

Blue Hydrangea

KATREENA DAYACAP

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In Memory of Agnes Solis Dayacap
September 15, 1960 - November 21, 2016

Her spirit blooms in every blue hydrangea, an endless presence
that reminds me she is always near.



To my father, Enrique:

Your unwavering integrity, and steadfast presence have shaped the foundation of who I am. Your generosity and resilience continue to guide my sisters and me, even in the moments you think we aren't watching. You are my greatest example of strength and someone I will always strive to make proud.

To my sisters, Sherri, Gabrielle, and Alexandria:

Thank you for being my continual support and honest companions through every season of life. Your presence has been a stable source of comfort and inspiration. I am deeply grateful for the bond we share. I am proud of the women you all are, and I will forever cheer you on.

To my husband, Nicholas:

Thank you for believing in me when I doubted myself, for encouraging my creativity, and for giving me the final push I needed to finish this book. Your support has been invaluable, and I am endlessly grateful.

I woke up with intentions of a good day.
By the time I concluded my morning routine,
My mind had its own agenda.
I left the house and drove to where you were.
The morning already felt so exhausting.
An uneasy sensation came over me
Its commotion settled into the pit of my stomach.
Day 137 and I still do not understand inescapability
And although professionals have tried to explain
All I want to do is respond with foul language.
Every day I spend hours
researching explanations for your condition
Repeatedly
Trying to find a remedy.
I sit next to you.
I do not know how it feels to be you.
Fear strikes me yet again.
How do you find the courage to stay tough behind all the
discomfort caused by the indisposition that is trying to
take over you?
Over me.
Over us.

I love you.
You are everything I am made up of.
You are the one who loves me purely and fiercely even
when I do not deserve it.
I see the fear in your eyes,
Yet your words are not a reflection of it.
How do you do that?
How do you carry on with so much strength?
Nightfall strikes,
Dark lipstick-stained wine glass.
Move forward...

Move forward.
Family functions have become intolerable.
They ask for you.
I can only defend.
I always arrive late.
You do not arrive at all.
Fast forward...
There is so much heartache in between that time you
know.
No one understood but us 6.
Just us.

I lay and sometimes watch the sunrise in the morning after
a sleepless night.
Sometimes I run into and converse with people
who remember your name like I do.
People you knew invite me out for dinner
or a drink to catch up.
Do you know?
I always arrive in black.
They do not understand.
They talk, and drink and talk and howl at the moon too
Like it too is something they have lost.

Floating through crowds of people who could not possibly
fathom the emotion of losing you.
I've been walking paths lately of grieving tears.
I walk these paths nightly now.
Map out my own mountain that you will never photograph,
and it is agony.

I sit in your room.
Hoping for the sound of your voice in my ears.
I listen for your footsteps,
I long to hear you call out my name.
I trace my fingers on things you may have touched
And stand in places you may have stood.

I know you are okay though
Finally free from pain and suffering.
I hope paradise treats you well.
Your name will live on forever.
Your love will go on forever.
You are my blueprint.
I grow stronger because of you.
When I succeed it is because of you.
When I go on, it is because of you.
Hope is stronger than fear
And I hope you know
Everything I do is to bring you closer.



Allow yourself to feel emotions.

Let yourself BE.

Be enraged.

Sorrowful.

Frustrated.

Revolted.

Disgusted.

Grateful.

Joyful.

Timid.

Fearful.

Prideful.

Hopeful.

Be empty...

So, you can be full again.



Living in Manila: 2017



I was working from home today and since the moment I woke up; I felt extremely off. It's kind of hard for me to write this because I want you to understand my days are filled with such great things. One might even suggest by some standards I am living my life to the fullest. But I will erratically experience instants where I would like to be alone. Then I remember I am grieving. This comes and goes. Unexplainable. One minute you're okay and the next minute you're in tears clinging on to memories that will now and forever be out of reach. I wish I could go back in time and just sit with my mom. Hold her and just be in her

presence. I miss her existence in this world. My world. I've been feeling off the past few days because my birthday is around the corner. This is the first one without her. Instead of thinking of the memories all I can think of is her missing presence. It's painful. It's 2:04 am here in Manila and I can't sleep. I've been thinking about her all day.

I love to laugh; I love to have a good time, and I don't like dwelling on the negative. Yet—I still lose myself to the tendency of living with a heavy heart. My mother experienced every bit of hurt, pain and unhealthiness in the world than I have and more. But I must try and reduce this heaviness. Simple—but not. Especially if you have experienced the painfully unpredictable. But I remember I am in a place of rebuilding depth of myself. It involves recreating passions, interests, physical health, deep relationships, and even requires excitement of future plans. I guess I've come to the point where it is largely up to me to direct my life. To venture to figure out what it will take to rewire my outlook. Tomorrow, I dare myself to purposefully choose a good thought over a dark or hopeless one.

