

I wonder if your fundamental dislike of men is related to your grandfather not stopping his wife from hurting his children. And she was probably just hurting his children as a way of hurting him for hurting her, or just to preempt any hurt she was scared he could do to her again. Everyone is just fucking scared. I know you don't want to hurt anyone, and I see you trying hard with your grand daughters. It's not too late to do the same with Me, Dad, James, Janet and Murdoch or anyone else.

Sensitively,

Andrew

Su

Tuesday the 9th of April, 2010

Dear Harry,

If you're anything like your mother you'll enjoy this. It's a mini Toblerone.

Welcome to the team.

Love From

Uncle Andrew

Sb

19th of February, 2010

Dear Vicki:

Because I'm such a nice nephew I think I might give you two choices about what art project for my masters you want to collaborate on.

The one that made me think of you first is called 'family archaeology.'

You would have to tell me a family secret, just because everyone is so tight lipped around here. I guess the intended effect is that we don't gossip about each other. But because you probably just don't gossip with me, the effect for me is that I don't understand anything, perhaps I don't even really know those who should be closest to me. And when I do find out stuff, like Murdoch's first marriage, it becomes a big deal and I get blamed for the word getting out. When if everyone just knew it'd be much simpler.

For example you could tell me what offensive thing Mum did that when you first met her. It can't be that offensive, unless she asked you if you were running an internet paedophile ring too. Perhaps it would help me understand what is up with her better. But as you probably won't tell me about whatever happened there, anything insightful about your Mum or Dad, or Big Al would be great. Of course the family secret I want to know most is what happened to that fantastic picture of you from the 70s with your great do from your mum's house, because it's not hanging on my wall. If you had it 'disappeared' I am very mad at you!

The other option is to write to four New Zealand girls I know in London and tell them about Jim's romantic "let me buy you a drink before you go home" line . .

This project is (I think) about writing to yourself in the past via someone in a similar position in the present. This is all speculative because I never really know what I'm trying to achieve, probably just make life more interesting. For example I recently wrote a letter to whoever the boy is that lives in my old room at Shiplake College. I can show it to you if you like. But also I think the girls would love a letter about romantic possibilities, London ones or otherwise. They're all sorta single, semi-attached in a four bedroom house. Yours and Jim's' is such a great story, one of my favourites, I love it.

Let me know which option you prefer, and I will call to discuss. My Wedding still in hypothetical stage if you're wondering. Off to do some manual labour, and see the dog Chez Xanadu. Oh and might say 'goo-goo-ra-da' to the Baby too. There has been a change at home, by the way; James got the old Xanadu sign polished and now it's stuck to the front door. I'll take a photo and send to you . .

xo,

Andrew

Sb

Wednesday the 2nd of June, 2010

Dear Murdoch:

I'm just writing to thank you for the down jacket which you partially paid for as part of my Christmas present, Christmas '05. You bought me an Icebreaker, because I was soon returning to a London winter. On a hot January day I exchanged it and paid the difference for a down jacket, something that I had wanted for a long time, especially since the vest Janet had lent me had been stolen in a shitty Australian bar in London.

This jacket has been a warm comfort since I have owned it. I remember sitting in the heated office in London, when I arrived. It matched my black shoes, black jeans and black sweater. Just last week when I had a cold I thought about wearing it inside of my sleeping bag.

Over the last few years its comfort factor has been as appreciated as the warmth. You can't help but feel cushioned in it. It's as close as clothing gets to proverbial cotton wool. Do I extend the metaphor too far to say its protectiveness resembles a big brother - little brother relationship?

I remember thanking you when I received the Icebreaker and exclaiming that it must have been an expensive present. At \$179 it undoubtedly was. I know Rebecca thought it was too extravagant. In your defence, a quality present is one that keeps giving. It's been five long winters now. And as it keeps giving this winter, or any other, I shall feel justified in expressing my appreciation for your generosity, kindness and thoughtfulness.

Thanks for my down jacket, I love it.

Love,

Andrew

Sb

Tuesday the 8th of June, 2010

Dear Murdoch & Rebecca:

I've noticed that there have been some uncomfortable conversations between us, when we are left alone at the dinner table. Although our relationship has been uneasy for a number of years now, I am no longer prepared to accept awkwardness at times like these. I think both of us need to brainstorm some conversation starters to prevent further awkwardness in the future. I'm sick of asking about your kids, I'm not any more interested in them than their mother is, so this topic is out. Likewise asking me about my writing is out, because I probably don't enjoy discussing it with you. Perhaps I will cultivate a new and unexpected interest, to enhance dinner time conversation? Any ideas? This is a record of conversations I will prepare for impending dinners:

the 8th of July.....a compliment about you

While we're on it, Murdoch, a comment about what I'm wearing does not qualify as a conversation starter. What are you, the Sartorialist now? Next time I will probably reply 'Murdoch, I wish our relationship had frozen in 2005 . . . like your sense of style.' That will shut you up.

Your brother, apparently,

Andrew

Sb

Tuesday the 22nd of June, 2010

Dear Steve Bond, Manager:

I would like to preface this letter by saying that I have a degree in French, but that it might as well be in French pastries. I have tasted thousands, as my skinny-fat waist line attests.

I am writing to you concerning the almond croissant that I ate at Nosh on Saturday the 19th of June. It was unlike any other that has passed my lips. It was stale. Not a rock, but a couple of days old.

I was half way through it before I realised, sleepily savoring the taste of disappointment, so I did not return it. However I later decided to point it out to the boy on the counter. I told him that it tasted one or two days old, and that it had been the last *pain d'amande* on display at 9am. He told me that it had just arrived that morning, and that even if it was stale it wasn't his problem because the pastries are out of house. This wasn't the first time he'd totally ignored me, writing down the opposite when I told him I was dining in.

The arrogance, how deliciously French! However if you're going to go to the trouble of offering authentic French service, why not complement it with the delectable aroma and taste of fresh French pastry? For this, *je pardonne tout*.

Sincerely,

Drus

Sb

Tuesday the 13th of July, 2010

Dear Craig:

I used to hate going to see you, but not for the usual reason that people hate going to the dentist. Please find enclosed an article about my artistic practice. I know it's hard for you or my Dad to understand that what an artist does might be work. Maybe it's not very well paid, or paid at all, but it's something that people, I, have to do. I thought of a metaphor you might relate to, artists fight moral decay. We brush the teeth of society. I'm the fluoride in your water. I am the gold fillings . . . you get the idea.

I'm very lucky to come from a wealthy family, but I also work other shitty jobs to pay for what I do, and make other sacrifices. My brothers and sister have followed more conventional, financially rewarding paths. Murdoch is Dad jnr, James decided to be a doctor when he was 4, Janet colonised a far-off country. That leaves me to complete the set by following a creative vocation. People sometimes suggest I don't fit in, whereas the opposite is true.

I know Brant had a hard time working his way through film as well, but he seems to be doing well now. I think as long as people work hard and are passionate about what they're doing, they deserve to be encouraged, even if they're not following the trails their fathers might have blazed. As our fathers' sons we have the same drive and need for approval that is presumably at the root of yours and Dad's success. That said I know your gentle reproach (before I moved to France and you told me not to join a cult, and that Dad was worried about me) was well-intentioned, and your thoughts made me think about my decisions and their potential impact on others.

Yours Sincerely,

Andrew Dryden

ps Last year I was thinking about making a necklace out of tooth floss. It would have held a pendant, but be used for its original purpose too. You would have loved it.

A friend recently thought of this:



Sb

Friday the 27th of August, 2010

Dear Lynsay:

You're the second person to call me a modern aristocrat. It's true that my father, the King of the Straight-Forwardness, told me I would never starve. Which gives me one less excuse. However this is also the disadvantage of being in the modern aristocracy. The rest of you have excuses in abundance.

One of the great things about creativity is that it is free. And if the cost of precious metals is too great for you and the other jewelers, may I suggest you melt down the guillotine? The necklace you made for me out of the piano key is hanging from the candelabra next to me. And I treasure the wooden brooch you gave me.

If you meant that I am a modern aristocrat because I have a polish that only comes by bathing in Champagne, forgive me. I bow gracefully at such a compliment from so fair a maiden. And will not be challenging you to a duel, after all.

Sincerely,

Drus Dryden

Sb

Wednesday the 3rd of November, 2010

Dear Kate:

I couldn't come to your birthday picnic. Last time I saw you, you insulted me, and I don't want to give you any more opportunities. It might have been a joke to you, but I didn't find it very funny. It was rude, and self-exposing.

You know nothing about me. Nor does Sanjiv. It's true that some people from wealthy backgrounds are cunts, so are some poor people, so are some of the people in the middle.

What sort of socio-economic cunt are you, you Grey Lynn dwelling, Golf driving, Art curating cunt? It doesn't really matter because your main qualification is that you tear people down, without a second thought. Whereas I've put more thought into this letter than I'd like to.

Dislike from,

Drus Dryden

Sb

Monday the 13th of August, 2010

Dear Barb:

I am writing to invite you to become a Patroness to the Arts. Throughout the centuries, many of the great works of art would not have been realised without the generosity and vision of the great Patrons. And our youthful century is no different.

What do I look for in a Patroness? She needs to be a society lady have infinite style, grace and beauty. Of which your bottomless cup overfloweth.

W.I.I.F.Y? You will be the envy of your friends, whose ranks may suddenly increase. You can order breakfast-in-bed any time you want, including on Parisian time. You will receive regular updates on works-in-progress, like they're African orphans.

As a patroness you are not necessarily required to contribute any funding. You are, however, obliged to be a fount of *bon humour* and encouragement. In other words, keep doing what you're doing. And think about investing in a flamboyant new hat which screams 'Art Patroness.'

Sensitively,

Andrew 'Drus' Dryden

Sb

Monday the 13th of August, 2010

Dear Cathy:

I am writing to invite you to become a Patroness to the Arts. Throughout the centuries, many of the great works of art would not have been realised without the generosity and vision of the Great Patrons. And our youthful century is no different.

What do I look for in a Patroness? She needs to be a society lady of style, grace and beauty. Of which your bottomless cup overfloweth.

W.I.I.F.Y? You will be the envy of your friends, whose ranks may suddenly increase. You can order breakfast-in-bed any time you want, including on Parisian time. You will receive regular updates on works-in-progress, like they're African orphans.

As a patroness you are not required to contribute any money, I require something far more valuable at this nascent stage. You are obliged to be a fount of good taste, *bon humour* and encouragement. In other words, keep doing what you're doing. And think about acquiring a new hat, which worn at a jaunty angle, will scream 'Art Patroness.'

Sensitively,

Andrew 'Drus' Dryden

Sb

Monday the 13th of September, 2010

Dear Janet:

I am writing to tell you that the you have been recognised as the giver of the worst gift I have ever gotten. So little thought went into this (re?)gift, that I feel sure I will have to remind you of what it is. It was a series of coasters which read:

kick-off
half time
full time
injury time

which I received for my 21st birthday. They're quite heavy and I wish you'd just sent the postage money from England, instead.

I found them recently at the parents' house and brought them home. And they now sit proudly on my coffee table. A friend was sitting at the coffee table yesterday and I told him they were a gift from you. He said "wow, she must really know you well." He's a real sport, he used to play hockey for New Zealand. However he suffers from a debilitating disease which has wrecked his hips, is in constant pain and can't run anymore. I wanted to give him 'injury time', which is the only way your present might become worse. He used to use sport as an outlet for his anger, he needs a new one.

On a more positive note, I still have the Christmas boxers you gave me in 2000. Although the elastic is gone, and I seldom wear boxers anymore, they have endured.

Despite the inglorious nature of this award, I would like to thank you for thinking of me all those years ago.

xo,

Andrew

Sb

Monday the 5th of October, 2010

Dear Nick:

I'm just reading a history of New Zealand rowing, it's my intense preparation for the world champs here next month. I thought you might like to read this extract about your friend:

One day Coker fainted at training, Rodger said and it was put down to dehydration. There were other occasions when he fainted or had dizzy spells, including in Montreal. Sadly, he was diagnosed as having a brain tumour. He was a teacher in Christchurch and just 31 when he died in August 1981. No one had a bad word to say about Coker. He was regarded as an exceptional person and a hard, gutsy performer on the water.

'Trevor was a gentleman, straight, honest, no bullshit and ready to laugh,' Ross Collinge said. 'I think he became quite religious.' Collinge and Joyce set up a trust fund for him. With some donations, a lot of them from Britain, where he taught, there was enough to pay off his mortgage.

The book mentions Trevor's son taking his place in a crew reunion in 1996.

My own father is also mentioned, who is quoted as thinking daily about his disappointment at the Mexico Olympics. I've known about this since reading about it in an Olympic history book in primary school. My dad would come to school every four years to talk about his racing, and I remember him seeming downcast when I got home in 1992. I told him that we all really loved his talk, and he replied that "at least he could do one thing right." I talked to him about it for the first time yesterday, telling him that I always thought he was amazing and a great source of pride for me to have an Olympian father. I think what I love about him, and perhaps the New Zealand condition itself, is that he was so committed to the idea of being an Olympic champion that he couldn't see any other outcome. He was unconscious when they finished the race. He's been unwell this year, he's always been so strong (in my mind he's invincible), so that's something which is hard to come to terms with. It meant something for me to be able to talk to him about his race openly, yesterday.

I have his rowing scrapbook, which is meticulous up until Mexico, so I'm going to complete it. Including a series of hilarious letters from admiring 9 year-olds, every Olympic year.

The book's fantastic, so if you'd like me to send you a copy, it'd be my pleasure to send it to you. The rowers' money problems are often discussed in the book, and I have a feeling you had something to do with the donations to Trevor's family, obviously a very touching gesture. The only problem with the book is that the publisher has placed a Cambridge Blue Boat on the cover, something I'm sure you won't approve of either!

Hope you and your family are well. How's your son's writing going?

Yours,

Drus Dryden

hi school



I went to a private boarding school for high school from 1993 -1997.
Horrendously, three kids died at it, this year.

14th of March, 2009

Dear Tom:

In the photo on your Facebook page you're sitting naked at a table of empty beer cans. No you're not naked, you're wearing running shoes.

I went through a naked photo stage too, I think you're the only other person who knows about it. I had invited you and Allan to stay at my apartment above the restaurant. I was living alone and wasn't used to company. The pile of black and white photos were taken at the end of an unhappy, drunken night. One photo was of a teaspoon and "I have measured out my life in coffee spoons."



Whereas your photo is taken by someone else, who is standing at the doorway, my photo is a self-portrait. I've got long arms, when we went to school together I was technically an ape because my arms stretched below my knees. From memory there was a whisper of pubic hair, but you're artfully concealed.

The other thing you saw in my apartment was the number that a girl (Jane) had given me at Richard's 21st, the previous week. I had just put whatever was close to hand on the wall. The French call it *collage*. You told her I had her number on our wall. Which was about when our relationship went into decline. I'd known this girl since primary school. At the party she asked if I would kiss her in front of her ex-boyfriend. She was much more sensible at primary school.

About a month later her friend (Simone?) was giving Jane and I a lift home. I remarked that the girl's house was on the way to mine so she should drop her off first.

Jane: Do you think I would leave her alone with you ?

I wanted to ask to be let out there, I love a good moonlit walk, but sat out the awkward silence instead. I'm not very good with pithy in real life.

I threw up that night off a balcony. Do you remember that time you threw up from a balcony, down the side of the house you were house sitting? Do you remember the Labradors clawing at the door to eat your vom in the morning?

I invited Jane to my 21st the next week, anyway. I was renting a crowd. She didn't come. You ended up doing the speech, because Christophe has a fear of public speaking and contorted a convoluted excuse for not being able to make it. Your speech was:

Drus is original, yup he's original. Umm he's original. He's really original.

Thank you. So was your speech. I've never heard another one like it.

Monday the 29th of May, 2009

Dear Head Mistress:

My name is Andrew Dryden. My family has numerous connections to Diocesan. My sister, cousin and aunts all attended, and my niece is pre-enrolled for 2017. I also coached the Diocesan rowing squad in 2007. And I believe if you consult the records, you will find I was the king of the 1996 Diocesan School Ball . . .

What I love about being an artist is that you can dream up anything you want, and if you ask politely it might just happen.

In brief, I am interested in staging the ultimate cross country. It's no secret that most of the girls don't like running or exercise generally. However I think that there is the potential to re-brand the cross country experience, and promote a more positive attitude towards participation. In short The Social Cross Country will combine the cross country with a school social. Djs will be positioned around the course and will play the finest running music. In putting together this presentation, I was struck by how incredibly lucky I am to know such a group of stunningly beautiful and effortlessly charming women, who have agreed to be the Djs. Boys will be invited, I envisage a fearless one being released like the rabbit at a greyhound track.

If you are interested, I would be happy to come and introduce myself and discuss my ideas further.

Sincerely,

Drus Dryden

Sunday the 23rd of May, 2010

Dear Mr. Fenner:

My name is Drus Dryden. I am a writer and conceptual artist. I was in Averill, from 1993 to 1997. In my last year I was a house sacristan, a member of scholar's common room and in the First VIII. Richard Stead was my house master and Grant McKibbin, English.

Like many old boys I was very saddened to hear about the recent tragedies at the school. Two pupils died in the course of my time at school, and it was heart-wrenching both times. I hate to think what it is like to have three pass in such a brief period. My thoughts are with the whole school.

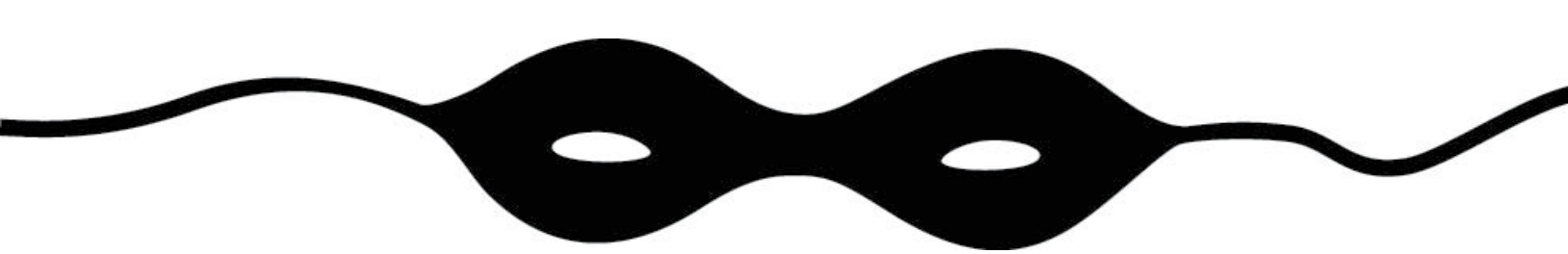
I was thinking about if there was anything I could do for the school. A lot of my work deals with emotionally sensitive subjects. I thought back to a proposal I made last year. It hypothesises the ultimate school cross country. It's no secret that many of the competitors don't like running, or exercise generally. However I think that there is the potential to makeover the cross country experience to make it more enjoyable, and promote a more positive attitude towards participation.

The idea behind the social cross country would be to contribute a special event to a community going through a trying time. I know that the whimsy of this event is at odds with the sombre mood at the school now, but it is planned for spring time.

If you are interested, I would be happy to come and discuss my idea further. Once again, my condolences to the friends, parents and teachers who have been affected by the recent tragedies.

Sincerely,

Drus Dryden



Monday the 5th of October, 2009

Dear Andrew,

I used to be your bagpiping pupil, when I was at King's in 1996 - 1997.

Perhaps you remember how we re-enacted the Culloden on the King's rugby field? A small, but committed force marching bravely out to face a vastly superior one. . . sigh.

Anyway I thought I'd just tell you about a strange chain-of-events that happened about a month ago. I was riding my bike through the Auckland Domain at about midnight. I heard a lone bagpiper sounding through the delicate mist. Always curious, a little tipsy, and maybe a little nostalgic, I thought I'd go say hello.

So I walked up the hill in the middle of the Domain, and waited for the bagpiper to notice me. When he did, he apologized for scaring me. I assured him it takes more than a lusty set of bagpipes to do that! We got talking and it turned out he was one of your old pupils, too. His name's Gavin and he's in the police band, if that rings any bells. Or shall I say, sounds any drones?

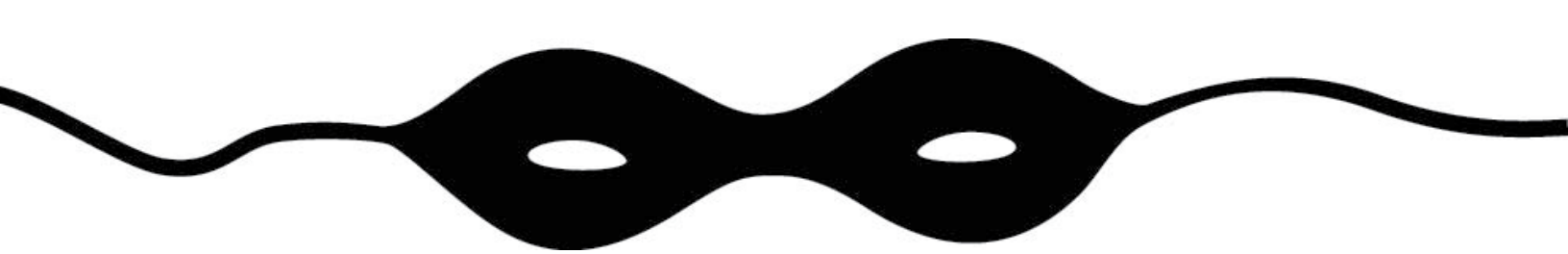
Of course I swore to him that I was going to start playing the bagpipes again . . . but then I sobered up. I wasn't wearing a kilt by the time that happened, sad to say.

Still, thanks for teaching me the bagpipes, and for trusting me with the kilt that time. I'm sure you must have positively influenced an army of young Scotsmen by now.

I hope this letter finds you well.

Sincerely,

Andrew / Drus Dryden



Monday the 5th of October, 2009

Dear Stephen Galvin:

I used to be your bass guitar pupil, in 1995.

I don't know how you would remember me, other than my appalling bass solo performance at one of your concert evenings. Whoever said they were looking forward to the next John Patatucci when you announced me should have got his money back.

I'm doing a masters degree at the moment, and part of it is about the emotionality of music. I must have remembered our music lessons together, I remember you asking me if I agreed that sometimes it was like a guitar could talk, and decided to google you.

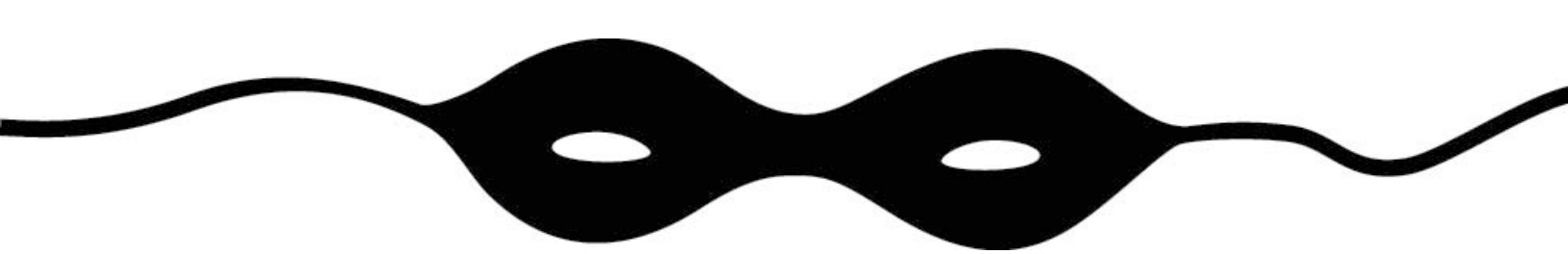
Congratulations on your guitar marathon! That's quite the guitar solo.

You'll be sad to learn that someone stole my bass in 1996, and that was the end of my bass career. If I still had it, I'd be giving you a call. You may be interested to learn that I did play the bagpipes for a year or so in my Scottish period, in 1997. I still dance a jig, when the occasion calls for it.

Well, I hope this letter finds you well. I really enjoyed learning from you as an impressionable teenager, I'm sure you're having the same positive influence on your current pupils too.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew / Drus Dryden



Tuesday the 6th of October, 2009

Dear Tim:

I was thinking a lot about school at the start of this year . . . when I was trying to become the King's College artist-in-residence. I think I told you about my idea for the Cross Country/Social. It was really weird to think of school. It was only when I started writing about it, that I realised how angry I was about it. How it all seems so brutal in retrospect.

I just wanted to apologize on behalf of the dorm for the shit you went through in our last year. I don't know what is wrong with that school, or the families the kids come from, but I think it is totally fucked to think that when sixteen kids get put together, they end up turning on each other. Normally when they are at their weakest.

If it's any consolation, I know exactly how you must have felt because something similar happened to me in sixth form, except you got it even worse. I wish I'd known how to do something to stop it, or I dunno, one of our teachers had done something, or just that it hadn't happened at all. I was vaguely thinking about becoming a teacher and stopping shit like this would have been one of the reasons.

I mean one knows now that someone like James Anderson or Steve Jamieson are just born cunts, but the way he and plenty of others acted was just un-fucking-believable. I remember Woody's end of year speech, who was supposedly a nice guy, he just slated everyone and that was just totally normal, totally de-sensitized behaviour. After his speech he asked me why no one had laughed that much.

I sometimes wonder if I've become too sensitive, but fuck that. I went to a school in England for six months after King's, and the other kids were wondering what my fucking problem was. As the artist-in-residence I was going to re-write the school motto: Stab or get stabbed.

When I went out to take photos for the thing I'll send you in November, one thing I noticed is that everyone looks about twelve years old. There was a guy who was obviously a Rugger, riding a bike back to his boarding house. It looked so ridiculous because he was staunching on his bike, but his thick neck had on it the face of a twelve year-old. This is the only way I can rationalise bullying: that all of us were just children, and no one had enough empathy to know how cruel they were.

If I've got it all wrong, just ignore this. Otherwise I'm sure your life has moved on far away from school. I hope you never even think of it, or just remember good times. Like when that guy asked you if you wanted any sammies on the beach at Pauanui. Lol. Whatever the case, this letter is written with the best of intentions.

From,

Drus

Sb

Friday the 7th of May, 2010

Dear Mrs. & Mr. Coe:

I thought I must have already written this letter, but not in 1996, like the school code of manners would have prescribed. The code used to hang in my father's office. The only rule I remember from it, to remove one's rugby headgear when speaking to adults. I have removed my figurative headgear in order to type this. I thought I had written this letter last year, but as I ran past your house on my workout last week, I realised I must have only thought about it. I probably didn't write it because I was worried at how it might be perceived; I've distanced myself from my old school chums because they're generally too conservative in their outlook.

I am writing to apologize for my appalling behaviour in your beautiful home at Jeremy's pre-ball in 1996. I was going to explain myself by saying that I was daunted by the loveliness of Claire, my date. I was under the misapprehension that if I could drink myself from Frog into her Prince.

There may, however, be another explanation. There is a strain of excitability in my blood. When my father was mugged in Rio de Janeiro at knife point, he initially relinquished his man bag. Then the hunted became the hunter, he ran, enraged, after his assailant. My rowing coach once lamented my wedding night, such was my headlong rush, astern. Rowing boats are quite suggestively-shaped, come to think of it. I am sometimes so eager to devour experience, Labrador-like, that I forget that there might be repercussions to drinking ten or so beers in an hour.

The last time I threw up from alcohol, many years ago now, it was off a balcony at my parent's house. Outrageous fortune had it that a pipe was going to be installed exactly where I had vomited. I heard my embarrassed father telling the plumber that it must have been the dog. At least Quizzie always had the good manners to eat hers.

The morning after the ball, I waited until the florist opened, then went to Meadowbank to apologise to Claire. Her stone-faced father opened the door, to me, an emotional pygmy, brandishing a bouquet.

In my fertile imagination I can see myself going to King's and giving a General Studies lesson in ball etiquette. Seriously, someone who isn't your parent, or Harold the drug education giraffe, should tell you these things, instead of letting you teach yourself. I was ashamed when my oldest brother told me, too late, that if I couldn't look after my date, than I shouldn't have been allowed to take one. Come to think of it, my other brother had told me not to go drunk to ballroom dancing class once, so I didn't. He said it was fine to go in pyjamas. This was a year before the ball and I could have used a refresher course. Ball season is approaching and there must be another me, poised to disgrace himself, vomiting down the length of a bendy-bus.

Well I hope that *ça va comme Jerry, bof*, and you're well too. My sincere apologies for acting like an ass. Please accept this very belated, but sincere apology.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew (Drus) Dryden



Uma,
our libidinous Labrador

Sb

Friday the 7th of April, 2010

Dear House Master of Averill:

I am writing to you to report an incidence of bullying.

In early 1994 I was called out of bed and taken to a room filled with fifth years. I was accused of stealing Andrew Turtill's, a member of the 1st XV with slicked back hair, *Ralph Lauren Polo* eau de cologne. I was asked to admit to this theft, repeatedly, in the first study on the right as you go into the third year wing. When I didn't admit, the ringleader and house sacristan, Hadleigh Averill asked me to hold out my hand. He opened a bottle of lighter and poured it onto my hands. Like it was eau de cologne. This scene was reminiscent of the torture scene in *Reservoir Dogs*, which was released that year. As he struck a match I burst into tears. They started laughing and let me go.

At this time, the house had a culture of bullying and silence which I hope has long since passed. To his credit, and our skepticism, Ian Walker, the House master had brought a psychologist into the house to talk through some of our conflicts. This was called 'peer resolution.' Some of the bullying had subsided by the time I was a fifth year, in that year group the main people we bullied were each other. I was quite used to the bullying, from my brother who was two years ahead of me in Averill. And that was probably one of the reasons I didn't report the incident with the lighter fluid at the time.

I looked up to Hadleigh, as a fellow creative type, and someone who was about a foot taller than me. I was very surprised when my ad agency boss in Amsterdam asked me if I knew him, 12 years later. I was even more surprised when two weeks later, Hadleigh emailed, asking to sublet my flat. Hadleigh was shorter and less handsome than I remembered him. When I emailed him about the incident with the lighter fluid, he said he hadn't done it to me, but to David Ritchie who bore a passing resemblance to me. He was tall (for a fourteen year old) and thin too.

I sublet the one room apartment to Hadleigh. An altercation followed a couple of weeks later, with our belligerent Dutch landlords, because they refused to honour their verbal agreement to let us sublet. I also refused to honour their warnings not to sublet. Again, it was in a tiny room. At one point Hadleigh tried to stand up for me, or at least defuse the situation. But it ended with our landlords verbally abusing and physically intimidating me and keeping \$3000 in bond. Hadleigh and his girlfriend were thrown out onto the street. Moral of the story, don't get stuck in small rooms with Hadleigh?

I was thinking of asking you to email Hadleigh, using the same language that you would use to a current Averill fifth year. But I hope you can't even imagine that situation happening nowadays in Averill. And I saw Hadleigh again last year, and this year, and I'm not sure that will achieve what I'm after. He'll probably always be a bit of an arrogant cunt, even if you only catch glimpses of it, these days.

Maybe I just want to be able to tell someone. If you'd like me to rewrite this letter for you to read out at callover, please let me know.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew (Drus) Dryden

ps I'm renting out the spare room in my Auckland apartment at the moment. Casually in conversation yesterday I mentioned that I'd gone to boarding school. She asked which one, and when I told her she asked me if I was in Averill?

