

Heart Underwater

~ journal entries of early grief ~

Dec 2019 - April 2021

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*What are the odds that two
undocumented
queer tender
femmes
find and care for eachother?*

It's a special kind of magic.

DECEMBER 2019

There is no one around
yet I don't feel alone.
I feel your presence.
You're here with me.

I love to think about you.

I love to cry about you.

It's an obsession.

It's every day.

I love you.

I feel crazy.

Our brief time together
has meant the world to me.

We may have been short-lived
but you've turned my life around completely.

I have no intention of going back
to who I was before I knew you.

Self-abandonment

was all I've known.

And when I told you

to have your way with me

you said

“Look after your own heart, Paulita.”

and brought me back to myself.

You saw right through me.

You made all the difference.

You had my back.

You protected me.

You were down for me.

I still don't understand why
you chose to watch over me.

Now, you're gone
but you've left me in good hands.

I promise to protect what was yours.

I'll safekeep the things

And people you loved.

And I will love them too.

Grief has been life-changing
in the best and worst ways
imaginable to me

Affirmation:

Moving forward I will allow myself to process the strong emotions that arise. I will not repress or shame my feelings. I can forgive and heal from things that will never get proper closure. I will not regret the past and instead move forward with more clarity. I will take all the time I need to cry and reflect. I will allow grief to transform me.

It's okay to grieve the time we will never have again





RF

I wish I could put this in someone else's hands..

Feelings of anger, betrayal, shame and realizations:

It's okay.

Be mad.

Be mad at her.

Be mad at yourself.

Be mad at what happened.

Be mad that you will never hear an apology.

Heal this wound.
Once and for all.

I deserved more.
I deserved to be loved
how I want to be loved.
I want to break this cycle.
The shame is too much to bear.

Never again.

There's a misconception we're taught about death. We tend to believe that we are "talking bad" or "disrespecting" the dead by naming any negativity that they may have brought about in their lives. Yet, the dead were once living human beings, and as living human beings we often make mistakes and hurt those around us (intentionally or unintentionally). It can feel wrong and sometimes shameful to talk about the hurt caused by those who have passed away.

When someone dies, there will be many things left unresolved that will not see closure. I've come to learn that it's okay to acknowledge the hurt as well as the love you have for the dead. We're capable of living with the nuance and complexity of emotions. Both extremes can be true and can co-exist simultaneously. It helps us to remember them as once being fully human and capable of many things, including hurt.

That's why it's so important to feel your anger too. And it's only up to you on whether you choose to forgive.

It's okay to feel it ALL. It's only human.

JANUARY 2020

I'm not sure how I'm feeling.

My mind is aloof.

My body is tired.

Am I forgetting

our memories?

It's been hard to focus

on your face and

your appearance

I feel a rush of desire?

I don't know how to feel.

I get caught up in my head
thinking and overthinking
everything.

back and forth between
blaming myself ,
blaming her,
loving her,
desiring her.

I don't think it's healthy to think so much
But that's all I can do.

"I'm romantically attached to someone who is dead" sounds very morbid and concerning but that's exactly what I was feeling once my friend passed away. No one told me this was possible. I just expected that the feeling of infatuation would end once the disbelief of their death wore off. But the romantic feelings persisted for a couple years, truthfully. It's like the aching process of a breakup except you cannot "block" them because they're literally gone forever. It's bizarre and so, so lonely.

live intentionally for yourself.
make things for yourself.
go and be with your friends.
not just because she would want you to.

be inspired by your life,
not just by her death.

she's really gone.

are you actually out there, somewhere?

in spirit, energy, or anything resembling life?

how dead is dead?

what happens to your soul?

are souls real?

is the soul the spirit?

is our spirit our brains?

is your presence just something i've made up in the pit of grief to

make myself feel better?

i wish i believed in ghosts.

i wish i could believe you're still out there.

i don't want our conversations to be one-sided.

i don't want my prayers to feel empty and meaningless.

i'm afraid to let you go.

give me a fucking sign !!!

Reminder:

No amount of pain will bring them back.

Today I was able to place her in a box
(in my mind)
and hold those emotions for later.

Not in a repressing way,
but in a way that I can acknowledge her

yet still move forward with my day,
with light, energy, and magic.

I miss your voice so much.

I went outside today.
It felt so nice to be out.
The sun was out too.
Today felt special,
like a milestone.
I am proud of today

Today, today, today ...