Lately I've been learning to brace my vulnerability to better become in tune with my feelings. My mother was the type of woman who wasn't afraid to say it. Whatever it was, wherever it was. I was embarrassed at times. And now I'm learning it's a brave display of self-respect and confidence to be able to do so. It's heart breaking to miss the intensity of her love. I miss her aura. But at the same time, these are the things I had 28 years to take in. I know them well and can still feel them when I close my eyes. Those who truly know me and knew my mom know the pain I've endured after losing her. Losing my mother has shaped who I am,

how I see the world, and has changed my life forever. However, my relationship with my mother continues every day and will for the rest of my life.



September Something: 2017

The Philippines feels like there is so much healing and love for me. And although I must live and be somewhere else from home right now, I am so enormously grateful to the universe for bringing me to a location where it feels like home—but very different from where and what I originally call home. A place I know I can always return to, to find myself again. And I have this forever for me. But beneath the craziness, the frantic buzzing, the list of things not done and to be done, is me. In between the activities there lies me. No matter what does or does not happen I am always waiting to get still and return home, where I always am.





I still struggle with my selfish thoughts of wishing you
could have stayed
But I will live out my journey as you have lived yours.
You showed every emotion.
Happiness.
Sadness.
Fear.
Love.
Anger.
Helplessness.
Excitement.
Joy.
Sorrow.
And all the while hoping and praying,
I would only know the good feelings in life.
I love you.
You'll be on my mind forever.



For four months,
I could not write a thing.
My poetry turned into shit, and I hardly had peace of
mind.
But I have realized
During that time and since my mother passed
I have taken a whole new level of responsibility.
Some subconsciously,
Some very real.
Even my dynamics and relationships with people have
changed in ways I never saw coming.
My current priorities revolve around self-care
Sustaining my energy
And being there for my sisters and father.
Though often I feel distant.
I believe it has to do with working on self-forgiveness.
I struggle with wishing I had spent every waking
moment with my mom
Instead of fleeing the house on days where I couldn't
stand to see the results
Of cancer's cruel doings or because I was fearful of what
could happen at any given moment.
I could not stand to see her in grueling pain
Where meds and simply being there for her wouldn't cut
it anymore.
But through all the searing pain,
Strength radiated from underneath her skin.
She always kept it together for my father, sisters and me.
I realize now
That when I would flee
It was because I was clinging on to what hope and
happiness was left.
When I think about my mom
I do not long for her to return and fix the family messes.

I do not want her to resume responsibilities that I now
take on.

I just miss her.

I miss her and it's as simple as that.

I can't say I'm comfortable with letting go.

I can't say it's easy.

The pain of letting go and the risk of what you're
clutching to is immeasurable.

But worth the surrender.



March 10, 2018: Manila



I often catch myself thinking, what have I learned? The answer is more along the lines of—what have I remembered. I remember how much I love home. I remember how much my family and friends mean to me. I remember the sweet comfort of quality tea. I remember my appreciation for the beach, for my dogs, for consistent internet and customer service. I remember my love for fall and winter and the crisp air and snowflakes it brings. I

remember nature, and good coffee shops you spend with great company, in solitude, in clear air and in writing. So I guess it is true. You do “find yourself” when you spontaneously travel to unknown lands, but it’s more distinguished than that. You remember yourself. You remember who and what you love. You remember why where you come from shapes the core of who you are. Could I have “learned” this had I not left and moved across the world? The answer is no. I really could have not. I had to realize my truth on my own. Far away from where I come from. And I am afraid that may be true for all of us. We must do our own digging, make the mistakes other people try to warn us to avoid. We must leave just to return, right back where we started, new, refined, wiser and always just the same.





More Thoughts

My mom was always my rock. The one I ran to when I was confused and or scared. She was the stronger version of myself. The one to help sort out my mess of emotions. I prayed that God would realize that and surely wouldn't take her. I thought to myself: He probably wanted to teach us lessons through her being sick. I remember praying every night. Telling God, I've learned my lessons and to please not take her. I wasn't prepared. There was so much no one ever told me. And because there were components of her death that were not easy, I was left feeling as if I could have done better.