Her brother had gone to Averill too, but left early due to bullying. Apparently he has never quite got his life together since. I didn't want to ask what his name was, in situations like this I always wait for people to volunteer more information, like she did when she said that her upcoming operation was for a hernia, it's not keyhole surgery apparently, there will be a scar. I'm not sure if I want her to move in, she seemed a little intense.

Anyway, her brother is now 34, which means he was probably in Hadleigh's dorm. There was a guy in that year group who was into military paraphernalia (always a good sign), his nickname was 'Voose.' One of the guys who was bullying him woke up one night with him standing over him holding a bayonet. I wonder if it's the same guy.

When she said her brother had been bullied, I told her that it was probably by my brothers. I meant it to sound comiseratory and understanding, but it might have sounded like I was trying to distance myself from the guy getting bullied. Sadly, that was the Averill way.

Sb

Friday the 27th of August, 2010

Dear Duncan Gardner:

You probably don't remember the time you punched me hard in the middle of my spinal column when I was a first year, and you were a fifth year. Well, I do. I'm writing to you because I'm looking for former High School bullies to participate in a performance art piece, and you would be perfect for it.

Let me tell you about how I envisage the performance playing out. You kneel on the floor with your arms tied behind your back in an empty school gymnasium. Then I urinate into your open mouth. I then need to defecate (which means this would probably need to take place in the morning), and take the faeces and push them into your nostrils. Finally I will masturbate into your left ear. This makes it seem like there's a sexual element to this performance, but there isn't. It's just that there is a certain artistic pleasure in 'threes.' I don't want to spit on you, because I think spitting is quite a disgusting habit. And I don't want to force myself to vomit, so soon after defecating; I just don't think it'd be very good for my digestive system. Perhaps it's just that the link between high school and masturbation is so strong? The performance would conclude once I have achieved climax. I normally take about five minutes to do this, but it may take longer given the non-sexual nature of the performance. You'll then be free to leave.

All up I can't see it taking more than an hour of your time. I would be more than happy to reimburse your travelling expenses. Unfortunately you will need to arrange your own transport from the site because I don't want faeces smeared inside my car. The performance will be recorded, and you will receive a signed copy of this limited edition recording.

If you're interested please contact me on the below number.

Sincerely,

Andrew Dryden
276.0689

Sb

Friday the 16th of November, 2010

hi Grant, how are you?

two things.

I note there is a new 'nerdcore' Shakespearian song, this time about the Dane, or rather Ms. Dane:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QB9D34HVO2g>
which I thought you might appreciate.

the other thing, is that I've designed a badge for a King's pupil (or three) that aren't prefects. the badge reads 'perfect.' I guess it's been an incredibly tough year, and the school has needed more leaders than there are badges to go around. I was wondering how you'd feel about nominating someone/s in the student body, or indeed the faculty, who has acted with extreme sensitivity under very trying circumstances, to whom the badge could be awarded to? some pics of it attached.

the badge recognises a brand of faulted perfection, that is seldom commended next to its more orthodox variety. am I right in thinking it's what the Japanese call Wabi-sabi?
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wabi-sabi>

hope the English exam went well for this year's McCullagh, Middleton, and me. or if it hasn't been yet, that they split an infinitive.

Yours sincerely,

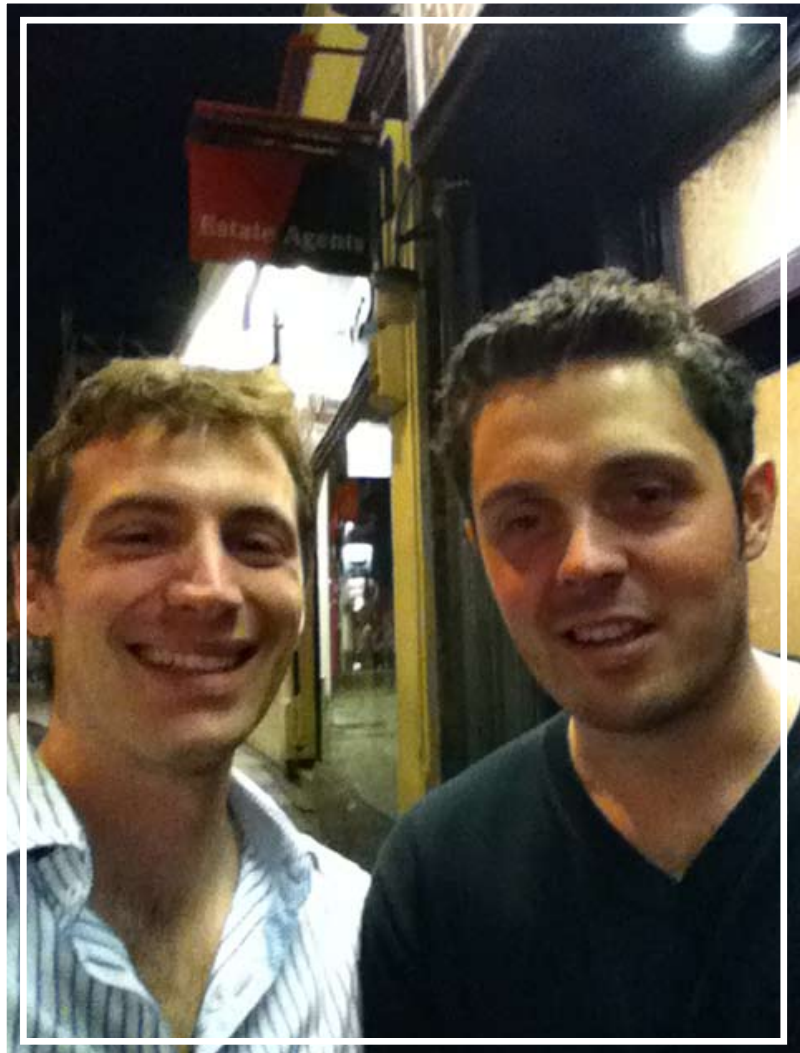
Drus Dryden



england

I was sure everything would be amazing if I went to England after I left high school. I was very young, seventeen, and the Headmaster described me as “young enough in myself to benefit from another year at school.” I accepted a rowing scholarship at Shiplake College, near the spiritual home of rowing, Henley-on-Thames.

Mark was my rowing coach, Tim was my best friend. Vicki is my aunt, who I would stay with on holidays in London. I worked for Julian (JMB), a rowing coach at another school, after I left school.



March 14, 2009

Dear Vicki,

Dad recently asked me to get the Barclay's letter that arrives every month at your home, 34 Raymond Avenue, South Woodford, London E18 2HG, cancelled.

I know the letters offend your admirable sense of order, but I thought perhaps you could see it as something else.

The letter parallels the periodic disturbance I was in your life in 1998. Sure as I arrived every time term broke, a letter now arrives every month.

I know I wasn't the greatest nephew/house guest, leaving wet towels on the floor, eating anything that used to move and trying to get out of Shiplake. I'm sorry. I felt especially bad when I spent all of Jim's Jersey pound coins.

I also remember building your garden path, Nancy -delightful as ever- coming over to lunch, you telling me about the 18 stone relative, our shopping trip to Marks&Sparks to buy the only suit I've ever owned (it's a bit short in the leg now), when you first dropped me at Shiplake, lunch at the Red Lion in Henley, asking if it was daylight yet when you picked me up at midday from Heathrow, your instruction in haircut etiquette, going to the driving range as a family, your genuine concern when I called you to tell you about the concussion and the Arnica you sent me soon after.

I've almost forgiven you for asking me if the girls I was meeting up with were blind, and for Jim asking why I put a cushion over my crotch when he sat down next to me.

Perhaps every time a letter arrives, it could remind you of a happy memory, or just that across the other side of the world there is someone who thinks fondly of you both, wishes you well and is grateful for your kindness.

If you want to collaborate in this art project, I will send you an art plaque to place next to it. You know, the little card saying who the artist is, and the date and the name of work. I think an appropriate site could be on the windowsill in the office.

If so I'll cancel it for good by this time next year, or this summer if I'm in London.

No worries if you'd prefer not to participate, and I'll try to cancel it now.

Your Nephew,

Andrew

March 31, 2009

Hi Mark:

I'd heard that Teddies were sending a crew out to New Zealand for the NZ national schools regatta this week, so thought I'd see if you were here. Turns out the Teddies aren't coming anymore, but thought I'd send you a friendly email nonetheless.

I hope you remember me, I was in the '98 Shiplake VIII. My rowing career took a bit of dive after school after I tried to make an NZ middleweight (-75kg) crew that was going to that Taiwan regatta. I lost too much weight (70kg . . . my scales were heavy) and just ended up in bed for a couple of weeks.

I was coaching at a local girls school last year which was going well until one of the girls punched me because she didn't want to race... what is it with members of my own crews punching me? ... anyway I told her to "take out her aggression on the water." On that note, sorry if I was a bit of a handful. It was only because I wanted to go fast, and wasn't mature enough to know there might be better ways to go about it. It's taken me quite a while to see that you can make stuff happen by being bullish, pissed off and determined.

I also ended up coaching a blind guy in a 2x for a session last year in Sydney, it was only when they got off the water that I found out that his partner was intellectually handicapped. Although, she was a world champion handicapped rower. Really summed up rowing for me!

I've also done a bit of teaching in France. I'm thinking about becoming a teacher, I'm doing a Masters at the moment. I was going to write a book about rowing (my father's Olympic crew & group dynamics) for it, but am writing a book about something else instead.

Steve Whittington is still in Melbourne. I think he got over rowing and teaching, and is doing something else now. He was head of rowing at an amazing school in Melbourne, so that surprised me. This was his last Facebook update:

Steve Whittington enjoyed watching the Head of the River rowing races in a mildly dispassionate frame of mind. Well done to Melbourne Grammar et al.

I'm still in touch with Tim Page. He was in this:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=61AvZ_D-Yh0

Also I saw this great sporting documentary last week, check it out if you're interested:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ph2Y-epihlk>

It's not as cheesy as the trailer, or Page's movie.

Well, hope you're good. You still have anything to do with rowing?

sincerely,

Drus

Sb

3rd of February, 2010

Dear whoever lives in Room 15, the top floor, Burr House:

I used to live in your room in 1998. I was the rowing scholarship student, from New Zealand. I'm a writer now, I occasionally write letters to people when I'm not writing anything else.

If the Burr House photo from 1998 is up, you can pick me out pretty easily. I didn't get a copy, but from memory I'm in the second to bottom row, in the middle, looking down. I was pretty fucking unhappy at the time, but that's not the reason for it. I glanced down at the house tutor's dog, which you probably can't see.

One funny memory I have of your room. I'd stayed at school one weekend when everyone else had gone home. I went drinking in Henley with one of the Australian tutors, he was a PE teacher but he didn't look like it. We were totally crashing and burning, trying to pick up girls. I think one of them had just had her tonsils out, or some sort of throat disease anyway. Anyway got home, super drunk and climbed up on the bunk and went to sleep. It was about March or something, so I was really surprised when I was really sweaty when I woke up. It took a while before I realised that I'd pissed myself, or 'fire-trucked' in the parlance of our times. It's a long way down from that bunk sometimes. Anyway I was wondering what to do next. Naturally I dragged my piss-soaked mattress down to the third formers dormitory and swapped it with whoever I thought was most likely to be a bed-wetter.

Unfortunately the next problem I had at Shiplake wasn't so easily solved. I got into a fight with the guy I rowed behind in the First VIII, Tom. I once described him as 'stupidly big', he was fucking enormous. It was just a play fight but things got totally out of hand and Tom punched me in the side of the head. Which would have been fine if I didn't have a headache for about two years afterwards. I had to lie in your bed, unable to sleep, unable to do much really. I preferred lying in piss. I'd hope that, well I probably started praying actually, that I'd just wake up the next day and the headache would be gone, that I wouldn't be able to feel the bruise of each of his big, dumb knuckles in a line across my skull. That was what had happened the fistful of other times I'd been punched. But not this time. I got a brain scan, but nothing showed up. I just kept worrying about it until basically it ruined my life. I'm not sure it was the punch, or me just being terrified that did it. When I write it out like this it doesn't seem like a big deal, but I was totally crushed. I guess you hear about people talking about how 18 year-olds feel bullet proof? Well, it's a great feeling and I hope you have it for a while to come. I just felt totally nauseous, all the time, and there was just nothing I could do about it. Partly because of the concussion, but mostly because I had this horrible feeling like my life had changed and there was no way of unfucking it. And I still had the taste of being bulletproof / unfuckable in my mouth. A doctor said to me:

I wish I had a magic wand to make it all right

I guess he says that all the time, but that was probably the most consoling thing anyone said to me at the time.

I was thinking yesterday about how I don't really believe in bad things happening. I always try and think of how even the shittiest thing is good. To learn how to deal with the concussion is the hardest

thing I've ever had to do. I'm 29 and that must seem old to you, but I think you never really figure things out as much as you thought you would when you were older. But hopefully learning to deal with it will help me be able to accept anything else that happens to me. I'm pretty sure that won't involve me fighting a 6'8" 18-stone gorilla, although I'm sure I've got a few more adventures in me yet.

One thing that a teacher said about me a couple of months after Shiplake, after I'd just come back to England from being a winemaker in France, was that if he had a list of boys names and he had to say which one had got into a 'muddle', he'd pick out me. Stuff's going to happen, and the bad stuff is just as important as the good stuff, it's all life. As I was leaving New Zealand to come to England, and Shiplake, the thing I wished for was that . . . I've never told anyone this, but it's there in my very hopeful 1998 diary . . . I would become an Eccentric. Unfortunately I stopped writing in the diary after the concussion, I didn't feel like it any more, like 'this wasn't meant to be part of the story.' Maybe the consolation is that all the tough stuff you go through forms your character, eccentric or otherwise. That becoming someone is a story worth writing, reading and living.

I had to do a sermon at chapel about a month before the concussion. I wish I'd had some of this stuff to say then. Instead I used to fantasise about taking off my suit and doing a haka.

I hope you're good. Not long to go before you get out of school, if you're in upper sixth. Good luck with everything, and enjoy your last terms of school, it's a fun one. If I can find a ten quid note I'll put it in the envelope and you can buy a round at the JCR on me.

Sincerely,

Drus Dryden
Burr '98

ps

One other story that cracks me up from Burr. There was a guy called Alex Caridia in my year. Every time he jerked off in fifth form he used to wipe it on the curtain next to his bed, and go to sleep. Anyway it was the end of the school year and he walked into his room and the Matron was there, cleaning the curtain. "What *IS* this, Alex? It's impossible to get off."

Sb

Tuesday the 16th of March, 2010

Dear JMB,

Sorry to hear the disease is deteriorating, or what I call . . . sorry can't think of anything witty to say. My dad was in the hospital for an operation this week, just a preventative thing but it's still pretty humbling seeing someone, whose always been so strong, in any way vulnerable. I remember when I first worked for you on exam results, and being very worried about my 18 year old health, following the concussion I got at Shiplake. I actually remember you asking me if I'd known anyone who was as worried about their health as John, and I'm not sure if that was a prod to get me to talk about it. I hope he's doing well now. You're being typically stoic and British about your health, and once again a fine example to all of us.

I was actually thinking about it the other day and Monkton Combe Computing is my favourite employment experience, because everyone, you, Alex, Portia, Graeme and John were so nice, and everything seemed to function so co-operatively. One reason I was hesitant about coming to coach rowing at Monkton in 2005 was that I was very selfishly driven, God knows why, towards getting my advertising career moving. I knew that if I came to Monkton there was absolutely no way in hell that I could give 50% towards rowing coaching, and spend the rest of my time trying to get out of it, with a view to how generous and supportive you'd been to me on so many occasions over the years. That I would have to give everything to it, like with anything I could expect to be successful.

I wasn't really able to be committed to anything at that time. 'Other than Bedlam', I can hear you say. Not advertising because they don't pay you, and treat you like dirt And not anything else because I was in such a 'muddle' trying to get into advertising. I should have realised the problem was that the people I'd committed to weren't repaying that commitment. That I should be applying myself with worthwhile people that could. That I wouldn't have to be so selfish, around people like, well, Monkton people. I would have been about thousand times happier, saner and more fulfilled guiding the rowers rapidly backwards.

I want to tell you that you've had a big impact on my, and probably a lot of other people's lives. Your example to me for how to live appropriately sanely, with courage, quiet strength, patience and dedication is something I try to live up to. You teach by example.

If you decide to come to the World Rowing Champs I'll be able to take the week off and help you out in any way I can. We have some family near the lake, so to save you booking a hotel we could probably stay with them. Likewise Murdoch has been part of the organising committee and will be able to get you tickets, so don't worry about that. It would be great to see you, and watch Alex compete. Compete? Win. The NZ 4- has disbanded now, you see. But if you think it'll be more exhausting than enjoyable for you, don't feel pressured to do it. Not that I recommend my former lifestyle of indecision, but maybe you can book the plane tickets and decide closer to the time?

I'm so sorry you're sick. Perhaps there is another way you can refer to the 'disease' than 'deteriorating.' Say that it's going backwards, like a novice crew at a very sedate rating, against the stiff current and headwind of your resolve.

Send an icy wave crashing over the bow for me.

much love,

Drus

Sb

Friday the 30th of April, 2010

Dear Peter O.:

I was thinking about this letter I wanted to write, but I didn't know quite who to send it to. It's a letter to Britain . . . I was wondering if perhaps you'd tape it up to a lamp-post somewhere? That way some random selection of citizens might read it. Or not, that's fine too. It's written on behalf of me as a 18 year-old (totally hot) school boy.

From,

Drus

Sb

Friday the 30th of April, 2010

Dear Great Britain:

Last night I was watching *Love Actually* and the opening and closing scenes are about how much love one sees at Heathrow. When I first arrived at Heathrow, when I was 17 and preparing to go to a school out of Reading, my aunt was picking me up. She'd driven across town in her Mercedes and was running predictably late. I had the sort of thrilling jet lag one has when one is youthful and arriving. I got a pound coin, the thrill and caution of new currency, and called my harrassed-sounding aunt. She arrived half an hour later. As we drove back to North London, I asked her if it was full daylight. It was about 11am. The feeling of my aunt's house is bircher muesli, crisp cotton sheets and an LED alarm clock showing 5:12am. After a couple of days in London, I went to the London Dungeons and bought my first suit at M&S and walked a bit lost around Oxford Street, my aunt drove me to the school. I asked if I could take a nervous piss at a pub on the way there, but she wouldn't let me. When we got to the school we were met by a teacher and his dog, the dog was a golden Labrador like the one I'd left at home. Except this one was a puppy. My aunt had asked me who I'd miss the most and I told her the dog. I was a puppy too.

Thirteen months later I was back at Heathrow again, flying home. I remember driving with my aunt again a couple of days before. She asked me if I was happy to be going back, she was happy I was going back. I asked her 'What do you think?' I was surprised when she took that as meaning that I wanted to stay.

England had been a tremendous disappointment to me: I was so young, I thought I'd be celebrated, treasured. Instead I got punched in the head . . . they broke my heart. My brother, who must be an expert, says boy bullies are better because they beat you up and that's the end of it, girls torture each other forever. That punch hurt for a long time.

As I walked through the gates at Heathrow I pulled the fingers back at England, for what felt like a betrayal. I felt like I'd been promised something, and now know I was young enough to believe it. All those people I met: Tim, Southers, JMB, Lord Monkton, Alex, Louis, Jay, Caridia, Tom, Alex, John, Cathy, Mel, Michael, Gazza the tour bus driver. All those things I did, row at Henley - I rememeber telling myself I'd regret it if I didn't, I swallowed a lot of my pride to get back into the boat and then it was a bit of an anti-climax when we lost in the first round of the Princess Elizabeth, and that was the end of it. There are some very depressing photos of me with my parents, long lank hair, trying to smile. I wish I'd just switched boats to row with my friends. I also made wine in France, got bladdered in London, learnt to speak French properly, make some true friends, learnt a lot. In my memory I felt so much older, from 17 - 18. And at the time so humbled by the concussion. It was the realisation that when you think you know something, and you didn't have to suffer to get it, you don't know anything.

Anyway I just wanted to apologize for giving you the fingers. I was young, I was angry, I felt like my heart had been ripped out. Isn't the fingers a medieval gesture to show your bow shooting fingers hadn't been cut off? I will use those fingers to play you out on the piano, if there's a next time. That's

a promise.

Love from your old friend,

Drus Dryden

ps I was leaving winter and symbolically wanted to show my contempt for England by wearing a summer outfit on the plane home. It was some Capri pants, when they were still cool, I forgot that it is actually freezing on planes. There is a photo of me walking through customs in New Zealand with a cold because they didn't have any blankets on Air New Zealand. I look strong but scared, my mother asked if I had dyed my hair because it was so dark. A family friend said that I looked like a 'Dryden' now, I looked strong. I felt weakened from being so worried, but in that way that you think you are strong enough to worry forever. In a strange way worrying like that is really exciting. If I can find the photo I'll put it here.

bris- tophe

Christophe and Bridget are a married couple. I've known Christophe since high school, but we only became friends at University. I was having a shitty, lonely year, and I still remember when Christophe came into my room the afternoon of the University Ball. Our lives followed quite similar paths, same high school, university classes, we both rowed, and finally we were both in London at the same time.



Monday the 16th of March, 2009

Dear customer services representative, Macpac:

I have just rediscovered my Kestrel Macpac, it used to be my school bag in sixth and seventh form, 1996-1997. When I bought it I loved it so much that I didn't want to name it myself, for fear of messing it up, so I got my mum to name it. She wrote my name on it maybe seven or eight times. I was so embarrassed that I drew squares over most of the names. Now my backpack has a lots of squares on it, but that made it identifiable in a square way.

I took it to Europe with me in 1998. (I am procrastinating writing this, and just went to cut my toenails and check the letter box.) That year in Europe I got beaten up and as a result developed post-concussion syndrome, post-traumatic stress and obsessive-compulsive disorder. The obsessive-compulsive disorder was characterised by a fear that objects had been contaminated by harmful chemicals.

By the end of 1999, when I was living in Christchurch, I decided that my bag was contaminated by the shoes that I used to wear as a petrol station attendant. So when I brought the bag back to Auckland I left it in the family bag cupboard and forgot about it. I think I was trying to sever every link I had to the past, I abandoned lots of my possessions. I think I was trying to abandon myself. This might work in the short term, but eventually you realise that you need a past. Without it you're just rootless, and it's hard to know where you're going if you don't know where you've been. It even went as far as stopping sleeping in my childhood bedroom, because it's where I used to sleep when I pumped gas and I thought that would make it contaminated with petrol. It's hard to explain how real a phobia feels if you don't know what it's like to be afraid of something that looms so large in your imagination.

Anyway about a month ago I found the Kestrel. It's bright cobalt blue, still, and I was shocked by how new it looks. I've started using it again, but my mother wants me to give it back to her. She really loves it, and I reminded her that it actually belongs to me. She then told me that she probably paid for it. In fact I saved up for it because she thought \$119 was too expensive for a backpack.

No one regrets buying quality. It has lasted long enough for me to work through a massive fuck out in my life, thanks.

Proud Macpac owner,

Andrew Dryden

i'm on this big confessional/ apology thing at the moment

December 20, 2007

Dear Bristophe:

I don't know what step that is in the AA process, but it's up there

I'm guessing Madeleine has told all so i thought i would apologize. for what it's worth.

i'm sorry for looking at Mike's porn DVD on his computer at your guys apt. when i staying there. obviously it's pretty gross and disrespectful and would have merited you guys getting kicked out if he ever found out about it, but i doubt he ever did because i don't know if you can tell if someone's been watching DVDs they shouldn't, on your computer.

anyway i'm truly sorry and i believe male idiot should be my email address.

ps: if you want a Christmas card Christophe what's your address and i'll try not to look at porn just before i send it.

pps: sorry if this email is pretty gross for you guys. try and see some lol in it.

ppps: sorry i'm such a cunt, trying to be better these days.

pppps: hope you're good. i'm sure u have somewhere to stay while ur in Akl Bridget, but if you wanted to borrow my apt. i'm in South Africa, you can also borrow my car if you don't crash it. email me if you want either and i'll get my flatmate to coordinate.

he should be fine with you watching porn.

Dear Christophe

If you got my last communication, I am still angry about 2006. This is ridiculous. Sucking it up hasn't worked so I'm spuing it out.

Basically I feel like you've let me down.

I feel like you knew how much a bitch Madeleine was but you just didn't really care and just kept hanging out with her. Sorry but stuff like her spontaneously deciding to call me at midnight to tell me she's hanging out with my only other friends in London really got to me.

In a way I envy your ability to not give a shit about anything, but then I think about the times when you just seemed to go out of your way to be a cunt during that time. Like before your stag do or that time when I stayed at your place in Dulwich where you just seemed to enjoy bringing Madeleine up. I dunno, it just doesn't seem the friendly thing to do.

There are a lot of examples of me being a selfish, shitty friend, e.g.: stealing CDs or emailing out your diary of when you were in bad a place in London, so I guess I'm just as much of a let down to you. I'm sure you don't really care, because you're immune to caring, but one thing I'd like to explain is that you asked me to be your best man, 1. I get too embarrassed (Toddy style) by people being nice to me that I auto deflect it and 2. I didn't think you were actually about to ask Bridget to become Bristophe.

If it's any consolation I went to Timaru when I thought I would probably try and kill Madelame if I had to spend a day around her to try and be a better friend to you.

Jesus, it all seemed a bit more simple in Cauty over a few DBs.

Well I had this great last line, so I might as well throw it in there:

If I sound like a pussy it's because I feel like I've been fucked.

I feel betterer.

Drus

Sb

Friday the 7th of May, 2010

Dear Bristophe:

I've been thinking a lot about whether or not I want to invite you to my birthday. I still feel betrayed by you.

I was thinking about how I forced myself to go to your wedding, despite the fact that I couldn't think of anything worse than seeing Madelame. At the wedding when she was stung by a bee. I offered her a sleeping pill /antihistamines, just to make her shut up for five minutes, but she didn't take them. I think that was the one time I spoke to her that day. I was really exhausted and at one point went upstairs and found a bathroom to lock myself in. It was filled with flies. At the stag do you had threateningly told me that I had better come to your wedding. I thought I would probably regret it if I didn't. I thought that I would probably be made out to be a cunt if I didn't.

I'm thinking back to whether or not it was worth it. I think it must have been the last time I ever saw Peter. I made a point of going and telling him that I couldn't imagine either of you without each other. Afterwards I was really angry with Julia for pissing around because I wanted to get as far away as possible as quickly as possible. Madelame had meanwhile asked her if she could get a lift with us.

When she got a lift with Tristan they asked her why I wasn't talking to her, and she just told them another lie. Which Chris was nice enough to pass onto me. It reminds me now about one of our last days at work together, our boss asked me where Madelame was. I wanted to say something along the lines of 'why start now?', as in why start doing her job with any level of interest once we'd been fired. Why would she stop being a cunt, now?

How can you be friends with someone with as little integrity as Madelame? How can I be friends with someone I can't trust? How can you be friends with me when I need so much more than you can give me?

I feel like I was using you for company in 2002 and for somewhere to stay in London. I felt like you were using me for a groomsman at your wedding.

I know you can't see why this is such a big deal to me, especially when you've been dealing with your dad's death. I don't write this to hurt you. Rather to explain why I don't call you to see how you're doing. Or invite you to anything I expect you to turn up to. I think our friendship is dead, and I no longer want to feel obligated to keep reviving it. Maybe this is a lesson I've learnt from you and Madelame: to look after my own needs before anyone else's. I don't want to feel like I'm letting you down, the way I feel like you've let me down. I want to feel like I'm being true to myself, the way you guys probably feel about the way you acted between Madelame and I.

If you still want to come to my birthday party, it's at my house from 6 onwards on the 14th of May.

Yours sincerely,

Sb

Tuesday the 16th of March, 2010

Dear Christophe

I was wondering, if when I come out to your farm, you'll play bull-rush with me? As you know for a good few years there, I was quite protective of myself. And one thing that I really missed in that time was a bit of biff.

Parlez-vous biff?

Sensitively,

Drus Dryden

Sb

note to self

25th of November

We need to find the courage to say NO to the things and people that are not serving us if we want to rediscover ourselves and live our lives with authenticity.

— Barbara de Angelis

Only the truth of who you are, if realized, will set you free.

— Eckhart Tolle

Sb

Thursday the 25th of November, 2010

hi Caleb:

as you ask, my masters is in autobiographical writing . . i've just written 100 or so letters to people. there aren't many about Uni actually, not even to our former abode, 1 Jacksons Road. some things get left out, basically because they went reasonably ok / fine / only mildly traumatic, or have been dealt with. Uni, despite lots of spiritual turmoil, was a pretty Halcyon period. i mean, i think i passed everything. even some of my courses. there's quite a few letters to Christophe because he's so apathetic, or perhaps emotionally tight-fisted is a better way of putting it. too tight-lipped too. he's cynical, unsupportive, conservative, cowardly like a French-man. i need more from a close friend.

bond over polystyrene bonding? good one. i work at the university bar. not the Foundry, the Staff Club. prices and decor circa 1982. maybe 1882 in some cases. recently a cat and a possum both died in a duel under the floor boards. until they found them, someone suggested the stench might have been emanating from one of the regulars, Kenneth, the former head librarian. he was in last week and his friend stood up too quickly and lifted his arm to steady himself; Kenneth shouted 'HEIL HITLER!'

incidentally i had a phobia of anything to do with chemicals when i lived with you, so the fact you worked at the polystyrene factory may have spooked me. i'm not saying it's logical. i acquired my phobia of chemicals, working at a petrol station, and my mum has a phobia / love of chemicals.

the reason i was pissing in the sink was that Bridgie had just cleaned the toilet with toilet duck, and i just couldn't be bothered dealing with the phobia that morning. one of the tragic things about being unwell like that is that it tends to fuck up everything else. fine if it's just getting kicked out of your flat by hard-out girls, but obviously then can be a few worse decisions and repercussions when the life rehearsal that is Uni is over.

i sometimes piss in the shower base these days, like when i'm not having a shower, just out of laziness. but that's fine, for i am Lord of this Domain. i certainly don't piss in the well of Human kindness, anymore.

i once went for a shower at College House because i was spooked by our new plastic shower curtain. i think back with sadness, but also tenderness for 20 year-old me. i heard of someone saying the same about themselves, that they'd make their younger self a cup of tea and give them a hug. well, i'd probably share half a bottle of wine, then give myself a reach-around, but the sentiment is the same.

do you remember that night we went out to Claire Darlow's best friend, Sarah's house for her 21st? oh man. i still liked her, i guess. i overheard Jerry, her rugby boyfriend, saying he was going to do her in the master bedroom that night. i don't know how she missed out on a letter, i guess there are lots of girls to write to. or i just gave up / forgot years ago, only a few years after she did.

i told you Claire Darlow got married right? also Bridgie. i was thinking of wedding crashing, but probably couldn't be bothered in reality. all bets were off, however, because she pre-foxed me and told all her friends not to tell me where it was. she pre-foxed the old me, my fine wine has matured. Maybe see you for some fine wine over New Year's?

Drus

Sb

Wednesday the 1st of December, 2010

hi Christophe and Bridget:

Miriam was saying she wanted to invite us all to a BBQ. If that happens, I'd come . . . assuming there's some DB's there.

I don't have a problem with you. I just think we've grown, all of us, since we were 20. And perhaps inevitably we've grown apart. We didn't have to be best friends forever, and I'm still your friend now. It's just natural that we all change. I remember first being friends with you at Uni, I'm grateful you were there.