The Big Black Box

Feelings of curiosity, jealousy, questions:

i wonder -> what you wrote

in that -> journal

that was in your room

i wish -> you wrote

about me

i feel selfish -> admitting that

but it's true

though, -> you probably

wrote -> about

someone else

In this grieving period my thoughts became obsessive. My life-long insecurities blew up in my face all at once and in their most intense forms. They were constant and terrifying. Jealousy and feelings of worthlessness engulfed me and I couldn't escape it. This explosion of insecurities was triggered by the death of my friend. I was miserable. I had to learn how to detach and forgive myself, forgive her, and forgive everyone else that my brain threw into the cockpit. With therapy, daily self-regulation practices, and time, I've learned how to soothe my emotions and gradually move forward.

Spiraling, unanswered questions:

what were the things that made you think of me?

songs, shows, foods, places, etc?

was I on your mind nearly as much as you were on mine?

did I ever make you cry?

or did you really have it all together?

were you just as nervous as I was?

were you ever jealous?

were you always honest?

were you afraid of your feelings?

why did you ask me if I felt resentment towards you?

did you feel like you had to hide parts of yourself from me?

why did you act so differently when your friends were around?

did you ever tell them about us?

did you withhold information?

how much do they know?

did you intend to make me feel crazy?

why did you insist on having me around?

you made things feel so confusing.

if you truly felt so indifferent,

why did you keep coming back?

FEBRUARY 2020

I had all the wrong ideas about grief.
Nothing has ever felt like this.
It lingers on every day.
It's not just sadness.
It's a hole.



VIII OF CUPS

VIII OF CUPS

What is the purpose of life and death?

Ramblings, human capacity for love and pain, trying to make sense of it all:

“Grief is just love with no place to go.”

My love for you radiates within me.
From my tired human body.
I'm capable of
so much pain,
so much love,
so much grief,
and it all comes from inside!

There's a strange beauty in that.

My body loves you
My body wants to create,
read, sing, paint, wail, sleep,
because it fucking loves you.
I make time for you because I love you.
It hurts because I love you.
I love my human body.

I miss yours.

Everyone feels your absence.
You were so important to so many people.

Somedays I feel a need to substitute
for the role that you played in our lives.

A pressure to transform myself.

To be everything that you were to others
but I've always known that I'm inadequate.
I never had your wit, your insight, your humor.

I wouldn't even know where to start.
I just want to make people feel less alone
but in doing so I have to abandon myself
and my own grief.

I'm not you and never will be.

I know this.

My love for you really only matters when I'm alone in my room.
No one else knows it, no one else fully understands it,
maybe not even you.

I feel like a fraud in grief..
like I don't have the right to feel
this fucked up over you when there are others
that have known and loved you much longer
than I got the chance to.

I often think about how you would feel
if our roles were reversed,
and I had been the one to pass away.

Would it impact you just as much?

Sometimes, I think that if you saw
the intensity of my mourning,
you would also question why
I've cried this much over you.

I worry that maybe I carried too much
where it wasn't reciprocated,
where I shouldn't have,
where you didn't want me to.

It's an isolating thought.

MARCH 2020

My grief usually feels like it's on top of me,
On my chest, weighing me down
But today my grief sits beside me.

It feels a little lighter.
But the feeling is bittersweet.

—

I wonder what our friendship
would have become over time?
Could we start over?

Maybe this time
we'd learn from our mistakes,
we'd be wiser, careful.
We could even grow
to be life-long friends.

I think that's just how it would be
and that would be enough for me.

I'm beginning to forget
your physical warmth,
your touch, your arms,
how it felt when you held me,
where you used to place your hands..
it all feels so distant

Isn't that sad?

I hope to one day know love in the way that you expressed it. Your love was evident in your words and actions. It was a love that exceeded the limits of what I knew to be true about love. It was queer kind of love. An old and unspoken kind of love. A love that felt new to those like me who have never known its full potential, its magic. A love that continues to love even after you're gone. We were so fortunate to have been loved by you.