I think it is great irony that the death of your mother is the most grown experience you'll ever have, and there is no other experience that will make you feel more like a child. I think what pains me the most—is what she had to go through. From the excruciating pain, to in and out of the

hospital, to the tumor hindering her ability to walk and continue with her normal life. I constantly receive flashbacks.

Months have passed, and since it is becoming longer that I haven't seen my mother, the reality of her death begins to intrude in new ways. Truthfully if there's any piece of advice, I can give anyone trying to console someone from a death of a loved one it's—don't try to make it better. Don't say "your grief will go away; things will get better." And I know people mean well and I'm grateful for your effort but know that it is not helping. What helps is someone who asks about it. Ask about her. Ask about me—about us.

Lately I've been learning to let myself be. My goal in life right now is to use my life, this life she gave me, to honor hers. In this way I fight for myself, for her. I fight for myself in the way she fought for my dad, my sisters and me. I choose to become the woman she raised me to be. I'm becoming that woman with every ounce of courage I have in me. I want to make her proud. I will fight because she did. She didn't lose her battle. She didn't lose the fight. She just passed the fight to me. And together we will win.



It is difficult to be close with people. It is even harder when you have experienced loss because you feel the differences more greatly. When you experience loss, you feel the gaps more significantly, you comprehend and are sensitive to small gestures, holes, misunderstandings, miscommunication, and differences in languages of living. But sometimes I carry a bit of resentment, irritation, and loneliness in my solar plexus. I often struggle within the debate of whether to speak out or let go and trust this will pass and move on. I chose to let go today and move on. But I praise myself because I recognize the strength and individuality I have gained. I take responsibility for my own healing and my emotional well-being.





I never realized how intertwined I was with my mother. We pulsed together. I could feel her alive in me even when I was far from her. Now that she is gone, it's like half of me has stopped pulsing and my mind is much quieter. On one hand, there is a strange relief—on the other there is terror because everything is foreign. The sky is different and so are once familiar faces. I am reborn from a different womb and must learn again how to live, think, and be in this strange existence. I do not need to fear certain things that may be happening. I do not need to be frightened by a future that may or may not be because of what happened to others. My lessons are my own. My mother's lessons are hers. FEAR is simply false evidence appearing real and the truth is I have no idea what is going to happen. The things I fear most usually never do, and the bad that does happen I usually never thought would so I can't think myself into a future or a present—I can only watch what unfolds and

react accordingly. Constantly practice bringing yourself back to where you are. It can be disappointing, but when you can come to terms with your reality you can begin to change and advocate for your desires.



March 2018: Manila

I trust that doubt means something is very important to you. I fell asleep last night thinking about things that aren't in my immediate knowledge, about situations on the other side of the world, about relationships countries away. And yet it means these things matter. It means I care. It means I'm responsible. I don't have to torment myself with unnecessary worry but instead see these experiences as representations of my strength, my reliability and my good heart.



My tasks are very subtle today
Really appreciating the mundane, the usual, the simple
these days.
Like making a cup of coffee, or sassy people at the post
office,
Miscommunication getting solved with customer service.
Loving it.

I wrote a few things down
I reminisced in my journal about what I've learned these
past few years
Month
Last 2 days.

I played with that I want to call in for the next year.
It's funny but my manifestations get smaller and simpler.

I don't want things.
I want feelings
More frequent ways of being.
More self-soothing.
More clarity.

More feeling fun with the uncertainty.
More dancing with the fact that I have no idea where the
fuck I am going
And being excited about that.

May 2018: Manila

Watching someone you love suffer is one of the worst experiences imaginable. You feel helpless because all you can do is stick by their side, hold their hand, pray with them and make them smile through the searing pain. It's a massive sense of powerlessness. You want to take away their agony. Some things will forever be out of your control.



I fought hard and endlessly to try and save my mother's life, and I just couldn't. There was nothing more I could do but let her know how much she was loved. I knew how much she loved me. In those last days, I realized that I have

received more love from her in 28 years than most receive in a lifetime. After we lose a loved one, we hear that everything will eventually get back to normal. The fact is normality is not what comes from this. After something this turbulent, you view and react to things differently. It really puts life into perspective. Like the pain she felt with me entering this world, I felt the pain of her leaving it.

Overnight I learned to speak a new language and became a new member of a club that I did not want to join. Every day after brings endless mental pictures. These became the first tears my mother will never be able to wipe. Life-long rituals and beliefs now must be reassessed. They never did give us a time span. It wasn't until she was at hospice that I felt her days were numbered.