I need different things than I used to, or perhaps more accurately I know better what I need. I still need as much love and support as I always did, and I'm better at giving it to myself.

That you're friends with Madelame hasn't changed the way I feel about you, but it's a good example of a point of a difference between us. I told you why I couldn't be friends with Madelame, and in spite of that, you could. I know it's hard to empathise when it hasn't happened to you, but I never want to see her again.

You and Miriam say Madelame has also changed; I'm glad she won't hurt anyone, like she did me, if that's true. I forgive her, mostly so I can forget her. I'm looking after myself.

I hope you're well, i'm sure you're working hard, and are there for Michele. Peter would be proud of you. next time you're having a few DB's, pass one over. Or more likely, have one for your absent friend.

love,

Drus

badvert- ising

I interned at a number of advertising agencies as a copywriter. This means you work really hard, but you don't get paid, and then, without warning, you lose your unpaid position. In addition to this, agencies are highly political places, where you have to play the game, something I'm not very good at.

Clemenger is an ad agency in Wellington, where I had an AWFUL time. Duster, Angus, Jamie & Mark, and the really uptight office manager shared this time with me.

Wendy was my boss in Amsterdam, Ilya in Boston.

Sb

Tuesday the 10th of April, 2009

Dear junior creative,

I'm writing to you because I used to be you, a junior creative at Clemenger BBDO.

Duster was the creative director, and used to hire two junior teams to duke it out for a year, for one job. "Rejection breeds obsession" –Robert Evans. As you might guess, I didn't make it.

I find Duster pretty depressing: at first I thought he was someone who was really interested in nurturing talented people and doing great work. I thought the team competition thing was a way to give twice as many people the opportunity to learn.

We were working on the safety belt campaign; I said "there was almost no me in the creative department because I'd had an accident when I wasn't wearing a safety belt. Duster just sarcastically said "that would be a pity." Ha-fucking-haha, but it was about a month before I lost my job. I have wished a thousand times that I picked up an office chair and threw it at him. That I jumped before I got shoved.

By coincidence, on a job interview a year later, the interviewer was a creative who Duster had dumped on before me. I couldn't believe that she was still pissed at him. I believe it now. I even said to her "well, it's over now." Is it over now? She said that Duster got beaten up a lot as a kid, and that this explained his racism / homophobia / lameness.

Sure, his schtick was just a giant insecurity plaster. Look and you'll see it seep into his work, in other ways than his management. He came back from Cannes that year trying to figure what we should be imitating, not what we could be doing that was new.

At the lunch where Duster asked everyone, mainly his secretary, when they lost their virginity, he said what he loved about advertising was that it was forever young. Is he still trying to dress cool? What Clemenger needed was someone with the wisdom and experience to know how to get people to work productively, without needing to be a cunt to some of them. We lost one of the people trying to do this, a highly awarded creative, following a late night discussion with Duster.

I hope your experience is more positive than mine. That you get treated with respect and you do the same to anyone else. If you're getting fucked around, don't take it. Work at the supermarket if you have to, you'll have more fun, and probably earn more too.

Whatever your experience of it is, at least congratulations on landing your job in a mother-fucker of an industry.

Duster said someone once sent him a shit in the post. I wonder if there's a pooppy typeface, to type him a pooppy letter in?

Sincerely,

Drus Dryden

express don't repress

March 30, 2007

hey Ilya

was going to come into Exile today but just got call to go back to JWT.

also, you were saying i bent people out of shape at M!? 'sorry' - but i was kinda starving at the time and it just kinda pissed me off that you were telling me (and everyone else) i was getting a job that didn't exist.

that thing where you told Sheila that i wouldn't get a job because i had rich parents?

the reason i'm bringing it up is because i'm sick of carrying around my hate for you.

Drus

Sb

Tuesday the 23rd of June, 2009

Dear Wendy:

I'm sorry to report that my collaborator is coming to wintery New Zealand, instead of me visiting her in Amsterdam.

Which means I'm also sorry that I can't attend the celebration bbq. But perhaps you can add my spirit to the guest list. . . I'm sure he'd enjoy nothing more than a good European bbq.

One other thing. When you so graciously offered me desk space in the office I spontaneously composed this Haiku:

*Sometimes
I wonder what it must be like
to be one of your clients,
and have one's problems
disappear.*

I wish you, and AW, many more successful years.

Thank you again for your many kindnesses in Amsterdam, and kind words since.

Sincerely,

Drus Dryden

summer bbq

June 27, 2009

hey Roger:

I hope you make it along to the bbq. I will be wintering in New Zealand. Have a non-Heineken beer for me if you do.

I just thought I'd let you know that a moment from when I was at Strawberry Frog sticks in my mind. I don't really know the back story, but there was a moment when Wendy popped her head into our room. She said something like:

Can I bring you back something for lunch? . . . it's the least I can do.

I have a thing for little moments, and maybe that was one. I've lost dozens of ad jobs and no one ever offered to break the fall with a kick in the head, let alone lunch. It's always hard to explain to people what they mean to me, without sounding like a hard-on.

Well, hope you're good. a song attached, I don't know the original, apparently Neil Young.

Drus

Oh, and if we still worked in the same office we would now be listening to this:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w15UFLzH6PA>

Sb

19th of February, 2010

Dear Angus:

One of the things with being a thoughtful, sensitive young man is that I dwell on things. Perhaps I'll ponder a throwaway line for months. So this letter, or email if I don't print it out, is part of a series called . . . 'I meant to ask you more at the time.'

Cast your mind back to Clemenger 2004. If you recall I worked with that miserable cunt of an art director Madelame. The other part of my job, other than thinking of 90% of our ideas, was to ensure that Madelame was happy at all times. I remember one night we saw you out at Motel and an old uni friend, admittedly not known for his tact, had reduced Madelame to tears because he had said she had a bad attitude to Wellington. WE had to leave immediately.

Anyway I had dealt with so much of this bs that it was just natural by then. I really appreciated your advice, even if I laissez-failed to take it. You said that girls like Madelame are just really manipulative and I should just get out of the relationship. But because I felt like I didn't really have any allies in the creative dept., partly because Madelame would tell me I didn't, I felt some deluded loyalty to stay with her. At one point I changed her name in my phone to "Angus woman" to remind me to stop being so Stockholm syndrome. We stayed friends, if you can call it that, for another year or so before it became impossible to do so any longer.

It's a long time ago, but memory is time travel. I'm not sure what I'm trying to say, maybe thanks for trying to help at the time, or something. I guess it's a quality like that that would make you a good CD now.

Actually the truth is that I'm just a terrible snoop, and I want to know more about your insides. What methods of feminine manipulation have you been submitted to?

Well, hope you're good. Tracey is lovely, by the way.

Sensitively,

Drus Dryden

Sb

Sb

Tuesday the 16th of March, 2010

Dear Mark & Jamie:

I am writing to warn you about a silent killer of the advertising creativity, I am writing to beg you not to sleep with each other. Bending one another over the production manager's desk is probably the quickest way to ruin a perfectly good, award-winning, sexually unrelieved (by each other, at least) creative team.

I know, when your creative juices are flowing, that it's easy to drop your pants as your partner drops to their knees. To crack each others' briefs, when you've cracked the client's one. Sex between copywriters and art directors is torridly written and hideously art directed; and afterwards your creativity will leak out your asshole.

How do I know? I once had a lot of ugly sex with my art director, Madelame. Don't make the same mistake I did. Hands off cocks and on bold Sharpie pens.

Kia kaha - stay strong,

Drus Dryden

Sb

Tuesday the 16th of March, 2010

Dear the slightly pedantic production manager, I'm sorry, I've wrackd my brain to remember what your name is but I can't do it. SCOTT. That's it.

Here is your pen back. It still works. And I didn't insert into my anus or anything . . . much.

Sensitively,

Drus Dryden
Sensitive boyfriend

Sb

Monday the 19th of April, 2010

Dear Duster,

I remember you once saying that you liked about advertising is that it was always youthful. Young people are idiots. Is it just so you can feel them up?

I feel like I know so much more than when I worked for you. Especially with regards to how to deal with cunts.

sensitively,

Drus

Sb

Friday the 30th of July, 2010

Dear Louiza:

Here are the chopping boards. A couple of things to note. They are hand coloured with brown food colouring. It's part of the design that the image fades over time, but if so desired the image can be restored. Brown food colouring isn't sold in most supermarkets, but is at specialty cake stores. Otherwise you maintain them by oiling them with vegetable oil.

I hope your friends like them.

On another note, I had a miserable time when I was a junior copywriter at Clems. Because of Duster. It was such a relief when I got made redundant after four months. By strange coincidence I met the junior who had been similarly bullied by Dustie the year before me. Does he still draw those cartoons of people he's made redundant? I knew her from the one Duster still had on his desk.

The water cooler psychologist said that Duster used to bully vulnerable staff members because he got beaten up as a kid. I don't know how you stop a bully when he is the person you would report it to. Perhaps report it to the kids who used to beat him up? Anyway if you see anyone put in a similar position to the one I was in, please intervene.

xo,

Drus

Sb

Sb

Tuesday the 5th of September, 2010

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Dryden:

I'm not sure if you know how advertising works. I am what is called 'a suit', I present work that a 'creative' has thought of to a client. I specialise in building relationships through my considerable charm, Andrew, in thinking of ideas. In this case, you are the client.

I am writing to you to commend you on the bravery of your son. It is a very shocking thing to collide with a tonne of steel, and sustain the injuries that he did; the goring of his hands, the bruising to his torso and legs, and the mild concussion. However you wouldn't have known it to see Andrew's reaction. He was the model of a gentleman, reaching out to me in the immediate aftermath of the accident to assure me he was alive, even making polite conversation in the car on the way to his house. He only dripped Claret on himself. He told me that you worried about his safety on his bike, he was thinking of you, not his injuries. Such was his composure, his *sang-froid*, that I did not see it fit to take him to a surgery. I'm surprised my Mercedes-Benz wasn't damaged more by hitting this wall of granite. Where did he develop this stiff-upper-lip? At Gordonston? Prison? Or just in advertising?

With sincerity we are both glad he has recovered well from his injuries, and that the accident wasn't more serious. I would not be able to write this letter alone, if I too had blood on my hands.

Faithfully,

the Driver

Sb

Tuesday the 5th of October, 2010

Dear Mercedes-Benz driver:

I'm sure you've thought of me since our worlds collided. First of all I wanted to let you know that although I am bruised, cut and still shaken, I am ok. I also wanted to thank you for braking when you did. I saw an ad about the quality of Mercedes-Benz brakes on Thursday evening, 'only the best', of which I am grateful. Well chosen, sir. But when I looked at the shattering in my helmet the next day I realised that the accident could have been much more serious, and I feel lucky to be able to walk, think and breath. On Sunday I just lay in the sunshine and smiled.

There are a couple of things I need to ask of you:

I know it was an accident, but will your insurance cover damage to my bike and helmet? The bike may be written off; repairs sometimes cost more than replacement. I'm going to take it to a bike shop for a quote this weekend, my guesstimate for bike value is about \$350. A new helmet will cost \$129.

I used to work on the Road Safety campaign at Clemenger, so safety and its promotion is something close to my heart. Would you be willing to send a group email around Saatchi saying you were in an accident, and to urge caution to other drivers in the car park? If so, please include the address of the nearest Emergency Room to Saatchi, Quay Park A+E, 68 Beach Rd near the Railway Campus. I'm not accusing you of being drunk, but I know getting behind the wheel after a few beers is a problem at other agencies, so perhaps remind employees of this as well? You can cc me on this email, my email is drusdrus@gmail.com

This is very much up to you, but I'm also wondering if you would consider making a donation to the Brain Injury Association? I will be making one. My life was changed indelibly by a concussion when I was 18. I would never want to go through the endless headaches and anguish I suffered then, and I have extreme sympathy for anyone who is. I am very relieved that my helmet must have taken a lot of the impact, but I know that other victims aren't so lucky. You can contact Rebecca McGarry on 414-5693 to donate, or details are on the website. <http://www.brain-injury.org.nz/donation.html>

I will be writing a number of letters on our behalf to people who have prevented this accident from being more serious or aided my recuperation, from Mercedes-Benz, to Bell the helmet manufacturer, to the friend who took me to A+E, to the doctors & nurses who treated me, to the friend who is helping take my bike to be assessed, to the friend who baked me 'get well' cookies. If there's anyone I have forgotten, please let me know.

Yours Sincerely,

Andrew Dryden - the guy on the bike

Sb

Tuesday the 5th of October, 2010

Dear Mercedes-Benz driver:

I'm sure you've thought of me since our worlds collided. First of all I wanted to let you know that although I am bruised, cut and still shaken, I am ok. The cuts have been healing well and the headache and shoulder pain have passed. I want to thank you for braking when you did. I saw an ad about the quality of Mercedes-Benz brakes on Thursday evening, 'only the best', of which I am grateful. Well chosen, sir. But when I looked at the shattering in my helmet the next day I realised that the accident could have been much more serious, and I feel lucky to be able to walk, think and breath. On Sunday I just lay in the sunshine and smiled.

There are a couple of things I need to ask of you:

I know it was an accident, but will your insurance cover damage to my bike and helmet? The bike may be written off; repairs sometimes cost more than replacement. I'm going to take it to a bike shop for a quote this weekend, my guesstimate for bike value is about \$350. A new helmet will cost \$129.

I used to work on the Road Safety campaign at Clemenger, so promotion of safety is something close to my heart. Would you be willing to send a group email around Saatchi saying you were in an accident, and to urge caution to other drivers in the car park? If so, please include the address of the nearest ER to Saatchi, Quay Park A+E, 68 Beach Road, near the Railway Campus. I'm not accusing you of being drunk, but I know getting behind the wheel after a few beers is a problem at other agencies, so perhaps remind employees of this as well? At your discretion. If you send it, please cc me.

This is very much up to you, but I'm also wondering if you would consider making a donation to the Brain Injury Association? I will be making one. My life was changed indelibly by a concussion when I was 18. I would never want to go through the endless headaches and anguish I suffered then, and I have extreme sympathy for anyone who is. I am very relieved that my helmet must have taken a lot of the impact, but I know that other victims aren't so lucky. You can contact Rebecca McGarry on 414-5693 to donate, or details are on the website. <http://www.brain-injury.org.nz/donation.html>

Once again thank you for braking when you did.

Yours Sincerely,

Andrew Dryden - the guy on the bike
drusdrus@gmail.com

Sb

Monday the 11th of October, 2010

Dear Mercedes-Benz driver:

I'm sure you've thought of me since our worlds collided.

First of all I wanted to reassure you that I am ok. A friend took me to A+E after the accident, so I got the medical attention I needed. The cuts to my hands have almost healed. The shoulder pain passed, although there is still an enormous bruise ten days later. The thing I am most relieved about is that I didn't hurt my head. My life was changed indelibly by a concussion when I was 18, I would never want to go through that anguish again. When I looked at the shattering in my helmet the next day I realised that the accident could have been much more serious.

Consequently I want to thank you for braking when you did. I saw an ad about the quality of Mercedes-Benz brakes on the evening of the accident. The ad said they're 'only the best', of which I am grateful. Well chosen, sir.

There are a couple of things I need to ask you:

Will your insurance cover damage to my bike and helmet? The bike is at the shop now, hopefully it won't be too expensive. A new helmet will cost \$129. I know it's a pain in the ass making insurance claims, but I'd appreciate any help you can give me to get me back in the saddle.

I used to work on the Road Safety campaign at Clemenger, so safety promotion is something close to my heart. Would you be willing to send a group email around Saatchi saying you were in an accident, and to urge caution to other drivers in the carpark? If so, please include the address of the nearest ER to Saatchi, which is Quay Park A+E, 68 Beach Road, near the Railway Campus. I'm not accusing you of being drunk, but I know getting behind the wheel after a few beers is a problem at other agencies I've worked at. So it is at your discretion to remind employees of this as well. If you send it, please cc me.

I emailed Basil to ask what your name is, but he didn't reply. So hopefully this gets through to you.

Yours Sincerely,

Andrew Dryden - the guy on the bike
drusdrus@gmail.com

Sb

Monday the 11th of October, 2010

Dear Wendy:

I was hit and hurt on my bike by a Saatchis guy in a car. I was thinking that perhaps it shows the difference between multinational and indie agencies, or at least between my experiences of Saatchis and Strawberry Frog.

I am ok now, but it's no thanks to him. Thanks again for having me then and showing me that not all ad agencies or people are tiring clichés. You're what New Zealanders, and Vulgarians, call: "good cunts."

I don't love biking now, but have gradually been getting back on the 'horse.' I wish I had a real horse, that's how the Saatchi guy should make it up to me, by buying me a faithful steed.

One funny thing that happened was that my mum made me look up his address in the phone book, when I told her about his letter. I asked her why, and she said she was 'just interested as to where he lived.' She's a Rugby mum, a Renegade, so perhaps she's taking the law into her own hands. Here's hoping . . .

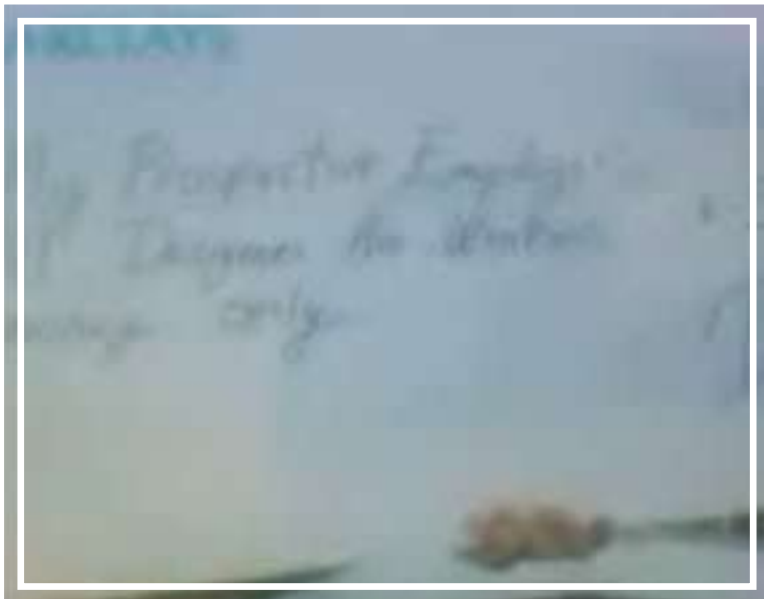
xo,

Drus Dryden

ps if I was a Renegade, I would chain the gate to his drive-way shut late one night, with a bike D-lock.

london

I lived in London in 2006. It was the best of times, it was the worst of times. I was sick a lot, and hated my job. Some NZ friends really let me down, but I was lucky to meet some much nicer English ones who I think of often, across the other side of the world. And of course it all feels quite exciting, like anything could happen. But probably won't.



Sb

Friday the 30th of April, 2010

Dear Transport for London:

I just wanted to explain why I took that pregnant woman's seat on the Underground that time, in late 2005.

I was exhausted, after living very hard for a couple of years. Like lots of other Londoners I was burning out. I was standing up and my 'friend' Madelame was sitting down. A seat came up next to her, and I just saw the empty seat. It was a couple of seconds before I realised that an English gentleman had given up my seat for a pregnant lady.

Rather than admit my mistake, I pretended I hadn't seen her. There was some light disapproval, and someone else offered her their seat. She and her stiff-upper-lip baby didn't accept it.

I only had one stop to go, I was wearied by the woes of the world, but this doesn't excuse my ungentlemanly conduct. I'm sorry.

I also wish I'd done something to help the kid who got onto a packed bus down the Kingsland Road, with his lip torn up to his nose. He ran onto the bus, running from his attackers. England can be so violent, I saw two other attacks in my neighbourhood in 2006. I wish I'd helped him. In this case someone gave up their seat, but I could have canceled my plans and taken him to whatever that hospital is called. I was just too shocked, there were so many people around and I didn't think.

I bike or drive everywhere now, but any chance I get to behave as a gentleman in the future, I hope to profit from it.

Sincerely,

Drus Dryden

ps

I'm also quite sorry about the time I had been drinking too much in 1998 and, on reflex, spued when I saw the packed last train approaching.

Sb

Friday the 30th of April, 2010

Dear Gardening Books Assistant, DK books:

In 2005 I wrote to DK books, a job application. And through some quirk in the DK mail system that letter was sent to the person who used to have your job, Tara Woolnough. I'm not sure if you receive miscellaneous mail now, if you do you should answer it once in a while.

Tara emailed me to tell me she had received my application and had passed it onto HR. She also asked me if I wanted to meet up with her one Sunday, and new to town and going through a horrific friend divorce, I readily accepted. We met up outside the Camden tube station, she said I would know her by her red framed glasses. We spent a charming afternoon walking up to Primrose Hill or one of those parks that has the whole city spread before it. From these humble beginnings, our friendship blossomed. We shared love of Scandinavians (she had just broken up with a Norwegian, I had just got together with a Swede), Tara taught me what a pencil skirt is. I still don't really know what Pataphysics is. Her mother is an amusing French woman, her father used to ask after me now and again. Tara wasn't having much luck with men, and could do better than that Russian love-rat, but that can happen to the best of us. We went to see *Rize*, a documentary about 'krumping' with her, she loves hip hop. She used to email me excerpts of DK's sex books, 'which wouldn't be work safe if they weren't work books.' She even sent me *Aquaerotica*, one of a couple of DK titles in my library.

I love Tara because she came along when other friends had really let me down, and she was a kind, hilarious, whip-smart, understanding, generous and supportive friend. She was very much appreciated. A bad friend called me to see if I wanted to mend our broken friendship the day I was meeting Tara, I'm so glad I broke free to T.

There was one interesting point in our friendship when I turned up to meet her at a friend's birthday. I still didn't know her well and I think she thought I was going to look down on some of her friend's dinner guests. *Au contraire*, any friend of a friend of Tara's is a friend of mine.

Once she drove me a little crazy, I can't quite remember why, it was a one-off. I remember her walking through Shoreditch on that hot summer's day, and she looked so pale in the summer sun. She is an English rose. She recently tried to become a model, but that didn't work out for her.

I suppose the last time I saw her was when we watched *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* in the park and drunk a few beers. I haven't seen her for three years, since I've been back home. I introduced a mutual friend to her, but it didn't take off. I miss her. She talked about visiting New Zealand once, maybe I'll see her again one day.

I believe she was appointed to her role after meeting the CEO of DK. I wanted to compliment DK on such a fantastic employee, an ambassador for DK. I don't quite know what she's doing now, something a little esoteric, and possibly Arabic. Something quite Tara, I'm sure.

If you want to pass on any of these compliments, she is listed as Alison Laydee on Facebook. I don't know why she's going incognito. Not to avoid me or anything, I know it could look that way from this gushy letter.

Sincerely,

Drus Dryden of New Zealand

Sb

Tuesday the 22nd of June, 2010

Dear Habitat, Regent Street, London:

I am writing to you to return the pen I stole from your front desk, the last time I was in London in September, 2006. It was the London design festival, and I stopped into Habitat to see Dominic Wilcox's *Orgasmatron 3000*. My memory is a little hazy, but perhaps I remember an email sign-up sheet at your door. This Parker pen was among the pens provided. I looked to see if anyone would notice it walking out the door, down the street, to Amsterdam and finally across the other side of the world.

Perhaps I should be writing this letter with the pen, but it's run out of ink. It's been my favourite pen for a couple of years, it's served me well. I used to have a similar one when I was a kid, I would write my weekly essays with it in a tight, sloping hand. Thinking of replacing the ink in it caused me to remember that this is not in fact my pen. I'll replace the ink before I return it.

I was in a very strange place when I stole your pen. I don't mean to excuse myself, but would like to explain some of the circumstances in my life at the time. I was a young designer and writer at the time, and was forced to work for free on internships, as I was struggling for the validation of a paid job. Two of the consequences of being utterly penniless and lower than lowly are that you feel totally silenced. Do I indulge myself to say that stealing a pen is a metaphor? An attempt to take back some shred of language, of power?

In any case you'll be glad to know that I'm not in a position where I need to steal pens anymore. I was even thinking about getting a pen manufactured. I didn't because you had to get 300 made, and I really only wanted ten. The guy at the pen factory was dispiriting.

I wonder what you'll do with your pen now that it is returned to you? Perhaps you'll put it by the sign up sheet again, cast it to the wind?

My father has a fondness for saying that anything he lends me is a Boomerang _____, please accept my grovelly apology on the return of your Boomerang pen.

Boomerangs are still exotic for New Zealanders, they are an Australian thing. If anyone ever asks you to tell the difference between an Australian and a New Zealander: they have Boomerangs, we don't. And an Australian might not have given your pen back.

I hope the shop is going well. Had any more Dominic Wilcox in there? He's great.

Sincerely, apologetically,

Drus

ps

UPDATE the pen is now trapped under the seat in my car, so that's why I haven't sent it back yet.

Sb

Tuesday the 24nd of November, 2010

Dear Jude,

When I left work for the last time, after being underpaid and trying to do as good a job as possible with no support, you shouted out across the office that everyone should check to see if I'd left a shit anywhere.

I did in fact leave one. A big one.

Called Jude Biddulph.

Yours sincerely,

Drus Dryden

girls

Letters to, or about pretty girls. Or if I'm lucky, both.



Saturday, 21st of July, 2007

Dear Neighbour (well almost)

My name is Andrew, I'm a conceptual artist and commercial painter.

One project I've been working on for a while now is called *Keep St Heliers Beautiful*.

The last thing I did as part of this project was try to win the love of a known St Heliers beauty, Samantha Marsh. I wanted to encourage her not to move to another suburb and to stay in St Heliers. I failed to win her affection but she's stayed in the area. So it's bitter-sweet.

I've noticed there is some graffiti on your fence. In the name of *Keep St Heliers Beautiful*, I was wondering if you would like me to paint over it?

Sincerely,

Drus

Sb

Friday the 30th of November, 2008

Dear Ali Hall:

Maybe you're the Ali Hall I met once in Bristol in 2001? You were studying bird(s) behaviour, and were going to go to Brazil later in the year. I stole your bracelet, but sent you another from Thailand.

I was just going through a box of old stuff last night and saw your name . . .

I just wanted to apologize for being such a weirdo! I don't know what was wrong with me. I know it's weird to send this to you now (if it's you), but Jesus I was a dic.

Well I hope you're well, and life's treating you well, or at least better than I did.

From,

Drus Dryden
from New Zealand

from your airport chauffeur

hi Peter G.,

Hope your flight wasn't too terrible.

This may be a pretty unusual thing to take out of *At the Death House Door*, but I thought of you during the shot of Rose running. What an amazing guy the Reverend is, and thanks for an amazing film.

Do you still want to send my friend a copy of *Prefontaine*? I met her in France, we were living in this miserable little town in the north, teaching English to the Barbarians. I don't know how our mutual admiration for Prefontaine came into conversation, but we really bonded over it. She was/is heavily depressed, so anything that made her happy, usually movies, we held onto.

Her address

Rebecca L.

548 Perry Drive

Mount Laurel NJ 08054

USA

I thought of a dedication for her. Don't worry about it if you're not into it, but I'm sure it would make her smile:

Dear Rebecca

In my work as a film director I meet a variety of people, even a friend of yours.

He says you embody many of Pre's American virtues, his integrity, his courage... and the way your golden hair ripples in the wind.

Peter Gilbert

The other thing about *Prefontaine* . . . I distinctly remember wanting to set my alarm for 6am to go running the next day, à la Prefontaine. I'm sure I got over that before bedtime, though.

Someone said you might be back to do a masterclass next year? Hope to see you again if so. If not then, tell your daughter the 2010 World Rowing Championships are in New Zealand...

Sincerely,

Andrew Dryden

Sb

Friday the 30th of March, 2009

Dear Isabel:

I'm writing a fashion blog at the moment, the title of my most recent post is 'social niceties.'

This caused me to recall the time I came to dinner with your parents and left early. You quite rightly sent me a letter about my complete lack of social niceties.

I'm not sure if I've apologized for this already, I tend to go through apology stages, but if I haven't I'm really sorry. I left dinner because (long story) I had Obsessive-Compulsive Syndrome. I left a lot of things early, and now am arriving late to others. At least that is fashionable . . .

You will be pleased to know that I have many more social niceties now, if I had your address I would handwrite this on my personal stationery. . . stuff like that.

I hope London and true love is going well, and happy late birthday!

sincerely,

A

From,

Drus Dryden

i don't want to be a dick

May 12, 2009

Dear Renee:

but i'm still kinda uncomfortable about our situation.

i just spend soooooooooooooo much time alone (four days non-stop last week) that it's kinda a headfuck for me to be involved-ish with someone i can't hang out with. i'm pretty much an all or nothing person and this isn't an all or nothing situation.

i'm a bit worried that we're just playing ourselves and not really accepting the reality of the situation. i mean if you live in Amsterdam, you need to meet someone who is in Amsterdam too. and even though i'll see you in a month, it'll go back to as it is now afterwards. maybe while you're here we should just get to know each other as friends? and think about anything else if we ever live proximately?

i don't want to be a dick, but i also need to be honest about how i'm feeling. i think it's even worse not to honour yourself and your friends.

obviously i think you're great, you're fun, and great company and so kind, and make me smile, but you're in Europe.

i hope you're not too upset by this, i'll call you.

