

Paul Maheke: To Be Blindly Hopeful

23rd March - 29th June 2024

Content warning: this text contains detailed descriptions of lived trauma, including sexual violence.

It is also an intimate record of recovery and repair.

It is not suitable for anyone under the age of 16.

If you've been affected by the subjects discussed in this text, support is available from the following places:

SurvivorsUK

<https://www.survivorsuk.org>

Rape Crisis England and Wales

<https://rapecrisis.org.uk>

Refuge National Domestic Abuse Hotline

<https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk>

Amethyst - Sexual Assault Referral Centre North Wales

<https://bcuhb.nhs.wales/health-advice/sexual-health-advice/amethyst-sexual-assault-referral-centre/>

<https://www.rasawales.org.uk/sarc.html>

Sexual health testing

<https://www.shwales.online/wales-sti-testing-kit-test-and-post.html>

Welsh Government help and advice

<https://www.gov.wales/live-fear-free>

Samaritans

<https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/>

Mind Cymru

<https://www.mind.org.uk/about-us/mind-cymru-mind-in-wales/>

12.08.2020

In the dream, I am under the covers getting ready to fall asleep. Suddenly, someone grabs me.

Their face is dark, almost dirty-looking. They have long, unkempt hair. They wear a black headband... or maybe it's a mask... they press against me, pinning me down, preventing me from moving. They violate me through the sheets.

Perhaps that's what bothers me the most today: He never used physical force to control me. He made me feel so small that I was afraid to say no. I said nothing to avoid upsetting him or being accused of hurting him, of disappointing him. He had been disappointed so many times with me, he kept repeating it.

13.08.2020

Woke up feeling anxious. My chest is pounding. Again, there is this weird vibration running through my whole body. I don't feel like smiling.

I'm trying not to deflect when friends ask how I am doing. It's still hard to tell who I should speak to and who I shouldn't. I just want to feel safe... the biggest/vaguest word. I don't really know how it'd feel to feel safer.

Today I'm returning to the UK and I'm looking forward to being in the flat. Weirdly enough, the fear of crossing paths with him has completely left me since I remembered/discovered he raped me. I was still carrying the guilt he placed in me. His hold on me is loosening.

The fear is coming from the fact that I'm seeing myself growing more and more confident about reporting him to the police. As I'm writing this, my stomach drops. It's scary. He is scary. I remembered that he smiled when I said I was afraid of him sometimes. I was very disturbed.

A mark left on me as of now and forever. It's up to me to figure out how to live better with it.

14.08.2020

Coping is a blurring process. Coping mechanisms are also about creating blind spots for yourself

16.08.2020

Yesterday I felt like I didn't want to press charges. That maybe I could resolve this without having to face him his manipulation ever again. Perhaps, this is just me speaking out of fear. I don't want to be questioned anymore about my experience. I don't want to have to justify how I move through life... Yet I always do justify myself. Is this back-and-forth part of the process? Or is this the remains of his manipulation,

of his hold on me?

I always make sure my pain is invisible to others--why?

20.08.2020

After a few days without nightmares, I'm woken up in the middle of the night by one of them. A is in a suit, as if he's going to work. He enters the apartment where I'm on vacation in the middle of the night — S. and L.B (A.'s friend) are there too. I'm not at ease. In the dream, I'm half asleep, I get up because I hear noise outside. The door is open, the bead curtain flutters in the wind. The neighbour is there, she reassures me saying the noises are from her son, who's rowdy. She's tall, 45-50 years old. Slim. Shaved head. She's wearing a knitted dress (probably cotton). I go back into the house. I sleep on the floor, surrounded by objects and trinkets.

I realize A is there. He's stirring up trouble in the semi-darkness of the living room. L. is working on a computer. An argument erupts between us. I feel trapped. I shout, I cry, I ask him to stop. I ask him to leave. He refuses and launches into a verbal counter-attack. L. B. comes to my defence. She asks him in turn to leave. I force myself to cry, I don't know why. Maybe I want to make sure she understands how intolerable A's presence is to me. S is woken up by the shouts and words we exchange.

I go to the window; I want to close the shutters and make sure he won't come back in. I know he's there, lurking. He surrounds us with his energy. The house is engulfed in this bubble of frustration. He doesn't want to give in and leave.

An insect —half snake, half millipede, half crab, half bird skeleton— comes in through the window. I scream. S and I try to kill it by smashing its skull; which is exposed, skinless, and matte black. Each part of its skeleton-body has a different colour: blue, yellow, black, white. It makes a sound of shell and bones when it moves on the concrete floor of the house.

S hits it with shoes on the head. The creature eventually dies.

I pack a bag and leave with S and L.B.

A. is still there. She witnesses his persistence. He's persecuting, at last in her eyes too.

I wake up.

21.08.2020

They dwell in the shadows. They live in the shade of a story that has been told for them by certain individuals they didn't know. The light casts images of random narratives that some attribute to them.

He steps forward and begins to address an audience he knows only by the names they bear. Nothing else has he ever known.

He breaks into tears as he realizes that what he is about to do will expose him even more than his mere presence in a white room, whose walls won't forget what has been said.

Forward, he presses his foot into a chest full of the nightmares of the past months. They forced him to apologize for things he had never done.

22.08.2020

A constant feeling of being on the verge of tears, without managing to shed a single tear. Torn without being visibly ripped apart. Flesh without memory of its wound.

23.08.2020

They live within the night. Clinging to the dark spots and corners. Deep within him, he knows where to look. If he ever wanted to see them, he would have already. Porous to the idea, he lets himself think about the moments he felt the world had allowed him inside its permeability.

25.08.2020

Had a reading with Gabriel.

Was woken up by the vision of a brown and black cat laying down on my bedside table. Its face is darkened, I can see its eyes. Possibly a female cat. She is looking at me. Her fur is longish and shaggy. The colours are mixing up.

26.08.2020

Woke up this morning with a strain in my neck.

I can't stop replaying the moment when I may have to confront his friends. Why are they protecting and enabling him in his abuse? Do they know? They must!

I'm on survivorsuk.org and I'm reading about ISVA (Independent Sexual Violence Advisor) services.

My chest aches. My chin frowns.

I'm rereading the legal definitions of rape and consent. I'm reading about the emotional aftermath of what they call "male sexual abuse". I'm reading that it has been recognized as a crime since 1994 and that in 2003 the masculine pronouns for the offender got replaced by "they". As I'm writing this, I picture myself reading it to an audience. Do I need an audience to recover and heal? Do I need to be heard?

Am I writing because on paper there is no ambiguity as to what has happened; to what he's done; to what he has made me become, or attempted to.

Do I need an audience to feel like my hurt has the right to exist? What is vulnerability if not sharing and speaking up? I wonder why some still regard it as a synonym of weakness. To me, it's the opposite.

The white sun of the Amalfi coast in my mouth as I toy with memories that aren't mine.

A bright light superimposing with the shadows of a devil that shall not be named. I'm writing this for you not for me.

I'm reading "We recognize that reporting to the police is particularly difficult for trans survivors and survivors of color, who are less likely to be believed by the police and others about their abuse." I'm writing this down for me.

I'm not too bothered if that doesn't make for great art. I'm not here for this. What do you do with it anyway...

27.08.2020

I want to examine maps and things in motion. I don't want to remain stuck here. I want to be able to move away from it, but that's not how things work. Rape, raped. Fixed.

I've logged into the website chat of survivorsuk.org — I'm in the queue waiting for someone to initiate a conversation. I'm very, very, very nervous.

I didn't know I could report him anonymously. I wonder if he'd know it's me.

I wonder what it means. What would happen.