What I truly miss is her presence in this world and my world. My body, birthed by her body, intensely felt the

physical loss. The warmth of her hand and her infectious laugh. I watched my mom go from a vibrant woman to someone who was so sick and sad. When you see your mother take her last breath—that sight will never leave you. The word cancer still gives me goosebumps and sends cold chills throughout my body. It sends flashbacks to a place that consisted of long days and nights that were painful to witness, but I wouldn't want to be anywhere else but there. It will always be this awful thing that tricked my mom, gave her hope—and then took her. I can't help but feel robbed of 30 something years I still should have got to spend with her. Change, change, change. It's all change. Everything is constantly changing, and I guess the only thing I can do is take the change, scream and howl when I recognize the pain of change and then also move forward with grace by acknowledging the positive.

I once thought—I suppose now I must marry someone I once dated because I don't want to be with anyone who didn't know you. I don't want to be with someone who doesn't know and admire the intricate weavings that were our mother and daughter relationship.

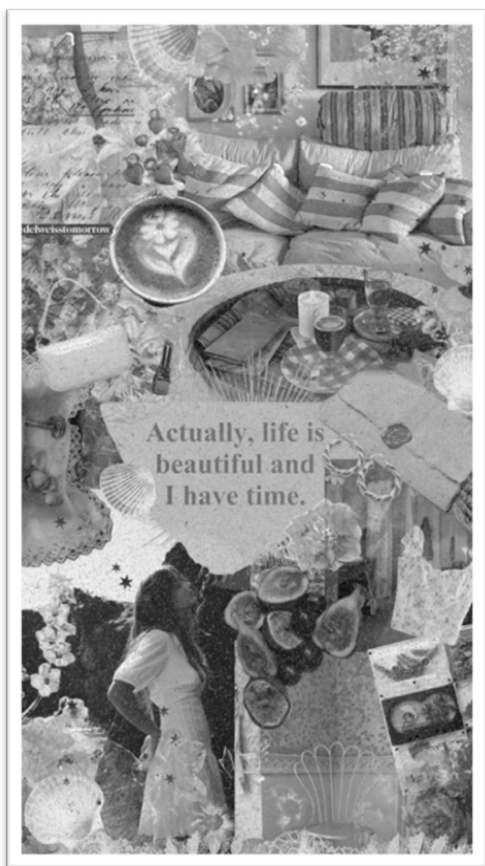
But you wouldn't want me to take a step back. You would want me to continue to push forward. I search for you everywhere, Mom. I want everyone to care for you as much as I do. I want to make sure everyone is still talking about you. I look for you everywhere, but I can only get glimpses. These glimpses are only in the spaces you were—in the places at one time I scratched and longed to get away from. I miss you.

And with all these emotions I will take that and surrender myself fully into this world. I step out and pray that it will show off and show up for me. I search and I hunt for liberation, for purpose, for meaning. And because of you I know somewhere, soon, I know it will find me wide-eyed and hungry. It will look at me and say, "There you are. I've been looking for you all this time."



In honor of you, I don't want to shrink myself. It's not my job to become someone else's idea of a worthwhile human being. I get that fire from you. I am worthwhile. Not because others think I am, but because I exist and, therefore, I matter. I am your daughter. What a great honor. I will continue to be who I am and forever speak my truth. Even if it makes people angry. Even if it makes them uncomfortable. Even if they choose to leave. I refuse to shrink. I choose to take up space. I choose to remember your life by always choosing to know my feelings. I choose to make self-care a priority. At first, I thought it was about

learning to let go, but with each day that passes without you here, I realize it's not. Sometimes you can't let go. Because it's about learning to carry it with you.



*Moving Back Home
to Rhode Island from Manila
May 2019*

After a long thought-filled flight I am finally home. Tonight, I am pondering the thought, the feeling of “home.” For me, it is a family unit. It is togetherness. Whether they are moving, traveling or staying put. Home is interest; home is where empathy is the foundation for everyone’s action. It is curiosity in our loved ones’ lives. Home is where the art is to me. It is finding a muse within shared communal conversation. This is where I feel most at home, and these are aspects I want to bring into my own future home one day.

I think because my mom passed, I sometimes feel like I’ve lost a great deal of security. I crave connection, closeness, and a feeling of support from what I distinguish to be “home.” But I am picky. I have an idea of what I want this to look like, and I have an idea of who should be involved in it. I think it’s important to have preference. It shows we know who we are. But I think I must open up a little more. If I do, I can see who or what is already available for me and use that as inspiration. I want to build a place of reliance, a home, and to be able to rush to my sense of security. But if I can embrace the vulnerability that comes with roaming on my own, as an inspired, open, emotional individual, I believe the creative will naturally be attracted to me. Interesting type of people I can call into this “home” of mine. Get clear in your head about what is important in life—which beliefs, ideals, and ways of life matter most to you. Take steps forward into the environments that hold these characteristics or interests. Let go of that fear or it won’t come.