APRIL 2020

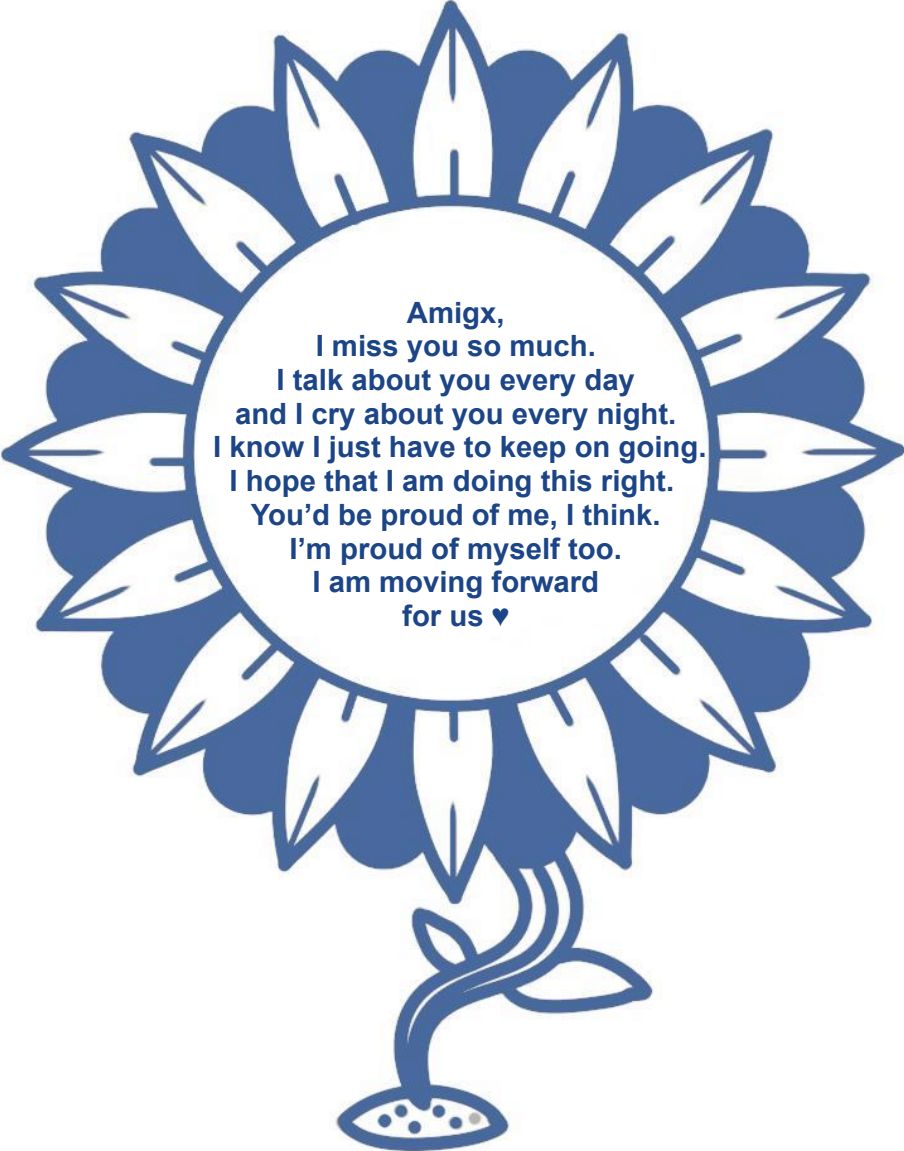
Having to let you go feels unfair.
I want to keep you with me forever
despite the pain and sadness it brings.

I know that time will do as it always does
and slowly take pieces of my memory.

Tonight you almost felt like a stranger
but I know that wasn't what you were,
especially not to me.

we laughed together,
we talked for hours,
we were vulnerable,
we learned from each other,
we cried and held each other,
we were friends, first and foremost

You were real.
We really happened.



Amigx,
I miss you so much.
I talk about you every day
and I cry about you every night.
I know I just have to keep on going.
I hope that I am doing this right.
You'd be proud of me, I think.
I'm proud of myself too.
I am moving forward
for us ♥

5/8/2020

Reminder: there is more to life than death.

6/19/2020

My friends are dropping like flies.

9/12/2020

I'm reminded of your absence every morning
by all the little things that make me think of you.
It's still hard to believe that you're actually gone.

11/20/2020

I've got so many questions to ask
that only you have the answers to.
But death said that you must go
somewhere where I can't reach you.

12/2/2020

I desperately want to talk to others about you.
About all the queerness, all the tenderness,
and all the complexity that you and I were.
Keeping quiet is incredibly tormenting.

I had a dream about you last night.
It was a good dream.

I've prayed every night, asking
for you to appear in my dreams
but you rarely ever did.

Now, when I'm finally trying to move on,
you're there making food for us.

I think I dreamt of you because
I've been suppressing my thoughts of you.
I even took down your pictures.

How am I ever supposed to get over you?

—

I'm not afraid to be angry anymore.
If anything, I want to stay angry. For me.
But this anger makes me want to avoid you.
It makes me feel like I finally have
a sense of control over our situation.
It's an anger that I should have expressed
when you were still here.
Now it feels like I'm not supposed to talk about it.

Why did you have to come back now?
Why do you haunt me like this?