Today is tough. My chest is pounding, and my pulse is irregular.

She said being coerced is abuse. It made me cry as I read it on my screen. I hold back the tears as usual, as if someone were watching me. That's always a feeling I have. Like living my life while being watched.

28.08.2020

Discussed it with Daniel last night. I hadn't realized he knew him. They work at the same venue.

30.08.2020

Feeling very drained this week. I'm tired and numb. Slept better, although the palpitations are still a daily companion.

The feeling of rehashing the brutality is crushing.

31.08.2020

I made a self-referral to Galop. Should hear back from them in a few days.

The same things are replaying in my mind: I wish I could be heard by his friends. I want to believe that if they had doubts about him, they wouldn't have enabled him in his abuse. I might be wrong. Rachel, Sarah, Emily, if you only knew who you are protecting; or maybe you already know who he is. He is an abuser. He destroys and crushes.

Maybe I was the only one not to know. That's probably it.

03.09.2020

Why do I see him when I climax? Why do I feel like I sound, move, and gasp like him when I climax?

He haunts my orgasms probably because he enforced his onto me so many times.

03.09.2020

Today Liam made me feel held, probably in a way that I had never felt before. His words were so precious. He saw me.

Oliver said he saw a sadness in my eyes he never saw before. Did I ever see it?

Why do I feel like this hurt isn't legitimate? Why does it feel so hard to understand its magnitude? My mind: oblivious. Meanwhile, the body works out the pain it needs to process; I want to say excavate. A dead corpse nested in my rib cage.

How long will I ache? Seeing an end where there is none; a long oscillation brushes the shore, washes it off, or the eye believes it did.

04.09.2020

Perplexing to see some people react to me as if nothing happened. I see myself not naming the assault as an assault because I'm equally uncomfortable about their silence.

Yet I'm angry because me too, I didn't want to see it that way, and yet, I had to. Now it's here and I cannot undo it. I just have to deal with it, so deal with it.

Visual stimulation is too much; I wish I could only bathe in sound.

I cannot hold others anymore the way I used to. I feel sorry. I fail them as they are failing me. We crumble and collapse.

Seeing people feels like a stretch at the moment. Texting too. It's taxing. I forget how to maintain contact. I lost my ability to stand upright and be a pillar for some.

What gives its depth to it is the absence. Whatever was there isn't anymore; for just a moment, the sensations disappear, the friends and foes too. An emptiness so full of its own gravity/density. An everything which swallows.

05.09.2020

It's hard to believe someone would take pleasure in putting another through this. On so many nights I told myself that it was probably because he had complicated relationships in the past, that I just needed to be patient. He'll get to know me. He'll understand real intimacy. I told myself he must have stayed single for too long. He must have forgotten that sex is an exchange and that it takes two to enter into a dialogue.

He wouldn't let me speak. He wouldn't let me enter into a dialogue with him. He wouldn't let me enter this relationship of ours. I was left outside while feeling trapped... and I'm trying to be poetic here. That's how it was. Just like the feeling in my chest: hollow and full at the same time. The black holes of the universe operate in that way too. So dense yet bare.

07.09.2020

He's not aware of it. He's had complicated relationships, it must have affected him, or he remained single for a long time... etc. etc. etc.

Some people would rather have me forget.

The whole thing is so unjust and unfair. Is justice the way forward? A language I know so little about. The language of war he knows so well.

Why do I feel like his friends have a say in whether he raped me or not, whether I'm a good person or not? Probably because he made them so central to his manipulation. He wanted me to know that I had been watched. That he is watching me. He made me feel like my voice was nothing because his entourage would never consider it. Not even when I was trying to help. Just like a sliding knot... he wanted me to feel that I could never escape his hold. That he could rape me again and again and that it won't matter because the power lies on his side.

That's the only way he can get off. He had to crush me like this time he bit my thumb so hard I thought I'd start to bleed. Yet again I didn't say anything. He had the answer he needed in order for him to come stronger: none.

I'm reminded of his smile when I told him that he scared me sometimes. How did I let someone belittle me that much. How lost was I? How lost he made me feel? This is the ordinary tale of toxic masculinity. Damn, I was crushed.

10.09.2020

An emotional release that feels tidal. I want to be bathed in sound. Deep bass sounds.

I'm wearing the red jasper necklace.

The year I've been raped was the year I was made to feel confused. I had lost all sense of self because everything that was supposed to be familiar wasn't safe.

I had been raped, but I didn't know it. I didn't compute it in that way. Only him knew.

11.09.2020

Anxiety washes over me... for no apparent reason. A soft shell.

I want this feeling in my chest to go away.

12.09.2020

Filip called. He is incapable of listening to me talking about the assault without letting me know that "we all have issues to deal with" —not because he is an asshole but because he doesn't know how to help. The millennial syndrome of mistaking self-care for selfishness. He wants me to be positive. At least my health is fine, he says.

There is a certain nostalgia living within me at the moment. I don't quite understand it because I have never been someone nostalgic. I thought I had a good memory for a long time, but my past seems to have been rewritten several times already.

I speak less and less. Contacts with people tire me. It's as if I'm floating in their presence. Do they notice? Neither here nor completely elsewhere.

I always have sobs in my jaw. Tears sometimes flow without permission.

I don't really know what it's like to mourn. Maybe it's not really mourning since I'm only discovering it now.

I often say that time is dissolving strangely at the moment. It may be that, more than ever, time is neither linear nor fixed. Variations of an obsolete unit that no longer makes sense to my body-mind, which only seeks to float now. That's probably why I need to be immersed in soundscapes, as I would in water. Without really controlling anything. Which I never really managed to do anyway.

It's a big blur, to be honest. No projection or perspective. Dissolved.

And what I got to say? And what I got to say? And what I gotta say?

14.09.2020

It's as if my body is not where it should be — why say it? — dissolved, absolved. Just like a watered-down beverage. The thing without the taste of the thing. Slightly off-key, detuned.

Why am I so overwhelmed by organizational work stuff?... The relief of a meeting being cancelled.

Who gets to qualify what happened to me? Who gets to say whether I get the right to speak up or not? Spoken for. Spoken by.

I feel powerless these days, I even wonder if I'm in a depressive state. I spend most of my time on my own. Not much of an appetite for anything social. Even responding to messages has become a weird burden.

How so?

I'm left here with a room with no view. What's the outlook? What does the future hold as to whether I'll get to work with it? A deeply unsettling shift in the way I perceive myself and others — as if in an indefinite state of wandering-wondering or alternate occupation. That's all my body-mind does. They know how to perform the functional but don't seem to understand yet why they feel that way... moreover how to overcome the attack they were put under.

A living shell disconnected from its (soft) core. AnnLee Pierre Huyghe; one shell, several selves.

With so much yet to be said, how am I not to feel overwhelmed? With people reminding me of how mundane what is happening to me is, how can I not be so quick to bury the cutting feelings? The invalidating feelings. How can I not feel like a self-pitying, too-sensitive-for-this-world kind of person? Ligia Lewis: feelings matter. They do matter because they are actual matter.

Was I expecting too much from my surroundings? What do I gotta say? Fucking sad.

16.09.2020

I had my first session of legal counselling today. I got to hear all about the legal procedure of reporting from the start to the finish line. It was intimidating and overbearing at times. I'm really afraid of how he will react. I know it's going to be a war. His personality makes it impossible for him to see his wrongdoings —that's probably what I want to believe... asserting power, humiliating someone in such ways intentionally is probably too ugly to look in the face.

17.09.2020

Today's conversation with the therapist was yet another breakthrough. I'm not in denial of the feelings I'm experiencing at the moment but those relating to the time I was with him; in his bed, in his house.