Who am I anymore?

Travel does something to you.

It changes you.

It adds this depth to your soul

Where I need more commitment to satisfy me now.

To feel connected, I need presence.

I need more art to feel stimulated.

Food with substance,

Longer walks and moments of complete silence.

I need music.

I need to chant.

I need more wine.

I felt loneliness stir within me returning home.

I feel how much I've changed.

It doesn't mean what's here is good, bad, or less.

I'm understanding that it just means I am now trying to
regain my place.

It's difficult.

It's difficult to realize because that means I must make
more effort to search anew.

Familiar spaces don't accommodate me anymore and
that is uncomfortable.

I pray I have the courage to not settle but to search.

I pray I have the determination to seek and not settle for
solitude.

I believe my place is somewhere out there.

If I am here,

Then there is also a source of people that want the same.

What you seek is seeking you.





Everything about my mother's last months in this world was never what we expected it to be. It's not the peaceful death of a mother like in the movies. It was like caring for a child, a baby—but in this case my mom. It felt like our roles had reversed over the last months of her life. My sisters, dad and I took shifts every day. From sleeping over at the hospital for months on end, to sleeping on the floor by her bed, or nestled up next to her when she slept. We were taking turns to guide her to the bathroom to make sure she didn't fall, catering to her daily fevers, making sure she tried to eat even when she couldn't. We managed her pain with oxycodone that slipped her into hallucinations; it was always frightening to witness, in the final days pushing a tiny red button to give her doses of morphine because she was in excruciating pain until the very end.

Those last weeks, days, and moments are utterly burned into my brain. No one can prepare you for that hell. It feels like an out of body moment. Looking down at yourself thinking, this just can't be my reality.

When I say I tried to save my mother's life, I exhausted all the options I could think of. I was tired of hearing the hospitals in RI say "hospice." I begged her to try other options and to seek advice from other oncology providers. She agreed. So my dad and I would take her to Dana Farber in Boston once a month. Sadly, they delivered the same news. They could not treat her with chemotherapy or radiation because of her ongoing infection; she was stage 4. The only option was pain management. I believe my mom only agreed to go to Boston for visits—even though she could barely walk, and it took so much energy out of her—because she still wanted to give us hope. Even though she had secretly accepted her fate. She still wanted to give us hope because she always put us first.

I recall one episode where she was still adjusting to her new meds, and she slipped into a hallucination. I was terrified. She was in a conversation with her mother, my grandmother who had passed away in 2003. She said "Mom, I'm ready to go home now, I'm ready." I was in tears hearing this. Then she said, "But what about my kids?" I was heartbroken.

We were always number one to her. Her priority. Even when she could no longer stand the pain, she was still putting us first and concerned about us.



I remember the day it became real for me. We had just decided to put my mother in hospice. We finally accepted her fate. I knew my mother had accepted it a while before we did. We were at the hospital; my mother had been there for a month, and she was having an awful day. My dad called my sisters and me, and we sat next to my mom. All 5 of us surrounded her hospital bed. She was unconscious again. My dad then said, "You know your mom had a good life." I knew what he was trying to say. Those words pierced right through me and my sisters, and we could not

stop crying. We knew what he meant. I cried myself to
sleep that night, as I did every night.



This body, this journey. This sweet body that homes a tender, vulnerable, compassionate soul—this body that lay receptive to the rays of sunshine that crashes into oceans of waves, that sweetly stands loyal to me, my beliefs, my capacity (depending on the day) for self-love and determination. I will fall. On this oath of constant self-reflection, of always holding up the mirror to my own soul, impulses, habitual ways of believing, thinking and perceiving. Yet I rise and return always again to truth. I found myself falling prey yet again to the illusory trap of “coolness.” But humility and compassion brought me back to myself and the values I desperately want to live by. I am ever evolving. I am grateful that I will remain human, mistaking and redeeming—again and again. The spiral of learning and living.



The other day I thought I caught a glimpse of my mother. I have not felt that recognition in a few months. The feeling of “There she is!—There’s my mom.” I don’t think I’ll ever feel like that about someone on this entire planet.