Drus

Sb

relationship round-up

Tuesday the 5th of December, 2009

Dear Julia:

it's not weird to have emotions, no need to apologise. i have emotions all the time. in no particular order, here are my recollections . . .

one thing i realise now is that when we were 20 you feel like your life is going to always be sweet, because its structure is so predictable up until that point. you go to school, then uni, you don't know what job you'll do but you figure you'll be fine, and totally don't appreciate how sweet it is having heaps of time to do whatever you want.

i guess we broke up at a time where both of us knew what we were doing, but do you remember how i would talk to you about whether i should get into advertising or veterinarianism? at pretty much that exact point at that street off Fendalton Road i would always start blabbing on about it. it must have happened so many times that eventually you just broke and yelled at me to shut up about it. that's one thing i didn't quite get, that you would sometimes be really un-understanding. i think i traced it back to your mum: she used to sometimes get out of character angry, also i can't really imagine the judge freaking out about stuff. anyway i don't think it was something you really knew how to deal with, male weakness. that time of my life i was totally fucked, and although i realised how sick i was, i didn't REALLY realise. it took me another couple of years to adjust my behaviour, i remember once when you were up in Auckland and we stopped in a petrol station. i took a quiet pleasure in watching you watching me to see how i was dealing with my phobias. my friend had a quote about it, that you don't do something about it until you really have to. anyway this must have been the quite heavy backdrop to our relationship, i'm sure i didn't ever really explain what i was going thru . . .

some funny things i remember from our relationship:

when we went to teppan-yaki and we both had diahorrea afterwards, i was staying at your house and you made me go downstairs so you could crap yourself. i probably had to go to downstairs bathroom anyway, because the upstairs one smelt.

the time i snuck out of Weka street at six and you heard your parents say "looks like we had a visitor" or maybe something a bit funnier and Judge-like than that

the time you thought someone was attacking the house, and when i said it'd be ok because i'd defend you, you said: "what would YOU do?"

the time you made me drive you to a field at my bach so you didn't have to poop in the bathroom

the time John pad-locked the fridge because i was eating too much food

when Emma used that 'ship into harbour' analogy to come onto that guy, lol

the time Libby and Haimona were coming round and i was wearing your skirt

the time you bought me a one-way ticket to Chch, but no return ticket to Akl

i think the reason we broke up was that you were too emotional for me, at a time when i was totally unable to deal with my own emotions. and i was going thru a pretty insane time with my obsessive-

compulsive disorder and when you're handling your own emotions in really unproductive ways, it's quite difficult to know how to handle anyone else. remember that time when we went to get the pill and i fainted when we walked out of the consulting room? funny, but obviously i wasn't in a place where i could handle my own stuff, let alone a girlfriend. the really sad thing about being sick like that is that you're unable to deal with anything outside of yourself, i was so self-focused.

anyway i think i probably behaved like a dick who wanted to get into advertising when you called me to say you were coming up to AKL in the first uni holidays after we had broken up, and just said i wasn't available. sorry, that i've realised that's a dude short-term strategy, just ignoring something to try and forget it.

i remember when i was being a dick when you had come up to AKL at Christmas too, i was angry because Melbourne had fucked out for me so badly and i couldn't see properly because i had been so stressed for so long, 3.5 years by that stage. and maybe i felt like you were stressing me out too, sorry for behaving like a dick. and for taking Fred, that French-Canadian on holiday with us. remember his Hawaiian shirt camoflague. i just couldn't handle the drama, remember when you were screaming at me going down Queen street, and then you got in a cab and forgot your wallet in the cab or something?

when i asked Chris Hooton how you were when he was up here at the end of your 4th year, he just said: "you should get over her, she's gotten over you" . . . err because Chris still is the biggest dick in the world. i've cut Chris off, god why did it take until this year?

one thing i heard was that you had started going out with Dan the drummer. i know one of his friends up here and he says he's his friend but not someone he'd go out with if he was a girl. hmm is that maybe the sort of guy you're sometimes attracted to: guys who don't make particularly good boyfriends

anyway i think you have to recognise that you're a highly emotional person and that (like everyone else) your weak point is dudes you really like, but who aren't treating you as well as you need to.

i recently tried to get together with someone who i now realise is totally unboyfriendable, and it takes all my maturity and accumulated experience to be able to deal with it by stopping it before i got any more hurt. there's that quote about how sometimes "the right thing to do and the hard thing to do is often the same thing" . . .

i also think that by the time we get to our age we've been round the block a few times and our hearts are a bit beat up, it's pretty exhausting. especially when you see people who got it together and make it seem really easy, it's hard not to be a bit jealous and just wish it would stop being hard. all the time. i guess you feel like it's crunch-time for you, that's you've got to trap a man or whatever. i think that's bullshit. 1. no one has their life figured out, and even if they do something crazy will come along to shake it up. 2. imagine having your whole life figured out by now, what are we supposed to do for the next 50 years? 3. everything has a strange way of working out and you have to believe in yourself and wonder at what might happen. you've got to do that because whatever's going to happen will happen whether you like it or not, and it's much less exhausting than trying to control situations and people that are totally out of your control.

i've never really thought really hard about life partners and future and stuff, and one thing that makes me not worry about it is how a psychic told me i would meet someone when i'm 32. therefore it's one less thing for worried me to worry about until i'm 31 & 11 months.

i don't know how to sooth you, other than to say that the only solution is the long one of dealing with everything as calmly as possible forever, one thing at a time.

hope today is a bit better. check your letterbox soon. . .

Yours Sincerely,

Drus

Sb

Monday the 26th of April, 2010

Dear Julia, JMH, the Ju-Ra-Ra, Ju-la-la, the Juharajah, Ju's clues, the Juanator, Don Ju de Marco, who's Ju?-Ju's who, Juria, J.Ho, Ulia, the Juharoa, "Genki"

Here is the scarf your boyfriend wouldn't buy you. I'm sorry it started a fight between you and your boyfriend, but maybe if he wasn't such a dick he could bring himself to buy it off me.

The other good thing about him getting a new job is that you won't have to see him so much.

I understand that people like him are just cocks out of self-defence, but he's still pretty annoying. I got some enjoyment out of telling you that the first question he always asks me "am I living at home?", when you told me he had to move home.

I don't want you, although I will admit that I'm envious of the fun we had together when we were younger. I haven't had that with anyone else for years. I want someone to watch movies with again, although my couch isn't really made for it.

It doesn't really matter to me who you end up with, but I'm sure there are nicer people than Henry. Maybe you can swap for one of them in Sydney? What am I talking about? Good luck to you both. And me too.

*cras amet qui numquam amavit
quique amavit cras amet*

Love From,

Drus

Sb

break-up care package

19th of February, 2010

Dear Garrity:

I was going to write to you about how Wellington's a heartbreak town. But it's so not.

Where are you from originally by the way? Am I right in thinking you're Canadian?

Even though you think you know every one, it's just because every one is either a bit drunk some of the time or quite friendly the rest. Someone dashing & new could appear at any moment, hair tousled by the wind, like a hair salad. I remember meeting Charlotte, Sanna, and err unrequitable Michael, none of them worked out, but they were all wonderful in their own ways.

Charlotte, oh that was rather a funny story. I'd been at a party with her and her friend, got in a cab to go to Good Luck. We'd left a drunk guy behind and were all like 'oh no, drunk dudes are terrible', and then I tipped the balance from tipsy to drunk on the first drink at Good Luck. I went in for a kiss with the friend, Kate, on the dance floor. I had had a crush on her for years, didn't know she had a boyfriend. I was having that explained by Charlotte at the bar, and one thing led to another. Charlotte came home but nothing really happened. It was nice, though. Polite but intimate. And then she snuck out at 5am. I guess it was all quite embarrassing, not really a story for the grandchildren. I think she was quite a respectable girl, she's a diplomat now. Not that I'm not a respectable boy. I've never been left like that before or since, so it was a strange feeling. My flatmate brought the phone in because my mum was called mum-style later that Sunday morning. My flatmate commented on the alcoholic cloud (around 12%) in my room. The thing was, I was trapped in a vile open relationship as this was happening, at least I thought I was. I could have stolen away silently too. I wish Charlotte had taken me with her.

Anyway the contents of this care package are as follows:

a poem

some chockie

the FB of a handsome stranger

a 'I'm going to shit on your ex's lawn' greeting card

~~These fantastic Martini sunglasses, they're handy when you're too shit-faced to order at the bar and you just point to them. They work it out.~~ Unbelievably, the Martini glasses shop is out of business.

Panda postcard: sorry it's a bit beaten up.

A long, thin French cigarette

As my mixtape burner is still frustrated I'm going to do that section via email. So let me know when you get this, and I'll send that thru.

Sensitively,

Drus Dryden

Sb

Sb

break-up care package

26th of February, 2010

Dear Ashley:

I was sorry to hear about your break-up. But I'm glad to hear you're wearing your Hello. tee to yoga. I recently faced my fear of bikram yoga, with my exercise partner, who is my brother's ex girlfriend. She's now my ex-exercise partner, come to think of it, since she went to work full-time. We used to go running on Fridays at 11am, the only day she didn't work, after she dropped her children were at creche. Rosa has so much energy that despite being 37, a mother of two and having a high powered job she wanted to train to run the Auckland marathon. The last time we went running, the day after bikram, I got a throbbing in my head and had to turn back, to watch her run off into the distance. I'm scared that a girl I like, Jessie, I wouldn't be able to keep up with either.

Song that's playing now . . . strong enough - Sheryl Crow

Was I strong enough to go running with Rosa? Not really. She had two weeks off work late last year and went exercise crazy. She just called me one morning and said I had to go to bikram with her. The last time I went was in Amsterdam with Emelie, my Swedish girlfriend. I'd never done yoga before, despite nearly moving to yoga ashram in Massachusetts the previous summer. I was sick all the time that year, and felt fine when I got out of bikram, but that night I sweat so much the bed was saturated. Two months later I had to leave Emelie, Amsterdam and a lot of my youthful enthusiasm, as I crawled back home.

Bikram was really funny when Rosa and I got there. The teacher was a 60 year-old dude, who was like a cross between a PE teacher and a psychologist. Some of his lines, through his clip-on microphone, like the one Britney wears so she can still dance:

"Some people get so clean doing bikram yoga they don't need to use soap in the shower"

he sniffed the air and said "can't you smell . . . THE SUGAR!"

he called me a rainforest at one point, because I was dripping, and anyone who lay down a sinner

"Some people come to bikram because they're professional athlete and they need to learn to focus, some people because they want to lose some weight . . . some because they've got a broken heart" (he said that bit in a cute voice)

Anyway I don't know what bikram yoga does to me, but two days later I had the most amazing day. And then I got sick again, not super sweaty sick, but sick for a couple of months. But that day when I felt great, was great. Not a heart break in the sky. PTO to see the photo I took on the mountain I climbed up just before I txt'd everyone I knew to tell them how happy I was. (Very.) Only one person wrote back a sarcastic txt, unfortunately one of my oldest besties, but we've worked out our shit now. Thinking about it the yoga teacher must have inspired me to wear short shorts, available from American Apparel, which I've done all this long, sweaty summer.



Anyway the ashram in MA used to send me yoga jokes:

how many yogis does it take to change a lightbulb? Into what?
The sign on the yoga studio door said "yogi wanted . . . inquire within"

Hope you're doing ok.

xo,
Drus

ps
this heart break care package contains:

A French cigarette
Some New Zealand chocky
I still haven't convinced any more girls to write to Tre, but here's the book
A Frank O'Hara poem
My CD burner is broken but email me if you want the musical component, email me when you get this . .
I normally include the Facebook of a fanciful singleton in your town, but Portland's a bit out of my jurisdiction.

Sb

Tuesday the 16th of March, 2010

Dear Caroline:

I am wondering if the reason you are so convinced that I am gay is in fact a ploy to convince yourself that you are not doing everything you can to not imagine me smeared in Pawpaw. Nothing but Pawpaw all over me. Pawpaw on my legs. Pawpaw on my back. Pawpaw on my face.

You're obsessed with me. You're obsessed with Pawpaw. You're obsessed with me, covered in Pawpaw. If you can't admit it to yourself, at least admit it to your local fruiterer.

Look what you've made me do . . . now there's Pawpaw on my computer keyboard,

Drus Dryden

Sb

Monday the 26th of April, 2010

Dear Esther,

It's not that I've forgotten to write to you. Just that I haven't thought of quite what I want to say to you. It's just I'm not sure how much telling you what I'm really thinking, or what I'm not thinking, will help you.

I have learnt to protect myself, and unfortunately despite your good, loving intentions I see you as a threat. I can feel some of my ex-girlfriends, their personalities at their limits, as actual feelings. Like how some people can smell colour, or taste sounds, maybe not that last one. Or how dogs can predict earthquakes.

The hard thing for me around you is that for all your love, kindness or sweetness, I never know how long it's going to last before brain clouds will appear. It saps so much strength keeping myself straight that I don't have anything left to carry anyone else through. It's not that I don't care about you. It's that I'm scared of you. Instability of you.

I hope this year will go well with the costume designer.

From,

Drus

Sb

August '10

my listing on findsomeone.co.nz

I'm looking for . . .

a relationship is about working together. I'm looking for a darling who thinks about what they can bring. Someone once said 'Not long ago I had the epiphany that being in a relationship is not about two people giving 50-50. It's about each person giving 100.' I want to be on them!

you have to be passionate about something, like the way I imagine being about you.

charm will get you everywhere, you Charmeuse.

creative, sensitive, intelligent & imaginative.

shitty things are going to happen, and I'll give you a medal if we can face them with courage.

it would be nice if we can work out together, like tennis, running, yoga, or erotic trapeze.

it will be easier to get lost in your eyes if you're tall & lovely.

your laughter, like Champagne poured over ice.

you have to be a chef in the bedroom, and a woman of ill-repute in the kitchen.

and obviously you have to like Jens Lekman:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FUwr3NJf8KM>



Monday the 11th of October, 2010

Dear Elise:

I don't have any answers to your question. However I can pass on the advice of renowned sex advice columnist Dan Savage. His advice is aimed at teenage boys, but I think anyone can learn from it, especially the part about not masturbating more than 10 times a day.

One idea I had would be for you to go on the radio to talk about being single. Bfm does a sex show on Sunday nights, and maybe Sarin, the host, would be open to the idea? The hope would be that bachelors might call the station to talk to you. Like radio Blind Date. I'm not in contact with Sarin but you can call her in the studio on 309-3879 at 8 on Sunday nights.

I have also included a poem and a single French cigarette, which you may do with as you wish. e.g next time a windswept & interesting man approaches you and asks for a cigarette, you can furnish him with this one.

Good luck
and sincere wishes
for deep kisses
and a great relationship with a dreamy guy.

xo,

Drus Dryden

ps <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-AUCSkHCrwY>

sex advice to teenage boys

Dan Savage

Longtime reader, first-time mailer. A long while ago, you wrote an incredible piece of general advice for teenage boys. The advice was so excellent that I clipped it out to keep in case I ever had a son. Well, years later, I have a son. But I have since moved a gazillion times and across several continents, and I no longer have that precious piece of paper.

My son is only nine months old, but I am worried that by the time he is a teenager, you will have retired to some fancy ranch where you will spend your days raising organic cattle, being nasty to the local genetically-modified-wheat farmers, and passing the afternoons on the porch sipping gin from a teacup while terrorizing the local boys with a Super Soaker.

I digress: any chance you could reprint your advice for teenage boys? I know that I, my partner, and my son will all appreciate it. — GGG Lady Lover And Mama

Congrats on the birth of your son, GGGLLAM, and here, at your request, is my advice for the hard-up teenage boy:

You're having a hard time getting girls. That sucks. I remember what it was like when I was a young teenager and wanted boys and couldn't get any. It sucked. But the sad fact is that most young teenage boys are repulsive — that is, they are half-formed works in progress. Girls mature physically more quickly than boys, which means most girls your age already look like young women and they're generally attracted to (slightly) older boys — and there you are, aching for your first girlfriend, but still looking like a short, hairless chimp.

But don't despair, HUTB. Your awkward/repulsive stage will pass. In the meantime, here's what you need to do: worry less about getting your young teenage self laid and start thinking about getting your eighteen- or twenty-year-old self laid. Join a gym and get yourself a body that girls will find irresistible, read — read books — so that you'll have something to say to girls (the best way to make girls think you're interesting is to actually be interesting), and get out of the house and do shit — political shit, sporty shit, arty shit — so that you'll meet different kinds of girls in different kinds of settings and become comfortable talking with them.

Some more orders: get a decent haircut and use deodorant and floss your teeth and take regular showers and wear clean clothes. Go online and read about birth control and STIs, and learn enough about female anatomy that you'll be able to find a clitoris in the dark. Masturbate in moderation — no more than ten times a day — and vary your masturbatory routine. I can't emphasize this last point enough. A vagina does not feel like a clenched fist, HUTB, nor does a mouth, an anus, titty-fucking, dry-humping, or e-stim. If you don't want to be sending me another pathetic letter in five years complaining about your inability to come unless you're beating your own meat, HUTB, you will vary your routine now so that you'll be able to respond to different kinds of sexual stimulation once you do start getting the girls.

Good luck, kiddo.

(The above advice was for a straight teenage boy. Gay teenage boys should read “boys” where I said “girls,” “anus” where I said “vagina,” “prostate” where I said “clitoris,” and “fist” where I said “fist.”)

Sb

Monday the 19th of April, 2010

Dear Rebecca S.,

These are some of the reasons I think you'd make a great wife.

You're very beautiful.

You're so grounded and sensible, but also fun fun fun.

You've got enchanting perfume. Well, I do now . . .

You're very thoughtful. I loved it when you left the flowers in my car door & the perfume bottle on my bedside table.

You know how to make small-talk in Thai.

Actually this is probably a list of you're a great person.

You're a silky, sweet lover. (Ok, maybe that's more of a wifey quality.)

You're a healthy eater, your husband will strive to cook you the healthiest brekkies-in-bed.

You look great in bandannas. Whatever your gang is, I want in.

I love that thing about you how you're really open to stuff and people somehow know it. I am too. I hope lots of lovely people find you like you found me.

Love from,

Drus

Sb

Friday the 16th of November, 2010

hi Rebecca S.,

i really hope you're ok, and you're not just being a tough bytch. you're such a darling, i hate to think of anyone hurting you. i'm really glad your friend came along. that sort of thing is really, really scary, and i'm really glad you're ok.

the bike accident came from nowhere. i had cuts and bruising. the worst thing was the guy just didn't give a shit about it, he was much more worried about his Merc, and refused to pay damages and didn't take me to A+E. another friend had a worse bike accident without a helmet, so i feel lucky i was wearing a helmet and my pretty head is still pretty.

floods? crazy. how is the classroom?

yup still work in the bar. a friend's gf is living here now, but moving in with him this week.

no, the dedication was more like:

"this special lady proposed to me on St Paddy's day, she left flowers on my car on Thursday, she got her flight wrong on Tuesday . . "

i wish, actually it reads:

"There is a delightful story for why I was a couple of minutes late, too, for my first class. For this I would like to thank the delicious Rebecca Sutton."

i crack up sometimes when i think about how you said i should tell the dudes in my new class that i was late because i was hanging out with a hot babe. i didn't know then that my class is exclusively middle-aged women.

i was going thru a few things when i met you, i almost failed uni, my dad was sick and i had been hanging out with some selfish girls. you're so fun, you made me forget for a little bit. and now i'm acing uni, my dad's well and i DON'T DO selfish girls.

so i remembered last night that i know a girl (also from Tauranga?) who studied nutrition in Sydney, and worked there for a couple of years after. do you want me to put you in touch? here is an Australian song until then

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w4Mcuqt3EKo>

xoxo

Drus

megan

I was introduced to a girl at a bar in September. She was pretty, but there were lots of pretty girls there that night. I couldn't leave the bar to drive home because I had imbibed Feijoa Cider, which the girl, a Neuroscientist, would later describe as 'liquid brain damage.' She did the bump pick-up line as we left the bar, in which you signal your interest in someone by bumping into them. I walked her home, then kissed her in front of her house. Her jaw clicked as her mouth opened to mine. She asked for my phone number and I left. She was wearing her favourite leather biker jacket.

When I got her number a few days later from our mutual friend, she claimed not to remember anything. As a Neuroscientist, I told her she should work on a cure for that.

A few more things happened, before I had to start writing about it.



Sb

15th of December, 2009

Dear Megan:

This is how the parachute dress floated into my life.

I hated my job, and compulsively sent out emails from work. Cries for help. I didn't appreciate the opportunity I had there in London, but try telling that to someone who really wants to be doing something they believe in and know that it isn't this.

I had noticed a great shop not far from where I was working in London. This was the subject header of the email I wrote them:

winner of today's weirdest email competition

I can't remember what the email said, basically I said that I loved the shop and if there was anything I could do to help them, I'd do it. I eventually ended up going in around the time that I left my job, and I introduced myself to Emily. I must have mentioned three details:

1. I was supposed to get married in about a week
2. I was moving to Amsterdam in the Autumn
3. But before then I was meant to be in France at the horse Chateau as a translator

It was in this way that we figured out that I could translate a letter for Emily. She was selling these enormous metal desks that used to be in French post offices, and was buying them from some guy in France. He was screwing her around a bit and needed a firm, but friendly letter written to him.

It turns out her brother lived in Amsterdam. Amazingly he was one of the bosses at one of the companies I'd been trying to work at for a couple of years. When I went to my job interview with him he asked me if I knew the only other New Zealander he knew, who I'd gone to boarding school with. That guy later emailed my anonymous internet posting to sublet my apartment from me.

I didn't end up taking up my position as translator (the ad also listed "dancefloor supervision" as one of my tasks) because the mistress of the house was extremely religious, more than a bit crazy, and suspicious of my (and everyone else's) intentions. She was the heiress to a fortune and apparently a relative of the Red Baron. I had got involved with them from one of my escape emails from work in London. My motivation for going to the Chateau, other than it being eccentric-fest '06, was that I needed a break from all the insane shit that had been happening. When she found out that I was almost married, her offer of unpaid employment was withdrawn. I had a mischievous habit of referring to Emelie as "my wife", which was quite fun, I think there's even a Seinfeld episode about it. The mistress' email reply after I had mentioned that "my wife was in Amsterdam", was one word long. "Details." The Chateau chef (now a really good friend . . . on FB) and I used to joke that she was saying it in a way like all gossipy, "*dish* . . ."

The marriage. When Emily (store owner) heard about it, she offered to lend Emelie (girlfriend) a parachute skirt. I just couldn't see how Emelie would turn it into an outfit, I lack a bit of lady outfit imagination at the end of the day. This must have been around the week that the marriage was called

off, so I never got to see what kind of sartorial ingenuity Emelie was capable of. The skirt Emily was going to lend us was, I'm going to call it "dirty green." As chance would have it green was the colour that Emelie wanted to get married in.

So. I renamed the white dress the *Cinderella dress*.

Like I told you I speechless (gob-smacked) at how beautiful you looked in it. What I didn't tell you was that I *may* have started crying about how beautiful you looked in it, quite drunk at 4 am the next morning. EmotionLol.

The price is \$250, if that's ok. You may wish to write a letter to Emily thanking her for making this collaboration possible. If so, her address is:

Caravan
3 Redchurch Street
Shoreditch
London E2 7DJ

I wonder if she knows that the parachute dresses very nearly ended up as her grandmother's undies?

Emily's really a lovely person, when I think about the time I turned up to Caravan in raggy cut-offs, blackened feet in jandals, and my sister's Esprit chambray shirt, like some sort of street urchin. . . Well, she's so nice. Generous, open-minded, sweet and supportive. I remember when I told her that I didn't have my job in France because I was "married", she said that it was probably the mistress of the Chateau wanted me for her own. Random Emily fact: she met her husband in the teepee at Glastonbury. Probably more romantic than the Boiler Room at the Big Day Out.

Blue shirts. That reminds me, I was going to offer to take you men's shirt shopping, if you're still in the market for a blue men's shirt. I'm not expert but I do have two tips. Would you consider stripes?

Thanks so much for collaborating with me in Operation Parachute. You look absolutely stunning & utterly gorgeous in it, and I can't think of anyone who I'd like to have it more.

Sensitively,

Sb

Sb

Poem for a brainiac

The largest erogenous zone
Is the brain.
And yours, so big,
there must be room for me.

Some boys want your body,
But I'm not your ex-ex.
All I ever wanted,
to flounce across
your frontal cortex.

In a brain scan they'll see me,
glowing red,
red.
Your other wooers will beg me,
the way inside your head.

I wrote this after New Year's when I hadn't seen Megan for a couple of weeks, and I was resisting my urges. I was amazed when she txt'd me as I was finishing the poem. I told her that the most amazing thing just happened, I made something happen by writing a poem about it. She asked me what the poem was about, I said 'a sensitive subject.'

Sb

hi Megan

One project of my other little known projects is The Compliments Project. Basically if someone says something nice about someone else I send it onto that person.

Tia, the other Ph.D at DoC last night, said this about you:

*that if you were explaining Neuroscience to him you'd want him to understand,
whereas some other Neuroscientists would just be talking to themselves.*

Well, just letting you know. Hope you had a good night.

Sb

February 1, 2010

hey Emily:

I thought this might crack you up . .

Megan, the girl who I sold the white parachute dress to, a guy asked to paint a picture of her in it.



Megan has this thing where guys just want to woo her, whether they be selling her dresses or painting her in them. . . I guess it's quite cute really, especially since I'm content to drop the sadism and just be friends with her. Reminds me of this song:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GhO1XIDFqxE>

Hope spring is peeking in. Thanks again for the help with the store, can't believe you have a store every day, two weeks was enough for me!

Drus

Sb

break-up care package

8th of February, 2010

Dear Garrity:

I was trying to see a girl before Christmas, her name was Megan. She is a Neuroscientist, she's a mega-brain and was just finishing her Ph.D when I met her. She was also on a 'boytex', no time for trouble, not even 'good trouble.' I found this out on our second date; she wouldn't invite me in, until we sat in my car so long that the battery died and she kinda had to. I was staying out of town at the time, and had brought an overnight bag to stay at my place. When I walked into her house with the overnight bag, she said to me: "I feel so cheap", I presume because she thought I had presumed. I felt quite expensive, having dual residences, and all! Well she has a skylight above her bed and we woke up early, talked for hours and then went to breakfast at 3pm. During lunch she said that my eggs (poached) grossed her out, because she could only handle scrambled or an omelette. Discussing food is never a good sign, critically at least, in my experience. As we parted ways, walking her back to her house I wanted to yell: "Megan . . . you look gorgeous", just because doing unnecessary, nice things that make me slightly nervous is my new thing. I didn't do it, however.

Anyway I tell you this story because it was about the most exciting day of our relationship. We sent hundred of txts, and saw each other a few times, pashed once more. I think she was dating a few other guys, and every time I decided to end our courtship she'd txt me and I'd give it one more shot.

It must have been around this time that I came up with the idea of making a sexual drustration (oops Freudian typing slip) frustration mixtape. (I'm studying Art Therapy.) It features:

<i>Manhunt</i>	<i>Karen Kamon</i>
<i>Should I Stay Or Should I Go</i>	<i>The Clash</i>
<i>Stutter</i>	<i>Elastica</i>
<i>Tangled</i>	<i>Jane Wiedlin</i>
<i>I Hate Myself For Loving You</i>	<i>Joan Jett and the Blackhearts</i>
<i>Is she really going out with him?</i>	<i>Joe Jackson</i>
<i>You Belong With Me</i>	<i>Taylor Swift</i>
<i>Jessie's Girl</i>	<i>Rick Springfield</i>
<i>The Boys Of Summer</i>	<i>The Ataris</i>
<i>Lust in the Movies</i>	<i>The Long Blondes</i>
<i>Damn I Wish I Was Your Lover</i>	<i>Sophie B. Hawkins</i>
<i>good morning, captain</i>	<i>Slint</i>
<i>Infatuation</i>	<i>The Rapture</i>
<i>A Message to Pretty</i>	<i>Love</i>

<i>Beggin'</i>	<i>Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons</i>
<i>Looking for a Kiss</i>	<i>New York Dolls</i>
<i>Want U</i>	<i>Lo-Fi-Fnk</i>
<i>Destroy Everything You Touch</i>	<i>Ladytron</i>
<i>Talk Amongst Yourselves</i>	<i>Grand National</i>
<i>I Wanna Sex You Up</i>	<i>Colour Me Badd</i>
<i>I'm Straight</i>	<i>The Modern Lovers</i>
<i>Used To Be My Girl</i>	<i>O'Jays</i>
<i>Satisfaction</i>	<i>Rolling Stones</i>
<i>Don't Come Around Here No More</i>	<i>Tom Petty</i>
<i>Going Out of My Head</i>	<i>The Zombies</i>

How did I leave out *Nothing compares 2U*?

Well I was telling our mutual friend how I was puppy sitting a labrador puppy and that I offered to bring it to her lab. She said "you should move on." She is as blunt as I am sensitive, but maybe that's what I needed. Now when Megan txts I just feel friend-ness, and maybe she sends everyone 'ü's, that's nice if so. My only reason for frustration is that my CD burner is broken, so I can only send you this mix from another computer. However, song #1 made me think of Megan, in the beginning.

Otherwise, this is the cover photo of *Sexual Frustration*:



Yours Sincerely,

Drus Dryden

Dear Black Leather Motorcycle Jacket
or as I prefer to call you, 'Leather Jackie':

I am a Martin Margiela jacket, I've seen you around. It's funny, given my military styling, that I'm such a looooooover.

Well, I just wanted to say that I love your sexy rock'n'roll attitude. Bravado?! Bravo!!

See you around some other time, maybe. . . (I'm just trying to sound all hot but cool but devil-may-care, I believe the culinary term is 'simmering.' Did it work? You're the expert.)

Love From

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
⑩ 11 12 13 14 15 16
16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23

ps: I was perusing Australian Vogue recently and hit on this special on hi-cut black leather jackets . . . and I thought of you. I have enclosed it. You should slip it into one of your zip pockets. With the confidence of having a special report on your style, why you'll have even more swagger! Enough of my jibber-jabber!

Sb

19th of February, 2010

Dear Megan:

I have decided that a self-defence class is your prize from the bad relationship writing competition. The bodyguard instructor is in Valencia with Alinghi at the moment, but said he'd let me know when he's back.

I just thought it was sad how scared you looked once when I dropped you home, when you had to walk past some dudes to get to your door. I've been attacked and I know it's an awful feeling, being vigilant and anticipating threats before they come.

When I was a winemaker in France the guy I worked with had been taught self-defence by his dad, a French paratrooper, because he got beat on at school once. But he wouldn't teach me because he said it was too *dangereux*. Well it's *dangereux* not knowing how to defend yourself too.

XO,

Drus

Sb

Tuesday the 22nd of June, 2010

Dear Megan:

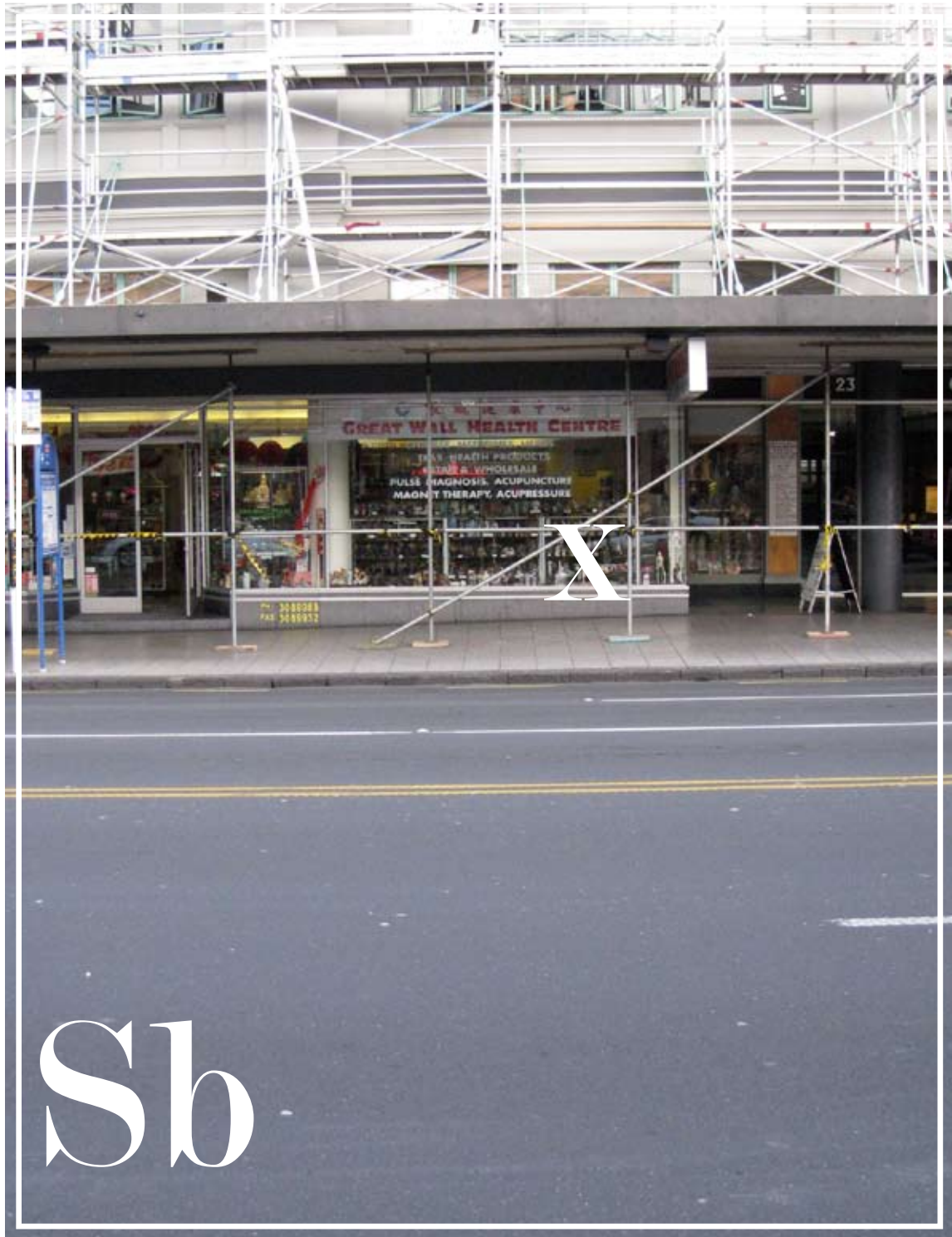
Will you miss your walks along K Road? Will you miss the pushers, the piss artists, the prozzers? I'm being unfair, there's more to K Road than D.O.C.