Every time I'm asked to think about the times I felt violated, when I proceeded to perform sexual acts on him without being aroused, without my consent, I'm reminded of that pain in my chest. I remember how ugly I felt, disposable almost.

These are the feelings I need to live with: the most painful ones. They entertain a fear as if you were still part of my life. I am ought to remember that I decided to walk away. I decided to gain back my agency and rebuild myself.

Every time I have to think of how you manipulated me to believe I was wrong... my chest tightens just like it tightened in your presence. I'm furious about the things you used to do to me. You wanted to humiliate me, to make me feel lesser than. You wanted to hurt me, to hurt something in me you couldn't relate to. I'm not interested in your motive. I just need to find my way back. Just like when I find my way out of your bed, out of your sick logic, out of your sick mind games. This is behind me. I changed the course of the plan you had for me. Subjugated to your vile greed for power.

The therapist recommended I speak about you in the past tense. You've been left behind. That's probably what enraged you so much, why you couldn't contain your venom when I told you there was too much violence. There was never a moment when I felt loved. I've only felt used. No more than a silicone flashlight. My subjugation to you, fed by the guilt you had placed in me, was always going to wear off when away from you: a brief moment so that I could be reminded of the taste of an air not so polluted by your twisted psycho fabrications.

You were in me, and because of that, I had to be around you. You've been severed from my life, but you left a mark I now have to live with until the day I die. However, your hold is no longer in effect. I see you for who you are now. Ever so acutely. You're a parasite. Scabies trauma.

18.09.2020

"We can never guarantee the outcome. The first step is dealing with the trauma by gaining back power"

19.09.2020

"To render enslavement as a personal experience, language must get out of the way."
Toni Morrison - Beloved

Re read and re listened some of the messages and voice notes I sent to Millie while I was with him. He was incredibly manipulative. I had never met someone using such mind games before him. He really got into my head and made me believe some of my friends were actually enemies. I feel sorry to have questioned their integrity. In a hindsight it was all the people who warned me against him. I wonder if Dimitri felt violated by him just like I did.

I also realise how in love I was and how he used it to his advantage to destroy the things he wanted to destroy in me.

Fuck you! Scrolling through the messages you used to send me right now... I realise how much my subconscious knew things I seemed oblivious to. You knew I could see through you. You panicked and attacked. You asked me to reflect on why I kept on dreaming of you as "a monster or evil and it took a toll" well yes because you were a monster, you were evil, you had raped me and I didn't know what to make of it.

It took me about a year and half to understand what had happened. I had to open up fully to my friends and family to see that your abuse was truly evil.

23.09.2020

The Equinox is just behind me. I feel much better since I've confronted my memory of being in bed with you, of being in your home, of having you in me.

I needed to write because I needed to give a weight to my own voice. I needed to hear it louder, for myself and for others to know what's not acceptable.

24.09.2020

Jason called. I spoke for the first time about the assault in a work context. I described this new performance as a reflection of my current personal emergency. Reclaiming the crisis as internal.

I danced while elevating my unresolved dead.

25.09.2020

Whatever is in the dark will come to the light.

Watching Surviving R. Kelly. My chest has tightened.

Somewhat my brain wants to convince me that his friends are protecting an abuser, but they probably are themselves caught up in a toxic relationship with him. The illusion will wear off. Trust that it will.

I still can't sleep without music. My mind is far too occupied. I must inhabit it with other images, of the cosmos, of the abyss, and of colourful lights.

If I find myself thinking again about his skin, his proportions — because, like all the people I've had sex with, I can draw him from memory — his posture, his gait, it seems even more absurd to have believed that I shared anything with him/you.

You were nothing but a reflection of the image you had created to please me and convince me that you only wanted good for me. I still think about the fact that you wanted to buy a house with me. A portion of it wouldn't belong. I wonder what you would have demanded in return for this favour from a great gentleman. A knight far too servile not to be a jailer. What pleasure did you take in seeing your traps close? Or did you see them closing in on you? Or did you see them locking us in with you? Because that's also what I understood, we had to fall with you and above all not get back up. Just watch you rise... towards I don't know what.

You were absent from yourself and you had tasked me with filling that void.

"This is not rocket science" how many times did you repeat it, surely to convince yourself and me of your flawless reasoning. There was no other outcome than abuse.

Endure and don't live, don't see, but envy me. I still wonder what you thought the world envied you for. The self-conviction of a psychopath touching the joy of finding oneself on top of the world. The roofs that will collapse under you, I hope; in fact, I already know.

26.09.2020

I hold your arms in an invisible embrace. I danced celebrating your shoulders and your lips, unknown to me still.

What are the things left behind when I think about what my next love will look like. It's like chasing the very thing which hurt you last. I wonder if romance is such a thing. Dialogue is definitely one: I want to converse, in and out of love. It seems like a very hard thing to ask. I'll never understand why some refuse to admit that there's not much to do (in love) apart from exchanging.

Today, I almost feel like the pain has left me. My mind is lighter. I am wary, however, since the weeks leading up to this one left me drained; emptied. Not like when the effort is behind, but when it is just ahead, tiring in advance because it seems so great. I may be lazy. I often think so.

I may have moved forward unknowingly into what comes after. Contrasting with what came before, it opens onto a new field. It's as if the opportunity to get better is finally presenting itself. I also know that it will leave as it came. Linearity is a manufactured thing. It is the human who drew/decided it. So, this field, although open, still does not offer me a horizon line.

The abyss stared back.

28.09.2020

Write speak read: your voice has a right to exist.

I cooked today. It's been a long time. I meditated too.

I saw red lands and green rooms. They spoke of past things that I must leave behind for they don't interface with me directly at the moment. They just need to be acknowledged so that I can live better with them eventually.

I'm excited to see Sam tomorrow. Someone I feel safe with. The way he speaks to me, his lips brown almost purple. His teeth white. So white. His eyes brown, his lashes brown, his nipples brown.

It's been a few days now that I feel back to myself as if I had sipped on enough water to regenerate for a bit... at least until the next rain shower.

I've stared into the abyss and the abyss stared back, but it didn't swallow me up. It recognized me as a son-grandson-descendant. The abyss isn't the origin nor the essence of what makes me ache. It just holds it. It has become the shelter of the

darkest parts of the world. I feel that we are all ought to look at it in the eyes now.

The trauma of this time feels greater than ever. For us all. How can we possibly recover from that? What cure? I believe some things can't be cured and that's fine. It's part of what we are meant to take part in.

My mind drifts so easily. Almost compulsively. It's addicted to drifting, to not being here. I want to reconnect with what's simple. What makes me feel I don't need to push so hard so often. What makes me so reckless? I wonder if it has to do with the uncovered stories my body-mind hosts. Or because Neptune is misplaced in my chart. How do I fight the cosmos? It feels fixed because it moves too slowly for my human body-mind. I can barely see it move or evolve, while my flesh is losing its substance. What is it that I'm trying to see? Why do I need to see in order to understand fully? How do you rest when you rely so heavily on sight?

29.09.2020

I had sex with Farid today. It's crazy how by giving me explicit permission to pleasure him he is making me feel safe. The action was okay; it had been so long since I have had penetrative sex.

The last time was obviously not a great memory or maybe not so memorable because it was all about you, right?

Sex has always had to be an exchange for me to enjoy. It's a form of speech and dialogue. I like to know how to pleasure my lover and in a perfect world they would have to be equally interested in my pleasure. You definitely weren't because dialogue has never been a thing for you.

You grew smaller in my mind. I wonder if this is another instance of my mind-body trying to get rid of you and your crass manners, of your abuse and your pink dick. Ridiculously pointed at the ceiling when you removed the duvet, pulled my head in its direction. You didn't ask with words and I felt like I had no other choice but to proceed.