But what I’ve learned in these past years:

- Remember how strong my mother was and how her expectations of me forced me to reach and become more than I ever imagined.
- Travel. Be independent. Wander. Find something that interests you, that you like and work hard. Push through periods of fearing it.
- Mingle with strangers and drink wine. Learn about the history and the culture of the city you’re situated in.
- Make your own decisions.
- Trust and don’t question the people who just really want to give you love.
- Don’t question the love people have for you. Embrace it. Feel it. Allow it. Receive it.
- You will always have a home to return to. It might come in the form of people.



#3 of Many Lessons
The Gift My Mother's Death has Given Me

Feel my feelings again.

With all the encouragement to let myself feel pain, anger, and even relief. I now allow myself to take slow time to tune into the feelings manifesting in my body. I never realized how disconnected I was from my feelings at one point. I was disconnected from myself, my body, and others. Today I felt the true devotional love and gratitude for myself to the point of tears. Something that would have been covered by a burning sensation of anxiety before. But now since I let myself feel the anger and the sadness—I let myself feel the love too. The energy of feelings is so powerful and creative. Don't see any feelings as bad, see them as different sensations and let yourself be embodied by giving space to them.



I've come to the realization that you really do have what it takes to make a difference. I lose sight of this from time to time. Experiences have played a big part. I cry often. I interchange between rushes of creativity, inspiration, passion, enthusiasm, a pleasure of being wild, a hunger to explore life, a feeling of loss and a drainage of bravery and hope. But in all honesty what I've been really feeling and taking notice these past few years is how incredibly strong I really am. I keep asking myself: where does all this drive to live and go on come from?

My mother passed away 8 years ago, and I have never once held back to the challenges presented to me. I showed up for family members. I showed up for uncomfortable meetings. I showed up to greet her friends. I showed up to take care of myself and move across the world in search of my own soul. A time for solitude, reflection and my own damn grieving sanctuary. I felt frightened, helpless and confused but kept on going. I explore the unknown. I converse with difficult people. I showed up to events alone because I wanted to go. I want to put myself out there and I could not wait for some type of safety net to make me feel comfortable enough to do so. I force myself to move even when fear consumes half of my body. Yes, I continue to move forward. Fighting forward. Pushing forward. It is me, but sometimes I am convinced that it's also another force in me. Maybe my mother, who is igniting a hunger for life within. Who has planted her left behind life force within my father, my sisters and me to use for strength and extra power. And with that I am tremendously grateful. I am grateful for my mother. I am grateful for myself. I feel true admiration and love for myself. I will never fucking give up. Even when I have convinced myself that I'm too tired and finally giving up I will NEVER GIVE UP.

My instincts and intuition are in the right direction. And because I choose me first, I can allow others to choose themselves. I am afraid, I am excited, sometimes I want to hide, and then I want to run into it. I continuously tell myself to fucking remember that there are undeniably no guidelines to this because nobody on this earth has ever been YOU losing YOUR mother. So —you put down the self-help books, and you do whatever the fuck you want.



The other morning, I thought about when I was a little girl and missed my mother every day during elementary school. I still feel her within me, and I promise to take care of her while I go deeper into newness and the unknown. I will actively seek gratitude to keep me out of fear. I pray for the world to show up and show off for me in ways that will always remind me that I have a place.

Let yourself be exposed. Alone. And know that lasting loneliness is just not possible. I would rather be a mess and

brutally honest than try to hold it together in tight routine, feeling suppressed and afraid.





For My Father, Enrique

You carried more than we ever witnessed
More than we were ever meant to understand.
Yet somehow—
You still made room for laughter.
You kept things light even when life was unbearably heavy.

You held the string
When life tried to pull us apart
You stood in the middle.
Unshaken.



Mom got sick
And never once did you leave her side.
You held her hand.
You held *our* hands.
And you held back the tears we never saw.

You smiled.
You prayed.
You kept moving forward for our sake.
You stayed steady, even when the ground beneath you was
shifting.

That is who you are.
Resilient.



Strong.
Full of love that doesn't bend or break.
Your love has never been about words—
It's been in everything you do.
In the way you never missed a step,
Even when your heart was breaking.
In the way you forgave me, time and time again
Even when I felt I didn't deserve it.

Every birthday.

New York City was special.
Those moments felt whole.
The lights, the noise, the fun.
Us 6.
Holding space for joy—
Even when life was complicated.



You are a man of faith.
Of depth.
Of quiet endurance.
You have never asked for anything in return,
But you've given us everything.

You have always been a pillar of support for my sisters and
me—
encouraging us to explore and embrace the world.
Through your sacrifices
so often unspoken
yet deeply felt—
you gave us the freedom to dream boldly and live fully.