Grief is tricky.
Looking back at pictures,
I barely recognize myself.
I'm not that same person anymore.

This unrecognizable person
was the "me" that knew you.
The "me" that experienced you.

On that first year of your death,
I carried my grief in my chest
and in my stomach.

The ache was all my love for you.
It felt like your presence.
Like you were watching over me.

I can feel the distance now.
Sometimes, I still want to feel close
like I did in those first few months.

All that love with nowhere to go,
It's stuck now in my throat.
I think that's why it feels so good to cry.

Today I got caught up in my feelings
after finding some silly trivial messages
between us from years back.
I don't mind this sadness though,
This is when I feel most close to you.

I remember the day I was informed of your passing;
there was a moment where I realized that instagram
would mark the time of our last conversation.
It's now 73 weeks.
This is so crazy to me.
I haven't seen you in over a year
yet it still feels like it's not real.
There's just no way that you're gone.

Looking back at our conversations,
I can see how much potential there was
between us to grow into great friends.
It still aches knowing that there are so many things
we won't ever know about each other.

It fucks me up.

I spend days in bed thinking about what
we would be doing if you were still here.
There are so many conversations
that I'm longing to have.

You were so fucking wise.

I was in awe of you.

I've never known anyone with our capacity to care and to give.
Someone so busy yet always found the time to be present.

The weight of my grief comes in waves.

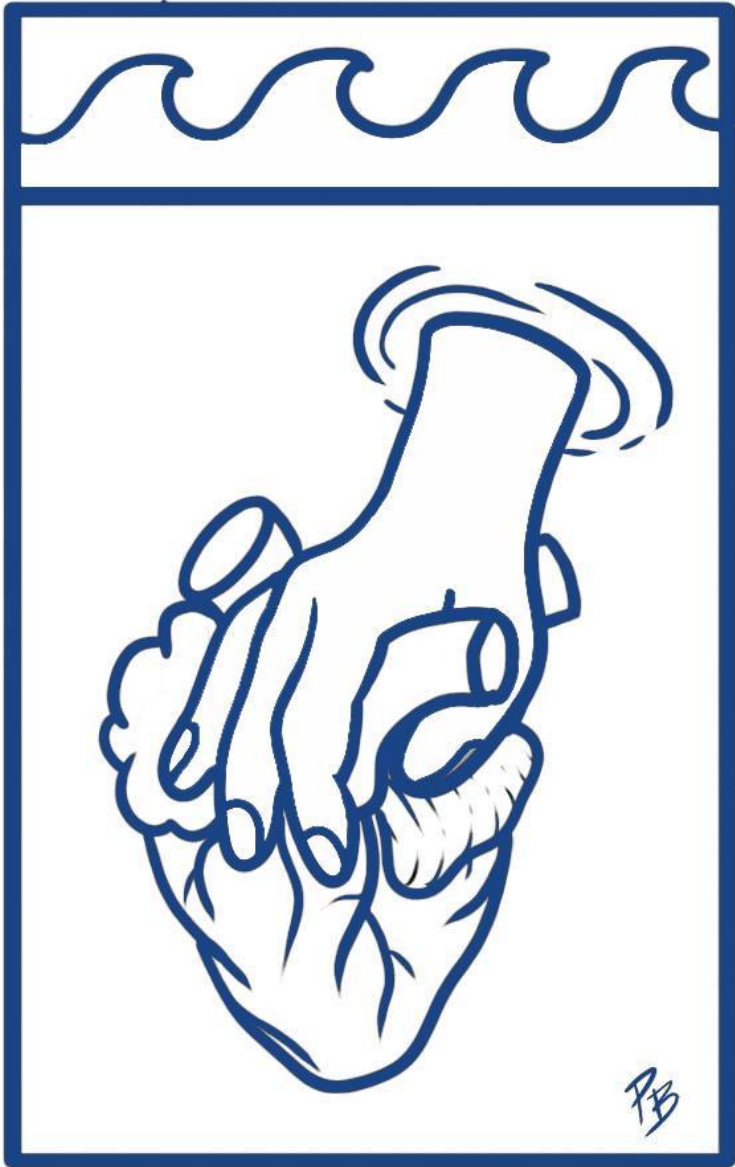
I've even developed crying these
big-ass alligator tears
that I didn't know I had inside me.
And they just keep coming.

If there were ever a way to prove
my love and appreciation for you,
these 73 weeks without you would be evident enough.

Grief is a fucking bitch
but even in the pits of it,
I continue to learn and grow.
I wish you could witness it.
I know you would be proud of me.

I wish we had taken more pictures together.

I love you.



Heart Underwater