You put both of your hands behind your neck and let me perform the job, the one job you assigned me with: be subjected to your power, silently pleasing you.

You came in a grunt, left the room without a word and went on with what you had to do. You went to the gym and then to the office.

I was left there with the feeling of having been used in the most degrading ways. A cum bag who looks cute at the art dinners.

I wonder how you'd have reacted if I had resisted, cause I never did.

01.10.2020

Had dinner with Marco. It's so heartbreaking and frustrating to hear him talk about how he describes the way he contracted HIV; and about how he made a « mistake

»... when all I hear is that he had been violated. He didn't give his consent. He didn't know the guy would break the implicit contract which ties sexual partners.

I had to tell him. That's funny how he is doing exactly the thing I was doing with the rape (mine) — I dismissed my right to call it a violation. I dismissed the violence and the trauma by burdening myself with a (useless) guilt, as if I were responsible for the abuse you perpetuated.

It's hard to look in the face of abuse because you never want to see yourself depicted as a victim because we don't know (as a society) how to take care of victims, we don't even know how to recognise them. We always try to get them to understand whatever happened to them wasn't what they thought. That's how you moved in this world. Building a world on your self-accredited entitlement to others; to their body, their sex. Hollow beings.

What else was left for us when in your bed and when we felt we had to give in to your distorted sexual confidence? Not that everything was bad but because it was mostly bad. Not because you couldn't perform but because we couldn't say no. Not that it mattered. You didn't care. Or rather you wanted us to feel that way. We were made to feel small. At least, I was.

You tossed my legs behind your neck you inserted your erected dick in me. I told you that you were inside. You said, yes, I know. You kept on going. I let you go about your business; go about my hole. I was in my head by the time you came. I was at the testing center by the time you were finished. I was picturing the nurse letting me know I was positive. I was picturing us fighting over you infecting me. Panic had taken over my body as soon as you pulled your now-flaccid dick out of me. You sighed in an ultimate relief. You had what you wanted. You could sleep now. I couldn't so I asked you if it meant that we were exclusive and monogamous, if we were an item, a thing, a couple. You were visibly annoyed by my question and asked why I'd ask.

I never told you, you never knew, but I took a test because I needed to know if you had infected me. I didn't dare to let you know because you'd have been hurt—that's what I thought. I always believed in your pantomime: disappointed, hurt, misunderstood, betrayed. The void within you became almost the mirror image of what you've witnessed in others. You had no substance. You too are hollow, baby boo.

Because you thought you had me, you didn't see that I'd survive you. Always. I'm writing this for myself as a reminder that despite your evil, I shall prevail.

04.10.2020

How much can one body-mind take to decide to resist? So many parts of me would love to think they'd have resisted — yet they did not. They could not because of some invisible forces which tied them tightly to the belief they had to comply, for they had integrated that pleasuring you had to be the priority, because it was your priority.

I see you wearing your glasses in this bed, but you didn't. Were you interested at all

in seeing us? Why was I interested in getting to understand your sick logic? Why was I so keen on shielding your borrowed emotions? Probably because reality was too harsh and realer than real. Just crude. Why is the brain always so prompt to generate fictions? Now that I see you, I just don't understand how people celebrated you. How did we celebrate you? For what?

We elevated you so that you could better abuse us.

Speaking from the future:

I wonder how you reacted to your reign crashing to the ground. Perhaps you knew your time was up when we all got together and spoke up. Everything that is in the dark soon comes to light. The thing is that what you've done to us can never go back into the dark. I wished so hard it would. Harsh lights have never been my thing. Probably because it's hard for me to look anything in the eyes.

I am hoping the support group I'm joining next week will offer me some comfort and affirmation. It's part of the process to restore what you've taken away from us. The broken parts of your psychotic love puzzle. I've contributed to it, I've given you this power, but I've taken it back. The cracks will remain but your psycho love puzzle has seen its own death. You had to restart. Will you?

06.10.2020

Sex isn't intimacy. Violence isn't sex.

07.10.2020

To ambition another way of relating to one another. To ambition another form of relation. To ambition another relation. To be in relation.

08.10.2020

I was smitten with Jamal today. I wonder why he can pull me back in just like that. He has a sweetness about him that I found irresistible alongside his awkwardness. Yet I know he isn't right for me. I need to talk through shit. Just like I'm doing now. Exposing everything to the sunlight so that I can reflect on it. Make it become flesh.

12.10.2020

Which parts of me want to hold on to what happened? Which parts want to let go of it?

17.10.2020

Maintaining balance is a battle. I drift sideways so many times; during the week; on

weekends.

I wonder if achieving balance is possible at all. Maybe balance, like other concepts, shouldn't be regarded as singular. I want to write in the plural form—all the time. Because I exist in a plural form. People say that without meaning it, but what if your entire being is meant to be plural and in between? That's what constitutes most of the violence of my existence. Not that I'm trans or non-binary, not that I'm differently abled, not that I'm that different. I also wonder if the degrees of difference matter. What are we differentiating from? What am I differentiating from? This is the premise of a quest that will probably lead me to understand the nature of my surroundings. What defines my context. It's all about context. The very nature of our experience is precisely defined by our context. I'm not the same here as I am there. People will read my body differently. As I travel, I mutate because I'm undefined and ambiguous ethnically. From North to North, longitudinally my body remains dangerous; it's a source of tension. It illustrates the battles that opposed my kind to yours. Kinfolk. Skinfolk. Fuckfolk. What's left of it may have to do with the future. I see no evolution in this, just a series of continuations, paralleling the past.

Why can't you see that?

The term coping is scary because it implies that there is a recipe for healing. It's scary because I'm always questioning whether I'm doing the right thing (Bear in mind I don't believe in "the right thing").

Coping, like fixing, requires us to figure out what's the thing that is going to make you hurt less; or forget more. Can I ever forget if I've already forgotten once? Do I ever want to forget if I've already forgotten once, and it led me to have a total meltdown? I know some people want me to forget because it'd be easier to deal with what my presence triggers in them.

I did isolate myself. People also left me on the curb, not that I resent them for it. I just noticed. I guess I did that too. When you don't know how to deal with the pain of others, one option is to run away. To cope, not to address.

Coping also creates a blind spot. It helps you move forward without hurting too much. It's a compensation. Something is missing, a hole has been made, I must fill it. I do not necessarily (need to) see it.

My chest is heavy. My jaw is full of tears. Tensed. Hurting. I refuse now to shy away from exposing the abuse. Whoever knows me shall know about it. I need an audience to heal because justice has different rules in this realm, in my realm. This is where it starts to get tricky because I feel like an exhibitionist, when really, I just want to be able to hide without feeling suppressed. Why should I shut up when you spoke out loud the web of lies/fictions you carefully crafted?

I'm writing from a place of hurt, hoping to get rid of the memory/ies of you. I'm tired of accommodating your (virtual) presence in my life. How do I get rid of you and your glasses and your smell and the shade of your skin?

I'm exhausted. Just because I cannot think of anything else but what you've done to me. I wish to finally find the key to the door which leads to the other side of that

story. The karmic wheel has its own timing. I'm aware of it just as much as I'm aware of the hollow wound you left in my chest. You filled me in like an emotional bin. You made me feel the emptiness which you're made of. I stared at the abyss and the abyss stared back—it also swallowed me for a bit.

You were part of my life, you aren't anymore, your words can't do shit. I'll thrive. Boy bye. I wish one or two of these magical formulas would work. They will. Let's say they will.

In front of an audience maybe when your crime would be put under scrutiny. My audience your crime our graves. Your fate. My second life begins now.