Thank you, Dad.
For who you are and how fierce and unconditional
your love has always been.





For My Sisters

I was born first but have never had to walk alone
Not just sisters.
We are lifelines.
Stitched by fate, tested by fire.
Different tones.
One pulse.
Shared blood, shared ache, shared rise.

Sherri—
There is a quiet spell in your strength
A woman who knows pain but does not let it speak for her.
Your strength doesn't shout.
It holds.
It heals.
We've walked through shadows together
with wide eyed wonder
Lost our way more than once—
But you were always there.
You are my tether—
My co-conspirator in survival.
Loyal to the bone.
You are generous past reason.
You stayed through every lesson,
Every unraveling.
Every soft return.

Gabrielle—
My sister of flame and feeling
Passion with direction.
You have always been the one to speak
When the rest of us sometimes fell silent—
To say the things we've swallowed.
The sister whose presence

Feels like a candle lit in a quiet room—
Glowing, grounding, impossible to ignore.
And I appreciate ever piece of it—
For the fire
For the feeling,
For the light you are.

Alexandria—
My baby sister.
You see the world in ways we don't.
And when you speak,
The room softens to hear you.
You've carried your own weight with quiet dignity.
You are already everything.
You are more than enough.
The same grief that bent us all—
But you grew with such grace.
Still waters, sharp mind.
Intelligence runs through you like a current—
Quiet, constant. Electric.
Our youngest, but never behind.

But life didn't leave us untouched.
When mom fell ill, we became her protectors.
Keepers of hope and silence.
We carried her.
We lit incense and held her hand.
We whispered prayers to her saint without words.
We watched life slip through her fingers,
but her essence never left.
She is still here—
Her love did not end.
It lingers in the room when we laugh without meaning to.
In the songs that felt too perfect.

It breathes in the pauses between our sentences.
It glows in the parts of us she raised.

We've fought.
God, we've fought.
Words thrown too hard.
But even in the ache,
We never left each other.
We find our way back to the table.
Sister dinners.
Laughing.
Remembering.
A sacred ritual.
A safe space.

I thank our parents
For the gift of growing beside you.
And no matter where we wander,
We remain—
Soul bound
A circle sealed in memory.
And always, always
Home in each other.

Principles manifest in our lives by how we present and carry ourselves in this world. Our attitudes and body language play a big role as well. These become cemented formulations of stories, thoughts, and characteristics that we hold onto. Falling asleep and waking up to sunshine and warmth make it impossible to judge, criticize or degrade myself in any way—when there is so much life outside these walls I can't possibly give in and believe my own negative self-talk. Beauty, water, sunshine, flowers, books, wine, the moon, feeling sexy, being tan—all of it makes us feel happier. This is for our good spirits. We need to be happier. Nature will always help us to face ourselves, but sometimes we need fun and wild experiences to help us let go of ourselves.

Don't remain in routine, plans and environment out of fear. It will only lead to a void in your life. I've learned to NEVER resist change or risk fear of letting go. Don't be afraid to let go. Fear of letting go of your body, your home, your comfort, your youth, your beauty, your money, the city you know well, the security of your job, the friendships that no longer work, the relationships that keep you from finding the real joy, the love and true alignment of your past, of who you know, who you are and who you have become. Don't be afraid to let go of what you thought you wanted but are no longer inspired by the beliefs you thought built you. You are too flexible, ever-changing, and expansive for any situation to stay still.

I get worn-out easily. I'm extremely sensitive to energy suckers. I admit I am impatient. I need new inspiration/discovery often but do not like to be overly stimulated. I like to continuously feel embodied. I relish conversations about subjects that truly matter according to what I think truly matters. I value nature's wisdom. People

irritate me easily. Sometimes I feel insecure and sometimes worry about where I'll end up. I often feel fear. Each day is a constant process of knowing myself and getting comfortable with my shortcomings to finally fully accept myself.

You go girl, peel back your own layers, listen to your own ranting, hold your hand. Accept yourself.



Your name has barely made a home inside my mind.
I don't know what you are nor do I know what I am going
to do.
But you move things inside of me...
You bring me new memories that I am craving to live. And I
miss you.

And I miss having the thought of having someone like you
walk in to clear this mess I've made of love's definition.
I have missed you to the point where I began to ask myself
where you have been....
And it is as if you waited for the perfect time to say "hello."
As if you knew that a woman like me, wanted to be
vulnerable for once....so you came....

Unexpected...undeniable...you came and instead of
running away..
I stayed.