I was walking along K Road myself a couple of days ago. Something caught my eye in the window of the Chinese Medicine shop opposite St Kevin's Arcade, near the Starbucks. Do you want a souvenir to take with you? Look at the bottom right hand corner of the window. You can have the one on the left, I bags the right.

Have a great trip. I guess that doesn't really describe it, does it? Enjoy living your dreams.

Yours Sincerely,

Drus



Sb

Monday the 9th of August, 2010

Dear Megan:

I had a couple for ideas for pieces I could help you with for the writing competition about . . . the Human Mind:

1. the txt book

do you still have all your txts saved on your old phone? we could do that book/essay of txts, and a parallel narrative about the science of memory. or filling in the blanks to what the txts mean to you.

if you'd be willing i'd like to do this as an Sb thing anyway. as an Sb thing i'd probably just do the txts in chronological order, with a small explanation of the project. the sxters wouldn't be named.

2. goodbye letter re-write (i think this is my favourite)

i guess you need to write a few goodbye letters in the next month? you could write them / it 'scientifically', and then i could rewrite it, with added sensitivity. i'm not suggesting you couldn't be sensitive in writing yourself, simply that it is quite time consuming to write sensitively, and you're rich in subject and sentiment but poor in time. it has occurred to me that it might be easier to write sensitively on the part of someone else, than to have to describe one's own inarticulate emotions.

i like how this would step into fiction, but might be able to say some of the things we can't say, and not because they're not true.

it could be one 2000 word letter. is there anyone special who you think would appreciate a very touching letter? someone who's missingness might be helped a little by a letter that arrives the day after you leave?

you wouldn't necessarily have to send this letter after it was written. i rarely send the letters i write any more. i was thinking of sending them all at once in December. i could break this rule and send the one i've written to you, as the start of a story. i can't see where the story would go, but as the replier i guess only you could.

3. a 'how we know each other' story
you write 1000 words on how you know me & vice versa, we don't show each other but send them to the competition together.

3. b 'how we know each other' story
we reconstruct the story of how we know each other through alternate (you - then - me) memories in chronological order. you would send one to me, and then i would reply, and so on . .

4. separation training
you could write me / other friends letters from K Road as if it is a foreign country. so ready us for when you leave.

5. goodbye presents
as a gift designer, i often think of goodbye presents, so could think of a couple for you. the writing could be your response to them. they could be letters to me, or an explanation for our in-joke, a scientific response rationally evaluating them, like the text an art exhibition catalogue, whatever you wanted.

6. break-up letter to NZ
i was talking to someone, Jessie, yesterday about leaving London. she was saying that she's breaking up with London and it might never get over her. how she's breaking up with London, even though the relationship totally works, and they love each other, but it's not meant to be forever. anyway, you could write a break up letter to NZ.

otherwise since you've only got a month or so left in town, and probably a million things to do, don't pressure yourself into doing it if you don't have time. if you have time i'm more interested in writing something interesting, and possibly useful in its own right, than aiming to win the competition, alone. i find it much easier to be motivated that way.

From,

Drus

I'm not the shit on the bottom of your shoes.
I'm not sure I want to be the polish, either.

Shoeshine. A short story.

How about I polish yours and you polish mine?

Sb

Auckland

8th of January, 2010

Dear Madelame:

I was thinking lately about your apology letter to me, the one you sent to Bridget. I've been writing a lot of letters, some of them apology letters. Some of them love letters. Some of them thank you letters. Some of them long letters. Some of them . . . you get the idea. I haven't written one in my own blood yet, but that's probably coming.

I guess I was the writer in our creative team, I thought I would take the liberty of rewriting your apology letter. That way it might actually be addressed to me.

It's summer now, maybe this reminds me of you. Also I am writing this to enter us into a creative writing competition. Actually, I don't need to justify why I'm doing this.

As I was saying, I have re-written your letter. If you wish you can sign it and return it, you may do so, to the following address:

AUT NZ Creative Writing Competition
Response Bag 500095
Dunedin 9054
New Zealand

It has to be there by the 31st of January if we are to win this creative challenge.

D

Sociopath

London

8th of January, 2010

Dear Drus

I am writing to apologize to you. I don't really know where to start. I am such a jerk. Let me explain why.

Do you remember that time you brought a jar of Marmite around the world for me, and then I complained that it wasn't big enough? You had brought yourself across London to deliver it, thinking that if you talked to me about whatever my problem was, you would be able to make it better. Maybe that was your mistake, to think that you could make me reasonable through kindness. One thing you probably realize now is that you can't make people do what you want, and why would you want to anyway? Let other people ruin their own lives. My flatmate answered the door when you got to my house, he told you that Kelly (the girl who I had rented out the room you were paying for to) and you were at a singles ball. You gave him the Marmite and left.

I'm sorry about the time that I told Christophe to call you at midnight. It was sick that way I tried to come between you and your friends. They should have been supporting you, but somehow I managed to convince them to hang out with me. Despite them knowing full well how badly I had been treating you. Well, that is my passion after all, coming between friends.

I'm sorry about the time you came around to my house and I made that display of hugging you in front of Derek and my boyfriend and calling you 'my best friend.' I am such a dick. Why can't I be humble?

I'm sorry about the time that I saw you with your father near the Embankment and as I rode off I shouted 'Don't be a stranger', as if I had no reason to feel guilty about how badly I had treated you. As if it was you who was acting strangely by being hurt by a campaign of meanness and treachery by someone you had given everything to. Actually I'm sorry I even talked to you at all that day, I have so much gall. You should have said something witty, like "sorry MJessieine, we're on a father-son picnic. . . Fathers and sons only."

I'm sorry that I'm proud, that I would rather destroy a friendship than let it change. I'm sorry that I let my jealousy triumph over your kindness.

I'm sorry I manipulated you into working with me in the first place, using my friendship because you knew that I would help someone who seemed to be in trouble.

That time I had a party and I invited you. . Your Swedish girlfriend asked you why you would go, why leave yourself open to getting hurt again. I guess you just wanted to prove you weren't hurt, or were hoping that somehow the great lump of hate that was blocking your heart might move on a little bit if you came. Instead the lump got bigger, more stubborn. I said loudly, proudly that success in life depended on how much you could manipulate people. You must have felt like saying: "hey flatmates, boyfriend, brother, that's something to look forward to, some manipulation." When my flatmate answered the door, she seemed like a sweet Australian girl, she knew who you were because of whatever I had said about you. She must have realized it wasn't true when I spent the entire night being self-centred, obnoxious, so obviously defensive. Are you glad you didn't use my toothbrush to clean the toilet bowl, when you went to the bathroom? On one level you're not actually mean enough to do the things that you might think of, but more importantly you probably realize how unfulfilling revenge actually is, how you just feel lonely at the end, that there isn't really any true catharsis.

Because even this letter can't be completely depressing, I'm sorry that I think fart jokes are so funny. You deserved a better level of humour throughout the time we had together.

It's so sad that we spent so much time together but I spent it trying to beat you down, one nasty little thing after another, while you spent it trying to get us through it. You're lucky it finally ended, although you must wish there was another way it could have happened. Maybe sooner, like that time that you checked my account balance that I said was \$0 which was actually \$5000. I went so far as to prove it to you when I was at an ATM, printing out only one of my balances. You probably fantasise about running away when you did that, without saying a word, never saying another word to me ever again. But even then you quietly carried on. Maybe you were so used to being with someone with so many hideous faults that one more didn't bother you. Maybe you didn't even notice any more. The only reason you knew my real balance because I had given you my card to go and buy me dinner when I was sick in bed.

I'm sorry I refused to honour the bet of one bottle of Champagne about whether or not Jenny's engagement to that Welsh guy would last. I guess it is satisfaction enough for you to see them walking down your street sometimes with, I mean satisfaction not in winning the bet but in seeing people succeed and be happy and being happy for them.

I hope you're happy. That you don't let people take advantage of your good heart and goodness and kindness. Please don't give up on people, I hope you meet someone who can give you as much as you give them. That is what you deserve. It will take bravery to trust people after you've known someone like me. Perhaps it is some consolation that you will be able to love so much more deeply if you still propose love as the answer. Love yourself deeply too.

Good luck and well wishes for something most delicious.

From your former business associate & friend with benefits (benefits include having your life ruined),
Madelame

Sb

Auckland

15th of January, 2009

Dear Madelame:

I was thinking about why I'm still angry at you five years later. You're so vagina-centric I'm sure you would put it down to the sex. I had blocked out the sex in our day-to-day life and I never think of it now. I remember a conversation we had, early on, when I said that I could divorce myself from it, act like it wasn't happening. You assured me that it definitely was.

When finally telling people how much you were screwing me around didn't seem to have any catharsis . . . and the people I've told since probably just get the bad friend stories, not the bad sex ones. For some reason the time you said 'let's pretend we're strangers' around the time I'd walked in on you about to sex an actual stranger sticks in my mind. More than the time you sexed Nick on the front lawn at the party on my birthday, because he had a girlfriend and needed to prove that you could still have him.

How did I ever put up with this? Because I was so determined? Because I was so used to it, from my mother, from my OCD? Because I just block out the bad bits, instead of doing something to address them?

But yes, maybe it was as simple as being screwed over sexually by anyone, whilst letting it happen, and along with all the other crap that went along with knowing you. Maybe I need to admit that is what happened, and with it admit that the sex actually happened. That it's as simple as getting played. Maybe you're not the only one who was proud. It's hard to admit that someone has so little respect for you, that they almost won't acknowledge that you have any feelings whatsoever. What sort of person could treat their friend like that? Someone like you.

I just watched a re-run of The Apprentice, from the series we used to watch together. The Donald had to either fire the girl who was rude or the girl who took crap from the girl being rude, instead of giving it back. The girl who took it got fired. Being so angry for so long has been my double punishment for knowing you. The second punishment, which has gone on much longer than knowing you did, is the one I have to lift. But I have a pretty good reason:

I want my life to begin again.

from

Drus

Sb

18th of January, 2010

Dear Charlotte:

I'm just writing to thank you for having *Sensitive boyfriend* on your radio show. I was totally terrified before coming in, but with you and Leah it was fun.

I was thinking about your question about Madelame, the Brutus of my heart. I was going to write out the full story, but it's so long and for one reason or another I was resisting it. One of the ways that writing is good for these things is that you can simplify and simplify until a quite complicated situation gets simplicated. Often it's so obvious you hadn't thought of it before. In this case, my subconscious released this:

“Don't sleep with your friends. Especially when they're not exactly acting like your friend.
And then don't try to stay friends with them afterwards.”

Life is actually quite simple, Madelame & I's psychic said that to me once. Then without the menace with which this remark could be spoken, she said: “I want to remove your brain!”

I hope your piano playing friend liked his piano key necklace. Thinking about piano players took me back to the advice my piano teacher gave to me: imagine you're holding bubbles (as in soap bubbles not MJ's chimp) in your hands when you play. I hope all piano players hold their lovers like that too. To the piano bar!

sensitively,

Sb

Sb

London

16th of January, 2009

Dear Drus:

I wanted to write to you to ask you to please not give up on people, I hope you meet someone who can give you as much as you give them. That is what you deserve. It will take bravery to trust people after you've known someone like me. Perhaps it is some consolation that you will be able to love so much more deeply if love's still your answer. Love yourself deeply too.

I'm sorry and good luck.

From your old friend,

Madelame

XO,

Sb

Sb

18th of January, 2010

Dear Jessie:

I was thinking about how I said 'thank you' *après* sex. It just came out, involuntarily. Maybe I should get one of those sex-gag things, you know, like a big red snooker ball.

I want to tell you that, going around with you last week, I felt my heart opening. A little more every time you smile your gorgeous smile, which seems like most of the time. Or pursed your lips and looked down, and right to left with mischief eyes. On the beach in your 50's delinquent outfit, in a park in a hiking tee, on a balcony in a cape. Eating pies or peanut slabs or tasting like Champagne. Especially in 4am chats. I've never been so open with someone I've known for a couple of days, but then *danger* always did bring people closer together.

And I think that deserves a 'thank you.' Around you, La Preciosa, hearts can't quit.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX,

ps

You know how we talked about your fear of mortality. Have you considered that along with being nuclear powered, you may be immortal? I have written a letter to your parents; you haven't got a monopoly on mischief, you know. Do you think I should send it? Or just put it on my wall? It basically says "thank you" for bring someone so wonderful into the world. Maybe one day you'll do the same.

Sb

16th of January, 2009

Dear Hillary & Pete,



Recently, I was lucky enough to see in Auckland, and was reminded what a beautiful, serious, inspiring woman she is. Reminded? It is stick. There are times around her when I feel that ap- appropriate to compare her to a pack-horse. Olympic weight lifter, some of her more daring outfits, for example. It has been said that the reason weight lifters grunt like they do is because they know they will never wear them with her aplomb.

Absentmindedly this morning, I was wondering who she got all this from . . .

I guess you haven't got a report on Jessie for a while and you'd appreciate this glowing one. She should definitely be allowed to go out tonight because of it.

Sincerely,

D

i just spoke to my friend, Jessie's flatmate in London. it's Friday night, Jessie is out partying and the letter, wet from the rain, is downstairs. my friend recognised the handwriting, which some people say is nice. i am often nervous when i'm writing postal addresses, i don't know why. this time i was very nervous. i've been worrying all week about how it's going to be read. my friend offered to intercept or, hilariously, repost it when Jessie might be feeling less hungover on Monday. but i left it.

bg

Hi D,

It's been so long since I've written a proper letter or even email, I can't really remember how they start?

Got back to the flat yesterday with the worst hangover of my life, after waking up (in typical Jessie fashion) on a couch of some people I'd met the night before - luckily they were really lovely people (I fell mildly in love with one of them, Alice, as she had the best stories, mostly about her adopted abandoned dogs) - so while i was feeling a bit perturbed about the fact that I'd ended up at some random's house, the fact that they were amazing made it kind of cool. I dunno - I guess I just love to hate my wildness. Or hate to love it? Both probably.

Anyway, i got back to the flat to find your letter, and well, it was really beautiful and it made me really happy. Letters are so amazing how they arrive, but with a time delay, out of sync with all the other communication.

I was so touched by everything you said... i have lots of stuff I want to say to you. I'm not so good as you at the beautiful compliments... You'll just have to guess them maybe. I want to say thank you to you as well, for how you made me feel, for being so kind, sweet and generous. I know what you mean about our 4am chats... I told you stuff I've never told anyone, and i haven't been that open with anyone so quickly either... You made me feel so comfortable for some reason, that I was able to tell you stuff. Somehow I felt like I could say anything and that it wouldn't matter...

I've been thinking quite a bit about stuff you said, about not being totally happy at the moment, and it makes me so sad to think of. I know you'll work it all out, and you'll be okay. You have a new friend now, and I can be a pretty good friend, so... well I hope somehow our 4am chats can continue... in some form or other.

It's been okay being back in London - I had a great day in Brick lane with my friend Jessi today, one of the days that reminds me why I LOVE london so much. We cavorted in the vintage stores and she convinced me to buy this bright red lace 80s prom dress, just for the hell of it. It's not as cold as predicted and there are lots of fun parties coming up... but i am pretty convinced I am going to leave at the end of the year -maybe melbourne, maybe Auckalofa. It feels like I am finally ready to quit europe... maybe maybe.

xxxx Jessie

p.s. Here's a compliment. I like your dress sense. I even pointed out a guy in Brick lane today who had your style and said to my friend "that guy has 'D' style."

jessie

Jessie is a beautiful girl I was involved with last summer. Although not perfect, she was a relief after Megan. She's been living in London, but is moving home to New Zealand any day now, if not already. She makes me nervous, not just because I like her, but because she is a Mughal, marauding on the plains of desire. She is a rambunctious Pirate of the heart.



Sb

18th of January, 2010

Dear Jessie:

I was thinking about how I said 'thank you' après sex. It just came out, involuntarily. Maybe I should get one of those sex-gag things, you know, like a big red snooker ball.

I want to tell you that, going around with you last week, I felt my heart opening. A little more every time you unleashed your gorgeous smile. Or pursed your lips and looked down, and right to left with mischief eyes. On the beach in your 50's delinquent outfit, in a park in a hiking tee, on a balcony in a cape. Eating pies or peanut slabs or tasting like Champagne. Especially in 4am chats. I've never been so open with someone I've known for a couple of days, but then *danger* always did bring people closer together.

And I think that deserves a thank you. Around you, La Preciosa, hearts can't quit.

XOXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX,

ps:

You know how we talked about your fear of mortality . . . have you considered that along with being nuclear powered, you may be immortal? I have written a letter to your parents; you haven't got a monopoly on mischief, you know. Do you think I should send it? Or just put it on my wall? It basically says "thank you" for bringing someone so wonderful into the world. Maybe one day you'll do the same.

Sb

16th of January, 2010

Dear Hillary & Pete,



Recently, I was lucky enough to see in Auckland, and was reminded what a beautiful, brilliant, utterly charming, vivacious, inspiring woman she is. Reminded? It is written across the inside of my skull in magenta lipstick. There are times around Jessie when I feel the burden of life lifting, this is the one time I think it appropriate to compare her to a pack-horse. There are a few more occasions to compare her to an Olympic weightlifter. Some of her more daring outfits, for example, although they dream of wearing them with her elegance.

Absentmindedly this morning, I was wondering who she got all this from . . .

I guess you haven't got a report on Jessie for a while and you'd appreciate this glowing one. She should definitely be allowed to go out tonight because of it, ha.

Sincerely,

Drus Dryden

Sb

19th of February, 2010

Dear Jessie:

I know. Because I feel the same way.

It's hard thinking of the right thing to say, from so faraway. It's hard wanting someone you don't really know, mainly knowing you want more of them.

Rozzy helped me figure out something more about you though . . . you're a bit of a mystery wrapped enigma yourself, you know. We were talking about Kat, Rozzy said from living with her she just realised that Kat was just a really lovely girl. And I was like 'yes. . . that's what Jessie's like too!' I know you it's not your favourite adjective, and you're many others besides. Even if it's not the first thing one thinks when one meets you, that would be 'who *IS* that girl?', I think it's one of the truest.

There's a funny story about being called lovely. An Irish guy I knew was with an Asian girl. She said to him: "Mike, you're lovely." He said: 'thanks.' She said: 'No, you're LOVELY. U-G-L-Y.' Lol.

I'm just happy I got to go round with you, period. I loved Jessie Week.

Don't worry about Auckland or London or wherever. You're doing great in London and you'd do great in Auckland. Planning is for the poor and you're rich in time and talent and charm-ed-ness. Just have fun, immediately. As I remember you're quite good at that.

From your friend, covered in puppy slobber,
from an actual puppy, it's not my own,

Drus Dryden

ps this is a poem about missing-ness, he's got it worse than you or I. But at least he has a nice maroon dressing gown! x

I've got to tell you
how I love you always
I think of it on grey
mornings with death

in my mouth the tea
is never hot enough
then and the cigarette
dry the maroon robe

chills me I need you
and look out the window
at the noiseless snow

At night on the dock
the buses glow like
clouds and I am lonely
thinking of flutes

I miss you always
when I go to the beach
the sand is wet with
tears that seem mine

although I never weep
and hold you in my
heart with a very real
humor you'd be proud of

mornings

frank o'hara

the parking lot is
crowded and I stand
rattling my keys the car
is empty as a bicycle

what are you doing now
where did you eat your
lunch and were there
lots of anchovies it

is difficult to think
of you without me in
the sentence you depress
me when you are alone

Last night the stars
were numerous and today
snow is their calling
card I'll not be cordial

there is nothing that
distracts me music is
only a crossword puzzle
do you know how it is

when you are the only
passenger if there is a
place further from me
I beg you do not go



Friday the 19th of March, 2010

Dear Emma:

A day or so after I was telling you I was embracing my bachelorhood, I totally forgot I was and started pining again. I was with someone over summer but then they went back to Europe.

Europe + summer surely equals romance. These are some European pick up lines that I've heard recently:

do you want to come and see my stamp collection? (Hungary.)

I want to lick the sweat off your body. (Sweden.)

And if they don't work, I have enclosed a long, thin French séducturette.

And if that doesn't work, how about (beauty in simplicity) offering him some pineapple lumps? When you think about it Pineapple lumps are New Zealand's most exotic flavour. Aren't you some kind of exotic NZ flavour?

May I also recommend acting like you know a secret no one else knows? The metaphor which I heard for acting like that, this week, was 'being a cat.'

It won't be long.

love from,

Drus

Sensitive everything

Sb

Tuesday the 9th of March, 2010

Dear Howard:

A group of Auckland friends, myself included, really miss our friend Jessie, who has been in London for about five years now. She's thinking of coming home, but then she always says she is.

I have conceived a micro-campaign to convince New Zealanders living in the UK to come home. Hence why I thought you & 100% Pure might be interested. But instead of targetting all New Zealanders in London, it will target one in particular. The jewel in the crown, Jessie Healy. Jessie is exactly the sort of person New Zealand needs back. Young, highly educated, impossibly talented, impeccable fashion sense, a hot-blooded dancer . . . Jessie was a loan, not a give.

Examples of how it would work, off the top of my head. These aren't final ideas, just hypothetical examples:

wemissjessie.co.nz

a website for people who miss Jessie. It would feature assorted Jessities, such as a fictional blog about what's going on in Adele's (her pseudonym) London life, or a 'what would Jessie do?' advice column, or something as simple as sound bites of Jessie. As well as serious information about incentives for Kiwis to move home.

street posters

posters placed on Jessie's way to work, or around her home in North London, or at her tube stop, or in her bathroom. Posters would use personal info about her from Facebook updates, flatmate goss etc. They'd be updated weekly.

bar advertising

Jessie is known to frequent a bar or two. So we would target her in this environment, where she is vulnerable to emotional appeals. Perhaps we could drop a few cases of 'we miss Jessie' brand wine into her local? Or finally set up the 'goodbye Jessie' pop-up bar, which exists for a week. . . it's where you go for your last London drink with Jessie.

Facebook group

'I bet we can get at least 15 people & 3 cats & a dog called Chopstick who want Jessie to move back to NZ', a parody of the 'If 100000 people sign up to this I will name my kid Lion Red' groups.

direct mail

a letter from John Key selling New Zealand to Jessie

I'm emotionally involved with this idea. Objectively, what do you think of it? I think it's so sublimely ridiculous that it might get some press, which would pay back any small investment in the website, pop-up bar etc. Also if other people want their friends to come home, they could be targeted in a similar way.

Sensitively,

Drus

Sn

sending Summer

Tuesday the 16th of March, 2010

Dear



&



It was lovely to see both of you over summer. Alas summer too is ready to leave, so I'm sending it to you. Please find popsicles sticks, sand, paper faded by the sun, the scent of sunscreen, Pohutakawa blossoms, beer caps and whatever else, enclosed. Have fun together, you three. Don't forget to send it back when it's time. Or however else you want to get it back here.

So . . . I was trying to get my aunt in London to write to you guyettes. She has a romantic story that I thought you might like. She was in London in the seventies, about our age I guess. She told a Londoner, Jim, that she was thinking of going home. He told her he'd buy her a drink before she did. She still hasn't left, but Jim keeps buying her drinks anyway. Some people just can't take a hint, lol.

No one really talks about anything in my family, and maybe that's why I'm such a G I G A N T I C gossip. Curiosity, it's natural. If you guys hear any carefree, summery goss, maybe you should tell my aunt, Vicki, and then she can pass it on to me. You'll be helping us to learn to gossip, I mean communicate better. She is on:

vbayley@jetease.co.uk

or

34 Raymond Avenue, South Woodford, London E18 2HG

or

0208 530 4593

ZUMBA!,

Drus

Sensitive nephew

Sb

Friday the 7th of May, 2010

Dear Neighbour of Jessie:

As I have been writing this I have heard a scooter drive past. Now a car, it's been raining. My computer makes a very low buzz. At my family's beach house, three hours from Auckland, when one wakes you can hear the sound of the waves. But soon after sight takes over as the primary sense. The clear light, the seventies browns, the grass, the sky, the sea, the beach. Perhaps hearing is the primary sense in London. There's so much to hear, but not much to look at. Apart from Jessie. But I guess for the most part you only hear her.

I love tranquility as much as the next peacenik. But I only appreciate it after I'm away from here. In this way I occasionally declare a war of the senses, and I've heard whispers that you might like a truce.

Let me speak plainly: I would like to propose a house swap between us. I am the occupant of a very quiet house, on a quiet street, in a quiet corner of the world. New Zealand. If it's not remote enough for you, the beach house is yours too. Yours is a belligerent city, with those four boisterous young ladies besides you. One of the reasons it's so quiet here is because they're there.

Think about it.

Yours sincerely,

Drus

ps I also like massage, do you? There are three masseuses conveniently located near my house.

Sb

Thursday the 20th of May, 2010

Dear Neighbour of Jessie:

A buddhist monk, John, asked me to look at whatever was in front of me in London. A rat, an armpit on the bus, a watermelon in summer, a brick. He asked me not see that, but to see the space around it.

Is there ever a gentler, more sensitive creature than your neighbour? Listen carefully one starry night, one soft, billowy morning, for something only the two of you can hear. Perhaps the only way to balance these exquisite quiet moments, is with THE ROOF-TOP DISCOTECA. I know what it is to have to wait for a tender whisper, most audible at 4am. She may make you wait, but it is worth it.

Jessie once called me from London, early one Sunday morning. She began loud but later, suddenly, her voice faded. In a couple of minutes, into silence. Jessie says she might be leaving you, and the noise of London, to come home to New Zealand. If she does, may she softly lower the volume for you too.

Yours sincerely,

DD

Sb

Thursday the 20th of May, 2010

Dear Neighbour:

Listen for the beauty in their laughter, her screams of delight are the sound of summer, of joy, of youth, of love, of life. You don't resent your other neighbor, the Tennessee chicken shop, for its aroma of chicken.

Yours sincerely,

DD

Sb

Thursday the 20th of May, 2010

Dear Neighbour of Jessie:

Yours sincerely,

DD

Sb

Tuesday the 13th of July, 2010

Dear Jessie:

You know how on our last night together, you said I could do anything with you? That was in January, and I've just thought of what I want to do. I'd tell you what it is, but I'd rather just show you.

I know you don't like mystery, but I love torturing you. Compromise is the basis of every good relationship, so I'll give you some clues.

1. It involves stars.
2. It is very dangerous. Do not hurt me.
3. You will need your clothes.
4. I am reading a book called *Men in Love: male secret sexual fantasies* at the moment, my fantasy is further out than all of the ones I've read so far. I'm up to chapter fourteen, the second to last chapter was "She made me do it", ha. If anyone asks how we ended up doing this I'm going to use that as my defence.
5. The book says some fantasies should stay fantasies. This is not one of those. Or is it? When you do it by yourself, it never works. I've never dared to do it with anyone else. Will it work? It's impossible to know! You have to trust me. Let's just take it slow. See clue #2.
6. It is all I think about. Now that I've thought about it, there's just so many details to take care of. Like I was wondering if there should be a drinks break at half way.

You said I could do anything. You can do anything, too. I believe in you completely.

xo,

Drus

Sb

August 9, 2010

cara Jessie

it's a pity you don't like my typewriter, because it obviously has a thing for you. i was testing it out and just chose a random key to press and when i looked at the page it was



maybe you should go to your 'J' party as my hipster typewriter?
how is your wasp sting?

about moving home: maybe the reason why you're stressing is because you're trying to work out in advance whether or not it's going to be the right thing to do. of course you can't know what will happen, and there is no right thing to do. without sounding callous, what we do is quite insignificant. the world's in control of us, not the other way round. we're lucky to be able to make choices at all.

sure you'll miss your LDN friends, but you won't have to miss the people who love you in NZ. maybe there are less jobs, but you're really talented at what you do, so you'll either work something out, or do your own thing and not need to rely on anyone except yourself. i believe in you and want to tell you not to be afraid of changing. you're lucky in that you have a choice to change, in the same way that i'm lucky in that i don't want to wake up in a tree in London.

talking to you makes me remember what i miss about you, when you p . h . m . s .
please don't say that you have blanks about talking to me, because i never want to hear anyone say that to me ever again.
that said, you sound cute when you sleep.

xo,

Drus

So

dearest jessie,

the typewriter ribbon i have so desperately waited for from london has finally arrived.

and i can now converse with you in a suitably fashionable fashion.

but what's this i hear? at precisely the moment i devise the means to converse with you, you inform me that you won't be calling me again? oh cruel irony. oh cool, irony.

i'll answer your questions, one by one. . .
i just checked, and there is only really one question, repeated multiple times for dramatic effect. la vie vie reclusive, well maybe it started when i stopped sending letters for a while. i still write them, but was going to send them en masse at the end of the year. but then i stopped writing letters, too.

i have also ended a number of friendship,
this winter. they have been on life support
for years, but i finally killed them. not
lingering deaths. only one awkward thing has hap-
-ened so far, when ed came around to my house
uninvited, like he usually does. i didn't answer
the door. i knew it was him & since he knocked on
doors with his car keys, making a knock with a
touch of malice.

but also maybe it has come into fashion
to hibernate for the winter. i notice that a lot
of people are staying indoors two weeks ago,
other people have started doing it.

other people have started doing it.

but mainly it's just winter. and i have a lot
of work to do.

speaking of work, i should probabli
do some.

besos,

drus



can't you guys see what they're doing?
as soon as american apparel goes
bankrupt, all stock will instantly
become vintage..
they will make a fortune on ebay..
it's like some sort of james bond
villain scam double_cross.

jessie,a
i was at a talk yesterday by a london
social media guy, nik roope? he did
the shoreditch bakery tweet if you
know that. pokelondon.com
anyway, maybe you should ask him
if he met anyone from any sm comp-
anies while he was here.
he also did the global rich list.

am i nappy? i actually have a curious
way of measuring that. and i was happier
before i went out on saturday night than
i was the next morning. i can't be sure it was
her but a girl who i was seeing briefly
a couple of years ago was trying to confront
me about something. and i don't thrive
on confrontation. i had written something
about her which she said had embarrassed
her.

i think she was trying to do the same
to me. shes pretty creepy. both pretty
and creepy. mostly the latter.

im working on an exhibition for Novem-
ber. also my master's due then. the ex-
hibition is of bed linen and a breakfast
-in-bed cafe.

what other stories are there from your
party? have a fun last day.

well i have to go to an audition.
its for another commercial. its
not a hister role, but im sure
once they see how good i am at
typing, theyll consider me for that

une bise

drus

ps so hot right now

youtube.com/
watch?v=k7X7sZzSXYs

mat & kristy,



Mat and Kristy (aka the Smuggles) are a couple, who I know because they are friends with my friend Rozzy. They are corporate lawyers and are more than a little bit like Paul Henry, the TVNZ presenter who was fired for getting ratings up, I mean being an offensive cock. They're also besties with Jessie, they set me up with her at the start of the year.