I'm sending you there in the Sunken Place. Black: the color you are so afraid of. For now, and forever: fuck you.

Because there is no sunken place on this Earth, in this day and age I made one for you. Several of you are buried there. I visit your corpses every now and then, just to check that you are deadier than dead. Not a ghost, just a sack of flesh. Trapped in this little grave of yours, I know I can look at our past as something I've overcome—as something I've survived. I live and you aren't. The sunken place is a few feet underground. Back to your initial den. The mole-rat has returned to the burrow. At the end of this narrow tunnel is the cradle I put you in. There is also a door without a key. It doesn't open. I don't want it to open. So now I'll call it a wall. I built a wall to entrap you in the darkness of this burrow. Be afraid. Be my guest. Stay there so that no one can see you ever again. You'll become a shell. One day I'll blow in your empty case. The sound will carry through the woods, the meadows, and the fields. Blown by the wind, your evil will disperse and vanish into thin air. You vanished and dispersed into thin air. I will never hear of you ever again because even if I did, my ears won't allow me to register your moaning chant. Goodbye, or rather farewell... and even more!

I'm sad beyond respectability. Or at least now on this sofa, inside my flat: a space unknown to you I had to mark with my urine to feel safer. Where I don't wear my face mask in fear of being recognized. Where I let my hair grow big in the hope, they'd keep you away because I'd have become someone you didn't know.

Is it because it's too late to reverse the process that I feel so sad? The invisible touch of what happened to me, what my body recorded without my knowledge, has brought forth what will never be able to hide again. A sentimental affliction that surely protects me as much as it eats away at my skin and spirit. Rogue and solitary, like you.

One lets oneself be manipulated to feel loved and desired, believing that nothing else is accessible to us.

I'm nervous to present this new work in Paris, and to be in France.

I had to take a long nap after I finished editing the sound for the work. Relistening to what I wrote. Unsure of the nature of what I'm doing. It's like a break-up letter I'm giving away to people I don't know.

I wonder how much this will stay with me once I've performed it. I'm curious to see how I can make this work my home.

21 minutes is a format I like; it leaves room for them to be curious. Or to explore the feeling of being left hanging in there.

I never know how things will resonate with people. So personal yet so mundane. Male abuse is still very taboo though. I was met with so many contradictory reactions/sentiments.

26.10.2020

1st BAM group meeting (Black, Asian, Multi) at SurvivorsUK.

I'm sitting here wondering what will come next. What's the phase coming after the death of self? Will there be a problem? A death of self sounds serious and deep, too deep to even fathom what are the things to hold on to and not lose. Losing what? Losing self? Self lost, at least not dead yet.

I wonder what's the weight of this pain I carry through the day and accompany me at night. It feels like a donkey sat on my chest sometimes. It left me alone lately. There is a rush or a vibration rushing through my bones and soul. That's how it feels. I shake or shiver. I'm unsure. Just like when you are bed bound with a fever. It comes in waves. A tidal fear. A tidal panic. A tidal puddle of sweat.

I am floating. I know what happened, what you did. I think of you in spite of my own desire to see you disappear. I believe I'll overcome. I remember your bullshit. I feel transformed yet uprooted. I want to believe you have no power over me, that it won't ever happen again. That I'll be able to love someone without being afraid. I wish the world wouldn't be so eager to invalidate people's experiences. I can probably let go of the hurt and the fear. I wonder when I'll be able to let go of the bad feelings you placed in me. I hope to have become more aware of my boundaries and needs. I was told I wasn't thinking straight. I wasn't valid, I wasn't intelligent, I was too sensitive. I was careless, too self-absorbed to be able to care. I was irrational, I over-dramatized. I promise myself I will be unapologetic, happy, and self-accepting.

It's always easier to feel good about doing but harder to feel okay just being.

The heavy feelings have given way to lighter emotions: I'm feeling back to myself. There is a whiff of bliss, a draft of hope. I've confessed my interest in him to Michael. We kissed for a few hours, we found our way to each other, just like our mouths and tongues knew each other from before. It's a rare feeling. He is very much in touch with his sensuality. He is in his body. Grounded, confident, reliable. His tongue has a way to swarm over my flesh which makes it shiver. I close my eyes and there is a butterfly flapping its frail wings over my neck and chest. He told me he is HIV+, but I knew it already. He asked me how and I couldn't find the answer. For a few weeks now I'm hearing "axe" when people say "ask". Cognitive dissonance? His body is brown. His touch is warm. I have the feeling this tie will last for a while. We knew each other from a thousand different past lives.

Dreamt of A. Mass shooter. He had a gunfire and killed people from the central yard of the low-rise building. He was in his suit. I somehow managed to get hold of his

weapon and shot him in the leg (thigh). He fell down on the ground bleeding and crying. Asking why I had done that... I didn't respond. I woke up with the fear of having to face a criminal investigation. I would have to justify why I had shot him. At the same time, I was relieved because he was incapacitated.

I'm thinking of Michael a lot. I think I'd like to be in a relationship with him. At least that's what I'm hoping for. He has a way to make me feel serene. His touch and kisses left a mark of the gentlest type.

Tomorrow there is no support group. First Saturday morning without speaking to the other members. It's already been 4 weeks that we started. Next week will be the start of phase 2. Diving a little deeper into our trauma.

I feel resurrected. Reborn maybe. I came out of this Summer a different version of me. That's true life changes you.

07.11.2020

Meditation #4:

You are in the sea. Your feet are battling against seaweed.

You're young. You are a kid and your mum pulls your hand up so that you wouldn't drown in the waves. You laugh.

You had to make a drawing of him, but it was for his assessment/programme. He is too frantic to draw, so you'll help. You are taking care of his hair. He is sitting in a white chair. You part his hair. You comb his hair.

A man appears in the bay window. He is wearing a black hoodie. His skin is dark. He holds a little bag of dope in his hand. He knocks at the window showing the little bag to the both of you.

He has a very pretty face. His hair is braided (or are they dreadlocks?). His eyes wide open.

The end.

There is a feeling replaying in my body. It's attached to a rainy Friday morning in Paris. We are at Alice's place. On mattresses. We were supposed to sketch the tiny streets of the 13th district. We decided to take pictures and draw from them. We are listening to some music. We are drowsy. I fell in love, but I can't remember with whom.

08.11.2020

Meditation #5:

I see Grandma in the garden at Varetz. It's beautiful. She's wearing black or slate gray rubber boots. She's wearing a brown coat.

She squints because of the sunlight hitting her face directly.

You appear from the balcony of the attic at the front of the house. She looks at you. You are dressed all in white, from head to toe.

You come down and leave the house with a Dalmatian dog. You match.

You walk along the path to Chassagne and away from the house. I stay on the porch.

You are on the edge of Bringidour. In the sun. I shiver through my body. Like on a hot summer after swimming. I am in the calm water. You smile at me from the bank. On your towel. Your wet body. Water droplets bead on your skin.

The cornfields are tall. I see the children who stole my watch back then. Grandpa appears. He chases them away.

Back in the house. I smell the sun-dried sheets. I smile. The tiles of the house, its red, black, and white flowers.

Back on the riverbank. Bwanga tends to your wound. You are open on the left side. You look at me serenely. You don't seem to be suffering. He disinfects you.

Suddenly, a brown and black devil emerges. He comes out of you; from within you. You signal the child to leave. He insists. You growl at him and he doesn't understand why. He flees and returns to the water.

I come back to myself.

09.11.2020

You, who is a poet and has the power to make words swing as if they had flaps and wings. Aquatic memories of a thought.

You, the poet who never called upon the buried older selves yet had to give a name to everything.