Intimacy crept in with the sun in the morning.
It clung against the corners of where your hard wooden
floors and tan colored walls met.
Then made its way into your bed and into my heart.
It's light touched your skin, twirling around your back with
the awkward shapes carved by blinds.
I gently lifted my head to watch how the sun made
shadows on the moldings of your shoulders and
arms—
Stunned—by the structure of your body,
By the brows that framed your closed eyes,
By the colors that grew on your face and settled in my soul.

And instead of leaving,

Instead of finding something in you that I hate, I have
chosen for the first time,
To build a home for you in my heart rather than in my
mind.
Because a mind will destroy something so unknown as
you.

But my heart...it has embraced you...
It has welcomed you with a smile that no longer carries
hues of sadness weaved into its' delightful tease.

I ask you to stay because I am tired from leaving in the
morning when the night's lust suddenly transpires into
a morning love.

Stay, because I have built a home for us both, where we can
lie and be vulnerable
And forget what it is to live with a mind and its' logical
nature to kill everything that is beautiful.

Stay
because you are the definition of what I've never needed
and yet I am here,
Drowning you with my words and turning you into my
passion.

Stay
because I am tired of feeling numb to the desire of love and
the lack of it.
Stay because I feel your energy reviving mine.
I am an artwork of complications, but I can promise you
that I will be worth it.
Understand that in my mind I have written books about
the way you walk and how you smile
I am a writer of many things, of many people,

but mostly of you.



Travel. Be Independent. Wander.
Find something that interests you—something you like and
work hard.
Push through periods of fearing it.
Mingle with strangers and drink wine.
Absorb the history and the culture of the city you've
situated in.
Make your own decisions.
Trust and don't question the people who just really want to
give you love.
Don't question the love people have for you.
Embrace it. Feel it. Allow it. Receive it.
You will always have a home to return to.
It might come in the form of people.



I seek simple comforts,
Words of appreciation,
To be met halfway,
Ability to relate,
And a feeling of being understood.
But there are times when these experiences are difficult to
find.
And what can we do but recognize that a part of being alive
is
Being lonely as well.
But always remember: this is not the final feeling.

Little rituals matter.
They are what bring us back to ourselves each day.
They ground and center us.
Find at least one thing and return to it
Over and over with devotion.



There is a dark hidden part of you.
An old familiar part that will never diminish
The part that will howl at the moon
The part that might come across monstrosities of life
trying to sneak up from behind—
And you'll have the courage to turn around—showing teeth
ready to pounce and rip it to shreds.
The curve of your soul that's murky and breathing with
nightfall.
The full-blooded part of you.
Show me how you dance under the thriving full moon and
just let loose
Because there is nothing on this planet that moves like you
when you let go.
And I hope you let yourself feel lust underneath your skirt
When you just throw it up in the air and surrender to the
breeze of the wind
And give in to the pleasure of being wild and the pleasure
of life.
Dance until your feet feel raw and your hair wild—
finally feeling that something
Gets the way you feel inside.
Do you recall?
Those frozen instants when you were so content, that it
rebirthed you.

I hope you remember the time you closed your eyes and
got pulled into the embrace of the gods that
acknowledged the god in you and made you remember
that life is worth living.

Leave a trail of ashes behind you.
Behaving? Leave that behind too.
Find the edge of the bed and the edge of you and the edge
of the world.
Don't you dare take the stories they offered you
Instead take a seat—throw that shit off the desk and
inscribe your own.
Don't give up until you discover the stories of your life that
make you FEEL
Like your bones are blazing,
pressing your thighs tightly together, that heart on fire feel.
And when you do finally find that,
PLEASE.
Under no circumstances accept anything less.
Let that be one of the greatest lessons of your life.
Because it exposed you of who you are when you let loose.
When you were over experienced, over danced, and over
lived.
Because even in the darkest nights of your life
You can still sift through the moments when you felt like
every molecule of yourself
Fucked each other into an explosive ecstasy.
And remember:
No matter how unwelcoming,
How exhausted
Or how lifeless you feel—
You lived vibrant once.
And you can, again.



I promise I am back.
I know I have been gone for a while.
My days have been busy, and the seasons have been
eventful.
I wait for the week to pass because I am anxious for my
weekends.
I go quiet sometimes, but it does not mean I'm not
working.
It means something.
I have not been able to create without going through that
death rebirth cycle.
So I hold its hand and I do the damn dance.
I hope life is good.
I hope you are taking time for yourself because you
deserve it.
Soak up the sun
Turn the music up loud and let loose.
Movement is medicine.
Let the music send you to a higher place of immediate
pleasure.
I hope you're living and life is loving you.



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