& jessie

September '07

Hi Mat

Kristy said that you don't like Wilco much. And that she didn't really know much Wilco. I have a deep personal connection to Wilco, due as much to the time of my life when I first heard Jeff Tweedy's tender voice. So who better to try and win you over than I?

It was my American girlfriend in France who first introduced me to Wilco.

No I lie, my favourite film genre is the Music Documentary and bored one day in 2003ish I went to see the Wilco documentary. Not knowing the band, the opening credits playing 'I'm trying to break your heart' (track 1) had me at 'hello.' The documentary is about the band's struggle to release their most critically and commercially successful album, which their record company said was unlistenable.

Anyway my American girlfriend in France had this album. I would txt her lyrics like 'I want to hold you in the bible black pre-dawn', she would act like she didn't like it. But if she couldn't have Jeff Tweedy she'd take a Jeff-Tweedy-talking New Zealand boyfriend in his place. She doesn't have a mobile phone anymore and even if she did you probably can't txt to America.

When I hear these songs I am taken back to my American girlfriend's dorm room, at the Teacher's College in the 'armpit of France.' Sixties beige on eighties beige, ancient bloodstains on the former boarding school sheets, an inch of dust on the floor that we'd occasionally move around but could never remove, drinking champagne out of jars. I was staying there illegally, next to her in her single bed. We would joke that I knew what it was like to be in the French resistance, always hiding from the authorities. Until one morning she forgot to put out her rubbish bin and the cleaning lady with cancer (not the one with the bug eye) walked in on us. Busted! (Incidentally, 'busted' in American means someone who is slightly fugly. As in 'the cleaning lady's face is busted.')

Radio Cure- song #9 is the soundtrack to this. Slow, implacable, will it ever end? 'Distance has a way of making love understandable.' Track 4 & 7 are new Wilco songs to me.

As a romantic gesture I bought Rebecca (American Girlfriend) Wilco's latest album in the last month before we left France. I was like: 'do you know how I knew you'd like this album...BECAUSE THEY'RE LIKE YOUR FAVOURITE BAND!' Track 10 is the opening track from that album, I love what happens at 2:10. This album cover is a picture of an egg.

As an even more romantic gesture I tried to run away to Paris with her one night when Wilco were playing the Elysée-Montmatre, but she had to go to a job interview in the opposite direction. She didn't have a working visa, so she didn't get past the first question.

If you don't like any of the Wilco songs I have included a Lenny Kravitz song at the end of the mix-tape. Because I told Rebecca that Lenny was my favourite artist and as she has quite low standards for her French contemporaries, she believed me. Thanks Rebecca for lending me your Wilco album.

From,

Drus

Sb

Tuesday the 17th of March, 2010

dear Kristy:

Jessie & i are forbidden to flirt, and the *We miss Jessie* proposal is a bit flirtilicious, so don't tell her about it.

it's hard for me because i think of things that i want to send her, like the tour of my body, or posting Colour me badd on her wall, but it's too flirty. because it's emotionally crazy for everyone. and i'm not sure me liking her would a good idea if she was here anyway. she's a wild stallion, whatever a wild lady horse is called. a fine philly? that doesn't mean i wouldn't bet everything (including Brad, our faithful manservant) on her at the races . . . but until I can, there's really not much point thinking about it.

i think it's quite dangerous trying to convince people to move home. of course she misses here and you. and mince'n'cheese pies. but she has to make up her own mind. her life's been away from here for so long. i had to come home, and it still took me ages to adjust, even though i really hate traveling and rootlessness. and bidets. it's hard being serious and responsible, because it's boring. (Jessie makes me more serious for some reason, although it may be because she also makes me hungover.) but it's better than never learning anything.

in the words of Margot Tenenbaum:

"I think we're just gonna to have to be secretly in love with each other and leave it at that."

sigh xo,

Drus

ps: Kat put me & Emil on the same party invitation - like we were bumming.

Sb

Tuesday the 17th of April, 2010

Dear Kristy:

I thought that was such an amazing idea you had for my 30th birthday present. That everyone should let me bum them. I was wondering if I could count on you to organise it for me? My birthday is on the 14th of May, so you've got a bit of time before then.

Hmmm, some house-keeping issues:

However it might be a bit exhausting for me to bum everyone on the same day, so I was wondering if it might be a better idea to stagger people over a couple of days or a week. That way I will be able to fit every one in, and vice versa, and no one will feel 'bummed' out.

Although you and I know that bumming like this wouldn't really be a 'serious' thing, maybe not everyone would be clear about that. Maybe you need to get permission from some peoples' boyfriends or girlfriends? And if they were single, it would have to be made perfectly clear that just because I'm single too, it probably wouldn't lead to anything. It's a fun birthday bum, let's keep it that way!

Thanks so much Kristy. I'm really hard to buy presents for, because I've got such amazing taste. The great thing about bums is that everyone has one, so everyone can be a part of this. This is going to be really special, this is going to be the best birthday present ever!

((,

Drus

Sb

Wednesday the 21st of April, 2010

Dear Mat,

These are some of the reasons I think you'd make a great wife.

You're very beautiful.

You're so grounded and sensible, but also fun fun fun.

You've got enchanting perfume. Well, I do now . . .

You're very thoughtful. I loved it when you left the flowers in my car door & the perfume bottle on my bedside table.

You know how to small-talk in Thai.

Actually this is probably a list of you're a great person.

You're a silky, sweet lover. (Ok, maybe that's more of a wifey quality.)

You're a healthy eater, your husband will strive to cook you the healthiest brekkies in bed.

You look great in bandannas. Whatever your gang is, I want to join.

I love that thing about you how you're really open to stuff and people somehow know it. I am too. I hope lots of lovely people find you like you found me.

Happy birthday.

Love from,

Drus

Sb

Wednesday the 21st of April, 2010

Dear Mat,

Happy 31st birthday.

I got you a word. Mattitude. I define Mattitude by its opposite, Catitude.

From,

Drus

Sb

Monday the 16th of August, 2010

Dear Kristy:

Instead of you getting your tattoo lasered for the wedding, why don't you get Matt to get a matching one, and then cut a hole in his white shirt, over it. That is the sort of wedding I want to go to.

The best wedding advice I have heard is that you should treat it as a party, not a play. Who cares if you are a little overweight, more for Mat to love, or that you have a tattoo. When I worry about things like that before an occasion, like I did before your engagement party, it's because something else is bothering me. Figure out whatever that might be, and you'll have way more fun than any of the other pissy wisps in white this summer. Think about what your tattoo means, for me it is your mischievousness, which is probably how you met your fiancé.

I also think it would be funny if the donkey is one of the groomsmen. After this stirring ode to love, acceptance and partnership, you'll probably want me to be a groomsman, but I think the donkey is more photogenic. In my mind he is the Brad of donkeys.

Also blondes have more fun, with there being one obvious exception to that rule.

Sincerely,

Drus

ps will there be sixteen down-trowels before dinner at your wedding?

Sb

Monday the 14th of August, 2010

Dear Kristy:

I'm just writing to ask you not to discuss my private life in public any more. I don't mind it so much, I know you're just an overgrown teenage girl. I'm asking you on behalf of my Johnson. He feels like falling off every time you ask me a question which only time can answer. And that shall truly be the end of any private life discussions, if that happens.

xo,

Drus
Sb

Sb

PRESS RELEASE

Monday the 16th of August
for immediate release

In response to unprecedented demand for information on my personal life, I've taken an uncharacteristic decision for such a private person: to dish full and intimate details. I hope this answers some of your questions. If not, please address them to me in writing.

- Drus

Hellen came over the other night, and I made her dinner. Although there's nothing going on, it is a little flirty sometimes. *Moon river* came on the radio and she said "I'm having a *Breakfast at Tiffany's* moment"; and as Caron has lent me her copy of it, I put it on. After a few drinks I was leaning against her as we watched. When it finished at 3am, I told her she was welcome to stay over, but she went home. That didn't mean I wanted anything to happen, but it didn't mean I didn't either. It's good to know where I stand now. Quite a funny thing happened a couple of weeks ago, I had gone over to her house to copy some movies from her hard drive to mine. We were doing it in her bedroom, computing that is. I was trying to figure out how to connect our hard drives and I said to her 'so . . . is there some magical way of putting my thing into your thing?'

Jessie called this morning. She asked me if I'd stopped liking her. Actually, she told me. Like how she told me that I did like her in the bath tub in January. It's so great not having to think for myself when Jessie is around. She called from a bar so couldn't really hear me. She called back half an hour later and the first thing she said was "you picked up!" Anyway we talked for a while, I told her I was worried we weren't a good match because she's such a drinker, and was occasionally a bit of a jerk when drunk in January. I told her that I much preferred her when she was sweet, gentle and open with me, which she was just as many times as she was a jerk. She said she'd 'like to go hiking', when she comes back, because she 'really likes mountains.' I'm only going if there's some graffiti on the mountains we can take our photo in front of. We'll cross that swing bridge if we come to it. For now we're sticking to our mutual agreement that long distance relationships are for the birds.



Pixel Poet

As of yesterday, I'm on a dating website, findsomeone.co.nz. A couple of girls told me they were on it, they affectionately call it [findanyone](http://findanyone.com). I was on it briefly last year, and I think I stopped because a transsexual wo/man emailed me? Better luck this time. I was quite taken by 'Pixel Poet'. I haven't emailed her yet but she's a magazine designer and my opening line was going to be "what magazine do you work at? Cute Girls Weekly?" Hopefully not the Woman's Monthly, or I'll be fending off indiscreet enquiries all over again.

Sb

Date report to Ruth

Lucy

Malt

Monday, 6pm

i went on a date with a girl last night.

she told me that she was a fashion designer with her own label, so i asked her if she was wearing anything she designed. she said 'i design lingerie.' ha.

we hung out for 2 1/2 hours, in front of a log wood fire, which is probably quite good for these things. she had only just joined FS too so was a bit awkward about that. she was listening into the conversation at the table next to us, when i was away from the table, and said they were on a blind date too. when i get nervous/drunk i sound quite g-a-y, and we were talking about fashion a lot, so i was worried that might give the wrong impression. i can't help it that i'm fabulous!

one curious thing she said was that she had been doing this thing on Saturday night where she was in a bar with a lot of books in it. she would ask a question and then pull a book off the shelf and point to a sentence, and see if it answered it. she said the book gave a very specific answer, but said she would have to know me better before she told me. isn't that what they say about lingerie, it should reveal a little, but never too much?

i must have been going Commando, because i couldn't shut up.

we had been putting wood onto the fire, until it was roaring when we left. i said "just as it was heating up . . ."

she's a Glamazon but i don't think we'll get it on. no good night kiss, just a hug.

i want to ask her if she'd consider making a pair of men's underwear i've designed for my exhibition in November. and her reaction would probably be a good way of figuring out what she's like. but if i'm honest with myself, Glamazon or not, i know it's prob not right for either of us. but if one is looking for ease, as in easy comfortability not the other sense, one probably doesn't find it on blind dates.

et toi?

Sb

Date report to Ruth

Lucy

Jaffa

Friday, 10.45am

i met up with Lucy for coffee on Friday. the last date we went on, i'd wanted to go to yoga. and this time i'd wanted to play tennis. but i don't know if she plays tennis. so i had this idea. i txt'd her to tell her that i was going to prepare a series of questions, to make our date even more artificial, but also because i want to know more about her.

i txt'd one question in advance: what perfume does she wear? she wrote back saying that she has two perfumes, but both were gifts, and she doesn't like either of them. because scent and memory are so entwined, i wondered if it was because she didn't like the guy who gave them to her. but no it was just because they were too heavy, the scents. she said she liked Stella McCartney, so i went to Smith&Caughey's and smelt it. it's so restrained, but dreamy, you wish it was more pungent. i guess that's part of it's allure, to leave you wanting more.

there were about ten questions:

she doesn't play tennis, but is willing to learn

she thinks break-ups should be like a plaster, but one of hers lingered for 2-3 years apparently!?!?
but she clarified that that was because they became friends, occasionally slipping over, into each other

her nickname was Lulu for a while, but she didn't like it and neither did her friends

a romantic thing that her man did for her once was buy a box of perfume. when she opened the wrapping a necklace fell out and he had meticulously unwrapped the cellophane to slip it in to surprise her

she doesn't wear hats, but she does have a wide-brimmed, summery one

i asked her what it's like being a Glamazon, and she said she wouldn't know. what a liar!

sometimes she would ask the question back to me, and unfortunately this led to me talking about Emelie. Emelie proposed to me as soon as she met me, and i accepted, leading to our torturous almost marriage. she used to call me 'Donald Duck' because i used to walk around our apartment only wearing a t-shirt, like Donald.

a funny thing happened at the end. i went to the loo and when i got back she told me she had read the last question that i had scrawled on the draft questions. she said the answer was 'yes.' i looked at the last question and it said "two people doing it?" well, i was a little taken aback, 'how forward', hilarious.

but then it turned out that she had meant the entire question above it, which was

is internet dating less embarrassing if
two people doing it?

i asked it to make her feel less self-conscious about being on a blind date. she seemed a little 'too cool' for internet dating, but obviously just embarrassed. none of us planned on being here.

anyway she's gone away for the weekend, and i'm back to wondering whether i like someone, and what the right thing to say is etc. when these questions can only be answered one way:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VwGGZTZ-3pM>

let me know how it goes with Kelly. what are you doing for your date? Mondiale is quite good if you want to go for dinner. do you believe in doing 'out of the square' first dates, or do you stick to the classics?

Drus

ps

i also asked her if she knew me well enough to tell me what the question she asked the book was. she asked if she'd have sex in the next month, and the book told her to look at her computer on Monday.

Sb

invoice

13th of September, 2010

Mat & Kristy

10 minutes of psychotherapy

@ \$100 p/hr + GST

= \$19.16

I spent ten minutes at my last therapy discussing you. I will be happy to provide a full summary, if necessary. It revolved around my decision not to attend your wedding, without wishing to be inpolite.

please pay within 28 days

A S Dryden

ASB

12 - 3027 - 0214440 - 00

Sincerely,

Drus Dryden

Sb

Wednesday the 3rd of November, 2010

Dear Mat & Kristy:

I'm sorry, but I can't be a friend to you right now. I've made a promise to myself to only have supportive people in my life. My decision is not made lightly. You guys are lawyers, so perhaps you want evidence. These are some examples off the top of my head:

Kristy

talking shit about Pen & Tia, when it is none of your business
pulling me away from Hellen at that party in February
trying to embarrass me, by bringing up Jessie in front of a crowd, then apologizing the next day, times about three or four

Mat

it's hard to get across how obnoxious you are Mat. It's exacerbated by how polite you are when we're alone on runs together, versus how you openly insult me in front of our friends
e.g. "Drus has AIDS"

I can't remember what you said at the dinner table at Rotoiti that makes me wish I'd dragged you outside and thrown you into the lake, but I often think of throwing you in the lake
that time you walked up to me at Mat Q's party and asked me when I last had sex, or that time you asked me if I'd had anal sex in front of everyone after the races

I'm assuming you're the friends Jessie is referring to, who think I'm weird. I haven't told her that you called her a 'big, fun dog', Mat. She's not big at all. But seriously Jessie needs support and encouragement like everyone else, and not just to scull two bottles of wine to see what she'll do next.

I know you think you were being hilarious, and smarter than everyone, but you were actually being destructive. Every time you did some little thing to piss me off, you missed a little opportunity to make me like you more. Everyone's insecure, but your way of dealing with your own shit seems to be proving you're better than everyone else. Congratulations on winning?

I do have some good memories of you, like the day at the races, on Bonnie Prince Billy, or going on runs. See you round, no doubt. Hope the wedding goes well. Hold on to your other friends,

From,

Drus

So

Dear Jessie,
Hello. You're coming out of the
jungle? Me too.

I have had a realisation.
You know how your friends think
I'm weird? Well that's because
we're not actually that compatible.

Do you know what is weird? Being
friends when you're not really
meant to be friends.

Anyway I hope your trip is going well.
AND you're looking forward to coming
home to New Zealand.

XO,

Drus

-----sent from my typewriter

Sb

Tuesday the 26th of October, 2010

Dear Jessie:

basically i'm sick of being hurt by 'fri ends'

an example is how Mat & Kristy are always starting shit

it's just easier to accept that I can't be friends with lots of people, because they are incompatible with my sensitive style. a lot of their other friends probably like it how Mat & Kristy make trouble, but it just doesn't work for me. like how Anna doesn't work for Rozzy, or how Kat doesn't work for you, or whoever.

donde estas, que haces? are you flying back this week? into Wellington?

Drus

Sb

Friday the 16th of November, 2010

Kristy,

thanks for taking the time to think about me, and to respond sincerely. I appreciate it.

I have written a brief contract which I would like you to sign if you want to be friends with me. I have made it as simple as possible, but if there's anything you want to discuss, I am happy to do that before I collect it from you. I am extremely busy for the next few days, with an exhibition and completing my masters, so I may be unable to meet or collect it around the end of next week.

One idea I had: I'm not sure if you guys have a 'Brangelina' name. you may wish to sign it on Mat's behalf as 'Masty', or any other variation that you prefer.

Yours sincerely,

Drus Dryden

Sb

contract

We will not try to embarrass you, Drus, publicly again. It's not funny, if you're not laughing.

Mat & Kristy
aka 'Masty'

date

Sb

hi Jessie

i'm really busy at the moment, exhibition with Zekiah and my masters hand-in on the 27th.
i'm not blowing you off *, it's just i like to take time with written responses.
i like to take time, generally.

have you flown back already?
i hope NZ opens like a flower for you.
i have something to show you for your birthday, when this headless chicken of a week is over.

Drus

* but I'm not blowing you either

Sb

Monday the 29th of November, 2010

Kristy,

you asked for some examples . . . rather than an exhaustive list, i thought i would give an example of a good behaviour, to show how i like to be treated, and one that undermines from the good behaviour, and could be improved.

you, good

thanks for putting the thought into my birthday present, the Standard Issue pashmina. i was wearing it all the time, including occasionally to bed, ha. another layer (sweet pun) was that Rozzy listened to my wish that i not be given any group gifts in front of a group, so it was appreciated when she gave it to me in the privacy of my bedroom.

you, improvable

the first time you asked me about Jessie in front of a group, i sent you an email on the 17th of March to fully answer your question. your repeated questioning, three or four times, never in private, only in front of an audience, is simply not a way i discuss my private life. that people told you to stop, and you would apologise after each time, demonstrates that you know that this is offensive to me.

Mat, good

i have enjoyed talking to Mat on our runs. on one run in Rotoiti i remember talking to him about the drama at the house, which I thought was detracting the holiday. we also talked about suits, Ed and anal sex, not all at once, although it's possible those three things have existed simultaneously before.

Mat, improvable

after the races, Mat asked in front of a group if i liked / had had anal sex. again, this was an attempt to embarrass me in front of a group. there is a difference between wit and crassness, between Oscar Wilde and Paul Henry. anal sex doesn't embarrass me, rather someone who deliberately tries to embarrass me offends me. thanks for inviting me to the races, i had a good time. i would have had an even better time if all of your guests were as courteous and thoughtful as our host, Brad.

the other commonality in these examples, other than a complete lack of consideration for my feelings, and an audience of our friends, is booze. I got punched in jaw when i said something inconsiderate when i was drunk and fifteen, once. that shut me up. why do i not just punch people who offend me now? because it doesn't make anyone feel better. i don't know if you've ever punched anyone, or anything, but it actually really hurts your fist. i broke one of my knuckles punching a wall once.

how can we we demolish the wall between us, given i'm no Mike Tyson? i would be satisfied if you & Mat could:

1. say you understand that you've offended me, and accept responsibility for your actions
2. think before either of you say anything to me in front of a group, in future, that might cross some of my boundaries

you don't need to sign the contract, necessarily. a verbal agreement will suffice, when i see you next.

Amitiés (ask Jessie to translate that),

Drus

ps. hey it's a song by that band we all like

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UO6R276hBeM>

Sb

Monday the 29th of November, 2010

hey Jessie,

ok. just take it easy, with regards to me, and generally. i know it's a head-fuck coming home. NZ time passes a little slower than Traveling time, there is time to do everything properly.

i've emailed Kristy & Mat. it was something i needed to bring up, i was unable to continue without saying anything. if they listen to me and improve the way they relate to me, the problem will be solved.

one thing i was going to say is that i have a bike you might be interested in. i was going to give you it, but i was in an accident when i was riding it a couple of months ago, when a guy ran into me with his car. i was hurt, and the bike as well. i got the bike repaired but then they found a small crack in the frame. i've talked to the guys about welding it, which would make it safe, but i probably won't get that done unless you want the bike. it's a bitching bike, hot pink & black, and a girl's frame. it's at a shop called T.White's, which i believe is in your *Wallpaper Guide to Auckland*. if you want to see it just ask to them to bring out the 'Vincolo', or i can meet you there to show it to you. it's just hanging out the back for the next month or so. no worries if you've got your bike situation locked down. it's worth a trip to the shop anyway, they're good cunts; their helmets are good and on sale for \$80.

hope the job interview went well. if you're still meeting with Allen Huang, he works near Mat & Kristy's.

xo,

Drus

mali



Mali is a girl I almost met in San Francisco once. I've written a book about what I think she's like, called *fantastic shy eyes*. Despite never having met and the ocean between us, we keep in touch. I think she's the biggest babe ever. It's a problem.

Sb

March 11, 2010

hey Mali

Happy International Women day got me thinking. As a happy person, is there any chance you could share some of your happiness tips?

I guess people normally say things like being grateful, which I'm sure is true. Another way of putting that is probably not wishing for what you don't / can't have.

I wonder if naturally happy people sorta know themselves well: to know what will make them happy, as opposed to what one does because that's what they thought they should do. Mexico looks like a pretty happy place for you, how did you decide to move there? Was it a big leap, or did you know what you were getting into, some people down there etc.?

Just wondering, and might be going through a bit of a 'change' period at the moment . . . which, as they say, is good.

besos,

Drus

Sb

March 19, 2010

hey Mali

have you been gripped by international exercise sensation, Zumba yet? i had my first Zumba experience on Monday. like this:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-myAVlxWBGs>

but with a 6'4" dude in the background trying to be invisible. it really helped with my Irish jigging on St Patrick's Day, the following Wednesday, to be sure.

thanks so much for your email. just had a really unsettling week, things have sorta gone back to normal now. my dad had an operation, graduating from grad school was about to self-destruct, i was looking for a new roommate and i was about to start work at a plant nursery. but my dad is fine, it was just quite scary seeing him in a hospital bed. i just switched programs at grad school (duh i've been in the wrong dept for two years, am in an actual writing program now instead of 'art.') found a new roommate. and just put off working at the plant nursery. i kinda romanticised the idea of working with plants, thought it might be really amazing, but i think it's just another way to procrastinate doing any writing.

i know these are all just little things, except for my dad's operation, but i just freaked out a bit when the plan changed so quickly, but thought maybe it was a good thing. with grad school it was really frustrating to think that something i'd worked hard on was just going to fuck-out . . . again.

what i meant when i asked if you knew yourself well, was that a lot of the time i have done things which i hated but forced myself through it anyway, but still hated it at the end and would have been better off not doing it. just totally ignoring my feelings, to the point where i'm just detached from them and almost resigned to expecting things to suck. instead of getting out of it.

i've also been a bit unsettled because i was seeing a girl from London when she was back here for the summer but now she's back in London again. but because i've been thru that one a few times now, i know there's not much you can do about it.

what i was trying to tell myself when i thought everything was about to change was that you just have to be brave. like you say, use challenges to prove yourself, change and grow. not worrying, yup. that thing about just doing what you do and believing in it, totally. ha, your dad sounds amazing! muchas gracias para tus palabras simpaticas. have a lovely week.

besos,

Drus

Sb

July 12, 2010

hey Mali

sorry to hear, this all sounds awful.

i only have one piece of advice:

to do 5 really nice things for yourself this week. they can be something really simple like waking up at dawn to see the sunrise, ok maybe watching the sunset would be nicer to you. just little things you've been meaning to do. even just going to get an ice cream or whatever. break ups are truly awful, but maybe it means instead of thinking about someone else, you can totally look after yourself.

besos,

Drus



break-up care package

Tuesday the 7th of September, 2010

Dearest Mali:

This is the tea cup that I have been meaning to send you since forever. The other American lady jokes are:

what's the hardest part about roller-blading? telling your parents you're gay
(By Amelia, from NYC, I was her intern.)

a man walked into a bar . . . and it hurt
(By Julie, also of NYC, we used to work together in Boston.)

There a few other things in here, maybe a candy bar. Maybe an Engrish pad. Maybe a French cigarette.

I went on a blind date last week and I decided to write a formal list of questions to ask Lucy, the lingerie designer. They're enclosed too. One of the questions asked if there was a sensitive way to break-up? Or was it like a sticking plaster? She replied that she says that she normally breaks up *à la* plaster. And went on to say that her last break-up had taken THREE YEARS!?!? But explained that it was on-again, off-again, that then they became friends, and that intimacy can never be erased, like marks of use on a much-loved kitchen table. That wasn't her metaphor, that's mine, perhaps because I am sitting at my much-loved kitchen table. She said he's got a new girlfriend now, but she hasn't met her yet. Anyway, as I met her from a dating site, I guess she's moving on.

She is from a place in New Zealand that has just had a major earthquake, Christchurch. I remember the morning of September 12, our first lecture was American Studies/Lit. Dr. Leonard Wilcox didn't do his usual pre-lecture ten minute stand-up routine, that day. Photos of the university library were in the newspaper yesterday, I joked that it could have just been a fraternity party, but really was humbled to see how bad the damage was. The library is no Bancroft, with louche lovelies lining leather love-seats. It's a bunker. The quake was at Saturday, 4am, and I joked that a newly formed couple who had just consecrated their relationship, would have felt the earth move.

Another thing: my first Spanish teacher, La Senorita Simonetta "callaros, CALLATÉ" Ferrari, was in the paper because the homestead she now inhabits had all six of its chimneys fall in. In class once we were discussing whether a woman should take her husband's name, in marriage. She explained that in Spain you either don't, or you take on both names. Anyway she asked us in her Italian accent "why should I take his name? What is he ever going to give to me?" I replied "great sex." Which in fourth form (9th grade?) is about the funniest call ever. Anyway, true to her beliefs, she hasn't changed her awesome name. It would be Simonetta Cotterill, no contest. We would sing her happy birthday as she walked towards our class. No matter how many times we sang, it never

was. We were discouraged? The paper said that she is now a renowned gardener. Do her plants serenade her now, *te pregunto?*

What I wanted to say, *antes de perderme en sueno de la Senorita*, was that ruptures, are violent, destabilising, and humbling. And that is why it is so important to love and value everything you have now, and remember this love if it ever goes. The beautiful old stone façades have fallen, but maybe something strangely beautiful will rise in it's place? I'm a hopeless optimist. Or maybe people who've lost everything will find each other? I don't really know how to give up. I have a friend who says she's got legs "that don't quit." As in, she's leggy.

By the way I always think it's telling when I talk to people about break-ups, and they cast themselves as the perp. I txted Lucy yesterday to ask her if she was keeping the evening free to celebrate the anniversary of our meeting, one week ago? She txt'd me to say that she thinks of me as a brother. If I'm her brother from another mother, she's my sister from another mister.

And now for more pressing matters of Malinche scarf style: of late I have been tying the scarf in a loop and hanging it around my neck. One of these days I'm going to tie two of them - full double Malinche. All the way. So intense.

Hope you like the tea cup. May it be filled with endless joy. By the way, there are a lot of sheep where they had the earthquake. I wonder how they're doing?

besos,

Drus



The University Library

Sb

October 4, 2010

Dear Mali

no, i can't sell you a jacket, but i can give you one. you have to give me your Letterman jacket in return though, which may set tongues-a-waggin'. maybe that can be your new calling, to be the breakfast-in-bed deliverer of America, Sg?

i recently commissioned an artwork about your country! i know a girl who cuts words into maps, so i asked her to cut this quote from On The Road, into the USA. unfortunately i am re-reading Breakfast of Champions at the moment, and it talks about environmental destruction in West Virginia and mining. double entendre oops.

you're sleeping with the package? i'm honoured. i would say go to first base with the tea cup, but it sounds like you're way past that.

i had a bike accident last week. i'm ok, just cuts and bruises, but it was quite scary. everything slowed down, and has been quite slow since. the guy didn't take me to the ER, which isn't very sensitive, i'm going to leave a note on his car tomorrow. more importantly i thought of our emails, you know, about loving while you can. which i'm resolved to do.

i talked to my dad about something i've been meaning to for a while - he feels like a failure (it feels weird even writing that) for not winning at the Mexico Olympics. i was reading a book about NZ rowing and it quoted him as saying he had thought about it quite a bit, "like every day." i told him how amazing i thought he was, regardless of whether or not he won. although i don't think it was articulate as that, i hope the message got thru.

thanks again for being, well, you. i know i'm a giant worldwide flirt, and that it's easy to do part-time, but you've been an important concept in my life. and i hope i'll meet you one day, thus making you less conceptual and more Malindrical.

Sincerely,

Drus Dryden

memory remi- nder

I started trying to write the happiest memory for each of my Facebook friends. Because that would have taken quite a long time, I decided to advertise the Memory Reminder Service on my Facebook page. I got a few takers.

Dear Georgie,

My favourite memory of you is from when we went on our date. We drunk mulled wine straight from the teapot, as your librarian friends serendaded us.

Your friend (Ashley? Is his band *Canadia* ?) dedicated a song to all the people on first dates.

I was at Satya the other day and a table sung happy birthday to their friend. Then we sung happy birthday to our friend. Then someone at the next table said it was a couple's 38th wedding anniversary, so we all sung them happy anniversary. There was only one other table left in the restaurant. One of them stood up and said it was their second date . . .

Dear Michael,

It was Easter '04. We were at a party in a winding industrial apartment. It must be famous in Wellington. Anyway Libby and I had run out of wine, and because it was Easter there were no liquor stores open. It was suggested that we make some new friends, if possible friends who were cradling wine bottles like yourself. Then your opening line:

I could make you look like an 18 year-old school boy.

Michael. Of lots of happy memories in our brief time together, my first memory is also my favourite.

Dear Christina,

My favourite memory of you is from the time that we met in the coffee shop, just before I flew out of SF. I didn't know what you looked like, and couldn't call you to tell you that I was there waiting for you.

Accept the things you cannot change. I got a coffee and proceeded to observe the world around me. There was a girl in the coffee shop who was checking out every single guy who walked into the coffee shop. There seemed to be no logic at all to who she was into. I remember being particularly perplexed by this one guy, his shoes and facial hair.

It took me a couple of minutes to realise it was you, Christina. Check me out.

Sb

Memory Reminder

4th of November, 2009

Dear Anna R.:

I believe I've already told you about how mesmerizing your eyes are, those eight and ninth wonders of the natural world, and it would be easy to talk about the first time I noticed them. (At Mag Nation one time? But I can't imagine how I didn't notice them earlier if so.)

But I was thinking about some of the other memories; I also love what you do to other people's eyes.

..

I'm not sure if you remember the first time I met you, at DoC. you were with Kareen, then Kareen left and Matthew Crawley joined us in the last booth. After a while I made to leave too. Matthew Crawley: his eyebrows raised, his eyes widened. I thought he was about to twirl his moustache, such was his delight, that he would get to share the booth with you alone.