You even named me after your past lovers.

In a moment of silence, you mouthed it on your sharply drawn lips. They called me in. We knew each other from a thousand past lives.

Your tongue flickers on my neck, sends shivers down my spine, on my cheeks. I fell for you in a moment of silence. You probably didn't know, or I like to think you didn't, because I was intimidated by the mobility of your hips. Sensuous. Freed from the fear your hands were moved by.

You are one of a kind, a kind of many ones.

09.11.2020

Lengthy touch: a whole world of possibilities.

10.11.2020

Speaking fast, as fast as we can so he wouldn't interrupt us, sliding into the cracks.
An aqueous upheaval, a tidal becoming, just rage.

Livid as we left the room without the answers we came here for. How were we
to make sense of this? An amorphous rage which had no grounding to their eyes.
Believed or not. Made to be left out of rationality. So, to say: we are crazy.

12 dances in a moon revolution (Kiev? Steady cam, gyration).

12.11.2020

I refuse to be in fear because it's fear that made me believe in the feigned kindness of
the embrace of the red devil.

14.11.2020

In Mark Fisher's *The Weird and the Eerie* — in reference to Kant: Time and space are
necessary forms of thought.

What if trauma wasn't to be processed but integrated? Or maybe this is the same
thing: I integrate my abuser so I can live better with his smell. Would that partly
explain why kids who have suffered sexual abuse would later become the perpetrator
of sexual violence?

Do we become what has been done to us; in parts; wholly perhaps?

Thing is I don't want any of you becoming part of who I am. A reconciliation must
happen. I have to reconcile with the version of me who was into you and who let you
be inside him. I realized I left this version of me with you. I'm taking him back so I can
better move away. Wholly, not in parts.

I have often dreamed of a future (romantic). I didn't know it would know brutality,
violation, humiliation. Surely because I am a man and it's not one of the fears that was
passed on to me.

Perhaps it is this forgetfulness that allowed him to violate without fear: protected by
the invisibility of the marks he left in us, his victims and his prey.

15.11.2020

Trauma info workshop: *The body holds its score* - book

The Weird and the Eerie - a struggle over the means of representation.

I see all your faces on my screen and my chest tightens. Someone calls us his
brothers. I understand in a way: we do have this innate bond. We've been abused. We
can relate to each other's pain and struggle to come out of it.

We all have met different versions of Christopher.

That's probably what's so terrible. It's so mundane yet terribly unforgiving. We the trauma. Them the pain inflictors.

05.12.2020

We listen to the sound of our voice without realizing that it actually comes from us. We disempower ourselves by thinking that what carries the sound we produce is the air exhaled by another-the-others.

We seek proof of what happened to us in the wrong places: we seek proof of what happened in the breath of another-the-others because we never thought of ourselves as trustworthy. We seek proof elsewhere to ensure that we would eventually be proven wrong. It's a comfortable place to be.

It's a narrative we entertain for another-the-others because it's a more acceptable and accepted one. People are always so quick to believe that no harm can be caused, that the victims are the exception, that the norm is gentle. Except the norm is violence. Always.

So, while I'm dancing, I know that energies move around me but when I saw the video of the orbs flying all around me, I panicked, because the thing I believed in the most turned out to be true. It has agency and wanted to show me that what I was seeking after wasn't what I needed to know.

For so long, and still now, I feel the need to justify how I feel about things why certain emotions run high in me, why I have decided to separate myself from certain people, certain ideas, certain areas of the world, and of my life. Only today I seem to be able to recognize that for the longest time I was running after some tangible proof of my delusion. Thing is the seemingly delusion decided to show itself under its most vivid colors so I can finally integrate it as my truth.

Who gets to live their life without having to justify their existence—in this world and the others?

No justification could mean true rest.

The worry of being... the worry of being-existing... of existing.

So, I said to myself, let the orbs dance and prance around. Let them follow the lead of your hips. Let them follow your voice—let them be supported by the air you exhaled. A process of recognition in the form of a swirl. We say the world I say a swirl.

10.12.2020

What have the eyes seen that the body can't remember? What has the body felt that the eyes couldn't see?

11.12.2020

I'm writing this driven by the urgency to get personal. Because this is personal. Take it as personally as it gets. It's less about the need to call out or point fingers than it is about gaining back a sense self-esteem and ridding myself of the shame they placed inside of me; onto me. I have decided to speak up —something I never thought I'd do— because I don't believe in the lies you served me anymore.

I walked through the fire of your anguish and burnt my feet to the bone.

12.12.2020

Commit to your rest.

27.12.2020

I'm in France, at my parents' for Christmas. I feel anxious all of a sudden: probably because A's birthday is coming and my phone keeps reminding me of it.

I've met Louis a couple of weeks ago and I already feel in love with him. The connection we've experienced and the support he shows are something I've rarely been able to experience.

I love everything about his body: gorgeous softness in touch and movement. I love his smile and the way his hair moves. I love the way he presses himself against me. How much he wants to connect. Our bodies want to make knots. I want to make knots.

I'm weirdly afraid of not being able to access love. As discussed briefly with my therapist before the break, I'm ashamed of the need I have to be loved. What does it say about how I approach romance? I feel like I'm starting from the wrong angle. Never expecting to win.

I have to remind myself that I have a lot to give and to offer and that I shouldn't settle for less. I deserve love and will be loved just like the way I do.

Louis is very special. I want him to know that. Not because he has to keep being special but rather because I want us to be special for one another.

I see him now in my mind's eye, smiling in my boxer shorts and a white t-shirt. One leg out. He is standing up in my living room on the other side of the room divider. His energy belongs here with me, but also there with himself.

29.12.2020

I see myself trying to control the natural course of things. I don't like this side of my personality which anticipates with fear where the danger will be coming from.

It's rather useless. It distorts reality and can indeed alter its natural course.

Louis makes me very happy. There is a warmth inside my chest which hasn't left me

ever since we kissed on the street, spent a few days together, getting to know each other: kissing, a lot. We talk so much. Sometimes I get scared of the intensity that I experience when I'm thinking of him.

He is so open and beautiful. I'm actually surprised to find myself being involved with someone I could regard as an incredible partner. And it's mutual.

He seems unafraid which makes me feel less afraid because of him. Thanks to him.

My head is full of him. My body is in flames. What's going on hahahahaha?! I'm probably already a bit in love! Which sounds crazy after having known him for just a week now. There is an obviousness in our connection though and I think we both decided to honour it.

The parts in me that are afraid think of the moment I'll re-read that in a while from now—thinking this won't last for long because they can't seem to accept, they deserved to be loved on an equal give and take basis. That's sad. Huge contradiction between my dreamer mind and my fatalist self.

29.12.2020

Today is the bday of A. and I didn't think of him until now. I'm completely transported by Louis' arrival into my life. I hope I'm right in thinking we'll be in each other's life for a while. This is what I'd love to have with him. Mutuality is just within reach. It has been kept away from me for a long time.

It's funny how much something as obvious as this romantic connection can make me think of myself as being deluded. I wonder why? Because despite my idealistic nature I can still see how life may interface with the romance in ways that could be not so ideal... yet I trust us and I trust the things we both feel and can't explain. Or can't rationalise.

I see a picture of him: I want to let him know I love him; I want to share so much with him. I want to kiss every bit of his body. I want him to feel as transported as I am. I want to hold his hand and introduce him to the people I love so they can witness how he makes me glow.

I want to hold and be held by him.

His blonde hair. The way they move. The way his back arches itself to pull our bodies closer. The things he says: I want your attention. Pull me in.

The way he cradles his head in my chest. He seems happy to have found a nest which he can also take care of.

Mutuality is just within reach and it feels amazing. I'm ought to push the fear out. Be in this moment which soon will be your future.

31.12.2020

I told Louis I wanted to be in a relationship with him. It was so freeing. He responded like none of my exes: he welcomed it and wasn't afraid. Rather the opposite. it pulled him closer, he said.

I'm unlearning to hold back

02.01.2021

Bien vieillir c'est accepter d'être dysfonctionnel, sans fatalisme ni rancune.

Today I'm tired and like every time that my body expresses tiredness, it also experiences low self-esteem and doubt. I feel ugly when I'm tired; I grow fearful.

I've to remind myself that I'm whole... sometimes it doesn't make sense as I also feel broken. That's probably why, when I'm tired, I can't feel whole and enough and just fine. I need to push through, always.

Louis's presence in my mind, heart, and body is growing bigger. That's also why I'm fearful. I want him to experience me as someone who is whole. Which in those moments I cannot be because I become afraid, he would leave me. Is that what people call being co-dependent? I hope not as it is important to me to come to this without the feeling that I'm lesser than; I'm enough. He says I'm a dream. I owe him to believe this is true. I'm a dream. I'm Louis's dream. He is mine.

I think he is still too afraid to let me please him. I wonder if it has to do with the visions, I had of him off a cliff. He was younger and probably about to jump from the precipice.

He is so precious in my eyes. He wears my slippers which are too small for him, he smiles in the kitchen and holds me from the back, he places himself in front of me, next to the mirror in the bathroom, to look at me do my hair. He asks if he can watch. I love it so much. I'm impressed by how honest and true to his desire he is. He keeps his desire very close to the surface for me so I can access it.

He might feel differently when it comes to sex. I sense it. It isn't as easy for him to give in as it is to give (to me).

His chin down, his eyes up he smiles at me. with a cheeky look he asks gently if he can wrap himself around me just because he needs to feel me closer to him. Pull me in. He pulls me closer. I told him that my body is his body too. Not that I want him to own me just that I want to share the whole of me with him.

Louis, I love you already. You might know it yet I didn't let you know. Our time will come.

Balance and drive / balance and direction.

04.01.2021

It's not because you hold on to something that you can prevent its exit from your

life. Just let go. Surrender and trust that you'll be loved the way you love. Give and receive. Keep open and soft. You aren't fixed and you don't want things to be fixed. Don't predict, just be.

05.01.2021

I saw Louis at the Gare du Nord today. Just the time of our respective connections. Such a salvational little hour. My body needed to feel him and to kiss him. He seemed very worried and troubled... many variable factors in his life at the moment. Perhaps fewer in mine. I want to give him the opportunity to lean on me because I know I could do the same with him. Well, that's what I believe. Still, I'm afraid of deluding myself. I feel too spoiled; I need to start integrating the fact that this is also what I deserve. Reciprocity is just within reach.

With you in me/on me I'm still me.

My hands on the small of your back, heavenly cambered.

06.01.2021

Being independent does not mean being isolated; or in isolation. I can connect still and I want to.

It means that my arms can stretch towards you and embrace your body in a movement which won't confine you, because it will just be an invitation you can also say no to.

I want you to know that you can say no. It allows me to say no too. Maybe that's what consent and mutuality looks like for me. A shared space where negation coexists with my desire; where the negative is as fluid as the parts of me that want and long.

I need to know that I can say no in order to desire you. Nothing else.

07.01.2021

I realised with the therapist that my fear of opening up about my struggles or concerns to anyone that I love is linked to the fear of worrying people.

It's born from the need to protect my parents from worry and the role I took on: an autonomous and independent child who always has it together. This resulted in a fear of letting people know when I'm not alright.

I've realised that this exact same fear translates into my love relationship. For the first time, I realise that by letting Louis know, it allows him to open up too.

It pulls him closer to me... which is unprecedented in my love history. I can afford to share because he wouldn't worry about me.

08.01.2021

Vanille Bleue: I Worry You'd Worry About Me

09.01.2021

Today started off with the very intense feeling of finding myself in a situation I know all too well: people clinging onto me and resenting me for not giving them what they wanted me to give.

For the first time since the beginning of the support group, I've felt uncomfortable to the point I had to let Del and Katherine know about it. Sean has started right away to pick on me in a way that felt too familiar. He made me feel like I'd done something wrong. He deferred his frustration onto me. This time around I decided not to buy into it and let it fly by.

It's quite messed up when you think that I opened up about my experience, which was so much about emotional manipulation, and found myself in yet another dynamic where someone is putting effort into making sure I feel bad about something that happened to them—and is yet unrelated to me. Out of my control.

Parallel to that, I've felt anxious for the first time about my relationship with Louis. I'm questioning myself a lot. Maybe it is because I don't move that much lately but I've the feeling that I'm fixating on what could potentially go wrong.

It's sad to see that I'm still afraid to share and communicate about my feelings. My mind goes right away to that place where I feel stuck. I'm afraid of the repercussions. It's as if me opening up would always result in them withdrawing. It's like there is no room for another narrative in my head. WTF...

I look at this picture of you sleeping and I'm already thinking about how I'd grieve your loss. It's so ingrained in me: I cannot accept that someone good for me could actually be interested in sticking around.

I look at you with my mind's eyes and that's the fear is taking over me. Fantasy vs. reality.

I let you know that I've deleted the dating app. I did it for myself. It's like an affirmation/manifestation: I want to believe because it's worth believing. Let's try to commit to myself. Dedication over devotion. I want to be dedicated not devoted.

10.01.2021

Listening to France Culture podcast about rape: it's gut-wrenching. Feeling very low. So low I had to lay down and close my eyes. I need to ground myself. It feels like grief.

Not sure how much of this is tied with me worrying over this burgeoning romance with Louis. I hesitate to write "burgeoning" because at the moment the only thing I can see is its potential end. Why am I spiraling over something that I approached with such ease? The beginnings are probably the easier part...

12.01.2021

I just had the most incredible meditation. The most affirming actually.

I saw Louis kiss me on a dock facing a sunset. I believe it was somewhere tropical. Could it be Spanish Wells (at Jamal's)?

I saw him embrace me so tightly. Kissing me with all his lips pushing me onto a bed. I saw him meet with my mother at an airport. I saw him smile.

My chest was full, my head got dizzy. The light under my eye lids was purple and blue. A blue ball in a purple halo.

It's so warm inside!

Today I oscillate between different states of mind: between the fear of anticipating and the joy of having found meaning in a connection.

I set some intentions for myself as the new moon rises in the dark sky of Jan.

I must remind myself that I can be happy just dreaming. I need to remind myself of the dreamer I am. I'm not meant to be pragmatic and rational about what I feel... but how do I process without understanding? Why do I want to understand? Dead the process of understanding. This time is over.

"Balance" and "drive" are in the end perfectly suited for the year just starting now.

Losing my mind over predictions; when my intuition feels like a burden. Actually, my reptilian brain must be messing with it because my intuition says be trustful and patient, good things are coming. I can feel it. I've let the tower fall and I rebuilt something better. The ghost limbs of my past are still too present in my present (to my liking).

Trying to predict isn't gaining clarity.

What do you need ultimately: security and reassurance. Which is hard for you to get because you are always expecting danger to come your way. Try to remember in which part of your history it is rooted in...

The worry of loving without reciprocation. That's the worry. That's what worries you.

You need someone who is able to take steps like you do. Someone who is loving you, engaging with all their soul parts (in one movement). They need to be unapologetically comfortable with that because you aren't. Be there for yourself as much as you are for them. It's hard for you to do so because you've only known/ chosen lovers who expected you to extend yourself (in a unilateral movement... from you to them). Expect more of others. Expect more from your lovers not because you are demanding but because you've got to love yourself more. You need this.