I go to see a psychologist once a week to discuss Sb and related issues, and I was telling her about you once. I think I called you a 'breath of fresh air', and was just talking generally about how uplifting your company is. I must have been a nice break from some of the other relationships we talk about because I can picture her laugh lines circling, and her eyes narrowing as she smiled . . .

I also thought your sister had wonderfully heavy eyelids when we saw her after Stephen Malkmus, but maybe she was just drunk. People *used* to say I was pretty like my sister too, we both used to be called 'Fish' on account of our big, blue eyes. Anyway, it was nice to run into you that night.

Thanks for the memories, of the power that resides in your eyes.

Drus
the memoirist

Sb

Memory Reminder

10th of November, 2009

Dear Jenny:

I was going to say that my favourite memory was the time you guys stayed in Steve's meticulous room and photographed all his stuff on his bed so you could put it back together again.

But on reflection over the last few days I'm swaying towards meeting your mother at Rotoiti on that weekend away. She just seemed so gentle and kind, a calm centre. I imagine her as a really loving mum to you; I imagine you are the same kind of mom to Moebius. One thing I've realised this year is that sort of stuff like this is passed down from generation to generation, just as much as brunette ringlets. Not that your mum has those, but little Moebius maybe, when he gets some hair?

xo,

Drus



Memory Reminder

11th of November, 2009

Dear Victoria:

i made a list of ten or so memories, and they're all great. if you want me to send you them all, i can. i saw Ivan last night, so that reminded me of "the Dog" card game . . . i still have the Chow-Chow card. otherwise these are three that speak to me today.

favourite past memory

when you were at fashion after-drinks when you guys had all finished third year, and no one knew where to go next . . . you said:

"I know where to go . . . I'm cool & I've got a club !!!"

lol, with you.

favourite recent memory

a mutual friend was talking about you and how you'd been away in Melbourne and how much James was missing you, and how much you missed him, and how happy you make each other and how good you are together. I just think it's nice to hear people spoken of so positively, and just the idea of it feels peacey. . .

favourite possible future memory

if you were to post your beautiful mother on this site:

<http://myparentswereawesome.tumblr.com/>

of course the way your parents met on Waiheke/post-Waiheke is also a favourite memory of you too. i think it's wonderful to think that the dream of you and your brother began so boldly.

i'm wearing a bow tie at the moment, must remember to take it off before I go out outside! loving Arthur Russell at the moment, do you know the 'planted a thought' song? i'll send it to you if not.

From Drus
the memory catcher



Memory Reminder

14th of November, 2009

Dear Rebecca:

I've been thinking long and hard about your memory reminder.

Carmello?

That time David came onto that girl and then she shoulder barged him, and then Tommy got so angry because she called him 'faggot.'

It's probably the time that we were in the kitchen with Fabi, she was 'dropping information' on us friend-talkers. I noticed that you had gone silent, much like an American Eagle before she swoops. And I thought to myself:

Fabi, do you know that Rebecca could crush you with her little finger?

Or pinky, as they say in United State. Don't mess with New Jersey.

The memory is your grittiness, your determination, your raw American spirit!

Really there are too many memoirs, I thought about saying the first time I saw you, across a smoky bar in a smoky town in a smoky country.

Do you remember the time you kissed the side of the train when Theresa was leaving?

NO! The way you talk about your German boyfriend's shorts.

NO! NO! It's the time Jeff Miller found the condom wrapper on his kitchen floor and thought that Terry-Dean was cheating on him.

Also the time you went partying when you were meant to be starting at the IUFM. What's French for 'Busted!' ?

XDX

Sb

Memory Reminder

Actually Rebecca, if I'm honest with you, my favourite memory is in my head.

Sometimes I think back to us, to us being what the French call *intimate*. One morning when one thing led to another, on Fabi's pull out sofa bed.

I'm not sure if I thought of saying this at the time, but was too hazy to say it. Or thought you might take it the wrong way, and didn't want to take the chance of ruining the moment. Or if I just thought it would be a funny thing to say, many moons later.

When I think about being there with you, I think about saying "hey . . . I thought you were a vegetarian."

And then we hypothetically laugh, and laugh. And then lie spent in each others arms. Before injecting with some of Fabi's needles.

love from,

your New Zealand boyfriend

Sb

Memory Reminder

29th of January, 2010

Dear Anna Hennerdarling:

My favourite memory of you is really easy because I think often. It was in that 'media bar' holding you and singing, well more just drunk shouting, to:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=skUJ-B6oVDQ>

I never used to be much of a hugger, or maybe I'd started by then, but you were very huggable and Coldplay was very shoutable that night.

It was a funny night. I'd just got back to Amsterdam from London, with a bottle of duty-free Caprihannas. Unfortunately I think it was the last time I was really happy for quite a while, like a couple of years or something silly like that. After that night, Amsterdam just fell apart in the shortest amount of time, and well pretty much everything else did too when I came back to New Zealand. Thanks so much for sending me postcards around then, fuck I was miserable.

About coming home, I felt like my life would just go back to normal that I wouldn't be stressed out anymore. Instead I felt like my life just stopped, that the last time anything vaguely interesting happened to me was in Amsterdam or NYC or London. I try and tell myself that I couldn't have done any more, that I tried as hard as I could, before I absolutely had to come home.

I felt like maybe you were the person missing in Amsterdam, there was always a weird disconnect I felt between Joy-Ann and Kristina. But you seemed to fill in the gap between me and them. I remember going for lunch with both of them, right when everything was just terrible and I would be going for floats at koanfloat.nl every day and taking fistfuls of whatever medicine I thought might help me, trying to not let my girlfriend make me crazy, wishing someone would pay me for working, hoping we wouldn't get thrown out of our apartment etc. Anyway I went for lunch with them and Joy-Ann just did something just a bit Dutch & mean, that she thought I was insane. Kristina just said to Joy-Ann that she shouldn't have said it. I was on the edge of reason, but that's not the point. What I'm trying to say is that you strike me as such a compassionate person, kind, accepting, calm and loving. That's what that lunch conversation was missing, and what Amsterdam was missing generally.

I have another project in which I pass on compliments that people have said about people, Joy-Ann and Kristina always used to say how intelligent you were.

I see a psychologist once a week and I lent her a book. She found one of your postcards in the book, the one from Barcelona of the violet stadium seats, and she returned it to me the next week. She had a soft (soft is my favourite feeling at the moment) look in her eye when she gave it back to me, I guess she knew I'd really appreciate being thought of around the world and that I wouldn't want to lose it.

The other thing I remember from that night is carrying a girl with a broken leg down the stairs into the media bar. Were you the other person carrying?

I'm happy about Facebook because otherwise I might not have you in my life. I always got confused about what your email address is, and your postal address, I always assume you've probably moved,

because of how crazy Amsterdam was for me. Are you still at Retiefstraat?

Well I went to Jens Lekman last night, he was hilarious. I feel really good today, soft. It's like an Anna Hennerdahl hug.

So why are you called Rora, anyway?

Well, thank you for that memory! I also liked going to the markets with you that time, I still have the photo in that blue hat.



xoooooooooooooooo

Drus

29 hitting on 30

Late one night I ran into Anna R., a girl I quite liked.
She said her sister, who is also a looker was not amused by turning 29.
I said, "That's my age. dude!"

S29y.o

1-28 St Georges Bay Road
Parnell
Auckland 1052

22nd of December, 2009

Dear Jess:

We met briefly at the end of Stephen Malkmus, I'm a friend of your beautiful sister, Anna. I saw Anna the other night, she said that you had recently had a birthday, your 29th.

It's funny, I have recently resolved to exclusively date another 29 year-old.

Some people like beautiful eyes (Anna's boyfriend must be one of those - what a pervert), or a sexy 'bad person' attitude. What is it about 29 year-olds for me? 29 year-olds have a ravishing self-confidence, self-actualisation. We've had to become ourselves by now. We make bold decisions, it's swash-buckling, thrilling. Maybe it's because we feel time is running out and we have to, which of course it's not; a lot can be accomplished in a very short time, if we decide it needs to be. We can make strong decisions because we know what we want, and certainly what we don't, and how one might go about getting it. Some also say we're very sultry, to which I say 'stop it.' All up I believe there are almost thirty or so reasons. I guess you'll find them all as you go along . .

I'm fortunate to know a few 29 year-olds, but for one reason or another they don't qualify. Maybe they're taken (I'm not surprised!), or they're 29 and ten months (I'm only interested in a long-term relationship), one is unsingle, and so on. Wish me luck. Or remind me that rules are made to be broken. And hearts to be mended.

Happy birthday, and best wishes for this most wonderful of your life.

XO,

Drus Dryden

ps

do you know that joke, what's the best thing about sleeping with twenty nine year olds?
there's twenty of them.

Sb

Tuesday the 9th of April, 2010

Dear Jess,

Well my 29th year is just about up. I thought I would 'break it down' for you, as they say in Zumba class.

My birthday is in autumn. It's probably not my favourite time of year, that would be spring. For my birthday I went to Wok'n'Noodle, in Mt Eden, because I love the full on guy there. The bartender played a song for me at midnight. Because it was my birthday I invited Noelle McCarthy to have a drink with me, she was at the bar alone you see. She politely declined. I told my friend that he should never let me get out of touch with him, because he cracked me up too much. Unfortunately I was reminded of why I don't really like him fifteen minutes later when he started punching me.

I broke up with someone I'd been having a long distance flirtation with, the day before my birthday. So I felt extra guilty when a \$300 pair of sunglasses arrived in the mail the next day. She arrived from Amsterdam six weeks later, she didn't cancel her flights. Cue a pretty awkward three week period and the eventual breakdown of our relationship, apart from the odd abusive email. I lost the sunglasses at the top of Symonds St in a rainstorm about a month ago.

I've been doing my masters at uni. In writing about pain. My supervisors recommended that I start seeing a psychologist, which has been really helpful. The biggest realisation for me has been that I let things happen to me, instead of stopping them. It's complicated to explain. I was having a really bad time at uni with a sucky supervisor. I ended up firing them and kicking out my flatmate. Well technically I kicked out his fucking annoying cat, and him by association. I just got a new flatmate, but I'm kicking them out too. I used to get kicked out of flats, and swore I wouldn't become the sort of person who did the same thing to anyone else, but well, I lied.

I opened a pop-up store for two weeks at the end of the year. It just about killed me, but now that it's in the past, the memory shimmers a little more every day. It's great to do things and learn how to do the next thing, with a couple more clues.

I've met a couple of nice girls this year, which is a nice change from last year. Unfortunately both of them were leaving the country in a week. That must be my other type, because neither were 29. Jessie is talking about coming back at the end of the year.

I had a really shitty week in March when my dad had an operation, I was about to get thrown out of uni and was about to start a job that I was going to hate. But my Dad's doing well, I got caught by a much better department, and just didn't do the job. It felt like changing from somewhere I didn't want to be, but was scared of leaving anyway. And maybe that's the moral of this year's story. Although there's still a couple of weeks to run, there might be some surprises yet. I like this new place.

Hope your 29th is going well too. I guess Anna's about to leave? Hope you won't miss her too much.

Your fellow 29 year-old,

Drus

Sb

Monday the 10th of May, 2010

Dear Jess,

This is a list of thirty-something accomplishments on the eve of my thirtieth birthday.

I was a French Winemaker in Gigondas, France.

I saved some South American deer with Prince William, in Chile, once. Actually we killed one accidentally. the important thing is that it was with Prince William. He pissed me off a couple of times: once when he used my pocket knife to cut his Royal toe-nails, and actually his bodyguard was much more regal than he.

I wrote a book, opened a store & have designed a range of Valentine's gifts

I once made something happen by writing a poem about it

In my youth, someone once said I was model-looking

I met Sofia Coppola's eyes across a crowded pool party in Miami

I was a professional athlete

I have faced my worst fear. I was punched really hard in the head once. My worst fear was basically brain damage. I have also faced near castration. I survived this and lots of other shitty things (France x2, advertising, Madelame, French throat disease, Rebecca, Emelie, boarding school, concussion, phobias, a car accident, two bike accidents.)

I won two essay competitions, when I was twelve and thirteen

I've been proposed to six times. (Rebecca S., Emelie, Rebecca L., Matthew, Danielle, Susie)

My horoscope once said that I could see the way through a brick wall

I won a medal for being most promising rower, once. Some say potential is an ugly word. I say cynicism is

I worked at Fantastic Man magazine!

I grew a beard

I'm a snappy dresser

Je parle couramment Français (I can speak fluent French)

I can cook perfect pancakes
I lost my virginity to an Irish minstrel
I came top of my class in third form
I get paid royalties for my four designs every quarter
I designed a piece of furniture
I used to play the bagpipes
I have jumped off a large rock
I have run a mountain marathon
I have a nice dog
I have delivered a sermon
(don't glance at that last sentence or it looks like something else)
I have been on the radio and in a magazine
I have delivered someone breakfast-in-bed
I have lived in NYC
I stood up to fuckwits; I intend to do more of that in the future
I led a sporting victory at school when my house hadn't won one for about five years

I pushed myself so hard that I couldn't keep going, from on the rowing machine in Under 16s, to living overseas. God loves a trier, and I hope to keep trying for another thirty years.

From,

Drus

deeply
superfi-
cial dot
com

I often felt anxious, judged perhaps, going into fashion stores. Which sucks because I love fashion. These letters were an attempt to weird retail assistants out a little bit, and make myself a little bit more comfortable in their shops.

deeply superficial dot com

Tuesday

Dear Little Brother:

I am writing to tell you what you must already know: that you're the best store in town.

It goes without saying that your clothes are great and your prices excellent, but it is your service that I find truly exemplary. I remember a time when Chris took it on trust that I had lost my \$169 credit note. The best shop conversations are always in Little Brother & Friends, by virtue of the fact that you might actually have a conversation. You go out of your way to make sure we're well-dressed. I don't know how many times I've heard Matt has offered to drop the sale price outrageously for an appreciative customer.

There is not a New Zealandic male's wardrobe that wouldn't be improved by a stylish piece, be it an AK-79 hoodie or a pair of Pantherella socks, from your store. I'm donating the last jacket I bought to my brother to prove this to him. Gubb & Mackie was cut for his stumpy arms, anyway.

I hope Auckland dudes enjoy the privilege of Little Brother & Friends for a long time to come.

Sincerely,

M. S.

deeply superficial dot com

Thursday

Dear Wunderkammer:

I haven't been in your shop for too long. I don't know what I'm waiting for, my ship to come in perhaps? I have had two treasured items from your shop, and one of them is lost and the other one has been worn to death, so it is high time.

The tee shirt I lost, it was a good one. It was only when I got it home that I realised that the print on the front (a drunk in front of a German World War One soldier) was reprinted on the inside, with a text explaining it. The drunk was a spy pretending to be a drunk so that he might slur some replies to any clipped German questions.

I AM AN IDIOT. I was in Montréal for a job interview. A cucumber I put in my bag in New York City had liquefied and given everything a cucumber taint. I don't think the new Comme de Garçons fragrance is likely to feature rotten cucumber any time soon. I had to wash and dry everything before my interview, which would have been fine if my wallet hadn't been stolen the night before.

Too proud to ask, I slipped my stuff into the dryer of another backpacker. He would come along every ten minutes or so, eye me suspiciously and wonder why his clothes weren't dry yet. Then I would slip my clothes in with his, remove them before he returned, and repeat the cycle.

I can't remember if I pretended to be drunk as part of the act.

Anyway I hope he appreciated the tee shirt I eventually left him, as much as I regretted losing it.

Anyway I'm doing a project on tee shirts this year, I was wondering if you remember the brand (from memory it was Hockey?) If possible I'd like to get in touch with the designer. I remember Mark being a lil pissed at him because he'd apparently decided to stock with Little Brother.

Sincerely,

M.S.

deeply superficial dot com

Tuesday

Dear Myhart:

I'm just writing to say how much I enjoyed Beat It playing in your shop about a week ago.

*Just beat it, beat it,
No one wants to be defeated
Showin' how funky strong is your fighter
It doesn't matter who's wrong or right*

I have taken the liberty of including a mixtape of some songs that I thought you and your clientele might enjoy.

Just beat it, beat it, beat it, beat it, beat it,

Sincerely,

M.S.

ps love the inside out b Store shorts as well. Go away winter, Come back sugar brown legs!

deeply superficial dot com

Tuesday

Dear Made:

My fave memory of your store is when I was considering a large bottle of Eau de Cologne. I don't usually wear cologne, but this one came in a great old school bottle and brought back childhood memories of an abandoned vaporiseur in my family's bathroom cabinet.

I wanted to test it out and asked the shop assistant for a test card.

"You know that's room spray, not Cologne, right?"

Lol.

See you soon. Have been coveting the April whatever blue jeans since forever.

M.S.

deeply superficial dot com

Wednesday

Dear Black Box:

I'm just writing to you to tell you how much I enjoyed my recent shopping experience with you.

I love the male shop assistant, he's got an American accent if that makes him easier to ID. A lady was in the shop at the same time as me, he mentioned to her that she smelt nice. Coming from another it could have been creepy, but with his charming air it was accepted as a generous compliment. As it turned out the lady in question had just had her hair cut and it was a bewitching conditioner that had aroused his senses.

I'm a big fan of Chronicles of Never, I love the contradiction of interesting cut and sombre fabric. When I can get over the idea that people will think I've crapped myself in the drop crotch jeans, not a scent even the charming shop assistant is likely to compliment me on, they are so mine.

Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,

M.S.

deeply superficial dot com

Monday

Dear Karen Walker:

I was a major fan of your men's line, and was very sad to see it go. I still wear the all my t-shirts (the Yeti, owl, smoking cat, lady thing & candle stick), except for one.

In 2003 I had to go to my brother's 'stag-do' in Paihia. I HATE male bonding shit like this, so the least I can do is look good doing it. I was wearing your starry hand print, circa 2002. It was a pretty shade of light blue.

We were catching the ferry back from Russell. I occasionally have a problem with running my mouth when drunk; I'm very mild-mannered the rest of the time. I started telling one of my brother's friends about how hard 'prison life' is and how it was still difficult for me to talk about. This went on for about 5 minutes. His brother is the head of the Wanganui chapter of the Hell's Angels and at the time was inside, so as the ferry pulled into dock he lifted me above his head and threw me into the water. I pretended to drown to try to force him to dive in and rescue me. But he almost fell for it.

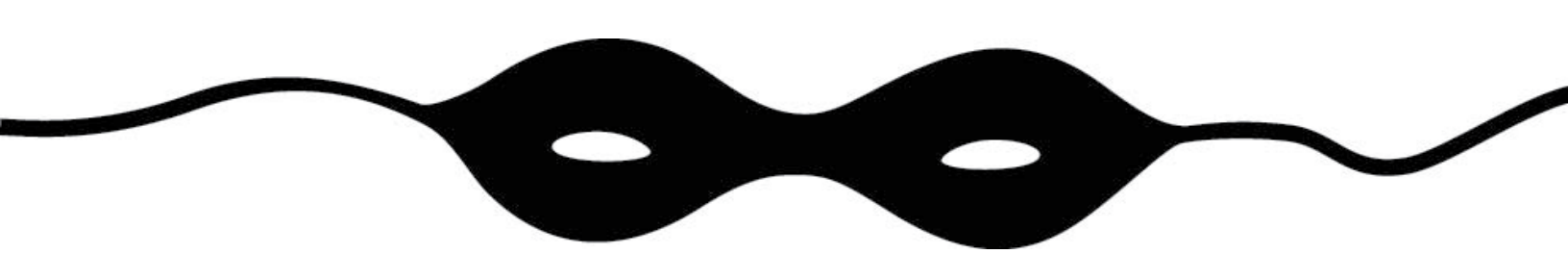
Anyway I was climbing up a ladder to get onto the dock and then another of my brother's friends (they're all really great guys) urinated on me. I asked him if he had been drinking Becks, which I thought was quite a good joke under the circumstances.

I don't remember much of what else happened that night. My brother (the groom) ran away, and this whole time my other brother was asleep in a urinal in Russell. So at least I wasn't the only one soaked in piss on that night.

I got back to the youth hostel and hung up the starry hand tee to dry. And when I came back to get it the next morning it was gone. I hate losing things and I especially hate losing clothes, especially especially all-time favourite KW clothes, especially especially when it happens because of a 'stag-do.'

I was wondering if there is any chance of getting a re-issue of the starry hand tee? Or if you know of anyone who might put up their starry arm to sell me their starry hand tee, at the right price? I would appreciate it greatly.

Sincerely,



Wednesday the 7th of October, 2009

Dear Lucy:

I am just writing to thank you for the yoga group that I was a part of. Marie is a great teacher and it was a great excuse to get together on a Monday night. It's too bad it couldn't keep going, but those are the breaks.

I have just had a breakthrough moment with my current hair stylist, but if my situation ever changes I'm coming straight to you guys. The salon is beautiful and the hair stylists I met at yoga were all Cats.

Sincerely,

Drus Dryden
sensitive boyfriend: a design pop-up store

pop-up store



In December '09 I opened an autobiographical pop-up fashion & design store. These and other letters sought to build relationships with the people I was working with.

SENSITIVE BOYFRIEND

Tuesday the 4th of August, 2009

Dear Vicki & Gary:

My name is Drus, I'm an Art & Design masters student at AUT.

I'm setting up a pop-up store at the AUT masters exhibition, at the St Paul Street Gallery in November, as my exhibition. The idea is that it will be an 'autobiographical' pop-up store, in that it either features products that I have made, or products that really speak to me.

I have always loved the Bocca lip sofa, I think my love affair began when I saw it on the set of My Two Dads, the 80's sitcom.

I was going to buy one to sell in my store, but then I found out how much it costs, roughly twice my Uni fees. I was wondering if you would consider allowing me to sell one on your behalf? My store will be positioned in the atrium of the gallery and will receive many visitors over the course of the exhibition week. I would be happy to pay a bond of the wholesale price of the sofa, to guarantee it will not be damaged, if it is not sold. On that note, I will be enforcing a strict "no shitty Sues" policy.

If the couch is not sold, Design55 will still benefit from this as a publicity opportunity. You would be acknowledged as a sponsor of my store on store signage. I would also be happy to distribute any Design55 marketing collateral to my customers, and to sing your praises. I will try to get it featured in Viva magazine, and on the (well-read) blogs of some of my friends.

Let me know if you'd entertain this unique proposal, and I'll come and introduce myself. Nom*D is on board, and I am negotiating with a friend to sell his vintage Porsche there as well!

By the way the working title for the store, subject to change without warning, is Sensitive Boyfriend.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Drus Dryden

about me

I'm a 29 year old writer & designer. I've worked at leading advertising and design agencies around the world, including Droog Design. I worked at Droog after winning a competition to redesign a white t-shirt.

Friday the 14th of August, 2009

Dear Chris:

This is Drus, I got my hair cut with you between 2002- 2007. I loved getting my hair cut with you, and often got compliments on your work. I think the last time I got my hair cut with you was just before my sister got married in Barbados, in June 2007. Only the bride's locks looked better that day. Ok, maybe the Czech supermodel's as well.

I don't really go to hairdressers to get my hair cut, I'm all about the conversation. You've got great taste in movies, and I always looked forward to the moment when, about 40 minutes into my appointment you'd ask me if I'd seen anything good lately. We often ended up talking about advertising, and specifically my difficulty with finding a job in it. I decided that I would not get a hair cut until I got a job. Unfortunately having a hair cut and getting a job are close companions, as George Thorogood will tell you. There must have come a point where I decided to stop trying to get my dream job in advertising, before pursuing my dream job as a rowing coach. But still I couldn't escape your neighbor, that sleaze-ball Toby Talbot. His daughters must have been rowing against my girls.

Anyway I'm currently an Art & Design masters student at AUT. I'm setting up a pop-up store at the St Paul Street Gallery in November, as my thesis project. The idea is to make it an 'autobiographical' pop-up fashion & design store, in that it either features products that I have made, or products that really speak to me. And perhaps you?

I want an accomplished and articulate hair stylist to come into the store/art gallery and cut hair and talk jive for a couple of hours, and I'm wondering if you might be interested?

I'm trying to think of practical challenges to this:

I guess you'd have to do dry cuts, is that a problem? Maybe the cuts could be more 'touch up' cuts, a little shorter & a lot sharper. I'm not sure if I would book people in advance or if I would encourage passers-by to take a seat.

I don't know if you know the TV programme, Tabatha's Salon Takeover, it's a reality show in which Tabatha makes a struggling salon work again. I used to watch it religiously, and picked up plenty of salon tips. So hopefully that will qualify me as your assistant, I'll do the sweeping up etc.

I get to choose the music, but you can make requests.

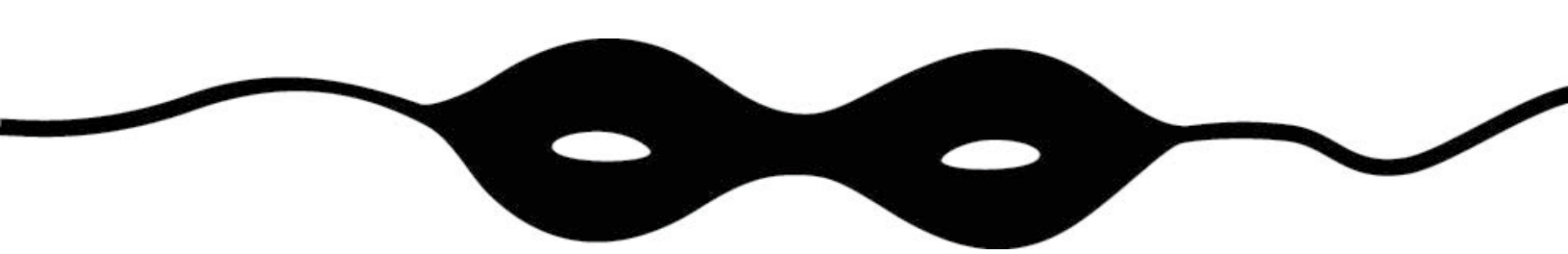
I would pay you for your time, around 2-3 hours on one of the five days the store is open. I'm not sure if I'll make people pay for their hair-cuts. If not they will be strongly encouraged to buy merchandise from the store.

Ever the advertiser, I thought you might be able to use this as a publicity opportunity. Mzima would be acknowledged as a sponsor of my store on store signage. I'm hoping to get the store featured in Viva magazine, and Mzima would be mentioned.

Let me know if you're interested, and I can come in and talk about it over a hair-cut. I'm about due for one. By the way the working title for the store is Sensitive Boyfriend. Or Insensitive Boyfriend, I haven't decided yet. I look forward to hearing from you.

From,

Drus



Monday the 5th of October, 2009

Dear Vada:

I'm writing about Devo, and the pop-up store I'm opening on Berresford Square in November. Devo's a great hair stylist, in fact I would call him an artist. I can't wait for my hair to grow back to see what wild idea he has for it this hair-cut. I saw he was the crowd favourite at the hair awards, I would believe it.

The pop-up store I'm opening is called Sensitive boyfriend. It's my masters project, I'm at AUT.

I'm thinking of running a few competitions in conjunction with the store. I'm thinking that a hair-cut with Devo would be a most excellent prize. I will cover the cost of the hair-cut.

I'm not sure what I want to do for the competition, but I'm thinking about a writing competition. What's your worst relationship story? But I haven't really thought about it. The Facebook group has around 100 people on it, and I'll probably publicise the competition on that.

Are you feeling it? I think it is a good little promotion for Vada, 100 people will hear about how great Devo is, and some lucky person will experience it for themselves.

Let me know.

Yours sincerely,

Drus Dryden
Sensitive boyfriend

September the 1st, 2009

hey Anna R.:

So there are going to be some guest appearances & special events at Sensitive Boyfriend. At the moment are:

Monday: hair-cuts ft. Divo

Tuesday: massage chain day

Wednesday: yoga ft. Karla

Thursday: gay day ft. Andrey

Friday: break-up counselling ft. Rozzy

Saturday: chess ft. Anastasia

Sunday: hip-hop dancing & flower arranging ft. Thora

The chess player, Anastasia, isn't that enthused. So there's a vacancy . . .

Forgive me for noticing that you've got the most amazing blue eyes. Startling, really. Do you think people would pay to look into your eyes? I would, they're incredible! So it would be called *Look into my eyes* and I guess people would pay to sit across a table from you. You'd get a big pair of 'Breakfast at Tiffany's' sunglasses to wear in between looks, for you to rest your kaleidoscopes.

Umm it just occurred to me that there might be a 'selling your body' ethical issue. . . maybe this is a terrible idea, especially as the new store location is on K Road. Eek?!?!

from,

Drus

Sb

16th of December, 2009

Dear Gert, Jop & Magnus:

I thought I would write to let you know what happened with my pop-up store, Sensitive boyfriend, and its proposed Butt magazine window display.

I think I have worked out why it didn't happen in Marc Jacobs that time, because there are quite a few million little details that need your attention in a store, and sometimes their cries go unheard. There was also a problem with the model, Andrey. He had to fly back to Russia before I had a chance to put him in the window.

In truth I wasn't 100% happy about putting Andrey in the window. There was an incident about a month before the store opened. He was walking down the street, at 4pm, a fashionable street, and some girl gave him some attitude about what he was wearing and called him a homo. In turn, he gave her some shit about what she was wearing and crossed the street. At which point her boyfriend crossed the road after him and punched him from behind. Unbelievable. Anyway I didn't want to put him in a vulnerable position after this. That said he's Russian and hard so I think he's doing perfectly well.

Anyway when I heard about this I delivered the tee and a Butt to Andrey = a Butt care package.

Without wanting to capitalise on misery I think there is an opportunity for a sensitive company to commercialise the care package concept. e.g. I do break-up care packages for people that I've just heard have broken up. Just an idea.

Anyway because Andrey didn't work out for the window display, I was going to do it myself. But either I'm quite shy or the weather was quite uncooperative, and I ended up reading FM, fully clothed (maybe shoes off) on the butterfly deck chairs.

The Butts in-store were provided courtesy of your Auckland stockist S/f. I had quite a bit of American Apparel pink underwear left over from the store, and decided to give some matching pairs to S/f's proprietors. A discreet uniform, or should I say undiform? The woman who works there, one of Jop's former students, is a little emotionally cold. So giving her underwear was quite funny/awkward. Like only I know how . . .

Well, Merry Buttmas and keep up the good work. Love the FM daily recommendations.

Sensitively,

Sb



tobi

Tobi was my boss in New York City in 2005. I helped him and Amelia make Iceberg: a chandelier hanging in a piranha aquarium. He committed suicide in his sleep earlier this year. Phillip was one of his manufacturers, Tim was his boyfriend. Sam and Jude were another of his manufacturers, and my former employers.



Sb

Wednesday the 29th of April, 2009

hey Tobi

What's going on?

I am writing a short story at the moment and it briefly mentions your Holzer tattoo. I wanted to ask you about it at the time but didn't. . .

Stupid question but is it meant to be your version of a "no poison" tattoo? Or was your forearm just the easiest flesh for Jenny to write on? Do you have any other tattoos, other than the chin dot?

Hope you're good.

D

Sb

Wednesday the 2nd of June, 2010

Dear Philip:

I was shocked and saddened to wake up to the news about Tobi today.