14.01.2021

It's very hard for me to believe that I can be loved unconditionally by a lover. Which makes it harder for me to trust but also to let go. As if I was always expecting to take the step which would make my partner take back their love. It also means that it is hard for me not to "work" on a relationship—it's a form of overcompensation. I'm making up for the potential lack of whatever my partner would feel I'm lacking of... most of it is me projecting and generating self-fulfilling prophecies which would eventually prove my point. I need to let people in and this means also resting. Just being in a state of presence which isn't about making someone else comfortable or even just holding a space for them at all times. By empowering myself I empower my lovers because they'll be also able to make a home for us which I can be the guest and the host—in alternation. Shit needs to rotate in the matter of love, in the matter of being in relation, in the matter of coexisting.

I need to let Louis know about this deeply ingrained belief so that he can be aware of where I'm coming from, and that I trust he can love me wholeheartedly.

15.01.2021

What to do with the feeling of being left alone? Even if it isn't a reflection of the truth, feelings matter. I wonder what there is to be found. There in the dark spot where my heart and head go back so easily. I wish to rid myself of the miserable narratives. The lower frequencies of that emotional scarcity anchor me in the wrong places and make me walk away from the lovers who might actually make me feel otherwise. How is it possible to forget the way I loved in the past—with ease and grace, dare I say hahah.

I'm trying to crawl my way back to that place: when it felt easy to just lean in... as I'm writing this, I realize that it might have never been easy for me actually. I've always been anxious of being left behind. It's probably coming from the crossing of the trauma of both my parents. An ever-growing distress at the thought of leaving and being left. Leaving and being left.

16.01.2021

When we let someone in, we also prepare ourselves to lose them. That's why falling in love is also a form of grief.

La Nuit Remue, Henri Michaux

Fou de Vincent, Hervé Guibert

17.01.2021

I still haven't accepted that the rape has changed me forever; and even if it's probably for the better, because despite the horror, and once the pains have eased, I find some

joy in redefining myself and remembering who I am. I'm not trying to romanticise the matter—violence remains violence, it destroys—but I also want to see other nuances in it.

The wounds are deep and not often the ones I expected. They occupy places in my body, the centre of my chest, my neck, my trapezius, my forehead, the lower part of my back, which wake up one after the other. I've learned to accept them as norms. They're there, I feel them more or less strongly.

The ones I had more trouble detecting are those that I can't explain and locate. They have a vibration close to detonation, sudden and abrupt. They jostle inside me like soldiers still too young to go to battle. Or too young to understand what war is in its materiality, its harshness. It's raw and vivid. It hurts much more than one can imagine... because it's a pain that can be so easily forgotten. Yet it won't budge. I don't know what else to compare it to but a war.

When Louis steps back, doesn't reply to my messages until hours later, uncertainty sets in and the images overlap. Those of Ricci with those of A, those of the boys who left me hanging and those to whom I didn't pay attention. It's an explosive mix of post-traumatic syndrome. It gives me the impression of losing all sense of reality or rather of being forced to look at them all simultaneously and a bit too closely. My chest hurts because it remembers the anguish and fear. I must remember consent, to myself and my body, that we are safe, that nothing and no one can endanger us. Here in the comfort of my own home as they say in English.

These pains and this feeling that my head is too full haven't visited me for weeks. They are here now, and I must deal with them. My jaws are filled with tears that struggle to find their way out. I still hold them back. For how long and why?

Tonight's meditation: I'm seeing Louis running in the meadows towards the edge of the cliffs overlooking the ocean/the sea. He pulls me by the hand towards him. He embraces me tightly. Taking my head in his hands, he kisses me. Then he puts my back against his chest and makes me look at the horizon. The colors are bright, rainbow-like. It's sunny, perhaps the golden hour.

Then appears the face of A, in his glasses and suit. Dark background, no more horizon. Just his face against dark colors. I decide to face him. As I stare back, there is a pit hole/sinkhole opening beneath me. Louis extends his arm and manages to save me

We fly high above the clouds then in very angular trajectories. He takes me to a spot where I see a kid dressed in white sitting on clouds. The clouds become a throne, then a church bench, then a school bench. A man who I thought was a priest is lacing up the shoes of the kid. He takes him to a corridor and then to the toilets. He now looks like a teacher: dark-haired, with a woollen vest (brown) or jumper over a greyish shirt.

Now, I'm in bed with A; we are having sex. The images accelerate and flicker. Several scenes. Several intercoursures. He said, "I've been waiting for this for a month now." I'm on top of him. He is inside me. A shiver runs all the way up from the small of my back to the top of my head. It shakes up my entire body.

I see my life backwards. The images are sequenced like in a show reel (playing in reverse). I see myself in different situations of abuse and discomfort. I witness those moments from the outside. Other people appear behind us when I'm in bed with him, on top of him, him inside me. They come and go in the room. Some are interested in watching, some aren't. One is letting things happen, others strike and stab him with invisible knives—as if to stab his energy. I realize he messed with other guys while being with me. I see the convos on his phone. I see the faces of a couple of them. I see him being abusive and violent with one... maybe David. I see him having sex with others. One of them is on top of him (like I was) and starts to stab him from the front. He kills him. A's feet are starting to rot and gangrene.

Louis appears and comes to find me. He nestles me in his left arm and lights a match. The place catches fire. We exit the building. We see the flames devouring it. A is inside. His house and his body are in ashes. The memories of me being in this house too.

A headline appears: The venue's director accused of rape by ex-partner. He was a rapist. A headshot of him in his suit and glasses on the front page. The newspaper catches fire too. It disappears into the black of my eyelids. I wake up. My eyes itch.

He damaged my emotional connection to people but now I call the end of it. This is the end of your toxicity affecting me and the ones who want to interact with me.

We burnt your house tonight along with the memories of us it held captive.

20.01.2021



An unknown that doesn't terrify.

Ever growing.

A collection of playing cards, including modern tarot cards and traditional playing cards, laid out on a wooden table. The cards feature various designs, including abstract patterns, figures, and symbols. A green plant stem is visible in the upper right corner.

I'm closing a chapter that weighs heavy. I don't forget it. It's right here with me. Our shared future doesn't need to be painful. There are possibilities, horizons that, I hope, will remind me of the summers in Corrèze, the desire to move forward, the feeling of openness to what cannot be predicted, without fear. The boundaries have fallen, and with their momentary death, I offer myself a future that doesn't alienate. It welcomes me here tonight. I have decided.

28.01.2021

The center does not lie (Kongo astrology)

07.03.2021

“Knowing what we love does not diminish who we love, only how we choose to love them.”

Tressie MacMillan Cottom — The Dolly Moment (2021)

Energy cannot be destroyed.

Equal state of being.

“It’s that [James] Baldwin quote,” she says. “You’re a victim until you’re able to articulate your victimhood - and then you’re a threat.” Jade Montserrat.

18.06.2021

Why do I see so much of him in me?!

28.06.2021

Today is my ex’s birthday, my first one. So, as I’m thinking of him, I’m also reminded of a time I felt freer: sexually, emotionally, things generally felt easier—even though it might not be true and even though I know my mind may be playing with me, I dwell on this feeling. Exhausted by the cycle of coming-back-to-being. To be what? I don’t know, but it feels like I need to reboot the system every now and then—just to remind myself of the person I once was and still am. Weirdly enough I’m probably happier today than I ever was; and despite feeling encumbered by all sorts of things, deep inside, I’m happy. I just wish I could remember, in my bones and flesh, what it feels like to be blindly hopeful.