I absolutely loved working with him & Amelia. He was very generous with his time, advice, champagne and margaritas in NYC and Miami. The Iceberg chandelier was wonderful. Amelia & Tobi's reference also helped me to get a job in London, afterwards. When London turned into a nightmare Tobi sent me a couple of kind emails, to stop me freaking out. I can't think of too many of my other bosses who would have taken the time to do that. Perhaps the reason I loved working with Tobi so much, was that my job was paid in delight, something he had a bounty of. London was only paid in GBP and headaches.

I also remember the time Tim & Tobi left a message on Amelia & I's Miami hotel answer phone in a fake British accent saying that the unregistered visitor (me) would be billed for his stay. He laughed harder when he found out I hadn't got the joke and hadn't passed on this message to Amelia.

Someone on the internet suggested his death might be another of Tobi's tricks. Maybe he is on a beach in Aruba laughing, but I doubt that's true. As a connoisseur of fine Tobi Wongs, I can spot a fake. And this one doesn't certainly doesn't elicit the requisite delight.

I have loved waiting to hear his new ideas since, and it saddens me to think that I won't be seeing too many more. I hope there are some unrealised projects that his friends can make happen for him.

He will be missed in this far-off corner of NZ. I actually made a fake Tobi Wong last year, because I had used my real one (a dimemond) to (para)conceptually pay a friend. I will polish and admire it even more today, and in the future, as I think of him.

My thoughts are with you & Radio Tania of the amazing voice, Tim, Amelia, Ian & Patrik, and Tobi's family & friends. Ian once called him the Queen of New York design. The Queen is dead, long live the Queen.

I hope you're well.

Yours Sincerely,

Drus

Sb

Wednesday the 8th of June, 2010

Dear Sam & Jude:

In the wake of the tragic, untimely death of my friend and former boss Tobi Wong, there is a business matter I need to broach.

Tobi had promised me 1.25% of his 5% royalty as a producer's royalty, if I presented the Sunjar to Suck.UK and you accepted it. As I left your employment before the Sunjar was marketed I never had this written into the contract. I emailed Tobi about my unpaid royalty in 2007, but did not receive a reply. I chose not to pursue my claim, as Tobi is my favourite designer and I figured that he would be putting the money to good use.

I am now writing to you to ask if my 1.25% can be paid to me from this quarter on. I am not claiming any retrospective royalties, just future royalties which Tobi was to receive for the Sunjar.

I realise this may appear opportunistic to make this claim post-humously. I greatly admired Tobi and his work, and will miss him dearly. However getting rightful credit and compensation for my work has been an on-going problem for me, and is a matter I need to pursue for my self-respect and to continue my creative work.

Please find a copy of the original 2005 and 2006 emails between Tobi and I enclosed, in which Tobi specifically mentions the terms of my payment.

On another issue, I am in contact with Tobi's friends and can help you contact Tim Dubitsky, Tobi's partner, or Tobi's family, in order to pass future royalties onto them. I am happy for you to ask approval for this through them, as long as they are assured that it was Tobi's original agreement with me and I am not a hyena taking advantage of a tragic situation.

You must be shocked by Tobi's passing, as well. Good luck in advancing any of the future projects you were developing with him, it will be a fitting memorial to an insightful, inspired and visionary designer.

Yours Sincerely,

Drus Dryden

Sb

23rd of August, 2010

Dear Tim:

Can I just preface this email by saying how sorry I am about Tobi. He is unquestionably my best boss. There are so many examples of small kindnesses he gave me, from the dimebond, to emailing me when I was freaking out in London & helping me get a job in Amsterdam in 2006, to not letting me pay for anything in Miami. I only knew him for a short time, and he made a big impression, so I can't imagine how hard it must be for you to lose him.

I am highly aware about how insensitive this email might come across, but it's something I need to bring up. This year I've been trying to get royalty payments owed from the company I worked for in London (Suck.UK) in 2006. I've slowly negotiated from getting nothing to about half of what I'm owed for the five designs which I designed, or in this case, produced.

When I was first in touch with Suck.UK in late 2005, Tobi asked me to pitch the Sunjar to them, saying I'd get a standard 25% of his 5% royalty (1.25%) if it was accepted. I have this on email. The Sunjar was eventually accepted and became a really successful design. Because I had left the company by the time the sunjar was released, I never had myself written into the contract. I emailed Tobi about it in 2007, but he never replied, so I just let it go. I find it quite embarrassing asking for money, and assumed Tobi would put it to good use. Obviously my embarrassment doesn't compare to your grief.

I'm writing to ask if you would consider letting me contact Tobi's mother, or preferably Tobi's lawyer, to discuss this issue. I only want to proceed with this if it won't be seen as some opportunistic prick who is taking advantage of a tragic situation. I do not want to cause any more distress to people who are already at maximum pain. I would not want any of royalties from the last four years, only future ones.

I'm really sorry to be sending this to you, and hope you are not upset by reading this. The reason I'm asking for the money, at the risk of upsetting you, is that I re-invest any money I make off royalties back into my creative work. Working with Tobi was a such an inspiration to me, because it showed me how with clever thinking and in spite of limited resources, you could make amazing work. I want to be able to continue this legacy. I fully understand if you do not wish me to proceed with this, so just say so if you think it will distress anyone to do so.

Yours sincerely,

Drus

Sb

Tuesday the 13th of July, 2010

hey Amelia:

I've developed a pillow case and it made me think of your drawings of people spooning.

I've had ridiculous luck with girls this year, meeting two nice girls who were all going overseas the week after I met them. One, Jessie, was quite the spooner. I've taken to spooning my third pillow, a luscious feather one, as I drift off to sleep.

The pillow case will feature an instructional picture of someone spooning a pillow.



Of course this idea makes me think of you, too, because of how much you must be missing Tobi. I hope you're ok.

xo,

Drus

Sb

Friday the 16th of November, 2010

hi Amelia:

i just wanted to ask you if you think it'd be ok for me to dedicate an exhibition i'm doing at the moment to Tobi. in the dedication i just wanted to say that people should always encourage each other, like Tobi did to me. not everyone thinks to do it, and sometimes it's the most valuable thing you can give someone.

the exhibition is of a bed in a gallery, that I will be serving breakfast in on Saturday. i've designed the bed linen, and everything else on the bed. the curator called it 'very sweet', but if you look closely there are a few more acerbic touches that Tobi would like.

obviously working with you and Tobi had a huge influence on me, showing me how his awesome ideas could be made with limited resources. as much as he made me laugh, or his brilliance stunned me, and it was his bravery to make audacious work and his kindness to me that impressed me. so I'd be honoured to dedicate the exhibition to him.

specifically I'm thinking of placing the Sunjar on the bedside table, or in the middle of the bed, so that it lights up the gallery at night. there'd also be a card next to the bed, talking about Tobi.

xo,

Drus

Sb

dedication

The café is dedicated to the memory of D. Tobias Wong, Sensitive artist/designer/boyfriend, and my former boss, who tragically passed this year. Tobi used to sell dreams in plastic bags for \$1, and he sold more than one to me.

TOBI RULES

Never underestimate the value of encouraging others. Tobi is desperately missed, and will always be unforgettable to we who loved him.

A song:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5JkBiP7rPt0>



Sb

Monday the 6th of December, 2010

Hi Julie:

Congratulations again on your great news. You're going to be a fantastic mom. I know because you were very maternal to me in Beantown. You're generous, and compassionate, and that's what a child needs.

DAMN, consider this tea cup your baby shower present. I just wish it read, *what baby powder you using?* Did I tell you I am working on a baby-sized shower for these occasions? Fred will fall over himself signing me up to that one. I was going to send the John & Yoko pillow cases as well, but they ran in the wash, so I need to get them re-printed. Soon.

So, given all that's happened, I was wondering if I might consider selling me the Dimemond? Name your price, if you're willing.

\$?



No worries if you accidentally spent it on a subway ticket, I think Tobi delighted in that happening to the others.

xxxoooooooo,

Drus

ps I was sending out an email about Tobi last week, and my computer kept crashing, which never happens otherwise. Hmm spirit world? In my verdant imagination I liked to feel that he was stopping me sending it out. Not because he didn't want me to write about him, but because I would regret offering to make people breakfast. Just because I'm so exhausted, I just need to focus on a five-course brekkie for myself. The friendly ghost of Tobi, my fallen father figure, is most welcome in this machine.

boy- friend business

Various letters concerning my many entrepreneurial Sb projects.

I used to be creative partner of Sanjiv.

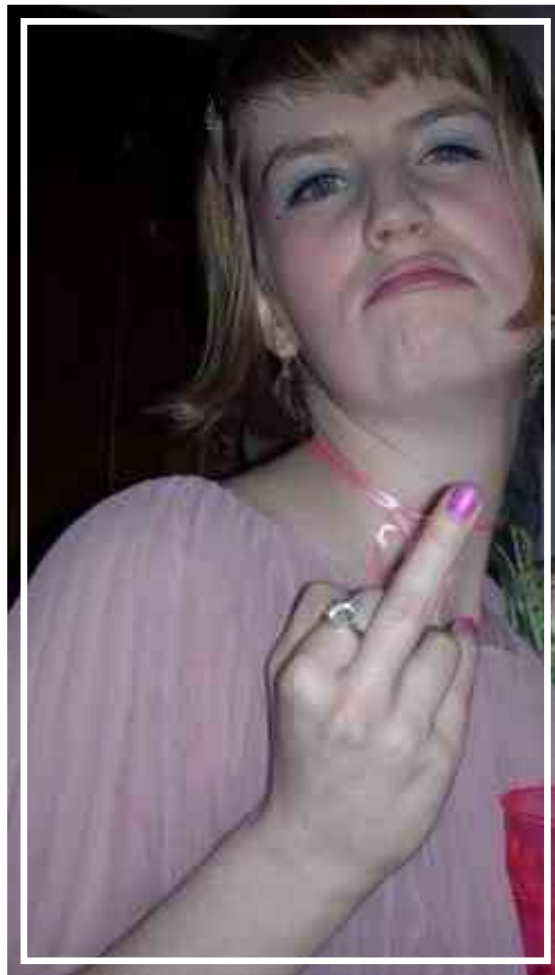
The others relate to books I was writing, or other ideas I was birthing.

1st of July, 2007

Dear Unity Books:

I have just written a book about trying to get a job. It's called *Male submissive needed*, and gives advice to people working for free in creative industries. It's published on CD, please find a copy enclosed. It occurred to me, in writing this letter, that Unity Books must be a nice place to work, so I thought I'd send you my CV.

I don't want to tell you how to do your job, but you should fire this girl because sure as the day is long she's got a real attitude problem:

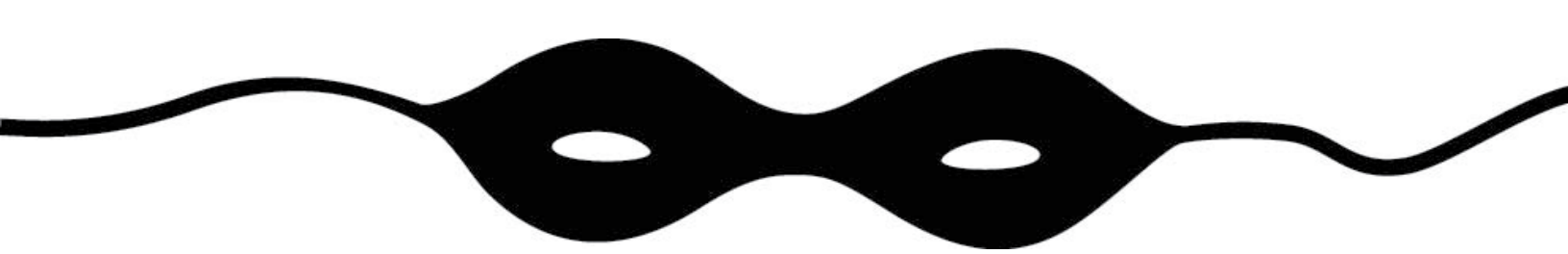


... and hire me in her place. I have an attitude solution.

Well, let me know if you'd consider stocking *Male submissive needed*.

Yours truly,

Drus



Thursday the 8th of October, 2009

Dear Sally:

I'm writing to you to ask you if you would like to meet me briefly (coffee? hard liquor?) just so we can move beyond the Awkwardness. I think we both have distorted views of each other. Since our paths cross quite frequently, and we have some mutual friends, it seems like the thing to do.

Again I'm really sorry about the Unity Books letter and card. It honestly didn't occur to me that it could be misinterpreted as an actual attempt to sabotage your employment. Which makes me at the very least insensitive and thoughtless. I'm sorry I haven't really talked to you since, it's just I thought it would be best to leave you be.

In conclusion: our mothers* agree, why can't we?

Sincerely,

Drus Dryden

* Did you know they went to school together?

My mum's phrase for this sort of thing is "to queer one's pitch", lol.

To the strawberry blonde man with the fantastic shy eyes? Shut the fck up, you total dreamboat!
Sadly I'm no strawberry blonde, my eyes are more of the piercing blue variety. One thing, though: as of yesterday I am the proud owner of the most darling grey shoes you've never seen.
But enough about me, I have a proposition for you:
I want to write a book about the dreamiest person I found, one day, cruising the craigslist missed connections. Today, that is you.
In no particular order these are the reasons I want to write about you, from your posting:

I guess you're about my age.
 You believe in love at first sight, or at least lust.
 You like strawberry blondes with fantastic shy eyes.
 You kick yourself occasionally, but not too hard I hope.
I don't really know why, I just do. I just like your style.

So if you have ever wanted a book written about your infinite hotness, this is your chance. If you accept you won't really have to do anything, I will be in San Fran come July and would like to know more about you.

By the way this isn't some weird scam or anything, just my weird book. So if you didn't want people to know there was a book about you, then no one would have to know. If someone was writing a book about my hotness, I would scream it from the rooftops. But that's just me..

Ciao yourself!

xMe

28/4/08

Dear Mrs. Hill~

You may not remember me, I was in your form one class at St Kent's in 1991. Who am I trying to kid? I was unforgettable! Anyway your daughter graciously gave me your email and said you wouldn't mind if I contacted you.

Last week I remembered a writing assignment you gave me. It was to continue the story started by a photo of an elderly Eastern European woman. All I remember is that she shouts to the sky, perhaps to the passing fighter jet:

"All I have is this hamburger!"

What was she complaining about? I could be partial to a little Hamburger right now.

Anyway I'm writing a book and it occurred to me that it's more or less the same writing assignment you gave me in the summer of '91. Except my starting point is this 'Missed Connection', which I found on an American website:

To the strawberry blonde man with fantastic shy eyes
3-3-2008
m 4 m
27 years old
(downtown/van ness/civic center)

I got on the same underground train as you were on at around 11pm tonight. You shyly smiled and I smiled back. You had glasses, a beard, grey shoes and a coat. I wasn't sure if you and the guy sitting next to you were together but I thought I would say hello nonetheless. We smiled at each other when I got off at Civic Center and I kicked myself for not going to the next stop. If this is you you'll probably be able to describe me as well. Ciao.

My supervisors call this a

very clever... proposal. Using... a catalyst for the biography is novel and offers the potential for a number of creative approaches.

If there was a prize for cleverest and most novel writing assignment, I would thank you in my acceptance speech! Sadly there isn't one and what's more now I have to write the damn thing. At the moment I'm writing a story a day:

I started with a story about being born in the USA, because the guy who wrote the Missed Connection probably was. Next was a story about how everyone likes cake, because pretty much everyone does.

Then a story about what a nice thing it is to call someone "windswept & interesting", which we all are at some point. Yesterday was a little less literal. It was a magic realist love story set on a subway train. It stars the guy who wrote the Missed Connection and the strawberry blonde with the fantastic shy eyes. Today: a letter to my Form One teacher.

And I was wondering if you might care to suggest what happens next? If Lady Muse doesn't look your way, I'm sure I'll think of something. But if you do, there's an apple in it for you!

Thanks for being such a great teacher. I hope your current charges know how lucky they are.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Dryden

ps Where are they now?

Tom Cotter is in Berlin doing a Ph.D in Chemistry.

David Ring was dating Michael Boulgaris, the property tycoon. No prizes for guessing that Matthew Lee is of the lavender set.

I was sitting opposite Simon Lee at a dinner party a year ago and didn't recognize him for an hour- he was my best friend in 1991. He works for Vodafone, is very much in love with an English Rose and has a good haircut.

Allan Yeoman is a high-flying lawyer in London. He perfected his courtroom patois by forever arguing that he should have made the list of boys who got to go to the 1991 Blue Light Disco your daughter was attending. Allan, let it go!

And I've almost forgiven you for only giving me a 9.5 for my Alphabet book that time . .

Sb

8th of February, 2010

Dear Sam & Jude:

I refer to our previous email correspondence. As you are aware, I own the intellectual property rights in and to Flipbook Post-Its; the concept for which was provided to you by email in March 2008 and detailed at page 4 of my presentation in that email.

Suck.UK has subsequently commenced production and sold the Flipbook Post-Its in late 2009. In doing so Suck.UK has clearly breached my intellectual property rights. I understand that it was not done purposefully from your email response of 22 December 2009, but this does not change the fact that Suck.UK is infringing on my intellectual property.

Rather than looking to legal remedies, I would prefer that we sorted this out pragmatically, and suggest you contact me to discuss a royalty for each product sold to date and going forward.

I know you've had problems protecting your ideas, so hope you are sympathetic to me as a fellow designer. If I share my ideas my rights need to be respected and my work valued.

Yours Sincerely,

Drus Dryden

Sb

Tuesday the 9nd of February, 2010

Dear Sanjiv:

don't like letters, huh? You, of all people, could use them. I've enclosed some Sb stationery.

From,

Drus

Sb

Sb

Tuesday the 29th of March, 2010

Hey Imogen, how are you?

I'm Drus. We met a couple of weeks ago at Christophe & Bridget's, aka Bristophe.

I don't think I really told you about my art project, Sensitive boyfriend. It's basically a community service to encourage sensitivity in relationships.

I'm currently trying to think of date ideas to publicise and giveaway on the Sensitive boyfriend Facebook group (230 members and counting). One date idea I had: the shopping date. You guessed it, the happy couple goes shopping together. Daters could get some subtle hints for anniversary presents. Or maybe it's just the good opportunity to give each other little compliments when they walk out, ravishingly, from the dressing rooms. It's going to be amazing.

I thought Made would be a great shopping date destination because, duh, it's one of the best shops in Auckland. Lots of fashion scores, for ladies & gentlemen. I loved those patent cloth shoes and the Skinny Nelson tops last time I was in. There's a pretty relaxed vibe, that might help on a first date. And where else has such charming and knowledgeable sales staff? In summary, Made is made for a shop date.

So I was wondering if it would be ok to mention Made as an Sb date? Perhaps Made would even consider contributing a small gift voucher (I'm thinking like \$30) to give to a couple, or a couple of couples, on the Facebook group? I'm thinking there might be a bit more interest if daters were actively encouraged to come in, pick up the gift voucher and pick something out.

I'm wondering how we would be able to get the maximum amount of people from the Facebook to visit. Perhaps if they have to mention that they're on a sensitive date, and it's first come-first served for the voucher? Hmmm do you have any ideas?

The winners would have to prove they're on a date, by the way; I'd leave that part up to you. That could be a good way to get past that awkward first kiss. Or to make it even worse.

From

Drus
Sensitive boyfriend

ps how do you feel about couples dressing the same?

Sb

Friday the 16th of April, 2010

Hey Hamish, how are you?

I'm doing an art project, it's a dating Facebook group. It doesn't set people up with each other, however, it sets them up with dates.

I'm currently trying to think of date ideas to publicise on it. One date idea I had was a Lilliputt date. Chicks love that shit, like Tiger Woods loves his Swedish wife & family!

Basically I'm wondering if it would be ok to nominate Lilliputt as a date? Perhaps you would even consider contributing a free round to giveaway to a couple, or even a couple of couples, on the Facebook group? What do you get out of it? There are 230 people on the Facebook group, so they might forever more associate Lilliputt with romance.

Let me know. Hope you're good.

From

Drus

Sensitive boyfriend

Sb

Tuesday the 8th of June, 2010

Dear Lee:

I wrote to you a couple of months ago, about how Wok'N is my favourite restaurant. I'm putting together a recipe book at the moment, and I was wondering if you'd be interested in contributing a recipe or two?

The theme of the book is (loosely) soul food. So, food that you make when you were feeling low on pep, although I don't think you have that problem, much. Perhaps you could contribute a high energy recipe, because I would LOVE to have as much energy as you do in the restaurant. If you wanted to include any other tips for a positive world view and living life to the full in your recipe, please do. Your vitality is a true inspiration to me, and no doubt a lot of your customers.

Otherwise I'm thinking of asking people for recipes they would cook for special people in their life. They could be anyone, and any meal from breakfast to midnight snack is open for your interpretation.

Any questions, just give me a call or an email.

I haven't been into the restaurant lately, so I must be due a visit. See you soon!

Yours sincerely,

Drus Dryden

ps Did I ask you in my last letter if I could buy a Wok'N bandanna? I'd still be interested if there's any chance of buying one.

Sb

Wednesday the 26th of May, 2010

Dear Pen & Ona:

I'm putting together a cook book. I was wondering if i might be able to invite you to contribute a menu & an event?

One of the cruelties of knowing you, is that your combined-power dinner parties were snatched away before I knew you well enough to openly gorge myself. Believe me, I would make a spectacle of myself now. Like a pig, in a trough. Of shit.

I have an idea that would hark back to this Golden Age of NZ cuisine, which I witnessed but once at the Herne Bay house.

I would like to invite you both to concoct a London breakfast-Auckland dinner menu together. If you want to then prepare the menus on a Saturday in the next wee while, we could have two simultaneous parties, Skyped to each other.

CAN YOU DIG IT? By it I mean the power-breakfast/dinner.

Sincerely,

Drus Dryden

ps: if Melbourne wants to join in for an apéritif, and dainty nibbles of that bicep cupcake, that's fine by me.

Sb

Tuesday the 8th of June, 2010

Dear Scrap:

I've been meaning to send you this for ages. Here it is, just in time for temperatures to drop and neck-lines to rise.

If you want to try and sell it, and see how it goes, that's fine by me. If not, please send it back or give me a call and I'll come pick it up.

Sensitively,

Drus Dryden
Sensitive boyfriend



Sb

\$35
edition of twenty

The bow tie scarf can be worn tied up or rakishly untied. So many looks from just one scarf! Developed in response to uncertain dress codes, it elegantly leaps from downtown to uptown before you can say *debonair*. It is a 10:1 scale model of a bow tie, and is 100% Merino. It is accessorised well by oversized novelty sunglasses.

Ub

Thursday the 8th of June, 2010

Dear Sunday Ladies:

I'm writing to apologise for being unable to deliver breakfast to you for the past few weekends, I've been sick. And unfortunately I can't do this one either. I am going to be an extra in a tv ad and they have me from 7am until 7pm, both Saturday and Sunday.

I feel like I should almost rename my breakfast-in-bed delivery service Unreliable boyfriend! In my defence, perhaps part of the service's charm is its unpredictability. Sometimes a bunch of white lilies, a tender note slipped into a handbag, or your boyfriend waiting outside your door astride a drawn horse & carriage, in a velvet cape, holding your crown of Gold and precious stones, are even sweeter by their unexpectedness and spontaneity.

Still, I wanted to thank you for your calls. You are my first, my best, my favourite customers, and though I may not always show it, I am devoted to your breakfasts.

Sincerely,

Drus

Unexpected boyfriend

ps in a quiet moment today, may I suggest you go to:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=shyrLL8e6ac>

pps what are your names?

Sb

Tuesday the 17th of June, 2010

Dear Jess:

I have a new project that you might be interested in. I am raffling a Parachute dress, these amazing dresses made out of parachute silk from London.

Anna liked it very much when it was in my store last year, and that's why I want you to think very carefully before you decide to enter the raffle. See question one of the *What a cheek! Have you got the nerve?* quiz.

Your sister walks in on, with a face like thunder, because you're wearing her favourite dress. Do you
. .

1. Say "I look much better than you in it."
2. Apologise profusely.
3. Run out the door and into the night.

xo,

Drus

a lone parachute dress
floating through the
to who? to me? to you?



Parachute dress
raffle

\$25 a ticket
max 12 tickets

FYFI Sb is raffling a diaphanous, deep blue Debbi Little (London) Parachute dress. The dress is affectionately known as 'Mermaid', on account of her fish-tail when hanging up. It's made from vintage silk parachutes, from the 50s; even floating through the air was more romantic then. Size? Tenish. As a one-off piece it's sizeless, as well as peerless, but never shapeless. Detailing includes 'rip-cord' shoulder straps, which can be altered. Fittings by appointment.

Tickets are NZ\$25, odds are 12:1. You can buy more than one ticket, you cannot buy the dress outright. The winner will be drawn in July by Rosalind Middleton. Rosalind is beautiful, honest, and utterly ruthless. She doesn't make apologies, nor does she do regrets.

My only wish for the dress is that it goes to a Woman of Daring. It's a parachute, after all. I know you are such a woman because you're thinking about entering this high stakes, winner-takes-all, ovaries-to-the-wall dress raffle. I'd wish you good luck, but you don't believe in luck, do you? Do your worst, you Hell-Cat!

Email drusdrus@gmail.com to register your interest. Or is that what boyfriends etc. are for?

Thank you to Style Baroness Emily at Caravan, Shoreditch, London, whose generosity has made this possible. caravanstyle.com



Sb

sensitiveboyfriend.com

Sb

hello Parachute dress raffle contestants & interested onlookers:

The raffle draw for the amazing Parachute dress will happen this week. The winner will be decided by 'Ruthless' Rozzy Middleton, by pressing stop like she's Keyboard cat in a blindfold on the raffle video, which is here. The winner will be broadcast by Youtube.

Firstly, thanks to the daring contestants:

Claire, is a town planner from London who is planning on wearing the dress to rooftop parties. Jumping off the roof & floating dreamily down is to be her party trick.

Gina is an advertising planner who is planning on wearing the dress to the first day of work at her new job. Congratulations.

Megan, winner of the last parachute dress raffle, will soon be swapping Auckland for the spires of Oxford. Will an Oxford Blue dress be going with her?

Georgia of Dunedin is a Fine Artist, like The Debbi, the Parachute dress-maker.

This is here blog:

<http://the-heart-of-glass.blogspot.com/>

Katherine is an author from NYC. She will need an amazing dress for the launch of her amazing book, which she will begin writing as soon as she's won the dress. Priorities.

Angela is the creator of this joke:

Why don't Oysters lift weights? Because then they'd be Muscles.

Anna, an artist and bibliophile, is currently at-large in NYC. Her startling blue eyes would be brought out by this blue dress.

Soong, an English Lit academic and radio Dj. Her Dj name is Dj Coldplay.

According to Cathy cat suits are OUT and parachute dresses are IN.

Mali of California, likes her wine like she likes her dresses: vintage.

You're all chancers, dancers, free thinkers & snappy dressers, and for this, already winners.

I was surprised that there are no male contestants . . . given the almost hourly compliments I get on my hourglass figure.

And finally thank you to Parachute dress purveyor *par excellence*, Emily Chalmers, whose generosity has made the Parachute dress raffle possible. Her amazing shop Caravan is in Shoreditch, London and here.

xo,
Sb

Sb

Friday the 30th of July, 2010

Dear Katherine, winner of the Parachute dress raffle:

Do your worst!

xo,

Sb

Sb

Tuesday the 9nd of November, 2010

Hi Sarin:

I had an idea for the Bfm sex show: blind dating.

I'm not sure how it'd work; I guess you'd need a singleton to come to the studio and field calls. And either you'd have a couple of bachelors or bachelorettes on the line, or they'd just call throughout the show. I occasionally get asked to set people up, so maybe one of them would be interested.

Otherwise love the show. Thanks again for telling me that song is by Picture Plane, it was driving me crazy!

From,

Drus

Sb

Wednesday the 24nd of November, 2010

Dear Clayton:

I overheard your comment about the Intense artist at the MoAD exhibition pack-down. Alas, we are intense because screaming oil paints run through our veins, not muted watercolours.

I'm sure there are many ways you can make artists feel more comfortable when they visit you in the shop. One way I've thought of is to offer them 'Intense' 88% cocoa chocolate, a bar of which I have enclosed.

May the till ring like sleigh bells all December.

Sincerely,

Drus Dryden

Sb

Friday the 27th of August, 2010

Dear Neighbour:

My car, the Boyfriend mobile, was parked opposite your drive-way about two weeks ago.

~ ~



I'm wondering if any of you remember crashing into it? Please give me a call if you do.

Sincerely,

Andrew
021.474.555

Sb

Monday the 16th of July, 2010

Dear Sam:

I know you have an interest in it, so I thought I'd update you on the recent developments with my toilet flush. The flush has been a problem since I moved in here, two and a half years ago. Full of enthusiasm, if not experience, I tried to fix it then. I used tooth floss to tie the inner workings of the flush together. Thinking back, this was to stop the flush running. But it probably caused the current problem: the flush is now gutless.

I had completely forgotten the tooth floss, and removed it last week. It has been working perfectly since.

Morale of the story? Perhaps life is like a toilet flush. Everyone gets shit'n'piss, crap'n'poo thrown at them, but it's a question of being able to flush through it. And this is significantly harder when you are tied in tooth floss.

I'm so proud of the new flush, that I'm thinking of posting it on Youtube. I'll let you know if that ever happens.

yours,

Drus

10th of December, 2009

Dear AUT:

Marcia has the potential to be an excellent supervisor to the right candidate. However I'm not such a candidate. The following are examples of misconduct which led to the termination of our supervisory relationship in September '09:

Marcia made unnecessary threats very early on in my supervision that she would report me during the mid-year progress report. When I filled in the report and sent it to her, she re-wrote my section extensively including quoting herself as me.

I overheard her complaining to the HoD about students sending her their essay drafts, complaining because she said she just wanted to work on her own research. When she saw that I had overheard her, she quickly inferred that my essay drafts weren't the essay drafts she was talking about.

There were what I perceived as unprofessional and unnecessary criticism in essay feedback. These included accusations of sexism, "being judgmental" and questioning why I was even doing a masters given that "i didn't seem to want to master anything."

At the beginning of the third term she informed me without consultation that she would be reducing her contact hours with me. Something I was happy to do, as it would mean I have to see her less.

She "heckled" (her word) during the introduction of my seminar.

I finally terminated her supervision following a meeting in which she lost control of her temper, refused to apologise for interjecting during my seminar, accused me of being disrespectful and would not say when she'd be available to meet with me again. In this meeting she complained about how hard she was working by having to do things (like meet with me) which are normal supervisor duties.

Basically she made me feel like I was imposing on her for making her do the job I was paying her to do.

I am very sensitive and the subject matter in my project made me even more vulnerable to such thoughtless supervision. Marcia said to me that she "knows how far to push people." I wish I'd known to stop this situation before it had to be stopped. The only reason I completed the practical component of the course is through my own dogged determination.

I asked to be given another supervisor three times, but was told to persist each time.

Marcia recommended early on in the project that I start seeing a psychologist, which I did. I would like to ask if AUT would consider compensating me for the sessions that were spent discussing how to deal with Marcia.

Who would suit Marcia? Someone as similar to her as possible.

Sincerely,

Drus Dryden

Sb

26th of November, 2010

Dear Reader:

This book almost didn't get written. Thank you for reading it.
closer is still a work-in-progress. I hope to create a smaller, more thematically-integrated version of the work to publish on sensitiveboyfriend.com in 2011, it's going to be heaven.

Sincerely,

Drus Dryden
Sensitive boyfriend

closure

a collection of letters
from Drus Dryden

xo